

YALE JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

Volume 5

Fall 2005

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This edition of the *Yale Journal of Sociology* is published by
The Department of Sociology at Yale University.

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Yale Journal of Sociology

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*The financial support of the Richard D. Schwartz Fund
and the Sociology Department is greatly appreciated.*

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Class Analysis and Culture: What the Sneetches Can Teach Us

Julia Adams

Dr. Seuss' The Sneetches is the lightest of literary confections. So what does it have to do with the weighty topic of the constitution of classes, as it is portrayed in the mainstream sociological analysis of class stratification? This paper contends that the Sneetches' antics are instructive as well as amusing. They exemplify the several ways that culture enters into the concept of class as sociologists deploy it. How have class analysts understood the category of class, and how could more explicitly incorporating culture improve their approach? Dr. Seuss points the way.

These days many books and articles in the class analytical tradition have titles like *The Death of Class* (Pakulski and Waters 1996); *The Classless Society* (Kingston 2000) and *The Breakdown of Class Politics* (Clark and Lipset 2001). "Do big classes really matter?" ask Kim Weeden and David Grusky (2005), and they answer in the negative. Not everyone working in this academic tradition sees class apocalypse now, but there is definitely a sense in the field of academic sociology that class is under siege.

Two main critiques are at issue. The first, which I do not address here, involves a claim that the historical landscape has changed in the United States and other advanced industrial-capitalist societies, and class no longer structures people's lives the way it once did. The second critique, my focus in this paper, is that the *concept* of class never actually did the analytical heavy lifting that it was billed as doing, especially in sociologists' causal arguments about the world, and requires radical surgery if it isn't to be eliminated altogether. This claim isn't spanking new (a 1959 paper by Robert Nisbet anticipates some of the current arguments) but it has become increasingly vocal and much more precise. And it *is* new in the mainstream of sociological class analysis. In the 1959 debate, for example, Nisbet's skeptical position was *opposed* by both Rudolf Heberle, taking the Marxian position, and Otis Dudley Duncan, for the quantitatively-inclined stratificationists.

This argument – that the old, “big” or aggregative concept of class doesn’t assess what it claims to – is best articulated in a series of provocative papers by David Grusky and his associates, including Grusky and Sorensen (1998); Grusky and Weeden (2001) and now Weeden and Grusky (2005). They want to salvage the concept of class but by radically redesigning it. This means, they say, bidding goodbye to the old “big class model” in either its gradational or categorical versions. Grusky and Weeden (2001) instead recommend focusing on the “proximate mechanisms” that link locations “at the point of production” with “life chances, attitudes and behaviors” like voting, etc. This is a great start, but it doesn’t go far enough. I will explain why I think so, and why their refusal of what they dub “postmodernism” unduly limits their analysis. But first a little more background.¹

Grusky and Weeden are interested in how people who come to fill distinct occupational slots – to hold certain jobs – come to resemble one another in important ways. There are multiple possible paths here. Workers self-select into positions, for example, and employers and other gatekeepers select them on the basis of certain key attributes as well. (These allocation processes can be more or less formal, including credentialing and apprenticeship programs.) Once on the job, people engage in practices and have experiences that further bond and socialize them. Like the allocative processes that take them into these positions in the first place, Grusky and Weeden agree, socialization and bonding take place more at the occupational than at the “big class” level – at least in advanced industrial capitalist societies. They clearly see what John Goldthorpe (2002) calls “the Storming of the Winter Palace Model” as inapplicable to settings like the contemporary United States.

One nice example from Weeden and Grusky (2005) juxtaposes sociologists and economists. The occupations themselves are technically similar, with high complexity and autonomy, etc. But sociology draws more politically left-leaning recruits than does economics. These political predilections are reinforced by the disciplines’ respective forms of training and socialization; by their anchorage in the world of business (or not) and by ideological policing by colleagues that makes it hard to stray from the fold. “Culture” enters in through all these processes, of course, and Weeden and Grusky’s attempt to disaggregate them analytically before re-measuring them can actually help us see how. But it’s also at this precise analytical point that it would make sense to develop a more expansive (and yes, “postmodern” or at least post-structuralist) approach to the workings of signification in class and class formation, big and small.

Think of social closure – i.e. boundary making and enforcement – which Weeden and Grusky correctly see as the heart of social stratification. There's more than one way to close a door or fortify a boundary. If you want to keep some people out and others in, you have first to devise a way to say that those you are excluding aren't like those you want to include. This is first of all a matter of signs, of signaling, of signifiers and signifieds. The clearest example of this sort of ideological operation will be well-known to those of you with children, good memories of your own childhood, or just expansive adult reading tastes – Dr. Seuss' *The Sneetches*. Some Sneetches want to keep others from attending their beach parties and hot dog roasts, so they decide that only star-bellied and not plain-bellied sneetches can come along. When those without get stars (in the Star-On Machine, courtesy of the Fix-it Up Chappie, Sylvester McMonkey McBean), the original starbellies divest themselves of theirs, and so on. All this in spite of the fact that “Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small / You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all” (Seuss 1989 [1961]: 3).

It's not such a stretch from the signifiers of starred and starless to the dichotomizing and hierarchical cultural logic of, say, male/female or black/white, as signifiers that employers and other gate-keepers (including some gate-keeping employees) take as indexing a whole range of signifieds relevant to whether someone is hired, fired or promoted. These include features like relative productivity; docility; commitment; being thought of as potential managerial material. Ascribed aspects of this sort are also perceived attributes and as such are arranged with some ideological systematicity in our society. For the most part, though, they do not come formed in ready-made hierarchies, much less dichotomies. Splitting and dominating takes work, ongoing cultural and historical work, in which some people, à la Seuss' Sylvester McMonkey McBean, participate more than others, but to which all of us, sneetchlike, contribute at times.

Here, however, I diverge from academic writings that in different ways insist on the relative naturalness of social dichotomies and from Dr. Seuss himself.² A more sociologically correct — but alas, less amusing — version of the good doctor's tale would have shown the whole starry array of shapes on those Sneetch bellies, and the ways that they are organized into two hierarchical categories. And are reorganized. And organized again. These cultural logics (or historically mutable sign systems that we produce) structure the allocative and socialization processes with which quantitative class analysts are rightly concerned – within and between generations, who

gets included or excluded. “When the Star-Belly children went out to play ball / Could a Plain Belly get in the game...? Not at all” (Seuss 1989 [1961]: 5). These logics do not arise either from class position alone or from the presumed “essential” characteristics of sneetches or people. Ascription takes cultural work. But of course not *just* cultural work: people also mobilize sanctions and muster resources to enforce these laborious distinctions. Seuss showed this rather elegantly. His Sneetches shamed each other and pushed one another around and then, in desperation, paid Mr. McBean, the Fix-it-Up Chappie, all the money they had for intrinsically meaningless and all-too-evanescent signs of distinction.

These sorts of processes, involving meaning-making or signification buttressed by resources and coercion, are just as important at the occupational level. Employers develop categories, ideal types, of the character of jobs and occupations. These are contingently stabilized networks of signs, to which employers and their agents attach typified income streams, powers of discipline, and disposition over resources and other people. Workers enforce these boundaries on one another as well. Furthermore, groups (and organizational representatives of groups) like professional associations manage the boundaries among occupations in ways involving contests over ideal types of jobs and the streams of assets and sanctioning powers that they command (see e.g. Abbott 1988). The reproduction of the occupational system, and therefore of Grusky and Weeden’s “classes”, rests on the iterative outcomes of these sometimes coercive forms of socio-cultural management and signification struggle.

This is not to say that technical features of jobs are meaningless or unimportant. But just as in the case of individual workers, it would be a great mistake to think that the “material characteristics” of jobs – e.g. their technical make-up – determines their character or their relationship to other complementary or contending formations. Yet this is exactly what many class analysts do claim, often reasoning backward from the relative uniformity of contemporary capitalist occupational structures. This is an error, akin to sloppy versions of evolutionary reasoning that infer evolutionary fitness from status quo social arrangements. Not only are occupational structures less uniform than they look at first glance, but at least some occupational ideal types are also regionally and internationally diffused, in ways that sociologists could more closely scrutinize. Grusky and Weeden themselves specify that people use “functional recipes” in dividing and rewarding labor, and presumably those functional recipes are malleable and communicable. This is an opening on their part to rich possibili-

ties of historical, cultural and political interactional analysis. It also nudges us to attend to the ingredients of these recipes, including people's persistent historical efforts to ascribe certain characteristics to people, jobs, and people on the job. These efforts enlist logics of signification — indigenous, borrowed or both — that we can analyze, and perhaps — who knows? — ultimately measure in a way that would satisfy quantitatively-oriented class analysts and stratificationists.

First, however, we'll need to surrender some of our old pre-Seuss locutions about class, including claims that class automatically arises or can be intellectually induced from a technical/material structure of positions. This isn't a straw man argument — plenty of people still say that this is the case. Nevertheless, this approach involves sociologists in a series of problematic reductions. Take, for example, our persistent sociological habit of talking of class as a "demographic characteristic" or variable that "explains" outcomes, such as "class differences" in something like rates of smoking. What may look like an unproblematic relationship of description or determination implicates a series of cultural practices and institutions like family; school peer groups and mass media, that are more or less interdependent or loosely coupled, and should be analyzed as such. There are no theoretically predetermined limits on mechanisms that co-construct class.

Just one mechanism, for example, is "social distance": people's taking up an idea or a practice because people around them, or people they want to resemble — say, celebrities — are doing it. After all, the only reason the Sneetches even notice their star status is that they are living on the same beach, having "frankfurter roasts / or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts" (7). There are "class" dimensions of who hangs out with whom (which implicates one set of social processes). There are also class components of who responds to mass-mediated celebrity culture — ads, television, the internet, films — in which famous people are portrayed with cigarettes in hand. And these representations are in turn structured in terms of "class-related" images and are astutely marketed to different economic strata. That is of course not all that these representations are doing; they have other elements and effects that little or nothing to do with class. On the other hand, multiple dimensions of what we might call 'class' pop up in each of the mechanisms or possible paths of determination that construct the class dimension of some social practice — here smoking (but note that it could just as well be education, fertility, consumption patterns, or anything else). There is a fractal quality to this example, and in fact the overall analysis.

Thus arguments that class somehow resides in or emanates from “the point of production” (to use the Marxian language, which is also Grusky and Weeden’s, in this case) seem to me to take far too much for granted. It may be that more careful analysis will show that the many potential mechanisms that might link classes (big or small) to production are somehow predominant or root causes. Meanwhile, however, that remains very much an open question, and we should all try to get the necessary privileging of production out of the sociological concepts or definitions of class, so we can then better understand production as one among many structured cultural sites, including markets, families, schools, political parties, media, associations, and so forth, at which class is continually made and remade.

This is tricky territory, since it involves analyzing the empirical production of class at the same time that the concept of class is being deconstructed and reconstructed. Nonetheless, we can make a start by parsing the distinctions among (1) the lexical or logical level, where you find the menu of definitions and translations of class as a sign; (2) the popular, or the signs of class prevailing in some specified population (like Americans, or sociologists who analyze class); (3) the institutional, or those definitions or concepts associated with “class” that are institutionally marked, on whose behalf people pull the institutionalized levers of inclusion and exclusion.

It is then possible to induce certain patterns and relations among these levels. For example, when American say “I am middle class” or “I am working class,” what do they mean? This tack highlights class as signifier. We could by the same token investigate class as signified, and its relations with other signifieds. Do common tropes like “white trash,” “welfare mother,” or even “worker” mean class? How is class-as-signified linked up in networks with other signifieds? Does it evoke some syncretic concept or a network of concepts for people? How do we map these sign systems, synchronically and diachronically? Finally, how are these concepts and conceptual networks institutionalized? How do they come alive in practice? How are they reproduced or undermined? People’s classificatory categories should be analytically incorporated into our theories of the structuring of class from the ground up, as they organize practices of social closure and, by the same token, social inclusion.

Then, perhaps, we could think about introducing the Sneetch to the Shmoo. In the Parable of the Shmoo, borrowed by Erik Olin Wright to illustrate fundamental features of class exploitation, L’il Abner, that inimitable resident of Dogpatch, discovers an odd creature “whose sole desire in life is to please humans by transforming itself into the material things that

human beings need” (1997: 4). Shmoos morph into necessities and not luxuries, however, so as they proliferate they end up undermining capitalists’ ability to draft workers, as well as men’s ability to command women’s household labor. In *Dogpatch*, the capitalist, P.U., and his men quickly get the situation under control, the Shmoos are eliminated, and everybody gets back to work. But what if people could keep their Shmoos, who would serve as a handy version of a basic income grant? Some noxious jobs would disappear, because there would be nobody to do them; others would have to be better compensated. But other class dynamics would stay just the same. Sneetches with Shmoos would still be drawing and enforcing distinctions among themselves at the behest of, and with help from, the McBeans and P.U.s. The mechanisms of social closure that contribute to social inequality rest on culture as well as cash. How would that transform the mechanisms of social closure that contribute to social inequality? If varieties of cultural turn are integral to the deconstructive moment in quantitative class analysis, opening a space for its convergence with culture, then the reverse is also true.

The ending of *The Sneetches* is a sly vision of utopia, in which the Sneetches decide to be just one big happy mutually indistinguishable group. They finally see the light on “The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches / And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches” (p. 24). In a class-centric rereading of Seuss’ story, you could say that workers of the world finally unite. If that seems out of reach, let’s at least learn from Seuss’ Sneetches and open the party – I mean the conversation – as widely as possible, so that we can all learn from it. That seems out of reach these days. But class analysts at least might learn from Seuss’ Sneetches and open the party – I mean the conversation – more widely, so that we can all benefit from it. The current deconstructive moment in quantitative class analysis is a healthy one, I believe, and it depends on a home-grown variety of the cultural turn. Acknowledging that unlikely intellectual development opens a promising exploratory space where class mappings converge with cultural analysis, Sneetches consort with Shmoos, and where there is much for all of us to learn.

NOTES

1. This extends an analysis adumbrated in Adams (2002) in the context of a symposium on Grusky and Weeden (2001). I thank David Weakliem for our continuing conversations about class.

2. These sociological writings run the gamut from Lacanian psychoanalysis to Charles Tilly's otherwise excellent book *Durable Inequality*.

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Against the Wal-Martization of America: Lessons for the Labor Movement from the ILWU and UFCW in California

Sam Bernstein

Abstract: The “Wal-Martization” of America highlights the severe crisis facing organized labor and the urgent need for labor movement revitalization. Labor leaders, activists, and academics have struggled to develop a strategy that can stem the decline. Two recent and important high-profile labor battles – those of the Southern California grocery workers and the West Coast dockworkers – indicate the ways in which the obstacles to rebuilding organized labor can be overcome. In both cases, the high stakes and anger within the workforce led union officials to implement social movement union strategies. The officials, however, were unwilling or incapable of leading the struggle forward in the face of strong corporate opposition. Ultimately, they served to demobilize rank and file workers and lead the struggle to defeat. Still, a small minority of rank and file workers and activists sought to build on grassroots militancy and self-organization that arose in the course of the struggle. Rather than giving in, rank and file militants attempted to increase the pressure on the employers by strengthening and extending social movement union strategies. Although this current was not strong enough to impact the struggles significantly, their focus on workplace militancy and internal union democracy sheds light on the processes through which social movement unionism can be implemented in practice from the bottom-up and serve as a model for rebuilding organized labor.

The Wal-Martization of America

Throughout the past thirty years, the economy has become increasingly integrated on an international scale. This process of globalization is occurring in the context of, and simultaneously through, an international economic restructuring within a neoliberal framework. Wal-Mart is a perfect manifestation of the impact of neoliberal restructuring, both on firms themselves and their workers. Wal-Mart is now the nation's largest

employer with 1.2 million “associates” – three times as many workers as General Motors – and the largest retailer with 1,397 superstores, which offer a full line of groceries. Home Depot, Wal-Mart’s largest competitor in the retail industry, is only half its size. In fact, Wal-Mart is now the world’s largest corporation, surpassing ExxonMobil in the Fortune 500 ranking in 2002 and maintaining that position at the top since. In 2004, it generated a staggering \$288.2 billion in revenue – an eleven percent increase over the previous year – with \$9 billion in profit. Indeed, in February 2004, Wal-Mart was named *Fortune* magazine’s “Most Admired Company” for the second year in a row. Likewise, the headline of a 2003 *Business Week* story was “How Wal-Mart Keeps Getting it Right.” Wall Street is obviously very interested in a firm that can continue growing in the double digits through the midst of a recession.¹ In short, Wal-Mart has quickly developed into one of the largest and most powerful entities on the planet since it was founded not long ago in 1962.

However, the extent to which Wal-Mart’s workers have benefited from this rapid economic prosperity is dubious. In 2001, the average Wal-Mart worker earned a mere \$13,861 a year. Although the firm boasts that 70 percent of its workers are fulltime, that is defined as only 28 hours a week, which would translate to less than \$11,000 a year at their overwhelmingly minimum wage earnings. In fact, 70 percent of Wal-Mart’s workers actually qualify for food stamps. Additionally, only 38 percent of its workers can afford the firm’s health insurance plan. In California, Wal-Mart workers cost taxpayers \$86 million a year, or \$1,952 a year per Wal-Mart worker.¹ Meanwhile, the firm is rabidly anti-union. Workers that support organizing drives are fired and most labor laws are blatantly disregarded. Wal-Mart has also been accused, in class-action lawsuits filed in more than thirty states, of breaking federal overtime laws by forcing workers to work off the clock.² In actuality, then, Wal-Mart’s enormous success is coming at the expense of its workers.

In order to survive in the current highly competitive global economy, firms and governments internationally must adapt their labor standards to those of Wal-Mart in a race to the bottom that devours wages, benefits, and workers’ rights. Indeed, journalist Bob Ortega commented that Wal-Mart’s “way of thinking...has become the norm,” not only in retail, but in all of business also.³ Likewise, a commentary in *Business Week* discusses the pressure from Wall Street to follow the Wal-Mart model, noting that CEOs find it easier to follow Wal-Mart’s low-wage route, even if a high-wage/high-productivity model may be just as effective in the long run.⁴

If General Motors can be taken as the postwar standard-bearer in economic relations – expanding profits and growth in combination with rising living standards for its unionized workers – Wal-Mart is the standard-bearer for the current globalized, neoliberal economy. A primary and gaping difference between the two firms is the level of organization among the workers. Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss argue that Wal-Mart’s extraordinary growth in the contemporary economy is due to the fact that it is able “to manipulate a wholly unorganized labor force.”⁵ Whereas the organized labor movement was at its strongest point in history during the postwar period, now, when it is most drastically needed in order to defend the American workforce from a race to the bottom, it is facing its greatest crisis in over eighty years. In fact, union density in the private sector is currently 7.9 percent – an all time low.⁶ The question of how the labor movement can reverse its decline and become an engine for social justice and democracy has never been so pressing as it is now.

The American Labor Movement: Crisis and Revitalization

The Wal-Mart model of low wages and benefits, part-time work, and fierce anti-unionism is an embodiment of a general corporate strategy – a framework known broadly as neoliberalism – that was developed in order to reverse the deep economic crisis that hit in the mid 1970s. Following protracted economic expansion in the postwar period, which had served to buttress a Fordist⁷ “social contract” of institutionalized labor relations stability (represented most famously by the GM model), Corporate America embarked on a concerted offensive against the gains achieved by organized labor in working and living conditions. U.S. firms were having difficulty competing in an increasingly globalized economy, particularly with cheap imports from Europe and Japan. Hence, corporate leaders sought to restore profit rates through a massive shift in the balance of power and wealth from labor to capital. As *Business Week* counseled in 1974, “It will be a hard pill for many Americans to swallow – the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more...Nothing that this nation, or any other nation, has done in modern economic history compares in difficulty with the selling job that must now be done to make people accept the new reality.”⁸

Using the very real economic recession and threatened layoffs as justifications, Corporate America, backed by the Federal government, systematically restructured socio-economic relations according to the neoliberal agenda, which constituted a means to expand economic markets and

increase capital's access to cheap labor on an international scale. This process *did* succeed in restoring profitability in the U.S., which regained its international competitive edge.⁹ Multinational corporate expansion, however, has come at a devastating cost to workers in the U.S., not to mention internationally. In the American context, deregulation, privatization, fiscal austerity, tax-cuts, corporate subsidies, and increased productivity have been accompanied by declining or stagnant wages, job losses, plant closures, outsourcing, exorbitant consumer debt, and slashed social services.¹⁰ Yet, the primary expression of workers' interests – the organized labor movement – has been in a state of disrepair throughout this period.

Clearly, the organized labor movement is the primary obstacle to a neoliberal restructuring that devastates the lives of working people in the interest of heightened profits and global competitiveness. This is precisely the reason that corporations, once again in conjunction with the Federal government, have conducted a full-scale assault on the previous gains won by workers and ultimately the very existence of organized labor. Anti-union legal provisions and the lack of effective penalties for violation of other labor laws became widely exploited by businesses beginning in the mid 1970s, particularly in order to break strikes and prevent unionization. Despite having existed since the postwar institutionalization of labor relations and the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1948, the open use of this anti-union legal system was largely legitimized by the conditions of economic crisis.¹¹ The culminating signification of this employer offensive is widely deemed to have been then-President Ronald Reagan's legal firing and replacement of all striking members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981, which led to the union's decertification. This clear government intervention on the side of corporate union-busting opened the door to a bolder and more sophisticated assault, which has been astonishing in its ferocity and persistence. As Fantasia and Voss write, "In the neoliberal utopia that corporations seek to create, there is no place for trade unions, making the future survival of a labor movement in the United States a very real and serious question."¹²

Ironically, organized labor itself played a significant role in institutionalizing this process of restructuring and its ideological justifications. In 1979, Lane Kirkland took over as the head of the AFL-CIO, declaring the need for a survival strategy that focused on the reform of labor laws so as to facilitate new organizing and the maintenance of existing union membership. Although this represented a marked shift from status quo business unionism, which solely emphasized servicing existing union members

through bureaucratic legal processes, Kirkland believed that crisis-burdened Corporate America would only accept the necessary legal reform if organized labor adopted a more conciliatory stance. This analysis was based on the long-standing notion of a capital-labor partnership. “As the economy contracted,” argue Fantasia and Voss,

instead of mobilizing significant opposition to the threats of layoffs and plant closings, a union leadership that had been well schooled in the language of the social contract could do little but accept, however, grudgingly, the rationale advanced by employers and their agents, that concessions by labor were necessary to stem the tide of industrial decline...In short, most leaders were stuck in an organizational culture that was based on an economic reality and a labor-management-government relationship that no longer existed, leaving them utterly ineffective (and powerless) in responding to the crisis.¹³

Initially perceived to be a temporary survival strategy, the logic of concessionary bargaining – the active process of negotiating away previous contractual gains on the part of union leaders in order to help restore corporate profitability and competitiveness – was effectively turned on labor and institutionalized. In fact, despite regaining its profit rates and competitive edge,¹⁴ Corporate America continued to use the rhetoric of *potential* economic decline in order to extract further concessions from a cooperative union leadership that saw no alternative but to accept this ideological framework. An initial weakening gave way to a full-scale retreat.

In 1995, after continued decline in union membership and power, John Sweeney’s “New Voice” slate defeated Kirkland’s handpicked successor in the first contested election for president that the AFL-CIO had ever had. Sweeney, former president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), represented workers in the fastest growing section of the labor force and labor movement. As labor researcher Steven Lopez writes, “Against Kirkland’s conciliatory approach, Sweeney has called for a more activist labor movement, one that could begin to challenge the supremacy of corporate rule. Sweeney has promised to reinvent organized labor, to transform it from a collection of sclerotic special interest groups into a once again broad-based social movement.”¹⁵ Most importantly, Sweeney has argued that organized labor can and must organize new workers if it is to survive and maintain relevancy, regardless of anti-union legislation.

The new repertoires of union strategies and tactics that were first introduced more widely in an American context¹⁶ by Sweeney and have since been studied extensively by researchers have become known as social

movement unionism. Despite organized labor in general suffering from continued defeats over the past two decades, the successes of social movement union campaigns have indicated sources of potential renewal. As Fantasia and Voss note, "The hallmarks of their approach have been flexibility and the way in which they have attempted to circumvent bureaucratic union structures and state-sponsored channels for managing conflict."¹⁷

Although the particulars of this new style vary greatly as innovation and creativity are encouraged, Lopez, in the most recent study on social movement unionism, identifies four primary dynamics that unify various tactics into a coherent strategic framework.¹⁸ First, social movement unions utilize a grassroots, rank and file intensive approach to organizing.¹⁹ This is meant to empower workers so that they take union matters into their own hands. It also allows workers to carry out certain tasks that had previously been performed by union staff, thereby freeing up union resources for other initiatives. Second, collective action focuses on public protest and disruptive tactics in order to develop workers' confidence and sense of collective power.²⁰ A particularly effective strategy along these lines is the corporate campaign, which uses in depth research of the structural nature of the targeted firm or industry in order to best determine possible points of leverage that can be exploited by public protest. Third, broad solidarity with other labor unions and community coalitions is built and mobilized in order to maximize pressure.²¹ This is an attempt to broaden the labor movement and break down barriers between work and community, widening the objectives and capabilities of organized labor. Lastly, the demands of union campaigns are framed in terms of universal social justice issues rather than narrow labor market goals.²² This is important not only in terms of building more effective solidarity and mobilizing workers, but also in reshaping conventional perceptions of organized labor as a narrow interest group. Essentially, taken together, these root principles are meant to reconceptualize organized labor as an actual social movement. The development of a dynamic, broad-based labor movement that actively fosters solidarity and rank and file mobilization provides the most viable path toward revitalization. In fact, it represents a wholesale reconfiguration of organized labor both externally and internally.

However, social movement unionism practices have so far remained limited to only a few progressive unions and have yet to become more widespread.²³ Even within progressive unions, results have been uneven.²⁴ Indeed, Lopez goes on to criticize the fact that most studies have focused on numerous factors leading to success rather than analyzing obstacles to

social movement union implementation and the ways in which actors concretely understand and attempt to overcome those obstacles.

He continues by outlining three crucial obstacles that all center on persisting legacies of business union practices.¹⁵ First, social movement union campaigns must directly confront corporate power to intimidate, threaten, and punish workers. Second, rank and file workers can be resistant to or wary about social movement union transformation due to past perceptions of unionism. As a result, it can be difficult to motivate workers to organize and mobilize. Yet, this grassroots activity is crucial to the process of realizing collective power and practically implementing social movement union strategies. Third, adopting new and innovative strategies and tactics requires a difficult process of internal organizational and leadership transformation. According to Fantasia and Voss, “they tried to build a new labor movement in the shell of the old.”²⁶ Whereas internal structures and leadership must facilitate that process, the bureaucratized nature of organized labor can prohibit necessary debate and experimentation. Indeed, The ways in which these obstacles are dealt with is pivotal to understanding the potential for a broader shift toward a social movement union framework.

Moreover, the vast majority of analyses of the viability of social movement unionism focus on new organizing rather than extending these new organizing gains in contracts, let alone winning decent contracts for the existing union membership. As Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich argue:

Although organizing is important for the revival of American labor, strategic and coordinated contract campaigns are equally essential to labor’s effort to rebuild and revitalize the movement. Without these campaigns, unions will continue to lose as many new workers as they gain, and newly organized workers will never be able to achieve contractual guarantees for the rights and protections for which they risked so much in the organizing process...When successful, these campaigns result in a significant expansion of union organizing opportunities, bargaining leverage, political clout, and a concomitant shift of public support toward unions. When they fail, as the labor movement learned so painfully with [PATCO], they undermine labor’s efforts for years to come.²⁷

In fact, it is dubious that unorganized workers would take the necessary risks or that the existing rank and file would be interested in engaging in new organizing if organized labor was unable or unwilling to win decent contracts for the latter. Continued concessionary contracts pose another obstacle to transformation that persists due to business union legacies.

Despite the emergence of new strategies and ideas that point toward the potential for labor movement renewal, organized labor has continued to experience decline over the past decade of "New Voice" leadership. It is at a critical juncture in which it must use and develop all of its recently recognized strategic and tactical capabilities to the furthest extent possible. Rather than proceeding cautiously, organized labor must be bold and daring in its experimentation. With profits expanding and competitiveness restored, there is a structural opening for labor to reverse the current balance of socio-economic power. Although past practices of business unionism institutionalized the accepted norm of partnership and legitimized the logic of concessionary bargaining, some sections of labor officialdom have come to recognize the failure of past perspectives and the need for fresh, more radical alternatives.

That alternative of social movement unionism has been posed and discussed, but it has still only been implemented narrowly. Indeed, completely transforming the form and content of organized labor is quite a daunting task. Therefore, active labor struggles must be analyzed in terms of the obstacles mentioned above so that the lessons of those struggles can be generalized to wider sections of the movement. In particular, the practical implementation of social movement unionism must be assessed. The ways in which legacies of business unionism are understood and overcome by social movement actors in the process of collective struggle must be determined. The following examination of two highly significant contemporary contract battles attempts to do just that.

From an American point of view, the neoliberal global economy is defined by the relocation of manufacturing industries and an increased reliance on imported commodities. Therefore, both the retail and logistics industries have risen in relative importance to the U.S. economy within the context of an increasingly global economy. Goods coming from overseas must be transported and sold through these two industries. The recent struggles of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), both of which have recently undergone contract campaigns that ended in relative defeat, provides an exciting opportunity to look comparatively at two economically crucial unions engaged in two of the highest profile labor battles since September 11. Furthermore, Wal-Mart played a significant indirect role in both conflicts; in the former case as one of the world's fastest growing grocery retailers and in the latter as one of the world's largest importers, seeking to drive down labor costs in both sectors.

These two unions also symbolize a key difference within the labor movement – namely, the disparate legacies of business unionism. The UFCW is known as one of the more conservative labor unions that has only grown due to top-down mergers and takeovers of smaller unions. The meatpacking industry, which was once its stronghold and a bastion of union benefits, now provides some of the worst working and living conditions in the country. The ILWU is known as one of the few remaining left, militant labor unions from the 1930s. They proudly display a raised fist and the slogans of their Communist-influenced original leadership on banners, websites, buildings, and even business cards. They also practiced many elements of social movement unionism long before they became more widely discussed. Despite these different traditions, both unions have expressed explicit support for social movement union strategies with UFCW leaders claiming that they represent the “wave of the future” and ILWU leaders claiming to have practiced them since their founding. Moreover, with the UFCW representing primarily women and Latino immigrants and the ILWU representing primarily Black male workers, there are significant demographic differences as well. An effective comparison of two quite distinct unions in terms of their strategies and concrete actions in the midst of a contract campaign can serve to identify the lessons taken from those campaigns and elucidate the challenges facing future labor struggles.

Research Design and Methodology

The studies of these unions and their contract campaigns centered on open-ended interviews with three groups of actors: management representatives, union leaders, and rank and file workers.²⁸ In seeking to determine the ways in which social movement actors understand and attempt to overcome obstacles in the course of struggle, these three groups represented the key actors involved. Some of the interviews were conducted in person while some had to be done over the phone. Most of the interviews lasted about an hour, although some were a bit longer and some, especially with rank and file workers, were shorter.

A host of management representatives and union leaders were contacted based on information garnered from websites. The ones that responded to interview requests were the ones interviewed. Ultimately, three UFCW leaders – all of whom were white, middle-aged men – and three ILWU leaders – two of whom were white and one Black, but all middle-aged men – were interviewed.²⁹ The facial and vocal expressions of these officials

remained largely steady and consistent throughout the interviews, with an occasional burst of anger or condemnation. Unfortunately, only the management representative from one grocery chain responded to interview requests and no representatives from the dockworkers' management responded, despite repeated requests.³⁰

Talking to rank and file workers proved to be extremely difficult. First of all, just finding workers to approach and request interviews with was problematic. They do not have websites, offices, or business cards. The only place to meet them is at their workplaces. At work, however, workers are subject to the dictates of managerial control and, hence, are only available to talk on their way to work, on break, or on their way out of work. Yet, workers on their way in could not risk being late, workers on break wanted to relax and be on their own, and workers on their way out had to rush to carry on the continual responsibilities of taking care of children, spouses, and the home. Second, even if workers were technically available to talk, they hardly wanted to talk about their union. In the case of grocery workers, they were so disillusioned by their union that most refused to comment saying, "Why would I want to talk about that bunch of assholes? I don't even want to think about it." In the case of dockworkers, they normally deferred to the union leadership saying, "I'm just a worker. I don't know much about the ins-and-outs. You should really talk to the president, etc." Third, workers did not seem to be accustomed to being approached by someone who is actually interested in hearing what they think, which partially explains the above responses to inquiries. The last two reasons are in fact indicative of the very passivity and disillusionment that the social movement union framework is meant to cut against.

Based on these challenging experiences, it seems as though survey research is grossly inadequate when attempting to dig deeper than the opinions of official representatives or mainstream media representations.³¹ In order to get at the experiences of rank and file workers, it is necessary to be an actual player in those experiences. As growing numbers of researchers are pointing out, ethnographic research is much more effective in unveiling the extremely dynamic nature of work and social struggle.³² This type of research, however, was obviously outside the scope of this project and the inadequacies of survey research had to be dealt with.

Yet, as a result, those workers that did want to talk or were open to talking were primarily rank and file activists who had clear ideas that they thought were important and relevant. Initially, meeting these activists was based on luck – they happened to be going in and out of the union offices or their

workplace. After meeting an individual activist, however, it was possible to then snowball off of their recommendations and the contact information they provided for other activists that they had worked with, which of course led to further snowballing. Ultimately, four grocery workers were interviewed – three middle-aged women, two of whom were Latina and one white, as well as one young white male. Likewise, four dockworkers were interviewed – all of whom were middle-aged men, two Black and two white. The interviews with these workers were very emotional for the interviewees and, as a result, the interviewer, with expressions ranging from anger and frustration to sorrow and grief to pride and confidence. It was clear that the workers' experiences weighed heavily on their lives, with one even breaking down into tears several times. Although these activists represent a disproportionately small section of the workforces in quantitative terms, qualitatively, they represent the opposite end of the attitudinal spectrum relative to the official union line,³³ which proved in fact to be very valuable. It would have been optimal to hear a more diverse array of opinions, but this was unfeasible.

Ultimately, the vastly differing perspectives of union leaders and rank and file activists succeeded in providing insights into the question at hand. When taken together, they point to the long standing legacies and failures of business unionism as well as the existing potential for social movement union revitalization. Essentially, they reveal the obstacles that must be considered in implementing this transformation in practice.

United Food and Commercial Workers v. the Top Three Grocery Chains

Background

Jobs in the retail grocery industry are not known for high wages.³⁴ Rather, it was the union-negotiated benefits package that caused it to be an attractive long-term occupation, particularly for youth out of high school and women as single mothers or secondary wage earners. With fully provided health care and decent pensions, as well as job scales that allowed for advancement, sustained throughout the 1980s and 1990s – a period in which those provisions were generally eroded and health care costs skyrocketed – jobs at the quickly growing grocery chains were some of the best retail jobs available. Represented by the UFCW – the fourth largest union in the country – the grocery workers have been unionized longer than most service sector workers.

The grocery industry has historically been defined by steady growth and expansion. By the 1990s, following a wave of mergers involving the consolidation of national chains, four companies – Kroger, Albertsons, Safeway, and Ahold – emerged with 54 percent of all national retail grocery sales by the year 2000 and combined annual sales of over \$120 billion. Despite the massive consolidation of the unionized retail grocery industry, it remains a very competitive market. With Wal-Mart recently rising to surpass Kroger as the largest grocery retailer in the United States, the giant unionized chains are facing an increasingly competitive environment. Between 2000 and 2002 alone, Wal-Mart's share of the grocery retail market jumped from 9 percent to 14 percent to the direct expense of the four leading unionized chains, whose market share dropped from 55 percent to 50 percent during the same period and continues to fall.³⁵

Yet, concurrently, the top three grocery chains could not plead poverty. Their combined operating profits rose from \$5.1 billion in 1998 to \$9.7 billion in 2002.³⁶ The threat of Wal-Mart, however, pressured them to move toward restructuring while they still could. Even before the strike and lockouts in Southern California began, Wall Street investment houses were advising the chains to restructure their labor costs in order to cut overall costs. According to Morgan Stanley, unionized chains paid their workers 20-30 percent more in wages and benefits than Wal-Mart.³⁷ Indeed, as the *Los Angeles Times* reported in late December 2003, "When talks aimed at settling the Southern and Central California grocery strike resume, the supermarkets' negotiators will have a staunch, if invisible, ally at the bargaining table: Wall Street stock analysts." Likewise, an investment analyst commented that the strike and lockout is "one of the best investments food retailers could make," one that "is likely to continue to pay off over a number of years."³⁸

The aggressive bargaining posture of the top grocery chains with the UFCW, therefore, can be understood in terms of these seemingly contradictory factors. On the one hand, their massive size meant that, if they stuck together, the chains had the resources to withstand a long, hard strike, even in Southern California – the largest grocery retail market. On the other hand, despite their size, their declining competitive position in the face of Wal-Mart growth drove them to cut costs in the one area Wal-Mart has always enjoyed an immense advantage: labor costs. Although, as public relations chief for Kroger's California Division admitted in an interview, "We did tend to exaggerate the threat posed by Wal-Mart in California considering that it has yet to actually enter the California grocery mar-

ket...We had to plan for the future...We had to make the unions understand that costs are soaring and that we will soon face serious competitive threats.” Indeed, Wal-Mart is currently implementing plans to build forty California “Super Centers” over the next five years. Moreover, the California market cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the nation. The chains figured that if they could win major labor concessions in Southern California – their largest market – they could do so anywhere.³⁹

With that strategy in mind, the corporate chains, led by Safeway CEO Steven Burd, opened negotiations in autumn of 2003 with devastating demands – even by the standards of today’s harsh climate for labor bargaining. Their last proposal included major health care concessions that would total a \$1 billion shift in costs from the employers to the workers (costs that would be extremely difficult for low-wage and often part-time workers to absorb), the establishment of a two-tier wage and benefits system, wage freezes, and greater management control over outsourcing and hours.⁴⁰ Essentially, this was an effort to break the hold of the seven UFCW locals that represent 59,000 workers under a regional master contract.

In this context, UFCW leaders had to draw the line. They had little room to retreat when confronted with harsh demands, particularly following mixed results after strikes in St. Louis and West Virginia earlier in the year. It was clear that the Southern California campaign would set the standard in advance of ongoing negotiations in Indianapolis, Chicago, Denver, and Northern California. The UFCW, created in 1979 through a series of mergers, is a historically conservative union that began experimenting with social movement union strategies a few years ago, but would now be put to the test in what would prove to be the most significant labor battle in almost a decade. With American working conditions rapidly deteriorating, Wal-Mart driving corporations to demand extreme concessions, and health care in crisis, the struggle of Southern California grocery workers would be a turning point in the broader labor movement.

Ruth Milkman, director of the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, told *Labor Notes* that this struggle is “a major test of labor movement power.” The corporate demands were for “a whole different scale of concessions...It’s no accident that they chose Southern California, known for its labor militancy, to try this.”⁴¹ Indeed, as Ed, a top UFCW official in Southern California, put it, “We knew we had to win this strike because we couldn’t lose it.”

UFCW Leadership

In the beginning, however, UFCW leaders sought to pursue a fairly conservative stance toward the concessions drive. Initially, the union agreed to concessions, particularly to cut health costs, but the corporations would not concede in other areas. Apparently, union officials were surprised by the aggressiveness of the corporate chains, even though Safeway had already taken measures to hire 17,800 strikebreakers.⁴² “We knew the employers would take a hard line in negotiations, but we didn’t think they would on every issue,” stated one leader. “We were willing to make compromises because we understood that health care costs were on the rise, but the two-tier would have been devastating. We had to go out so we could protect our health and welfare package.”

Yet, even after deciding that a strike would be necessary, officials instructed workers to only walk out of Safeway-owned Von’s while asking the other two companies not to lock out workers. Kroger and Albertsons, however, were quick to rally around their collective interests and proceeded to lock out their workers the following day. According to Ed, “The employers thought that the lock out would last no more than four or five weeks after their workers would flood back to the stores, leaving Safeway workers isolated on the picket line.” As Ray, a top official in the Bay Area, commented, “It was clear that the companies were willing to pull out all the stops to get their contract...But no one expected such a long strike.” Later on, it was revealed that the three chains illegally shared profits throughout the strike. The union filed lawsuits against both actions, which are still under investigation. Regardless, the four and a half month long labor battle was on.

Although the UFCW had not expected such a widespread struggle, they had taken steps to prepare. They increased dues a year prior to the contract’s expiration in order to set aside funds should they be needed. Additionally, officials said that they had focused on training shop stewards in their strike responsibilities. Leaders also pointed to the organizing that had been conducted over the past fifteen years to develop some of the strongest labor federations and local councils in the country. Building alliances with community and religious organizations had been at the center of this work. “We have a strong labor movement here in California,” said Mike, a leader in Los Angeles. “We had developed coalitions with our natural allies, which provided a strong base for us to work with.”

Indeed, even before the strike, the grocery workers had been given soli-

darity pledges from the Teamsters and SEIU, among others, who promised not to cross picket lines. The UFCW consciously framed the struggle as one for decent health care and against the “greed of Corporate America,” while also emphasizing the quality service that unionized grocery workers provide. As Ed put it, “The solidarity expressed was incredible and the rank and file was extremely committed. The vast majority of customers stayed away [from the stores] because of the respect that workers had earned and the fact that we were fighting for the interests of all working Americans...In the first few weeks, I thought there was no way the employers could withstand [the strike].”

“The solidarity from organized labor was particularly phenomenal,” he continued. The striking UFCW members received significant amounts of financial aid, including a national strike fund set up by the AFL-CIO, so that everyone could continue paying their bills. The ILWU held “stop-work” meetings that shut down the ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach and held large, electrifying rallies and mass pickets at local grocery stores. The dockworkers, through the Friends of Labor coalition that unites various labor and community groups in Southern California, conducted an “adopt-a-store” program. The teachers’ union helped the public relations effort by taking out expensive radio advertisements. Informational pickets were held at stores in other regions of the country, particularly in Northern California. Most notably, 5,800 Teamsters refused to cross picket lines, shutting down the two picketed grocery distribution centers and other trucking operations. As Mike asserted, “It was so heartwarming to see a real labor *movement* again.”

Yet, this incredibly inspiring level of solidarity was severely undermined less than two weeks into the strike when UFCW leaders suddenly ordered an end to picketing of distribution centers under pressure from Teamster officials. A month later, just before Thanksgiving, those picket lines were resurrected and Teamster drivers again promised to refuse to cross lines at the distribution centers – this time at all ten. As Karl Swinehart, a member of the teachers’ union wrote, “With picket lines out front and no deliveries in back, management will be under increased pressure to back off their assault on their employees’ health care and their union.”⁴³ Harley Shaiken, a labor expert at the University of California, Berkeley, argued that the renewed commitment of the Teamsters had much broader implications. “In the midst of a knock-down, drag-out economic struggle, the cooperation between these two unions could breathe new life into organized labor and transform the way strikes are waged.”⁴⁴

Again, however, in another twist of events and strategy, the picket lines were pulled less than a month later.⁴⁵ As Ed explained, “We appreciated *any* contribution that the Teamsters could make, but paying strike benefits for their workers was just too costly [for the Teamsters]. They couldn’t go any longer. The key is to keep the customers out and eliminate demand. With no customers, the truckers aren’t delivering much anyway. They’re a bigger benefit to us on the inside – they can tell us which stores need picket lines and all that.” Teamsters, however, apparently at the request of their leadership, proceeded to turn the keys over to grocery managers who then drove the trucks through the picket lines. As Ed admitted, “Some [UFCW] members looked at all this entirely negatively and became disheartened.”

In the midst of all this vacillation, solidarity was further spoiled when UFCW officials, twenty days into the strike, decided to pull the picket lines from Kroger-owned Ralph’s stores, where 18,000 workers were still locked out.⁴⁶ According to leaders, this was a strategic move that served to thank customers by providing them with an option for shopping, in addition to pushing a wedge between Kroger and the other two companies – a tactic that proved irrelevant when their profit-sharing scheme was revealed.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Mike believed that “the addition of Ralph’s picketers to the lines at Von’s and Albertsons provided an added boost to morale.”

Just before Christmas, both sides returned to negotiations with the UFCW offering to accept up to \$350 million in health care concessions, but management refused and talks collapsed after one day. In response, union leaders continued to hail the slogan, “One day longer, one day stronger.” This cry did certainly have some merit as Albertsons announced around the same time that they had experienced a 51 percent drop in profits for the third quarter and sales at its Southern California stores were down \$132 million.⁴⁸ Similarly, Safeway announced that they had lost \$500 million in the fourth quarter of 2003, but remained firmly entrenched. Meanwhile, however, the UFCW also showed weakness as it cut medical coverage on January 1, 2004, and drastically reduced weekly strike pay, which was already at different levels depending on the local.⁴⁹ “We were rapidly running out of resources,” says Ed. “We needed to make them stretch... We encouraged our members to look for other part-time jobs and helped them in that process. We also were very careful to explain the decision to our picket captains beforehand... I think it always remained a positive situation.”

Striking workers were able to maintain morale through the New Year due to continued displays of overwhelming solidarity from organized labor, community groups, and customers, as well as large informational

pickets in the Bay Area. The ILWU held another “stop-work” rally after pledging \$4 million to the strike fund. A corporate campaign was also waged through a national boycott, press conferences on Wall Street and at Safeway CEO Burd’s house, and lobbying investors. “We had to leverage pressure in any arena we could,” said Mike. Yet, days after an inspiring mass rally called by the AFL-CIO, the UFCW sowed further confusion (even within the ranks of the AFL-CIO leadership) by suddenly and secretly proposing binding arbitration to settle the strike. The companies immediately rejected the offer but agreed to resume negotiations in mid-February.⁵⁰ Concurrently, a large UFCW local in Chicago refused to participate in publicity campaigns as it negotiated separate contracts with Safeway, weakening the union’s ability to carry out an industry-wide fight and highlighting internal disarray within the International.

In late-February, following two weeks of negotiations, the companies began making dramatic movement on health care and pensions, according to UFCW leaders. “Compromises started being worked out...It was a real turning point in the dispute,” Mike asserted. “They stayed intransigent on the two-tier issues, but we succeeded in protecting our benefits...We didn’t want to get killed over the two-tier – we figure we can fight that another day.” After four months and eighteen days on strike, workers voted on February 28 to accept a new three-year contract. Ray, an official in the Bay Area, admitted, “It wasn’t the best contract, but they had no choice...At least the membership was on board.”

Despite the fact that union leaders declared the resulting contract a partial victory,⁵¹ particularly given the conditions of a long, drawn-out strike, there were several lessons that they were taking from the struggle. First, officials said it was clearly evident that unions can never be prepared enough for looming contract battles. To this end, leaders argued that dues should be doubled earlier prior to an expected action so that sufficient financial reserves can be built and a larger strike fund can be maintained. Second, leaders said that the unions must more effectively exercise their strength and solidarity before they are “forced into the street,” primarily through organizing campaigns. However, details here were lacking as they only suggested working longer past the contract expiration and calling for boycotts. They believed that this would give the employers a “taste” of what was to come, particularly now that labor’s massive solidarity had been displayed in the Southern California campaign. Strikes, they argued, should be avoided at all costs as it “only hurts the entire movement.” Third, UFCW officials advocated working toward a national grocery contract. In this way, the UFCW

could increase its bargaining leverage. They admitted, however, that this had to be long-term objective that employers will fiercely combat. For now, the goal should be to “narrow the gap” between contract expirations.

Lastly, union leaders were very serious about starting a drive to organize Wal-Mart workers. So far, this effort has been mainly defined by building community coalitions that highlight Wal-Mart’s impact on the local economy in addition to lobbying for protective legislation. They recognize that organizing Wal-Mart workers must happen on a very large scale and are making the first steps toward that objective – primarily through education and legal reform, although the latter received much more rhetorical emphasis. They expressed hope that Wal-Mart’s board of directors would change course and work toward a partnership with organized labor while also realizing this was fairly unlikely.

The lessons learned from the Southern California grocery strikes, however, proved to be of immediate concern as contracts expired around the country within a year. In talking to Ray, an official in the Bay Area, after the Southern California struggle, but before their own contracts expired in September 2004, he commented on the particular lessons that would be used in the Bay Area contract campaign. He said that the main problem was that the UFCW is trying to fight national companies on a regional basis. “If workers in Southern California – the largest bargaining unit in the UFCW – could not beat back the grocery chains, then no other units could on their own either... We have to figure out ways to link up with other UFCW locals with expired contracts and spread the hurt. We really want a national contract,” he said. Ray considered the contracts in Seattle to be pivotal in this effort. “We need to wait and team up with Seattle,” he argued. “The companies want a strike so we should wait on it.”

Several months prior to their contract expiration, Ray said that they were getting the membership ready for an oncoming battle. He believed that through a boycott, the union could give the companies a sense of their commitment and solidarity. Indeed, in March 2004, nearly 700 rank and file members of eight Bay Area UFCW locals participated in a mass mobilization meeting and activist training session – yet it was organized largely by the ILWU. As a result of this meeting, the Bay Area Coalition – a group similar to the Friends of Labor coalition in Southern California that includes several seasoned labor organizers – was formed in order to “reverse rank and file apathy and negativity built up over decades of UFCW history as a ‘service union’ in ‘partnership’ with the employers and inspire the kind of union pride and solidarity necessary to ward off major contract

concessions,” wrote Marcia, a retired UFCW member and rank and file activist.⁵² This was not an initiative organized by the UFCW leadership.

In fact, the Seattle locals ended up accepting a concessionary contract just before the Bay Area contracts were set to expire. Then the Sacramento locals ratified a separate concessionary contract in early January and the Bay Area quickly followed suit in mid-January. Mike, from Southern California, reflecting on the Bay Area contract, said that they benefited from the Southern California struggle. “They kept their benefits, avoided a two-tier system, and even got some raises – all while maintaining labor peace.” This rosy picture, however, stands in stark contrast to the contract comparison that a local in Southern California posted on its website. According to that document, the contracts are virtually the same, excepting marginal wage increases in the Bay Area.⁵³ Strides were not even made toward linking up contract expiration dates.

These results may seem somewhat inevitable given the extreme pressure being applied by the grocery chains and the devastating defeat dealt to the Southern California contract battle. Yet, the leadership did not even follow through on the limited lessons that they took from that struggle. In fact, many rank and file workers believe that it was the UFCW leadership’s erratic conduct of the strike and continual vacillation that undermined the potential for a very different type of struggle. The comments – and even actions during the strike – of rank and file workers provides a very different take on the impact of the UFCW’s business union legacy and efforts to move toward social movement unionism.

UFCW Rank and File

For the rank and file grocery workers who have to live with the contract negotiated by the union leaders, the resolution of the strike was not even remotely positive. Rather, they overwhelmingly regarded the resulting contract as a defeat. As Caroline, a local shop steward, declared, “It was the same contract that the companies originally put out there! We struck because we couldn’t live with it and now we have to try and live with it...This used to be a good career for the uneducated, but not anymore. All I know is that this union needs a serious reality check.” Todd, a picket captain, frustratingly said:

It was about the benefits – for my wife, two kids, and me. They wanted to cut everything. They wanted to cut benefits, they wanted to cut pensions. And they did. We didn’t want more money, we just wanted to keep our bene-

fits...With the two-tier, there's a lot of turnover. There's a lot of new people with no experience...The benefits are out of reach, you can never make it – so promotions are out of the question and many quit.

As Sara, a locked out Ralph's worker, bluntly put it, "We were robbed...The union leadership has no idea what we went through, and for nothing!" Only a few months after the strike ended, most workers said they did not even want to think about, let alone discuss, the strike or the union.

Despite the deep anger and frustration that followed four and a half months on the line, every worker that was willing to talk expressed the immense excitement and solidarity that had been experienced in the early stages of the battle. As Todd stated, "I was overwhelmed with all the support we got on the picket line...That's what the labor movement needs more of – old-style solidarity." Rosa, who was both a shop steward and a picket captain, said, "The teachers were so helpful. They brought money and food and medicine. They were so good to us and we didn't expect that. It was like a miracle...Also, the churches came out and the dockworkers set up a strike fund and the Teamsters shut down the warehouses, which was key." In the first few weeks, according to almost all workers, there was a feeling that they were fighting for all working people and a determination to struggle through the end.

This empowering sense of strength, however, was soon undermined by the decision of UFCW and Teamster officials to pull the picket lines from distribution centers. "That was so confusing," remembered Rosa. "We should've stayed together. We would've been stronger and more powerful." As Todd recalled, "I talked to a driver and he said members of the Teamsters wanted to be out there supporting us, but the leadership put the breaks on." Indeed, grocery workers at one distribution center refused to obey the leadership's order and decided to maintain their picket line. According to *Labor Notes*, Teamsters told the workers that if they kept the line up, they wouldn't cross.⁵⁴ As Sara said, "Yeah, I heard about that. I agreed with them. Our feeling was that we never should have taken down any picket lines – stores, warehouses, anywhere...There's no goodwill with corporations. Those workers were showing our seriousness and determination."

Rank and file workers were also extremely angry that they were ordered to pull picket lines from Ralph's stores. Rosa, a picket captain at one of those stores, felt that this move was completely illogical. "It left the stores completely open, giving the scabs a free pass!" she declared. "Our respect with the customers was killed – when they didn't see pickets, they thought

we had become weaker. We had been so loud and had talked to the customers to explain the issues to them...Then there was nothing.” She said that she had heard that workers had set up “rogue” pickets at Ralph’s in San Diego, but that the union leaders forced them to shut down. Ralph’s workers were then sent to pickets at other stores. According to Rosa, this sowed divisions between rank and file strikers:

They [workers at other stores] wanted to know why Ralph’s was free. They thought the union didn’t want us picketing because we weren’t committed enough...But I talked to all my workers and we decided that we had to fight this together. We told the other picketers that we would get back to work faster if we didn’t fight each other – only if we fought the companies. People listened and agreed...The union wasn’t there so we had to do it ourselves. We organized our own committees to hold independent rallies and make roaming pickets to [go] where lines were weaker. That kind of solidarity and teamwork was crucial when we felt disheartened.⁵⁵

Indeed, more than three months into the strike, rank and file workers clearly remained determined to continue the struggle. In another inspiring example of militancy, workers from a local in West Los Angeles – not the one referred to by Rosa – organized a series of mass pickets. They regularly drew between 150 and 300 people picketing in front of different stores each week, virtually closing them down. As Robert, a rank and file member of that local, said at the time:

Our primary target is to become highly visible and the rallies have been important for this...For workers, it keeps up morale, gets them involved in the union, and we are able to give out information about what we are doing...We should have solved this a long time ago...We should have become more militant months ago...It’s time to start looking ahead, to start strengthening, recruiting, crossing national boundaries, maybe even using civil disobedience.⁵⁶

Ultimately, though, the last straw was the unions’ cutting of strike benefits and medical coverage. As Sara, also a strike captain, recalled, “I had already had a couple of people – single mom’s and stuff – cross the lines because they couldn’t afford it anymore. Then it just became a whole lot worse, but luckily we convinced folks to get other part-time jobs to fill in the gap. I thought about it too. All I knew was that I sure as hell wasn’t going to cross that line after all we had been through.” “I knew people who had to live in their cars after that and some people even committed suicide. There were a lot of hungry kids too...I mean, how did they expect us to

survive with that little?” Todd incredulously wondered. “I remember it – I was thinking right around then that the leadership was really going to have to come up with some grand strategy if we were going to win this thing –and then they said benefits were up? It was Christmas and New Years!...I remember thinking, man, what is going on here?”

When union officials announced that negotiations were going to resume and that compromises were being proposed, but did not keep the membership informed as to the nature of those proceedings, workers only felt increasingly disillusioned and powerless. Caroline disappointedly said, “We had no information on the contract before the vote – no discussion. At that point, I didn’t even care if it was fair, I just wanted to get it over with.” Yet, Todd discussed a petition that had received 200 signatures calling on leaders to resume pickets at Ralph’s, have more open communication, involve stewards in negotiations, and take action against scabs as part of the settlement.

Complaints that the union was not transparent or democratic enough were a theme that ran through the entire struggle. “When they pulled the pickets from Ralph’s,” Rosa explained,

I went to several officials and asked them who made this decision and why it had been made. They just said they didn’t know. Not only did they not have answers, but they didn’t want to be questioned either. It was like we just weren’t important...But when I challenged them, they had the nerve to say that I didn’t deserve to be in the union. They said they would call the cops if we kept picketing and then they sent me to a dangerous area.

In fact, according to Rosa, management hired gang members as scabs and sent them to stores in areas controlled by their rivals. She said many strikers were physically threatened by the scabs and that they fired weapons at the picket lines in some instances or followed workers home. In addition to not doing anything about these complaints, union officials sent Rosa and other dissenters to picket at stores that were being worked by ethnically rival gangs. As Rosa stated, “We are the union. They’re just representing us. We wanted to be [at Ralph’s stores], but they wouldn’t let us...It was so hard, just so hard. You can’t even imagine – we’ve been through much.”⁵⁷

Sara said, “For me it was disgusting to see everything that happened. Why didn’t they do things that might rile people up a little and try to get something done? Taking us off the line at Ralph’s should have never happened...Then there’s our cut in strike pay. There was also a lot of misinformation and they didn’t let us know what was going on.” All rank and file

workers that were available to talk even for a moment expressed deep feelings that the union was weak and that more action had been needed. As Todd said, “We should have at least talked about breaking the law... We should’ve done some civil disobedience.” “The union kept telling us, ‘One day longer, one day stronger,’” Caroline recalled in anger, “but we were not getting stronger, we were getting weaker. We were tired, we were frustrated, we were hungry, we were broke, we were sick... The union, instead of sending us all this paperwork saying how important the strike was, should have called a huge meeting to talk about it.” Sara said, “We acknowledge that we wouldn’t have had anything to fight for if it wasn’t for our union. But we felt alone out there. There should’ve been more open communication from the start.”

There was also much anger regarding the lack of preparation for the battle. Many said that there was too little money saved up, not nearly enough water available on the lines, and no educational campaigns. Most did not think the officials even knew what to expect – that they thought just striking would be enough. Yet as Joel Jordan commented in *New Labor Forum*, “The UFCW officialdom must have been only too aware of the power and resolve of the chains to cut labor costs. Along with every other international union, the UFCW has a research department. More important, before and throughout the Southern California strike, the chains proclaimed their determination to win significant concessions from the unions.”⁵⁸

Many workers believed that the lack of internal democracy and accountability meant that the union leadership themselves were handicapped in attempting to develop and implement a coherent strategy. As Rosa argued, “Not only were we in the dark, but the union was in the dark because they didn’t hear from us. That’s why we had to take action to let them know that we’re not complacent, we’re not idiots, we knew what was up, and we wanted something done about it.” Although workers said that many believed in retrospect that defeat was inevitable given the strength of the companies, many also agreed with Todd who said, “If the union was stronger, we could have gotten something better. They need to get rid of the leadership – [local President and national Vice President Ricardo] Icaza and his cronies.”

Everyone was confident that the union had to be reformed. As Caroline, the very bitter shop steward mentioned earlier, angrily asserted, “The union doesn’t represent our interests – they just don’t care. They’re their own business with narrow interests. The officials just want to get a salary

position...This union needs a reality check.” Indeed, all of the officials that discussed the strike for this study made over \$100,000 a year.⁵⁹ The same worker said that, following the strike, half the workers in her store met to talk about decertifying the union, but decided not to move forward with it, mainly because they knew they would be in an even worse spot if it were not for the union.

There were also more positive ideas regarding the way in which the union had to be transformed – particularly from the bottom-up – but this hope is reigned in by cynicism. As Rosa declared:

The leadership doesn't want us to have control, to know what's going on. They want to maintain their power and keep us wondering, keep us dependent. But we've been using the Internet to know more. Did you know that Icaza is a multi-millionaire? He earns more than [President George W.] Bush! He could've single-handedly paid our benefits when we were hungry...Questions started rising for workers when they pulled the lines from Ralph's and we didn't get any answers. We were disillusioned and we lost faith – this is extremely widespread. Very few people will do anything for the union anymore. Personally, I realized my initial naivete and have now been going to union meetings regularly, just to raise a little hell. Hopefully I can work with some others who want to do the same.

She hoped that rank and file workers could start raising awareness in the stores. Almost a year after the strikes, she said that there had been no membership meetings, that steward meetings had only started again a month earlier, that workers had no idea what was going on with legal battles, that they were promised money that they had yet to see, and that union officials never come by the workplaces anymore. Unfortunately, she said, most workers are extremely discouraged and feel powerless. She doesn't think they will honor union decisions in the future. In her eyes, the union has essentially been crushed. She believes that the UFCW's focus on organizing the unorganized will only divide the membership as the existing members feels as though they have already been left behind. “We can't organize the new if the old have nothing,” she said. “Union power is crucial, but only if it is unified and effective.” Still, Rosa is getting ready for the next contract expiration in 2007 by talking to workers about the potential of mass meetings and greater rank and file decision-making power, as well as doing research on health care and other issues in order to organize rank and file discussion groups.

As Sara, another militant, but more optimistic, strike captain and shop steward put it:

We feel like we've been kicked in the teeth. We truly feel we have been betrayed. We paid the price for the leadership's mistakes...But I know for myself that our struggle is not over. There is still much to do preparing for our next contract. We need to have more regular union meetings between the union and the rank and file. Also, we need to start a network of employees by way of the Internet. And our union officers shouldn't spend union dues on political campaigns or exorbitant salaries...Things need to change and only we can do it. History was made here and I would like to not have to repeat that. I can only hope that as people begin to see what happened with this strike and the effect it has had on others in the workforce, they fully understand our struggle – their coming struggle – and prepare to make difficult choices for change.

The sentiment that the grocery workers' struggle exemplified the potential that exists to revitalize the labor movement – but that it was consistently undermined by the leadership – was widespread. As Todd put it:

It had been a long time since all the unions got together and helped each other out. It might not have been enough, but it was a start. We need a union nation – workers need control...If it had gone well, a lot more places would be unionized. People would say, 'We want this too. We want to be able to fight and have our voice heard.' Instead – now – there's a lot of people out there that don't like unions, that think unions just take your money and make decisions for you, and this [strike] has furthered that.

Conclusion

This strike was a watershed for the labor movement. Union officials intent on avoiding a confrontation with management will point to this strike as an example of what will happen if workers dare to reject concessions. In fact, this was precisely the rhetoric used by UFCW leaders whose contracts expired in the year after the Southern California battle. As Marcia Thorndike, a retired Bay Area grocery worker wrote, "No [national contract] coordination occurred. Instead, UFCW locals across the country accepted concessions in contract after contract with hardly a fight, driven by the assumption that strikes can't win and that UFCW workers must accept concessions."⁶⁰ Yet, any strike strategy that is inconsistent and contradictory will typically lose. As rank and file workers showed, there was significant potential to militantly shut down the stores' operations with the backing of immense solidarity – at least more potential than witnessed in most labor struggles of the past two decades – but it was not utilized.

Rather, the union leadership actively sought to subvert rank and file militancy and mobilization so as to maintain its own power and position. This hesitancy to lead a fight when necessary is the norm – not the exception – for UFCW leaders. It is the long-standing legacy of the UFCW's business unionism, a legacy that union leaders are having difficulty overcoming in practice. Ultimately, the officials want to go no farther than forcing the grocery chains back into a partnership precisely when the companies are essentially declaring war. Maintaining that he had always been able to work out solutions with the companies in the past, Icaza himself admitted, "I felt that by having that relationship [of partnership]...we had passed the era of a need for strikes. I thought those days were over."⁶¹

The UFCW, with some of the highest-paid officers among AFL-CIO affiliates, is the epitome of a bureaucratized labor organization that is run from the top-down, primarily by powerful regional officials, creating a large, but factionalized union. With no direct election of International officers, an expensive patronage system has been fostered. According to a rank and file UFCW activist in Seattle, between 1992 and 1998, there were three different cases involving International officers embezzling a total of \$4 million in membership dues.⁶² This is also the same union that betrayed the 1985 Local P-9 strike at Hormel meatpacking in Austin, Minnesota⁶³ and allowed an eleven month strike by 400 meatpackers at a Tyson plant in Wisconsin die an agonizing death last year.

Instead of viewing a tragic defeat such as that in Southern California as a mandate to push forward with internal and strategic transformation in line with social movement union precepts, UFCW leaders are retreating back into a business union perspective that focuses on legal reform and concessionary bargaining. Despite their rhetoric, they demobilized the most outright solidarity in years, avoided truly disruptive tactics, and discouraged any meaningful participation by the rank and file. Leadership conduct of this struggle has ultimately served to reinforce common notions and practices of business unionism, producing a more passive and disinterested membership.

In fact, the union leadership of the ILWU, which played a pivotal role in the grocery strike, was very critical of their peers in the UFCW. As Joe, from Local B in the Bay Area, commented, "The UFCW leadership was not prepared for what was sure to be a fight. They failed to mobilize a rank and file that was committed to and serious about winning." Another official was even more harsh saying, "Something's got to be done about that union if they are going to try and take on Wal-Mart. It's run by career bureaucrats

and wealthy organizers...There's no democracy or rank and file empowerment. It's a textbook example of contemporary business unionism." Given those statements, let us now turn to the conduct of the ILWU, a traditionally strong and militant union, in a contract battle that forced it to take a stand against union busting led by the largest and most powerful corporations and government in the globalized economy.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union v. the Pacific Maritime Association

Background

The dockworkers union on the West Coast has been one of the most militant and powerful labor unions in the country for the past seventy years. Following mass strikes that rippled up and down the coast in 1934, they won recognition and control of the hiring hall, providing power on the job that was reinforced by "quickie" strikes. The union took a blow in 1960 with the Modernization and Mechanization Agreement that introduced new container technology on the waterfront, eliminating many union jobs. The union, however, maintained a voice in how technology was implemented and union jurisdiction over new jobs created by that technology. Meanwhile, the ILWU has always shown a strong commitment to struggles for social justice around the world, putting its famous slogan – "An injury to one is an injury to all" – into practice. More recently, these actions include "stop work" meetings and rallies in solidarity with the anti-WTO protests in 1999, anti-privatization strikes at ports around the world, arrested dockworkers on the East Coast, antiwar protests (most recently on March 19, 2005)⁶⁴, and, of course, the grocery workers' struggles. With high wages, jobs on the docks have long been the economic backbone of communities of color.⁶⁵

Over the past twenty years, as global trade has skyrocketed, however, dockworkers' unions have come under increasingly aggressive attacks by corporations and governments around the world. With the hiring of anti-union Joe Miniace to head up contract negotiations for the Pacific Maritime Association – the organization of huge multinational shipping and docking corporations – in 1996, it was clear that the ILWU was soon to be targeted in a concerted manner. Just four companies dominate about a quarter of container handling worldwide as they aim to secure control over the entire logistics process. This is crucial in the context of neoliberal glob-

alization's international production and supply chains where cargo ships have essentially become floating warehouses. As the *Journal of Commerce*, the shipping industry's trade publication, argued, "The battle lines of the future have been drawn. Competition will no longer be company vs. company. Instead, it will be supply chain vs. supply chain."⁶⁶

With the ILWU controlling \$300 billion worth of imports every year – equivalent to one-third of US annual economic output – it is vital to massive importing companies such as Wal-Mart and Toyota, which have banded together in the West Coast Waterfront Coalition (WCWC) in order to press their demand, that shipping work be "modernized" – meaning costs driven down and the process sped up.⁶⁷ As labor expert David Bacon wrote, "Over the coming two decades, the companies want to automate shipping far beyond the use of automated scanners and tracking devices. In their vision of the future, cranes and dockside machines will eventually be operated by remote control, perhaps by people miles away from the wharves."⁶⁸ Tim Shorrock, of the *Journal of Commerce*, told *Socialist Worker*, "Big companies around the world would like to break this union because it is one of the most powerful sections of the most globalized part of labor."⁶⁹

Preparations for these attacks began in December 2000 with a Clinton administration commissioned study on "modernizing" the ports. In the report, written by an industry advisory group – the Marine Transportation System National Advisory Council (MTSNAC) – under the guise of the Secretary of Transportation, PMA President Miniace spelled out his goal of breaking the dockworkers' power through introducing technology that would eliminate jobs, outsource clerical work to non-union facilities, and break the union's control over hiring. In addition to attempts to codify these transformations in labor agreements, much of these "reforms" have been proposed in Congressional legislation over the past several years and efforts have been made to put the ILWU under the jurisdiction of the anti-labor Railway Labor Act (RLA), which bans strikes for the unions it covers. These strategic multi-pronged assaults have gone hand in hand with Miniace's rise within the PMA, which was backed by Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) – one of the world's largest port terminal operators – and MTSNAC chair Chuck Raymond, who is also CEO of CSX Lines – a major freight company – and a PMA board member. The connections between government officials, anti-union retailers and importers, and gigantic shipping firms are too extensive to spell out fully here, but it is clear that they are unified in their efforts to assert as much control as possible over global trade and logistics planning, which means crushing the ILWU.⁷⁰

In this context, the PMA, backed by threats from the Bush Administration,⁷¹ proposed extremely harsh demands – particularly in relation to the history of previous negotiations with the ILWU – to 10,500 dockworkers in the weeks leading up to their contract’s July 2002 expiration. In addition to demanding wage freezes and cuts in health care and pension benefits, the PMA wanted to eliminate half of all clerk jobs by using computerized link-ups that would allow work – such as tracking container movement or assigning workers – to be contracted out to non-union operations in open-shop states like Utah or Texas. Using computers and telephone systems to distribute work groups to various port terminals would have effectively broken the union-controlled hiring hall, which would gut the power of the union. Management also wanted to break the master contract that allows all portworkers on the West Coast to bargain jointly.⁷²

Following the post-9/11 attacks on unions in the airline industry, which are already rendered powerless under the RLA, the ILWU was forced into a position of taking a stand for the entire labor movement against union-busting and pro-management labor laws. If the employers could successfully restructure the industry by enforcing outsourcing, anti-union labor laws, and government intervention on one of the most powerful and militant labor unions, then the future of organized labor would appear quite dismal. It was precisely the time for the ILWU to utilize the international solidarity that had been developed over decades and the power that dockworkers have within global supply chains. With the most powerful corporations and government in the world waging war on the docks, the ILWU would have to use its economic power to force its opponents into a retreat or be permanently weakened.

ILWU Leadership

Despite the fact that the PMA had been carefully laying the groundwork for these negotiations years in advance, Craig, a top local official in Los Angeles, admitted, “We initially went into these negotiations in the traditional way: elect a bargaining committee, prepare the members through education, raise a strike fund, and get in contact with our allies around the world... We were pretty unprepared for this fight now that I look at it.”

In typical fashion – although with much greater foresight and transparency than most unions – the ILWU elected delegates to form a bargaining committee as early as January 2002, six months before the contract expired. This committee would determine the ILWU’s contract demands.

According to Larry, an International officer, the committee decided to fight to maintain “the best health care coverage in the country,” seek gains in pension benefits, and implement a fair and just deal around technology. The introduction of new technology was obviously a crucial issue. As Larry put it, “The PMA has always sought to portray us as stuck in the Stone Age, unwilling to accept technological innovations.” Therefore, the union would not outrightly oppose new technology, but accept it only on three conditions: that all new work would be done by union members that were retrained, that workers would get a share of the wealth created by increased productivity, and that technology would not be used as an excuse for a speed-up. The union figured they understood the nature of dock work and the contract better than the PMA. Yet, the formulation of the specifics of this type of deal was apparently quite difficult as the PMA refused to expose the actual nature of the proposed technology, citing the need to maintain an edge over its competitors. In addition to developing demands, the negotiating committee also initiated raising a strike fund and assessing the potential needs of the rank and file. The committee, however, consciously sought to engage in a limited mobilization, citing the potential consequences of job actions.

With negotiations beginning fairly late, the union’s strategy was immediately thrown into crisis when the PMA refused to settle health care issues, which the PMA leadership knew, according to union leaders, would provoke a strike. Furthermore, in June, before the contract even expired, Tom Ridge, head of the newly formed Department of Homeland Security, was calling union officials and telling them that any job actions or disruption on the docks would be considered a national security issue and essentially banned, either under Taft-Hartley or through military strikebreakers. Likewise, the Department of Labor was pressuring for an easy settlement, asserting that if the ILWU did not comply, military troops could be used to work the docks and the RLA could be extended to cover the union. They also threatened to declare the ILWU’s coast-wide bargaining unit an illegally monopoly.⁷³

When the contract expired at the beginning of July, union leaders decided to extend it – the first time in the union’s history – due to the PMA’s intimidation tactics and fear of government intervention. As Craig put it, “We never expected the PMA to use the Bush Administration to get what it wanted...It totally caught us off guard.” Yet, when working under a contract, any job actions are illegal. Given that, the PMA was forcing speed-ups on the docks – due to a large influx of shipments by firms that

were preparing for possible disruptions – and accusing the workers of slowdowns when they did not comply with the PMA’s demands. Management argued that these “slowdowns” broke the contract and that they would lock the workers out, inviting Federal intervention with a Taft-Hartley injunction that would force dockworkers to return to work for eighty days without any right to conduct actions. As Larry commented, “We’d never had to operate in such a tough political atmosphere before...It was clear that the PMA’s strategy was to stall until the government intervened directly and [in order to create] the conditions upon which the PMA could unilaterally enforce the contract they wanted.” By August, no agreements had been reached and the PMA had very little incentive to negotiate.

Despite the fact that, with the contract extended, the union could not engage in job actions related to the negotiations, they did organize mass demonstrations at the ports, at which unions from around the country and the world declared their commitment to fighting with the dockworkers and taking a stand against corporate attacks. Still, union leaders were afraid that any job action would be taken as an excuse for a lockout, which would clear the way for the use of government troops as strikebreakers. As Joe, an official in Local B, put it, “We were potentially in the same position as the PATCO strikers in 1982 when the government just came in and crushed the strike.”

In the midst of this outright hostility from the corporations and their backers in Washington, the ILWU agreed to a press blackout with the PMA. Management, however, then used the WCWC, which was not technically involved in negotiations, as a public relations conduit. The WCWC proceeded to hammer the union in the press, accusing it of being opposed to modern technology, conducting slowdowns that hampered efficiency, being greedy overpaid workers, and willing to consider a strike that would devastate the national economy, which had just come out of a recession. It wasn’t until late July that the union members convened to discuss and assess their strategies to date. They voted to end the press blackout and go on a public relations blitz that would put forth the union’s position and publicize Bush’s threats.

Beginning in August, the ILWU used the press and mass rallies featuring AFL-CIO officials and politicians to spread support for the dockworkers’ struggle and shift public opinion. They argued that the government had to get out of the negotiations and stop siding with the employers so that the PMA would actually be forced to bargain. According to Larry, the AFL-CIO’s involvement was crucial. “They were looking for a good fight to

take part in and pledged to help in anyway necessary,” he said. “They ran the campaign exactly the way it should work. They asked and gave, they didn’t tell us what to do. Their resources were pivotal in providing communications support, research, organizing, and a corporate campaign strategy to split the WCWC.” This shift in tactics apparently compelled the PMA to negotiate fairly. “The tone at the table was completely different starting in mid-August,” Joe explained. “By early September, we had finally reached an agreement on health care.”

Still, new technology and union jurisdiction proved to be a major sticking point, preventing a general contract agreement. Although the union had been extending the contract day by day, in early September the union stopped renewing it, opening the door to preparations for job actions. “But we refused to engage in such actions,” said Joe, “because we wanted to show our commitment to a relationship based on responsibility.” Still, with the PMA refusing to negotiate and stepping up its accusations that any failure to comply with speed-ups should be regarded as slowdowns, tension on the docks was near a breaking point. According to union leaders, by late September, the speed-ups were getting out of control – five dockworkers had been killed on the job in 2002, up from a typical one or two⁷⁴ – so they declared a “work safely” campaign, which only further fueled the “slowdown” claims. With that justification, the PMA locked out the 10,500 dockworkers up and down the coast for thirty-six hours. When workers returned on September 29, 2002, they were looked out again – indefinitely.⁷⁵

After ten days of ILWU pickets outside the ports, all workers refusing to work, and management refusing to let them in, Bush intervened directly. According the ILWU officials, the employer lockout collapsed under its own weight as hundreds of millions of dollars worth of goods stood idle on the docks and the economy took a real hit. This exposed the contradictions in the PMA’s strategy: they wanted a lockout so that they could draw Taft-Hartley and blame the union for disruptions, but the union hadn’t actually done anything wrong. Initially, despite his aggressive stance, Bush proposed extending the previous contract for another thirty days. As union leaders put it, Bush was afraid of invoking a Taft-Hartley injunction just before the November 2002 midterm elections. Union officials wanted to hold off on accepting this proposal, but they say they were running out of resources and were afraid of Taft-Hartley so they agreed to the contract renewal. Yet, the PMA – showing up to the mediation session with armed guards – refused to accept the proposal, instead blaming the dockworkers for the “infrastructure meltdown” in which tons of cargo were just piling

up in the ports. "The ILWU is playing games with the U.S. economy, and inflicting economic pain and hardship on scores of companies and their employees," said Miniace. "Given the extreme urgency of keeping the goods moving through our ports, I cannot fathom why the union would deliberately take these slowdown actions."⁷⁶ With this, the PMA created another impasse and pressured Bush to pull out Taft-Hartley – the first time it had been used in twenty-four years, and thirty-one years after its last use against the ILWU. This forced the union back to work for an eighty-day "cooling off period" in which no job actions were allowed and the PMA unilaterally set the conditions of work. As Larry argued, "They wanted eighty days of free shots at the union."

In fact, under Taft-Hartley, any violation of the injunction is punishable in a Federal court by massive fines, which, if not paid, can result in criminal charges and imprisonment of union leaders. In a clear effort to bust the union, the PMA declared that they would be keeping careful records of productivity and continued to try to provoke the union during the eighty-day period in order to gather evidence of illegal slowdowns that could generate lawsuits against the ILWU. While they cited the massive amount of cargo that remained on the docks as evidence of union intransigence, this pile up was in fact created by the lock out, which the ILWU likewise monitored very carefully.⁷⁷ Indeed, a Federal judge eventually decided that there was no evidence of slowdowns, but not before he made numerous threats that heavy fines could be leveled and only after a huge financial drain on union expenses as they battled these accusations in the courts.

With Bush pressuring both sides to reach a settlement, a Federal mediator was brought in to oversee negotiations. New technology and job security remained the major obstacle. "The mediator eventually forced an agreement on technology," Larry said. "The plan was not specific at all, but at least it provided a framework for implementation [of technology]. Under it, new technology would be introduced through an arbitration process and we would get pension increases in return." According to Craig, "As public opinion gradually turned against the PMA and WCWC, they became divided and increasingly arrogant. They knew they had made a huge mistake by clogging up their own shipping operations... On the other hand, we remained united and committed to responsibility. We beat them at their own game by refusing to play it."

By the beginning of November, three weeks after Taft-Hartley had been invoked, the ILWU leadership announced that a tentative settlement had been reached, but it was not ratified until a month later. Union leaders

were very happy with the contract. They stressed the fact that it maintained some of the best health benefits in the country, which is indeed quite unique, and provided for a fifty percent increase in pensions. They even achieved some wage increases, although these were still below the rate of inflation. Technology, of course, was the crucial issue, however. On this issue, they succeeded in negotiating a framework in which the specifics of introducing new technology would be dealt with through an arbitration system. Yet, the union did agree to cut six hundred clerk jobs – the best paid in the union. The PMA was also able to strengthen the “steady” system in which some workers only work for certain port companies, undermining the power of the union hiring hall. They also raised the wages for the already well-paid steadies, which could sow future divisions within the union. This was further exacerbated by increased wage differentials dependent on skill level.

The union did succeed in winning continued jurisdiction over jobs that would change immediately due to new technology implemented with this contract, but an arbitrator will determine jurisdiction regarding technology that is introduced in the future.⁷⁸ In a major blow, the ILWU accepted one of the longest contracts in their history – six years.⁷⁹ Overall, union officials claimed to have won most of their demands, but recognize that there will be future struggles over technology. As Larry concluded, “Given wheat we’ve been through – we almost lost our union, but we ended up earning a great contract...Sure it isn’t perfect, but I would call it a victory and I think the membership is satisfied with it.” Joe even went so far as to say, “We wore the PMA out. They ended up with a contract that was forced on them.”

Despite the fact that union leaders unanimously hailed the resulting contract a success, they admit that there are several lessons that must be taken from this struggle. First, they say they were slow to readjust to management’s increasingly aggressive stance, which caught them off guard. Some said they wanted a six-year contract so that they would have time to regroup and prepare for what is sure to be another fierce battle in 2008, but they also stressed the need to exercise more caution the next time around. Many believed the key would be establishing a strong public relations apparatus before negotiations begin. Second, given the direct involvement of the government in port-related issues, they are preparing a renewed focus on political lobbying and legal reform. They are going to work to repeal a port security bill that allows the use of government troops to work the docks in the case of a “national emergency” and includes invasive background

checks on all dockworkers. Union officials will also be pushing legislation that restricts outsourcing. Another primary goal was defeating Bush in the 2004 elections because “although the Democrats aren’t necessarily a help, they’re not nearly as harmful as the Republicans...Of course, they’re both parties controlled by capital, but we’ve got to be practical.” They also want to reform labor laws that hinder organizing and job actions. Third, ILWU leaders were going to wage an educational campaign for the rank and file that would train the many younger workers in the ILWU’s rich history and how to enforce the contract.

Lastly, Craig spoke of a more determined campaign to “cover our flanks.” This included building greater international support, working more closely with the AFL-CIO, developing a united front of all transportation workers, and more effectively mobilizing the membership. “The ILWU has always been at the forefront of the labor movement and we’ve got to keep it that way,” he declared. “The labor movement as a whole needs to go more on the offense because you can’t score on defense.”

The leadership of the ILWU did in fact take a more aggressive stance – relative to other contemporary unions – in terms of adopting social movement tactics. In particular, they have a long tradition of building strong solidarity – an element that seems to have been downplayed by officials. In addition, they developed a public relations and corporate campaign that sought to pressure the government and corporations. Yet despite the ILWU leadership’s steps toward social movement unionism and its broadly radical rhetoric of a perpetual battle between capital and labor, what is possibly more remarkable than the conduct of the PMA, the WCWC, and the Bush administration, is the fact that the union did not really *do* anything – for instance, job actions or a strike – in the face of these incredible threats and actions. Indeed, officials hardly mentioned the possibility of job actions by dockworkers, presumably out of fear of government intervention. Although most rank and file workers deferred to the story laid out by the leadership, several workers – particularly older ones – were extremely angry that the union did not attempt to counter the management’s aggressiveness or the inevitability of government intervention. In fact, they felt that the union leadership has been following an increasingly conservative approach at exactly the moment when the ILWU’s militant tradition can best provide a model for the rest of the labor movement, which is facing similarly hostile threats from management and the government. According to some in the rank and file, the leadership undermined the potential power that the dockworkers have, given their crucial position in the global economy, and

that the result was not only an unnecessary concessionary contract, but also the ceding of ground to a heightened corporate offensive.

ILWU Rank and File

Indeed, most rank and file dockworkers expressed gratitude that they survived with their union intact and that their standard of living had not been worsened, particularly in the face of such aggressive corporate and state intervention – often directly referencing the Southern California grocery strike in their comments. Yet, some rank and file activists – of which there are certainly more than in the UFCW – believed that the ILWU had sacrificed some of its most important and long-standing principles in this high-stakes fight. Rather than view the resulting contract as a relative victory, rank and file activists said that the PMA achieved most of their demands. “If you decide to say that health care, pensions, and wages were the primary issue, then, yeah, we won, even though there was a sort of two-tier negotiated,” Carl, a long-time militant in the ILWU, said with disgust.

But that’s just straight up bread-and-butter business unionism. The problem is that the real issue was technology – no – even that was just a cover for the real issues, which were job security and union jurisdiction – power on the waterfront. On that front, we lost in the short-term and, in the long-term, gave the balance of power to the bosses...We lost over six hundred jobs and new technology will be implemented through an arbitration process – and the corporations and government showed what kind of pressure they will put in order to get their deal. In the future, the door has been opened for the PMA to get everything it wanted this time around.

As Tony, from the Bay Area, commented, “The PMA is going to get all the profits while our wages aren’t even going to keep up with inflation. We used to load two hundred tons in eight hours. Now we can do that in forty minutes. Believe me, I appreciate not killing my back anymore, but that’s the kind of profits they’re making.” Fred, from Los Angeles, said, “It’s a contract that’s made to divide and weaken the union. It’s a six-year contract. There’s no open review on the technology. No open review on the wages...We don’t even have control over how money is disbursed. It looks like the impact could be devastating. It’s made to weaken the union step by step.”

All of these activists argued that the primary problem was the fact that the contract was determined under Taft-Hartley. As Ron, a crane operator, said,

We didn't negotiate the contract. It was forced on the union, basically. The employers knew, early in the negotiations, if it came down to a strike or a lock-out, they would get Taft-Hartley invoked. That was their plan from the outset. I don't think anybody would deny that. They succeeded in doing that and that was their way of getting the government to intervene in the contract negotiations and help them unilaterally enforce their key demands.

Tony concurred, angrily commenting, "Taft-Hartley is known as the 'slave labor act' to even the most conservative union heads. I like to call it 'Shaft-Hartley.' It was like negotiating with a gun to our heads. We were painted into a corner of fear... We never should have accepted those conditions." "The ratification of this contract by such an exaggerated majority⁸⁰ showed the level of fear and panic created by government intervention and the national security hysteria of the 'war on terrorism.' Our union leadership was affected by this and cajoled the members into voting yes," Carl argued.

In fact, most rank and file activists admitted that they had not expected this contract battle to involve such high stakes. They said that the indicators were there and that it was clear it would be a tough fight, particularly with managers paying such close attention to productivity on the job, but that nine months of negotiations were not expected. "The problem was that our leadership, which must have known about changing management strategies, viewed the indicators in isolation – the connections were not made," Tony said. "This, I think, was due to reliance on an old model of relations. The impact of 9/11 was not anticipated with its new 'national security' justifications. The International hadn't connected the war at home with the war abroad... They thought it was just politics, not economics." Likewise, Ron argued that, "with the port security bills, they were treating the docks like airports. Ridge's threats were akin to [former-U.S. President Harry] Truman calling [former-ILWU President Harry] Bridges during the McCarthy-era negotiations. The objective was to set the tone for those negotiations in the favor of management."

Still, despite the lack of immediate preparation, workers argued that the employers' objective became clear early on in the negotiations and that, due to the broad and deep levels of solidarity that had been developed, the union could have quickly shifted to counter management's attacks. "There was a growing sense of frustration among ILWU members that the PMA was stonewalling negotiations [in the weeks before the contract expired]," Carl described. "But the threats led to a 'play it safe' strategy on the part of

the union, which focused more on winning the support of Democrats...But the way to counter [those threats] is not to stick your head in the sand. Capitulation only invites more attacks by the employers. The way to counter a threat to trade union rights is to exercise trade union rights." As Ron asserted, "Solidarity is what we do best and we had a lot of it throughout the lockout and negotiations. I mean I'm talking about solidarity in practice, not just showing up at rallies and talking about it. These folks were ready to stop working if we stopped working." All of these activists discussed their "stop work" actions over the past decades with much pride. "Thanks to our commitment to international solidarity, we had pledges of secondary strikes and boycotts from dockworkers in Liverpool, England, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Australia, and South Africa because we did the same for them when they came under attack," Tony continued. "With all that, we definitely could have forced these multinational companies to back down."

Likewise, as rank and file activist Jack Mulcahy wrote in *Labor Notes*, during the lockout, the PMA tried to force workers from other unions, such as the International Association of Machinists (IAM), to do the work of longshore workers, but they refused to do so when ILWU members set up pickets and told them what was going on. Truckers and train workers, who are essential in moving shipments to and from the docks, also refused to work. Dockworkers in Charleston, South Carolina, who had been defended by the ILWU after being arrested during pickets several years ago, also declared that they would not unload ships that had come from the West Coast or were supposed to go there. Workers from a variety of different unions, including the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU), attended mass rallies throughout the contract battle.⁸¹

Yet, activists argued that external solidarity was not enough in a high-stakes battle such as this. "The only way to actualize this solidarity in practice," said Carl in anger, "was to take action ourselves. With all of that built up, it was time to take the handcuffs and muzzles off – it was time to start fighting back...For longshoremen, it's important to counter the verbal attack, but it's even more important to exercise our power on the docks." Indeed, all of the activists mentioned that fact that in 1999, when contract negotiations broke down, waterfront workers agreed to continue working without a contract, but used "work-to-rule" tactics to "tie the ports in knots." With these organized slowdowns and "work safely" campaigns, the PMA was brought to its knees in a matter of days. "I know the leadership

was scared that any job actions would be used as an excuse for a lockout, which would clear the way for the use of government troops as strikebreakers or the invoking of Taft-Hartley,” said Fred, “but that happened anyway – even with the leadership bending over backwards to show that they were not going to take action.”

As Tony asserted with frustration, “[ILWU officials] kept renewing the contract in order to prove that they were willing to negotiate in good faith, but the PMA just kept stalling and saying that we were the ones not negotiating. The PMA wouldn’t take ‘yes’ for an answer. They were clearly going to keep pushing until we stood up to them...How long can you take that before you start exerting your own strength?” As Fred recalled:

By the end of July, a month after the contract *should* have expired, we were all real frustrated. We were getting slammed in the media, Wal-Mart [through the WCWC] was accusing *us* of being greedy, and the government was saying we were unpatriotic. We were totally united and ready to take action, but instead the leadership was playing on their terms – trying to avoid a fight, saying that the ILWU were the ones that really cared about America’s security – which was a real insult to our international allies – and refusing to take a strike vote.

In the midst of all this, International President James Spinoza announced that the ILWU was willing to make a compromise that would sacrifice up to 1,500 clerk jobs for the representation of workers hired due to new technology in return, a fact that union leaders failed to mention in discussion.⁸² “That was a clear concession,” Carl argued angrily.

The ILWU had traditionally said that we’re not going to give up our jurisdiction, and that was certainly a step back from that position. We had caucus meetings at the end of July to discuss the issues and I decided to go in with a plan...First, we needed to take a strike authorization vote. Second, we needed to lift this self-imposed gag rule and get information out to the rank and file. I mean, who was saying we would offer concessions? Third, we needed to stop renewing the contract so that the rank and file could take action. We were facing a potential PATCO situation and our lack of action was only emboldening Bush and the bosses.

However, at those caucuses, Carl – an elected delegate – was apparently presented with charges by union officials for conducting independent interviews and writing an article for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in which he blasted the PMA and called for international solidarity to stop government intervention. “I beat the charges because I had the overwhelming support

of my local and other workers,” Carl explained, “but it was a most egregious assault for a union that prides itself on its militant and democratic traditions. Without an open discussion of what’s at stake and what tactics can win, the kind of organizing that needed to happen could never take place.”⁸³

As Fred condemned:

The leadership was so concerned about government intervention, but we hadn’t even given the government a reason to intervene. It was pretty clear that the PMA was going to manufacture a reason no matter what and we had already implemented a ‘cooling-off period’ on ourselves...The leadership just kept trying to bring back the ‘old system’ through PR and relying on the AFL-CIO.

“A big problem was that it wasn’t like the PMA was just stalling – they were trying to preemptively force their demands on us,” Tony said.

[At my local], in early September, we discovered that non-ILWU members were doing our work so we held an immediate work stoppage and won our demands in twenty minutes. Then, they tried to force us to work overtime to finish unloading a ship, which was cheaper for them than calling in another crew, so we called the union office, but they only gave mixed signals, saying we had a right to refuse the work but that we should still do it...I think it was this kind of thing that forced the leadership to finally stop renewing the contract, but they didn’t mention our actions because they didn’t want it to spread.

Likewise, Carl said,

In September, we published the first issue of *Maritime Worker Monitor*, a rank and file newsletter that criticized [the leadership’s strategy]...It also addressed the speed-ups that the employers were enforcing and how to fight them by doing a ‘work safely’ campaign, which was later endorsed by the leadership. This was a big issue since five people had been killed since March and nine to eleven killed in the course of the three-year agreement. We weren’t able to take these kinds of economic actions until we stopped renewing that contract...I heard about small actions happening up and down the coast...The leadership should have had a plan for job action to challenge the PMA, but there was none because the ILWU tops were paralyzed.

As mentioned earlier, the PMA used these “slowdowns” as an excuse to lock the workers out. This fraudulence infuriated the workers. “It felt like we had been assaulted,” Fred recalled in anger. “We were doing a good job with the rush of cargo that was coming in...We were making lots of money

for them and then we were on the street...People were real angry about it. It's changed the relationships forever."

Following the lockout and invocation of Taft-Hartley, rank and file activists were furious that the leadership would agree to negotiate under those terms – with a “gun to the head.” “The last time Taft-Hartley was pulled on us [in 1971],” Fred argued, “we ‘cooled off’ for eighty days, regrouped, and then walked out again as soon as the injunction expired – and we won. The last time Taft-Hartley was used [against striking coal miners in 1978], the workers refused to obey it, saying ‘Taft can mine it, Hartley can haul it, and [then-U.S. President Jimmy] Carter can shove it.’ Why couldn’t we do that this time?” Carl agreed, asserting, “The ILWU has never run from a fight in the past. We’ve managed to come out of them intact. We should have taken the same approach as our history has shown us.”

All of these activists concluded that it would be up to the rank and file to reform the union from the bottom up in order to actualize the potential power that dockworkers have. “The leadership’s job is to negotiate with the employers so they have a different reality,” said Ron. “The rank and file has to deal with the impact of those agreements...I think we have to change the actions of the leadership through taking hold of the formally democratic procedures and making rank and file motions.” Indeed, activists were proud to have passed antiwar resolutions in their locals, to have played a major role in U.S. Labor Against the War, and to have initiated the Million Worker March, which was an independent rank and file effort to “organize and mobilize the self-activity of all workers, unionized or not, around a broad political effort to push forward a broad working class agenda.” As Fred confidently put it, “Leadership isn’t about what position you hold...Leaders have to *lead*. It’s up to us to show that we can make it happen.”

There were varying degrees of optimism regarding the possibility of leading such an independent fight with some saying that as a left-leaning union the ILWU created the space for such rank and file initiative and others believing that while this was just rhetoric, it was rhetoric that could be turned into action. “The key,” asserted Tony, “is going to be organizing whatever rank and file potential there is so that we can retake democracy in this union, enforce transparency, and mobilize the strength that we have.” Regardless, all of them argued that, in the context of the ILWU, the stakes are extremely high. As Carl put it:

This is class struggle. The PMA and Bush were testing the waters to determine labor’s resolve to defend itself. The issues here are the survival of the long-

shore union and even the very survival of the American trade union movement...It seems like there is a hunger in the labor movement for some leadership to be out front. The ILWU has traditionally taken that role...Those of us rank and filers would like to continue that leadership role.

Conclusion

Through using their immense economic power on the docks, the ILWU could have been an inspiration to union workers facing increasingly aggressive demands for concessions while showing the vast majority of American workers that aren't unionized that it is possible to organize and fight back. In taking on a traditionally militant union, multinational corporations and President Bush were sending a clear message to the rest of organized labor. Indeed, it was probably the most significant government attack on labor since PATCO, and the inclusion of the ILWU under the jurisdiction of the RLA is still a very real possibility. The use of Taft-Hartley was an opportunity for labor to not only expose the Bush administration's pro-business policies, but also launch a campaign against restrictive, anti-union labor laws that undermine unions in the workplace and put up enormous obstacles in the way of organizing new workers.

Instead, the union leadership was reluctant to engage in a fight that could be framed as a struggle for all American workers. Bush, the PMA, and the WCWC took a gamble in boldly confronting the ILWU, but the union backed down in the face of such an assault, failing to pull out all its cards. To be clear, the ILWU has and did utilize some of the most widely discussed tactics of social movement unionism more effectively than the majority of labor unions – namely, building local and international solidarity, strategic preparation in advance of negotiations, public relations and corporate campaigns, and a larger coast-wide bargaining unit. Indeed, they are also consistent in using these tactics, including creative disruptions, in solidarity with other struggles. Yet, these tactics were not enough on their own – and union officialdom was unwilling to develop or implement a strategy that could meet the challenge. As Tony commented, “We’ve been involved in a lot of social protest, supporting other workers in the past, but now it’s more like lip-service.” Without the militant mobilization of rank and file power on the job, let alone adequate democratic practices to even debate those issues out, the ILWU was rendered relatively impotent in the face of increasing aggression on the part of Corporate American and the Federal government, which were set on taking as much as they could get away with.

Rather, the economic impact of the lockout ironically displayed the tremendous power that the dockworkers have, as business was negatively affected from East Asia to the East Coast. The only way to prevent multinational corporations intent on destroying that power would have been to use it. Whereas, the leadership of the ILWU consistently focused its attention on the scale of intimidation, threats, and outright assault that the union was forced to face, this single-minded focus blinded them to the larger context in which they should have and could have held their ground and even pushed forward. The attacks on the ILWU show that employers will keep pushing for more and more concessions until one or another group of workers draws the line. Avoiding such a battle is not an option and only further undermines the possibilities for labor movement revitalization. As Carl concluded, “The present ILWU leadership has departed from our union’s principled legacy. Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem like they know how to use labor to battle the employers. Instead of orienting to a business strategy, we should restore the slogan, ‘An injury to one is an injury to all.’ That, I think, is the only way we can ever get out of this mess.”

Conclusion: Overcoming Obstacles

Since September 11 and an economic recession in 2001, Corporate America has heightened its decades-long attacks on organized labor in a very systematic manner.⁸⁴ It has sought to use the longstanding justifications of an increasingly competitive globalized economy – and the pressure of Wal-Mart’s low-road race to the bottom – in order to extract even greater concessions from an already embattled workforce. Indeed, by confronting the UFCW and ILWU, which both represent workers in two of the few remaining – and most economically important – private-sector union strongholds, in incredibly high-stake battles for both sides, Corporate America has significantly amplified the crisis facing the entire labor movement and the urgent need for the revitalization of that movement.

Certainly, the UFCW and ILWU represent very different traditions in the broad spectrum of organized labor in the U.S., but in both cases, the unions failed to develop and implement coherent strategies that could adequately challenge contemporary corporate power. The leadership of both unions, in the face of perhaps overwhelmingly persistent assaults, chose to retreat into the traditional business union framework of partnership with the employers, eventually agreeing to sacrifice significant concessions for the supposed survival of the unions and employers. This decision was made

at precisely the moment when corporate belligerence is making a mockery of any notion or possibility of resumed partnership.

Rather than more boldly experimenting with innovative strategies and tactics related to social movement unionism, union leaders were hesitant to significantly transform the core business union norms of labor relations.⁸⁵ Still, in the cases of both the UFCW and ILWU, leaders were clearly not operating solely by an old servicing model, but were forced to take some kind of more radical stance. Union leaders did in fact utilize some of the most popular and widespread strategies of social movement unionism, at least as far as they are associated with contract campaigns rather than new organizing. Essentially, this involved a two-pronged, inside-outside strategy that aimed to bring the pressure of a movement to bear. On the one hand, they waged legal battles and political lobbying. This was reinforced, on the other hand, by building solidarity with other labor unions and community coalitions, which exercised their power through rallies, boycotts, and petitions focused strategically in order to maximize public pressure around issues of social justice. Indeed, both sets of union leaders vowed to strengthen the resources allocated to developing that strategy, particularly the inside aspect. Although varying forms of this strategic regimen have in fact proved to be successful over the past ten years, in the context of the high-stakes, large-scale battles discussed above, they were shown to be inadequate in pointing an effective way forward.

Instead of focusing, however, on combinations of explanatory factors that, when supposedly used to varying degrees, can lead to success, it is more useful and pertinent, as Lopez indicates, to focus on the obstacles to, and processes through which, longstanding legacies of business unionism can be overcome by organized labor.⁸⁶ As mentioned earlier, he identifies three primary obstacles to this shift: confronting the sheer power of multinational corporations, reversing traditional rank and file expectations or perceptions of roles in order to facilitate mobilization, and internal union transformation.

For both Southern California grocery workers and West Coast dockworkers, the power of the corporations – and the government, in the case of the ILWU – that they had to face off against seemed insurmountable. Union leaders certainly focused the bulk of their attention on the immense capabilities – financial, economic, legal, and political – of their opponents. In Lopez's case study, organized labor overcame this obstacle by turning the rabid anti-unionism and aggression of the employers around. The unions were able to successfully use what was outright union busting in

order to frame the struggle as one of social justice for all workers and their rights. Certainly the UFCW and ILWU attempted to similarly frame their struggles. The grocery workers were able to win massive solidarity and support based on the fact that they were struggling for decent health care, which so many Americans lack, and against the competitive pressure of Wal-Mart. Likewise, the dockworkers were struggling for the basic right to a union in the face of the leading multinational firms, anti-union labor laws, and an unabashedly pro-businesses government. Indeed, the framing of the struggles as ones for broader social issues facilitated the broad solidarity that was displayed in both cases.⁸⁷ Ultimately, these cases reconfirm the ambiguities – rather than outright omnipotence – of corporate power. As Lopez writes, “[It] raises the possibility that the ideologically extreme anti-unionism of so much of American capital may represent an important *inflexibility*, a rigidity that creative social movement unionism can not only exploit but influence.”⁸⁸

The successful framing of the struggles and resulting ability to garner significant solidarity, however, must be led forward and reinforced by rank and file mobilization on the job. Likewise, any job actions must be at the core of a broader, more comprehensive strategy that includes successful framing and developing layers of solidarity. The types of job action utilized must also not be limited merely to strikes, although this is a primary weapon of labor.⁸⁹ In the cases looked at by Lopez, frequent organized and even spontaneous confrontations with management on the job – including small protests, petitions, and work-to-rule actions – as well as limited strikes were fundamental not only to putting real pressure on the employers, but also in giving rank and file workers a lived sense of collective power and confidence. Whereas in Lopez’s cases union organizers actively encouraged this dynamic, with the UFCW and ILWU, the leaderships vacillated and ultimately discouraged it actively, possibly leading to the defeats suffered. UFCW officials consistently undermined the grocery workers’ struggle by removing picket lines and cutting strike benefits, which served to demobilize rank and file activity. Similarly, rank and file dockworkers were extremely restricted in their actions as the leadership continued to renew the old contract, only ending it and endorsing work-to-rule actions under pressure from the workers. Ultimately, potential power on the job went unused.

By underutilizing rank and file power and activity, UFCW and ILWU leaders buttressed a primary obstacle in the shift to a social movement union: rank and file disillusionment and passivity. According to Lopez,

rank and file mobilization is crucial not only in terms of its direct role in shifting the tone of negotiations or simply empowering the workers, but also as a means to transform the expectations of the rank and file in practice. Rather than remaining passive and reliant on an old business union framework, the rank and file of the unions he analyzes has been able to realize and carry out the concrete shift to a social movement union. Workers have learned through experience how to organize themselves, exert their power, and lead in struggle. “The success of grassroots organizing tactics,” writes Lopez, “is rooted in their very ability to overcome workers’ existing experiences and images of business unionism.”⁹⁰ Yet, in the cases discussed here, the actions of union officials actually reinforced these traditional perceptions and roles. The actions and words of rank and file activists in both cases, however, offer insight into the potential for real self-activity, as they were the ones engaging in the necessary organizing at a grassroots level.

Indeed, Lopez’s argument recognizes the significant role of leadership ambivalence and internal union hierarchies as an obstacle to this potential empowerment of the rank and file. Even in his cases, in which union officials were far more open to progressive innovations, the leadership expressed vacillation and the desire to transform as little as possible while still being capable of winning.⁹¹ Ultimately, the lack of serious commitment to worker mobilization on the part of union leadership, and its unwillingness to break from past operating models obviously prohibits overcoming entrenched legacies of business unionism in practice. If social movement union transformation relies on mobilizing and empowering rank and file workers in order to alter their lived experience of unionism, then the union leadership must be willing to foster those dynamics. Yet, in the cases of the UFCW and ILWU, not only did the leaderships only consent to rank and file activity once that position had been forced on them, they also did their best to actively discourage and cover up such independent mobilization. Likewise, the extreme lack of real democratic processes within the unions – the UFCW did not even have the formal mechanisms of the ILWU in place – prevented an open debate regarding strategies and tactics from taking place. Often, union leaders seem to be more concerned with maintaining their own power and control, than most effectively leading their members in a determined struggle to win good contracts.

In discussing the potential for and means by which the labor movement can be revitalized, then, the resulting “elephant in the room” is the role and nature of existing union leadership.⁹² Due to the fact that voices of rank

and file workers are seldom considered in discussions of transformation from business unionism to social movement unionism, often it is the relatively progressive rhetoric of union leaders taken for its word that is cited as evidence of the potential shift occurring within the movement, or at least sections of the movement. Likewise, again, as Lopez criticizes, most academics and activists focus primarily on explanatory factors for success or lack thereof, which obscures the actual roles of actors or groups of actors within the movement in practice.⁹³ Rather, through analyzing obstacles that stand in the path of concrete struggles and the ways in which various sets of actors attempt to overcome them – according to the actors themselves – the different processes of thought and action become visible, showing marked differences between certain groups. Here in both cases, it is clear that a core of rank and file activists display the greatest commitment to implementing a social movement union framework in practice, while union leaders remain hesitant, and even opposed in some instances, to doing so. In fact, the impact of business unionism on union leaders seems to be its most difficult legacy to overcome.

As soon as the American labor movement began showing the first signs of institutionalization in the postwar period – when it moved into traditional business unionism – writers were discussing the process of bureaucratization and encroaching conservatism that was taking hold among union leaders. This led to the top-down, servicing method that focused on working within legal and institutional channels while undermining the inspiring social movement legacy of organized labor's upsurge in the 1930s.⁹⁴ This process is further exacerbated by leaders that are increasingly distanced from the day-to-day realities of the workers they represent and actually associate more often with the employers. Indeed, in an extremely influential study on the inherent bureaucratization of social movement organizations once they have been formalized, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward argue that this process occurs due to the fact that formal organization produces leaders that are vulnerable to cooptation and increasingly concerned with organizational maintenance rather than disruption or contention.⁹⁵ In reference to this early shift in organized labor, they argue:

What had happened, quite simply, was that the organizations born out of the workers' protests had become over time less and less dependent on workers, and more and more dependent on the regular relations established with management. This movement was, in part, a natural result of the tendency toward oligarchy in formal organizations.⁹⁶

Consequently, these authors tend to fetishize grassroots spontaneity.

Yet, some form of organization is clearly crucial. Without unions, workers would have nothing to defend and no means to do so. Likewise, rank and file activists could not spread their ideas and actions to wider layers of workers unless they organized. Still, very few scholars have studied the ways in which formalized social movement organizations might possibly reverse this tendency toward conservatism. Most recently, Kim Voss and Rachel Sherman examined local unions that were supposedly committed to shifting toward social movement unionism, seeking to determine the process through which unions that had been used to operating along the lines of business unionism were able to reorient to a new framework. They conclude that three factors have led to radical transformations in which union leaders have significantly altered their goals and tactics: political crisis within the local union, an influx of outside organizers that had experience in other social movements, and centralized pressure to reform from the international union.⁹⁷

In the cases studied here, however, these factors do not seem to be adequate. First, internal political crises are only significant if leadership turnover is possible or likely. Despite a conservative, top-down approach, the ILWU president was reelected without opposition following the recent contract battle due, in large part, to a lack of substantive internal democracy. The UFCW lacks even the formal democratic mechanisms to overthrow disastrously inept leadership. Furthermore, such crises only become transformative when they are in fact perceived to be crises, which depends on interpretation. As mentioned above, for example, most dockworkers do not believe there is a political crisis in their union because they have not been able to hear an alternative viewpoint to that of the leadership. Second, outside organizers must be brought in by the existing union leadership. If that leadership does not feel the need to do so, it is unlikely to happen, which is presumably why no ILWU or UFCW leaders expressed an interest in bringing in outside activist organizers. Third, the leadership of the International must be even more committed to radical reform if they are to effectively facilitate innovation. This was not the case in either the ILWU or UFCW, both of which have an even more conservative International leadership than at the local level.⁹⁸ Indeed, not only are Voss' and Sherman's findings essentially explanatory factors of success that seem unlikely to become widespread in the movement, but they advocate a top-down, undemocratic approach that would serve to strengthen the centralized control of union leadership at the expense of rank and file input.⁹⁹ The cases

studied here, in fact, show that it is this rank and file sentiment for radical union transformation that offers the most hope for renewal.

Overcoming the serious legacies of business unionism, particularly within the existing union leadership, is a task that runs much deeper than any top-down or circumstantial factors. Rather, surmounting this obstacle requires a fundamental shift in general perspectives on labor relations in the context of larger economic structures – a shift that must reject business unionism down to the fundamental assumptions upon which it is based. These assumptions must be viewed in terms of the social context in and social processes through which business unionism arose: institutionalization of a previously militant social movement.

Although there was, at the very least, a material basis for that standardization and bureaucratization in the postwar boom period – with organized labor being guaranteed a seat at the table where high wages and benefits for its membership could be negotiated in return for agreements not to disrupt the actual work process – that system of a “social contract” based on labor-management partnership has been rendered obsolete by the crisis of the 1970s and the subsequent employer offensive waged against labor. As Gregory Mantsios notes, despite the fact that organized labor is clearly departing from its past practices in many ways and attempting to shift toward social movement union strategies, it largely remains wedded to certain old, fundamental assumptions.¹⁰⁰ As he argues:

In fact, it could be argued that the heightened level of activity and sharper, more visible rhetoric mask an ideological foundation that remains fundamentally unchanged. At its core there persists a deep belief in the ability of the U.S. economy and the U.S. socio-economic system to provide a fair and just distribution of resources...It is a faith in the socio-economic order that has defined and limited organized labor's objectives...The effect of this ideology is to emphasize the common interests of employers and employees.¹⁰¹

According to labor leaders, then, corporations chose to pursue their short-term profits at the expense of the common good when faced with the new global economic order.

Not only does this ideological framework romanticize postwar labor, but it also ignores the relatively permanent reality – meaning that the global economy has undergone a fundamental transition and the past will not return – of corporate intent to compete through slashing labor costs. Wal-Mart and other corporations are not being “mismanaged” – they are following the isomorphic dictates of the market, and they are being unanimously

praised by the business establishment for doing so. Corporations, motivated by real structural imperatives, exist in order to return and *maximize* a long-term profit. This must now be achieved in the context of a highly competitive and saturated global economy in which capital is far more mobile and barriers to foreign investment are greatly reduced. These are precisely the reasons that the PMA, WCWC, and leading grocery chains, despite already earning tremendous profits, were determined to squeeze out as much as was feasible – meaning as much as they could get away with.

With the current balance of power between capital and labor, any notion of partnership or shared interest only leads to more wealth distributed to capital and away from labor – greater inequality. “It is in this context,” writes Mantsios,

that Corporate America declared open class war, engaging in anti-union campaigns...and reversing the hard won reforms of the past...The interests of capital and labor are clearly opposed, and clinging to the faith that the structure of the U.S. economy is fundamentally just is self-defeating. We need to acknowledge the fundamental changes in labor’s circumstances and reject the logic of partnership with Corporate America.¹⁰²

It should be clear, then, that corporations, with government backing, will continue to force high-stake battles on organized labor until the latter is completely crushed or finally mounts a determined stand against these attacks. The Wal-Mart, low-road model will only be reversed when organized labor gains the necessary power to do so. All of these dynamics have been heightened and intensified in the aftermath of September 11.¹⁰³ If the problem is class-based, then a class-based solution is needed.¹⁰⁴

The examples of the ILWU’s and UFCW’s recent contract campaigns show that a small core of rank and file activists understand the nature of these contemporary battles and what it might take to win them. Indeed, they believe that the only way to win is to exhaust every strategy and tactic possible, particularly the militant use of labor’s collective power in the workplace, and to never avoid confrontations that prove inevitable. Moreover, the fact that a small number of dedicated activists were able to convince wider layers of workers – albeit still small numbers in these cases – to independently organize and mobilize in the course of struggle points to the most promising potential for labor movement revitalization. Surely there will be passive, cynical, and even reactionary workers that must be won over, but that must happen in any case if the movement is going to be reinvigorated. Even the UFCW shop steward who wanted to decertify the

union – and never wanted to be a steward in the first place – was clearly looking for an alternative to the continued defeats and concessions.

As Fantasia explains, only a few confident and militant workers can, when organized together, provide grassroots leadership that generates in practice the strategies and tactics necessary to build an effective struggle in the face of extreme power, whether of corporations, the government, or even union officialdom. The demands of a particular conflict necessitate the creation of new social arrangements and new ideas. The cultures of solidarity – the lived sense that workers have common interests and collective power – that arise as a result, Fantasia believes, represent a real class-consciousness developing concretely in struggle.¹⁰⁵ As Farrell Dobbs, a rank and file Teamster activist during the 1934 Minneapolis general strike, wrote:

Wiseacres of the day spoke pontifically about the ‘passivity’ of the working class, never understanding that the seeming docility of the workers at a given time is a relative thing. If workers are more or less holding their own daily life and expecting that they can get ahead slowly, they won’t tend to radicalize. Things are quite different when they are losing ground and the future looks precarious to them. Then a change begins to occur in their attitude, which is not always immediately apparent. The tinder of discontent begins to pile up. Any spark can light it, and once lit, the fire can spread rapidly.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, if a group of workers take a stand, other workers can see in practice their own potential to do the same – “to rely on and cultivate mutual solidarity to win the decisive battles.”¹⁰⁷ Not only was this the manner in which today’s unions were formed during the explosive 1930s,¹⁰⁸ but it also seems to be the primary way in which workers today can reinvigorate their movement from the bottom up.¹⁰⁹

Increased rank and file mobilization and militancy, however, will quickly run up against the internal union power structure. Union leaders are very hesitant to cede the social power that they have so actively cultivated. Yet, the position of union officials ultimately relies on the support of their rank and file members. Mobilized workers can not only stop corporate aggression, but can force internal union reform at a grassroots level by exercising their collective power and retaking hold of democratic mechanisms in order to hold their representatives accountable. This would open a dialectic of mobilization and democracy as workers become aware of the power structures that stand in opposition to their collective solidarity.¹¹⁰ With workers independently organized and mobilized, union democracy becomes a central question that must be resolved. With greater room to

debate out the appropriate strategies and tactics in the course of struggle, there is an opportunity not only to motivate wider layers of workers, but even the union leadership itself. Future research would benefit from investigating the possibilities and difficulties in rank and file self-organization and the processes through which real internal union democracy is achieved. Only then will organized labor be capable of reversing its decline and emerging as a powerful social movement. This is no doubt a seemingly insurmountable process, but overcoming such obstacles is what has defined social movements throughout history.

Right now, American workers and organized labor cannot afford to lose much more. Existing union leaders have shown that they will continue to approach high-stakes labor battles with caution and vacillation, leading to defeat. A few rank and file activists, on the other hand, have displayed their willingness and ability to fight to the end and win broader layers of workers to doing the same. In the process, they have actualized, even if only temporarily, what are fundamental aspects of social movement unionism and labor movement revitalization, but have yet to be widely implemented or examined: militant rank and file empowerment and internal grassroots democracy.

In more fully developing these dynamics, rank and file workers can potentially reshape organized labor as a genuine social movement that represents the interests of all workers against the unjust economic imperatives of Wal-Mart and other multinational corporations bent on accumulating greater amounts of wealth and power. As Fantasia and Voss argue, “A fortified labor movement, reconstituted along the lines of the social movement unionism that we see struggling to emerge in various forms, would make an enormous social difference. It would essentially represent the sole institutional counterweight to the American neoliberal juggernaut *within American society itself*.”¹¹¹ Despite significant obstacles, the enormous potential is evident – it must be realized.

NOTES

1. See Stephan Goetz and Hema Swaminathan, “Wal-Mart and County Poverty,” October 18, 2004. Available at <http://cecd.aers.psu.edu/pubs/povertyresearchwm.pdf>. Arindrajit Dube and Ken Jacobs, “Hidden Cost of Wal-Mart Jobs,” August 2, 2004. Available at <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/lowwage/walmart.pdf>. This latter study compares the average wage of Wal-Mart “associates” and unionized grocery workers in the Bay Area: \$9.40 to \$15.31 – 39 percent less. Likewise, Wal-Mart workers are half as likely to have health benefits.

2. Featherstone, *Selling Women Short*.
3. Bob Ortega, *In Sam We Trust: The Untold Story of Sam Walton and Wal-Mart, the World's Most Powerful Retailer* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), P. xviii.
4. Stanley Holmes and Wendy Zelner, "The Costco Way: Higher Wages Means Higher Profits, But Try Telling Wall Street," *Business Week*, April 12, 2004.
5. Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), P. 29.
6. "Union Members in 2004," United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 27, 2005. Available at <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/news.release/union2.txt>.
7. Fordism is taken to be a regime of surplus accumulation that centered on mass production through high productivity and mass consumption through high wages. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
8. Quoted in Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 65-65.
9. Michael D. Yates, *Naming the System: Inequality and Work in the Global Economy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003).
10. Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy* (New York: Verso, 1997).
11. Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
12. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 33.
13. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 64, 126.
14. Prolonged economic growth during the 1990s, following a few short booms in the 1980s, signifies this restoration of corporate profitability and competitiveness. Still, whether or not the material basis upon which that has occurred is stable is still an open question. Regardless, Corporate America has regained its wealth and can afford to give some back to labor if it is effectively pressured to do so.
15. Steven Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt: An Inside Study of the American Labor Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), P. 7.
16. The concept of social movement unionism was first used to describe a new type of union movement that had emerged in South Africa, Brazil, and South Korea beginning in the 1970s. It was later applied to the potential for renewal in the American labor movement and popularized by Sweeney. See Gay W. Seidman, *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' Movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Many attribute the American introduction of social movement unionism to 1960s activists who entered the labor movement. Lowell Turner and Richard W. Hurd, "Building Social Movement Unionism: The Transformation of the American Labor Movement," in *Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century*, edited by Lowell Turner et al. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), P. 9-26.
17. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 127. It seems as though no specific tactics are effective unless used in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

18. Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*. For a longer list of social movement union strategies, see Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 127-130.

19. Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich, "It Takes More Than House Calls: Organizing to Win with a Comprehensive Union-Building Strategy," in *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies*, edited by Kate Bronfenbrenner et al. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), P. 18-36. Steve Early, "Membership Based Organizing," in *A New Labor Movement for a New Century*, edited by George Mantsios (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998), P. 82-103.

20. Roger Waldinger et al., "Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles," in Bronfenbrenner, et al., *Organizing to Win*, P. 102-120. Larry Cohen and Steve Early, "Defending Workers' Rights in the Global Economy: The CWA Experience," in *Which Direction for Organized Labor? Essays on Organizing, Outreach, and Internal Transformations*, edited by Bruce Nissen (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), P. 143-164.

21. Paul Johnston, *Success While Others Fail: Social Movement Unionism and the Public Workplace* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994). Ruth Needleman, "Building Relationships for the Long Haul: Unions and Community Organizing Groups Working Together to Organize Low-Wage Workers," in Bronfenbrenner et al., *Organizing to Win*, P. 71-86. Dan Clawson, *The Next Upsurge: Labor and the New Social Movements* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

22. Johnston, *Success While Others Fail*. Clawson, *The Next Upsurge*.

23. Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, "A 'New Labor Movement' in the Shell of the Old?" in Mantsios, *A New Labor Movement*, P. 24-43.

24. Kim Voss and Rachel Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement," *American Journal of Sociology* 106 No. 2 (2000): 303-349.

25. Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*, P. 12-13.

26. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 127.

27. Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich, "The Evolution of Strategic and Coordinated Bargaining Campaigns in the 1990s: The Steelworkers' Experience," in Turner et al., *Rekindling the Movement*, P. 211-237, quote on P. 211-212.

28. For a sample of the interview questions, see Appendix A. Slightly different questions were asked of the different groups and the interviews were open-ended, but they all followed along similar lines. Due to the fact that all subjects were either public officials or individuals within a much larger group and all are identified by pseudonyms in this study, only an informational sheet outlining the conditions of confidentiality was required by the Human Subjects Committee. For a sample of the informational sheet, see Appendix B.

29. "Leaders" were determined to be those that held paid full-time positions in the union. All were Local officials except one from the ILWU International.

30. The grocery manager's perspective was primarily incorporated into the background section on the grocery strike.

31. It was possible, however, to gain a more critical perspective from *Labor Notes* and *Socialist Worker*, which provide the most consistent and comprehensive analyses of labor issues from a rank and file standpoint. The writers and audience for both are rank and file workers and independent labor activists.

32. For instance Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*, and Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*.

33. Of course, there was some variation in attitude between different rank and file activists. This variance was primarily a reflection of conflicts and tensions with the opposing line put forth by union officials. On the whole, however, there was a clear consensus among the activists in opposition to the union line. That consensus is depicted in this study.

34. Even still, wage rates in the retail grocery industry were 36.5 percent higher than the average retail industry wage in 1982. By 1998, however, that figure had fallen to 3.5 percent higher. "UFCW Bargaining in Retail Food Industry A Disaster," Research-Education-Advocacy-People (REAP). Available at [http://www.reap-inc.org/Briefing_Papers/Bargain\(BP7\).htm](http://www.reap-inc.org/Briefing_Papers/Bargain(BP7).htm).

35. Joel Jordan, "With Such Victories, Who Needs Defeats?" *New Labor Forum* 13 (Fall 2004): P. 47-55.

36. Kelly Candaele and Peter Dreier, "A Watershed Strike," *Nation*, October 23, 2003.

37. James F. Peltz, "Wall Street is Chains' Not-So-Silent Partner," *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 2003.

38. Ibid.

39. Jordan, "With Such Victories, Who Needs Defeats?"

40. Chris Kotalik, "Battling the Race to the Bottom," *Labor Notes*, November 2003.

41. Quoted in N. Renuka Uthappa, "Unions Pull Pickets at Ralph's," *Labor Notes*, December 2003.

42. Kotalik, "Battling the Race to the Bottom."

43. Karl Swinehart, "Grocery Strike Heats Up," *Socialist Worker*, December 5, 2003.

44. Harley Shaiken, "Grocery Strike Animates Unions," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 2003.

45. Nancy Cleeland, "Missteps Hurt Union in Supermarket Strike," *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 2004.

46. This despite the fact that UFCW workers were still on strike against Kroger in West Virginia. Uthappa, "Unions Pull Pickets at Ralph's."

47. James F. Peltz, "Grocers' Mutual Aid Pact Detailed," *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 2005.

48. N. Renuka Uthappa, "California Grocery Strikers Hold Firm," *Labor Notes*, January 2004.

49. N. Renuka Uthappa, "Supermarket War of Attrition Drags into Fourth Month," *Labor Notes*, February 2004.

50. Alison McKenna, "Southern California Grocery Strike," *Socialist Worker*, February 13, 2004.

51. Shockingly, *Labor Notes* reported that, "Former UFCW President Douglas Dority (who resigned shortly after the settlement) called the strike "the most successful strike in history." N. Reunka Uthappa, "Two-Tiered Grocery Contract Leaves Anger, Questions," *Labor Notes*, April 2004.

52. Marcia Thorndike, "United Food and Commercial Workers," *Socialist Worker*, March 26, 2004. See also Vincent Bourbourg, "Bay Area Grocery Locals Must Overcome Hurdles to Avoid Southern California's Concessions," *Labor Notes*, May 2004.

53. "Northern and Southern California 2004-2005 Food Contract Settlement Comparison." Available at http://www.ufcw770.org/ComparisonSoCal_NoCal.pdf.

54. Uthappa, "Super Market War of Attrition Drags into Fourth Month."

55. Rosa said this with much pride.

56. Alison McKenna, "Striking L.A. Grocery Worker Speaks Out," *Socialist Worker*, February 20, 2004.

57. Rosa was audibly crying when she recounted these events over the phone.

58. Jordan, "With Such Victories, Who Needs Defeats?" P. 49.

59. "A Review of UFCW Salaries," Research-Education-Advocacy People (REAP). Available at [http://www.reapinc.org/Briefing_Papers/Is_Corruption_A_Problem\(BP5\).htm](http://www.reapinc.org/Briefing_Papers/Is_Corruption_A_Problem(BP5).htm).

60. Marcia Thorndike, "Bay Area Grocery Workers," *Socialist Worker*, February 4, 2005.

61. Quoted in Jordan, "With Such Victories, Who Needs Defeats?" P. 50.

62. Darrin Hoop, "Why the UFCW Won't Fight," *Socialist Worker*, June 11, 2004.

63. After six months on strike in which the 1,500 workers fended off assaults from the company, National Guard, the courts, and the media, the International – irked by the radical local – revoked approval of the strike, cut strike benefits, and ordered the workers to return to work and end the boycott. Workers refused and continued to strike. The union said it would not protect other Hormel workers that struck in solidarity. Five months later, the local was placed under trusteeship and strikebreakers permanently replaced the workers.

64. Jack Heyman, "Defending Labor's Right to Protest the War," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 16, 2005.

65. David Bacon and Freda Coodin, "Bush Threatens West Coast Dockers' Right to Strike," *Labor Notes*, September 2002.

66. Paul Lundberg, "Let Shippers Set the Agenda," *Journal of Commerce*, March 4, 2002.

67. This association was formed in late 2000 as importers and retailers became more concerned with logistics operations, particularly in preparation for the negotiations with the ILWU in 2002. Its main purpose is to press its demands in the gov-

ernment and with the PMA. R.G. Edmonson, "On the Hot Seat," *Journal of Commerce*, October 21, 2002.

68. David Bacon, "Dockworkers' Contract Postpones Crucial Jurisdiction Questions," *Labor Notes*, February 2003.

69. Lee Sustar and Snehal Shingavi, "The Battle for the Docks," *Socialist Worker*, October 11, 2002.

70. Lee Sustar, "Power on the Docks: Use it or Lose it," *International Socialist Review* 27 (November-December 2002): P. 7-9. Despite repeated requests, management representatives refused to discuss their strategies and intentions, as mentioned earlier.

71. Bacon and Coodin, "Bush Threatens West Coast Dockers' Right to Strike." "White House Will Move on Port Strike," *Journal of Commerce*, August 6, 2002.

72. Bacon and Coodin, "Bush Threatens West Coast Dockers' Right to Strike." Freda Coodin, "Employers Have Long-Term Plan to Weaken Union's Control of Ports," *Labor Notes*, November 2002.

73. Bacon and Coodin, "Bush Threatens West Coast Dockers' Right to Strike."

74. Bacon, "Dockworkers' Contract Postpones Crucial Jurisdiction Questions."

75. Jack Mulcahy, "Report from the Waterfront," *Labor Notes*, November 2002.

76. Quoted in Bacon, "Dockworkers' Contract Postpones Crucial Jurisdiction Questions."

77. Mulcahy, "Report from the Waterfront."

78. Bacon, "Dockworkers' Contract Postpones Crucial Jurisdiction Questions."

79. Freda Coodin, "Longshore Union Calls it a Win," *Labor Notes*, January 2003.

80. It was ratified by 90 percent of voting longshore workers.

81. Mulcahy, "Report from the Waterfront."

82. Coodin, "Employers Have Long-Term Plan to Weaken Union's Control of Ports."

83. A few mentioned the fact that in the spring of 2002, soon before the contract expired, the International President unsuccessfully attempted to expel a reform slate that had been elected in a Bay Area local. A year later, following contract ratification, the same president was re-elected without opposition despite his conservative, top-down leadership style.

84. Michael D. Yates, "Economic Crisis, the Working Class, and Organized Labor," in *What's Class Got to Do With It?*, ed. Michael Zweig (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), P. 125-139.

85. George Becker, a top leader in the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), warned against precisely this tendency in arguing for what it will take to win against union-busting and renew the labor movement: "Perseverance, constant escalation of the battle, and a dogged determination not to quit no matter how bleak the circumstances may look. The labor movement must be constructive, creative, and ever willing to change, but it must never, never forget how to fight." Quoted in Bronfenbrenner and Juravich, "Strategic and Coordinated Bargaining Campaigns," P. 237.

86. Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*.

87. This is a primary argument made more generally in Clawson, *The Next Upsurge*.

88. Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*, P. 209, emphasis in the original.

89. There could be an argument that strikes are no longer an effective weapon – because they don't always, or even sometimes, win. Yet, these cases indicate that had the struggles been waged more comprehensively and in a determined manner, a strike could have succeeded. The success of a strike depends, in large part, on real concrete solidarity (truckers refusing to cross picket lines at all, for instance) – for which the potential was there in these cases.

90. *Ibid*, P. 92.

91. *Ibid*, P. 129-130.

92. Bruce Nissen, "Concluding Thoughts: Internal Transformation?" in *Unionis in a Globalized Environment: Changing Borders, Occupational Boundaries, and Social Roles*, edited by Bruce Nissen (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), P. 264-273. Michael D. Yates, "Workers Looking for Jobs, Unions Looking for Members," *Monthly Review* 55, No. 11 (April 2004): P. 36-48.

93. Lopez, *Reorganizing the Rustbelt*, P. 218

94. Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, *The Local Union* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1953). Sidney Lens, *The Crisis of American Labor* (New York: Sycamore Press, 1959). Paul E. Sultan, *The Disenchanted Unionist* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

95. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

96. *Ibid*, P. 159. Their analysis was largely based on Robert Michels' 1915 study in which he labeled this process the "iron law of oligarchy." See Kim Voss and Rachel Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy."

97. *Ibid*.

98. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the ILWU International President attempted to place a local under trusteeship in order to throw out a democratically elected reform slate and the UFCW International put Local P-9 under trusteeship in order to crush a rebellious strike.

99. An interesting development in the labor movement was the 2003 formation of the New Unity Partnership (NUP) – an informal coalition of several of the more progressive International unions led by SEIU and UNITE-HERE. The NUP was essentially a leadership reform caucus within the AFL-CIO that sought to force a more general shift to social movement unionism through union mergers, refigured jurisdiction, the promotion of International intervention, and required budgetary allocations for new organizing. Essentially, this would be an application of the top-down reforms advocated by Voss and Sherman. Late last year, the NUP hinted that it may try to unseat Sweeney in the June 2005 AFL-CIO elections or even split from the AFL-CIO if these reforms were not implemented. The NUP, however, was dis-

banded at the very beginning of this year following bitter opposition from more conservative AFL-CIO Internationals. Subsequently, a compromise was formulated that tempered the initial demands significantly. This accommodation to more conservative elements of the movement further undermines the possibility of effective top-down change. Similarly, UNITE, which represents textile workers, and HERE, the hotel and restaurant employees' union, merged in mid-2004 in order to actualize the same methods of reform. The impact has yet to be determined. Harold Meyerson, "Time's Up for the NUP," *American Prospect*, January 18, 2005. Lee Sustar, "Behind the HERE UNITE Union Merger," *Socialist Worker*, July 23, 2004. Also see the *Labor Notes* discussion of the NUP and other such reform efforts. Available at <http://www.labornotes.org/nupdiscussion>.

100. Mantsios, "What Does Labor Stand For?" in Mantsios, *A New Labor Movement*, P. 44-64.

101. *Ibid*, P. 52-53.

102. *Ibid*, P. 56. For similar arguments regarding the structural changes in the global and American economy as well as their impact on labor's position within that, see the following books: Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (New York: Verso, 1988). Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*. Michael D. Yates, *Naming the System*.

103. Michael D. Yates, "Economic Crisis, the Working Class, and Organized Labor," in *What's Class Got to Do With It? American Society in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Michael Zweig (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), P. 125-139.

104. William K. Tabb, "Neoliberalism and Anticorporate Globalization as Class Struggle," in Zweig, *What's Class Got to Do With It?*, P. 63-76.

105. Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*.

106. Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972) P 49.

107. Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*, P. 20.

108. Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*. Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (Boston: South End Press, 1997). Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion*. For the ILWU in particular, see Maurice Zeitlin, ed., *Insurgent Workers: Studies of Industrial Unionism* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations Publications, 1987) and David Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

109. Moody, *An Injury to All*, P. 303-330. Yates, *Naming the System*, P. 234-238.

110. Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*. Elaine Bernard, "Creating Democratic Communities in the Workplace," in Mantsios, *A New Labor Movement*, P. 4-15. Bill Fletcher, Jr., "Whose Democracy? Organized Labor and Member Control," in Mantsios, *A New Labor Movement*, P. 16-23.

111. Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work*, P. 168, emphasis in the original.

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Labor Markets in Transition: Gender, Unemployment, and Labor Force Participation in Poland and Hungary*

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Abstract: We ask whether gender predicts labor market outcomes during the transition from a planned to a market economy in Central Europe. Comparing Hungary and Poland, we theorize that the timing and extent of institutional change, including welfare state reform and privatization, will have different short and long-term effects on labor market participation of men and women. We predict that because certain key reforms were delayed in Hungary, women were able to establish themselves in the new economy. The rapid decline of socialist welfare state policies and early privatization of the service sector in Poland, however, denied women—particularly mothers—similar opportunities. Our findings support both hypotheses: Women in Hungary are doing relatively well, whereas married women and mothers in Poland are facing increasingly limited opportunities.

Introduction

The countries of East Central Europe are now more than a decade into a transition from a socialist redistributive system to a market-oriented economy. With a few notable exceptions (Fodor 1997; 1998; Gal and Kligman 2000a; 2000b; Haney 1997; 2002), and despite a vast literature dedicated to the dramatic political and economic transformations, most studies have not addressed how men and women have been differently affected by these changes. To date, most research concerning issues of gender and inequality

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in transition has been theoretical or based largely on single country qualitative studies or anecdotal evidence.¹ In addition, a general tendency throughout the transition literature has been to over-generalize the impacts of transitional processes across countries, with minimal attention to the precise mechanisms and institutions of change within countries. Our analysis aims to correct the current lack of comparative research on the social consequences of changes in the political, economic, and social spheres in post-state socialist societies.

The goal of this paper is to analyze whether labor force participation rates and unemployment patterns changed during the transition from socialism to capitalism in Hungary and Poland. Specific theories, predictions, and propositions of gender and labor market participation in transitional labor markets have often been inconsistent, speculative, or contradictory. By analyzing over-time as well as cross-country survey data, we are in an ideal position to test and adjudicate among competing claims. Specifically, we will test two sets of competing predictions, which make predictions about gender-specific labor market outcomes as a result of transition. While one set of hypotheses predict that women will have significant advantages in the labor market as a result of market reform, the other set predicts that women will be the losers of reform in terms of employment opportunities.

Analysis of unemployment and labor force participation is an ideal way to examine emerging gender inequalities in the restructuring labor markets in East Central Europe. Occupational segregation by sex, sex-based discrimination, and a sex-specific wage gap are all well documented features of advanced capitalist labor markets (Blau 1998; England 1992; Reskin and Roos 1990). Similarly, gender differences in unemployment rates have been offered as evidence of women's overall disadvantage in capitalist labor markets (Corcoran 1999). However, socialism ostensibly aimed at emancipating women "from above" through women-friendly labor market policies and full equality for women in economic and political spheres.² Indeed, women entered the socialist labor force *en masse*, and the state enabled their participation through seemingly child-, family-, and woman-friendly social policies, including subsidized childcare, generous maternity and family leave allowances, job protection, and guaranteed healthcare. As a result, women enjoyed substantial occupational and educational opportunities under state socialism.

Understanding gendered patterns of unemployment and labor force participation will uncover potential needs in a wide-range of social policy areas, from poverty alleviation to labor market regulation, in transitional

societies. In addition, if women in post-socialist countries enjoy advantages in transitional labor markets, identifying the mechanisms by which they attain and maintain those advantages will shed light on the durability of gender inequality in labor markets in advanced capitalist countries.

Why Hungary and Poland?

Because the market and market forces are proposed as *the* major mechanisms driving the predicted outcomes in the various predictions of labor market participation and gender inequality, our analysis attempts to hold the level of market development constant.³ To this end, we will compare employment trends in two countries, Poland and Hungary, which followed similar paths of reform and achieved advanced levels of market development to date, relative to other countries in East Central Europe.⁴

Holding the level of market development constant allows us to look at the trajectory of market transition and its effects on employment patterns. Thus, we will analyze unemployment trends at three time points, which cover the entire span of transition to the present. Our three time points include 1988, one year before the transition began, 1993, a period of the transition when many of the most damaging effects of reform, such as rapid economic contraction, rising unemployment, and increasing levels of poverty, were first being realized⁵, and 2000, more than a decade after the transition began, when markets were relatively well-developed and economic growth, albeit limited, was occurring in both countries.

Theories of gender and unemployment during transition

Revalued Resources

Fodor's "revalued resources" thesis (1997; 1998) builds upon "job segregation theory," which posits that most jobs are segregated by sex and that such segregation is nearly universally bad for women, producing a gender gap in pay and the concentration of women in the least compensated and prestigious occupations. Fodor amends this theory to argue that whereas job segregation was undoubtedly a major disadvantage to women in terms of pay, prestige, and advancement under socialism, during the transition, women's concentration in certain types of jobs, particularly those in the service sector, may actually protect them from unemployment. While sectors such as heavy industry and agriculture have been the hardest hit by

market reforms, the service sector has experienced unparalleled growth during the post-state socialist period. Hence, occupational segregation may actually become a valuable resource for women in maintaining employment during the period of economic restructuring. By virtue of their disproportionate concentration in jobs undergoing growth, women may be protected from job loss.

In addition to the “revaluation” of service occupations, Fodor points to the revaluation of academic credentials during transition as a major potential resource for protecting women’s position in the labor market. Under socialism, women were more likely to pursue academic credentials, while men were more likely to pursue vocational training.⁶ Not surprisingly, these educational differences corresponded to occupational differences, where women were concentrated in administrative or professional occupations while men were concentrated in manual jobs in industry and agriculture. Thus, although women were more academically educated than men, their educational credentials did not allow them to secure jobs in the most prestigious areas of the socialist planned economy—heavy industry and production. However, during the transition from state socialist to capitalism, educational credentials will become a stronger predictor of labor market attainment and women’s higher levels of education will make them more attractive to employers.

Furthermore, Fodor suggests that women’s educational credentials may translate into a highly valued form of cultural capital, including skills such as “fluency in languages, analytic skills, better self-presentation, and more flexible retraining possibilities” (Fodor 1997: 486), which will make them more attractive to capitalist employers. These skills, combined with higher levels of educational attainment and positions in service professions, may translate into greater security in the labor force for women relative to men.

Retraditionalization of Gender Ideologies

Whereas Fodor’s theory is one of structural change, the “retraditionalization” thesis points to cultural change as the primary mechanism likely to affect women’s labor market opportunities. Proponents of the “retraditionalization” thesis predict that the renewed enthusiasm for traditional gender ideologies—including views that women’s proper place is in the home not the workplace—during the transition will translate into gender inequalities in the labor market. Observers argue that such traditional ideologies are, in large part, the result of a backlash against socialism and against socialist

policies that required full employment and active participation in politics for women, without concomitant changes in gendered division of labor in the household. In some instances, a return to the home for women has been proposed as a way to erase the damages done to society and to the family by the evils of socialism—a process Gal and Kligman refer to as the “sacralization” of the family and of women’s traditional roles within it (2000a).

The rather substantial influence of the Catholic Church in society and politics, particularly in Poland, has been proposed as a major factor influencing the strength, articulation, and penetration of traditional gender ideologies. Evidence for the emergence of such ideologies includes ubiquitous public images of high-status stay-at-home wives and mothers, political dialogues centered on the “needs” and “rights” of women to stay at home with children, open calls by political and religious leaders for women’s return to the home, the virtual disappearance of women—as well as the rejection of women’s issues—from politics at the local and national levels, and the constant pressure for abortion restrictions on parliamentary agendas (Goven 2000; Wolchik 1993). Proponents of this thesis predict that women will exit the labor force in large numbers both by choice and by force. While some women may voluntarily exit the labor force, traditional gender ideologies may influence would-be employers in their decisions about hiring, firing, and promotions. Thus many women may be forced out of the labor force as a result of discriminatory practices by employers, who believe that men, not women, should support families through paid work.

Market Discrimination

Though the “market discrimination” thesis predicts outcomes consistent with the retraditionalization thesis—namely, that women will exit the labor force in large numbers—the argument points to structural changes in the political and economic organization of society rather than to gender ideologies and culture as the primary mechanisms affecting women’s labor market opportunities. Proponents of this thesis point to capitalist reforms and the retrenchment of the welfare state as potential sources of disadvantage for women. As a result of such changes, employers in the nascent market economies in East Central Europe will increasingly discriminate against women.

The market discrimination thesis suggests that macro-level changes brought about by the disappearance of the socialist welfare state may have simply made it more difficult for women (especially wives and mothers) to

maintain secure and stable employment. Changes at the level of the welfare state have included the reduction or elimination of state-sponsored child-care benefits, which under socialism provided subsidized childcare and child allowances,⁷ the elimination or reduction of maternity leave benefits and mandatory flexible schedules,⁸ and massive reductions in the number of state-funded nurseries and kindergartens.⁹ Such trends parallel the disappearance of state protection and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, which by many accounts has been accompanied by massive increases in sex discrimination in hiring and firing, and a rise in incidences of sexual harassment in the workplace.¹⁰ (Goven 2000; Kotowska 1995; Zielinska 2000)

Observers note that because employers are increasingly responsible for providing maternity leave and childcare benefits, and because the state no longer enforces anti-discrimination laws, employers have real incentives to discriminate in favor of men or in favor of unmarried women without children. While the costs to employers for employing women have increased, the costs of discriminating against women have decreased. (Fuszara 2000; Heinen 1995; Kotowska 1995) Therefore, discrimination in hiring *and* firing need not be the result of the re-emergence of traditional ideologies, but simply due to the fact that the financial risks of employing women of reproductive age are perceived by many employers as prohibitive, particularly for firms struggling to survive in the newly forming market economies.¹¹ Thus, similar to the retraditionalization thesis, while some women will exit the labor force by choice, in response to the growing demands of balancing work and family, others will be forced to exit through discriminatory practices in hiring and firing.

Transitional Strategies in Poland and Hungary

Although the market discrimination and revalued resources theses make predictions about the links between macro-structural change and gender inequality in the labor market, both theories fail to explain how the strategies, character, and timing of institutional reforms may affect women's unemployment, in both the short and long-term. While the market discrimination thesis is essentially a theory of gender relations in fully developed market economies, the revalued resources theory is based on short-term change in transitional economies. The retraditionalization thesis is unsatisfying as well in that it completely ignores the effects of structural and institutional change on employment opportunities. While cultural change may in fact be taking place, the long-term viability of women's exit

from the labor force, if it has occurred, will likely depend on the structural ability of women and families to maintain traditional family roles while avoiding downward mobility and poverty.

Thus, none of the theses outlined above adequately predict why we might observe differences in employment trends across countries, and none provide a satisfying mechanism for why such differences might obtain. What is missing from this literature is a theoretical bridge to link the structural predictions of the market discrimination and revalued resources theories to the unique institutional processes of change in countries undergoing transition, while also allowing for the potentially intervening effects of cultural factors. We therefore supplement the previous theories by arguing that differences in the character and speed of the reform process undertaken in both countries will, to a large extent, determine how, when, and whether men and women will differently experience the effects of market reforms in terms of their labor force participation rates.

Although Hungary and Poland appear relatively equal across almost all aggregate measures of development by the year 2000, these two countries in fact pursued divergent strategies of reform. Thus we propose a country-specific theory of transition, which points to differences between Poland and Hungary in terms of (1) initial transition strategies, (2) rate and form of initial privatization measures, and (4) the timing of reforms of the socialist welfare system. Such institutional differences, we predict, are likely to produce varied outcomes in terms of women's and men's labor market chances in Poland versus Hungary in the short as well as long term.

First, Hungary and Poland pursued divergent strategies of reform, particularly in the earliest stages of transition. Economists, in particular, have argued that while Poland initially pursued a radical, or "shock therapy," approach, Hungary followed a more "gradualist" approach to market reform (Brada 1996; Duke and Grime 1994; Kolodko 1997; Mizsei 1993; Rona-Tas 1996;).¹² The goal of Polish reforms immediately following 1989 was to privatize quickly despite probable negative short-term social and economic consequences. The "shock therapy" approach to reform was heavily endorsed by various Western-trained neo-liberal scholars and consultants, who asserted that a rapid and comprehensive transition strategy was the only path to successful and "irreversible" reform (Sachs 1990a; 1990b). Hungarian reformers, on the other hand, preferred a slower process of privatization in order to build upon existing institutions while maintaining a strong social safety net.

Part of the difference between Hungary and Poland in the timing and

character of initial reform strategies can be explained by differences between the two countries, which pre-dated 1989. During the 1980s, Hungary's experiments with market socialism had led to the establishment of many of the institutions and practices of a market economy. In fact, by 1989, Hungary already had a relatively well-developed small business sector, particularly in the service industry. This allowed Hungary to delay rapid small-scale privatization and instead focus on large-scale privatization. (Duke and Grime 1994) Poland, on the other hand, lacked a comparable small-business sector prior to 1989, therefore motivating rapid privatization of small businesses immediately following the fall of socialism. Initial widespread political support for the post-1989 Solidarity government undoubtedly also played an important role in enabling the institution of more radical and rapid reforms in Poland versus Hungary. (Duke and Grime 1994; Gomulka 1993; Mizsei 1993; Rona-Tas 1996) Therefore, while Poland prioritized the rapid privatization of the small, feminized tertiary sector, Hungary turned to large, male-dominated industrial enterprises in its early privatization program. (Duke and Grime 1994) Finally, while Poland instituted major reforms of the socialist welfare system as early as 1990 and 1991, Hungary delayed major reforms of the welfare system until after the 1994 elections.¹³

Poland's strategy of radical reform led to massive economic recession, hyperinflation, and an unprecedented rise in unemployment and poverty.¹⁴ As part of the larger reform strategy, Polish reformers revoked many of the protections previously offered by the state to vulnerable workers, including wives, mothers, and unskilled, low-educated workers. For instance, while jobs of women on maternity and parental leave were formerly protected, restructuring firms were no longer forced to recognize such protection.¹⁵ Thus, women on maternity leave (i.e., mothers of young children) were the first to be laid off in the early 1990s in Poland.¹⁶ In addition, rapid reform led to the early classification and removal of "non-productive" workers. Not surprisingly, such workers were often young, married women (who had the potential to become pregnant and, thus, exit the labor force), as well as unskilled (especially female) workers (Fuszara 2000).

At the same time Poland was instituting relatively radical reforms in the economic sphere, the state was also chipping away elements of the socialist welfare state as part of the larger goal of market reform. For example, already by 1991, childcare allowances—a previously universal allowance provided by the state to all families with young children—became means tested. In addition, financial responsibility for childcare—previously guar-

anteed and provided by the central government—was shifted downwards to local governments, which quickly instituted fees for admission (Kotowska 1995). Indeed, by 1991, average tuition for childcare facilities was equal to one-third of an average month's income in Poland (USAID 1991).

Specific groups of women were likely to be disproportionately affected by the initial privatization scheme for several reasons. First, lay-offs and early retirement in the small tertiary sector were much more likely to affect women early on, due to the over-representation of women in such businesses. Whereas Hungary began small-scale privatization and the development of an institutional structure for policies and practices as early as 1980, Poland plunged into the process during the very initial stages of reform with little or no experience or preparation. Thus, from the outset, Hungary was in a relatively more stable position than all other post-socialist countries to implement a privatization program without the risk of severe labor market dislocations. The rapid shake-up of small businesses in the initial stages of Poland's transition, on the other hand, was likely to push many women out of the labor force through unemployment and early retirement.

In addition, small businesses are least likely to be able to afford generous maternity leaves and healthcare benefits for their employees, given that such businesses operate with very few employees and very little revenue, compared to larger firms. Thus, women in such businesses are likely to be the hardest hit by the state's removal of income support and legal enforcement of mandatory childcare leave benefits and are likely to be the targets of active discrimination by employers. Furthermore, small service-sector businesses are much more difficult to monitor and regulate, especially in transitional societies where a solid legal structure and institutional framework for protecting employees in the private sector are unlikely to be sufficiently established. Therefore, not only was Poland's strategy of privatization likely to push women disproportionately into the ranks of the unemployed, but also was also likely to make it difficult for female employees with families and/or children to sustain employment in the long run.

Finally, we predict that what makes the effects of the timing and strategy of reform in Poland so harmful for women is that re-entry for the unemployed is extremely difficult (Heinen 1995; Kotowska 1995). Immediately following the institution of "shock therapy" in Poland, unemployment rates increased dramatically. Radical restructuring led to a shrinking labor market, where education, skills, and perceived reliability and flexibility became paramount to obtaining and maintaining employment in the new economy. Thus, once unemployed—particularly in the earliest stages

of transition—reentry into the labor market was extremely difficult, especially for specific groups of women, such as wives, mothers, and women who lacked skills and education.

Furthermore, even where anti-discrimination legislation exists, laws are often un-enforced. Therefore employers may discriminate without much concern for punishment. It is estimated that in Poland, for example, it is estimated that there are an average of seven times fewer job openings for women than for men (Titkow 1994). In addition, a USAID report noted that even as early as 1991, there were an estimated 74 unemployed women for every job offer for women, whereas there were only 20 unemployed men for every job offer for men (USAID 1991). As a result, not only were women more likely to exit the labor market very early on in the transition process, women were also unlikely to reenter even after moderate economic growth was achieved.

By 1993, those most dependent on the state for protection in the labor market in Poland faced serious obstacles to sustainable employment. In Hungary, on the other hand, such major reforms were postponed, by and large, until the mid-1990's, due largely to political strategizing. Until 1995-96, a year after the second electoral cycle following the transition, the state continued to provide relatively generous and universal social welfare benefits, delayed certain aspects of the privatization program, and postponed massive streamlining of the workforce. Thus, for a while, Hungarian women—unlike their Polish counterparts—were able to maintain a strong hold in the labor market, due to the continuation of socialist-born policy measures meant to ensure job security and protection for all workers. In addition, because Hungary was most successful in the early privatization of large, state-owned enterprises in industry and manufacturing sectors, women were less affected than men by early lay-offs and structural unemployment. Finally, the delayed reforms of the small, female-dominated service sector in Hungary allowed women to maintain employment, to accumulate skills and experience in the new economy and, most importantly, to avoid the fate of early unemployment with little or no hope of re-entry.

Overall, what previous theories have failed to address is the confluence of structural patterns, institutional arrangements, and cultural factors that are likely to produce varied labor market outcomes in transitional societies. Fodor's theory of revalued resources offers a valid, yet ephemeral, explanation of women's labor market experiences during the *initial stages of transition*. Primarily a structural theory of transition, it remains unclear whether these predictions will hold as the transitional labor markets develop and

mature. In contrast, whereas the market discrimination thesis presents some insightful propositions as to how working women may fare in a fully developed market economy, it fails to address how the unique institutional arrangements and changes in transitional societies may produce country-specific outcomes. Finally, the theory of retraditionalization, while positing purely cultural factors as determinant, fails to address structural factors and the specific mechanisms that will generate its predicted outcomes. To the existing literature we contribute a theory of institutional change, which emphasizes the importance of the timing and character of transitional reform strategies to predict labor market outcomes for men and women.

Thus, we hypothesize that in the few short years between 1989 and 1993, the bottom simply dropped out for Polish women, especially wives, mothers, and low-educated or unskilled women workers, in a way that it did not for their Hungarian counterparts. Largely due to the rate and character of the initial stages of Polish reform, women as wives and mothers were pushed out of the labor market and, once unemployed, found it increasingly difficult, even impossible, to re-enter. In Hungary, on the other hand, women had a few years to adapt to the new economy. These years served as

TABLE 1: HYPOTHESES REGARDING GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT

Theory	Hypotheses	
	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>
<i>Revalued resources</i>	Women's educational credentials and concentration in the service sector will protect them from job loss.	
<i>Retraditionalization</i>	Reemerging attitudes about women's "proper" place in the home will induce job loss. Process will be stronger in Poland, where the Catholic Church is more influential.	
<i>Market discrimination</i>	As a result of the retrenchment of socialist welfare and enforcement of anti-discrimination policies, the costs of employing women have increased while the costs of discriminating against them have decreased. Women with small children will be most affected by discrimination.	
<i>Transitional strategies</i>	Women were protected from job loss due to gradual reform strategy.	Women were the hardest hit due to rapid reform of service industries.

a buffer for women against the harshest effects of market reform, namely, the disappearance of social welfare benefits, job security guarantees, and the removal of “non-productive” workers from the labor force.

Data and methods

Data Source

Our study employs data drawn from two cross-country surveys conducted in East Central Europe in 1993 (“Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989”) and 2000 (“Poverty and Social Structure in Transitional Countries”). From the 1993 dataset, we use individual-level data taken from a nationally representative sample of 4,221 households in Hungary and 3,520 households in Poland. Given its considerably smaller size, for the 2000 dataset we pool individual-level data from both the nationally representative sample and poverty over-sample in both countries.¹⁷ In Hungary we use a nationally representative sample of 1,002 households and an over-sample of 447 poor households; in Poland we use a nationally representative sample of 1,015 households and an over-sample of 501 poor households. Together, these datasets allow us the unique opportunity to adjudicate among the above competing hypotheses regarding gender inequality in transitional labor markets across countries and over time.¹⁸

Methods and Analytical Strategy

Our primary aim is to determine whether and how the nature of gender inequality in the labor market has changed during the transition to a market economy in Hungary and Poland. In order to adjudicate between the various hypotheses presented, we address gender inequality with respect to two dimensions: inequality in access to employment opportunities and inequality in labor force participation. Using multivariate logistic regression, we thus construct two separate sets of models to examine the effect of gender and other pertinent factors on individual outcomes for unemployment and labor force participation in Hungary and Poland in 1993 and 2000. Our samples for the unemployment models consist of all those currently in the labor force (i.e., working, on maternity leave, or unemployed) between the ages of 20 and the official retirement age for men and women in each country.¹⁹ Given these restrictions, we are left with 2,815 observations in 1993 and 617 observations in 2000 for Hungary and 2,380 observa-

tions in 1993 and 773 observations in 2000 for Poland. Likewise, in our labor force participation models, we impose the same age limits, resulting in a sample of 3,208 observations in 1993 and 870 observations in 2000 for Hungary and 2,883 observations in 1993 and 1070 observations in 2000 for Poland.

We construct our models beginning with the full version, proceeding down to reduced, more narrowly specified models. Results from our logistic regression analyses are given in Tables 3 –10. For both 1993 and 2000 models, Models 1 and 2 are identical across both countries while Model 3 is country-specific. Model 1 represents the full model, which includes all the variables discussed above, Model 2 is the reduced model, including only those variables that are shown to be significant in either Poland or Hungary, and Model 3 is our final model, including only those variables (or groups of variables) that are significant for each country.

Outcome Measures

Tables 2a and 2b present the distribution of variables, which are included in the 1993 and 2000 models, including unemployment and labor force participation rates for each country over time. For both years, the outcome measure for the unemployment models is coded one if the respondent reported being “unemployed” for their current main activity or, additionally, if he/she reported not working but “looking for work” in a separate question. Respondents are coded zero if they reported either working or being on maternity leave with a job. For the labor force participation models, the outcome measure is coded one if the respondent reports working, on maternity leave with a job or unemployed/looking for work and zero if they report otherwise (keeping house, disability, retirement, doing nothing, other).²⁰

Independent Measures

Independent measures for the analysis are grouped roughly by 1) demographic characteristics, 2) family status, 3) educational attainment and 4) most recent occupational characteristics. While all sets of independent variables are included in the unemployment models, we include only the first three sets of variables in the models predicting labor force participation. Among the demographic set of variables, the one pertinent for our analysis is sex, where females are coded as one and males as zero.

TABLE 2A: DISTRIBUTION OF VARIABLES IN MODELS - HUNGARY AND POLAND, 1993

	Hungary			Poland		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Unemployed	13,10	16,15	9,91	11,51	12,27	10,80
Labor Force Participation	81,31	77,63	85,19	80,98	76,55	85,61
Demographic Characteristics						
Age (mean)	39,30	39,50	39,10	38,30	38,40	38,30
Rural Residence	39,16	38,20	40,00	42,70	41,80	43,80
Female	51,29	-	-	51,07	-	-
Household Responsibilities						
Married	75,15	75,00	75,39	75,88	77,08	74,62
Spouse Employed	49,22	51,83	46,47	51,07	57,16	44,71
Young Child in HH	20,42	20,49	20,35	27,76	29,11	26,36
Educational Attainment						
University	12,43	12,75	12,13	8,45	8,16	8,72
Academic Secondary	13,92	19,32	8,91	16,00	22,65	9,69
Academic Technical	16,11	15,59	16,59	19,79	21,91	17,78
Vocational Training	28,57	20,08	36,46	29,10	22,50	35,36
Elementary or Less	28,97	32,62	25,91	26,66	24,78	28,46
Most Recent Job						
Part-time Position	2,75	3,54	1,92	4,05	4,80	3,27
Self-Employed	9,23	6,20	12,42	18,24	14,86	21,77
Most Recent Industry						
Agriculture	12,52	9,58	15,63	15,07	14,79	15,37
Industry	43,88	35,94	52,24	39,09	27,05	51,67
Trade	12,21	15,95	8,28	12,18	16,39	7,79
Services	26,07	33,61	18,13	27,29	35,71	18,50
Other	1,82	0,89	2,80	1,91	0,87	2,99
N	2863	1402	1461	2380	1149	1231

Some of the theories we test predict that family status, measured here as marital status and the presence of young children in the household, will have an effect women's chances for employment. In particular, married women and women with young children are predicted to be disadvantaged

TABLE 2B: DISTRIBUTION OF VARIABLES IN MODELS - HUNGARY AND POLAND, 2000 NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

	Hungary			Poland		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Unemployed	13,30	10,55	15,48	24,42	31,82	15,38
Labor Force Participation	78,36	72,10	84,18	71,94	66,43	80,00
Demographic Characteristics						
Age (mean)	39,30	39,70	39,00	38,80	38,90	38,70
Rural Residence	34,73	32,06	37,46	30,51	30,81	30,07
Female	50,64	-	-	59,50	-	-
Household Responsibilities						
Married	68,65	70,79	66,45	70,31	71,49	68,58
Spouse Employed	45,98	46,35	45,60	45,69	46,21	44,93
Young Child in HH	18,81	17,78	19,87	22,39	25,06	20,95
Educational Attainment						
University	15,62	17,38	14,01	10,87	11,91	9,46
Academic Secondary	24,11	26,24	22,15	35,34	41,19	27,36
Apprenticeship	33,79	27,30	39,74	32,90	25,56	42,19
Elementary or Less	26,49	29,08	24,10	20,89	21,34	20,27
Most Recent Job						
Part-time Position	23,79	20,63	27,04	14,91	14,48	15,54
Self-Employed	10,29	6,67	14,01	11,49	9,66	14,19
Most Recent Industry						
Agriculture	8,52	5,40	11,73	10,81	11,03	10,47
Industry	31,51	23,81	39,41	23,12	15,17	34,8
Trade	12,86	18,10	7,49	13,68	17,01	8,78
Services	35,69	41,90	29,32	29,96	33,56	24,66
Other	5,47	4,44	6,51	9,30	7,82	11,49
N	622	315	307	731	435	296

in the labor market. For marital status, respondents are coded as one if they are married and zero if they are not.²¹ To test the effects of parental status, respondents that report having children less than the age of six in the household are coded as one and those that do not are coded as zero. We designate a specific age cutoff since children begin school around the age of

six and become less of an encumbrance to mothers seeking employment.²² To test for differential effects of young children and marital status on unemployment and labor force participation for men and women, we incorporate two interaction terms, one for females and young children and another for females and marital status.

We code education as a categorical variable with five levels in 1993 and four levels in 2000. This difference is due to variation in the ways respondents were asked about their educational credentials in the two surveys. Respondents with an elementary school education or less serve as the reference group for both time points. Comparison categories in 1993 include university, academic secondary, academic technical and vocational training, while those for 2000 include university, academic secondary, and apprenticeship training. These variables will allow us to test whether educational credentials protect one from job loss and unemployment.

Finally, relevant measures regarding respondents' most recent job include employment type, full-time/part-time status, and industry. For employment type, respondents are coded as one if they report that in their last/current job they were self-employed and coded as zero if they were employed otherwise. For job status, those that report part-time positions for their last/current job are coded as one, and zero if they report full-time employment. We divide industry into a set of 5 dummy variables that include industry, agriculture, service sector, trade and other. We use "employment in industry" as the reference category. This variable will allow us to test whether service sector employment protect against job loss and unemployment.

Control Measures

Some of the measures included in our models are not of significant interest to our theoretical considerations but are incorporated for purposes of control. In the 2000 models, we include a dummy flag variable that acts as a control for those respondents that were included in the poor over-sample.²³ Among the demographic variables, we include age and rural residence. Age is coded by years and also serves as a crude proxy for work experience. In addition, because various theories argue that in times of unemployment crises, the young and elderly workers tend to be the first groups laid-off, we test for non-linear effects by adding an age-squared term in all the models. Lastly, for rural residence, respondents are coded as one if they report living in a rural area and coded as zero if they live in an urban area.

Results

Overall Unemployment

Not surprisingly, with the abolition of the state socialist policy of full employment, the working population has contracted significantly, and unemployment rates have risen sharply since 1988 across all transitional societies. Thus, as shown in Table 1b, unemployment rates soared from 1988 to 1993 in Poland (0.45 – 13.1) and in Hungary (0.35 – 11.5).

From 1993 to 2000, we observe a significant deterioration in the condition of Poland's labor market, as unemployment rates increased from an already high 13.1 percent, to 24.4 percent. Figures for Hungary remain stable, yet moderately high, at around 12 percent for both time periods. Thus, overall unemployment figures in Poland seem to indicate an increasingly deteriorating labor market while those for Hungary show potential signs that it may be inching closer to a state of relative labor market equilibrium.

Has unemployment affected men and women differently in these countries since the transition? Regression results show that during the initial stages of reform, women in Hungary maintained a strong employment position relative to men. Results from Table 3 show that, all else equal, women were less than two thirds as likely to become unemployed than men in 1993. In contrast, women in Poland show signs of downward mobility beginning in the early stages of transition. Model 3 shows a negative statistically insignificant effect of being female on unemployment and positive, statistically significant interaction terms for married women and women with young children. As we hypothesized, these findings suggest a significant employment penalty for working wives and mothers during the earliest stages of the transition.

Have employment trends changed since 1993 and, if so, how? Our findings show that women in Hungary continue to maintain a strong position relative to men in the labor market by 2000. All else equal, women are almost 40% less likely than men to become unemployed. In stark contrast, we find evidence of an astonishing decline in women's employment conditions in Poland between 1993 and 2000. By 2000, women are more than twice as likely than men to be unemployed. Furthermore, though the marriage penalty for women has disappeared, a strong and significant penalty for motherhood remains.

The political and economic transition has produced dramatically divergent employment outcomes for women in the labor force in Hungary and

TABLE 3. ODDS RATIOS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 1993, HUNGARY, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Age	1.062 (0.047)	0.995 (0.006)	-
Age-sq	0.999 (0.001)	-	-
Rural Residence	1.003 (0.122)	-	-
Female	0.678 (0.164)	0.676 (0.164)	0.710* (0.094)
Married	0.574** (0.108)	0.601** (0.111)	0.630** (0.083)
Married*Female	1.192 (0.331)	1.226 (0.340)	-
Young Child in HH	1.380 (0.258)	1.402 (0.262)	1.222 (0.169)
Young Child*Female	0.669 (0.193)	0.642 (0.184)	-
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	0.235*** (0.067)	0.241** (0.068)	0.236*** (0.067)
Academic Secondary	0.625* (0.130)	0.634* (0.133)	0.633* (0.132)
Academic Technical	0.539** (0.100)	0.543** (0.099)	0.545*** (0.099)
Vocational Training	0.707* (0.099)	0.712* (0.100)	0.719* (0.100)
Most Recent Job			
Part-time Position	1.280 (0.454)	-	-
Self-Employed	0.511** (0.117)	0.518** (0.117)	0.520** (0.118)
Most Recent Industry (Ref=Industry)			
Agriculture	1.608** (0.251)	1.616** (0.245)	1.615** (0.247)
Service	0.574* (0.132)	0.571* (0.130)	0.576* (0.131)
Service*Female	0.394** (0.141)	0.394** (0.142)	0.389** (0.140)
Trade	0.946 (0.168)	0.932 (0.167)	0.947 (0.169)
Other	0.091** (0.095)	0.090* (0.091)	0.092* (0.094)
Chi-square	192.62	190.01	186.80
Degrees of Freedom	19	15	13

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 4. ODDS RATIOS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 1993, POLAND, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model3</i>
Age	0.929 (0.046)	0.959*** (0.007)	0.959*** (0.007)
Age-sq	1.000 (0.001)	-	-
Rural Residence	0.918 (0.133)	-	-
Female	0.720 (0.193)	0.723 (0.194)	0.652 (0.168)
Married	0.606* (0.133)	0.596* (0.129)	0.595* (0.129)
Married*Female	1.990* (0.614)	1.970* (0.607)	1.975* (0.608)
Young Child in HH	0.438** (0.113)	0.432** (0.112)	0.431** (0.112)
Young Child*Female	2.610** (0.844)	2.647** (0.854)	2.653** (0.855)
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	0.266** (0.104)	0.269** (0.105)	0.266** (0.104)
Academic Secondary	0.592* (0.136)	0.601* (0.137)	0.593* (0.136)
Academic Technical	0.521** (0.112)	0.526** (0.112)	0.520** (0.111)
Vocational Training	0.930 (0.163)	0.926 (0.161)	0.920 (0.160)
Most Recent Job			
Part-time Position	0.857 (0.305)	-	-
Self-Employed	0.359** (0.092)	0.356*** (0.092)	0.362*** (0.093)
Most Recent Industry (Ref=Industry)			
Agriculture	0.491* (0.137)	0.476** (0.129)	0.478** (0.130)
Service	0.769 (0.208)	0.764 (0.206)	0.567** (0.103)
Service*Female	0.623 (0.212)	0.618 (0.210)	-
Trade	1.088 (0.224)	1.086 (0.223)	1.127 (0.230)
Other	0.422 (0.260)	0.424 (0.261)	0.420 (0.258)
Chi-square	167.16	166.26	164.30
Degrees of Freedom	19	16	15

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 5. ODDS RATIOS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 2000, HUNGARY, GES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Poor Sample	2.012** (0.493)	2.023** (0.484)	1.970** (0.463)
Rural Residence	2.432*** (0.577)	2.374*** (0.557)	2.336*** (0.534)
Age	0.987 (0.088)	-	-
Age-sq	1.000 (0.001)	-	-
Female	0.861 (0.418)	0.668 (0.181)	0.649** (0.158)
Married	1.096 (0.348)	-	-
Married*Female	0.804 (0.427)	-	-
Young Child in HH	0.567 (0.217)	0.562 (0.188)	-
Young Child*Female	0.861 (0.614)	0.869 (0.598)	-
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	0.111** (0.084)	0.109** (0.082)	0.107** (0.080)
Academic Secondary	0.545 (0.187)	0.538 (0.183)	0.530 (0.178)
Apprenticeship	0.561* (0.144)	0.558* (0.143)	0.545* (0.138)
Most Recent Job			
Part-time Position	1.642* (0.398)	1.623* (0.391)	1.566 (0.372)
Self-Employed	0.076* (0.078)	0.079* (0.081)	0.078* (0.080)
Most Recent Industry (Ref=Industry)			
Agriculture	0.912 (0.362)	0.928 (0.365)	-
Service	1.007 (0.331)	0.918 (0.251)	-
Service*Female	0.749 (0.389)	-	-
Trade	0.725 (0.316)	0.731 (0.310)	-
Other	1.064 (0.547)	1.058 (0.544)	-
Chi-square	93.01	92.26	87.12
Degrees of Freedom	19	14	8

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 6. ODDS RATIO FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 2000, POLAND, GES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced and Country Specific <i>Model 2</i>
Poor Sample	1.679* (0.337)	1.650* (0.329)
Rural Residence	1.497 (0.317)	1.519* (0.317)
Age	1.001 (0.075)	-
Age-sq	1.000 (0.001)	-
Female	2.027* (0.758)	2.393*** (0.541)
Married	0.666 (0.232)	-
Married*Female	1.787 (0.771)	-
Young Child in HH	1.035 (0.333)	0.871 (0.257)
Young Child*Female	2.095* (0.823)	2.437* (0.927)
Education (Ref = <=Elem)		
University	0.040*** (0.026)	0.038*** (0.024)
Academic Secondary	0.138*** (0.037)	0.136*** (0.037)
Apprenticeship	0.306*** (0.075)	0.307*** (0.074)
Most Recent Job		
Part-time Position	0.550* (0.142)	0.548* (0.142)
Self-Employed	0.131*** (0.068)	0.135*** (0.070)
Most Recent Industry (Ref=Industry)		
Agriculture	0.266** (0.117)	0.277** (0.118)
Service	0.811 (0.301)	0.480** (0.119)
Service*Female	0.443 (0.199)	-
Trade	0.800 (0.238)	0.837 (0.244)
Other	1.124 (0.333)	1.105 (0.322)
Chi-square	228.53	223.63
Degrees of Freedom	19	14

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Poland. What factors can explain these differences? In the following sections, we examine the explanatory strength of the various theses proposed in the literature and offer some brief conclusions based on our evaluations.

Revalued Resources

Did women's overall educational advantage and dominance in the service industry help to provide them with greater security in post-socialist labor markets relative to men? Unemployment models for both countries that educational credentials are important for protecting both men and women from becoming unemployed. However, the question remains whether this protection was more heavily weighted toward women than men in these countries as Fodor predicts. Descriptive figures for 1993 in Table 2a show that the only advantage that women maintain over men is at the academic secondary level, where the proportion of women is roughly 11% higher than men in both countries. However, the 1993 models suggest that academic secondary education offers an equivalent advantage as vocational education in Poland and only slightly more protection in Hungary (Acad-Sec = .60, Vocat = .70). Moreover, at the university level, where the unemployment protection is greatest, the proportion of men and women with university degrees is nearly identical. Thus, Fodor's initial assertion that women would continue to enjoy a significant advantage over men in academic education is not fully supported. To the extent that differences in educational attainment exist, they are not large enough to account for the overall differences we observe in unemployment outcomes for men and women in 1993.

The comparison of educational effects in the models for 1993 and 2000 suggest that education is indeed becoming a "revalued resource" in both Hungary and Poland. However, educational distribution figures for 2000 in Hungary show that, just as the returns to education begin to rise, men are increasingly pursuing higher levels of education and steadily weakening women's former advantage. In addition, the coefficients for academic secondary and vocational education are identical, again suggesting that an academic education does not necessarily provide greater protection against unemployment than does vocational schooling. Together with the results from 1993, these findings bring into question the extent to which the slight educational advantage that women gained under socialism actually contributed to their relatively strong employment position in Hungary following reforms. Women in Poland, in contrast, continue to maintain a sizeable

and growing advantage over men at both the academic secondary and university level. However, given women's significantly inferior employment conditions in Poland, these results indicate that, although women may benefit from competitive tendencies of the market that reward educational attainment, such benefits do not overcome the significant barriers that women face in the labor market.

In addition to educational attainment, the "revalued resources" theory predicts that women will enjoy an advantage in the newly reformed labor market due to their dominance in service sector occupations. Table 2a and 2b provide evidence of a significant shift out of industry and into services for both sexes in Hungary and for men in Poland. Whereas in 1988, industry was clearly the dominant sector, accounting for nearly 50% of all jobs in both countries, by 2000 the service sector has become the largest industry in both countries. In addition, industry figures by sex show that women have constituted the majority of service workers since 1988 and continue to do so in 2000, while the same is true of men in industry.

Results from the logistic regression analyses show mixed support for the hypothesis that service sector experience disproportionately protects women during market transition. In 1993, service sector employment was a strong and significant factor for protecting workers from unemployment in both countries. For example, in Hungary, men employed in the service sector were about 40 % less likely and women 77 % less likely than those employed in industry to become unemployed. However, by 2000, the effect of service sector employment disappears. Thus, although Fodor was correct in her prediction that service employment would protect women *during the initial stages of the transition*, these results show that the direct effect in Hungary was short-lived, dwindling down by the end of the decade. Nonetheless, we cannot underestimate the devastating effects that industrial restructuring and labor force streamlining had on men's employment situation during the first few years of the transition. Thus, it is plausible that women's considerable dominance in the service sector and the additional protection they received relative to men in this sector *early on*, worked to provide women with a strong buffer against severe labor market dislocations during the initial stages of transition and consequently helped them to maintain their employment positions in the years afterward.

In Poland in 1993, though women did not enjoy returns for service employment over men, service workers on the whole were much less likely (by about 44 %) to become unemployed than those employed in industry. By 2000, the service sector effect still holds, but this effect remains the same

for both men and women. Thus it appears that, unlike Hungary, women's greater experience in the service sector did not provide them with any additional protection against unemployment compared to men in this sector during the early stages of transition. It is also important to note in the distributions that, in contrast to women's increasing dominance in Hungary's service sector, women's proportional dominance in Poland's service sector in 1993 (~20%) had diminished significantly by 2000 (~9%), suggesting that men are making significant inroads into this burgeoning sector.

Overall, the theory of revalued resources does not sufficiently explain the differences in unemployment outcomes for men and women in these two countries. In Hungary, although education provides significant protection against unemployment for women, their overall educational advantage over men is not significant and the protective effects of academic over vocational training against unemployment are minor in both years. Such findings seem unable to fully explain overall gender differences at the aggregate level in 1993 or 2000. The more compelling story for Hungary lies in women's dominance in service occupations and their relative employment advantage compared to men in this sector during the early years of the transition. However, this theory not supported in the case for Poland, where any potential advantages for women due to their educational superiority and dominance in the service sector, are cancelled out by other factors.

Retraditionalization, Market Discrimination and Transitional Strategies

Scholars of the retraditionalization theory contend that women's position in the labor market will decline significantly as a result of re-emerging ideologies regarding the traditional role of women. We predict these employment penalties, if they exist, would be greater for women in Poland given the greater influence of the Catholic Church in the political and social spheres of Polish society. Theories of market discrimination, on the other hand, suggest that women will suffer disproportionately from unemployment due to discriminatory practices by employers attempting to protect themselves from perceived financial burdens of employing working wives and mothers. Moreover, our theory of transitional strategies supplements the latter theory with an added temporal dimension, which differentiates expected outcomes for Poland and Hungary. We expect employment disadvantages to be more pronounced for women in Poland than Hungary due to the more expeditious and aggressive nature of reform strategies

undertaken in Poland. Thus, despite the different mechanisms that each theory proposes, the resulting hypotheses are essentially the same with respect to the direction of women's expected unemployment outcomes: we predict significant employment disadvantages for women in Poland, especially for those who are married and/or have children.

In order to adjudicate empirically between these two types of theories, where one emphasizes culture and the other structure, we analyze the social determinants of labor force participation. If the retraditionalization theory holds, in addition to a shrinking *demand* for female employees, we should also expect to see a shrinking *supply* of female workers. Thus, with the re-emergence of ideologies surrounding traditional gender roles, women should also be increasingly self-selecting out of the labor market to fulfill their newly strengthened role in the domestic sphere. Theories of market discrimination and transitional strategies posit no such outcome, however. According to these theories, we will observe a fairly constant supply of female workers combined with a declining demand.

Unemployment

We first examine to what extent these theories hold with respect to unemployment outcomes. To test these theories, we incorporate interaction terms in all the models to identify married females and females with young children in the household. Findings for Hungary show that both interaction terms were insignificant in 1993 and 2000, implying that women's employment opportunities were hampered neither by marriage nor motherhood. These results, together with a negative effect of being female on unemployment in 1993 and 2000, suggest that, compared to men, women have enjoyed greater employment security throughout the last decade of transition. These results for Hungary provide strong evidence against hypotheses posited by scholars of the retraditionalization and market discrimination theories. Overall the results remain consistent with our more dynamic theory of transitional strategies, which predicts that the gradualist nature of reform undertaken in Hungary will offer some protection for women's employment position during transition.

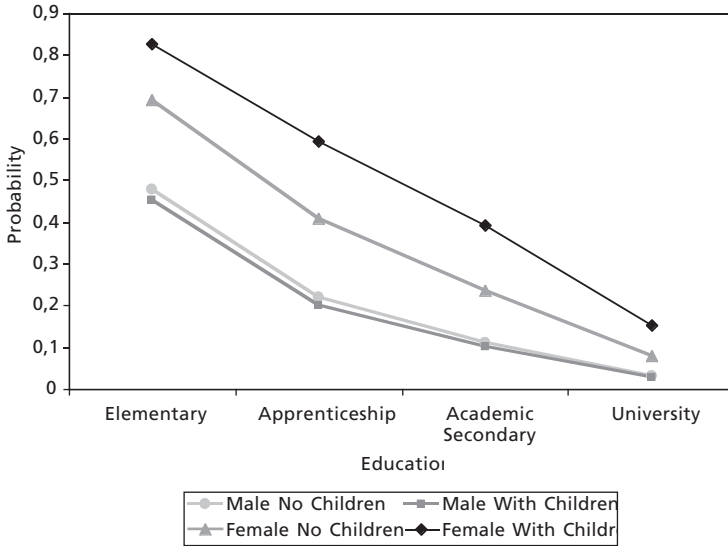
In sharp contrast, results for both years in Poland provide evidence of worsening employment conditions for women from early on in the transition to the present. Unemployment models for Poland show that already by 1993, women who were married and/or had children encountered significant barriers to employment. Holding all else constant, the predicted

odds of unemployment for married women with young children in the household was slightly more than three times greater than that for married men with young children. By 2000, though the marriage penalty for females disappeared, the net effect of being female became strongly positive and statistically significant, showing that, all else equal, even single, non-mothering women face difficulties in the labor market compared to men. Findings show that single, non-mothering women are over twice as likely than single, non-fathering men to become unemployed. In other words, by 2000, all women in Poland—not just those with specific family constraints—are encountering significant barriers to employment. Even more astonishing, by 2000, women with children are now nearly *seven times* more likely than men with young children to become unemployed.

Chart 1 shows the predicted probabilities of unemployment for men and women by education and parental status in 2000. This chart clearly illustrates how the employment opportunities for women in Poland—especially women with children—are increasingly limited relative to those of men. The clear, consistent horizontal trend from left to right shows that education reduces the likelihood of unemployment for both men and women, while the vertical distance between the lines demonstrates the net gender and child penalties for women. Note that while women are overall more likely to be unemployed than men, women with children are much more likely to be unemployed than women without children and men with or without children. Furthermore, while for men parenthood is an advantage for remaining employed, for women there is a sizeable “mother penalty.” It is important to note that even at a university-level education, the child penalty remains for women, demonstrating that even with the strong mediating effects of high education on unemployment, opportunities for working mothers remain limited.

In sum, results from our unemployment models suggest a dramatic divergence in the employment conditions of female workers in Hungary and Poland. We find strong and compelling evidence that Polish women are becoming increasingly marginalized from the mainstream labor market as a result of self-selection and/or discriminatory employment practices that privilege working men. In addition, this gender gap in unemployment has progressed rapidly over time to encompass all women, not just those that are married and/or have children. We also find that, once unemployed, re-entry is particularly difficult for women in Poland, where over one-third of those who report ever being unemployed since 1988 report a total duration of unemployment of three or more years during the past

CHART 1. PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY SEX, EDUC AND PRESENCE OF YNG CHILDREN FOR POLAND



decade. (See Chart 2 for a breakdown of the number of months spent unemployed by gender in both countries.) In sharp contrast, findings for Hungary show that the employment opportunities for women have outpaced those of men since the transition began. More importantly, married women and those with children—in other words, those most vulnerable to unemployment in Poland—have not been disproportionately affected by unemployment in Hungary. Finally, unlike in Poland, neither women nor men enjoy a noticeable advantage in the duration of their unemployment spells: Once unemployed, unemployed women remain unemployed as long on average as their male counterparts. Overall these findings support our general predictions regarding cross-country differences as a result of reform strategies.

Labor Force Participation

Results from the unemployment models show that the demand for women's labor has been, and continues to be, stronger than that of men's in

Hungary while results for Poland show the opposite trend. These results lend preliminary support for the predictions of retraditionalization theory in Poland but not in Hungary. However, there is also a labor supply dimension to this theory, which predicts that women will increasingly self-select out of the labor force in accordance with traditional gender roles. To reiterate, participation in the labor force means that one is actively employed, on maternity leave with a job, unemployed and looking for work. Thus, those not in the labor force report that they either keeping house, in early retirement, on disability retirement, or doing nothing. Importantly, no one coded as out of the labor force is currently looking for work. Thus, unlike unemployment, there is a degree of self-selection involved in these respondents' decision to remain out of the labor force. Such decisions are undoubtedly influenced by individual and family preferences and attitudes toward work and social roles, the structure of social support for remaining in the labor force, the material well-being of families of individuals who withdraw from the labor force, as well as the conditions individuals expect to face within the labor market. Thus we understand "self-selection" to take place within the context of structural, cultural, and individual constraint.

Overall, the labor force participation models show mixed support for the retraditionalization theory in Hungary and Poland. Trends in labor force participation for men and women from 1993 to 2000 flow in the opposite direction as those observed for unemployment in both countries. In Hungary, regression results indicate that in 1993, single women were equally as likely to participate in the labor force as single men, and mothers as likely to participate as fathers. However, married women were only one third as likely to be in the labor force as married men. Thus, as early as 1993, we see evidence that married women were withdrawing from or not-entering into the labor market—a finding consistent with the retraditionalization thesis. By 2000, however, the marriage effect disappears, while both single women without children and women with children have become increasingly likely to self-select out of the labor force.

Trends in labor force participation in Poland from 1993 to 2000 differ somewhat from those we find in Hungary. Regression results show that in 1993, women, including married women, were as likely to enter the labor force as men but women with young children were less than one-fifth as likely to participate in the labor force as men with young children. Though these results are consistent with the predictions of the retraditionalization thesis, these findings might also be explained by the sharp decline in state

support for working women with children in Poland, which occurred very early in the transition period. By 2000, however, the effect of children on women's labor force participation has disappeared. Women—including those who are married and have children—are no less likely to be in the labor force than their male counterparts. This finding is particularly relevant when considered along with our earlier findings on unemployment trends in Poland.

Discussion

The trajectory of unemployment rates by gender from 1988 to 2000 illustrates the motivating empirical puzzle for our current analysis and present a serious challenge to post-socialist states trying to reconcile the forces of marketization with the demands for social equality: Namely, what explains the rather dramatic difference between these two countries, which on many macro-economic indicators appear quite similar?

The transition at first appeared as a blessing for many working women in these two countries. In 1993, single women without children in Poland maintained a stable position in the labor market, despite child and marriage penalties for married women and mothers. However, the benefits that single women enjoyed in the transitional labor market were rather short-lived in Poland, disappearing by the end of the decade. Our results show that by 2000, in terms of unemployment, women's overall position in the Polish labor market declined significantly, particularly for single women and women with children. Meanwhile, the advantage that women enjoyed at the start of the reform process in Hungary appeared to be relatively stable.

In terms of Fodor's revalued resources, empirical support for the theory over time is limited. While a high level of education does indeed increasingly protect individuals from unemployment, any educational advantage that women might have gained under socialism has disappeared, at least in Hungary, by 2000. While in 1988 women held a distinct educational advantage over men, the educational gap began to close by 1993 and had basically disappeared by 2000. Thus, at the same time that the returns to education in the labor market are increasing, women's educational advantage relative to men is disappearing.

The theory of revalued resources also predicted that women would be protected from unemployment due to their numerical dominance in service sector occupations. While our results show that service sector employment was a significant factor in preventing unemployment for Hungarian

women in 1993, the interactive effect between gender and work in the service sector disappeared by 2000. Thus, in Hungary, as Fodor predicted, the preponderance of women in the burgeoning service industries gave women an employment advantage over men only during the initial stages of transition. In contrast, service occupations in Poland offered significant protection against unemployment in 1993 and in 2000. However, this protection was equal for women and for men and, thus, was not a unique advantage for women.

What about the predictions of retraditionalization, market discrimination, and reform trajectories theses? All theories predict a strong marriage and child-penalty for women in the labor market, while only the retraditionalization and reform trajectories theses make specific predictions about cross-country differences. While the retraditionalization thesis predicts both a supply-side and demand-side change in women's labor force due to changing attitudes regarding women's roles, the market discrimination and reform trajectories theories predicts a demand-side change as a result of the increasing costs—both real and imagined—of employing women. In terms of unemployment, we find support for all three theories. Results show that not only are women in Poland more likely than men to become unemployed, but there remains a large and significant child penalty for women. Indeed, even during the earliest years of the transition between 1988 and 1993, women in Poland encountered sizeable and significant child and marriage penalties. Conditions did not improve by 2000, when although the marriage penalty had disappeared for women, the net effect of gender had increased dramatically. By 2000, women were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than men and mothers were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than fathers. In sharp contrast, women in Hungary were less likely to be unemployed than men in both 1993 and in 2000, and neither marriage nor motherhood significantly affected women's labor market chances.

The timing, size, and significance of such gendered effects in Poland, but not in Hungary, lend empirical support to both the retraditionalization thesis and our own predictions about reform trajectories. Because most negative effects in Poland emerged sometime between 1989 and 1993, they seem to be attributable to a unique aspect of the early stages of the Polish transition. By predicting only unemployment, however, we are unable to adequately adjudicate between these competing theories. After all, we have no way of separating those individuals who are unemployed but looking for work (a large number of which would lend support to our trajectory

thesis) from individuals who self-select out of the labor market (a large number of which would lend support to the retraditionalization thesis). By analyzing labor force participations models we are better able to determine whether women's seeming disadvantage in Poland is due to demand or supply-side processes, to self-selection by female employees or to discrimination by employers. As with unemployment, evidence on labor force participation suggests important differences between Hungary and Poland. In 1993 in Poland mothers were much less likely to be in the labor force than fathers but, by 2000, all significant gender effect have disappeared. In Hungary, by contrast, only married women in Hungary are less likely to participate in the labor force compared to their male counterparts. By 2000, women and mothers are less likely to report being in the labor force.

We interpret the Polish findings as strongly supporting our transitional trajectory thesis. By 2000, Polish women are not self-selecting out of the labor force voluntarily despite the high barriers to remaining employed. What seems to best explain women's high rates of unemployment seems to be the preferences of employers to hire men over women and to avoid employing women with young children, or alternatively, to fire women and mothers at higher rates than men and fathers. Though the retraditionalization theory predicts that women in Poland are likely to exit the labor force by choice as well as by force, our evidence suggests that this has not occurred. Furthermore, the material situation of most families in this region makes it unlikely that large numbers of women (or men) would voluntarily leave the labor force. Under socialism, the standard of full employment meant that all or most families were essentially dual-earning households. The necessity of two incomes has only increased during the transition. Thus, unless households are willing to voluntarily lower their standard of living, or the general wage structure shifts so dramatically in these countries as to increase overall male earnings, women are unlikely to leave work voluntarily.

The more likely scenario—and one supported by our findings—is that women are being forced into unemployment and kept out of paid labor through discriminatory practices by employers and/or unfair labor market policies. Thus we find high rates of unemployment among women matched by high rates of self-reported labor force participation in Poland. We interpret this as evidence that even when unemployed, women are not giving up their attempts to re-enter the paid labor force. While culture factors may indeed be influencing individuals' attitudes toward family and gender roles, the long-term viability of women's voluntary exit from the

labor force depends on the structural ability of women and families to maintain traditional family roles while avoiding downward mobility or even poverty. It appears that, at least for the time being, structural conditions simply do not accommodate traditional gender ideologies, to the extent that they are prevalent during the transitional period.

Our findings also provide evidence of feminized long-term unemployment in Poland, while in Hungary no such trend is evident. In terms of duration of unemployment, we find that while men and women in Hungary experience similar lengths of unemployment, on average, women in Poland are much more likely to experience long-term unemployment compared to men. A surprising 35% of unemployed Polish women report three or more years of total unemployment since 1988. Thus, our findings suggest that not only do Polish women face a substantial degree of discrimination in the labor market as women, wives, and mothers, their chances of re-entry once they have become unemployed are low.

While the findings for Hungary could be interpreted as supporting the retraditionalization thesis, we offer a slightly modified interpretation. We suggest that Hungarian women and mothers increasingly self-select out of the labor force simply because they can. Since 1989, Hungarian women have enjoyed a relatively stable position vis-à-vis the labor market. Compared to their Polish counterparts, they have experienced relatively low levels of discrimination in terms of hiring and firing, they have enjoyed a more generous and universal social welfare benefits, and they have not experienced long-term unemployment on a massive scale. Thus, they may be more likely to self-select out of the labor force both because the labor force is more “woman friendly” and because of the endurance of the sexual division of labor according to which mothers are more likely to stay at home and care for children while their children are young. Therefore, in the case of Hungary—unlike Poland—women may be more able to act on their or their families desire for them to drop out of the labor force due to the presence of more favorable structural conditions.

Overall, our findings suggest that Hungarian women’s labor market advantage is due more to a *lack* of apparent discrimination, than to gender-specific revalued resources, such as high education or transferable skills. In fact, we find no evidence of a marriage or child-penalty for women in terms of unemployment in Hungary, suggesting that even those women most vulnerable to changes in the structure of welfare benefits and most dependent on state support of their employment, have managed to stay their ground in the transitional labor market. Furthermore, once unem-

ployed, women in Hungary do not remain unemployed any longer on average than their male counterparts. Though gendered inequities likely exist in terms of the duration and amount of unemployment benefits, unemployed women do not face insurmountable barriers to re-entry. Therefore, they may be much more likely to self-select out of the labor force simply because they can do so without fear of long-term unemployment or insurmountable barriers to re-entry.

Conclusion

Women in Hungary seem to enjoy an advantage in the transitional labor market that women in Poland do not. Not only do women in Hungary have greater access to more generous maternity and child social welfare benefits, but they are less likely to be unemployed. However, while our analysis focused on trends in unemployment and labor force participation, we do not deny the possibility that other types of gender inequalities exist in the Hungarian labor market, including a gender gap in wages, occupational sex segregation, sexual harassment, or inflexible and informal leave policies. Future research must follow employment trends in Hungary to track existing and emerging inequalities.

While the story of women's employment in Hungary permits tempered optimism, the picture that emerges in Poland does not. Almost immediately following the fall of communism, Polish women, particularly married women and women with young children, were faced with rapidly deteriorating labor market opportunities. For those women who became unemployed during the earliest years of transition, re-employment prospects were bleak. Our findings suggest that not only do Polish wives and mothers continue to face a substantial degree of discrimination in the labor market, but also once they exit the labor force, their chances of remaining unemployed are high. Contrary to neo-liberal predictions, therefore, this evidence suggests that unemployment is far from a fleeting phenomenon and is becoming a growing epidemic among women in Poland. Further research must focus on the extent and consequences of long-term unemployment in Poland. As with Hungary, future research must also continue to follow the effects of various reform efforts on women's employment opportunities.

Finally, this study demonstrates the need for state action to address issues of gender inequality in the labor market, particularly in Poland. Such action might include the establishment and enforcement of tough anti-dis-

crimination and sexual harassment laws, the development of a social safety net of social welfare benefits to support both working and non-working women and men with or without children, and the institution of women-friendly job and skills retraining programs. Though gender equality has seemingly ranked low in the priorities of policy makers throughout the transition, such policies may prevent increases in poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the years to come.

Appendix

TABLE 7. ODDS RATIOS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 1993, POLAND, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Age	1.210*** (0.047)	1.211*** (0.047)	1.212*** (0.047)
Age-sq	0.997*** (0.000)	0.997*** (0.000)	0.997*** (0.000)
Rural Residence	0.874 (0.098)	0.875 (0.099)	-
Female	0.787 (0.195)	0.777 (0.192)	0.782 (0.193)
Married	0.953 (0.230)	1.010 (0.236)	1.014 (0.236)
Married*Female	0.741 (0.228)	0.662 (0.185)	0.656 (0.184)
Spouse Employed	1.546* (0.301)	1.353* (0.171)	1.350* (0.171)
Spouse Employed * Female	0.795 (0.202)	-	-
Young Child in HH	1.466 (0.359)	1.454 (0.355)	1.428 (0.348)
Young Child*Female	0.329*** (0.934)	0.328*** (0.094)	0.329*** (0.094)
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	3.150*** (0.818)	3.136*** (0.815)	3.302*** (0.846)
Academic Secondary	1.439* (0.250)	1.428* (0.249)	1.498* (0.254)
Academic Technical	1.267 (0.204)	1.261 (0.203)	1.307 (0.207)
Vocational Training	1.207 (0.1760)	1.201 (0.175)	1.220 (0.177)
Chi-square	419.96	419.14	417.73
Degrees of Freedom	14	13	12

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 8. ODDS RATIOS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 1993, HUNGARY, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Age	1.300*** (0.061)	1.303*** (0.061)	1.312*** (0.060)
Age-sq	1.000*** (.001)	1.000*** (0.001)	0.995*** (0.001)
Rural Residence	0.818 (0.104)	0.817 (0.104)	0.815 (0.103)
Female	1.349 (0.353)	1.342 (0.351)	1.311 (0.339)
Married	1.664* (0.416)	1.770* (0.426)	1.823** (0.420)
Married*Female	0.488* (0.167)	0.425** (0.130)	0.411** (0.123)
Spouse Employed	1.661* (0.336)	1.464** (0.209)	1.444** (0.204)
Spouse Employed * Female	0.780 (0.218)	-	-
Young Child in HH	1.249 (0.378)	1.216 (0.365)	-
Young Child*Female	0.695 (0.259)	0.715 (0.266)	-
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	6.656*** (1.949)	6.602*** (1.931)	6.549*** (1.914)
Academic Secondary	2.223*** (0.468)	2.211*** (0.466)	2.205*** (0.464)
Academic Technical	2.426*** (0.498)	2.430*** (0.499)	2.413*** (0.494)
Vocational Training	2.112*** (0.326)	2.105*** (0.325)	2.098*** (0.323)
Chi-square	514.23	513.44	512.61
Degrees of Freedom	14	13	11

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 9. ODDS RATIO FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 2000, POLAND, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Age	1.281*** (0.074)	1.281*** (0.074)	1.275*** (0.072)
Age-sq	0.996*** (0.001)	0.996*** (0.001)	0.996*** (0.001)
Rural Residence	1.093 (0.183)	-	-
Female	0.836 (0.257)	0.832 (0.256)	0.731 (0.218)
Married	1.605 (0.502)	1.603 (0.502)	1.330 (0.380)
Married*Female	0.453* (0.178)	0.454 (0.179)	0.519 (0.186)
Spouse Employed	0.508 (0.191)	0.503 (0.188)	-
Spouse Employed * Female	1.962 (0.848)	1.996 (0.860)	-
Young Child in HH	0.985 (0.356)	0.987 (0.357)	-
Young Child*Female	0.629 (0.255)	0.628 (0.255)	-
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	5.048*** (2.033)	4.861*** (1.926)	4.758*** (1.873)
Academic Secondary	3.202*** (0.696)	3.130*** (0.666)	3.211*** (0.679)
Apprenticeship	1.764** (0.331)	1.743** (0.325)	1.691** (0.312)
Poor sample	1.113 (0.188)	1.115 (0.189)	1.131 (0.190)
Chi-square	198.59	198.31	190.52
Degrees of Freedom	14	13	9

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 10. ODDS RATIO FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: 2000, HUNGARY, AGES 20 - 59

Independent Variables	Full <i>Model 1</i>	Reduced <i>Model 2</i>	Country-Specific <i>Model 3</i>
Age	1.230** (0.085)	1.236** (0.085)	1.243** (0.084)
Age-sq	0.997*** (0.001)	0.996*** (0.001)	0.996*** (0.001)
Rural Residence	1.263 (0.245)	-	-
Female	0.879 (0.285)	0.877 (0.284)	0.564** (0.120)
Married	1.669 (0.489)	1.708 (0.500)	-
Married*Female	0.452 (0.190)	0.441 (0.185)	-
Spouse Employed	1.283 (0.652)	1.247 (0.631)	-
Spouse Employed * Female	1.1054 (0.616)	1.083 (0.630)	-
Young Child in HH	1.051 (0.427)	1.036 (0.421)	1.282 (0.495)
Young Child*Female	0.168*** (0.081)	0.170*** (0.081)	0.148*** (0.068)
Education (Ref = <=Elem)			
University	4.419*** (1.670)	4.123*** (1.539)	4.397*** (1.625)
Academic Secondary	2.378** (0.611)	2.278** (0.579)	2.308** (0.582)
Apprenticeship	1.947** (0.415)	1.923** (0.408)	1.941** (0.409)
Poor sample	0.625* (0.123)	0.624* (0.123)	0.594** (0.115)
Chi-square	166.10	164.64	158.95
Degrees of Freedom	14	13	9

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Change in chi-square from Model 1 to Model 3 is not significant for all models.

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

NOTES

1. There are notable exceptions, including Fodor (1997; 1998) and Fong and Paull (1993).

2. Although state socialist regimes required full employment, little was done to transform the gendered division of labor in the home and family. The state's neglect of the "private" sphere was consistent with communist ideology, which assumed women would gain emancipation from equality in the labor force. In fact, women's participation in the formal labor market only added to their existing responsibilities as caretakers, wives, and mothers. Moreover, women's participation in the socialist labor market was characterized by wage inequalities, legalized sex segregation, and discrimination. For a discussion of women's "double burden" under socialism see Corrin (1992).

3. By holding the level of market development constant we also recognize that although Hungary and Poland currently appear equal or relatively equal on most aggregate measures of economic development, these two countries pursued rather divergent reform strategies.

4. See King and Szelenyi (2001) for an analysis of divergent strategies of reform and their consequences in post state-socialist societies.

5. Between 1990 and 1993 unemployment rates in Hungary and Poland increased dramatically. In 1991, official statistics report less than 2% unemployment in Hungary and 3.5% in Poland. By 1993 the equivalent figures were >12% and 16% respectively (Fodor 1997).

6. There is evidence that this trend continues. Fuszara notes that despite rising tuition requirements, women continue to outpace men in seeking higher education. Women also continue to predominate in feminized majors, including humanities and pedagogy, while men predominate in more financially lucrative majors, including management, engineering, and computer science (Fuszara 2000: 263).

7. Child allowances are no longer indexed to the cost of living, resulting in some payments as low as \$.50 per child per month (Zajicek 1995).

8. The Hungarian parental leave allowance (EPA), which had previously paid new mothers up to 75% of average earnings from at the end of the maternity leave period (when the child was 6 months old) until the child turned 2 year old, was abolished in 1996. Also in 1996, a second form of parental allowance, known as FRA, which had previously been a universal benefit, became means-tested. For a more complete review of the changes in maternity and parental leave benefits, see Haney (1997: 2002) and Goven (2000).

9. In Poland between 1989 and 1995 the number of nurseries declined by 60%, while the number of kindergartens declined 25% (Kotowska 1995).

10. Neither Polish nor Hungarian law currently protects workers from sexual harassment.

11. Heinen (1995) argues that many Polish employers perceive women—particularly young, married women—as risky and unreliable workers, with high rates of absenteeism due to family obligations

12. We use the categories "shock therapy" and "gradualism" with caution. Though often used to contrast Hungary and Poland, these categories tend to over-

emphasize the differences between the transition strategies. However, there were important differences between the timing and character of Hungarian and Polish reform processes, and it is the consequences of these differences that we wish to highlight and explore in this paper.

13. Until the Parliamentary reform programs of 1995/96, the Hungarian welfare system continued socialist policies of universal entitlement and complete inclusion of social welfare in the central budget (Goven 2000).

14. In Poland in 1989, official statistics reported less than 1% unemployment; by 1992, more than 2.3 million people were unemployed (Duke and Grime 1994). Furthermore, Milanovic (1994) reports that between 1989 and 1993, poverty in Poland more than tripled, while poverty in Hungary increased only minimally.

15. The 1990 Polish Employment Amendment abolished job protection for women on maternity leave from firms that had liquidated and/or declared bankruptcy. Because such classifications applied to such a vast number of companies in Poland in the early 1990s, the effects on mothers' labor market participation was significant (Bryant and Mokrzycki 1994).

16. Fodor (1996) found that being on maternity leave in 1988 was a significant predictor of being unemployed in 1993 in Poland but not in Hungary.

17. See Appendix A to determine how the poverty over-sample was selected in both countries.

18. We are limited in our ability to make longitudinal claims using cross-sectional data from two time points. However, our analysis is suggestive of dramatic cross-country differences and it is therefore possible to argue that the countries under study are indeed following two distinct paths.

19. The official retirement age is 55 for women in Hungary and 60 for women in Poland. The retirement age for men in Hungary and Poland is 60 and 65 respectively.

20. Early retirement programs have been used to reduce the overall labor force, and many speculate that such programs affect women disproportionately. Therefore we include those who report being retired but who are younger than the official retirement age. Students were excluded from the analysis.

21. We tested for differential effects between various categories of marital status by including dummy variables for divorced, separated, widowed, single, cohabitating, etc. but found no significant inter-status differences. We therefore relied on the more straightforward dichotomous categorization.

22. We use a dummy variable for young children rather than a continuous variable since the latter did not yield any significant effects. This suggests that although the presence of children has a significant impact on one's probability of (un)employment, there are no added effects for each additional child.

23. Due to the size of the 2000 representative samples, we added poverty over-samples to our analyses. Although the overall unemployment rate is higher in the poverty over-sample than in the representative sample, this will not bias our results or our conclusions with regard to identifying the factors that contribute to unemployment and labor force participation since we assume these mechanisms operate similarly for both populations. To test this assumption, we ran separate models for both the poor and the representative samples. The coefficients for both the unem-

ployment and labor force participation models did not differ significantly for the two populations

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Members

Julia P. Adams

Julia Adams, Professor of Sociology, teaches and conducts research in the areas of state formation, gender and family, and social theory. She is currently studying contemporary forms of patriarchal politics, and the historical sociology of principal-agent relations.

Jeffrey C. Alexander

Jeffrey Alexander, Professor of Sociology, works in the areas of theory, culture, and politics. An exponent of the 'strong program' in cultural sociology, he has investigated the cultural codes and narratives that inform such diverse areas as computer technology, environmental politics, war-making, the Watergate crisis, and civil society.

Jennifer Bair

Jennifer Bair, Assistant Professor of Sociology, teaches and conducts research in the sociology of development and economic sociology. Her recent work examines the implications of post-NAFTA industrial restructuring for firms and workers in Mexico.

Scott A. Boorman

Scott Boorman Professor of Sociology and Research Affiliate, Cowles Foundation for Research in Economics, is a mathematical sociologist interested in developing new mathematical phenomenology for complex social structures and processes. His research in recent years has been in models for evolutionary biosociology, blockmodel algorithms for the empirical description of social networks, and the theory of complex statutory evolution, and analysis of social processes that involve alternatives to rational choice.

Hannah Brueckner

Hannah Brueckner, Assistant Professor of Sociology (University of North Carolina, 2000), is interested in micro-level models of social structure. She teaches and conducts research in stratification, gender inequality, life course, social policy, welfare states, social networks, and adolescent behavior. Methodologically, she works with quantitative methods for describing and analyzing longitudinal data, especially event history analysis.

Averil Clarke

Averil Clarke, Assistant Professor of Sociology, obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2002; her dissertation, entitled *I do if I could: marriage, meaning and the social reproduction of inequality* uses qualitative and quantitative sources and techniques to explore the relationship between family formation, race, class and gender stratification among African American women.

Deborah Davis

Deborah Davis, Professor of Sociology, is currently dividing her research time between a book exploring the social consequences of privatizing home ownership in Chinese cities and a field study of educational reform in rural China. Her primary teaching interests are comparative sociology, inequality, stratification, and contemporary Chinese society.

Ron Eyerman

Ron Eyerman, Professor of Sociology, received his B.A. from the New School for Social Research, a Masters in Labor and Industrial Relations from the University of Oregon, and his Doctorate at the University of Lund, Sweden. He is the author of several recent books, including *Music and Social Movements* and *Cultural Trauma*, and *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. His interests include cultural and social movement theory, critical theory, cultural studies and the sociology of the arts. He is Co-Director of the Center for Cultural Sociology and currently, the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

Philip S. Gorski

Philip Gorski, Professor of Sociology, works in historical and comparative sociology. His research is in early modern Europe, particularly in Germany and Holland, focusing on the interaction of religion and state building. His recent book, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, proposes a new theory of the

emergence of the modern state. He has also developed a strong interest in contemporary religion.

Lawrence P. King

Lawrence King, Associate Professor of Sociology, is a comparativist who studies the intersection of political processes, social structure and economic institutions. He has published widely on the transition to capitalism in Eastern Europe and Russia using both qualitative and quantitative methods. He is currently writing his third book, *Postcommunist Capitalisms*, about the emergence of three distinct types of capitalist systems in the post-communist and reform communist world.

Karl Ulrich Mayer

Uli Mayer, Professor of Sociology, works in the areas of stratification, education, labor markets, life course and aging. He has done empirical quantitative research on images of society, intergenerational social mobility, vocational training, higher education, job shifts and career mobility, labor market segmentation, and the transformation of East Germany.

Alondra Nelson

Alondra Nelson, Assistant Professor of Sociology and African American Studies. Her research interests are in the areas of the sociology of health, illness and the body; the sociology of science, technology and knowledge; social movements; social stratification (intersections of race, class, and gender); and social and cultural theory. Her research areas include the social implications of genetic science; genetics and racialization; African American social movements and health activism; and race, gender and technology.

Christopher Rhomberg

Christopher Rhomberg, Ph.D. (University of California, Berkeley, 1997) Associate Professor of Sociology, does research and teaches in the areas of political sociology and social movements, urban sociology, race and ethnicity, and historical methods. His research has concentrated on race, class and urban politics in the United States. Current work focuses on contemporary alliances between labor unions and community organizations, and on collective action within the media industry. Methodologically, he is interested in narrative forms of sociological explanation, and in problems of representing collective agency.

Rachel Sherman

Rachel Sherman, Assistant Professor of Sociology, conducts research and teaches in the areas of service work, organized labor, class, culture, social movements, and qualitative methods. Her recent research is on work and inequality in luxury hotels in the U.S.

Philip Smith

Philip Smith, Assistant Professor of Sociology researches in the area of social and cultural theory, cultural sociology and criminology. Working mostly from a Durkheimian perspective, he is primarily concerned with the role of symbolic codes, narratives, classifications, morality and rituals in social life and the ways that these structure conflict, identity and action.

Peter Stamatov

Peter Stamatov, Assistant Professor of Sociology, does research on the sociology of culture, ethnicity and nationhood, social movements, and globalization in the context of modern Europe. His dissertation focused on the neglected moral aspects of globalization by examining the religious roots of practices and institutions concerned with the welfare of geographically distant strangers in nineteenth-century England. In another project, he investigates the political implications of musical theater in nineteenth-century Europe.

Iván Szelényi

Iván Szelényi, William Graham Sumner Professor of Sociology, works on social inequalities from a comparative and historical perspective. Recently he conducted large scale surveys on changing stratification system in European post-communist countries and currently he is working on poverty and ethnicity in transitional societies.

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