

Industrial & Labor Relations Review

Volume 62, Issue 2

2009

Article 10

Global Unions: Challenging Transnational Capital through Cross-Border Campaigns.

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time, just as in California, hospital employers were resistant to changes in workload management and offered no viable alternatives, nurses were dissatisfied with the work environment, and the question of whether the ratio could legitimately be used to define the maximum staffing level rather than the minimum remained unresolved.

Section 3 discusses what is known and not known about how nurse-to-patient ratios affect patients, nurses, and hospitals. The authors review studies evaluating the relationship between nurse staffing/ratios and patient or nurse outcomes, and discuss the various arguments against ratios and proposed alternatives to them. Three of their conclusions are of particular interest: collective action is important; ratios must be constantly recalibrated to fit the reality of the changing workplace; and ratios alone are not enough to create either a satisfactory work environment or a safe patient environment.

Safety in Numbers succeeds in explaining much of the often arcane world of nurse staffing in a way that is entertaining and understandable to a general audience. It should be helpful to both researchers and practitioners whose work brings them into contact with hospitals, nurses, or the care and treatment of the sick and disabled.

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Global Unions: Challenging Transnational Capital through Cross-Border Campaigns. Edited by Kate Bronfenbrenner. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press (an imprint of Cornell University Press), 2007. 280 pp. ISBN 978-0-8014-7391-3, \$22.50 (paper).

Most academics accept that globalization is politically contested. It seems obvious to most people who think seriously about labor and globalization that trade unions and civil society respond to new kinds of injustice by making demands on multinational corporations and nation states. While this is the premise of most literature on international and comparative industrial relations, few writers focus on the concrete realities of injustice and the difficult struggles for change, and most assume that unions are weak and unsuccessful in these struggles. Kate Bronfenbrenner's new book

makes the argument that unions and their allies can actually win these struggles if they have the right strategies.

The book contains papers from a 2006 conference involving academics and trade unionists from around the world, including many key figures from the American labor movement. The purpose of the conference, Bronfenbrenner writes, was to make unions more effective at campaigning against multinationals, in particular, by strengthening the research function, and ultimately, to "shift the balance of power between capital and labor" (p. 221). She argues that, through their presence, the 560 attendees "demonstrated that there is a strategic front uniting against the combined power of the neoliberal state and transnational corporations" (p. 2). The book's ten chapters, whittled down from nearly 100 paper proposals, examine various aspects of international campaigning. Most are high-quality case studies, fine representatives of the burgeoning international literature on union revitalization.

One of the book's central points is that campaigns should take place at many scales, or levels, such as the workplace, the community, the nation-state, and the corporate network. The two pieces that make this point most directly are those by Tom Juravich and by Amanda Tattersall. Juravich provides an excellent overview of the past three decades of corporate campaigning developed by some of the sharpest minds in the U.S. trade union movement, and explains in some detail the state-of-the-art corporate research techniques. Tattersall describes the international campaigns of the U.S. Service Employees International Union, using an interpretive framework that reflects an intensive engagement with economic geography. These two researchers touch in different ways on the spatial complexity of union strategies and the need for activities at different levels to interact with and complement one another. In other words, union strategies should be simultaneously bottom-up and top-down and should knit different elements together in constantly changing ways.

Most of these papers deal with cooperation between unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This point is central to the papers on workers' struggles in the global south, including the pieces by Peter Wad, Ashwini Sukthanakar, Kevin Kolben, and Darryn Snell. Wad's piece examines a campaign in which union-sponsored NGOs in Denmark supported a decades-long struggle for union recognition in a Malaysian factory. Sukthanakar and Kolben discuss the campaigns of Indian unions, together with NGOs in the global north and south, in one case, facilitated by the World Social Forum. Snell's article

assesses ways in which unions might work to hold multinational corporations accountable for their role, passive or active, in human rights abuses, including summary executions, torture, rape, forced relocation of indigenous people, and use of slave labor. Central to all of these contributions is the limitation of the law in protecting workers, the need for campaigners to view regulation as one of many resources, and the need for cooperation between unions and NGOs in the global north and global south.

A third theme is the role of new, alternative instruments for regulating the workplace. These are the focus of articles by Valeria Pulignano, Samantha Gunawardana, Dimitris Stevis, and Terry Boswell. Pulignano discusses the successes and limitations of European Works Councils (EWCs)—statutory information and consultation bodies located at the level of the European firm—as manifested in the 2004 struggle at General Motors Europe around corporate restructuring and potential plant closures. Gunawardana's paper discusses self-organization of workers in Sri Lanka's export processing zones (EPZs) through internationally networked women's centers, rather than through traditional trade unions. Stevis and Boswell assess International Framework Agreements (IFAs), which are codes of conduct negotiated between trade unions and (mostly European) multinationals. While these instruments all have advantages for workers, these writers identify problems and limitations that prevent them from providing complete solutions: EWCs are riven by economic conflicts of interest; political and social repression face women working and organizing in EPZs; and IFAs are voluntaristic and Eurocentric.

This book has two excellent sectoral case studies, one on the Latin American banana industry by Henry Frundt and one on the European port sector by Peter Turnbull. Frundt's paper is about trade unions' strategies to organize multinational banana companies, to fight restrictive European import duties, and to promote certification programs to support employers that pay a living wage. Turnbull's piece follows how unions successfully mobilized against the European Commission's proposed liberalization of ports, a regulatory initiative that was aimed at forcing countries to allow seafarers to take over work done by more highly paid longshore workers. While both of these sectors are dominated by multinational firms, both are also subject to transnational government regulation, either through trade arrangements or EU competition rules. Whereas the longshore workers were able to use industrial action and various kinds of insider influence (including close ties to the association of port operators), banana

workers used grass-roots lobbying and worked with consumers and NGOs. Both, however, used complex, multi-scalar strategies, aimed at both states and companies.

Bronfenbrenner's assessment of the chapters reflects her ambition to promote effective international campaigning strategies. While the introduction tells us that unions have "done battle with some of the most powerful transnational corporations and governments and won" (p. 2), the conclusion argues that union-side negotiators of IFAs have "a great deal of learning to do" (p. 218), and that campaigns relying excessively on the state are "doomed to failure" (p. 215). Bronfenbrenner's solution to these limitations is encapsulated in the concept of "comprehensiveness": more corporate research, more coalition building, more understanding between global north and global south, more countering of competition with solidarity, more participation by the rank-and-file, and more shifts in strategy (in order to wrong-foot management). Piecemeal, defensive activities are criticized, and comprehensive, strategic campaigning praised. The book's final line: "global unions are the future" (p. 225).

So, what are the winning strategies? It is difficult to disagree that, as corporate strategies become more international, so should the strategies of unions, or that international strategies have to be sophisticated in order to be effective. However, it is equally difficult to tell whether "comprehensiveness" means an increase in quality or quantity, better activity, or just more activity. Furthermore, the call for "global unions" is divorced from the realities presented in the chapters. Readers learn much less about the triumphs of global unions than about local and national unions and NGOs from different parts of the world cooperating in ways that are more or less effective.

Bronfenbrenner's book has much to offer for those interested in the internationalization of unions and civil society. The Juravich chapter, in particular, provides crystal-clear insight into the state of the art of international campaigning in the United States, and should be read by any activist or academic dealing with multinationals. The rest of the chapters provide windows into an exceptionally wide range of international labor activism. For students, scholars, and activists trying to find their way in a globalized world, this book will be extremely valuable.

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