Labour Internationalism: An exploration of the grassroots' perspective

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Rebecca Amie Ryland

30th September 2011

Abstract

Labour Internationalism: An exploration of the grassroots' perspective

Over recent decades UK trade unions have faced a period of uncertainty due to the ongoing political, economic and cultural shifts in the industrial relations landscape. Many have queried the contemporary role of trade unions arguing they are antiquated and superfluous organisations who have not engaged with new norms that hold that collective organisational principles of solidarity have been replaced by individualised thinking and practice.

A variety of strategies have been employed to reverse declines in membership levels and bargaining power but with limited success. The outlook is not entirely bleak however with many turning to what is often referred to as the 'saviour of the labour movement' (Mazur, 2000): a 'new' labour internationalism.

Trade unions have a long history of engagement in labour internationalism, however there has been limited investigation into how union initiatives encouraging internationalism and internationalist identifications are received, understood and interpreted at the grassroots, by union members whose subscriptions sustain union activity in the first place.

By developing upon a growing expanse of literature within the field of labour geography which seeks to place the politics of labour at the forefront of its analysis, this thesis will explore a case study of UNISON North West, identifying how labour internationalism is understood, expressed and conducted in daily practice. Analyses will be based upon members' personal narratives thus reasserting the importance of worker agency.

This thesis is dedicated to my Mum and Dad.

This is to you,

This is for you,

And this is because of you.

Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors David Sadler and Pete North whose theoretical insight and guidance have moulded this thesis into what it is today. Your academic insights, comments and suggestions have provided much needed clarity on many occasions whilst your pastoral support has been gratefully received..."*keep on keeping on*".

Thank you to "Team Roxby" (Department of Geography, University of Liverpool) where I have been lucky to be surrounded by such thoughtful and supportive fellow postgraduates. In particular thank you to Denise Hinton who was my source of sanity and calm during times of stress. Thank you to Tinho, Bob, Jane, Claire and Andrea for all of your helpful advice when I've pestered you on a many number of different things! Thank you also to DJFeath for spurring me on with your political insights and good humour.

I would like to thank my parents and my sister Elena for providing me with daily examples on how I should live my life – overcoming challenges with a strong sense of family, caring supportive attitudes towards others, hard work, enthusiasm and most of all humour. All of you were with me at the very start of this process when I

vowed "never again" to doing anymore study on submitting my Masters dissertation at Liverpool John Moores University; to the conversations on a PhD studentship I had seen advertised; and now years later on its submission. I cannot begin to put into words the thanks due for all your love and support. You have all been a constant source of encouragement in all that I do and I will always be grateful.

To my husband-to-be Jon – thank you for believing in me that I could do it! Thank you for listening and advising me. Your encouragement and optimism got me through the ups and downs that a PhD brings, particularly in its latter stages.

Finally, my eternal gratitude goes to the individuals who participated in this research. I will always be indebted to you for the time, input and enthusiasm each of you put into this research as well as your willingness to welcome me into the world of trade unionism. It was meeting people such as yourselves and spending time with you that really opened my eyes to the world of the labour movement and acted as a catalyst to my commitment to trade unionism as a vocation. Just as many of the participants went through a transitional experience from lay member to activist during this research I too experienced transition: from objective researcher to lifelong trade unionist. Thank you participants for giving me an insight into your world and for showing me what is relevant and interesting in your lives, as ultimately, this research would not have been possible without your contribution.

Contents

List of Acronyms

AFL-CIO	The American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations
COHSE	The Confederation of Health Service Employees
ICFTU	The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
MNCs	Multinational corporations
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NILS	New international labour studies
NLI	New labour internationalism
NSM	New social movements
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
PP	Political Process theory
RAT	Rational actor theory
RMT	Resource mobilisation theory
SMT	Social Movement Theory
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

Chapter 1

Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

The trade union movement has faced a period of dramatic uncertainty in recent decades with many analysts questioning the continuing commitment of the modern worker to collective solidarity, aims and actions through membership of trade unions (Ferner and Hyman, 1998; Martin and Ross, 1999). Unions have been accused of becoming antiquated and superfluous organisations because they have not engaged with new norms which hold that collective organisational principles and forms of action are inappropriate to an era in which values of solidarity and the commons have been replaced by the sovereignty of individuals in the creation of their own lives (see for instance Beck, 1992).

Declining membership levels, influence and bargaining power have led many, both within and external to the movement, to question the role of trade unions. Experience has demonstrated that as with all organisations, trade unions are sensitive to wider issues and events, particularly labour market changes and the impacts of neo-liberal state policies. Such developments have heralded a necessity for trade unions to adopt measures of organisational change, in order to identify means for reform and revitalisation. At first slow to respond, many trade unions have more recently been adopting various strategies of reorganisation, with moves away from traditional forms of trade union organisation towards initiatives based upon the narratives of both community unionism and social movement unionism as part of attempts to build a new

model of representing and relating to a changing workforce. Revitalisation is also evident in the process of merger between unions, and the emergence of so-called 'super unions'. As part of this, unions have begun to look beyond national borders in attempts to (re)develop international solidarity, once the very backbone of trade unionism. Labour internationalism has to some extent resulted in the creation of transnational links for information and best practice exchange, for example. Furthermore, the aim for some is to re-establish networks of solidarity between workers across borders to pursue the original *raison d'être* of the trade union movement – for workers of the world to unite, creating a global community based on worker identity.

As yet however, there has been very limited investigation into how union initiatives encouraging internationalism and internationalist identification are received, understood and interpreted at the grassroots, by union members. There have been studies of the development of transnational alliances created through the international networking of localised protests and campaigns, for instance in the evolution of the Liverpool dockworkers dispute in the 1990's (Castree, 2000). There have been analyses of the impacts of specific institutionalised forms of international labour organisation, such as European Works Councils (Wills 1998). What remains to be explored in depth however, is how union agendas that aim to promote labour internationalism, and in related fashion, that aim to align union work with broader international development issues such as the fight against global poverty, are seen by those to whom such agendas are targeted: the union members whose subscriptions sustain union activity in the first place.

Trade unions have a long history of engagement in labour internationalism and in campaigning in the wider field of international development; yet despite the growing expanse of literature within this field of labour geography (which seeks to

2

place the politics of labour at the forefront of its analysis), there is very little research into whether or not grassroots members support or query its conduct – or are even aware of international activity. This thesis therefore aims to explore grassroots and branch perspectives on these wider roles with a focus upon how these understandings and interpretations are constructed. The research will attempt to identify whether solidarity and the concentration of interests across space can effectively serve as the foundations for contemporary trade unionism (Hyman, 1994).

1.2   Case Study: UNISON North West

UNISON is one of the largest public sector trade unions in the United Kingdom (UK) with over 1.3 million members. It was formed in 1993 when three public sector trade unions, the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE) merged. UNISON members work across a number of service groups: local government; the National Health Service (NHS); the Police service; education; utilities; transport and the voluntary sector.

As a trade union, UNISON provides support to members on work related issues, including individual or collective bargaining and negotiating support and representation on pay and terms & conditions. Fundamentally, trade unions are organisations that fight against social injustice thus much of UNISON work is campaigning on issues such as anti-discrimination, equality and promoting fair pay.

Practically speaking, members within a company/organisation are represented according to a defined geographical area and service group i.e. Manchester health branch and Manchester local government branch. UNISON branch and members within that organisation elect volunteer stewards to represent them. The stewards receive training in workplace issues and are then able to co-ordinate and represent members on both an individual basis and collectively. Each branch is run by an annually elected committee of members which holds regular meetings, including an annual general meeting for all members to attend. Branches elect delegates to attend the union's annual National Delegate Conference, whereupon the National Executive Body (the elected supreme body) meets with lay activists to set the union's policies for the forthcoming year. To encourage all voices to be heard UNISON has 'self organised groups' of black and minority ethnic members, women members, lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender members, and disabled members. Young members and retired members also have their own sections within the union. Being a 'member-led' trade union through groups such as these is a part of UNISON's very ethos.

UNISON nationally is composed of twelve regions across the UK. The North West region (upon which this thesis is based) is the largest of these regions with approx 200,000 members. The region covers a large geographically spacious and diverse area – from the rural Cumbrian Lakes at the north of the region; to the Cheshire countryside at the south; the Merseyside coastline on the west, through to the urban sprawl of Greater Manchester in the east of the region. This diverse geographical spread brings with it various characteristics with which the union must contend on a daily basis – often areas of extremely high deprivation lie alongside very affluent areas, making for high variances in politics, demographics and trade union activity levels and density.

Given that UNISON is one of the largest trade unions in the UK, this necessarily involves a consideration of the positioning of public sector unions within the current politico-economic environment. The thesis will examine issues such as increasing levels of privatisation within the sector and relations with global employers; with these ideas engaged with alongside debates on whether internationalism provides trade unions with a strengthened framework from which to counter the attacks from neoliberal capitalism in collaboration with other unions.

In his book, 'Redefining Public Sector Unionism: UNISON and the Future of Trade Unions', Terry (2000: 2) claims that 'in the voluminous literature on British trade unions there is virtually no treatment of public service unions as a distinct set of institutions'. The same can be said now over a decade since the book was first published. Terry continues: 'In effect, they are treated as centralised, bureaucratic, traditionally rather right-wing versions of private sector unions'. Within this thesis I wish to advance a different view of the public sector, in particular with regards the practice of labour internationalism.

In terms of political engagement and lobbying many argue that unions have had a stronger political voice when influencing favourable legislation under Labour governments, having delivered gains such as the minimum wage and the transposition of European Working Time Directive. However, much of this has been cautious and weak in order for the then governing party (Labour 1997 – 2010) to maintain its pro-business face, and the laws governing industrial action and statutory trade union recognition are still particularly constraining (Dickens and Hall, 2006). Notwithstanding its role as a major party funder, UK trade unions have been unable to position themselves as a *the* key political actor with whom the government must

interact despite lobbying becoming an increasingly vital part of the policy making process (Baccaro et al., 2003: Hamann and Kelly, 2003). Where unions are able to build adequate political and institutional support they appear to have less incentive to mobilise their membership, build coalitions with other groups or support grassroots initiatives. Therefore, the degree and type of institutional embeddedness influences the revitalisation strategies trade unions adopt allowing one to query whether the perceived deteriorating relationship between the union movement and UK politics has acted as a catalyst for public sector trade unions to adopt more internationalist motivated strategies.

By arguing that public sector unions are distinctive within the industrial relations arena is not to suggest that the case study of UNISON North West explored within this thesis has no wider implications. The issues confronting UNISON are similar to those affecting many unions, the responses, if distinctive are nevertheless relevant in other contexts. Insofar as the so called crisis of trade unionism is first and foremost often deemed (incorrectly) a private sector phenomenon a plausible case can be made for seeing the future of public sector trade unionism as crucial to the survival of the wider labour movement. The case study is significant as UNISON has international activity as core to its revitalisation strategy, and because UNISON stresses that it aims to be a union that is led by members in all that it does. Whilst much of the debate about labour internationalism focuses on the private sector and the role of global corporations, the prospect and reality of privatisation of governmental functions, coupled with the fact that union membership density has historically been relatively high in the public sector, makes the actions of trade unions in the public sector of extra significance.

1.3 Structure of this thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Building on this first chapter which has outlined the context of this research, *Chapter 2* will look at the challenges faced by trade unions. Literature related to trade union revitalisation strategies will be drawn upon to highlight the attempts made at renewal; before discussing whether labour internationalism could be an effective tool for revitalisation. This will be examined within the context of public sector unionism and trade union relations within the UK.

Chapter 3 will then trace the relationship between human geography and labour from the starting point of a 'geography of labour' to more recent notions of 'labour geography' which asserted notions of labour agency in producing economic space. Focus will then turn to related understandings of labour internationalism from its inception through to the contemporary concept of a 'new' labour internationalism. Finally the chapter will highlight theoretical debates that illustrate the complexities of international solidarity – its conduct and motivations.

The use of social movement theory in *Chapter 4* positions my study of labour internationalism in a way that highlights the interactions and personal narratives produced through labour internationalism. Before moving onto the empirical sections of this thesis, *Chapter 5* outlines the methodology of this research, reflects on the political motivations for undertaking this thesis and the benefits and challenges to conducting a PhD CASE Studentship.

Chapter 6 introduces the empirical section of the thesis by identifying UNISON grassroots members' awareness and understanding of labour internationalism. It explores how internationalism is framed and expressed in daily practice (if at all) by individuals and at branch level.

Chapter 7 will present personal narratives from international activists that suggest an individual's experiences, daily habits, multiple agencies and positioning within various networks result in different interpretations of internationalism. This is also true for non-active lay members: thus the key for trade unions is to tap into this uncovered, potential international activeness.

Chapter 8 then brings together discussions in previous chapters to identify whether new labour internationalism is, or has the potential to, revitalise public sector trade unionism. The chapter will analyse theorisations of the public sector before arguing that for new labour internationalism to be an effective revitalisation strategy it must be grassroots based, adopting social movement approaches that construct internationalist identities and connections between public sector workers globally.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by reiterating the key arguments set out across previous chapters. It will return to each of the four questions stated below before presenting reflections on the research.

The thesis will address the theoretical and practical problems through the following research questions:

(i)   In what ways, if at all, do grassroots members think about internationalism?

(ii)   To what extent, and how, do grassroots members make connections with international 'others'?

(iii)   What, if anything, is 'new' about labour internationalism?

(iv)   To what extent is, and could, labour internationalism be an effective tool in revitalising public sector unions?

Chapter 2

Revitalising public sector unions

2.1   Introduction

This chapter examines debates surrounding the historical supersession of trade unions in postmodern, post-industrial times querying whether the trade unions that exist today are organisations fit for purpose in this new era. An entire literature on trade union renewal has been dedicated to this concern for more than a decade, some of which will be referred to within this chapter. This chapter will identify debates surrounding an apparent decline in trade unionism and resultant revitalisation strategies, both conventional tried and tested methods, and one deemed the 'saviour of the labour movement' (Mazur, 2000) that of a 'new' labour internationalism.

2.2   Trade unions: historically superseded?

The decline of UK trade unions is a familiar story. As shown in the first chapter issues such as mass unemployment, privatisation and de-industrialisation in the 1980's were followed by the challenges of globalisation and reluctance on the part of the 1997-2010 Labour Government to reverse the anti-trade union legislation introduced by its predecessors (Charlwood, 2003). Service economy growth, decentralisation of bargaining arrangements, an employer driven insistence on

flexibility, expansion of sub-contracting and the growth of smaller workplaces with increasingly diverse workforces have hastened the erosion of traditional modes of regulation (Parker, 2007: 563). Furthermore, the haemorrhage of members from trade unions' natural constituency (i.e. traditional industries, manufacturing) has proved extremely difficult to replace by organising in new sectors and workplaces (Machin, 2000). Many explanations for the decline have been espoused with the core explanation tending to be that a decline in membership reflects (and in turn exacerbates) growing union weakness and ineffectiveness. Behind the weakness and ineffectiveness lie two linked changes: a dramatically changed structure of international capital that weakens the collective bargaining power of unionism in general (and decentralised, workplace-based unionism in particular) and a managerial offensive designed to weaken union influence not so much over pay and other terms & conditions of employment, but over the organisation, pace and nature of work. Further propelling the need for revitalisation has been the weakening of trade union ties to, and influence within, the national political sphere. Blair, in a prelude of what was to come on the eve of Labour's ascendance to power in 1997 claimed:

> "We will not be held to ransom by the unions...unions have no special role in our election campaign just as they will get no special favours in a Labour Government" (Financial Times, 1997).

With no apparent support domestically could this have been one of the catalysts to UK trade unions to consider labour internationalism as a method to reverse organisational decline? As well as challenges of a domestic nature, it is in the context of a highly competitive global economy in which capital is decisively weakening labour, states and

democracy that trade unions must revive. Pessimistically, an influential apocalyptic analysis associated with Touraine (1986) and more recently Castells (1996: 354) dismisses the contemporary relevance and role of organised labour as 'a major source of social cohesion and workers' representation'. Both authors argued that the labour movement had become anachronistic in the new post-industrial world and that in post-industrial society the labour movement, developed as it was to fight for workers rights in industrial society, had been 'historically superseded'. Politics for Touraine (1981: 5) was 'no longer carried out in the name of political rights or workers' rights but in support of a population's right to choose its own kind of life and in support of its political potential, which is often called self management' (ibid). He claimed that a cohesive, collective society founded on mass production and mass consumption (in which unions would have a strong place and effective bargaining) has given way to a more individualised, post-industrial society. In turn, this has resulted in the decline in the workers movement as it is no longer able to remake society, instead confined itself to material improvement within existing institutions. For critics espousing such theory trade unions do not fit well in a more individuated society where individuals aimed to manage their lives themselves, not collectively.

Such claims can in one sense be deemed premature and to a certain extent misconceived, especially when others argue that we have witnessed the beginnings of a trade union 'rebellion against capitalist globalisation' spanning the globe (Moody, 1997). However, on considering this trade union 'come back' as a 'response' to globalisation two issues emerge, firstly that all trade unions however progressive and critical of globalisation, are overwhelmingly locked into national outlooks and strategies, no more so than in the public sector. Secondly, the dominant approach of the most powerful and still influential trade unions appears to be to accept globalisation,

intensified economic and labour market competition and global capital mobility as inevitable and unstoppable. Many of the labour renewal strategies currently observed can be interpreted as not only a reaction to, but also constitutive of neoliberalism and the re-scaling of capital and the state (see for example Brenner, 2004; Jessop 2002). In this view, trade unions must adapt to competitive considerations, by engaging in 'enterprise egoism' making the survival of the establishment the union's top priority (Hyman, 1999b: 104) to ensure that their members maintain their jobs and secure future investment flows (Moody, 1997: 55). According to Wills (2001) in this globalised economy, trade unions have left a vacuum at the heart of their organisation – unless they can devise new mechanisms to respond to the contemporary political-economic reality in which workers are increasingly vulnerable they are unlikely to renew their authority. In what should be (in many instances) their finest hour, trade unions have proved themselves unable to reverse anything beyond the terms of redundancy and the scale of training on offer (ibid).

The majority of trade union revitalisation literature has an implicit assumption – that union revitalisation is desirable and important. Yet given that trade unions in many countries are, to some degree, experiencing a crisis, we must query whether unions have become superfluous in a global economy where national boundaries appear to be of declining importance and where a shift to market regulation within many countries is clearly discernible (Held et al., 1999). Thus the fundamental questions are: does it matter whether and how trade unions are revitalising and does the strength of unions make any difference? And pertinently for the aims of this thesis – what do the answers to such questions mean for labour internationalism? Reflecting upon debates within this thesis I would argue that to identify and promote the importance of trade unions it must be recognised that despite the shifts in the economy

and in policies both at international and national level, unions retain a crucial function not only instrumentally but with regards issues of affective solidarity, social justice and democracy, something many concur with, as exemplified within the following extract:

> "Labor unions are important to democracy and to the achievement of local, national and global justice in the twenty first century...organised labor is arguably the most effective popular vehicle for achieving a democratic and equitable society" (Levi, 2003: 45).

Perceptions of trade unions such as this are international in nature. The pursuit of a 'democratic and equitable society' simply reflects the aims of social justice that trade unions have fought for since their inception. Many academics and labour movement activists identify with this, but it could be argued that this perception is not always recognised by all lay trade union members. A reliance upon renewal strategies such as service unionism as a method of revitalisation over the last two decades has been seen to reflect and constitute individualised notions of membership. Such strategies have not necessarily produced effective revitalisation within the labour movement and often act to reinforce the view of members as passive consumers of services provided by the union rather than actors with a shared ownership of the union (Cumbers, 2005: 123). The outlook however is not entirely bleak. As reflected in labour geography, from the mid 1990's onwards a new and more optimistic note has entered revitalisation analysis and the arguments of some key authors on the subject of organised labour. This change appears to have been created by events such as the Seattle protests at the World Trade Organisation conference in 1999 (see Waterman, 2001).

2.3   Are Trade Unions sooner or later defeated?

> "Unions are sooner or later defeated, and when the period of depression ensues...the labor movement either subsides or changes its form to political or socialistic agitation, to ventures in cooperation...or other panaceas"
>
> (Commons et al., 1918).

Union revitalisation has been defined broadly as a 'variety of attempts to tackle and potentially reverse problems of membership decline, workplace organisation erosion, mobilisation weakening, institutional change and power loss' (Guglielmo, 2007: 179). Successful union revitalisation does not require the complete rectification of these problems, as these are often dependent on an environment in which unions have little control. It does require identification of attempts to proactively address problems conceptualising unions as 'actors' and not simply as organisations managing their own decline. The impact of neoliberal globalisation, particularly of market fundamentalism shaping contemporary world markets, means that unions are under pressure from employers, governments or both. Reacting with one or two piecemeal strategies, no matter how innovative or intensive, is unlikely to address the fundamental cause of the problem, nor are the heavily relied upon conventional approaches. Therefore a new approach is required for a new era dealing with the challenges of globalisation. Perhaps a renewed approach to labour internationalism is necessary?

Beyond recurrent employer and government opposition, there are at least two critical problems for a broadened labour participation in international, national and local reform efforts. One is when unions take a narrow perspective and fail to develop the linkages, alliances and broad reform vision required to build the necessary political

power for social change. The other is the widespread contemporary condition of union decline, which labour revitalisation literature seeks to address. The two are inextricably linked: a broadened perspective and more comprehensive strategic focus is necessary to reverse the decline of organised labour (Frege and Kelly, 2004: 2) as renewal requires unions to have influence both at work and in wider society. Consequently it can be argued that proactive strategies are crucial.

There now exists a wide array of literature on union renewal with recent reviews tending to focus on cross-border solidarity, reforming internal union structures, engaging in political and corporate campaigns, labour management partnership, strengthening bargaining power, union mergers, and improving labour law to advance unionisation. Of particular focus within the literature is internal organising within unions, especially consideration of membership participation and innovative approaches to organising workers, such as the 'organising model' and other alternative strategies to increasing unionisation (Behren et al., 2004: 23). Reference is often made to assessing best practice (Kumar and Schenk, 2006: 19) in relation to union structures, policies and other organisational features of unions or developing a 'bigger tool kit' (Turner, 2004: 4), a range of strategies both new and old that can be combined to escalate counter pressure and increase the prospects for resurgence and reform (Frege and Kelly, 2004: 4). Many analyses refer to the importance of drawing lessons from case studies and other research on a variety of renewal strategies (Verma and Kochan, 2004: 3) and come to the conclusion that traditional approaches to unionism are lacking in terms of their capability to confront the exigencies of neoliberal globalisation.

2.3   Merger or alliance? Are bigger unions always the best way to revitalise?

It can be argued that collaboration between trade unions lies at the heart of strategies for enhancing union power. At the national level the industrial relations arena has experienced a trend towards this with an increasing number of trade union mergers (Keller, 2005: 210)[1]. Mergers are depicted as a response to a complex and changed environment with each one deemed context specific (Undy et al., 1981) reflecting the identities and cultures involved. Mergers are influenced by numerous factors including the benefits of scale, technological change, corporate mergers, financial difficulties and changing membership patterns (Buchanan, 1974) with each one being a product of the economic and political climate in which trade unions are currently situated. Undy et al. (1981) developed a framework of influences culminating in three principle merger types: *defensive*, motivated by the desire to prevent organisational extinction; *consolidatory*, to strengthen a union's position in industry or occupation; and *aggressive*, motivated by growth and expansion. Early debate explored the potential for the emergence of 'super unions', which in time might dominate the industrial relations landscape (Willman and Cave, 1994) as union membership would become more concentrated in relatively few unions, each of which would operate a recruitment base unrestricted by industry or occupation (Heery et al., 2001: 8).

One positive benefit from mergers is that the different bargaining units that make up the union can cross-subsidise one another (Willman, 2001). Charlwood (2004:

---

[1]During research for this thesis trade union mergers and the notion of 'super unions' were of particular interest due to the recent formation of the UNITE (a merger between Amicus and TGWU in 2007 that led to well documented controversy surrounding alleged infighting and leadership battles, the legacy of which is still experienced today) trade union in the UK and discussions of a merger between UNITE and the American steelworkers union. UNISON itself is the result of a merger between NALGO, NUPE and COHSE in 1993.

383) exemplifies this with well organised workers in a large car factory that can subsidise the costs of representing and organising a poorly organised group of workers in the insurance industry. However, he argues that could come at cost. As a result of decentralised collective bargaining, the large merged 'super unions' consist of separate divisions, which correspond to industries, with each division consisting of a group of de facto enterprise unions. This type of organisational form does not make for either representational or administrative efficiency (Willman and Cave, 1994). The size and organisational complexity of large super unions also makes it extremely difficult for members, activists or leaders of the union to exercise strategic choice about the union's direction. Strategic choices may be made by the union's policy making bodies, but the implementation of strategy can be difficult in organisations where day-to-day policy and practice are determined by paid officials, members and activists at a local level, often in response to employer initiatives (Carter, 2000; Charlwood, 2004).

Despite debates over the past decade to date there is no definitive evidence to mark the emergence of all-powerful super unions. Instead, Willman and Cave (1994: 395) have argued that the 'tendency for concentration through merger often damages representative effectiveness whilst yielding few administrative benefits'. Growth through merger may aid organisational change, increase membership and potentially result in revitalisation of the trade union organisation involved, but there is no evidence that such strategies produce an increase in collective identity or solidarity between workers, nor redevelopment of community engagement. Furthermore, whilst it may produce elements of change, there is little evidence of any real impact that can be quantitatively measured such as by increasing membership levels (Baccaro et al., 2003; Behrens et al., 2004). Fichter and Greer (2004: 89) claimed:

> "Structural change in itself does not hold great potential to drive revitalisation…It is in the context of new organising, political and bargaining strategies, and the emergence of new international initiatives that structural change takes on the crucial role of institutionalising labour movement revitalisation".

This is supported by Pfeffner and Salancik (1978) who propose alternative revitalisation strategies such as joint ventures and strategic alliances that accomplish similar purposes as a merger in broadening and intensifying co-operation between existing trade unions. Keller (2005) claims such alliances are a functional equivalent of restructuring, with major advantages of greater flexibility due to a limited pooling of resources, as well as the option not only to expand this intensified co-operation into further areas, but also to end it should it not prove worthwhile. As such, alliances prevent the problems of post merger integration management, and offer convenient opportunities for strategic organisational development. In keeping with the research focus of this thesis, we must query whether such activities could be extended across borders for the purposes of revitalisation?

> "Trade unions must become more internationally focused by linking up with other unions in solidarity campaigns and learning the lessons of union successes and failures elsewhere. In a global era, it is time to move beyond union jingoism: labour everywhere needs to learn and export lessons from abroad"
>
> (Baccaro et al., 2003: 130).

Visser (1997: 231) argued that trade unions may be forced to seek co-operation across national borders because they no longer find allies, protection or rewards within national arenas. For Visser the message is quite clear: national systems of industrial relations have become irrelevant and unions must either co-operate across national

borders or else become ineffective, unable to defend current wage levels and standards of social protection. He continued:

> 'Trade unions must first learn to play alone – in other words, increase the level of information and co-ordination, discovering what they have and what they can do in common – before they will be able to convince employers to play along'
>
> (Visser, 1997: 252).

To date there has been just two formalised mergers across national boundaries to produce international trade unions – the mergers between UNITE and American Steelworkers and the merger of the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST) from the UK and Federatie van Werknemers in de Zeevaart (FWZ, Federation of Sea Workers) from Holland to form NAUTILUS International.[2] Here there was an industrial logic to this cross border activity – could the same logic be applied to the public sector trade unions? On what basis would such cooperation occur? On discussing the merger between NALGO, NUPE and COHSE to form UNISON the strategic thrust of the process was the creation of a single union for public service staff, an aspiration of public service trade unionists for decades (Dempsey and McKivett, 2001: 5). As Terry (1996) commented 'the fundamental assault on public services was prompting renewed thought about the nature and purposes of public service trade unionism'. Now we face a fundamental assault from neoliberal capitalism which is international in nature – therefore should UNISON produce an *international* response? According to Hyman (1994: 132) decision making procedures related to questions such as this must take into account numerous issues such as organisational culture and the politico-economic environment within which the

---

[2] See Chapter 8 for discussion with Vice President of NAUTILUS.

19

trade union is situated, thus organisational identities and culture are a potential determinant of union strategies for revitalisation:

"Identities may be viewed as inherited traditions which shape current choices…although this can be disturbed by outside factors. In a period of crisis, trade unions…may be driven to choices (redefinition of interests, new systems of internal relations, broadening or narrowing of agenda, altered power tactics) at least partly at odds with traditional identities…

To the extent that old beliefs, slogans and commitments – the ideological supports of union self-conceptions – are undermined, an explicit and plausible redefinition of trade union purpose is essential if 'the capacity itself of labour movements to pursue the social and political construction of solidarity' is to be salvaged"

(Regini, 1992: 13).

Trade union strategic decision making is determined by a number of factors, most notably: institutional differences, identity differences, and differences in employer, political party or state strategies. Rather than separate issues these should be examined as interrelated factors, as unions choices on revitalisation are not determined by these factors alone - internal structures and framing processes are also highly influential. Challenges to the institutional stability and legitimacy of unions have focused attention from literature on the similarities between unions and social movements, reinforcing the potential value of ideas and concepts from social movement literature.

2.4   Moving beyond trade union alliances

Trade union coalition building with social movements has become more extensive over the last decade or so. The relationship between coalition building and union revitalisation is discussed extensively by Frege et al., (2004) who argue that trade unions must embrace a form of trade unionism that is not restricted solely to workplace and industrial issues, but takes on board the social and political dimensions of the environment in which they operate. They argue that although unions have historically formed coalitions with non-labour groups there is a new urgency in the need to form such coalitions for the purposes of revitalisation. They suggest five types of resources coalition partners can offer to trade unions: financial and material resources; access to new social groups and constituencies for recruitment or influence; expertise and specialist knowledge; legitimacy and credibility with social groups; and mobilisation.

One aspect of this has been the sharing of objectives with groups whose identities are 'work mediated' but which go beyond the employment relationship. Such approaches have shaped the work that unions conduct within their own structures as well as within workplaces and political campaigns. Examples evidenced within the literature include anti-racism work; equality agendas associated with gender, ethnicity and individuals with disabilities; and campaigns for family friendly policies. Responses to challenges posed to trade unions in general, and public sector unions in particular, have also resulted in the emergence of shared agendas with social movements. This is true, for example, with some aspects of the women's movement (Parker, 2002) with Kirton and Healey (1999) drawing attention to the interrelationship between union revitalisation and the transformatory effects of women's activism. Some have also

noted the adoption of the informality of the women's movement within some UK trade unions (Heery, 1998). Heery et al. (2004) have also explored the ways in which ethnicity and gender can intersect in the workplace to generate raised levels of collectivism.

Many working in the field of international labour studies have emphasised the newly emerging models of cross-border networking and activism within contemporary social movements. The new movements, mobilising around issues of social justice, globalisation, human rights and the environment have produced the emergence of new transnational actors (of which labour is one amongst many) that are finding new commonalities upon which to unite (Drainville, 2002). This rise of coalition approaches at international and cross-border levels have been widely discussed in literature in particular coalitions between trade unions and NGOs of various kinds including: anti-sweatshop campaigning; anti-corporate alliances campaigning for rights based and ethical company practice (Sadler, 2004); coalitions of trade unions and health service users around specific issues such as AIDS treatment (Lethbridge, 2004); and human and labour rights campaigns over the welfare and treatment of migrant workers (Ford, 2004). Although strong evidence of the commonalities and convergences developing between unions, NGOs and social movements has emerged so too has evidence on the difficulties in their relations. For example, Anner and Evans (2004) refer to a 'double-divide' which comprises the very different organisational cultures and modes of practice between unions and NGOs. Despite this, Hale (2004) offers the optimistic assessment that once unions and NGOs begin to work together differences can be quickly overcome with coalitions often providing the basis for genuinely new forms of effective internationalism.

The importance of social visions for the sustaining of particular struggles was highlighted by Lopez (2000) with some claiming that new social visions would emerge as an amalgam of alternative politics rising out of the ashes of the 'old' socialist movements of the Cold War era, and into the interactions of many other new forms of issue based and identity based internationalism – or to be more precise, internationalisms (Omvdt, 1993; Waterman, 2000). The interaction between social movements and labour has been a particular focus for Waterman who appeals strongly for the transcendence of the 'old' style of international labour practice that represents an extension of essentially national trade union policy to the international level. Waterman's vision is that of a new 'global solidarity' premised upon the merging of many other forms of internationalism such as the anti-globalisation movement (Waterman, 1998; 2001). He proposes that organised labour is best seen as an important actor in a wider array of actors that together make up the 'global justice and solidarity movement' (Waterman, 2005a: 196).

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has identified that trade unions are experiencing a transitional period as a result of shifting economic and political landscapes. It is apparent that trade unions are still relevant in this contemporary era but for this to be more apparent they must revitalise to meet with the needs and expectations of current and prospective members. Many such revitalising strategies have been conducted none of which appear

to have halted the challenges that have arisen as a result of globalisation and related neoliberal practices. Relatedly, an apparent decline in national level influence appears to suggest a necessary shift in focus to the international arena, or at least a recognition of the most effective scale(s) at which to mobilise. And so a combination of renewal strategies is proposed – a 'new' labour internationalism characterised by changing political, economic and cultural contexts alongside aspects of the conventional methods befit to this era. Adoption of such methods is determined by the characteristics and organisational culture of the trade union itself, thus raising many questions for public sector unions who, by becoming increasingly subject to internationalism, are facing significant change.

Chapter 3

Labour and Geography

3.1 Introduction

The challenges outlined in the previous chapter have inevitably resulted in a growing interest in labour issues in human geography together with a renewed concern for worker agency and the resistance strategies of labour. Therefore this chapter will look at labour as it is understood by human geographers. It will focus upon the geneology of labour geography, a concept introduced by Herod whose point of departure was a critique of both the neoclassical economic geography of the 1960-70s and the Marxist economic geography of the 1980s for their deficient attention to labour. As a corrective to this he called for a new approach to labour that he referred to as 'labour geography' contrasting the previous passive approaches of the 'geography of labour' where workers were depicted as passive factors of production and instead presenting them as crucial economic actors. The chapter will first look at theorisations of the relationship between labour and geography before outlining the introduction of labour geography in the late 1990s and its contemporary equivalent now fifteen years on.

Focus will then turn to labour internationalism will be made as they have continually oscillated between a range of economic, political and institutional processes culminating in a rich yet complicated history which can now be seen as manifest in contemporary trade union international activities. In drawing out some of the central

themes of this diverse body of work this chapter will focus predominantly on issues which are perhaps most proximate to the interests of this thesis, concerning the necessity to present the unheard voices and experiences of those constructing international solidarity.

3.2 Geography and industrial relations: an engagement waiting to happen

The concept of labour has interested geographers for a long time, most often as a cost that influences investment decisions rather than as a social force in its own right. The last fifteen years however have witnessed geographers placing the politics of labour at the forefront of their analysis (Lier, 2007). Herod (2001a:12) argued that this conceptual shift from depicting labour as a locational factor in neoclassical economy to an active spatial agent in the production of economic space, represented a shift from a 'geography of labour' to a 'labour geography' (Herod 2001a:12). Labour geography has emerged as a discernible strand of research charged with the purpose of understanding how capitalism constitutes the spatial conditions of workers – their geographies – and how workers themselves and their organisations work to shape these geographies.

For Ackers and Wilkinson (2003: 176) the relationship between economic geography and industrial relations was merely an engagement waiting to happen. The first real insight into geography's understanding of labour came in the form of nineteenth century commercial geography which provided a depiction of labour as inert, a factor to production to be catalogued no differently than various climatic conditions or

various soil types found during imperial adventurism (Herod, 1997a: 4). Here although labour was marginalised it was deemed a major concern in terms of relative productivity rates, skills and cost factors of different colonised peoples (ibid).

3.2.1   Neoclassical Location Theory – labour as a cost

The essence of economic geography of the 1970s and its association with labour can be encapsulated by Massey's (1973) analysis which identified four criterion within neoclassical industrial location theory: (i) the effect of associated costs such as transport and labour as well as 'agglomeration forces' on the locational decisions of independent, single plant firms (Weber, 1929); (ii) Hotelling's (1929) analysis of the spatial behaviour of firms whose location is dependent upon competitor's locations; (iii) the influx of the 'behavioural approach' which provided understandings as to how the internal operation of a firm influences decision making processes and thus its economic geography; and (iv) a focus on one individual firm's behaviour before broadening scope to the development of entire economic landscapes (Massey, 1973). Certainly, these four features do not provide a systematic narrative of location theory, yet the overview provided here outlines for the purposes of this thesis how labour was perceived within this tradition. For neoclassical economic theory the focus was primarily upon firms' decision making procedures on location. Firms' behaviour, investment decisions and activities are explained in defining their economic geographies. The approach influenced the way workers are marginalised within geographical literature - the view

presented is that of capital and it is the firm that is active in making space, not workers (be that as individuals or as a collective) which as a consequence means labour is reduced to factors such as wages and skill levels, location, union membership etc; all factors used in firms' location decisions. Such theorisations were simply reproduced with the emergence of the behaviouralist approach, an outcome of analyses that argued against the notion that locational decisions were made by economically rational firms. Ironically it could be seen that a focus on behaviour would imply an incorporation of workers into location theory yet it shares many of the same faults as its predecessor with its primary purpose being to identify how enterprises make investment and location decisions. Where labour is considered again it is merely in passive terms. Although both approaches do not ignore labour entirely by identifying that labour influences enterprises' spatial structures, they do so from the perspective of how capital can best exploit potential markets.

3.2.2   Marxist economic geography – labour power

The conceptualisation of labour in Marxist geography is closely linked to Marx's development of the labour theory of value. Marx saw labour power as a fundamental category in capitalist production. Here workers and capitalists are mutually dependent upon each other through the employment relation where labour power is purchased as a commodity in exchange for money. The capitalist system of production is based upon the purchase of two forms of commodities: labour power and the means

of production, the latter being machinery, materials etc in order for labour to produce. Labour power and the means of production come together in capitalist production to produce new commodities, which can be sold for money. For capital to accumulate, the sale of these commodities must generate surplus value in addition to the initial monetary value (Castree et al., 2004).

Although workers sell their labour power as a commodity, workers themselves are not real commodities, instead they are sentient and social beings and products of a society they themselves have been instrumental in creating (Lier, 2007: 815), a fact which led Storper and Walker (1983: 4) to declare labour a pseudo-commodity, one which is 'idiosyncratic and spatially differentiated' meaning workers have the capacity to work and can (or are forced to) sell their labour power as a commodity (Castree et al., 2004). Thus the relationship between employee and employer can potentially be conflictual. The latter is perceived as maintaining the power by dominating the production process yet is subject to continuous social struggle and negotiation.

Human geography identifies in Marxism a tradition that has developed a conceptual and theoretical framework assisting with the understanding of the ways in which capital accumulation and class processes are fundamentally spatial (see for instance Harvey, 1982; Massey, 1984; Smith, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991; Herod, 2001a). Central to this way of thinking is conceptualising the process of capital accumulation as inherently expansionary. Harvey (1982: 428) argued that geographical expansion 'provides a strong basis for sustained accumulation'. The search for new markets and ways to make profit as well as the constant need to overcome internal crises results in capitalism spreading across space, meaning an increasing number of workers and places around the globe are brought into the same capitalist system of exploitation and

interdependence (Smith, 1984). By coming together in place, labour and capital make capitalist production possible. And yet here lies a source of contradiction and potential struggle - the geographical vision of capital and labour for the economic landscape i.e. their 'spatial fixes' (Harvey, 1982) may vary considerably over time and space. This was recognised by Walker and Storper (1981) who argued for a greater understanding and recognition of the role of labour in locational analyses. They maintained that although labour power takes commodity form, workers are not objects; their behaviour can drastically affect the labour process. Thus labour as a locational factor takes primacy over all other market factors influencing industrial location (Walker and Storper, 1981: 497). Although refocusing attention on labour the approach still failed to create an explicit link between workers' own economic and social practices to the production of their own spatial fixes (Herod, 1997a: 13).

The early/mid 1990s in the UK saw a revival in the interest in organised labour as a subject of geographical scrutiny. In particular two papers acted as a catalyst to debate - Martin et al.'s (1993) analysis of union decline and Massey and Painter's (1989) paper on local union traditions in the UK. Each of these papers scrutinised the broad geographical changes in union membership and union density at a national level. The UK debate was noteworthy in that it highlighted the spatially diverse trends of de-unionisation by utilising quantitative analysis on union membership. In this sense, both their general approach, as well as their methods, differ greatly from contemporary studies of trade unionism within the field of geography which most often draw upon qualitative data emerging from case studies of particular places and union campaigns.

This literature acted as a counter to the capital centric approaches offered earlier within geography. From this standpoint Herod (1998) argued that historically economic geography has developed through substantial shifts in its perceptions of

workers' role in capitalist societies. The move from a neoclassical industrial locational studies perspective to Marxist economic geography entailed an ontological shift in the study of labour, with labour no longer reduced to mere costs in the production process. He identified however, that both of these approaches still failed to fully account for the agency of labour, instead producing a somewhat static view of labour in capitalism. Admittedly, the Marxist turn resulted in a more dynamic and relational understanding of workers and their labour power as integral to the logic of capitalism, but they were still deemed as an oppressed class prohibited from actively creating the geographies of capitalism. Marxist economic geography asserted 'capital as the primary maker of the geography of capitalism' thus leaving workers' struggles 'somewhat secondary to the actual process of producing space' (Herod, 1997a: 9-10). In other words, workers were not deemed capable of producing geographies at best they could merely modify them. In light of this, the last fifteen years or so has witnessed Herod and other geographers seeking to promote an understanding of labour as an active maker of social space, thus abandoning capital-centric traditions.

3.3   Seeing the production of economic space through the eyes of workers

Wills (2008: 5) noted that within the previous conceptualisations of *workers* 'there was very little attention to the mechanics of class, culture and organisation'. It was left to a new generation of labour geographers led by Herod (1995) and Mitchell (1996) in the US and Wills (1998) in the UK to emphasise labour and class as

(relatively) autonomous agents in shaping the landscape of capital (Rutherford, 2009: 5). Labour geography made two significant contributions to economic geography. Firstly it placed an emphasis on agency and interest in labour as an integral corrective to the bias in economic geography on understanding and representing the interests of capital both theoretically and empirically. Secondly, it provided an approach to place, space and scale that outlined explanations of workers' struggles as well as opening up analyses and contestations of strategies of resistance (Bergene, Endresen and Knutsen, 2010). Space was regarded as a source of power and conflict – no longer a backdrop, arena or reflection of society, instead a fundamental component to the constitution and functioning of society as apparent in Harvey's spatial fix (1982). On reflection, Harvey (2001: 25) explained:

> "I first deployed the term 'spatial fix' to describe capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring...in particular I used it to focus on the particular problem of 'fixity' versus motion and mobility of capital".

Thus the term spatial fix was referred to by Harvey (1982) in explaining how capital seeks to reproduce space to appropriate its own needs at particular times and locations. On querying the theoretical and empirical primacy given to capital when seeking to understand the making of the economic geography of capitalism Herod (1997a) aimed to shift geographical thinking towards an articulation of how workers actively *produce* economic spaces and scales in particular ways as part of their own 'spatial fixes'. He argued that the production of space is not only important for capital's ability to survive but also crucial for workers' survival and reproduction: 'Just as capital does not exist in an aspatial world, neither does labour' (Herod, 1997a: 16). Herod (2001a) explained that since a spatial fix is a reflection of the problem of reproduction, and since

reproduction is a social and cultural as well as an economic process, it follows that different groups of workers seek different spatial fixes that reflect their cultural and social interests.

Therefore, following Harvey's (1982) argument about how capital seeks to make a 'spatial fix' appropriate to its condition and needs at particular times and locations, the same can be said of labour's spatial fix. Workers' activities should be recognised in terms of their desire to create particular spatial fixes appropriate to their own needs and as Cumbers et al. (2008a: 373-374) argued this can mean that in 'particular points in time and space, some groups of workers will ally with elements of capital against the interests of other groups of workers, but such alliances will only ever be temporary'.

Labour geography provides integral insights into the agency of workers by identifying how labour occupies a number of roles, all of which overlap and can be depicted as interdependent of one another: as abstract labour in capitalist production, as organised labour in industrial politics, as income-earners and as social actors in relations of reproduction. Herod's emphasis was on how workers are proactive agents of change as they 'actively produce economic spaces and scales in particular ways' (Herod, 2001a: 46). For Herod there was a need to conceive of labour as a (pro)active agent in the production of economic geographies and not merely as a passive victim of the dictates of capital. Hence the call for a 'labour geography', as opposed to a geography of labour, is intrinsically politically motivated as by acknowledging worker agency in the theorisation of capitalism we empower workers (Herod, 2001a: 36):

"Recognising that different groups of workers may have, in very real ways, different options as a result of difference in where they quite literally stand in the world – global north or globally south, for instance – provides something of a corrective to accounts that present workers as either inherently powerless and condemned only to follow the dictates of (global) capital or as simply dupes of capital".

This statement is crucial as labour geography represents a vital step in this direction by depicting labour as capable of making its own geographies and exposing the weaknesses in the spatial configurations of capital. The increasing attention placed on the agency of workers is deemed by Lier (2007: 820) as a result of economic shifts that put unions on the defensive sparking debate as to how these challenges can be overcome. Further to this there existed a growing frustration in the social sciences with the perceived failure to recognise the agency of social actors; and, related to the previous point, the still largely structuralist focus of economic geographers who were still largely engaging in analyses in which focussed on firms, not workers. By neglecting worker agency implies their actions are inconsequential, an assumption which could lead to political resignation (Herod, 1995). Herod (2010: 5) does however agree that there are limits to the agency of labour, although the same does of course apply to capital.

Labour geography encompasses many approaches to the study of labour including responses to economic restructuring (Jonas, 1996; Herod, 1997a: Castree, 2000; Tonkin, 2000; Ellem, 2003) politics related to union and community organising in the service sector (Tufts, 1998, 2009; Wills, 2001a); worker organising in subcontractor sweatshops in industrialising economies (Hale and Wills, 2005); campaigns against state restructuring (Tufts, 1998; Wills, 2001a); yet regardless of the issue being examined all literature related to this discipline focuses explicitly on the spatiality of particular worker struggles. Furthermore, analysis is not entirely on the

economic geographies of trade unionism, it also encompasses workers' embeddedness in national political structures and traditions (Cumbers, 2004) and in local structures and ideologies (Mitchell, 1996). Thus a contribution is made by labour geographers to a geographical understanding of the wider politics of work, not just trade unionism, and how it relates to economic, social and regulatory processes (Lier, 2007: 821). However, a void still remains, that being the narratives of many workers for whom this field represents. My thesis will take this forward by presenting the perspectives of grassroots trade union members based in the public sector on labour internationalism.

3.3.1 Reflecting on fifteen years of labour geography

According to Wills (2009) labour geography has gradually widened its thematic approach to encompass most of the significant debates within the wider field of human geography. In his most recent work Herod (2010: 23) provides a useful listing of what he calls the several axioms around which labour geography has developed:

- Social actors are geographically embedded and this shapes the possibilities for their social action;
- For both capital and labour, negotiating the tensions between the needs for fixity and for mobility is a process which drives much of their economic praxis;
- Different sets of social actors are differentially tied into local, regional, national and transnational relationships, and the ways in which they are so will shape their praxis;
- Different sets of social actors will often have quite different spatial visions with regard to how the geography of capitalism should be made and these varying spatial imaginations can result in significant political conflicts;
- Scale making is often central to workers' political praxis;
- How social actors behave geographically shapes how landscapes are made, with the result that landscapes are contested social products;
- Landscapes are not merely a reflection of social relations but are also constitutive of them;
- Analysing workers' political and economic practice requires an approach ground in historic-geographical materialism.

From this we can argue that labour geography has made real progress in seeking to understand how workers shape economic geographies. Despite this however Castree (2007) has depicted labour geography as a field with few analytical boundaries warning that it may drift both theoretically and empirically. He provides the most succinct overview of labour geography thus far asking the fundamental question regarding its future direction. This, alongside Lier's (2007) paper reviewing labour geography and recent works from Bergene et al., (2010) address a number of what are deemed 'missing links' in the analysis of the relationship between labour and its geographies. Although labour geography has effectively mapped out not only the issues, but also the opportunities for workers and their organisations, it still faces a number of challenges in providing a coherent understanding of the geographies of workers under contemporary capitalist processes. Some of which will now be explored.

Lopez (2004: 12) argued that studies of political mobilisation 'suffer from a tendency to tell success stories'. Labour geography may also be charged with this criticism due to its often bias towards workers whose 'potential impact at the heart of the world economy gives them a uniquely strategic position' (Moody, 1997: 280) thus making them able to use capital's spatiality against itself (Herod, 2001b). Furthermore, political success and analytical significance should not be confused (Lier, 2007: 829). In his writings on the Liverpool Docks Dispute Castree (2000) discusses a campaign which on its conclusion failed to meet its desired outcomes, yet theoretically it is a success as it was the first real example of a new labour internationalism based upon grassroots level information and exchanges that utilised new information technologies. From this dispute alone numerous lessons on the scale of worker campaigning can be learnt.

It has been argued that the approach often overlooks non-unionised workers (Herod, 2001a) resulting in questions surrounding agency – for instance which workers do we recognise as active spatial agents? Answering this question channels feminist critiques to argue that labour geography must consciously include in its analytical framework often-neglected groups, voices, experiences and places. There are of course a number of studies that deal with such including Tiejun's (2008) study on Chinese migrant workers; Hale and Opondo's (2005) analysis of female workers in developing countries and Andrae and Beckman's (2010) insights into the informal sector: all demonstrating labour geography's progress in transcending ideals of the stereotypical white, western, male worker. What remains to be seen is discernible attention to politics and struggle beyond the Anglo-American arena. Strong, contemporary research is seen in Norwegian and German geography (Berndt, 2000; Berndt and Fuchs, 2002), yet beyond this the diversity of union and non union politics in the global South and the former Eastern bloc remains un-researched in any great depth (apart from academics such as Hale and Wills, 2005; and Bergene et al., 2010).

It can be argued that labour geography suffers from sectoral bias with the majority of research drawing upon case studies on economic restructuring and the politics of industrial decline in manufacturing, and yet the research beyond such workplaces (for instance low-paid work in the private sector) has provided the context where approaches such as community-orientated unionism have been best understood.

Notably for this thesis there remains a lack of focus upon public sector unions. The public sector arguably presents workers with some unique challenges and opportunities. In contrast to workers in competitive sectors with a high degree of capital mobility which calls for transnational labour mobilisation, the majority of public sector employees are still dominated by dynamics at the national and local scales. This

confines the agency of organised labour based in the public sector to grapple with increased competition between local authorities and the erosion of the public sector as we know it through processes of privatisation - a struggle not prominent within labour geography literature. Further to this, labour geography neglects to acknowledge the increasingly international characteristic of the public sector with it often depicted as geographically rooted despite the heightening levels of international market forces to which it is subjected. Academic portrayals such as this may result in the perception that public sector trade unions do not value labour internationalism as a potential revitalisation tool or promote internationalist tendencies and conduct. Such views are unwarranted, as this thesis will show.

The urgency for labour geography to look beyond the workplace was underlined by a number of developments, primarily recognition that geographies could be contested within communities; across/between workplaces and across borders. Globalisation has been linked to a revitalisation of scale which challenges not only the hegemony of the nation state (Brenner, 2004) but also labour's traditional strategies around/within the state (Rutherford, 2009).

A further criticism of labour geography is with regards its articulation of international activity. Focus has predominantly been placed on the actual process of campaigns or disputes, for instance the development of transnational alliances or specific institutionalised forms of international labour organisation, such as European Works Councils (Wills 1998). Instead I wish to explore the human side of such processes – how worker agency influences how and why individuals become involved in internationalism.

3.3.2   Creating economic space through international solidarity

Castree et al (2004:63) insist 'that if theorising is about identifying the fundamental processes at work, then geography has theoretical significance' in turn this means internationalism and the geographical spaces within and across which it is practiced is a process valid of such theorisation. This theoretical relevance is enhanced even more so by neoliberal capitalism which is rescaling workers lives in complex and contradictory ways by changing the spatial and temporal relationships between places (Castree et al., 2004). Herod (2003: 501-2) stresses that any international solidarity campaign represents:

"An explicitly spatial response to the changing geography of global capitalism within which workers find themselves...the practice of labour solidarity is, in fact, an inherently spatial one...that is not only political, social and cultural but also spatial in nature".

The notion of 'jumping scales' dictates a move upwards in a vertically spatial hierarchy (Cox, 1998). Harvey (1993: 24) warned of place-based struggles being reduced to 'militant particularisms' unless they were articulated at a higher scale. For workers this relates to the threat of labour being 'put in place' (Peck, 1996) with the idea of 'up-scaling' for trade unionism being the subject of debate in labour internationalism since its inception. Politically this was first framed within the discourse of the Communist Manifesto: 'Working men [sic] of all countries, unite!' proclaiming that workers should come together across national borders in solidarity. Whilst it is generally accepted that the processes of globalisation have reconfigured the spatial organisation of capitalism

labour geographers would disagree with claims that workers employed in globally networked corporations are powerless. This is evident in Herod's two significant case studies of Ravenswood and General Motors which highlighted the potential for workers to reproduce economic space to meet the requirements of their own spatial fixes. Despite acknowledging the geographical potential for worker action from such cases it must be identified that these do not symbolise nor represent the experiences of all workers globally. Both cases focus upon multinational employer structures and workers who have the opportunity to exert pressure on their employers due to their positioning within global networks. Labour geography must still map out the political opportunities and articulations of workers in less privileged positions.

For some academics, scales can be separated, with particular actions more effective according to the scale at which they are conducted. In arguing that organisation and rhetoric needs to be aimed at the scale that 'matters' North, (2005: 223) presents two supporting examples, the first discussed by Castree (2000) in his analysis of the Liverpool Docks Dispute 1995-97. Castree argues that the Liverpool dock workers organised effectively at local and international levels but were unable to make persuasive arguments at a national level, the site at which decisions about their conditions of employment where made. In the second example Sadler and Fagan (2003) argue that Australian trade unionists in a similar position were more effective at organising at the national scale. Thus, workers should consider rescaling actions during disputes/campaigns – it is a temporal process, not just a decision made at the beginning of an industrial dispute, it must be reactionary and adaptive to changing circumstances such as legal provisions, support from others at different scales, political opportunities.

Successful examples of 'scale jumping' are often impossible without pre-existing organisational infrastructure at the local and national scale (Castree, 2000).

Labour internationalism should therefore not be seen as a substitute for national and workplace worker politics. Rather it could in some circumstances point to the existence of valid 'spaces of engagement' for workers to enact their struggles. Whilst some labour geographers stressed that even local action by workers can be effective (Herod, 1998) others argue that labour needs to foster a progressive internationalism especially via non hierarchical networks between both workers and workers; and workers and consumers in both advanced and developing nations (Waterman and Wills, 2001; Johns and Vural, 2008).

As we have seen during this chapter, Herod's labour geography is 'an effort to see the making of the economic geography of capitalism through the eyes of labour' (1997a: 3). Tufts (2009: 2) argues that any new theoretical framework must remain grounded in the real concrete practices and circumstances of workers lives – abstracting organised labour's practices too far from the realities of everyday political struggles leads to analyses which are far removed from unionism as it 'actually exists'. Hence this chapter and those that follow within this thesis will engage with trade union grassroots members in an attempt to see labour internationalism through their eyes. Mitchell (2005: 96) insists that too much of labour geography fails to put 'working people at the centre of analysis' - this thesis will address this imbalance through an exploration of individual narratives. Individuals are not just workers and so how they align their wider existence with internationalism and international others is of great interest (see Chapters 6 and 7). In agreement with Mitchell (2005), Castree (2007: 859) argues that labour geography typically focuses on the employment aspect of an individual's life as if this can be separated analytically and ontologically from their wider existence. Instead this thesis supports claims that labour internationalism

encompasses every aspect of an individual's existence – be that work; class or non class identity; community issues; global politico-economic forces.

This is of particular significance when applied to the public sector. For many public sector workers there is an inextricable link between their employment and home life as they both receive and deliver public services – be that health care and/or education for instance. The sector is built upon a universal 'public sector' ethos of the importance of access to quality, public services, an issue often recognised by research participants during discussions. It could be argued that there is an altruistic element to the public service ethos which can provide an international bridging framework to others, whilst the increasing number of public services being delivered by international companies provides opportunities for instrumental internationalism. Before examining the potential for this, we will first explore theoretical understandings of labour internationalism. The world, its politics, economics and culture have changed dramatically since the first cries for 'workers of the world to unite' were called out and the following sections will identify what this means for labour internationalism – whether such change has produced complications in, or strengthened the potential for, international solidarity.

3.4   Labour Internationalism – a history of working class struggle

Labour internationalism is certainly not a new concept as recent attempts to make a distinction between an 'old' and a 'new' labour internationalism recognise.

Waterman and Wills (2001: 2) refer to a classically defined labour internationalism depicting it as being 'thought of, or fought for' in terms of a homogenous working class seen as the universal emancipatory subject. Building on this, Waterman (2001: 50) conceptualises labour internationalism as 'classically a critique of the nation state and of capitalism; a recognition that the capitalist nation state was too limited to deal with social problems and human needs'.

The labour movement from its very inception was almost instinctively internationalist (Munck, 2002). The period from the early part of the nineteenth century through to the 1930s can be depicted as a 'classical period' of labour internationalism. The notion of a unified working class with one, indivisible world 'class interest' was dominant in theory and rhetoric, if not always in practice. In the 1840s calls for workers to organise on an international footing were a feature of the working class movement. Most famously, in 1848 the Communist Manifesto called for the working class struggle to be understood and organised within an internationalist perspective. Consequent to the spread of capitalism was the growth of an international working class whose labour it exploited. As capitalism developed, the relationship between capital and labour became the same social experience of a worker in the north west of England as it would be for any worker across Europe and further afield. It was this commonality in experience within and across countries that gave Marx and Engels hope in the emergence of a working class as a revolutionary class on a world scale. However, it would take a number of years for their vision outlined in the Communist Manifesto to appear in an organisational form.

3.4.1   The heyday of internationalism

The first attempt to organise internationally was through the International Working Men's Association 1864, also referred to as the First International, an organisation joining trade unions and political organisations. Its origins can be traced back to an economic crisis generating a general strike movement in the UK. During these strikes employers made explicit reference to foreign competition and threatened to import cheaper foreign labour thus enabling Olle and Schoeller (1977) to assert that promoting internationalism was vital for English workers. According to Munck (2002) Marx was personally responsible for much of the ethos of the First International, with the primary tasks being to give international support by intervening in strikes threatened by foreign strike-breakers and fighting for the political rights of workers. However as these rights were often nationally determined, this task undermined the long term work of the First International as efforts were put into strengthening national trade unions (Olle and Schoeller, 1977). In 1866 the international campaign for the eight hour working day almost simultaneously, though independently in Europe and the USA, appeared to vindicate the expectations socialists had of the international character of the struggle against capitalism (Mirola, 2003). The combination of increasing confidence in the working class movement and the historical novelty of these developments can be seen as contributing to optimism surrounding this particular phase of labour internationalism amongst socialists.

However, the aggressive nationalism instituted by employers together with the consolidation of nation states led to growth in nationalistic ideologies among workers and, through the rudimentary welfare states, a growing symbiosis between the

nation building process and improvement of workers' social existence (Munck, 2002). Marx wanted to counter the identification of workers with their national bourgeoisies through the slogan 'workers of all countries unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains', but political differences, as seen in the ideological divide over the support for the Paris Commune; differences in conceptualising solidarity between pragmatists and ideologues; and the split between socialists and anarchists contributed heavily to the disintegration of the First International (Wills, 1998).

3.4.2   National chauvinism

Following the establishment of the Paris Congress on Bastille Day in 1889, the centenary of the French Revolution, the Second International was formed and spearheaded by Engels until his death. Internationalism during this period was enthusiastic as evidenced by huge May Day rallies of the early 1890s (Wrigley, 1996). Unlike the First, the Second International was made up of political parties having national sections and deeply involving themselves in the life of the working class in each country. This organisation led to the creation of a new labour and socialist ideology, that of social democracy. However, the second period of internationalism from the 1890s onwards was characterised by the separation of the representation of political and economic interests of the workers. The result was a political culture in which nationalist as well as internationalist sentiments competed for expression. Due to the party orientation of the Second International, the trade unions, now confined to

representatives of the economic interests of the workers, founded their own organisations separating the national centres from the branch unions. The branch unions formed international associations, International Trade Secretariats (ITSs), for each of the major industries, whilst the national centres came together in the International Trade Union Federation. These organisations and their interrelations remain in similar form today, although subsequent historical events have altered their organisation and function.

The onset of the First World War was a major blow to the international labour movement. Despite a background of massive anti-war demonstrations in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, the parties of the Second International (with the notable exceptions of the Italian Socialist Party and the Russian Bolshevik Party) resorted to what Munck (2002) framed 'national chauvinism' with the social democratic parties supporting their respective nation states in the war.

3.4.3   The Comintern years

The Russian Revolution saw the formation of the Third International in 1919, also called the Communist International or Comintern, founded by the Russian Bolshevik leadership with its overarching purpose being to export the revolution across the world. Labour internationalism in this era was a credible aspect of a working class movement that was challenging capitalism and represented a vital force around the world. During the time of Lenin the national sections of the Comintern were explicitly

subordinated to the international centre, but after Lenin's death Stalin used the organisation as a branch of the foreign affairs policy of the Soviet Union (Munck, 2000). The fate of labour internationalism after the period of the early 1920s is inextricably linked to internal developments within the USSR, the re-establishment of the Second International and the period of capitalist consolidation in the West.

However in the early 1920s an optimistic view of the prospects of labour internationalism had prevailed and was expressed by the leader of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in arguing that a more internationalised labour movement would rise from the changes in the structure of capitalism (Fimmen, 1924). Lorwin (1929: 3) in contrast produced quite pessimistic conclusions about the prospects of labour internationalism in that he argued that working class consciousness has an inherently dual nature which develops from the position of the worker within capitalism. Internationalist perspectives, in Lorwin's view, would therefore always be compromised by the interest that workers have in the national development of their economy and trade. And yet during the late 1930s the world witnessed the international solidarity shown by working class men and women from more than fifty nations who volunteered to fight for the defence of the republican government of Spain between 1936-39, a motivation independent of the influences of national economy and trade thus disputing Lorwin's comments. A decision was made within the Commintern to establish International Brigades, named after heroes of the Left from within each country. Around 60,000 individuals fought in these brigades and they played key roles in some of the battles of the conflict. The fate of the workers' revolution in Russia, and the need to stem the rising tide of fascism in Europe were concerns that, either together or separately, inspired the extraordinary mix of communists, socialists and radical democrats that made up the International Brigades (Buchanan, 1991) and POUM

militias[3]. Thousands of volunteers sacrificed their lives in that struggle, a struggle which for many epitomises the ethos of labour internationalism, as identified by a number of participants during research for this thesis.

3.4.4 Cold War politicking and ideological demarcations suspend hopes for labour internationalism

Following the end of the two world wars internationalism was seen by some to stagnate, relying on initiatives merely 'international in rhetoric and occasionally in practice' (Ghigliani, 2005: 360) before retreating to a national, statist, protectionist stance in part as a consequence of post 1945 ideological divisions often associated with Cold war politics. The ideological split within the labour movement between reformists and revolutionaries solidified after a split in the International Trade Union Confederation, and the foundation of two bodies, one from each camp: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) for the Western countries under strong US influence and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)[4] for the socialist states. Due to their practical nature the ITSs were to a greater extent spared the difficulty of ideological differences and did not experience any break in their traditions, although their criteria for affiliation followed the ICFTU and led to the exclusion of trade unions from communist countries (Bendt, 1996).

---

[3] Please see Orwell's 'Homage to Catalonia', 1938.
[4] The division between the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) derives from ideological stance. The WFTU became an explicitly Communist organisation in the 1950s with the ICFTU associated with the fight against Communism (Munck, 2002: 142).

In their discussion of trade union internationalism during the Cold War period, Haworth and Ramsey (1983) illustrate a combined ideological rhetoric between imperialist and cold war politicking on one side, and on the other an economic strategy marked by national, local or industrial self interest. This has become known as 'trade union imperialism', the suggestion that trade unions of the West began to see their external policy as part of that of their respective national governments and those of the East using trade union connections to advance geopolitical ends. This term is used to encapsulate what Munck (2002: 144) identifies as the 'rhetorical cover for a politicised trade union foreign policy on behalf of both the Western powers and the Soviet Union'. Also during this period trade unions began to attempt to counter the power of international capital by launching the first steps towards multinational collective bargaining (Ghigliani, 2005) deemed the only way to counter the might of MNCs and the 'grail for the international labour movement' (Ramsey, 1997: 520). Maier (1977: 614) associates this period with the notion of the 'politics of productivity', a claim that trade unions should subsume class conflict to ensure growth and productivity gains so the economy epitomises a domestic compromise. This notion, although contested was encapsulated in Ruggie's concept of 'embedded liberalism' describing the compromise between commitments to a liberal international economy and domestic welfare (Ruggie, 1982: 384). This was also transnational in nature as it resulted in the distribution of the US model of capitalism to other national political economies via the Marshall Plan which O'Brien (2000) and Munck (2002) agree served to further the notion of trade union imperialism.

3.5   1989 and the onslaught of neoliberalism – obstacles or opportunity for labour internationalism?

It can be argued that the former 'old' labour internationalism (referred to as 'old' in light of conceptualisations of a 'new' labour internationalism) reflected the conditions of the latter half of the nineteenth century, characterised by the move towards the first wave of globalisation through dramatic increases in world trade up until the outbreak of the First World War (Munck, 2002: 136). As a consequence, trade unions felt their position had been weakened and they felt forced to become international in outlook. Van der Linden (1988: 331)[5] refers to this most succinctly:

> "A fraternity of peoples is highly necessary for the cause of labour…not to allow our employers to play us off one against the other and so to drag us down to the lowest possible condition".

Van der Linden's assertion is just as relevant today with the challenges of the unevenness in the development of the globalisation of capital. Lee (1997: 3) however highlights what he deems as irony that such 'trade union internationalism flourished when multinational capitalism was in its infancy' whereas now that multinational corporations (MNCs) have effectively come to dominate the global economy there is a lack of 'vigorous international trade union movement capable of confronting corporate power'.

Sadler (2004: 36) suggested that a renewed interest in labour internationalism was partly motivated by a political and economic environment transformed by events

---

[5] Cited in Munck (2002: 136).

since 1989, described by Herod (1998) as involving a shift from discourses of geo-politics to geo-economics, with trade unions forced to re-think the scale of their organisation (Wills, 1998: 117). The year 1989 is depicted as leading to the 'collapse of the major ideological cleavage that had split workers' organisations and made it more difficult to organise united class-based politics in the workplace and in the political system' (O'Brien, 2000: 536). The previous turbulent era experienced a contest between the Soviet Union and the United States for global predominance which numerous academics claim ended hopes for worker internationalism that cut across both state and employer boundaries.

For some, 1989 was seen to provide an opportunity to rebuild trade union strength that had been weakened by ideological divisions. Harrod and O'Brien (2002: 6) claimed that the 'demise of the Cold War offers the possibility of constructing a new form of internationalism less polarised by ideology' which can 'rekindle the spirit of the late nineteenth century internationalisms'. The collapse of the WFTU and the emergence of a more independent and progressive leadership in the US union confederation, the AFL-CIO, meant according to Cumbers (2004: 830) that the prospects for a more genuine union internationalism increased. Yet challenges on a more national scale would also need to be overcome. Now that the Cold War was over ruling powers of advanced capitalist countries no longer needed alliances with 'their' working classes in the battle against the East (MacShane 1992; Herod 1998). As Munck (2002) asserted it is important to be aware that although the end of the Cold War resulted in a lessening of East/West conflict, it did not signify the ending of all forms of potential ideological conflict with regards the conceptualisation and practice of labour internationalism. It did offer the prospect of new areas (both geographically and ideologically) in which trade unions could organise, particularly in areas that had

formerly been forbidden territory but divisions remained between unions themselves from developed and developing countries due to instances of trade union foreign policy of detriment to 'comrades' and acts of protectionism – something that could be further exacerbated by the emerging globalisation of capital. Perhaps the hopes of new opportunities were to be illusory? The years that had followed witnessed globalisation – debates on its impact on trade unions and workers as well as its very existence were to dominate much of the debate on labour internationalism.

3.6   Globalisation: trade union friend or foe?

Despite years of 'popular and academic obsession with globalisation, accounts of its effects on labour remain divided' (Raess and Burgoon, 2006) with its impact depicted as both a challenge and potentially an opportunity to workers and their trade unions (Breitenfellner, 1997). Wills (1998) presents the two opposing arguments most succinctly: the first from advocates of globalisation who claim 'the mobility of capital makes trade union organisations impotent as workers are unable to resist the global might of the multinationals' (Wills, 1998: 111). The opposing argument is that 'political and economic circumstances are ripe for a renewal of labour internationalism because the erosion of national boundaries allows workers to make connections across space' (ibid). O'Brien (2000: 538) portrays the process as determined by ever heightening neoliberal conditions that pursue deregulation and increasing competition between actors which impact upon workers and is often referred to in terms of a process that is 'used as an ideology to justify economic retrenchment and dismantling of social welfare provisions'. This argument is developed by Wills (1998) who claims the very rhetoric

of globalisation has become a political weapon and as a consequence, for Hirst and Thompson (1996: 6) globalisation is therefore 'suitable for a world without illusions, but also one that robs us of hope'. However, Wills did argue that it has meant that 'trade unions are being forced to look for new allies and new strategies for the future, and the national political arena no longer holds the allure it once did' (1998: 116). A claim supported by some who saw globalisation as having created a crisis for national forms of trade union organisation which has, in turn, made a more international trade unionism necessary (Ramsey, 1997; Taylor, 1999) with Haworth (2005) suggesting academics refer to Levinson's (1972) seminal work on such issues:

> '...his argument was straightforward. Capital was internationalising and, consequently, the power of management was increasing. The trade union response had to match the scope and level of MNC power'
> (Haworth, 2005: 189).

Evidently globalisation is not just about capital mobility but represents a cultural and political shift. The impact has made it necessary for trade unions to adopt new forms of organisational approaches (Martinez Lucio and Weston, 1995) and an increasing awareness of the new set of links, spatial maps and connections that can shape the way workers respond and mobilise in new and innovative forms.

As with the ending of the Cold War, the impact of neoliberal globalisation can be depicted as creating a 'dilution in working class nationalism', a result of which workers' movements turned to the international realm for solidarity (O'Brien, 2000: 538). It should not be argued however that nationalism is dead amongst working people, nor that union activity on an international scale is without problems. For some there was considerable hope that the internationalisation of the trade union movement would move beyond its traditional political and ideological schisms to begin to

construct more genuine relations of transnational solidarity between workers (Routledge and Cumbers, 2010: 43). Some envisioned this occurring through the notion of a 'new' labour internationalism, a strategy which could revitalise trade unions. However, the period following the events of 1989 and the onset of globalisation meant that the ways we theorise and practice labour internationalism has become increasing complex and contradictory.

3.7   New Labour Internationalism – saviour of labour internationalism?

Almost sixty years ago Lorwin (1953: 334) claimed 'the inner logic of trade unions is to concern themselves more and more with questions of national policy, since these impinge directly or indirectly on the basic trade union function of improving working and living conditions'. Munck (1998) argued that if we were to substitute Lorwin's 'national policy' with 'international policy' this phrase would make sense within this contemporary era. Having discussed labour internationalism from its inception it is appropriate to address the following question: what, if anything, distinguishes the 'old' from the 'new' internationalism? In short what is 'new' about new labour internationalism? In addressing this question, Costa (2007: 256-7) adopts the following stance:

"It is crucial to adopt a balanced posture when comparing the old and the new labour internationalism, either because many of the promises of traditional proletarian internationalism, such as international labour solidarity, have not yet been realised, or because the ambitions claimed by the new labour internationalism are themselves subject to obstacles, or even because the distinction between the old and the new internationalism is not uncontroversial. It thus becomes necessary to problematise the relationship between the old and the new labour internationalism".

The previous 'old' labour internationalism was subject to two key criticisms – first that it had a markedly elitist dimension, regardless of the grassroots actions and the communist rhetoric of geo-political blocs in the past. The national schisms between what some would call the rank and file and the bureaucracy were in turn played out in international labour relations, with the latter more able to organise the resources and networks to sustain some semblance of co-ordination in the longer term while grassroots members retained a more nationalistic outlook. Second, the role of national players and projects in the development of the meaning and the form of international politics of labour was crucial (Lillie and Martinez Lucio, 2004). The labour diplomacy model was constructed on the basis of a civil service model of action and decision making processes. It therefore exuded the values of planning and incrementalism derived from social democracy, which in turn derived aspects of its character from modern state social democracy (Martinez Lucio, 2010: 541). Within such an approach solidarity was understood as conforming to administrative reciprocity and managed expectations. Regardless of such origins and constraints, there is a belief that there has been a series of political, social and environmental changes in the political economy of industrial relations that have led to a 'new' labour internationalism.

While it is clear that as the structuring and organisation of the old labour paradigms dissolve, new forms are developing (Munck, 1999:14), it is also true that the 'old questions' are not irrelevant, and that the 'old actors' are not incapable of changing

(Adkin, 1999: 216). The proposal for a synthesis between continuity and transformation, to 'look at the old labour movement in new ways' (Waterman, 1999: 248), and to construct new projects of global solidarity in which 'restitution' (the acceptance of the errors of the past or 'solidarity with the past') is understood as one of the components of the future project of global solidarity (Waterman, 1998a: 231) are, therefore three converging ideas that should be taken into account when considering the relationship between the old and the new labour internationalism (Costa, 2007: 257).

Furthermore there is no general agreement among academics about the 'new' labour internationalism's boundaries, features and potentialities[6] (Ghigliani, 2005: 361). It is encapsulated in terms of networking, information-sharing, new recruiting targets and new concerns for gender and consumer issues, the environment and human rights (Lee, 1997; Munck, 1999; Waterman, 1999; Hyman, 2004). It is a move towards social movements and community groups and, consequently, by the increasing role of the politics of alliances and coalitions (Ghigliani, 2005: 361) an approach supported by trade union revitalisation theorists. There are various features assigned to NLI which appear to be closer to social movements with their broader and social employment agendas, relatively less concerned with bureaucratic praxis and culture, and more open in its geographical focus and concerns (Munck, 2004).

In an attempt to encapsulate NLI characteristics Waterman (1998) produced thirteen criteria, arguing that the labour movement is weak, and in its attempts to overcome the challenges of the contemporary era, must disassociate itself from the inadequacies of the dominant, traditional trade union. Waterman claims the criteria reflect successful examples of internationalism in its rejection of the form, content and

---

[6] The idea that there exists no real consensus on 'new' labour internationalism is discredited by Waterman (1991: 77) who identifies himself as the first to provide an actual definition and scope of the term in 1986.

procedure of traditional labour internationalism (1998: 71). Epitomised by grassroots level organisation, the criteria suggest a move away from the 'aid model' (one way flows of money and material from the 'rich, powerful, free unions) to the 'solidarity model' (two-way or multidirectional flows and exchanges of information and support) and recognition of the need to build alliances and coalitions with other social movements and trade unions. The criteria are supported by Munck (2002: 154) who depicts them as a move beyond a 'conception of transnational collective bargaining, involving a more 'social' movement unionism', in adherence with Herod (2001b) who portrays interactions between scales in a break from the traditional understandings of unions 'going global' to match with the internationalisation of capital and its globalising strategies (Castree, 2000). Instead NLI comprises a complex interaction of local, national, regional and global responses (Munck, 2002). Most notably, the thirteen criteria and debate surrounding interpretations of labour internationalism encompass the theorisations of labour geography outlined in the previous chapter – primarily that of the necessity to emphasise worker agency in international action as well as further accentuating the idea that space is a source of power. Theorising internationalism in this way provides workers with integral tools in countering capital's supposed monopoly over the making of economic geographies.

Waterman's thirteen criteria for a new labour internationalism (1998: 72-73)

- Move from international relations of union officials towards face-to-face relations at the grassroots level;
- Surpassing dependence on centralised, bureaucratic and rigid model of international organisation to self-empowering, decentralised, horizontal, democratic international network;
- From 'aid model' (one-way flows of money and material from 'rich, powerful, free unions) to a 'solidarity model' (two-way or multidirectional flows of political support, information and ideas);
- From verbal declarations to political activity, create work, visits, or direct financial contributions by the working people concerned;
- Surpassing an 'export solidarity' model by practising 'international solidarity at home', combating the local causes/effects of international exploitation and repression;
- Generalizing the solidarity ethic by combating national, racial, political, religious, ideological and gender discrimination amongst working people locally;
- Base international solidarity on expressed daily needs, values and capacities of lay working people, not just their representatives;
- Recognise that whilst labour is not the privileged bearer of internationalism, it is essential to it, and therefore link up with other democratic internationalisms so as to reinforce wage-labour struggles *and* surpass a workerist internationalism;
- Overcoming ideological, political and financial dependency in international solidarity work by financing internationalist activities from worker or publicly collected funds, and carrying our independent research activities and policy formulation;
- Replace political/financial coercion with a public discourse of equals, made available to interested workers;
- Requires that intellectuals, professionals and officials to speak with workers and take on training role as opposed to leadership;
- Recognise there is no single site or level of international struggle;
- Recognise the development of a new internationalism requires contributions from and discussion with labour movements in West, East and South, as well as within and between other socio-geographic regions.

'How' and 'why' workers organise themselves at different scales are still prominent unanswered questions raised throughout labour internationalism literature for, as Ghigliani asserts 'these nodes and scales of labour organisation impact upon the geography of worker solidarity across space' (2006: 363). Thus as Herod argues, primarily new labour internationalism is a 'shift from a spatially hierarchical model of organising internationalism to one focused on much flatter networks' (Herod, 2003: 518). As the roots of 'old' labour internationalism are further eroded by economic and

political change, trade unions have been forced to rethink the scale of their organisation (Wills, 1998: 117). Such changes require a greater concern for bottom-up organisation building and the extension of grassroots activity (Munck, 1999; Moody, 1997; Waterman, 1999; Lambert and Webster, 2001).

It is apparent that the search for a discursive consensus around the conceptualisation of the new labour internationalism is ongoing. Many studies of trade union revitalisation remain largely prescriptive and often 'idealise' labour transformation as an antithesis to the stagnant and defensive actions of retrenched business unionism. As a result, renewal as it 'actually exists' remains hidden as the emphasis is on capacities to achieve an ideal form such as social movement unionism (Tufts, 2009: 2). Recent efforts to build new global unions are embryonic and there is little evidence to suggest that they will escape the 'geographical dilemmas' that historically plagues unions (see Castree et al., 2004) as the local aspirations of workers in real communities often collide. However, a healthy scepticism must be levied at the new labour internationalism (see Waterman and Wills, 2001; Munck, 2002). Labour is forming a range of new relationships that transcend national borders. It is often more accurate, however, to describe the emerging formations as situated networks where actors exchange information that can be put into action at a number of different scales rather than formal institutions able to leverage power against transnational capital (see Wills, 2002). In 'getting to grips with international capital' unions need to develop a much more relational sense of space (Cumbers, MacKinnon and MacMaster, 2003) in which attempts to build local organisational strength (whether at home or abroad) are firmly underpinned by a culture of international solidarity (Cumbers, 2004: 847).

Two decades since the optimism brought on by the ending of the Cold War Routledge and Cumbers (2010) claim that a charitable view of internationalism would

be that progress towards genuine solidarity has been rather pedestrian. For them, a more critical stance would be that the same old divisions, particularly those from the global North and global South remain entrenched whilst some of the new forms of global union organising are largely irrelevant to the challenges facing contemporary workers. Furthermore, as Fairbrother (2000) argued a widening gap between grassroots members and union leadership exists, therefore any revitalisation efforts will be fruitless unless initiatives are in place to overcome this (Cumbers, 2005) something this thesis argues that new labour internationalism is well placed to accomplish. Moody (1997) was explicit in calling for a new approach to regulation, where workers and activists organise at a grassroots level through networks and influence the agenda of capital. Cumbers (2004: 847) argues that it is necessary to encourage workers to think more reflexively about how their own everyday practices are tied to and affect the material conditions of others in distant places (Cumbers, 2004: 847): 'only when such methods become more widespread will there be the prospect of a genuine and sustainable union internationalism' (ibid), one that can overcome the obstacles to collectivism produced by what many perceive as a society of individuals.

3.8   Individuation Thesis – the erosion of mutual solidarity

The literature of the last two decades has overwhelmingly identified trade unions as major victims of the increasing fragmentation and individualisation of social and working life (Kelly, 1997). In part this has been claimed as a reflection of the fracturing of collectivism resulting from, firstly, structural changes in the labour market, and secondly, from the new emphasis placed upon the individual employee in

management strategies. These developments have, it is argued, rendered the notion of a standardised group of workers pursuing similar interests increasingly difficult to sustain (Bacon and Storey, 1996; Leijnse, 1996). Shifts in the composition of the workforce away from manufacturing towards private sector services have reduced employment levels in the areas of traditional trade union membership strength (Waddington and Hoffman, 2000). Such structural changes have been seen by many as signalling a break up of a traditionally homogenous and collective experience of employment, and it is argued, have fostered the diffusion of individual orientations at the expense of traditional forms of class related solidarity (Lash and Urry, 1987; Valkenburg and Zoll, 1995). The justifications given for these claims range from those taking the move beyond class, and hence the inappropriateness of trade unions, as their point of departure, to those regarding trade unions as too bureaucratic and inappropriate for the challenges facing working people in the twenty-first century.

Hyman (1992) argues that the current crises of trade unionism can also be attributed to changes at the grassroots level. With his focus on interest disaggregation within the working class, he identifies the processes of a shift from collectivism towards individualism, a growing particularism of collective identities and a fragmentation within the 'organised working class' The latter argument is related to the notion of a new individualism, that is, workers defining their interests individualistically or in terms of particularistic identities leading to an erosion of their mutual solidarity.

The individualisation thesis holds that neoliberal labour markets, the casualisation of work, the decline of heavy industries, the changing nature of family life, and patterns of cultural globalization have uprooted people from older communal ways of life. Individualisation is thought to cut through old bonds of common fate, mutual dependence and trust, as well as long-standing political and social commitments

linked to neighbourhood, nation and class. This has resulted in identities that are looser, more negotiable and more autonomously fashioned. The negative aspect of this greater freedom is more insecurity and risk as life becomes less certain and predictable. Beck went as far as to state that in this new world 'community is dissolved in the acid bath of competition' (Beck 1992: 94). One does not have to sustain that rather extreme generalisation to accept the important kernel of truth contained within it and empirical studies show that many indicators of social capital such as inter-personal trust and civic participation have declined (Halpern, 2000). One such study is that of Putnam (2001: 19) in his analysis of a rapid decline of social capital in contemporary America, he refers to social capital as 'the connections among individuals'; social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'; with a dominant them emerging:

> "For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into even deeper engagement in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago – silently, without warning – that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current"
>
> (Putnam, 2001: 27).

This is consistent with Gidden's overview of institutionalised individualism whose arguments about the redundancy of class analysis, and in particular the decline of class struggle as a concept is relevant to the analysis of contemporary societies and associated collectivity. I argue that rather than 'class struggle' being undermined by the disembedding consequences of individualisation, collective class actors and individuals occupying particular class locations are changing their repertoire (Tilly, 1995) of class struggle in response to processes of social change seen as institutionalised individualisation. Critiques that argue collectivism is withering depend upon a 'heavily mythologised vision of the past: a golden age when workers were spontaneously

collective and labour organisations joined ranks in a unifying class project. History of course was never like this' (Hyman, 1992: 159). This links to what Pollert (2009) deems the conceptual over-polarisation of the terms 'individualism' and 'collectivism'.

3.8.1   Trade union membership – a collective or individual motivation?

'Collectivism' in the field of employment relates to the existence of independent, or quasi-independent organisations founded to represent and articulate the interests of groups of workers within the workplace, industry, sector, community, or country (Kessler and Purcell, 2003). It is important to reflect upon Kelly and Waddington's view that trade union collectivism is 'a root principle, because only through collective organisation and action can unions challenge employer power, and it is only through the deployment of material and ideological power resources that unions obtain individual and collective results for their members' (1995: 114).

The process by which individuals join a trade union involves individual, personal factors as well as contextual employment and wider societal issues (Visser, 2002). As a result recruitment and membership retention is a highly complex area of study, as is the mobilisation of members. The rationale for union membership is often described along an ideological-instrumental continuum (Hartley 1996). In order to investigate individuals' identification with their union, Alvin and Sverke (2000: 75) explored a typology of union commitment patterns. Because instrumental and solidaristic concerns are both central features of labour organisations (Hyman, 1992) and represent the fundamental bases of member identifications with unions (Sverke, 1995) it is necessary to make a distinction between instrumental, and

ideological/affective commitment. The former refers to an identification with the union in exchange of benefits associated with membership (Heery and Kelly, 1994; Bacon and Storey, 1996; Waddington and Hoffman, 2000) and the latter to an identification with the goals, values and ideology of the organisation as well as perhaps notions such as a commitment to colleagues and other workers, the working class, social justice. Commitment is part of the very essence of unions and a prerequisite for participation (Gallagher and Strauss, 1991). Indeed as McClendon et al. (1995:10) have noted:

> "Unions survive on the commitment of their members, and to be effective, national unions must have the support of local union rank and file".

Some academics claim that instrumental reasons for membership are becoming more and more frequent, at the expense of collective and ideological motives (Bruhn, 1999). Furthermore, even though membership loss in actual numbers is marginal in comparison to previous decades, the logic behind such trends is argued by some as symptomatic – individuals are losing interest in the unions (Allvin and Sverke, 2000). In her research on the ideologies and union participation of trade union members Hartley (1996: 336) identified that only a quarter of participants indicated that ideology or strong held beliefs influenced the decision to join a trade union; instead the primary motivating factor was employment insurance. This was similar to the findings of Waddington and Whiston (1997) in their research of over ten thousand trade union members.

Given that individuation thesis suggests that contemporary trade union members are merely consumers of services offered to them by their trade union, the idea of an 'active' trade union member becomes something of an anachronism. Instead

it would be argued that trade unions should accept members as 'passive consumers' and concentrate on the services they offer if they are to retain numbers. Williams (1997: 501) states: 'the shift towards a more explicit, individualised, representational and servicing function, making trade unions more like organisations that have 'consumers' rather that active members has been encouraged by some writers'.

The decline in the incidence of industrial action and membership participation in 'everyday' union business has been cited as further evidence of a general erosion of collectivism (Putnam 2001). In bringing lay members' perspectives on labour internationalism to the forefront later within this thesis, their narratives will assist in identifying that support for collectivism and solidarity is still prominent in the mindset of many. Trade union members' perception of the union's role in individualised issues may hold both individualist and collectivist approaches and their priorities may alter over space and time (Healy 1999). Williams (1997: 508) drawing on Fox (1985) and Hyman (1992), asserts that a wholly individualistic strategy would be misplaced, as instrumental and solidaristic concerns combine and interact in the functioning of anything that is recognisably a union.

The issue of member apathy referred to in literature (Lipset, 1954; Roy, 1968; Franzway, 2000) is not new, either for trade unions or academic reflection and is a view shared by those looking at political participation more widely. Dahl (1961, see also Olson, 1965) for example argues that considering the costs of participation, the puzzling question is not why some people *do not* participate, but on the contrary, why some people *do*. Furthermore, why do some act in solidarity and feel connections with international others, whilst others do not?

While trade union activists often look upon collectivism as a moral value in its own right, as we have seen, many workers join unions for instrumental reasons, that is, trade unions membership is regarded the most effective means of realising individual needs and aspirations. This corresponds to Stirling's (2009) view that solidarity and collective action can be the most effective way to manifest individual needs. However, there is a danger here in making unions too instrumentally attractive. Hyman (1992) argues that unions representing merely mechanical and not organic solidarity often have passive members relating only to trade unions as one among many other bureaucratic institutions regulating the employment relation.

Increasing heterogeneity within the working class resulted in a crisis of interest aggregation in the late 1980s, thus undermining the notion of a mechanical solidarity. For some sceptics solidarity has already ended: we are in an epoch of individualism when concern for the welfare of others has no place in the rational-choice egoism of purely economic actors (Hyman, 1999b). However, the question should be posed rather differently: not whether solidarity is at an end, but whether current models and conceptions are exhausted and thus whether international solidarity must be redefined and reinvented. Hyman suggests that in order to survive, solidarity needs to be rethought and reinvented in an organic fashion, and he proposes that solidarity be based on a flexible coordination of differentiated, and thus more interdependent, individuals. This project, Hyman argues, requires the recognition and respect of differentiations of circumstances and interests of workers both within and across borders. To attain this it is important to redefine which interests should be represented, and to give priority to the construction of an agenda uniting rather than dividing workers, that is, focussing on discontents which generalise fragmented experiences. In

the end, it can be argued that recognition of being united against a common enemy prevails:

> 'The logic...is the reassertion of rights of labour as against the imperatives of capital. Many of the most effective interventions...represent partial efforts to articulate a new discourse of workers' rights'
>
> (Hyman, 1999b: 111).

3.9   Conceptualising International Solidarity for a new era

Workplace collectivism, together with wider social solidarities is at the heart of trade unionism (Hyman, 1999a). Solidarity, like most evaluatively charged concepts, is subject to many interpretations. Within this section it is not my intention to explore the etymology and historical evolution of the concept, but it is important to highlight some of its contrasting conceptualisations as they have vast implications for understandings of internationalism.

In essence, 'solidarity' is the feeling of reciprocal sympathy and responsibility among members of a group which promotes mutual support. As such it has subjective and emotional elements which helps to explain its conceptual neglect, for as Baker et al (2004: 28) have argued, solidarity is associated with 'love' and 'friendship', essentially private matters which individuals should be left to work out for themselves. Exploring the notion of 'imagined solidarities', Hyman (1999a) posits at least three interpretations of solidarity. Initially, use of the term 'imagined' may be seen to infer that workers' solidarity is illusory and unattainable, yet it may also be deemed as portraying solidarity as a utopia nonetheless capable of inspiring action. Relatedly,

'imagined communities' is the idea that people may conceive a commonality with others without ever knowing them personally. Hyman (1999a) claims that workers' diverse interests cannot be integrated mechanically but require creative imagination. He produces three distinct concepts of solidarity with the first presupposing a common identity – the possession of characteristics which mark individuals as members of a group with a collective loyalty and clear sense of difference from others. This constitutes what is referred to as a 'mechanical solidarity' based on a supposed or imputed unified 'class interest'. The second type of solidarity (which can be seen to overlap the first in terms of definition and practice) is based upon an awareness of common interests which are best pursued collectively. This is the classic rationale for trade unionism: all workers are victims of oppression and exploitation, yet as individuals they are weak; thus the only way they can win demands is through combined, collective action through which 'unity is strength'. The foundation of effective labour movements depended on both concrete examples of successful collective action, and what Hyman referred to as 'solidarity as a mobilising myth'. By emphasising a commonality of interests union organisers seek to persuade workers to act collectively, and given that interests are shaped by subjective perception as well as objective situation, belief can create its own reality (Hyman, 1994). One must recognise however the many cases of successful action presenting concrete examples that move us beyond understandings of mobilisations at mere mythology. Hyman thus maintains that any collectivism today requires new forms of strategic imagination, and workers' definition of interests is as susceptible to being shaped by, for example, unions as it is by other organisations seeking to influence the values of working people. The third and final definition is 'organic' solidarity which involves 'mutuality despite difference' whereupon the notion of a 'universality' or 'unity' of interests across the working class

globally is rejected. Instead the focus is on a particular interests rather than commonalities and mobilised on the basis of 'coordinated diversity' (Hyman, 1999b: 107) which is more nuanced and flexible that previous formations. Another way of comprehending such mutuality is that of expressions of the obligations of humanity – that of the obligation of the strong to support the weak, on the pragmatic rationale that the roles might on occasion be reversed.

For Waterman (2001: 235-239) movements that have arisen as a response to globalisation have 'a complex solidarity for a complex globality'. He identifies six characteristics of solidarity – identity, substitution, complementarity, reciprocity, affinity and restitution. Waterman is concerned that international solidarity will not be achieved purely out of a sense of moral duty but rather as the rational expression of shared interest. He indicated that international solidarity cannot operate as did the spatially bound, tightly organised solidarities of the past (Waterman, 1998). Rather it would require more variegated forms, involving complex mediations and a rolling process of articulation and re-articulation. As such, international solidarity is a creative process that can be revitalised according to the collective needs of workers and their organisations. However, there exists a paradox at the heart of solidarity – on the one hand it has connotations of unity and universality, emphasising responsibility for others and the feeling of togetherness. On the other hand it exhibits itself most forcefully in antagonism to other groups, often in ways which eschew the possibility of compromise (Wilde, 2007: 173). It is also crucial to explore the possibility that the forces of globalisation that have devastated traditional forms of solidarity may have provoked new forms, which place the idea of human solidarity on an emerging agenda of global politics or instead whether increasing individualism renders international solidarity obsolete.

3.9.1   International Solidarities need to be constructed

Whether solidarity actually exists between workers, and on what basis, is of course difficult to measure in practice. This raises questions concerning union members' perspectives on international solidarity – most notably the tensions that can arise in its construction. Tensions can derive from different interpretations of internationalism being rooted in instrumental, economic motivations or influenced by affective ideologies. An exclusive focus on economic factors often stems from accounts of the adaptation to capitalist structures that does, partially, characterise trade unionism (O'Brien, 2005: 164). O'Brien (2005) claims the assumption here is often that only by following the internationalising tendencies of capitalism will trade unions adopt more internationalist tendencies (see for instance Levinson, 1972). In contrast, Haworth and Ramsey (1988) and Hyman (1999a) claim a common political ideology is the basis for effective trade union internationalism.

Gumbrell-McCormick (2001: 19) in her summary of the purposes of trade unionism makes a distinction between political self-interest and the much more complex area of ideology. She argues that solidarity and identity as well as ideology provide 'a framework for the mediation of individual interests and motivations' (ibid). The real strength of an emphasis on 'solidarity' and 'identity' however, in particular to this thesis, is that it shifts the focus away from the practice of official bureaucracy and towards a discussion on what internationalism means for trade union members. This understanding thus supports the ethos of labour geography that this thesis wishes to support whilst suggesting that labour internationalism is bound up in activism, social

movements, grassroots' democracy and emancipatory idealism, notions key to both social movement theory and trade union revitalisation (see Chapters 3 and 4).

The dichotomy between economic and ideological motivations is apparent in Johns' (1998) distinction between 'transformatory' and 'accommodationist' solidarity. Transformatory solidarity refers to workers in one place acting to help those elsewhere without any expectation of reciprocity that they themselves will benefit. Alternatively, accommodationist solidarity may at first sight appear altruistic but is more about defending particular privileged (work)places in the global economy. For example, on investigating the strategic campaign of steelworkers at Ravenswood, West Virginia, Herod (1995) presents an example of this transformatory solidarity in an international campaign that created links between the steelworkers and unions and workers abroad to challenge the plant's international consortium of owners. In her exploration of U.S. worker solidarity with Guatemala, Johns (1998) queries whether such solidarity merely seeks to reinforce the prominence of U.S. workers in the global workforce identifying a probable case of accommodationist solidarity. The promotion of unionisation and developing labour standards abroad can eliminate sources of cheaper labour, thus potentially taking foreign workers out of competition and 'keeping U.S. jobs here' (Johns, 1998: 256).

At the heart of this distinction is the spatiality of class interests. Transformatory solidarity promotes 'universal class interests' that are not 'spatially rooted or derived' whereas accommodatory solidarity seeks to accommodate capital 'in place' and thus assert 'the dominance of a particular group of workers within capitalism's spatial structures' (Johns, 1998: 256). Johns supports Harvey in promoting an understanding of class that transcends local and particular interests. In his discussion of a campaign to prevent the closure of an Oxford car factory, Harvey criticises workers

for their narrow concern with 'particular' place bound interests. He argues instead for a 'universal' and relational approach to class interests that attempt to balance the needs of workers over a wider scale, even when they are competing for the same resources. Both understandings serve to illuminate the question as to whether political responses from workers and their communities can be interpreted as class resistance or something more parochial. Hudson and Sadler (1986) argue that the claimed distinction between defending place and betraying class that is inherent in Harvey's analysis is a false dichotomy. Instead they argue that class is interrelated with experiences of place. Herod (2001a: 17) makes a similar suggestion, arguing against the notion that if the interests that workers are seeking to promote or defend are anything less than universal then they are class dupes: 'geography may serve at times to bring workers together in the face of a more divided capital and to divide them in the face of a more unified capital'. For Herod, context is integral – workers and their unions must respond according to their available options – not according to their decision as deficient class actors. Castree et al (2003) agree such tensions are geographical dilemmas, not features of class. The actions of one group of workers may be of detriment to others elsewhere exemplifying the complexities and tensions of labour internationalism, not the inability of workers to fulfil their class interests/aspatialised class interests. Both of these approaches are similar in that they perceive class formation and thus the basis of labour internationalism through economic interests (Sadler, 2000). However as a wide expanse of literature has proven, class is considerably broader than an economic relationship. Economic interests undoubtedly have a powerful influence on the spatial strategies of trade unions and also the nature and formation of class politics. However, class analysis now entails a much wider array of processes than economic interest.

Castree et al. (2004) argue that capitalism does not exist in a social vacuum, and hence class is deeply intertwined with other axes of differentiation than the capitalist-worker axis. The same authors term these axes 'differences external to capitalism' thus paying heed to capitalism in its economic aspects and viewing culture as something external to it. Nonetheless, the influence cultural differentiations among workers might have on the employment relation, through the ranking of workers by employers and a subsequent matching of them with certain types of jobs, is recognised. It is thus necessary to consider both the ways in which the ascribed categories of identity are perceived by others, in this case employers, and by those who are marked by them. Regarding the latter, cultural axes of differences affect workers' self-identity, and might thus influence the development of class consciousness, and hence, 'class solidarity can…be diluted or challenged by non-class bases of identity and affinity' (Castree et al. 2004: 55).

Arrighi et al. (1989) use an analogy of a wheel to identify that the working class is often conceived of as divided along several lines. It is widely acknowledged that although constituting a class, this is not a homogenous group of people. Instead, workers are of different nationalities, ethnicities, genders, generations, occupations, ideologies, religions and sexual orientations. In addition to these differentiations comes the geographical unevenness of development. Radice (2001: 115) queried 'how could it have been possible…to conceive of a real commonality of interests between, say, the industrial workers of Britain, and the miners and plantation workers of the colonial Gold Coast?' Class is comprised of people from different nations in a world of uneven development. Though Marxists would agree that the common interests of workers in reality transcend national boundaries, they would also acknowledge the difficulties posed by them i.e. the possibility of workers putting national interests before class interests, perceiving national interests as self interest.

ABSTENTIONS

Often support for labour internationalism is influenced by a worker's 'social being' (Marx, 1970: 138) which conceptualises their wider existence (be that class/non class identities; local affairs; global forces and moral geographies). This often enables workers to recognise a commonality of interests with other workers (Castree et al., 2004) informing *how* and *why* they make connections through international strategies. Harvey (1993) posits the only way to bridge difference is to emphasise commonality. But is it too weak a logic to assume workers still exist within a definite framework of an international working class identity? And if so, can trade unions construct a common identity between workers producing support for international strategies? It is commonly held opinion that because of conjectural problems with economic stagnation and recession; fundamental changes in the occupational structure together with changes in management strategies; and cultural, institutional, ideological and political development trends, the working class has become fragmented and disaggregated (Madsen, 1996).

For many, it is problematic to speak of a transnational union identity amongst workers, where instead in a generalised context of changing union identities, the notion of diffuse labour identities would seem more accurate (de Sousa Santos, 2007: 247). In their genealogy of working class internationalism, Pasture and Verberckmoes (1998) critique Marx and Engels' for identifying class as the only valid criteria of contention in constructing internationalism, whilst ignoring other variations in identity and ideology. This for Harvey (1993: 94) has been one of the contributing factors to the weakening of working class politics: the increasing fragmentation of 'progressive' politics around special issues and the rise of social movements focusing on identities. He claims these movements have become an alternative to class politics of the traditional sort and in some instances have

exhibited downright hostility to such politics (ibid). Amin (2003) suggests that identity politics are favoured by capitalism to achieve fragmentation within any movement deemed capable of challenging the current eco-political system. This may provide recognition that a new labour internationalism based upon promoting a class consciousness could prove effective. And yet, trade unions are working under the perception that a working class identity is dissipating, resulting in many determined to shift the debate towards articulations of internationalism that are more closely related to questions of citizenship involving broader notions of solidarity and the emergence of transnational workers' networks (Josselin and Wallace, 2001). Segal (1991: 90) promotes a recognition of difference whilst uniting in commonality, 'it seems perverse to pose women's specific interests 'against' as opposed to 'alongside' more traditional socialist goals. Segal parallels Hartsock's (1987) concern, calling for identification of 'the similarities that can provide the basis for differing groups to understand each other and form alliances'.

Herod (2001a) developed this further through identification of 'labor's spatial fix', the idea that workers also attempt to produce space to meet their own requirements. From this, Herod explained that since a spatial fix is a reflection of the problem of reproduction, and since reproduction is a social and cultural, as well as economic process, it follows that different groups of workers will seek different spatial fixes that reflect their cultural and social interests (ibid). What must be asked at this juncture then, is how in pursuit of international solidarity can a potential collision between class interests or spatial praxis be averted in forging commonalities over space (Herod, 2003: 502). This issue is raised by Castree et al (2006: 382) who frame the question:

"...as grassroots politics is conducted 'from' place and 'about' place, how can international solidarity then be constructed with others whose commitments, aspirations and goals are forged in quite different contexts?"

Castree et al (2004) identify three such areas of commonality between workers, the first being their relationship to capital which means they all need to earn a living; secondly, when this is fulfilled a common interest exists with regards improvements in terms and conditions; and finally workers are interdependent of each other through their reliance on each others' production and consumption practices. It can be assumed that this commonality of interests will foster a class consciousness, particularly, as stated by Hyman (1999a) if workers realise the inefficiency of particularistic struggles. However there is no guarantee that individuals will identify themselves as a class, thus Castree et al (2004) argue inter-place solidarity needs to be actively constructed to overcome a variety of worker identities. By placing the focus of international solidarity upon issues directly relating to the local:

"The interests of one group of workers could be brought to the attention of, and supported by, workers from across space in efforts aimed at opening up the landscape and making the spatial connections between workers visible"

(Herod, 2003: 509).

Capitalist policies result in the fragmenting of international worker consciousness into multiple, disconnected, fragmented identities may influence trade union members to perceive internationalism as unfeasible, and their trade union counterparts as the distant 'other' for whom there exists only competition. Alternatively, a rapidly expanding global proletariat as a result of neoliberal globalisation, with access to communication

technologies and increased mobilities, may suggest that an effective labour internationalism could promote a reconstitution of an international working class identity:

> "The experts proclaimed the working class a thing of the past. The diagnosis read: paralysis due to globalisation, fragmentation, flexibilisation. A deteriorative disease was said to have rendered this once combative social class too weak to survive the dog-eat-dog world of lean and mean transnational corporations and trimmed-down states…Like Mark Twain's proverbial death notice, the diagnosis proved premature"
>
> (Moody, 1997: 9).

3.10 Conclusion

The relationship between geography and labour has changed significantly over recent decades. We have seen during this chapter how a shift from 'a geography of labour' to 'labour geography' has placed emphasis on the role workers and their organisations have in shaping the economic landscape. In doing so, labour geographers have promoted the necessity of promoting the voices of workers often unheard in the past. This approach has become increasingly necessary due to the changing economic and political approaches most pertinently that of neoliberal globalisation resulting in unprecedented impacts on workers and their trade unions. Despite this change in emphasis, I have identified that still some voices are unheard: perspectives are missing from grassroots trade union members on labour internationalism and most notable to this thesis there is a lack of understanding of the views held by public sector union members. Furthermore I have highlighted the need identified within literature to move

beyond notions of a unified, homogenous working class solidarity in recognition of what is often posed as a fragmented, individualised contemporary society. In doing so I wished to question the existence of a once golden era of solidarity by querying whether the many identities and networks within which an individual is embedded have always created tensions or produce opportunities for international solidarity. Solidarity should be seen as an ongoing process which can be constructed, developed and amended based upon grassroots members' common issues, not necessarily common identities – the next chapter will provide a toolkit as to how this can be produced.

Chapter 4

Exploring Internationalisms

4.1   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is not to provide an in-depth genealogy of social movement theory's exploration of collective action. Instead I will identify how many of the aspects of new labour internationalism and new social movement theory overlap and intertwine to produce concepts apt to this contemporary era. Waterman (1998) in his conceptualisation of a New Labour Internationalism (NLI) recommended labour adopt a social movement orientation that promotes grassroots engagement. Therefore by discussing social movement theory I wish to illuminate the aspects of this field of work most appropriate to the area of research within this thesis – that of exploring the connections between individuals and international 'others'. Having suggested in the previous chapters that international solidarity should be understood as a creative process, rather than an end point with its practice promoted at a grassroots level it is necessary to focus upon how internationalist identities can be constructed and what strategies can achieve this – social movement theory will provide these answers.

4.2   The 'American' school – strategy based social movements

Of the wide ranging effects that the social movements of the 1960s had on sociology, one of the more significant was the reorientation of the study of social movements. Traditionally, the central point of exploration had been explaining individual participation in social movements. The major formulations - mass society theory, relative deprivation, collective behaviour theory pointing to sudden increases in individual grievances generated by the 'structural strains' of rapid social change i.e. the American Civil Rights movement. The traditional theories shared the assumptions that movement participation was relatively rare, discontents were transitory, movement and institutionalised actions were sharply distinct, and movement actors were arational if not outright irrational. The movements of the 1960s however dramatically changed these assumptions. By providing a rich array of experience and enlisting the active sympathies, the movements stimulated a shift in theoretical assumptions and analytic emphases that eventually became formalised in the resource mobilisation theory of social movements.

This approach to the analysis of social movements emerged in the United States as a response to the growing Civil Rights, anti-Vietnam War and Women's movements. The field developed from Park's concept of 'collective behaviour' and Olson's 'Rational Choice Model' which contrasted collection action as rational and purposive as opposed to functionalist accounts which focussed on crowd behaviour as irrational and of protest as 'deviant'; or the views of other structuralists which saw humans as mere embodied carriers of wider structural forces (North, 2006: 14). Retrospective critiques of structuralist/functionalist accounts were highly critical of the

model in analysing the work of a number of theorists (including Oberschall, 1973; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; McAdam et al. 1988) Crossley (2002: 11) outlined the critique, arguing that collective behaviour approach:

- Portrays movement emergence as a reflex response to 'grievances', 'deprivations', 'anomie', 'structural strains' or other such forms of hardship. The stereotypical collective behaviour theorist believes that objective hardships are both a necessary and sufficient cause of protest and movement formation;
- Portrays the protests and movements triggered by these hardships as irrational psychological responses; manifestations of 'mob psychology' or collective hysteria;
- Portrays those who become involved in these 'mobs' as (previously) isolated individuals who are often not very well integrated into society;
- Lumps social movements together with other assorted forms of 'collective behaviour', such as fashions, crazes and panics, without any due consideration for their distinctiveness and properly 'political' nature.

Evidently, the approach attracted a multi-faceted critique with numerous empirical studies questioning its plausibility. Most notable was the refutation that increases in hardship result in increases in movement activity; instead as identified by Eisinger (1973) protests often increases during periods of reform and economic upturn supporting theory that suggests strains and conflicts are a constant factor in social life and, as such, cannot explain movement activity which is variable according to occurrence and intensity (Crossley, 2002: 12).

4.3   Rational actor theory – methodical individualism

Rational actor theory is the alternative model to functionalist approaches that see protest as irrational. According to Crossley (2002: 56) the key defining feature of RAT is its methodological individualism placing focus on the individual and instrumentalism. Proponents argue that 'we must regard the social world as decomposable into the actions of individuals and must explain whatever social phenomena we seek to explain in terms of those actions and individuals' (ibid). The RAT model proposes three distinct elements: desire; opportunities and constraints for action; and rationality. 'Desire' defines goals and interests for individuals, as well as costs and losses. Actions and their consequences are profitable and/or costly to the extent that they bolster or reduce an individual's stock of desired 'goods'. Alternatively, desires can be deemed structures of motivation which drive action (Crossley, 2002: 56). 'Opportunities and constraints' are an important consideration in understanding that any desired goal can be costly or profitable depending upon how easily and painlessly it can be obtained. And finally, 'rationality' is the capacity of individuals to identify courses of action which enable them to maximise the realisation of their desires whilst weighing up the costs and benefits to a particular course of action. Unlike the previous approach rationality is strictly instrumental – individuals find the most effective means for realising their goals or interests (Crossley, 2002: 58).

The main issue for RAT is the way it has been applied to the study of social movements. Much of this work centres upon what RATs call the collective action problem, a problem most famously associated with the work of Mancur Olson (1965).

The following section will look at this in more detail in relation to trade unions and internationalism.

4.3.1   The collective action problem: "what are the benefits for me?"

According to Olson, rational self interested individuals will often not contribute to securing 'collective goods' because of the superior rationality of 'riding free'. Instead mobilisation occurs only if 'selective benefits' are offered, the group is small so that benefits to individuals are greater than the costs of securing the collective good, or the group is privileged i.e. contains individuals sufficiently endowed that the marginal costs of securing the collective good are less than their individual benefit. The rational actor has an overtly instrumental orientation to the union and decides whether or not to participate through a calculated process of reasoning as per Olson's theorisation. This involves weighing up the personal costs and benefits of involvement such as paying membership subscriptions in return for free legal advice; help with work problems or financial services. As Olson (1965) argued, this poses considerable issues in terms of collective action, where a great deal of time and effort is expended for gains that all members ultimately enjoy. It is queried why a lay member would participate in a campaign, or a dispute for example, when they could let someone else to participate and still benefit from the outcome. Olson's answer, in short is that they would not. It is 'rational' to refrain from participation.

Mobilising members therefore becomes a calculation of how to reduce the costs and raise the benefits of participation for the individual (Roy, 1968; Manzer, 1970). The theory does not account for why some members do take on positions of responsibility within trade unions, where the costs of activism are high and the rewards (in terms of concrete victories at least) can be low. To explain this, we need to look beyond the 'rational' decision to members' ideological commitments such as those relating to trade unionism, democracy and other political projects. For trade union activists with commitments to these types of principles, participation is itself the 'reward' and the idea of the 'free ride' is therefore redundant (Hirschman, 1982). Snape et al., (2000: 217) refer to Sveke and Sjoberge (1995) in their claims that instrumental union commitment is related to the intention to remain a member but not to the intention to participate actively in the union, while affective commitment is related to both'.

It is not necessarily the case however that members who do participate in the union are committed to some kind of political or trade union principle; whilst those who do not participate are without 'affective commitments'. There may be other deciding factors: members distance themselves from trade unionism activism because of the nature of the task involved or factors relating to the trade union itself. Here is it useful to refer to Hirschman's study 'Shifting Involvements' (1982) and work on women's union activism (Franzway, 2000; Parker, 2002).

How then do successful movements overcome the problem identified by Olson? The development of programs that offer the collective incentives of group solidarity and commitment to moral purpose is essential. Group solidarity and purposive incentives are collective in that they entail the fusion of personal and collective interests. Movement supporters, like all socialised actors, act in terms of internalised values and sentiments as well as calculations of self interest. The major task

in mobilisation then is to generate solidarity and moral commitments to the broad collectivities in whose name movements act, in this case trade union members. For effective labour internationalism this suggests that we must construct solidarity and commitment between workers across borders. To do so it is necessary to tease out the internalised values and frame them in terms of international solidarity.

Crucial to this thesis is the understanding of the role of individual identity. Identity falls outside of the remit of the collective action problem and of RAT itself (Crossley, 2002: 67) due to RATs minimal conception of the rational, calculating actor. Identity, for example, is an issue even in those movements which are not explicitly 'identity movements': for example trade unions are concerned with working class consciousness and black civil rights movements with black pride and identity. Relatedly, RAT fails to fully comprehend the extent to which individuals are embedded in social structure meaning there is little consideration to class, gender or ethnic variations (Savage, 2000). One of the overarching aims of new labour internationalism is that it recognises and embraces difference whilst promoting notions of social justice – acting for profit in accordance with RAT does not fulfil such principles. In this respect RAT is incapable of adequately making sense of an integral aspect of internationalism in particular, and of social movements in general (Jasper, 1997).

4.4   Resource Mobilisation Theory – there will always be grievances and deprivation to produce collectivism

The main pioneers of Resource Mobilisation theory (RMT) were all greatly influenced by Olson's collective action problem and the RAT model from which it grew. McCarthy and Zald (1977) developed an organisational-entrepreneurial concept that held that 'a social movement is a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of society' (1977: 43). They argue that within any society there will always be grievances or deprivation, and that as grievances are more common than social movements, the key question is to explain why some social movements successfully mobilise while others fail to materialise out of observable grievances. RMT therefore concentrates on the processes that enable social movement mobilisation, in particular the role of organisations within the social movement and of outside supporters, rather than the issues raised by the social movement itself (North, 2006: 15).

The approach emphasised both societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), examining the variety of resources that must be mobilised, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements. Specifically, analysts have argued that: i) movement actions are rational, adaptive responses to the costs and rewards of different lines of action; ii) the basic goals of movements are defined by conflicts of interest built into institutionalised power relations; iii) the grievances generated by such conflicts are sufficiently ubiquitous that the formation and mobilisation of movements

depend on changes in resources, group organisation, and opportunities for collective action; iv) centralised, formally structured movement organisations are more typical of modern social movements and more effective at mobilising resources and mounting sustained challenges than decentralised, informal movement structures; and v) the success of movements is largely determined by strategic factors and the political processes in which they become enmeshed (Jenkins, 2008: 119).

Traditionally, the study of social movements has focused upon the question as to why movements form with explanations emphasising sudden increases in short term grievances created by the 'structural strains' of rapid social change (Gusfield, 1968). In contrast, resource mobilisation theorists have argued that grievances are secondary. Academics such as Oberschall (1973), Jenkins and Perrow (1977) and Tilly (1978) have argued that grievances are relatively constant, deriving from structural conflicts of interest built into social institutions, and that movements form because of long term changes in group resources, organisation, and opportunities for collective action. Whilst grievances are necessary for movement formation, they are explained either by changes in power relations or by structural conflicts of interest. McCarthy and Zald (1977) adopted a slightly different position, arguing for theory of movement formation in which the major factor is the availability of resources, especially cadres and organising facilities: 'the definition of grievances will expand to meet the funds and support personnel available' (1973: 13).

4.4.1   Mobilisation – a tick list of resources for social change

Mobilisation is the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective action. The major issues therefore are the resources controlled by the group prior to mobilisation efforts, the processes by which the group pools resources and directs these towards social change, and the extent to which outsiders increase the pool of resources. Little agreement exists as to types of resources that are significant resulting in many simply listing the assets that are frequently mobilised by movements, for instance McCarthy and Zald's (1977) money, facilities, labour and legitimacy; or Tilly's (1978: 69) land, labour, capital and technical expertise. Freeman (1979: 172-5) expanded upon this distinguishing between tangible assets such as money, facilities and means of communication from intangible or 'human' assets that form the central basis for movements. Intangible assets include both specialised resources such as organising and legal skills and the unspecialised labour of supporters. Further to this, in their analysis of successful mobilisation, proponents of 'political process' approaches concentrated upon the emergence of favourable 'structures of political opportunities' that determine a movement's success or failure (Tilly, 1977: 54-55).

The most distinctive contribution of resource mobilisation theory has been to emphasise the significance of external contributions and the cooptation of institutional resources by contemporary social movements. McCarthy and Zald (1977) argued that the movements of the 1960s and 70s mobilised a 'conscience constituency' of elites and co-opted institutional resources from private foundations, the mass media, government and business corporations. They depicted social movements as shifting from classical

social movement organisations with indigenous leadership, volunteer staff, extensive membership, resources from direct beneficiaries, and actions based on mass participation, towards professional social movement organisations with outside leadership, full time paid staff, small or nonexistent membership, resources from conscience constituencies and actions that speak on behalf of, rather than involve an aggrieved group (Jenkins, 2008: 121). Whilst it is the case that professional social movement organisations and the co-optation of institutional resources increased during the 1960s, the features detailed above hardly explain the mobilisation of generalised political turmoil in that period. Most of the movements were not professional and did not rely upon resources for mobilisation. As will be discussed, this is exemplified by the civil rights movement which was indigenously led, mobilised resources through local community networks and gained support from 'conscience constituents' only after initial mobilisation (McAdam, 1982). If direct beneficiaries have been the major contributors to recent movements then we must query how they have been mobilised.

4.4.2   Elite Patronisation – the only way to mobilise internationalism?

McAdam (1982) provides a critique of RMT by arguing that it is based upon an elite model of power, suggesting that political power is concentrated in the hands of a minority. This could be deemed corrective to pluralist models of power where the power is equally distributed throughout the polity (Crossley, 2002: 82). From the pluralist position, which takes no account of the exclusion of certain groups from the

political and power centres of society the adoption of extra-institutional forms of protest by such groups inevitably appears excessive, unnecessary and therefore irrational. Elite theory attempts to remedy this by highlighting the concentrated nature of power and related processes of political exclusion. For Elite theory it is perfectly rational for an excluded group to adopt extra-institutional tactics of struggle because there are really no other channels open to them. McAdam (1982) however is critical of this (and in particular of resource mobilisation theory) for failing to identify the latent power of excluded groups. Adopting what he dubs a more 'Marxist' approach he argues that excluded groups are often in a structural position to generate a considerable amount of power and leverage, albeit by extra institutional means, if they are sufficiently well organised and they realise their own potential power. The implication of this is that excluded and apparently powerless groups are not as powerless as they may appear, thus not dependent upon elite groups for patronage and resource mobilisation. This is supported by McAdam's reference to black insurgency in the USA during 1940-60s whereupon an injection of external resources was not necessary to initiate this movement. External resources did flow into it but only after it had gathered momentum and achieved a few victories. Thus successful movement mobilisation led to resource mobilisation, not vice versa.

For RMT, effective collective action requires gaining access to sufficient resources and motivating rational actors to become involved. Presuming that resources are sufficient and that the free rider principle will be solved, the framework implicitly assumes that preferences of individual actors will be aggregated until critical mass obtained. The framework therefore does not identify who engages in collective action and how they view themselves and their allies in struggle. As identified, questions such as this are identified through the concept of collective identity (Cohen, 1985; Melucci,

1989). Here is it argued that collective action does not spring automatically from structural tensions. Instead numerous factors determine whether or not this will occur. These factors do include the availability of adequate organisational resources but also the ability of leaders to produce appropriate actions and the presence of a favourable political context. Each of these factors contributes to an explanation of the shift from structure to action.

From this perspective, individuals will participate in collective action when it resonates with both an individual and collective identity. The most central process of the social construction of collective identity is that it is meaningful to participants and that logically precedes any meaningful calculation of costs and benefits of joining in collective action. In contrast to RMT framework, such collective identities cannot be taken for granted nor viewed unproblematically; they are instead essential outcomes of the mobilisation process and crucial pre-requisites to movement success. For the purposes of this thesis I wish to examine whether international mobilisation can occur with or without access to resources through framing collective action that resonates with individuals both personally and collectively.

4.5 Political process approaches – why do some mobilisations occur and others not

RMT is one of two overlapping approaches which emerged in American social movement analysis. The other side is the Political Process approach which shares

many ideas in common – therefore this section will discuss the concepts additional to those they share to avoid any repetition. Proponents of political approaches theory concentrate on the emergence of a favourable 'structure of political opportunities' that determine the likely success or failure of any social movement (Tilly, 1977: 54). The actions of the activists are seen to be dependent on the existence, or lack of, of a specific political opportunity (Meyer, 2004) which can be defined as:

> "...consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from collective action"
>
> (Tarrow, 1998).

For Tilly (1984: 312) the political opportunity structure within which a movement operates 'corresponds to the process by which a national political system shapes, checks and absorbs the challenges that come to it'. Three vital components for movement formation are proposed:

> i) Insurgent consciousness: where certain members of society feel deprived, mistreated, and have grievances directed at a system that they perceive as unjust (see also deprivation theory) (Cragun et al., 2004). When a collective sense of injustice develops, it motivates people to become movement members. The movement activists do not choose their goals at random, instead, the political contexts in which they are positioned stress certain grievances around which movements organize (Meyer, 2004);
>
> ii) Organizational strength: Similar to the main argument of the resource mobilization theory detailed earlier, the argument here is that the social movements must have strong and efficient leadership and sufficient resources. Political opportunity theory has much in common with the related resource mobilization theory, particularly when it is seen as focusing on mobilization of resources *external* to the movement (Tarrow, 1998);

iii) Political opportunities: If the existing political system to is vulnerable to a challenge, it creates an opportunity for others i.e. social movement members/trade unions to issue political challenges and try to use this opportune time to push through a social change. Such vulnerability could be the result of a number of factors including increasing political pluralism, decline in repression, division within elites (particularly where it is evident that some support organized opposition), increased political enfranchisement (Cragun et al., 2004).

Eisinger (1973) first explored the notion of political opportunity structure in the 1960s examining why the level of riots about race and poverty varied between different places in the United States. He noted that the lack of visible openings for political participation of repressed or discouraged dissident made riots more likely. Thus the inability to legally air grievances was the political opportunity which led to organization and mobilization of movements expressing their grievances by rioting (Eisinger, 1973). Meyer (2004) in his overview noted that this broader context can affect: mobilising; advancing particular claims rather than others; cultivating some alliances rather than others; employing particular political strategies and tactics rather than others; and affecting mainstream institutional politics and policy. A key advantage of the theory is that it explains why social movements emerge and/or increase their activity at a given time. When no political opportunities exist, it is claimed that simply having grievances and resources will not be enough. Instead, it is argued that only when all three of these components are present, the movement has a chance to succeed. Like Eisinger (1973) Tarrow suggests that protests and movements tend to emerge and flourish in periods when opportunities are being opened up, for instance the declines in a state's repressive power, shifts in alignments within the polity of emergence of cracks within an elites' hegemony.

Critically, agency does not receive enough attention in relation to the PP approach – in one sense it remains attached to the problematic RAT model's language of 'costs and benefits' that most advocates use in the basic assumption that the chief determinant of movement activity is the opportunity/constraint structure within polity. However, many PP advocates have begun to explore the role of identity, emotion, culture and biography in relation to movement - some of the important yet often ignored insights of the collective behaviour approach. However, in doing so, this approach leaves us without a clear concept of agency. The agent here is no longer a rational actor, at least not in the minimal sense proposed by RAT, but no other clear conception over and above ad hoc additions of emotion, identity and culture have yet emerged. The PP agent is thus stranded in a vague and unclear position somewhere between RAT and a better alternative. I intend over the next few sections to overcome this problem by transcending empiricist compilations of the 'facts' of movement formation and offering coherent explanations of both 'how' and 'why' movements occur.

4.6   Adopting Frame alignment processes to organise and guide international action

The concept of frames was used primarily by Goffman (1974: 21) who defined them as 'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify and label' occurrences within their own lives and external to it. Frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organise experience and guide action. Collective action frames are active-orientated sets of beliefs and

meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement. This was developed as a result of a critique of resource mobilisation approach that it failed to address the interpretation of events and experiences relevant to participation in social movement activities and campaigns (Snow et al., 1986: 465). Framing can be used strategically – it can be deliberative, utilitarian and goal directed; frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose, to recruit new members, to mobilise adherents, to acquire resources etc (Benford and Snow, 2000: 624). For labour internationalism this could provide opportunities to frame trade union members' actions internationally potentially constructing and mobilising solidarity.

Such efforts by social movements to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers were initially conceptualised as 'frame alignment processes' (Snow et al, 1986). There are four basic alignment processes: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation. *Frame bridging* refers to linking two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue of problem. *Frame amplification* involves the idealisation, embellishment, clarification or invigoration or existing values or beliefs. One of the key factors affecting whether or not a frame resonates is to do with the extent to which the frame links into existing cultural values, beliefs and narratives (Zuo and Benford, 1995). *Frame extension* entails depicting a social movement's interests and frame as extending beyond its primary interest to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential participants. This can be problematic however causing conflict and disputes within movements regarding issues of ideological purity and efficiency. *Frame transformation* refers to changing old understandings and meanings and/or generating new ones. Although identified as four separate processes, collective action

frames are not static, reified entities instead they are being continuously constituted, contested, reproduced and transformed. Therefore framing should be seen as an ongoing process. This process does not occur in a structural or cultural vacuum; rather it is affected by numerous factors of the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded. Although these factors can be quite varied, the literature points to three factors which are particularly important: political opportunity structure, cultural opportunities and constraints and the targeted audiences. Further to this, I would call upon a recognition of Tarrow's (1998:3) claims that theoretical attention needs to be placed on leadership, stressing a richer sense of agency and the importance of the role of organisers who exploit political opportunities, create collective identities and produce mobilisation.

4.7   Providing leadership from the grassroots up

Leadership is an important concept in relation to new labour internationalism with the aim being to move away from elitist notions of its conduct to understandings of leadership at all levels of a trade union, in particular promoting a grassroots approach. However, there is a tendency in social movement theory to dismiss aspects of leadership when it is associated with patterns of authority or bureaucracy. Similar concerns, of course, have occurred within industrial relations analysis in debates over the role of the trade union bureaucracy versus the rank-and-file (Hyman, 2005). Much of the literature analysing trade union governance is based on deeply pessimistic notions of the inevitability of oligarchy in organisations arising from the work of

Michels (1915: 401) for whom 'optimism will remain the exclusive privilege of utopian thinkers'. 'It is organisation which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators...who says organisation says oligarchy' (ibid). This approach has been applied often to analyses of union power structures, principally to support the argument that unions resemble one party states with the bureaucracy holding all the resources and the powers of communication, rendering them oligarchic rather than democratic (Lipset et al., 1956). The Webbs (1920) recognised the possibility that trade union officers could develop different ideas and outlooks but they believed that some form of bureaucracy was desirable, taking account of unions becoming more complex organisations but also to regulate members so as to protect the union itself from the consequences of any possible irresponsible action.

The specific social role of the trade union leaders, outlined by the Webbs was inextricably tied to the development of the social democratic model of trade unionism. New Social Movement theory (which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections) argues that the crisis of this particular trade union model has been partly engendered by a new uncertainty in the institutional framework, leading to new experimentation with innovation and social movement type activity. Debates over the organising model have acted to revive the bureaucracy versus grassroots debates albeit within terms of an activist/leadership framework. Kelly (2004) highlights the positive leadership role that can be played by union activists in mobilising members around collective senses of injustice and grievance (Fantasia, 1988). In doing so he has drawn criticism from Fairbrother (2005) for adopting a 'vanguardist' approach to union activist leadership in contrast to his own model of 'workplace activism' grounded in the collective strength of workplace organisation. However, in considering this argument

Darlington (2009) adopts a consciously dialectical approach and argues that Fairbrother's explicit attempt to denigrate Kelly's emphasis on the role of union activist leadership effectively blurs the distinction between activist and members, leaders and led, re-focusing on what is implied to be a more spontaneous dynamic in which conflict and mobilisation originates in the more or less spontaneous action of workers rather than being led by premeditated "vanguard" leaders'. Fairbrother (2005), in promoting the primacy of workplace organisation may thus over-promote voluntarism and spontaneity and miss the importance of leadership, engendered at both activist and union leadership level. Critiques of approaches which express caution or even hostility to leadership have also come from within social movement theory. Barker et al (2001: 23), for example, devote an edited collection to the critique and concluded that:

> "Leadership is fateful for movement development at every stage and turning point – their growth and decline, their heritages for the future and their mark on history – are all intimately tied up with their forms of leadership, the quality of ideas offered and accepted, the selections from repertoires of contention, organisation, strategy and ideology they make".

However I would concur with Robnett (1997) who asserted that leadership be positioned throughout trade union and social movement structures, therefore it would not be 'leader' singular as proposed by Melucci (1996) but instead 'movement leadership' distributed amongst individuals at different levels. Routledge et al. (2006) explored the possibility of 'imagineers' individuals who translate the significance of action in local areas, thus helping to overcome the complex relationship between leaders and led which necessitates antagonism and co-operation between local bridge leaders and formal leadership. For Goodwin and Jasper (1999) such individuals are

gifted, they know what to do and when; can invent new tactics; know how to time action and response; and how to mobilise members.

As well as the question of political strategy and leadership labour movement theorists have also developed some other concepts of relevance. Sidney Tarrow (1998), for example, in his book Power in Movement develops the analysis further by outlining a number of key concepts in protest and social movement theory. Tarrow's contention is that social movements may develop certain ways of working which create and develop their power. Much protest action is 'conventional' in form, having been rehearsed and practiced through many years. Strike and demonstration are given as examples where learnt behaviour is repeated. On this point Charles Tilly's formulation echoes Marxist interpretations of the development of consciousness through collective action:

> "People *learn* how to strike, to invade a field, to burn in effigy, just as they fail to learn a great many other forms of action which they might, in theory, employ to advance their interests. What is more, each learned form of collective action acquires a sort of standing within some defined population as others learn to interpret it and react to it: the first strike is a mystery, the second an outrage, the thousandth a problem to be dealt with. We can thus speak reasonably of any coherent population as having a limited repertoire of action within which its members ordinarily make choices when they have collective claims to advance"
>
> (Tilly, 1981: 19).

From this we can question whether individuals learn how to take action, how to become active and, or, act as a collective. Do they learn from leaders or is it something innate and instinctive? Discussions so far have identified that action can be determined by resources, organisational culture and the external environment. If it is something to be learnt is this through political education? What makes someone become internationally

active, and indeed, what does it mean to be internationally 'active'? Furthermore, if people learn to strike and thus act as a collective, can international action and solidarity be learnt and constructed as suggested in previous chapters?

4.8   New Social Movement theories – producing knowledge

The previous sections have focused primarily on the American school, albeit an American context which has engaged with and influenced by European theories and ideas. Within the European context however debates on social movements have concentrated upon 'new social movements' (NSM hereafter). The term 'new' is ironic given that it emerged from the cluster of movements of the 1960s i.e. the student movement, the peace movement, environmental movement, second-wave feminism etc. Although not necessarily 'new' in terms of chronology, the debate on NSMs remains important due to the change in perspective it placed on movement analysis and the questions it raised, all very much still relevant in this contemporary era and allows us to question the adequacy of the RM and PP approaches discussed earlier in this chapter.

The NSM paradigm defines the central role of social movements as being about the self production of values, strategies and ways of living – holding that social movements are what Eyerman and Jamison (1991) call 'knowledge producers' – rather than focussed on strategies to ask, persuade or force the state to grant their demands. They take the post-structural emphasis on the ability of a social actor to create their world rather than structuralist or functionalist emphases on social movements as being about demands that need to be met by the state (North, 2006: 19).

4.8.1   The personal *is* political

The New Social Movement paradigm is a relatively recent addition to social theory that stresses both the macro historical and micro historical elements of social movements. The macro level refers to the relationship between the rise of contemporary social movements and the larger economic structure, and on the role of culture in such movements. On the micro level, the paradigm is concerned with how issues of identity and personal behaviour are bound up in social movements. The paradigm is comprised of a core set of concepts and beliefs; products of the post-material age and are seen as fundamentally different from the working class movements of the industrial period (Pichardo, 1997: 412). NSM demands are depicted as having moved away from the instrumental issues of industrialism to the quality of life issues of post-materialism (ibid). Therefore, participation is not a means to an end, to achieve a future goal, instead it is 'the end in itself' – a sign to the rest of society what form of society could or will be organised. As such, NSMs stress forms of organising, the experience of the living, or acting collectively rather than achieving their end. They seek to integrated the public and private, visible and hidden, political and personal sides of life so 'differently and changing society are seen as complimentary' (Melucci, 1989: 40).

From this Melucci concentrates on the process of collective identity building, which he argues proceed along three continua, the first being to query whether the social movement aims to change the social structure or to develop alternative culture codes, seeking to analyse the capacity of members to develop such codes without being constrained by the social structure. Secondly, Melucci examines whether the social movement should work seek institutional integration; or if on developing alternative cultural codes that are not accepted by the polity, accept radical marginalisation. Finally

he seeks to explain debates about whether to orientate towards mass society or to strengthen internal solidarity, and whether the form of the group (building solidarity and alternative codes outside the polity) prevents an orientation towards mass society. Further to this, Melucci identifies that the dualism between structuralist and ideological conceptions of political change is false, and that once power is made visible, structure and the challenges of to those structures interact in what he calls 'exploring the frontierland' between structure and agency' (1992: 239-257). In recognising that the need to make agency more visible we must promote individuals multiple agencies and the role they play in making connections with others as well as having the potential to initiate mobilisation.

4.8.2 The role of emotions in constructing and maintaining international activism and solidarity

International activism can be defined as a certain level of ideological commitment to social and/or personal change (Fuller and Kitchen, 2004), but where does this certain level of commitment come from, and should it always be assumed? (Askins, 2009: 7). Activism is discursively produced and actively constructed in a range of ways (Maxey, 1999:200). Many activists still tend to refer to distinctive and independent cultures of struggle, often including anti-capitalist elements.

Although the content of their activism has been significantly modified by the evolutions that have taken place in the role of representatives and in union strength,

Contrepois and Jefferys (2003) found that activists' guiding motivations have changed surprisingly little, being still focused around the demand for social justice. Current geographic studies of social movements focus on practices of activism that are enacted through different kinds of networks embedded in places and also operating across multi-scalar political action (Ettlinger and Bosco, 2004; Castree et al 2006). In a similar, related vein, discussions on labour internationalism have analysed how geographical scales can be produced and manipulated strategically to link up with distant others and effectively mobilise scaled relations through networks to sustain activism (Herod, 1998). Other research has identified how collective identities of resistance are often tied to places and localities and show that interpersonal networks of daily life embedded in communities provide meaning and purpose to social movements (Mitchell, 1995). Only recently, and mostly outside of geography, have emotions been recognised as playing a crucial role on the organisational dynamics of activism (Calhoun, 2001).

Academics have re-introduced emotion into the conceptual and analytical repertoire in the analysis of collective action and connected emotional experiences to explaining the causes and processes behind collective action. Considering emotions assists in the understanding of becoming active, how individuals sustain their activism, and even why their activism may decline. Most notable for this thesis, academics have begun to recognise the importance of emotional attachments to the construction of solidarity – it is clear that shared experiences and feelings of empathy are vital to the politicisation process as well as the development and sustainability of labour internationalisms (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2007: 284).

Only two decades ago, a group of academics with diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical interests identified a broad range of research agendas for the

burgeoning field of sociology of emotions (Kemper, 1990). One area of interest was missing, that of the emotional experience in the context of social movements and collective action. Academics duly responded to this lapse with cultural critiques of the over emphasis on instrumental reasoning in social science and acted to reintroduce emotions into the study of social movements (see for instance Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2000). Jasper (1998: 397) wrote of the explosion in cultural work on social movements being highly cognitive in its orientation, 'as though researchers were still reluctant to admit that strong emotions accompany protests'. As apparent in earlier discussions within this thesis, emotions were displaced by metaphors of rational economic calculators and purposive formal organisations, for whom social movements were just one more means of pursuing desired ends. However, the last few decades have seen such instrumental metaphors displaced with goals, interests, even strategies and political opportunities increasingly viewed as embedded in and defined by cultural meanings and practices (Melucci, 1996; Jasper, 1997).

The concept of emotions as self feelings recognises the intrinsic connection between emotions and self identity, a link that is crucial to the analysis of emotional processes in social movements and collective action (Yang, 2000: 594). Given that individuals actively seek emotional achievement and that social movements provide unique avenues for such explorations, the dynamics of social movement mobilisation may be seen as a function of the emotional processes of the movement. Furthermore because emotions are defined as self feelings, the achievement of emotions may also be considered as the achievement of identity. This therefore epitomises the identity orientated paradigm in social movement literature which treats the process of movement mobilisation as the process of the construction and transformation of identity (Calhoun, 1985). Earlier in this thesis I referred to collective identity and how it can

spur on activity because an individual values the potential gain to a group, so that identity thereby helps to define one's 'interests' (Jasper, 1998: 416). Identities frequently stand as proxies for many specific cultural attributes including skills, habits, loyalties, beliefs, ideologies, and sensibilities: one could have an 'activist' identity that transcends a particular movement, or an 'organisational' identity associated with loyalty to a particular organisation, perhaps even a 'tactical' identity i.e. radical or nonviolent activist (Jasper, 1997). More commonly however, and as discussed earlier, identities are based on ascribed traits such as sexual preference, nationality, race, class and gender – although such labels are usually still proxies for more concrete cultural attributes. However, a collective identity is not simply the drawing of a cognitive boundary; most of all it is an emotion, a positive effect toward other group members on the grounds of that common membership. That emotions are constitutive of identity has received increasing recognition in social movement literature – Melucci (1996: 71) for example, explicitly argues that collective identity has an emotional component: 'Passions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear are all part of a body acting collectively'. Defining oneself through the help of a collective label entails an affective as well as cognitive mapping of the social world and partly because of this affection participation in social movements/trade unions can be pleasurable in itself, independently of the aims and outcomes. Jasper (1998: 415) suggests ways in which emotions are integral to various dimensions of protest:

> "Participation in social movements can be pleasurable in itself, independently of the ultimate goals and outcomes. Protest becomes a way of saying something about oneself and one's morals, and of finding joy and pride in them. One can also have negative emotions about one's identity, such as shame or guilt; many movements are motivated precisely to fight stigmatised identities".

As an integral part of all social action, affective and reactive emotions enter into protest activities at every stage. Some help explain why individuals become mobilised, ranging from emotional responses they can have as individuals to those that recruiters can stir in them. Others are generated during protest activities, including both affective ties among fellow members and feelings toward institutions, people and practices outside the movement and its constituent groups. These affect whether a movement continues or declines, and when. In all stages, there are both pre-existing affects and shorter term emotional responses to events, discoveries and decisions.

Not only are emotions part of our responses to events but they also – in the form of affective attachments – shape the goals of our actions. There are positive emotions and negative ones, admirable and despicable ones, public and hidden ones. Without them there might be no social action at all, and to categorise them as rational or irrational (much less to dismiss them all as interferences with rationality) is misguided (Jasper, 1998: 398). Emotions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions; they are what constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities, and interests. They are in Collins' words (1990: 28) 'the glue of solidarity – and what mobilises conflict'. Emotions are tied to moral values, often arising from perceived infractions of moral rules. One context in which emotions unfold is that of common human narratives, or what de Sousa (1987) calls 'paradigm scenarios'. Just as grief leads an individual through several predictable emotional stages, other unexpected and unpleasant events resulting in protest may lead through feelings of surprise, sadness, anger then outrage.

The emphasis on the role of emotional attachment in the construction of internationalisms reminds us of the need to pay attention to the individual and their political subjectivity – what motivates them to act internationally? Empathy, fear,

anger? Hope and faith? Individuals may respond to a wide range of emotional, cognitive and spiritual impulses (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2007: 294). What is often missed within literature is exploration of the range of forces (emotional, psychological, spiritual, cognitive) animating the political consciousness of trade union international activists[7]. The following sections will illuminate a number of such forces.

4.8.3   Nostalgia – promoting an expression of individual and collective identity

Denzin (1984: 49) defines emotions as 'temporally embodied, situated self feelings that arise from emotional and cognitive social acts that people direct to self or have directed towards them by others'. He claims emotion is an experience that 'is felt in and runs through a body, and, in the process of being lived, plunges the person and his associates into a wholly new and transformed reality – the reality of a world that is being constituted by the emotional experience' (Denzin, 1984: 66). That emotions are temporal is evident in the concept of nostalgia whereupon individuals have self validating emotions in different social processes; in their meanings for the emotional experiences; and identities of individuals or social groups (Yang, 2000). Traditionally, nostalgia has been viewed as a modern malaise that alienates people from the present (Lowenthal, 1985: 13). Davis (1979) rejected this view but continued to admit the relatively passive character of nostalgia – passive in the sense that it is primarily a reactive experience. I would argue that nostalgia is neither malaise nor a passive

---

[7] This will be analysed within Chapter 7.

emotion, instead nostalgia is an emotional experience actively sought, articulated, and shared by those in collective groups such as trade unions. Nostalgia is an emotional achievement that connects individuals with their past and give expression and meaning to personal and collective identities.

4.8.3   Moral shocks – a catalyst to act

Moral shocks often act as the catalyst for recruitment into social movements. Often when an unexpected event of piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in an individual they become inclined toward political action, whether or not they are already active (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995; Jasper, 1997). Responses to moral shocks vary greatly in the emotions that ensue – many individuals resign themselves to unpleasant changes, certain that those in positions of power are not influenced by citizen protest. Activists work hard to create moral outrage and anger and to provide a target against which these can be vented. These feelings can then be channelled towards concrete policies and decisions makers (Gamson et al., 1982). For example, by framing a problem as 'big business' or 'instrumental' activists suggest a moral judgement by providing someone and/or something to blame.

4.10.3 Emotional labour – cultivating social networks of solidarity through emotion

In his exploration of two Argentinian grassroots networks of human rights activists, Bosco (2007: 545) found emotions significant in explaining their sustainability and expansion. The emotions of activism and emotional connections among participants themselves and among participants and their supporters created shared collective identities (Melucci, 1996) and oppositional consciousness (Mansbridge, 2001) which acted as a catalyst to mobilisation. Both networks mobilised emotions strategically and performed what Hochschild (1983) and Taylor and Rupp (2002) term 'emotional labour', or the acts of 'channelling, transforming, legitimating and managing one's and others' emotions and expressions of emotions in order to cultivate and nurture the social networks that are the building blocks of social movements' (Taylor and Rupp, 2002: 141). Emotional labour can enable feelings of proximity, solidarity and shared identities, often in spite of social or geographical distance. Such framing of emotions – that is, the process by which activists re-interpret the emotional foundations of their activism and create shared emotional templates that allow them to find common grounds for cohesion (Snow et al., 1986; Jasper, 1998; Taylor, 2000) lead to the creation of new organisational geographies that ultimately enhance possibilities for mobilisation, including the creation of trans-local coalitions and networks (Bosco, 2007: 546).

Askins (2009: 8) identified physiological humanism – that similar feelings and experiences can be shared and expressed across social and cultural difference and space and place. Powerful narratives, the testimony of others and moral shocks can all

be strategically deployed into feelings of resistance, hope, solidarity and morality (Bosco, 2007) referred to as emotional labour whereupon emotion is framed to develop activism (Hochschild, 1983). Although organisational processes often compel individuals to control their emotions, other social processes, particularly collective action, provide conditions for the active pursuit of emotional experiences and expressions. Following Denzin's definition of emotions as 'self feelings' I further suggest that emotional achievement entails an achievement of identity and is in keeping with the necessity of recognising an individual's multiple agencies and how they are embedded spatially, temporally and emotionally across various positionings.

4.9   Conclusion

Underpinning much of the writing on individualism is the inextricable relationship between collectivism, class and occupational identity. It is feared that differentiation and diversity weakens union solidarity and collectivism based on longstanding class and occupational attachments. Such views ignore the fractures that have always cut through union organising, whether they are on the grounds of class, status, nationality, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. Assumptions of a homogenous form of collectivism are unfounded. Instead, diversity can, in reality, be a source of solidaristic collectivism. Collective orientations are never given, but must be developed, fought for and sustained by the very individuals involved on the ground.

Identifying the need to illuminate a worker's wider existence (that is beyond the workplace) is integral to understandings of labour internationalism, in particular in constructing solidarities with others. Within this chapter it was queried whether an international working class is possible, promoting instead internationalism founded upon a commonality of interests between workers. By illustrating the complexities of international solidarity – its conduct and motivations, it was possible to identify that there is a tendency in class theory to place emphasis on non economic factors. Evidently, economic factors, changing employment relations, individualism and fragmentation of the workforce are integral. As Castree et al. (2003: 243) argued: 'so much for a global solidarity founded on identity. What about one founded on ideas and/or issues?' For Castree et al. (2003) although certain categories are helpful to mobilise around in certain instances, the diversity of the working class means that campaigns seeking to concretise identities rather than the common issues workers face are unlikely to succeed. What is needed therefore is an internationalism based upon common issues such as struggles against common employers. However, I would argue that internationalism cannot be reduced to purely instrumental interests. Although workers may join trade unions for purely instrumental if not individualistic reasons, issues of affect promoted through awareness raising and political education serve to connect workers across borders.

The chapter also outlined what has become known as a bifurcation between resource mobilisation theory and new social movement theory (Tarrow, 1998). In an attempt to overcome this dualism, Diani (1992) produced a definition of social movements that combined the two schools: 'Networks of information interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political and/or cultural conflict, on the basis of shared collective identity'. With this improved

definition structure and agency would be seen as interactive concepts reflecting their interrelation in everyday practice. To further strengthen accounts of collective mobilisation emotions were introduced - emotions are subjective and contextual, affected by place and our interactions with other people (intersubjectivities) thus we are always being produced and producing ourselves (Askins, 2009). It is necessary to move away from structuralist accounts to individual's multiple agencies as this is necessary for understandings of labour internationalism and activism. Expressive actions must be recognised as intertwined with rational, instrumental actions. Shared emotions are the key to collective action and identity and therefore crucial in the construction and maintenance of labour internationalisms.

The theoretical framework to this thesis outlined over the previous chapters has identified that it is necessary for trade unions to revitalise. Various methods have been tried and tested yet it is a new labour internationalism that appears to be providing cautious optimism. Despite claims from Touraine (1981) amongst others that there is no longer a role for trade unions, new labour internationalism provides opportunities for organising and engaging at the grassroots level, potentially aiding to remove the gap between lay members and union leaders thus producing revitalisation. How public sector trade union members perceive such internationalist action however is not addressed in any real depth within literature. I hope within this thesis to begin to overcome this void whilst adhering to labour geography's calls to promote worker agency. New social movement theory will enable me to develop the theorisations of new labour internationalism by illuminating opportunities to construct affective and instrumental forms of international solidarity. The following chapter will present the research design employed to address these issues.

Chapter 5

Research Design

5.1   Introduction

The following chapter will outline the research design employed during the conduct of this PhD. It will justify the selection of particular research methods deemed most appropriate to seeking answers to the research aims and questions identified in Chapter 1. It will then turn to look at my experience of CASE studentship research before identifying how the research developed according to notions of reflexivity and the positionality of the researcher.

5.2   Research ethics

Research ethics are the moral principles which guide research from its initial inception, through considerations on its conduct, data collection, storage and publication. Ethical considerations are of relevance to all forms of research. Viewing ethics as 'processes that bring about more than just social relations' (Kindon and Lathom, 2002) brings together both the researcher and participants' notions of 'ethics' closer whilst necessitating an increasingly active approach to participation and change.

The ethics review process has an important role to play in ensuring that all kinds of research, especially for those projects working with humans, is conducted in such a way as to minimise harm or suffering to participants. The ethics committee polices issues of data ownership, and it makes some of the rules of research engagement clear from the start. Furthermore, the ethics review provides a framework for negotiating complex relationships. The ethics review also plays an important role in ensuring ethical standards are maintained across all research projects.

As an ESRC CASE studentship, this thesis has been conducted in adherence with the guidelines outlined by the Council as per the Research Ethics Framework (2005: 1). All participants were given information leaflets detailing the aim of the research; what their participation would involve; emphasis on confidentiality; and reassurance that this was voluntary participation and that they would be able to withdraw at any time. In addition to this, once it was confirmed that the leaflet was understood and any questions or concerns discussed, participants were then given a consent form outlining the terms of research participation. Each participant was required to place a tick next to each statement in order that they declare their consent and provide their signature.

Gaining informed written consent is a significant ethical issue (Lewis and Lindsay, 2000). Outlining the purpose, methods and intention of the research is fundamental to the meaning of consent, and it is integral that researchers discuss these issues along with any potential risks or outcomes related with participants (British Sociological Association 2002; ESRC 2011). It is however impossible to anticipate all possible risks but the researcher should ensure that participants are fully aware of, and understand, all information that is available at the beginning of and throughout the research process.

Confidentiality is central to the development of effective, successful research relationships. Participants must be made anonymous with any personal details as well as the data produced during the research encounter protected. Confidentiality was assured at each stage of the research.

The recording of information collated during fieldwork can be problematic. Some researchers use notebooks, but this can cause suspicion and intrigue on the part of participants (Holmes, 1998). Audio recording is effective as it captures the majority of verbal data enabling the researcher to interact with participants knowing the information is being collated. The use of a digital recorder was explained to all participants and permission sought. On no occasion was its used declined. Data was transcribed verbatim.

5.3   Research motivations

As the three previous chapters have asserted, the theoretical framework upon which this thesis is based is the development of labour geography. Labour geography from its inception has promoted political motivations, particularly in its engagement with trade unionism. Its origins can be traced back to the work of radical economic geographers writing in the 1970s. From Massey and Miles' (1984) early intervention into the decline of trade union heartlands in the UK, to more recent works analysing new labour internationalism (e.g. Wills, 1998, 2001, 2008; Castree 2000; Herod, 2001b;

Cumbers et al. 2008b;), there is a discernible political intent: geography matters to workers, while workers, conversely, matter to geography.

In a recent paper, Castree (2007: 856) outlines the field suggesting most labour geographers do not subscribe to orthodox theories of economics, nor do they subscribe strongly (or at any rate exclusively) to 'cultural' approaches like postmodernism or poststructuralism – which is not at all to say that they ignore questions of discourse and representation. Instead, it is no exaggeration to say that most labour geographers operate with some version (often a mixture) of Marxian, Feminist, anti-racist or institutional approaches to worker issues wherein power and social relations get central attention. Labour geography illustrates an enduring commitment to critical theory in which issues of systemic inequality loom large. It concerns itself with politics of the field, 'politics' being the values written into the research as well as labour geographers' understanding of what their research is for practically speaking. It is my intention that this style of approach to research will be evident throughout my thesis – in its research practice and academic content.

Though there is by no means a 'party line' evident in the discourse, it can be argued that labour geography is dominated by figures of the Left – in their work it is clear that a broadly 'pro worker stance' is taken from the outset. Although supportive of this stance (as will be apparent throughout this thesis) this does not mean that I am uncritical of worker actions and positioning. In fact, literature referred to within this thesis from Herod (2001a; 2001b) and Johns (1996) identifies examples where workers have resorted to geographical exclusionary activities to the disadvantage of counterparts elsewhere. For many labour geographers, trade unions are unambiguously promoted as valuable institutions (despite their weaknesses as highlighted in various accounts throughout labour geography narratives) whose positioning should be promoted by

academics. Although agreeing with Sayer about the existence of a general reluctance within geography to articulate normative concepts and judgements Wills (2007: 139) reflects on a major research project on trade union futures in the UK arguing:

> "I was engaged in normative – or action – research...My 'lay normativity' prompted me to explore trade union futures in the first place, the research was then driven by my own need for answers about strategy and practice".

This thesis is also inspired by a normative concern to question and strategise trade union internationalism – its theorisation academically, but most importantly trade union grassroots members' interpretation and practice. I wanted to gain an understanding of whether internationalism could be used to revitalise trade unions – be that to engage with members through organisation and recruitment strategies and/or to reposition trade unions at an international scale. Like Wills (2007) I wanted to use the findings to 'make a political (normative) argument about what unions needed to do'.

Labour geography is surprisingly uncritical of its objects of real world analysis and very light on policy prescription.[8] Typically, case studies adopt a putatively 'neutral' stance on what a given group of workers or trade union have done or not done, or else an explicitly celebratory one (Castree, 2007). Often there is a descriptive analysis followed by a short normative comment on principle and policy. It must be recognised that one can be an ally of labour by way of constructive criticism. Labour geographers need to focus less on what workers and trade unions do and place more emphasis on examinations of what they 'could' or 'ought' to do (ibid).

.

---

[8] For an exception please see Sadler and Thompson's (2001) critical account of the ISTC.

Labour geographers have used a wide range of methodologies in their explorations of workers and their organisations with the relationship between place and practice informing how the collection of data is conducted. Within this particular field of inquiry, that of labour internationalism, recent critique points to empirical works based solely case studies of private, multinational companies based at the level of strategic, institutionalised campaigning (see for instance Wills, 1998; Herod, 2001a, 2003; Lambert and Wesbter, 2006; Castree, 2007). Mitchell (2005: 96) argues too much of labour geography fails to put working people at the centre of analysis. It typically focuses on the employment aspect of a person or group's life, as if this can be separated analytically and ontologically from their wider existence. Instead, the richest forms of analysis are holistic: they analyse the geographies of labour struggle as windows onto the wider question of how people live and seek to live (Castree, 2007: 859).

I wished to explore what could be determined as this theoretical void by researching the lives of people who are far more than just 'workers', and place focus on the perspectives and agency of grassroots members with regards to internationalism. We know from literature that globally, some trade union members participate in international campaigns, we are told of the process of the campaign, the reasoning, the motivations and the outcomes. However, within labour geography and associated industrial relations literature there is little evidence to suggest *why* some trade unionists are internationally active, what makes them participate (or indeed opt not to participate). Instead we turn to social movement literature for such insight. Furthermore, and most integral to this thesis, is a lack of understanding of grassroots' perspectives on internationalism. How is internationalism interpreted? What does it mean to be 'international' and how is it practised daily both beyond, and in relation to, trade union international campaigning? What does it mean to be an international activist

and work (or represent workers) in the UK public sector – a sector often perceived as tied to the nation state, with service delivery locally, community based, yet increasingly affected by global issues? These are stories that are untold, voices that are unheard. The research design chosen for this thesis would need to take this into account by selecting methods of data collection that would make these narratives visible.

Postmodern geographers, initially led by postmodern feminist geographers of difference, have moved beyond considering gender to make visible and explore the experiences of others who may have been marginalised or excluded from research. As Harvey (1989: 48) states:

> "The idea that all groups have a right to speak for themselves in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate is essential to the pluralistic stance of postmodernism".

Recent research in labour geography has begun to map the experiences of those often excluded, in particular the role of workers and their organisations in the global south (Hale and Wills, 1998; Endresen, 2010); experiences of agency and temporary staff given that this mode of employment is increasing (Meyer and Fuchs, 2010) and sectors other than manufacturing for instance the retail and hospitality sectors (Tufts, 2010). Research such as this supports calls for labour geography to adopt a modernist focus, encapsulating the experiences and perspectives of workers in the modern world. It goes without saying that all this is positive, crucial research and yet, I wish to highlight that often we overlook those amongst us – quite often there exist unheard voices in our own workplaces and communities.

An examination of labour internationalism required a research design that recognised the 'how' and 'why' behind positivistic understandings. Just as labour geography is 'an effort to see the making of economic geography of capitalism through

the eyes of labour' (1997:3); so too is this thesis and therefore it required methods of data collection that would reflect such. As Peck and Wills (2001: 176) asserted, geography is more than simply 'background scenery' instead, it has a constitutive role to play in the drama of what happens to workers and what workers can do to alter the terms and conditions of their employment (Castree, 2007: 855). Thus a research design that recognised this was necessary.

5.4   Politically motivated research?

One of the ways in which politically motivated research within geography can be traced, and with particular relevance to this thesis, is through feminist standpoint theory. From this we delve into Marx's historical materialism which understood the world from the standpoint of the proletariat. According to Marx and Engels 'the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas...yet ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas' (1857/1970: 129). For Marx then, the purpose of science is to penetrate beneath the mystifications of surface appearances to reveal social relations such as the power geometries existing between capital and labour relations. Hartsock (1998: 36-37) argues that to avoid focusing only on surface appearances researchers must adopt standpoints:

> "A standpoint is not simply an interested position (interpreted as bias) but is interested in the sense of being engaged...[It] carries with it the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible".

The contention here therefore is that capitalist social relations impose restrictions on understanding, and it is only by adopting the standpoint of oppressed groups that we can develop a more nuanced understanding of social relations, and furthermore, how to overcome challenges to inequalities. Standpoints are not merely given through social positioning: they are 'achieved rather than obvious [and represent] a mediated rather than immediate understanding' (Hartsock, 1998: 39). Marx did develop a standpoint analysis to develop understandings of the social relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, but as Hartsock contends, it can also be used to understand oppression such as in terms of gender, race and sexuality. What is evident is that contrary to dictums of positivism, standpoint analysis requires a foregoing political analysis. The Marxist challenges to the positivist paradigm, particularly in those emanating from feminist scholars such as Hartsock, have been influential in opening the ground for politicised research. Such impetus however also has roots in events beyond academia. For instance, the insurgency of radical geographers in the late 1960s was linked to the political and social ferment of the era. For Barnes et al. (2007: 4) the economic dislocation of the 1980s resulted in what they perceived as an 'unprecedented yoking of politics and method' in the industrial geography. Whereas positivists asserted that research should be conducted from a position of neutrality, it soon became accepted that research may follow a political agenda.

5.5   Active academia

For those researchers who associate themselves with radical geography there is a recurring theme throughout literature in the relationship between academic work and activism (see for instance Routledge, 1996 and Castree, 2000). I personally entered the research field with a very different outlook to this. Having previously worked as a researcher within the voluntary sector I had conducted objective, distanced, apolitical research and assumed I would continue this approach with my PhD research. However, within the space of only a few months, I began to find myself increasingly concerned with the political motivations of my research as well as its academic content. I began to query whether my research was politically relevant and being a CASE project whether it adhered to the necessary requirements of producing a clear set of policy prescriptions at its conclusion. Proponents of action research would prioritise the involvement of trade union policymakers in the process of the research design (see for instance Wills and Hurley, 2005; James, 2006). To a certain degree this did approach did occur – the ESRC application was written collaboratively between David Sadler (academic supervisor) and Frank Hont (UNISON North West Regional Secretary) who identified the academic voids within literature and the relevant trade union issues respectively. Regular progress meetings during the PhD process ensured a continuation of the collaborative process, although in hindsight I now recognise that as time passed and I became more embedded in the research the meetings were conducted whereupon I set the agenda so that I could inform the CASE partner of my actions - thus I was taking more ownership of the research. We did however discuss research questions, possible gatekeepers and potential participants as will become evident in later sections within this chapter.

Therefore to some extent trade union policy makers were involved in the production of the research design. However, as time went on I became more in control of the conduct of the research. Having attended a seminar on the alliance between UNISON North West and the German public sector trade union Ver.di, my initial feelings were that I should produce an in-depth case study on the origins and outcomes of this alliance and its implications for internationalism. I wished to gain an understanding of how both unions were experiencing the issue of privatisation and TUPE transfers and how through information exchange each union could support the other instrumentally. My focus was on instrumental internationalism – this matched the feelings of grassroots members I had spoken to during focus groups however I was yet to speak to international activists or experience for myself affective internationalism. That was until October 2008 when I participated on a UNISON sponsored study tour to Auschwitz.

Nothing could prepare me for what I saw and experienced or for how I felt on my return home. I travelled to Poland with a group of people I had never met before (apart from two). We were a strange grouping of individuals – ranging between 22 and mid 60s; from the North West and North East of England; some UNISON active members, some passive members; others FBU members. Some had been on the delegation before, but for me and the majority of participants it was the first time. Throughout the week I experienced a series of shifting emotions – at first I was nervous, apprehensive and this soon turned to fear, anger, sadness and pride. Journeying around the concentration camps my emotions altered according to images such as swastikas drawn (over previous days) on the walls of buildings, most notably on the interior wall of a room which had housed children. The photos of prisoners in their striped pyjamas with fear and anger in their eyes were juxtaposed alongside the

treasured photographs of families that had been packed in suitcases, safely and lovingly put away to be drawn upon for reminders of happier times, will be etched in my mind forever. As will the de-humanisation of these prisoners – I saw the camps as an economic space. Everything within it was used for the purpose of profit.

At one point I felt a sense of pride that has stayed with me ever since. I learnt of members of the resistance who managed to plant explosives within one of the gas chambers – they were trade unionists. I found myself feeling some kind of connection with the past; a solidarity with these individuals. This feeling of pride and solidarity was reinforced by the others on the delegation. We did not know each other, had very different backgrounds, different politics and different experiences of life yet we all united under this feeling of affective solidarity.

Many of the readings I have engaged with on affective solidarity have looked at social movements and direct action (see for instance Routledge, 1998 and Juris, 2008 amongst others). This was different in that it was a trade union study tour – there would be no direct action as such, no clashes with authority, no jovial carnival atmosphere; just a study tour that would educate us on why something as horrific as the Holocaust must never happen again. Here we became living witnesses. As a group we shared a sense of affective solidarity through our collective moral outrage – I found it transformatory, empowering – I wanted to know how we could now assert this new found agency (Wood, 2001: 268). How could I tell others; share this feeling; get others involved?

Before October 2008 I concentrated solely on instrumental internationalism – a reflection of the views of trade union members during focus groups but perhaps also my own personal politics. I would argue that this is a reflection of how my politics has transformed during this research process, and therefore how my research design had to

change in keeping with this new understanding. My personal experience tells me that to generate solidarity and support for internationalism; trade unions must make struggles visible and promote effect and material change to their members (Routledge, 1998: 255). Juris (2008: 62) argues that emotions are generated through lived experiences which produce powerful affective ties, something Collins (1990) claims is the 'glue of solidarity'. My experience concurs with this, but I wanted to hear the views of others who had experienced this, who promoted this, who mobilised others through affective solidarity. I wanted to know what the political motivations behind labour internationalism are – be they the political motivations of individuals or of the trade union as a whole. My research design and associated methods would need to reflect this.

As I became increasingly interested in the associated political motivations I also recognised that it is important that academics retain a certain degree of autonomy:

"The direction of research does not necessarily follow every lead proposed from the grassroots, nor do the findings necessarily reinforce community activists' closely held hunches about how the world works"

(Wilson Gilmore, 2007).

Supporting this, Mitchell (2004) argued that academic research does not necessarily have to be closely intertwined with activist priorities in order to be politically incisive; instead we should recognise the division of academics and activists. Mitchell supports this in his discussion of Marx in claiming that although he may have been directly involved in political struggles, his major and lasting contribution was in fact his academic work, a result of often prolonged and isolated engagement with theory away from 'the field'. Mitchell perceives radical geography as a positive development:

"Doing radical scholarship has perhaps never been easier (at least in the western world); radical scholars do themselves, and the myriad of activists they wish to connect with, a great disservice when they forget that, and instead spend their time fretting about whether they ought to be on the front lines instead of in the library"

(Mitchell, 2004: 25).

According to Mitchell, we should appreciate the institutional space that previous generations have created in academia for radical scholarship, and to not fully exploit this legacy would in itself prove politically problematic. I found this to be something my CASE partner supervisor agreed with when discussing their motivations for entering the CASE studentship:

"You've seen everything we've got going on. And it's only going to get worse over the next few years. We need academics, people like you, to come into trade unionism and look at what's going on and how we can move forward. You've [academics] got time to stop and think, to theorise. We just haven't got the time to do that, as much as we'd love to be able to"

(UNISON North West Regional Secretary: diary extract, October 2007).

Wilson Gilmore (2007) argued that the most productive time for engagement between academics and activists is when the analysis is complete. She continues that in academic research, answers are only as good as the further questions they provoke, while for activists, answers are as good as the tactics they make possible. Having now taken on employment as a full time trade union official the contrast between this current role and that of a PhD student encapsulates these tensions. Although my thesis has been motivated by policy concerns from the outset, with a confidence (stemming from the support and guidance of both UNISON and academic supervisors) that my thesis has the potential to produce valid insights into trade union international processes and

policy direction, instead my focus has been mainly on the opportunity to present

grassroots' perspectives whilst contributing to the narratives of labour geography and

labour internationalism. There is certainly a time for focusing on policy implications yet

I would argue that a thesis is for producing a different sort of knowledge, with policy

implications the next step following thesis submission (see dissemination section

towards the end of this chapter for more information).

5.6   Case Study as a method of investigation

Now one of the most widely employed methods in social science research,

case studies are becoming increasingly popular as a result of the growing influence of

post-positivism.

> "A case study is not in itself a method, instead it is a research framework
> that with the aid of research methods enables the researcher to focus
> upon the subtleties and intricacies of a complex case"

> (Denscombe, 1999: 9).

One of the key issues for case studies is generalisation. Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue

that case studies can only provide 'working hypotheses' which can be assessed by

comparing them to other case studies for 'fit'. Flyvbjerg (2002) also questions the

extent to which case studies can offer predictive theories. He argues the purpose of

social science is not to provide inductive theories or context independent knowledge,

but to uncover context dependent knowledge, which he claims is at the heart of social

science activity. In contrast to Lincoln and Guba, Flyvberg contends that it is possible to generalise between individual case studies. Strategic case selection is important here, and Flyvberg distinguishes between a range of case study styles. Critical case studies, for example, have strategic importance to a general problem. He notes, the statement 'all swans are white' could be disproved by the discovery of a single non-white swan. In paradigmatic cases, on the other hand, the researcher chooses a case that might plausibly reflect wider trends (Herbert, 2000). An alternative strategy is the maximum variations in case process and outcome. Finally, extreme case studies involve studying trends that are just beginning to unfold, but which may become more significant in the future. What all case studies share, however, is an in-depth focus as opposed to a general breadth of knowledge, with the research fully engaged and embedded in the field.

The main benefit of using a case study approach is that the focus allows the researcher to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations. In particular it enables the researcher to grapple with relationships and social processes in a way that is holistic rather than based on isolated factors (Denscombe, 1999: 39). One of the strengths of a case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, data and research methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe, 1999: 31). More than this, it more or less encourages the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny.

5.6.1   Case study: UNISON North West

Exploring UNISON North West as a case study enabled academic theory to be placed in a 'real world' context (Yin, 1994: 178) with investigation targeted at all levels of the union allowing for comparison and the formulation of trends with regards understandings of labour internationalism and its impact upon UNISON international policy direction should this be commonplace.

UNISON North West is a particularly interesting case study for a number of reasons. It is the largest of twelve regions within UNISON, consisting of approximately 200,000 members, thus making the findings of significance to other regions, potentially in fact a test case for the conduct of labour internationalism. As highlighted within the introductory chapter the region covers a wide variety of geographical areas over an expansive distance – from the Cumbrian Lakes to the North of the region, down to rural Cheshire, and from the coastal stretches to the west of the region through Merseyside up to Lancashire across to Greater Manchester's urban sprawl to the east and everything in-between. Its geographical variations are also reflected in its political differentiations and the many different experiences of working life that manifest itself across the area. UNISON members work for the public sector, which encompasses a wide range of employment, as evident in its different service groups – local government, education, health, energy, Police and fire service. It represents workers across all grades of employment, but recognises that the majority of its members are female, low grade employees: 'We find that most of our members are women, low paid women, working sometimes up to three part time jobs just to make ends meet and support their families' (Lynne Morris, Regional Manager, UNISON: Diary extract May 2009). I intended that

my research design would reflect the diversity of the North West region and developed a matrix that would encapsulate each of these attributes. However, I soon identified that instead of representing each of the service groups, there was an attribute of more significance – that of the level of privatisation a branch was experiencing. During initial fieldwork it was becoming evident that the branches who were entirely, or increasingly subject to privatisation readily identified with instrumental internationalism as they were able to identify with counterparts working for the same employer globally. Branches less subject to, or with no experience of, privatisation appeared to have a different outlook – their support for internationalism (if any existed) was based primarily on affective solidarity i.e. notions of political solidarity with countries such as Cuba or Palestine or actions related to international solidarity. I wished to explore this hypothesis in more detail so produced a branch matrix around which I would base my sampling procedure. Focus groups would be conducted with each of branches to gain the perspective of 'lay' grassroots members (i.e. non active members); and semi structured interviews would be conducted with members of the branch executive and international activists (should any exist within the branch).

A consistent theme within literature is the extreme contrast between the transnationalisation of capital on the one hand and the national and local scaled practices of trade unions on the other (Wills, 1998). I wanted to explore the local practices at branch level and those of individuals within these spaces. I hoped that a branch matrix such as the one identified would enable to explore this alongside all of the different local politics, culture and branch organisational issues from across the region. It was necessary to gain an understanding as to how interconnections between public sector workplaces, branch organisational cultures, embedded histories and the national and international legislative environment intertwine. I began to recognise that

whilst focusing on the 'local' branch cultures, these spaces were also subject to a number of non-local origins e.g. the ethnicity, gender and affluence of the workforce and local community, experience of labour relations within the branch. As a result of this it may be difficult to ascertain where the local begins and where the international ends as per Massey's (1994) understanding of a 'global sense of place' stressing the importance of the multifarious connections that define place. It is therefore a question of context, understanding how events and processes in one place relate to events and processes elsewhere.

5.6.2   Using a multi-method approach

Having decided upon my areas of study I now needed to devise an approach for studying them. I needed a methodology that gained access to actual lived experience, to internationalism in practice. It was apparent that an in-depth qualitative approach would be necessary with a number of methods available – open participant observation at branch meetings, international meetings and related events; semi-structured interviews with trade union officials, lay activists; focus groups with grassroots members; elite interviews; analyses of documentary data such as leaflets, internal documents and websites. Each of these methods would be employed to reveal different, yet complimentary, types of data, and need to be combined into a coherent research strategy which considered the key issues of validity and reliability. A quantitative approach would not be suitable to the type of data I was intending to

examine, an understanding shared by Mason (2006: 12) who in discussing the relationship with her mother explained 'simply to measure the frequency of visits between mothers and daughters, or even what they do together and their views of the quality of their shared time, will not capture the 'heart and soul' – the essence or the multi-dimensional reality – of what is taking place'. I needed to think about my research questions, the type of data I was looking for, the related literature framework and how all of this would determine my choice of methods. I wanted to explore the everyday, life experiences, narratives of internationalism for this I would adhere to the qualitative tradition. The particular strengths of qualitative research lie in the knowledge it provides of the dynamics of social processes, change and social context and in its ability to answer 'how' and 'why' questions in these domains (Mason, 2006: 16).

Utilising a multi-method approach such as this produced different kinds of data on the same topic/theme. The initial and obvious benefit of this is that it will involve more data, thus being likely to improve the quality of the research as the researcher can see the issues from different perspectives and have a more rounded and complete understanding. Furthermore, the multi-method approach allows findings to be corroborated or questioned by comparing the data produced from different methods thus enhancing validity. Of the various multi-method approaches, the one most often referred to is triangulation (Denzin, 1970). Denzin (1970) suggests four aspects of triangulation: 1) data triangulation – data collation through several sampling strategies; 2) investigator triangulation – more than one researcher in the field; 3) theoretical triangulation – employing more than one theoretical position; 4) methodological triangulation – employing more than one method to collate data. Within the context of this thesis, triangulation has been employed through use of a multi-method approach on

the understanding that 'different data complement each other in revealing differing facets of the social world' (Yeung, 1995: 319).

5.7   Research design in practice

I was concerned with developing an analysis of what constitutes labour internationalism in practice. How is it conducted in the North West region – by who, using what forms of communication within and beyond UNISON, with financial and resource support, through mutual learning, mobilising rhetoric? In sum, how is labour internationalism interpreted and conducted at the grassroots? To answer these questions the principle methods of data collection were focus groups with lay grassroots members; semi-structured interviews with branch executive members and activists; and overt participant observation. Further to this I conducted elite interviews to gain an understanding of why it is often argued that the apparatus of trade union internationalism is ineffective and fails to justify the internationalist sentiments expressed at trade union conferences. By talking to 'elites' I wished to identify whether there was a consensus on interpretations on internationalism across the labour movement – from the grassroots through to those within so called hierarchy. For these interviews to be effective I collated and analysed the main body of data from grassroots and branch interviews allowing the findings to inform interview discussions with elites. Each of the methods and their conduct will be described in detail during the remains of this chapter.

A total of four focus groups were conducted, each containing around 6-12 participants and lasting between 20-50 minutes. Forty semi-structured interviews were completed at branch level and fourteen elite level interviews. All episodes were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All were conducted face to face apart from two which were conducted over the telephone due to distance and time constraints and one was conducted over email at the request of the participant for their convenience. The length of interviews varied from 14 minutes to 1 hour and 35 minutes (on average lasting around 40 minutes) for trade union branch executive members and activists and between 17 minutes and 1 hour 35 minutes with elites (interestingly activist and elite interviews lasted longest possibly accounting for their interest and/or involvement in the topic being discussed).

5.8.1   Focus groups

Focus groups are of particular value because of their ability to allow researchers to study how people engage in collective sense-making i.e. how views are constructed, expressed, defended and sometimes modified in the context of discussion and debate with others (Wilkinson, 1998a: 186). In other words, it is claimed that focus groups enable researchers to study and understand a particular topic from the perspective of the group of participants themselves (Wibeck et al., 2007: 250). Focus groups are said to offer an opportunity to observe the 'construction of meaning in action' (Wilkinson, 1998b: 338); they may be conceptualised as 'a thinking society in miniature' (Jovchelovitch, 2001: 2). They enable researchers to hear more detailed

revelations about people's thoughts and ideas – particularly about the social words, as made and experienced through human dialogue (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006: 454). Focus groups provide an effective way of eliciting a range of opinions on a given topic, whilst having the additional advantage of enabling the researcher to facilitate discussion and witness how the dominant narratives are constructed and negotiated between participants (Madriz, 2003).

What the aim of the focus groups was to identify grassroots members' perspectives on trade union internationalism – primarily were they aware of it and whether or not they support or question it. I followed Krueger's (1998) advice that questions should contain open-ended questions, i.e. questions that stimulate discussion without directing it too much. Probing questions may be included in the interview guide, to make participants reflect on links to their own prior knowledge and to other participants' contributions. Probes may also be used to help the participants challenge each other and elaborate their accounts – in other words, to promote a 'spirit of contradiction' (Billig, 1996). Discussions were loosely structured around a number of key questions designed to elicit responses on topics I was interested in exploring. I began each session by asking participants to discuss why they decided to join a trade union – this proved an effective way to build rapport between the participants as each had an opinion on this. Discussions were then guided by set questions.

Even though the focus groups are participant centred activities whereupon the researcher plays a detached role, there may be circumstances where the researcher will intervene if discussions diverge too far from the stated aim (Wibeck et al., 2007). Fortunately, within each focus group conducted, participants required little prompting within each of the focus groups with the majority of them eager to debate the questions posed between themselves without directing responses to me. Focus groups were held

at branch offices or in the workplace. Neither site appeared to influence the actual content itself of the focus group although one participant passed comments about how they begrudged participating and how their line manager would frown upon their participation. In this instance, participants were reminded of the consent form and that they were volunteers and should they not wish to participate, or felt uncomfortable participating they were free to leave at any point.

In choosing focus groups I was influenced by the potential advantages that the method had to offer in terms of allowing participants to participate as a much as possible i.e. to see through the eyes of workers (Herod, 1991a). However, having conducted a number of focus groups I began to realised that they are essentially social moments, not natural situations. These individuals were gathered together at my request, in the role of researcher, for a particular purpose, which had been set by me. Kitzinger, 1994: 106) had similar concerns:

> "It would be naive to assume that group data is by definition 'natural' in the sense that it would have occurred without the group being convened for this purpose. It is important to note that although, at times, the focus groups may approximate to participant observation the focus groups are artificially set up situations".

Researchers have to ensure they merely facilitate discussion, balancing roles away from being 'directive' leading participants towards discussing issues that they conceive of as central and being a 'voiceless participant' not engaging in the discussion at all, but being verbally silent and displaying a lack of involvement through non verbal signals (Savin-Baden, 2003: 50).

On analysing the data derived from the focus groups I categorised the material and loosely followed Stevens (1996: 172) criteria of research questions to ask to the data in order to focus attention on the interaction of the group:

- How closely did the group adhere to the issues presented for discussion?
- What statements seemed to evoke conflict?
- What common experiences were expressed?
- Was a particular member or viewpoint silenced?
- Was a particular view dominant?
- Whose interests were being represented in the group?

Across all of the focus groups I found that members joined a trade union for individual, instrumental reasons, not for solidaristic, collective purposes. Thus associations with labour internationalism were not always congruent with their understandings of trade union membership (please see Chapter 6 for in-depth discussion on this). However, this was extremely helpful in developing my understanding of internationalism and the approach necessary for my ongoing fieldwork. I conducted four focus groups in total, all of which raised the same issues - the majority of grassroots members were unaware and disinterested in labour internationalism, until discussions revolved around what internationalism meant for them in the workplace (in keeping with their motives for joining a trade union). The information reached saturation at this point and instead of conducting a focus group with each branch within the branch matrix I decided the next necessary step would be to identify whether such understandings are also reflected at branch level within the branch executive and therefore whether grassroots understandings were influenced by branch attitudes to internationalism or vice versa. The data derived from this method was invaluable. Conducted at the beginning of my

research fieldwork it guided thoughts, my focus on particular literature and the direction of data collection to a great extent.

5.7.2   Observation

Focus groups and interviews were supplemented by the overt participant and non participant observations at branch meetings and international events providing a real insight into the process behind decisions on internationalism. A research diary was written to compliment and support interview data by identifying the contexts within which decisions are made as well as non-verbal communications.

Participant observation allowed me to explore questions about every day, often taken for granted meanings of trade union internationalism and its related activism. I decided to conduct overt participant observation as I believed it would enable me to discover the meaning of internationalism in practice – I wanted to examine how international activists participated in campaigns; the way activists negotiated discussions and tensions in local branches on internationalism; the processes and practices by which branches conduct daily issues and the implications of this for international activity. Further to this, I wished to explore the conversations of activists and lay members in natural settings to see how much and what kind of open ended exchange the group or setting allowed for in discussions of internationalism. Do they presume that the purpose of discussion is to decided the most strategic way to present interests that they presume do not need exploring, or do they discuss issues in order to figure out what their interests and opinions are (Lichterman, 1998: 404). Who drives

these questions, is there a group leader, who (if anyone) is interested? How is internationalism prioritised in group meetings? Does the culture or organisation of a branch affect this? Such issues and meanings related to international practice may of course be ascertained from interviews, however I found that many participants did not readily discuss them or think of them of relevant until probed for further information.

Participant observation enabled me to explore the traditions, symbols and stories that make internationalism meaningful as it is happening in everyday life. If I had taken the discourses and traditions articulated in interviews or surveys as representing the complete meaning of internationalism then I would have missed the proximate, implicit meanings that may be at work in everyday settings of internationalism itself. For this reason, during observations I took great care to listen to the way in which international activists spoke of internationalism – self descriptions, sayings, cautionary tales, fond memories, stories that people articulated in every day settings such as meetings and conversations over lunch. I proceeded on the notion that this data would be valuable reference points that would assist me to map out internationalism. Not all semi-structured interviews would replicate such data as that collated at the settings of branch meetings, international rallies or panels, where other discourses and reference points other than those of therapeutic individualism (Lichterman, 1998: 412) will come into play.

5.7.3   Interviews

Interviewing can be referred to as 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102) with it recognised that face-to-face contact with participants supports an effective exchange of dialogue. Interviews are a situational and generative approach to gaining information, giving privilege to the accounts of social actors as data sources (Mason, 2002). As knowledge is situated and contextual the interview 'ensures that relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced' (Mason, 2002: 62). Interviews can be structured in a variety of ways. Smith (1995: 13-15) informs us that:

> "Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading...A strategy often employed...is to try to encourage a person to speak about the topic with as little prompting from the interviewer as possible. This point can be seen as a development of the requirement to ask neutral rather than leading questions. One might say that you are attempting to get as close as possible to what your respondent thinks about the topic, without being led too much by your questions".

Interviews encourage an environment in which respondents discuss, in a conversational approach, their own opinions and experiences (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999). Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to discuss areas of interest, but also enable participants to raise their own issues (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Therefore, this method was chosen as a valuable way to ascertain in-depth reasons for behaviour or attitudes and enabled the conduct of postmodern research to explore the experiences of those often excluded or marginalised.

In total 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with branch executive members and activists and a further 14 with elites. During the research it became apparent that these three groups experienced and conducted interviews in different ways, as will be described in the following sections.

5.7.3i   Interviews with branch executives

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for two reasons: the first being due to the suitability of the method in the rich data it generates and secondly to be able to target discussion towards specific research questions. Issues explored during interviews included participant's background and personal politics to assess whether this influences perceptions on internationalism as well as the extent to which they are involved in international activities; branch engagement with internationalism (allowing for identification of intra-branch tensions on internationalisms) and views on UNISON international activity. Semi-structured interviews allowed personalised responses to be formulated and the loose framework of each interview meant that comparison of responses within and between branches as well as between the different levels of organisation within UNISON (i.e. grassroots members; branch level activists; regional officers; national officers) could be developed.

I chose to conduct interviews with branch executive members because I wanted to gain an understanding of their perspectives on labour internationalism – qualitative interviewing, in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing (Mason, 2002) would enable me to extract this information. The sampling

procedure, as identified by the branch matrix meant that I would be able to compare branches in more detail through interviewing. This form of purposive sampling stresses a concern for 'information rich cases'. Respondents were able to talk freely such that a great detail can be learned about the research questions.

The majority of interviews were conducted at branch offices on days when officers were seconded to do their trade union duties. Interpreting and understanding the significance of different interview sites is important through the research process as part of creating a feasible and effective research plan, understanding power relations between researcher and participants, addressing ethical considerations and dilemmas that may arise, and gaining insights into fundamental questions of the research. As Oberhauser (1997) has illustrated, it must be stressed that the interview is not just an opportunity to gather information by asking questions and engaging in conversation, but it is also an opportunity for participant observation. Specifically, during an interview it is important to consider the physical attributes of the site and to observe the people who are present and their interactions with each other and with the participant (Elwood and Martin, 2000: 656). Careful observation and analysis of the people, activities and interactions that constitute these spaces, of the choices that different participants make about interview sites and that different participants make about interview sites can illustrate the social geographies of a place (Elwood and Martin, 2000: 649). Quite often, interview sites are located according to terms of convenience for both researchers and participants, suggesting that the location should, for instance, be quiet and easy to find. However, we must recognise that far from being removed from the social and cultural contexts of other spaces, the interview site provides a material space for the enactment and constitution of power relations. Particular places may make some participants feel

uncomfortable speaking freely about some issues where others are present and may overhear the conversation – power is never absent in any locations (Krueger, 1994).

Furthermore, locations can influence the power relations between researchers and participants. Oberhauser (1997) and Falconer-Al-Hindi (1997) argue that interviews conducted in participants' homes have important potential for disrupting power hierarchies between researchers and participants. It was evident during an interview with an activist in her home that we were able to foster an atmosphere conducive to sharing personal information, and to create a more reciprocal relationship. Conversely, I found that the power relationship changed on conducting an interview in an office at The University of Liverpool – suddenly I felt vulnerable, immature and ignorant – a student, an academic, with my fear being that I would be viewed by the participant as unable to fully understand the dynamics of trade unionism. Similarly, McDowell (1998) in her examination of interviews conducted with bank employees argues that the interviews were affected by the location of their workplace but for different reasons. She suggested that some participants had concerns about confidentiality, the appropriateness of conducting an interview at work, and being reluctant to talk about their home lives in an interview conducted at their workplaces.

We must also consider the participant's identity within different locations and how it is asserted, for instance in one location a participant may assert ones agency as a manager, and in another location answer interview questions from a different perspective, such as that of a concerned parent. Within my research I found participants agency differ according to whether we met at the workplace, within the branch or at UNISON regional/national meetings. The participant's demeanour and character appeared to change accordingly, as I assume did mine according to location.

5.7.3ii   Interviews with international activists

For activist interviews, I found that imposing a rigid structure during the interview discouraged participants from fully engaging and expressing their opinions. International activists were particularly interested in my research from the outset and passionate about their own experiences and activities thus I identified with Maxwell's (1996) argument that lists and prompts discourage participants from talking about the issues that really matter to them. Here the researcher would simply collate data on the themes/subjects they wish to know avoiding any unexpected, potentially integral results. During the process of activists' interviews this became apparent and as a consequence I began to adopt a slightly different strategy. I wanted to understand what made individuals become active (see theory Chapter 2). What made them, unlike others, act? Was it their upbringing, life experience? I wanted to explore their activeness in both temporally and spatially situated practice, shaped by (and shaping) context and embedded within both past and future decisions. This meant that activism needed to be examined as part of an individual's life course, rather than something distinct to it (see empirical Chapter 7 on decisions/motivations on activism). Rosenthal (2004: 50) argues:

> "In order to understand and explain the statement of an interviewee/biographer about particular topics and experiences in his/her past, it is necessary to interpret them as part of the overall context of his/her current life and his/her resulting present and future perspectives".

Consequently, I acknowledged that it was important to enable participants to have a more active role in the development of the research, enabling them to determine the

significant factors to their activism. Here I adopted an approach combining semi-structured interviewing and characteristics of biographical narratives which:

> "Seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future"
>
> (Roberts, 2002: 1).

This approach has become more common within social science research due to recognition that individual experience is storied and that the use of narrative (telling a story) to articulate a biography can be particularly effective in collating many diverse elements into one coherent path (Lawler, 2002; Roberts, 2002). Rosenthal (2004) argues that biographical interviews differ to other forms of interviewing, allowing the participant to dictate the length, content and direction of the narrative.

The biographical narrative was used to a certain degree, however not fully. Participants were able to talk in great length about their international activism, how they became involved in it, their personal history etc but given that the interview was required to engage with a broad number of themes, as the interviewer there were occasions where I deemed it necessary to intervene in the narrative, providing prompts, asking particular questions. In accordance with Wengraf (2001: 113) wherever possible I gave up control 'refused to take up an offers of partial control and maintain the maximum power asymmetry against yourself' allowing for the power relations found in traditional interviewing to be subverted. By privileging the viewpoint of the participant, I gained a greater appreciation of the ways in which they became involved, conducted and promoted activism. This method facilitated a better rapport between the participant and myself – participants gained a greater sense of control over the direction of the

interaction. Rather than a formally structured interview directed solely by my agenda, instead it resembled an informal conversation between two equals. As well as telling 'their' story, participants were involved in a process of reflection, often trying to account for behaviour and actively questioning their motivations to acting in particular ways. This was particularly helpful in that it revealed how trade union activism is intertwined with participants' wider life course as they discussed actions and choices in relation to previous experiences and future aspirations.

Stroobants (2005: 51) identified that this process is of mutual benefit as it encourages reflection on the direction of the narrative:

"Telling life stories is an infinite process of reconstructing experiences, events and choices. The meaning and value of an experience becomes clear by looking back on it in the life story. At every moment, past events might receive new meanings and form the basis for other biographical strategies that might offer new action perspectives for the future...By narrating their life, the women give meaning to past experiences and explore possible future action perspectives".

On analysing the data I found, in keeping with Ricoeur (1980) that narratives are reflections on experiences from the vantage point of the present, which on expression can often appear quite disparate and separate events that are linked together in accordance with individuals' present situations to form a coherent pathway and ultimate outcome (Ricouer, 1980: 183; Steedman, 1996). As a result of this, participants' lives, in particular the activist nature of it, appear linear and inevitable within the narrative with one experience or event leading seamlessly onto the next. Therefore, the narrative was produced in not necessarily a 'true' representation of how events occurred but must be understood as a process by which individuals can arrive at an understanding of past

events in shaping their life trajectory. As we will see in Chapter 7, such narratives are inextricably tied to the spaces within which they are produced:

> "I see narratives as social products produced by people within the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. They are related to the experience that people have of their lives, but they are not transparent carriers of that experience. Rather, they are interpretative devices through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and others"
>
> (Lawler, 2002: 242).

Just as this approach would not work for the branch executive members interviewed, so too is this the case for the elite interviews conducted. Many branch executive members had different priorities to activists (although it must be remembered that many branch executives are also international activists and so somehow balance and merge these roles and priorities). Branch executive members, due to their positioning and responsibility within the branch, often spoke of time and resource restraints in relation to internationalism. The priorities were recruitment, retention, member representation and organising and this was reflected in the direction of discussion in interviews. Activists however, as we have seen took a different approach during interviews, with focus being on the practice of internationalism, mobilising others and discussing this in great depth in relation to their own personal narratives. For elite interviewing I found myself taking a very different approach – formal and professional, structured allowing for time constraints in the knowledge that I had been very fortunate in gaining access to these individuals.

5.7.3iii   Elite interviews

Before conducting elite interviews I summarised all of the empirical information produced in the earlier stages of fieldwork to identify whether, and in what way, grassroots' perceptions on UNISON international activity does, could, or even should inform future internationalism. I interviewed individuals who are, or who have previously held, management positions within the labour movement. Despite having been made aware of ethical considerations and completing a written informed consent form, each of the participants stated they were happy to be identified within the research. Participants ranged from Rodney Bickerstaffe, previous UNISON General Secretary; Arlene McCarthy, MEP; Andrea Maksimovick, from the NGO Solidar and Keith Sonnett, UNISON Deputy General Secretary.

The use of the word 'elite' was not taken lightly when deciding upon how to categorise this grouping of individuals and I use it warily. Researchers who discuss 'elites' as an unproblematic category of people are assuming that it is possible to clearly identify 'powerful people' and may assume that the power associated with people through their professional positions will transfer directly into the interview space – both of these assumptions may be deemed questionable (Smith, 2005: 645). In agreement with Hughes and Cormode (1998) it is just as important to research those who influence important decisions as it is to research the lives of those affected by these decisions. It may be difficult to ascertain who influences these 'important decisions' within the realms of labour internationalism but it was thought elite interviews may address this issue to some extent. The factors used to signify 'elite' can vary from context to context – Parry's (1998) research focusing on 'gene-hunters', examines people with an elite form of knowledge whereas McDowell (1998) and England (2002) both focus on

professionals working in prestigious financial institutions. Relatedly, Oinas (1999: 352) suggests 'an elite status can be regarded as stemming from the control of resources'.

I wish to avoid the idea that there is a dichotomy between 'powerful elites' and 'powerless others'- it should not be assumed that these elite individuals within this research are all powerful and all knowing, whereas the other participants are powerless. Ironically, in many respects within this field of study it could be argued that grassroots members hold the power to an effective, powerful labour internationalism. The term must be unpacked recognising that 'elites' may change over time perhaps even during the research process itself. Therefore, within this research the fourteen individuals that make up this category are termed 'elite' in line with Woods (1998) to represent individuals bound by strong, social, professional or political ties, rather than at the top echelon of society:

> "The attribution of elite status is very context specific. There will be different elites for different areas of activity, and different spatial and institutional scales. These elites may be interconnected, and those individuals who are able to connect different elites have potentially greater influence simply because of their position in the network"

> (Woods, 1998: 2105).

In this instance, the individuals referred to where in, or previously had been, in positions within networks of integral interest to the workings of the trade union movement and labour internationalism. The individuals were deemed informants (Welch et al., 2002: 613) able to provide valuable data on their experience, personal network, workings of a particular trade union and/or the daily workings and processes of labour internationalism. It is generally accepted within literature that trying to gain access to research groups is a problematic aspect of many social research projects with

many suggesting that gaining access to 'elite' participants is particularly difficult. Fortunately, my being a CASE student opened many doors enabling me to access these individuals with little difficulty. In keeping with the culture and trust of trade unions I was put in contact with gatekeepers to these individuals with an explanation of the research and the UNISON CASE supervisor meant access was immediately granted on all occasions. Furthermore, being able to meet with these individuals subject to their busy diaries I believe, was simply a matter of luck, being able to be in 'the right place at the right time' and the support of my funding allowing this to happen. With the importance of such issues during the conduct of research should not be underestimated.

5.8   Reflexivity: breaking down the researcher/researched dichotomy

Recent years have seen increasing recognition that the process of a research design often relies heavily on intuition, contingency and reflexivity, rather than the ordered and scientific accounts often presented in methodological reflections. Quite often personal circumstances, chance meetings and occurrences may be of equal significance to the more august and scientific activities such as literature searches for possible openings. It is without doubt that I have been extremely fortunate during my PhD research, especially in comparison to a number of my peers who during discussions I discovered experienced a number of difficulties, be that issues of funding or often access to participants. Thankfully due to my experience as a PhD CASE student I did not experience either of these problems meaning they did not impinge upon my research. The broad approach taken from the outset was to conduct qualitative

research with recognition that research is not 'neat, tidy and unproblematic' (Fuller, 1999: 226), but an ongoing, evolving process which is influenced by both evolution and change within the research process, as well as external developments and innovation in the broader discipline (Limb and Dwyer, 2001).

Recent decades have witnessed a call within human geography for consideration of progressive methodologies whereupon the entire research process is analysed, rather than just the impersonal and abstract research technique (Eyles, 1988; Eyles and Smith, 1988). Here we must recognise the influence of 'reflexivity' within research, that as researchers we must carefully interpret and reflect upon the research process in its entirety (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). The production of knowledge, be that the formulation, analysis or presentation of data is all subject to the researcher's own interpretation and theoretical assumptions. Instead, being reflective means 'the interpretation of interpretation (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 5). The relationship between the researcher and participant also impacts upon this process thus a component of reflexivity is understanding one's own positionality (England, 1994). The production of knowledge is therefore a subjective rather than objective process and highly dependent upon the identity, motivations and cultural values of the researcher as well as the contest within which it is determined. As a result, and following Hartsock's (1998) assertions as referred to earlier in this chapter, it is integral that the standpoint of the researcher and their relationship to the field of study is understood.

Positionality involves considering critically how aspects of social identities position researchers in relation to respondents and, in turn, influence the collation of data and the knowledge produced (Valentine, 1997). Positionality refers to 'taking account of our own position and writing this into our research practice' (Rose, 1997: 305). This has drawn upon the work of feminist geographers who have identified,

developed and critiqued these concepts. Initially, commonalities between researchers and participants, for example women interviewing women, were thought to create connections and give researchers privileged 'insider' status (Barker and Smith, 2001). However debates have considered how positionality is in fact much more complex, as commonalities between research and participants may be fractured by other social identities for example a young female researcher interviewing an Asian, elderly female participant. Furthermore, identification with participants is temporary and unstable, as relations are ever changing and shifting, thus reflecting a postmodern conception of power relations (Fuller, 1999).

Positionality has been discussed throughout all fields of human geography, yet it is feminist geographers (see for instance Rose, 1997) who have illuminated the complex relations of power to greatest detail. Madge (1993: 296) encapsulates the concept:

> "The role of the (multiple) 'self', showing how a researcher's positionality (in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality) may influence the 'data' collected and thus the information that becomes coded as 'knowledge'".

It is evident that positionality is crucial to the research process; however it is also fundamental to recognise that a researcher's positionality can change. This is possible during a specific data collection encounter, as the researcher builds rapport with the participant; but also as the researcher becomes more embedded within the overall research field. The nature, timeliness and longevity of such change are context specific, determined by the research field; the researcher; participants and the methods employed. My own positionality(s) shall be explored below.

During research for this thesis, my positionality as a twenty-something, middle class, academic, white, female non trade union member positioned me in different ways to different participants. A number of participants assumed I was a UNISON member or queried if I was undertaking my undergraduate dissertation, positioning me as an inexperienced 'outsider' with no knowledge or understanding of the field. Neither position was accurate, since I was neither a UNISON member nor an undergraduate. This reflects what Tooke (2000) described as the position of 'betweeness' to represent how researchers are neither entirely 'insiders' nor 'outsiders'. Betweeness is discussed by a number of academics to describe their analytical positioning as between the 'field' and the 'not field', between theory and practice, but also between researcher and researched (Rose, 1997; Katz, 1994).

On some occasions to have challenged assumptions made by participants would have disrupted my position with participants, potentially losing trust or rapport. Instead to resolve this I would speak of the experience I had of working with UNISON and the various campaigns and projects I had participated in thus indicating that I was not completely ignorant of the field. This reflected that positionality is an ever changing process, as identities are repositioned and renegotiated in often fluid and unpredictable ways (Fuller, 1999).

5.8.1   Positionality: wearing different hats

On reflection, I found during the research that I adopted 'different hats' (Macmillan and Scott, 2003: 103) according to who I am communicating with.

Adopting different positionalities can avoid or accentuate power relations according to my needs. On speaking to UNISON members I have found that I refer to myself as a university researcher; when seeking to heighten the importance of the research to sceptical activists or others within the labour movement I often prioritise my relations with UNISON over my academic role on an understanding that a closer relationship with the labour movement will hold more ground. Interestingly, power relations have played a key role in gaining or hindering access to participants – working in collaboration with key regional actors is mentioned when talking to regional or national actors; whereas differences in politics or attempts to relate more to the 'rank and file' has meant that at times I have described my role differently. Moreover, working alongside individuals in key positions at UNISON hierarchy could influence participants' responses to questions, perhaps highlighting the organisation's internal politics or participants' expectations of the research itself.

Like many researchers I found that gaining access to participants can be challenging. Actually contacting them and arranging for them to participate was not necessarily the challenge however, often this was conducted with ease. There was one major issue that needed to be overcome however – that of access in terms of establishing trust with potential participants. The first aspect of this often proved problematic – that of establishing my credentials. During the initial stages of research this left me feeling quite defensive, often anxious to state my claim on the research and explain my positioning within the field. However, experience and observation at various trade union events soon showed me that this was not an issue directed at me personally, with individuals questioning both my own and the research's credibility, but instead part of trade union culture. Individuals would ask 'are you a trade unionist?', 'are you from a family of trade unionists?' Despite being brought up to understand and

support trade unionism I found myself feeling inadequate to conduct the research – perhaps someone directly involved in the movement would have a better insight? Over time, as my confidence grew, I began to understand that trade union culture is built on trust – on meeting people for the first time, like in many organisations, questions are based around credibility, experience, background etc to gage an understanding of a person's politics and from this build rapport or recognise and understand difference. I recognised that there is a culture of continuous networking within trade unionism. These questions are asked first, trust is built and you are welcomed into the culture. The more people I met the more I understood this culture and discussed my role as a researcher and the benefits of the research to UNISON and its members.

5.9   Research analysis

Through conduct of the research methods above I was able to produce a significant body of data – written, verbal and observed data. In order to convey this information in-depth analysis was required. Many researchers will discuss in great detail the process they experienced of deciding upon an area of study, how this determined the research design and how they went about collating the relevant data, yet often there is a lack of recognition of the importance of the actual analysis of that data. Many recognise that analysis of data is not an objective process and that researchers undertake a complex process of interpretation (Savin-Baden, 2003). Despite the postmodern concern to give voice to participants, it can be argued that in some

instances participants may not always speak for themselves or may find their voices restricted or mediated and filtered through significant others (for instance in group interviews or focus groups) and researchers who make decisions about which methods to employ and how to interpret their accounts. Therefore, researchers need to be reflexive about how data is interpreted, since all research is analysed from a particular perspective or position (Timar and Enyedi, 2004).

All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim most often immediately after the episode. Similarly, field diaries and episodes of observation were kept up to date and/or written following each episode. The subsequent data produced was analysed in relation to the different research aims (Kitchin and Tate, 2000) following the established methods of coding information into relevant themes for each research aim, and finding exceptions to this. I followed the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1968), whereby interview analysis is called 'reading for themes'. Information from the interview is split into categories and these categories are then saturated i.e. as many examples as possible are found for each category within the interview text. Within transcripts categories were highlighted with different colours with a summary response written for each interview/focus group. I then produced a document for each of the key themes, listing all of the examples found across all of the transcripts. In writing the thesis I was guided by the key themes, and wherever possible used the data collated from participants instead of my own words as I wanted to allow the voices of participants to guide the thesis in keeping with the research epistemology. Triangulation was employed here, and where possible, quotations from more than one participant used to illustrate arguments (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Participant quotations are important for revealing how meanings are expressed in the participants' own words rather than the words of the researcher (Baxter

and Eyles, 1997: 508) yet I was careful that they were not used in an anecdotal fashion, or merely cherry picked to suit and preconceived outcomes I may have initially wanted from the research.

5.10   Dissemination of research findings

Dissemination is an important, although often overlooked part of the research process. The process of dissemination gives glimpses into power relations (Doyle, 1999; Kitchin and Hubbard, 1999). In an effort to foster reciprocity and to thank participants, I will produce a summary of research findings similar to that produced following completion of my MA dissertation research. Further to this a summary of findings will be presented at research workshops (to which all participants will be invited) for feedback, further debate and validation of findings. This will collate further data as will a subsequent focus group with the regional international committee assessing their views on the findings. Once data collection is complete emphasis will then be placed upon feedback and information exchange with overall findings presented to both individual participants and their branches and UNISON North West to identify any implications for the region and UNISON nationally. It is intended that a presentation and discussion opportunity will be held at UNISON's national delegate conference enabling all international activists to attend and air their views on the research with it hoped that this will in some way serve to influence future international policy.

However, dissemination of information is an issue I have been keen to promote during, as well as after the end of, the research process. As such informal dissemination to key individuals was provided throughout the research process. Articles were published in UNISON related magazines and I produced an initial report from the findings of my MA dissertation research which was circulated amongst participants and activists. Furthermore individuals may access it online at the UNISON North West website. Further to this is could be argued that my new career with UNISON is itself a practical form of dissemination in that I embody much of the knowledge generated by the research and I am keen to use what I have learnt through this research during my daily tasks.

5.11   Conclusion

This chapter has described, explained and justified the research design used to generate the data that has provided working answers to my research questions outlined in Chapter 1. It outlined the development and conduct of my research design for the study of UNISON North West. Beginning with a discussion of the political motivations of the research, I situated the thesis within the tradition of radical geography scholarship that stems from a normative standpoint. Although the pathway for politically motivated research is well established it also produces anxieties in the form of tensions between activists and researchers over what sort of knowledge radical scholarship should aim to produce. The gulf between academia and trade union

employment has since become more apparent during the latter stages of the writing up of this process. Unlike many academics I was fortunate to find that my academic priorities do contribute to understandings of labour internationalism and were aligned with the motivations and enthusiasm of many participants who were the object of my research. Those who did not experience the same motivations also aided the research as I aimed to explore why they lacked interest in internationalism.

Employing a mixed method approach was considered most fitting in order to produce a rich dataset, it is evident from the next three chapters that semi-structured interviews, particularly those with activists produced the most interesting and in-depth data. I needed to define exactly what I meant by labour internationalism, its practice and where its manifestations could be found. This process has a strong resonance with the theoretical framework developed and deployed throughout this thesis. I intended that my methods for studying labour internationalism would reflect the dynamic geographies of the theory in practice and the individuals involved.

Chapter 6

Interpretations of Internationalism

6.1   Introduction

The theoretical debates explored across chapters 2, 3 and 4 illustrated that many recent contributions continue to study the development of transnational alliances and/or analyse the impacts of institutionalised forms of international labour organisation, often culminating with a set of programmatic injunctions as to how trade unions and the wider labour movement are, or more pertinently, *should* be acting. This chapter aims to build upon this literature, in particular developing the limited investigations into how labour internationalism is received, understood and interpreted by grassroots trade union members. Within the field of labour geography and wider discourses related to that of industrial relations and social movement literatures we are yet to have any real understanding as to whether grassroots trade union members are aware of internationalism; how they interpret it; how they perceive it is enacted by their trade union; and whether or not they support its practice or perhaps perceive it as a distraction from the *core* agenda. This chapter will therefore seek to illustrate the grassroots' perception of internationalism – detailing how it is framed, expressed and enacted in daily thinking and practices by individuals and their branches. In doing so, the chapter will examine perceptions of the purpose of trade unionism and what trade union membership means in terms of activism, ideas of collectivism and mobilisation be that within the UK or internationally.

6.2   Defining the 'grassroots'

The logical starting point for this chapter is to identify what one constitutes as the trade union 'grassroots' membership, given that this is the base for exploration within this thesis. Interestingly, it was the language used to distinguish those not committed to an official trade union capacity that caused the most confusion within the field. Terminology such as 'grassroots', 'lay membership', 'rank and file', 'ordinary member', 'activist', 'rep' were used interchangeably. Furthermore, it was identified that certain terminology produces particular political connotations, as I wrote in my research diary following an informal conversation with a Regional UNISON official:

> "...the problem with using "grassroots" is that some people see it as meaning 'militant', you know 'trots'. So you have to be careful using that, because we're trying to move away from that kind of image. Most people would say 'ordinary member' or 'lay member'"
>
> (Research diary 15.03.10).

Despite this, distinctions illuminated during fieldwork on talking to lay members and activists produced a significant difference between three particular groupings and therefore in keeping with the aims of this thesis of being grassroots led these are the categorisations that shall be used throughout the following presentation of data: i) Grassroots members – members who do *not* take on a paid official role within UNISON structures: this grouping includes the 'lay member' and those taking on the role of branch stewards, activists; ii) regional full-time paid officials; and iii) national officers. Definitions of the latter two categories were consistent with all participants, as was what it means to be an 'lay member' i.e. an individual who pays trade union subsidies but does not take on any role within the trade union; defining an 'activist' however was

subject to various understandings as asserted by a member of the National Executive Committee (Branch D, P1)[9]:

> "You have different levels of activists, you have some people who will say 'I will be an activist but all I want to do is X'; 'I will hand out stuff for you'; 'I don't want training'; some people will say 'I don't want to do anything outside work but I want to help you as much as I can because I am a trade unionist but that is all I want to do'. Then you go in stages right up to people wanting to get involved at regional level, at branch level, national level and try and get involved as much as possible and get involved in all the campaigns and international campaigns and everything else...
>
> It is peoples' personal choice. We make it absolutely clear when someone does become an activist that you can get involved with it as much as you like. It is not like you are taking on a job where this is what you have got to achieve it is a case of all union activists are all volunteers and we have to make sure we remember that at times. We will give them the training and it can be very fulfilling and people take it on but there is that absolute guarantee that you can walk away when you want, you can take on as much or as little as you wish and any help is useful to us".

Understanding this terminology, in particular how it is used in practice and how individuals ascribed it to themselves, is important for two reasons. Firstly it provides clarification as to what being a trade unionist means to certain individuals – what roles they adopt, their levels of engagement with trade unionism and their commitment to a particular cause. It also illustrates an individual's expectation of the role and function of a trade union – if they are simply a 'lay member' they may then position themselves in a form of service contract with the trade union. Alternatively, to be an 'activist' suggests a certain level of ideological commitment to social and/or personal change (Fuller and Kitchen, 2004). However a certain level of commitment should not be automatically assumed, as illustrated by the previous extract. Here we are able to query

---

[9] In line with ethical guidelines every participating branch and individual has been made anonymous. Each branch has been accorded a letter and each participant has been given a number.

what constitutes activism: Activism is discursively produced, and actively constructed in a range of ways (Maxey, 1999: 200); therefore it is dangerous to reify one type of approach as *the* way to enact social change. Moreover, to be an 'activist' does not indicate a commitment to internationalism per se, although within this chapter we will explore data which suggests that a commitment to trade unionism encapsulated by the notion of a 'union ideal' often translates readily into a commitment to trade union internationalism.

Having disentangled the problematic of defining the 'grassroots' within the context of this case study, we can now explore whether the two distinct groups within this category – 'lay members' and 'activists' project differing understandings of trade unionism and internationalism, and if so identify why this is the case. To do this, the data drawn from focus groups consisting of lay members will be discussed first before examining activists' understandings allowing for comparisons between the two groupings.

6.3   The role of trade unions

During focus groups with lay members, one of the initial questions participants were asked was to discuss their perception of the role of a trade union. The intention here was threefold, firstly I hoped to begin to unravel whether they would consider and explicitly express notions of internationalism and solidarity. Secondly, it may identify their motivations behind membership – be that individualism or notions of

collective expression. And finally, given that participants in these instances were lay members I hoped that they may produce understandings as to why they did not adopt active roles – be that what they may perceive as workplace based and/or internationally active roles. One group observed produced the following explanations during discussion on the role of a trade union:

Branch D focus group

"To help the staff and look after the staff, the *members* [my emphasis added] of the union" (P3)

"Yeh basically if you're in trouble at work, we can like always call the union for help, that's the way I perceive the union as. I mean like you pay like a fixed amount each month – I don't know what that goes to, erm, but I've never used the union so...the way I see it is if you get into trouble at work you just call them and they try and...they're like a lawyer" (P5)

"It's the staff voice isn't it? You know towards management. Things like we've just had that pay rise and things and it's the union that negotiates erm, the best bits" (P3).

Here we are able to identify what D'Art and Turner (2005) refer to as a concentration on member self interest. The final quote in particular is in accordance with 'service' unionism in which members are dependent upon the formal organisation and hierarchy of officers to provide what they require (Heery et al, 1999). A number of roles are identified: service union, legal services, individual member representation, negotiator, collective bargaining, staff voice, collective representative in staff versus management. These can be depicted as a reflection of members' perspectives on the 'core' role of a trade union. They require a guarantee that their interests are secure and presented an

image of 'the union' and 'members' which could be portrayed in the analogy of service 'providers' and service 'users' illustrating the 'member - union' relationship as an economic exchange based upon individual considerations not collective solidarity (Snape and Redman, 2004), with a further dichotomy presented of 'union' and 'employer'. There was no suggestion from the majority of focus group participants that these two roles were interdependent of each other, were members would adopt an active role within trade union campaigning and activities.

Interestingly, within the extract, it is evident that one of the participants stresses that the role of the trade union is to look after *members only*, as opposed to all employees within the workplace, an issue also recognised by another participant later in the same focus group:

"There's two people, one pays union membership the other doesn't why should the one that doesn't pay benefit outside of the workplace? It's an individual thing" (P2)

This comment re-emphasises members' perspectives based upon 'business' unionism (Heery et al, 1999: 38) with the suggestion that a union's role is not to protect the fate of workers it does not directly represent. The participant queries: "why should the one that doesn't pay benefit outside of the workplace?" identifying two issues here – non members benefitting from trade union activity (as discussed in Chapter 4 with regards to Olson's free rider principle (1965)) and a sense of 'territory' based upon the trade union being associated with workplace issues only and not therefore, perhaps community or international campaigns. Furthermore, the quotes suggest that trade union membership is on an individual basis, without any suggestion of ideas relating to

collectivity. In this sense, initial understandings were that a trade union's core role is to "look after workers" (Focus group B, P4). Notably trade union members' interests within the workplace, nor was international activity mentioned from the outset. This led me to assume that labour internationalism and its associations with collectivism; workers beyond the UK and social movement orientation may not receive a high level of support during ongoing discussions.

The suggestion that membership is 'an individual thing' was apparent throughout each of the focus group discussions, and an issue raised on a number of occasions by both activists and trade union officials during fieldwork as a contributing, if not sole factor, behind a lack of consensus within the trade union with regards members' negative feelings towards collectivity and solidarity and the subsequent difficulty in mobilising members as this international officer (Branch E P1) proclaimed:

> "There are people who have just cut it [trade union collectivism] off and I don't blame them either because at the end of the day you have your own life to lead. But I think I don't know how they do it and it just feels to me as though this sort of 'I'm alright Jack' mentality that came about particularly with the Thatcher years is...well it hasn't gone away".

Within this extract, the international officer refers to the phrase 'I'm alright Jack' taken from the film of the same name, a brilliant satire on both the class struggle and industrial relations in 1950s Britain. In time the phrase has come readily associated with notions of individualism, with it here referred to as becoming increasingly common during the years of Thatcher's government and associated neoliberal policies and the fragmentation of society. Notions of individualism were evident during discussions at each focus group.

6.3.1 **"Trade union membership? It's just an insurance policy"**

Branch D focus group

"It's an insurance policy just in case" (P1)

"Yeah, and that is a valid reason for joining a trade union, just as any other is and I think that the challenge is that once the umbrella isn't needed any more, to make sure that people still stay" (P3)

The notion of 'insurance' was noted on a number of occasions across each of the focus groups and appeared to be one of the strongest motivating factors for trade union membership. The second participant (P3) appears to defend this reason for membership, but at the same time appears to recognise 'floating' membership (individuals who become members when they require trade union services and leave when employment is secure again), as recognised here: 'a lot of people tend to join when things aren't going well for them. That's when people want to become a member' (P3). P3 quoted above identifies whether membership can be maintained once the member's problem has been dealt with – a query also raised by Stirling (2009). Another focus group recognised this issue:

Branch N focus group

"I'd say the majority of members don't care. They're only bothered does their wage go up every year, have they still got a job..." (P2)

"I would say members don't care about it until they're told about it. People don't think about things unless people actually tell you. I think people do care" (P5)

Here we see the first quote encapsulates the majority view from activists who participated within this research with regards lay members. However the second participant suggests that by raising awareness of trade union conduct, lay members may be interested and may care, suggesting that some may perhaps be motivated to become involved (see supporting theory during discussions on the role of emotions in Chapter 4). Members' lack of awareness on labour internationalism made me query ideas alluding to issues of transparency and democracy, with ethos of trade unionism being member-led: "if members are not aware of their trade union's activity then could this be deemed undemocratic in nature?" (Research diary extract, 15/01/09).

6.3.2   Trade union role beyond the workplace?

For the majority of lay members who participated, at no point was the trade union's role beyond the workplace considered. Although some did appear to understand the role goes beyond this:

Branch G focus group

"The other stuff just comes secondary to that although I guess they are important"   (P4)

"Thing is issues in one area have an impact upon somewhere else. I think raising issues on things is also the role of the union" (P5)

It was widely recognised by lay members that the primary role of a union is to represent its members – however the last two quotes hint at an understanding and acceptance by these two participants that UNISON may act in other areas. In stating that 'the other stuff just comes secondary' (Branch G, P4) but acknowledging its importance, this participant argues that there is a wider role for UNISON as long as its 'core' role is given priority i.e. representing members in the workplace as identified over previous pages. Furthermore the last quote identifies 'issues in one area have an impact somewhere else' (Branch G, P5) suggesting that events occurring internationally can effect UNISON members and providing an acknowledgement of the importance of the world outside the workplace and UK borders. This participant also cites raising awareness as the role of a union but does not extend upon this as to what types of issues are of importance or what level of involvement UNISON should employ. From this, it is apparent that many recognise that the workplace and local community are inextricably linked to global forces and thus trade unions have a role to play within this. For the majority of lay members, there appeared to be difficulty in explaining just how this occurred in practice.

6.4   Defining Internationalism

As evident in the previous section, the majority of lay members within this research perceive the trade union role as being workplace based, representing members in negotiations with the employer. Identifying this does not necessarily mean that lay

members do not think or act internationally however. Moreover, we should not automatically interpret their portrayal of trade union membership as an individual based service as an indication that they are self interested and entirely individualistic resulting in a negative understanding of internationalism. Instead, we see that towards the end of the previous section participants appear to begin to hint at an understanding of the importance of relations between their trade union and internationalism, or at least the world outside their workplace.

At the time of interviews, globally we were experiencing what many deemed an unprecedented period of great economic and political uncertainty, a period that for many participants served to further illuminate the inextricable link between local and international processes and thus the necessity for trade union internationalism. It was from this positioning that an interesting dichotomy appeared between lay members and activists: for activists, the necessity for trade union internationalism during such uncertain times was stressed; whereas lay members produced expressions of isolation and protectionism, re-emphasising trade unions' role in supporting the individual. A branch activist explained (Branch E P2):

> "I mean this bank crisis that's going on, it shows we're all interlinked and we've got to know what our brothers and sisters are doing elsewhere. People in this country used to think we stood alone, we don't. I feel as though if America gets the flu today, we cough tomorrow.
>
> I think we've got a lot to give, we've got a lot of experiences to give to help those who haven't achieved as much as us, and we should be out there helping as well as gaining information. You know it's a two way street, we've got a lot to give and a lot to receive, I think. We all want the best of everything, so if somebody elsewhere has achieved something, I think it's great that we should know and we should stand together and none of us stand alone, none of us stand alone".

The activist produces explicit notions of internationalism here referring to collectivism and both affective and instrumental internationalism. International links are seen as being both political and economic intertwined with local issues as evident here:

"Do you think global issues affect your branch?"

"My opinion would be an overwhelming yes but I come from the perspective that global issues affect us all, all of the time. I think that it is naïve to think that global and local issues do are not directly linked and that issues at the macro level do not have an impact at the micro level" (Branch H P1)

Whereas on discussing international links a focus group discussion revealed:

Branch G focus group

"Well it depends on the economy doesn't it? If you've got full employment it doesn't matter" (P5)

"Right now we've got to start looking at fighting battles on our ground before we go to help other people, you know, because we've got a lot of battles lining up" (P4)

As previously stated, we see here two very different standpoints in response to the economic climate and what this means for internationalist perspectives – the first, from an activist is affective in nature referring to collectivism using solidaristic terminologies such as 'brothers and sisters' and identifying our interdependencies; a link we should exploit for mutual benefit. Interestingly, lay members produce a very different perspective on this – responses were individualistic with suggestions of nationalism and

171

isolationism with internationalism not depicted as an opportunity for mutual exchange, rather as their union 'helping others' in a 'one-way' form of charity.

Focus groups did however appear to recognise the benefits of instrumental internationalism but unlike activists were unable to place it into any real, definite understanding of how it could be conducted in daily practice:

Focus group N

"Different groups meet together in the European Parliament and so do employers and companies and whatever so why shouldn't unions meet up and make links across Europe?" (P4)

Here internationalism is depicted as being a European process – this assumption was commonplace. Furthermore, it was often perceived as trade unions attempting to influence political policy as individual organisations; as opposed to bypassing these supranational structures and acting alongside each other in trade union alliances. This may be representative of how many perceive the power and positioning of trade unions – merely attempting to lobby parliaments for change as opposed to acting independently and effectively. The following discussion however, does suggest that some lay members recognised that trade unions do have potential to influence and need to find a way to do so to counter employer networked, perhaps internationalism therefore could be an effective revitalisation tool in their perspective:

"I do understand the need for it, for trade unions to react to globalisation and big businesses..." (P5)

"You're saying that businesses are big and multinational, why can't UNISON, unions be big and multinational? And I just think well are there many nice multinationals that do anything good for the rest of us?" (P2)

"Well I appreciate that but that's almost cutting your nose off to spite your face. What we've got to be is realists and recognise the world that we live and work in and it is becoming more increasingly international. I think if we were just to say well because multinationals are big and horrible we shouldn't become like that...but I don't think we should be necessarily too big but we need to find some way of working out what we do about it" (P4)

The discussion identified concerns many participants referred to – that by working with other unions, UNISON would become 'too big', perhaps detached from its branches and members (an issue explored in depth by Chaison, 1980). Interestingly, such concerns were expressed during a period in which we witnessed the merger of two trade unions to form UNITE and subsequent discussions within the labour movement and the media surrounding the problems this raised as a consequence with regards leadership and strategic planning. Conducted effectively however, it was apparent that lay members recognised this could be a successful revitalisation tool.

On introducing internationalism to discussion during focus groups with lay members it became apparent, as highlighted above, that abstract interpretations of its practice and motivations were produced. The majority were unaware it is conducted and automatically attached negative connotations without expressing any real understanding

of its motivations, yet the idea that their trade union would be unnecessarily assisting an imaginary other was commonplace:

Branch D focus group

"What do you think about trade union international activity?"

"Are we paying for that?" (P6)

"Not to sound horrible or anything but if they pay their contribution to their union, sounds awful doesn't it? I pay my taxes to...I pay my taxes to help us out (P5)

"[mutters inaudible]...illegal immigrants to have everything provided for them. So are we paying this union to work for other people in another union who are not paying [subs]" (P6)

"Can we go?" [Referring to international delegations] (P2)

"I know nothing about the international aspect of it" (P1)

"Well I think we've got enough problems over here. I want my money to stay in our country. It sounds like my money's paying for someone to go over there and do it in someone else's country. My £9 stays here" (P6)

The reactions here provide a number of interesting discussion points: firstly the idea that 'we' are paying for something suggests that any monies and/or resources pertained from membership subscriptions are being misspent, particularly as the participant asks if the other participants are annoyed by this conduct. The language employed is very powerful - 'we', 'they', 'I' are used throughout producing strong identifications with the union or some form of collective; and the imaginary 'other' who is assumed to be

benefitting from this international activity. The second participant within the excerpt

draws out a comparison with taxes, somehow producing an understanding of making a

contribution to a system (through union membership) that should be redistributed

within that system. There also exists a negative understanding of the trade union

'working *for* other people' reverting to notions of a form of one-way solidarity

(Waterman, 1998 amongst others). This is accentuated by the final quote 'we've got

enough problems over here', again expressing ideas of boundaries/territory; 'us' and

'them'; but most significantly suggesting that international activity is based upon

monies being spent elsewhere to solve a 'problem', a problem that will be resolved by

'someone' (presumably reference to a trade union official here) travelling to another

country. In a similar vein, participant 2 queries "can we go?!" which was met with

laughter from the other participants – from this one could sense that international

activity was seen as an opportunity for holiday. Given this, in an attempt to ground

participants' understandings of international activity, focus groups were asked if they

could discuss the different ways in which they perceived UNISON to act internationally

and whether it could be depicted as positive action:

Branch D focus group

"I think it's good if it's helping the international community develop a
fair society and working conditions for other countries" (P2)

"Have we not got a government for that though?" (P5)

It was recognised that trade unions can promote social justice through trade union

issues e.g. working conditions, but there was difficulty in attempts to get lay members

to express just what phrases such as this meant in practice i.e. what *exactly* does

UNISON do to achieve social justice? As is evident from the quote, it was rare for

participants to talk explicitly about particular forms of internationalism unless they

were asked directly about these matters. This is not to say that issues of internationalism

were not present within their mindset however, but more that the everyday vocabulary

used to express internationalism was ascribed to various, often abstract, terminology.

Trade union involvement in humanitarian causes and international

development was recognised by lay members. UNISON's involvement in the Make

Poverty History campaign was cited by one participant and received this response:

Branch D focus group

"I saw a UNISON flag at the Drop the Debt concert..." (P6)

"I think everyone's got to get involved in things like that because it
affects everybody everywhere. As regards working conditions it's up to
their government to sort it" (P4)

"Can see why UNISON is doing it. Collectively they have a strong voice.
Famine, climate change etc all these things affect us and in the long run it
affects our working life as well" (P3)

The response to UNISON's involvement in this campaign was slightly more positive.

Unlike previous discussions, here the campaign was tangible for the participants and

they appeared to have an understanding of the motives behind the campaign. The most

positive participants were in the younger age band within the group – a number of

activists claimed that UNISON's involvement in Make Poverty History, given that it

was heavily promoted through music and celebrities really engaged young members'

interests. The most intriguing factor here was that participants readily identified that poverty, famine and climate change as issues that affect 'everybody' and so must be dealt with collectively. Why then, does the first participant claim that working conditions should be dealt with by 'their' government? Those within the trade union movement promoting internationalism would no doubt argue here that working conditions, just like poverty, famine and climate change, are an international issue – so why does the lay member here see it differently? Perhaps tensions exist here in that the participant identifies the maintenance or improvement of terms and conditions as the role of the state or the employer; or recognises that differing levels in working conditions produce potential competition between workers across borders; or merely sees working conditions as being simply workplace bound and thus not an issue that could be acted upon collectively? There was recognition that working as a collective on a campaign such as this produced a 'strong voice'. This was deemed the case for a coalition working together to eradicate poverty, but would participants' views be equally positive on discussions surrounding trade union collective action?

6.4.1   Instrumental internationalism: we all have something to gain

Participants from one focus group readily identified with the benefits of collective action via trade union alliances. Notably, this focus group was established with members from a private sector branch with a globally based employer and counterparts predominantly based in Germany. Their discussion illuminates their

association as employees with the employer and its global positioning, as opposed to being members of a trade union and how UNISON could use this positioning to its advantage. However, one participant does recognise that by working together UNISON and the counterpart trade union can improve working conditions here in the UK, thus asserting ideas of instrumentalism:

Group D focus group

"There's a lot of working practices in Germany that are better than ours. Yeh talking about [our company] with others in Germany, that's a good thing" (P4)

"We have this [company] magazine – 'World One' and in the last one there was a profile of UK and Germany workers. They [German workers] have better working hours. If union over there has introduced things making their life better and UNISON is getting involved with them it can only improve things here can't it?" (P2)

"It's quite interesting that because when we discussed information exchange with Cuba and Palestine you seemed a little negative but now with Germany you appear more positive?"

"But the difference here is it's our union dealing with their union on a level pegging and we all have something to gain" (P6)

"It's not like we are giving something for free" (P5)

"If we're going somewhere and they've got a union and they are working on a union to union basis then yeh I think it's a good idea. An information exchange is good. But who's going out there to do it?" (P2)

"Cuba is seen as a holiday destination, Germany isn't. That's why people wouldn't be happy. And we've got a [states name of employer] in Germany, we haven't in Cuba" (P1)

The discussion also identifies a number of issues. Notably, members' perceptions on different countries – it is argued that we have something to gain from working with Germany, a European, Western, capitalist nation; whereas with Cuba and Palestine relations would be based upon 'giving something for free'. For these lay members, Cuba is merely seen as a holiday destination from which trade unionists in the UK have nothing to gain – although pointedly, it is identified that their employer does not have a base in Cuba, thus suggesting that information exchange is only beneficial if it is between trade unionists with members working for common employers. Throughout interviews and focus groups, Cuba was exemplified for two opposing reasons – the first, as above, a holiday destination used for 'jollies' for UNISON full time officials; secondly by activists to epitomise an alternative to the capitalist system, offering inspiration of what can be achieved against all elements as identified by this branch activist (Branch H P1):

> "But you know anybody flicking through the paper sees Kevin Coyne's saying in The Sun article you know[paraphrases recent newspaper article], "it's outrageous, we're in the middle of a recession and Derek's [Derek Simpson, Joint General Secretary of UNITE] swanning off to a beach in Cuba". And some members, if they heard that we were out there would say you know, "oh it's great isn't it, they can go out there and spend our money...

> I mean we're often talking to the CGT in France who have got members working in companies where we have members, so even a trip to Paris to go and meet with the CGT, some people would say "well that's outrageous that my subs are going to..." But you know their subs go towards paying for meetings in Preston, in Liverpool, in London. You have to go where you have to go and I think you have to be able to put into context why you go though and what you do".

For this activist, perceptions of geographical distance and of other countries often act to produce negative assumptions with regards labour internationalism. The need is to raise awareness about why such exchanges are occurring and what the motivations are, as this discussion between a Regional Organiser (RO) and two activists from Branch C regarding the their private, European employer:

"I think the point is in this country we see the rough end of [employer] and they've got a bit of a playground as far as the legislation's concerned. But to sit and talk to how they're managed by working people in Germany where it's a different picture, or you know internationalism [referring to international officers] "why don't we look up the companies who have large subsidiary bases in America" and "how they do business over there" really is very enlightening. Things like Cuba, I mean there are certain relevancies, there is the health service, but also the literacy rate in Cuba, terrific, absolutely terrific and renowned for their education..." (RO 1)

"Are they?" (P1)

"Absolutely" (RO 1)

"I would have thought the opposite" (P2)

"Do you know what, when I said before that there's nothing that we can gain from Cuba I got totally the wrong end of the stick there didn't I?" (P1)

"Well they've got one of the highest literacy rates in the world for a start and they've also got one of the lowest infant mortality rates...Here's a story I learnt from a people who have succeeded despite the thought of one of the biggest nations in the world being round their neck and they've had to do it in isolation. How do they do that? And perhaps closer to home you know listening to the way things have developed in Europe I think there's a lot can be learnt. Sometimes we just need someone to show us what we can learn and who can show us it" (RO 1)

From this we identify assumptions attached to perceptions of different countries and peoples worldwide and the implications of this for international activity. Such assumptions were commonplace during discussions, however most often discussions with activists recognised that all countries can learn from each other through two way information exchange:

Branch N focus group

"We do similar things with other local authorities within environmental health and within other departments as well, you always share information, I've got this problem with this, how have you tackled it? I'm sure if you could do that on a union perspective that's got to be a good thing" (P4)

"Yes I think personally any of these partnerships you've got to put it into perspective what, if you like your opposition are doing. So you know for a fact that you know like inside this country that employers are targeting and now we're facing this cross Europe, Pan European employers and they're going to be learning their tricks if you like, without wanting to be negative about it, they'll be wanting to learn what they can get away with from other countries. So if they're talking, I think we need to be talking as representatives of workers because we can learn tricks as well sort of thing" (P6)

Each of these extracts recognise similar issues – the first identifies that effective two way exchanges of information based upon mutual beneficence occurs on a daily basis within the workplace. The second quote progresses this idea further through recognition that by working as a collective a common goal can be pursued and/or a common opposition identified. From this positioning, a collective opposition can be produced to counter employers who are, as the participant states 'talking to each other, to learn what they [the employer] can get away with', perhaps this may be a form of instrumental internationalism that could be extended across borders through labour internationalism.

6.5   The union ideal: activists' understandings of labour internationalism

During interviews, it became evident that activists appeared to formulate a particular understanding of trade unionism – its motivations, its positioning, in sum what they perceive to be its raison d'être. Here the participant epitomises this understanding drawn out from a discussion on the lack of mobilisation of grassroots members:

> "Well there's a certain amount of unwillingness to go the extra mile for what you believe in. And I think sometimes in union activity, sometimes you have to do things that are not immediately obvious or make sense but you know you have to do, sometimes you have to look at something, look at some problem or issue not just in a narrow focus but broadly and a lot of people aren't prepared to do that because I think they don't fully believe in the union, in the *union ideal*.
>
> Unfortunately there's a great amount of individuality. I think some people they think about things on a very individual basis. "I'm going down to this meeting, I'm going to tell them what I think and this is right". But they may be right in their specific view at that moment in that area, but the union is a big thing, even a branch area, the union is a big thing and there's other considerations that we have to accommodate"

> *"Do you want to explain what you mean by the 'union ideal'?"*

> "It's not just related to the strict boundaries of work, it's an organisation in itself, it has benefits that come with being a member of the union, it has a sort of motive, a force of itself, a community of itself, that's how I see unions"
> (Branch I P3).

The conceptualisation of a 'union ideal' is encapsulated by a number of key phrases within this extract: 'go the extra mile'; 'what you believe in'; 'the union is a big thing',

each of which indicate a sense of being engaged and active, as well as suggesting a form of innate understanding of trade unionism that goes beyond individualistic needs to the needs of the collective – 'a community of itself', beyond the branch and 'not 'just' related to the strict boundaries of work', epitomising an ideological commitment to trade unionism, a commitment that extends beyond the workplace, of affective solidarity. This sense of commitment was observed with all activists, but was not automatically recognisable during focus group discussions consisting of lay members. The following extract also epitomises this notion of a union ideal. The participant talks of tradition, a historical sense of solidarity - the idea that as workers we are a collective force. The participant attempts to draw a line of connection through affective ties:

> "I mean for me it's solidarity, it's not charity, it's not given out of pity. It's something that you know as workers it's a common agenda, it's something that you share with each other and I think it's done through those basic principles of solidarity that are the essence of trade unionism, whether that's in a local workplace or across the globe, those principles of solidarity are ultimately what has, not only driven trade unionists, but has driven people you know?
>
> I think it's what motivated people to go to Spain in '36, I think it's what motivated people for all sorts of reasons throughout the centuries, but certainly from a trade union perspective, when other trade unionists are in struggle or need you to stand alongside them, then I think knowing that you are part of something that isn't just confined to a local area is a source of strength, and I think it's been something that trade unionists have always done."
> (Branch H P1)

6.5.1   Affective solidarity – international boundaries are irrelevant

The previous extract encapsulates activists' interpretations of labour internationalism. Many recognise it in both its affective and instrumental forms and depict it as a mere extension of the 'union ideal'. As we saw earlier, lay members did not always readily identify with internationalism as their understandings of trade unionism is that a union is based in the workplace, negotiating on the behalf of the individual worker with the employer. The notion of the union ideal appears to illustrate that being an active member of a trade union predetermines feelings of solidarity with others which was apparent during activists' interviews. Their understandings of why they initially joined a trade union enabled the assertion that because of their particular experiences, upbringing and familial background these individuals exhibited an inherent understanding of trade unionism could relate to the notion of a union ideal:

"I joined when we had closed shops so I had to anyway, but it would never have occurred to me not to, my parents – my dad's family worked in the railways by mum's family worked in the shipyards, big, strong union places so I was brought up with the labour movement. It was like you vote Labour, you join the union and you know you stand up and be counted when you have to be. So it just never occurred to me to do anything else" (Branch N P7)

"It's like I didn't learn about the union from just popping into the Town Hall when I first got my job, I learnt about it because my granddad was a miner and my dad worked in BAE Systems when they went on strike, that's why I knew about the unions" (Branch N P4)

"On day one I immediately signed up because I knew that that's what you *should do* [my emphasis added] anyway. So that's, that was thirty years ago when that sort of thing was prevalent" (Branch O P2)

Within each of these individual's accounts, trade union membership is depicted as 'normal' practice, learned as part of a political socialisation process within the family home and local community i.e. 'it was the done thing', 'my parents were members'. Each reflects upon a high level of trade union consciousness during their upbringing because of this. It is evident from the first and final quotes above that individuals recognised a change in thinking with regards trade unionism – what had once seen completely natural to them, joining a trade union, was not so today for others 'that was thirty years ago when that sort of thing was prevalent'. I found that many activists reflected upon the past often with nostalgia as if to express their disappointment with the changes they have witnessed over the past few decades since they became members:

> "When I was at school we did the history of the labour movement, you did the industrial revolutions. You go out there and say to a lot of kids "I work for a trade union" and they'll say "well what's that?" And they just don't know what a union is. I think as unions, we should be getting into schools and telling kids what we're about. It's not only about the 60s and you know like the three day week and everybody out.
>
> We're already starting to see the fruition of what they're not teaching children because young people are starting work now and you approach them and say "I'm from the union and I'd like to talk to you". A lot of them just haven't got a clue what the union is, who you are, what you do, why you're there. Thing is we've already missed a generation.
>
> But young people are more interested in world issues aren't they? I mean some schools do projects like Make Poverty History, Kick Racism out of Football and things like global warming so the union could say these are the types of things we're also interested in. Schools do projects about social issues so the union could tie into that. "This is what we do as well, so when you're working you get involved in this type of thing by joining us""
> (Branch B P3)

Many of the frustrations of trade union activists identified during discussions are encapsulated within this extract – first it is identified how the labour movement was once recognised as relevant within education and was seen as a component of the

185

functioning of society, with a strong role within history. As a mother of two children, this activist told me of her concerns that within the space of just one generation, young people entering the world of work have no understanding of trade unions. The labour movement, she believes, is no longer depicted as having a major stronghold within society or part of the fabric of both UK history and modern daily lives as it once was. This alone provides us with further insight into reasons behind lay members' perception of the purpose of trade unions as referred to earlier.

The previous activist stated "it's not only about the 60s and you know like the three day week and everybody out", as if to mimic the voices of those who attach negative associations to this era in an attempt to argue that trade unions are still relevant today. Trade unions have progressed since then and are often seen to be attempting to discard previous militant tendencies with which they are often negatively associated. There appears to be real concern in the fact that they have "missed a generation", suggesting that there could be a bleak outlook for trade unions unless workers are made aware of trade unions. We see towards the end of the extract that the participant recognises that young people are interested in international issues such as Make Poverty History, thereby attempting to show that there is potential for trade unions to engage with young people through internationalism – a possible recruitment tool, or opportunity to mobilise current members. This was an issue I discussed with a number of activists with one response in particular encapsulating their responses (Branch E P4):

"So do you think that internationalism could act as a recruitment tool and also kind of re-motivate those who are currently activists?"

"Well you know it's a difficult thing isn't it? You know we do this thing where if you're a member of UNISON you can get your Vauxhall Astra cheaper or something, well that's great, but we need to try and get people more of an attitude, you know more of an attitude that the union can help you but also you know we're involved in things, we give money to things...but it's still a person driven thing I find. You know I would really like the union or UNISON or groups like that to be more part of our fabric of what we do.

You know it always impresses me about what I read in the past or now where you see, I mean in Europe, particularly you know the union is involved in more aspects of your life

I think people have got to take responsibility. I think this is what I think about unionism and getting people more involved in great organisations for doing good, which unions are well placed so many people are members of trade unions and if we can move that idea outside work as well, that would be great, here's hoping perhaps"

This activist re-emphasises the notion of trade unions being a component of the fabric of society, inbuilt into other aspects of peoples' lives beyond that of the workplace, linking back into earlier discussions regarding the union ideal. He argues that this is commonplace in Europe and infers that companies and trade unions work in conjunction with one another, perhaps promoting adherence to partnership working. In indicating that 'people have got to take responsibility', this activist pursues a strategy whereupon individuals become more active within socially progressive organisations such as trade unions for the good of the collective – something that can be pursued no doubt, on an international basis.

Unlike lay members, for activists, there was no distinction between the trade union daily tasks and international activities, instead the core role is campaigning for

equality, social justice and promoting workers' rights – issues that activists argued are not limited by geographical boundaries:

"What does trade union international activity mean to you?"

"International trade union activity to me is the same as undertaking 'usual' trade union duties. I strongly believe that international boundaries are irrelevant when campaigning for equality, social justice and to protect the rights of working people, their families and their communities" (Branch H P2)

This was also supported by the following activist in suggesting that as well as eradicating any supposed boundaries between geographical boundaries i.e. workplace, community, international it should be promoted that trade unions act as a collective force, a comment made in stark contrast to discussions earlier in this chapter whereupon lay members argued that the only individuals to benefit from the trade union should be members within the workplace. Instead it was argued: 'I think what unions should be doing is you know maintaining a link with local community, it's not 'we' and 'they', it's all 'we''. A sense of collectivity also strongly supported by another activist who claimed: 'You cannot be a union man [sic] no matter how you try unless you think in terms of 'we' and not in terms of 'I''. For activists, this understanding was commonplace:

"I think if you look around it's internationalism isn't it? People from different backgrounds working together. What efforts are being made to learn from each other's culture? I think this is what we need to develop, we need to understand each other, the values they have, the background they have and how they can contribute. And if you look around there are many people from all backgrounds and if we can create the internationalism amongst ourselves, I think it would be very good for bringing other people in"

(Branch I P2)

Here, the participant disputes understandings of internationalism being beyond UK borders, presenting an understanding of the wealth of international diversity and culture that exists within our own communities. Here 'internationalism' is depicted as the people around us – their upbringing, ethnicity, culture, experiences from which we can all learn. The participant identifies internationalism as something that can be produced 'amongst ourselves', as if to suggest it is a mindset, an understanding between peoples within the same workplace and community a claim supported by Stirling (2009). Achieving this, it is claimed, is an opportunity for 'bringing other people in' to the trade union as new members, or perhaps even, to this way of thinking of internationalism and the activists' union ideal.

For all branch activists, the union role within the local community was integral, particularly as it often makes the link between the workplace, local community and international sphere more explicit, as highlighted during discussions on a recent natural disaster and the actions of this activist's branch (Branch G P3):

"One aspect is humanitarian things like the Tsunami – I feel like we should get involved with helping with things like that. I'm very proud to think my union was involved in the aid to the Tsunami. Locally we worked with the Kashmir community here; many had relatives in that part of the world. Those people are our members so you show your caring attitude"

"Do you think that's important, working with the local community?"

Well members aren't just workers are they? They have a life outside of work"

On discussing trade unions' role outside of the workplace, this participant readily identifies what may be perceived as international activity and states how he is proud to be part of an organisation that is involved in humanitarian aid, particularly as local members, workers and residents were able to identify that their union was assisting an area within which they had relatives. For this participant it is important to show that the union has a 'caring attitude', making associations with ideas of affective solidarity, heightened by the final quote referring to members beyond their identity as workers, perhaps suggesting that international ties can be drawn between individuals beyond that of their employment role, re-emphasising theoretical discussions during Chapter 4 regarding individuals being embedded within various structures.

6.6   Expressing labour internationalism: workers of the world unite?

Throughout fieldwork I found that there was a notable absence of what could be deemed classical interpretations associated with international trade unionism such as the phrase 'workers of the world unite'. Such terminology was not expressed by lay members, nor was it produced by activists, apart from two. The first of which below, explained to me during personal discussion that his political expression finds its outlet through his academic study (the participant was studying for a Masters Degree) and that this interview was an opportunity to express his ideas out loud as this opportunity is not found elsewhere. This is interesting in that on this understanding, such political terminology is not commonplace within activist discourse on internationalism.

Therefore, we must ask, what phraseology is used to describe internationalism on a daily basis? How is it discussed, and how is it perceived and expressed through language? For this participant, it is political and ideological:

> "I suppose it's that old expression isn't it, "the only thing necessary for evil is for good men to do nothing". I think that applies doesn't it? You've got to be actively seeking to you know do the right thing haven't you? I mean that's the Trotskyst idea as well isn't it, a permanent revolution and keep going and all that, a lot of these left notions scare your average members too. They might be thinking, you know they want to make sure they get a wage increase and everything, but I suppose a lot of your political, your active members are people who secretly perhaps are very hard line lefties who see it as a vehicle to disseminate ideas and you know increase activity and all this.
>
> You've got to give a sense of constant. If you think internationally the fact that people are starving, that is constant. If you have that awareness that is constant motivation isn't it really? If you've found a way of sort of I don't know bringing it all alive to people, international implications of what's happening"
> (Branch K P3)

For this individual, phrases such as 'constant' and 'permanent revolution' encapsulate the level of activeness and engagement with trade unionism that he sees as necessary from members. He readily links international development with international worker issues. Reference to Trotsky is posed as something not automatically associated with contemporary international trade unionism instead interpretations of internationalism were mainly put into what may be termed 'lay language', as opposed to political frameworks. All activists identified that workers have commonalities and should work together as a collective across space, yet only one recited Marx and even here it appeared to be said in a mocking tone, as if to imply such language is old fashioned:

191

"It's a link between people of a like minded nature that can obviously help and share each other to achieve a, the same aim, you know which is to improve the terms and conditions of working class people across the world. And the "workers of the world unite! Nothing to lose" etc" [laughs] (Branch D P1)

6.6.1   "It's a class issue..."

As we saw earlier during the theoretical chapters, over recent decades we have witnessed a fragmentation in working class ideology, with shifts in union member attitudes from collective orientation towards individualism (Madsen, 1996). Castree et al., (2003) argued that the basis for international solidarity is common issues, not common identities. However, to the extent that local interests align with those of workers elsewhere, then a national or even international class politics is possible. However, under conditions of intensified spatial competition where workers are rendered increasingly insecure, class politics may evaporate as local interests take precedence. Furthermore, Harvey (1993) claimed that progressive politics weakened any basis for an internationalist class based politics to occur (discussed in more detail during Chapter 3). I discussed this with activists and responses varied, some depicted class politics as the only motivation behind internationalism:

"It's about acting in solidarity...it's a class issue. It's all about class and making connections with other workers" (Branch M P2)

In the previous chapter it was evident that, unlike activists, lay members do not always associate with class politics. Workplace solidarity was depicted as difficult to mobilise

locally let alone internationally according to some, particularly surrounding tensions as to the boundaries of class:

> "I was out on strike predominantly for the majority of the low paid within our place, most are GNB members, the old terminology again, the manual workers from the works department. I was out there, I know they do a difficult job, I now it's hard work in all weathers, no doubt about that, they get a pittance, they get less holidays all the rest of it, I was out trying to get their wages increased, they all went in! [laughs]
>
> So I was on a picket line taking abuse, strong abuse, very strong abuse from GNB members, GNB had voted nationally to accept the pay offer you see, not to strike. So all my principles there were getting hammered on that day. Because I was, I'm fortunate, I've got a good job, very lucky, well paid, I can do all the things in life I want to do, very fortunate, I thought I was there fighting for the low paid, and all I got was absolute torrents of abuse. And it wasn't nasty, it was vitriolic! It was nasty! Very intimidating"
>
> (Branch L P1)

This participant explains how he was motivated to act according to principles of class solidarity. However he appears to detach himself from the low paid workers he is picketing on behalf of, by outlining how their employment differs from his own and by the suggestion of a privileged position in comparison. In doing so, he problematises the class identity – does he identify himself as working class? In a privileged position within the working class in comparison to these other workers? Or as middle class because of his employment and fortunate circumstances? He appears to expect some form of group solidarity from those he is acting on behalf of and is shocked by the response he receives. Evidently, collective identities can be fraught, particularly those drawn upon class and even choices in trade union membership – perhaps it was thought that cross union campaigning was inappropriate according to the needs and context of that particular dispute. Therefore, it can be ascertained that collective identities may not be recognised, let alone mobilised within the same workplace, which if correct does not

bode well for international trade union activity. In stark contrast is the case of the Liverpool docks dispute of the mid 1990s – an example used on many occasions by participants to epitomise collectivity on the basis of worker identity and issue based connections. For those involved, the connection was very apparent, that of the increasing causalisation and deregulation of dock work – issues all dock workers could relate to and act upon as a collective:

> "If you think lines on maps they're a manmade fabrication, we're all living and breathing and all that. It's immaterial, especially with internet and telephone and all that, I mean if somebody's doing the same job as you and they live in other countries, you've got every cause to feel that that's a comrade of yours like. And you think about what's happened in Liverpool with the dockers and all that, a lot of people internationally came out in support of the Liverpool dockers, and that was really refreshing to see that"
>
> (Branch K P3)

For this participant collective identities are apparent – someone doing the same job as you is a comrade, it could be queried whether this expands to an idea of working class collectivity regardless of employment similarities. He argues that geography is immaterial now that we have the technological resources available to break down barriers of communication across mass geographical spaces as identified by new labour internationalism (Waterman, 1998) thus increasing possibilities for effective mobilisation. Activists often articulated labour internationalism with the same understanding, used in both of these extracts. However they used different phrases to express their perceptions of global collectivity and asserted affectual ties referring to workers as part of a global family:

"Well I think really in a trade union it's like being part of a family, I know that sounds a bit...It's like being part of a family, but the family's far bigger than just your trade union and it's far bigger than this country, it's about being a human being isn't it?! It's just about being a human being and caring about what happens to your fellow human being. It's about society, not just a little society, but the bigger society and bigger society and bigger society"

(Branch E P1)

Many outlined the impact of improved technologies and communications as resulting in a compression of geographical distance. Ideas of being interlinked were again emphasised in relation to expressions of humanitarianism and affective concerns, rather than economic and instrumental ties. Similar sentiments are produced here, however an attempt is made to move away from negative understandings of charitable work and trade union colonialism. See how the activist links issues of global concern i.e. global poverty and climate change with politico-economic decisions, in particular foreign policy and matters of employment perhaps suggesting that most global issues can in some way be linked back to issues of employment and thus the international role for trade unions:

"I think perhaps you should explain it in terms of a global village, because we're all on the internet now, Australia and Malaysia and Russia are not really so very far away and we need to have that wider perspective, because all our actions are linked to other people's lives, and we can't ignore the major concern of our time which is global poverty. I think that's linked to climate change as well, the fact that so many countries don't have enough water to grow their crops and that a lot of money is being spent on the wrong things, we're wasting billions of £s and $s on wars which aren't getting us anywhere. But because people have jobs that are bound up with arms production it's not something that you can turn around overnight"

(Branch M P1)

It became apparent during the course of interviews that many activists appeared to be cautious in attempts to avoid expressing labour internationalism as a form of trade

union imperialism. I noted during a number of interviews that activists were very wary in their wording so not to present their union in a superior fashion to other trade unions elsewhere in the world. Some were explicit in their distaste for this form of expression:

> "There's a phrase from South African trade unionists something like 'if you've come to share in our struggle that's fine, but don't sort of patronise us'. I'm paraphrasing but..."

She went on to emphasise that as a collective we are responsible for each other:

> "And if you have any section of your population which is oppressed then there is an element where you are as well, even if you're not personally..."
>
> (Branch M P2)

Others produced notions of guilt and a sense of the responsibilities remaining as a result of British colonialism. This following participant spoke of growing up in an era of British colonialism, that during her school years she felt a sense of pride when glancing over the 'pink map of British colonial power', now she explained, in hindsight she felt nothing but shame:

> "I feel that as a former colonial we have a huge responsibility for the way the continent is now [Africa] and that it's a very fertile area and they should be able to feed themselves easily and able to export and they're still struggling to run things properly. So I feel that we haven't left them in the best possible state that we could have done. I think, I think our previous history has been exploitative and I'm ashamed of that"
>
> (Branch M P1)

We can see from these last few participants how internationalism can be interpreted as a responsibility for actions in the past; for foreign policy decisions made by Western governments seemingly based upon capitalist exploitation; and that having made

decisions in the past on behalf of others through such conduct as colonialism, many feel this should not be repeated in any way though trade union internationalism. For some participants a focus for internationalism therefore was Britain's place in the world and its place in history. Such notions were not expressed by lay members. As discussed earlier in the chapter, lay members identified primarily with instrumental forms of internationalism. This for activists was a concern, with many identifying the necessity of outlining internationalism to lay members. For this to be effective, activists argued perceptions of international activity must change.

Within this section we identified the numerous interpretations of trade union internationalism produced by UNISON grassroots members. Predominantly, lay members were unaware of labour internationalism and how it is enacted by their union, however on further discussion it became apparent that they support it when conducted for instrumental purposes. Activists however, readily identified with labour internationalism, perceiving it merely as an extension of the union ideal – an innate understanding of trade unionism and its international positioning.

6.7   Branch Internationalism – member-led or leading members?

I will now turn to look at whether trade union branches reflect their members' international perspectives and/or experiences. It is understood that the purpose of a UNISON branch is to act as a liaison between grassroots members and numerous key stakeholders - regional and national UNISON structures, the employer,

the local community, the state and the wider labour movement. Therefore, my research led me to wonder whether branches adopt a role as a gatekeeper, epitomising grassroots' views on internationalism and carrying them forward to these various stakeholders; or instead acting on behalf of the stakeholders and informing grassroots members what their perspectives 'should' be thus conducting international activity regardless of the grassroots' view (whether this is known or not). More succinctly put – is branch internationalism member-led? I put this question to branch executive members, the responses from whom form the basis of this section.

As previously identified during the methodological chapter of this thesis, fifteen UNISON branches from across the North West region of England participated in this research. From this sample, six branches said they were fully comprehensive with UNISON internationalism as opposed to nine branches that were not confident in expressing how it conducted or its purpose beyond their own branch activity. Interestingly, of the six that were aware each had an individual who was an international activist or someone who held a regional and/or national position within their branch. The positioning of such individuals within a branch appears in this instance to support networking and direct communication – with face-to-face filtering of information an effective way to mobilise internationalism. All but one of the branches who participated conducted internationalism in some way – but the extent and type of practice varied considerably. The one branch who did not conduct internationalism explained this position:

"I've got no chance of being successful in that, I'll be honest, because straight away I'll get shot down for that [mimicking members' voices] "Why are you doing that? We're going through redundancies, people are losing their jobs?" But you know, no disrespect in the great scheme of things it's [internationalism] important, but compared to those losing their jobs, those being deployed, no I'm sorry, we've got to take those into account. We're a member-led organisation; we've got to go with what members want. Unfortunately internationalism is not just on the table at the bottom, it's off it altogether"

He continued:

"I'll be honest, in my view internationalism cannot take precedence over member issues because that is our bread and butter: our members, we'd be voted out straight away if we put international issues ahead of their issues"

(Branch A P1)

The branch officer identifies a number of issues here in his response. He first identifies that he is accountable to his branch members – from this it appears a two way flow of information exists between himself and the branch members who are able to query and express their feelings towards branch decisions which he must then act upon, reinforcing the notion of UNISON being a member-led organisation. It did appear however, that his opinion was based merely upon assumption as he provided no examples of attempting to conduct branch internationalism and any resultant outcomes. However, his viewpoint does appear to reflect the perspectives of some lay members outlined earlier. Interestingly, we see in the second part of the extract how he distinguishes between 'internationalism' and 'member issues'. Furthermore, the so called 'bread and butter' politics of member issues are argued should take precedence over internationalism. For some branches, depending on how they perceive internationalism, this binary between member issues and internationalism was not as clear cut:

"Obviously you know there's the private rights directives, all sorts of things that they [lay members] wouldn't know is European legislation. You know, things on the working time directive and things that we do actually represent them on but we don't tell them, "oh this is because it's a European directive that came on", to them it's just day to day bread and butter stuff"

<div align="right">(Branch D P1)</div>

This branch identifies internationalism and with member issues as interrelated on a daily basis through trade union lobbying and policy formation on regards European Union directives. So I queried the distinction between the two branches: the diverse views on internationalism that exist here are related to the service groups within which the branches are positioned. UNISON represents members across five service groups: health, education, police civilian staff, utilities and local government. It was apparent during analysis that service group characteristic often influenced branch perspectives on, and activities related to, internationalism. The extracts above show a direct comparison of the two most diverse viewpoints that emerged: the first branch that makes the distinction between internationalism and member issues represents police civilian staff, whereas the second branch represents utilities workers.

The police branch based its activities predominantly upon member issues – individual representations, negotiations with the employer as guided by members. Interviews with two participants from this branch and observations at its branch AGM suggested that branch members are politically passive unless it is in relation to individual and collective instrumental grievances. The branch role is therefore perceived by its members as acting on their behalf in a contractual agreement as per D'Art and Turner's (2005) identification of a concentration on member self interest and 'service' unionism. In contrast, the second branch, which depicts internationalism as intertwined with the daily regulation of work, is situated within the utilities service

group for whom every aspect of their work is international, be that based upon the fact

their employer is multinational, that they have counterparts working for the same

employer in other countries, that they are regulated by European legislation, that issues

related to utilities encompass issue of global climate change, or quite simply that the

resources they work with – water, gas etc know no geographical boundaries and are not

necessarily subjected to the manmade borders of nation states. Thus the very nature of

their work is international, as highlighted by another branch secretary recognising the

importance of European policy to such branches:

> "The main thing I'd say is that a lot of the law is made in Europe and a
> lot of the Health and Safety law comes from Europe. The Working Time
> Directive comes from Europe, in terms of public services the ones that
> have been privatised a lot of the companies involved are European, half
> the water in this country is owned by French water companies, things like
> that. So as far as I'm concerned it's a big issue. And a lot of the best
> protections workers have actually come from decisions from the
> European Court, which tends to be more sympathetic than our bloody
> government! The Agency Workers Directive this summer's come from
> Europe that our Government was kicking and screaming against"
> (Branch F P1)

Although branch officers and stewards can frame issues in this way, it does not

necessarily follow that lay branch members readily identify with internationalism.

Therefore, in some cases, it may be that branch activity does not reflect lay members'

views. As we saw in the previous chapter, on talking to lay members from the utilities

branch during their focus group, many at first were unaware of international activity

being performed by their branch, and were not supportive of internationalism in any

case, perceiving it as one way solidarity. On further discussion however, they

recognised the validity of instrumental forms of internationalism that were interrelated

to the daily workings of their branch and employment i.e. lobbying the European

Union, alliances with other trade unions working for the same employer; but they were less supportive of affective activity. This perhaps could be due to the fact that other variations of internationalism were not seen to reflect the work involved within this service group and so appeared more abstract. Lay members were unable to relate to it and/or see anything tangible or relevant arising from its conduct.

Having explored whether certain branches are more akin to internationalism, or particular forms of internationalism, I decided to investigate this further by comparing service group responses. A distinction became evident between branches according to levels of privatisation: those with majority services kept in house were more concerned with local political issues; those highly privatised (i.e. services put out to tender to private companies, members TUPE transferred out, or all members working for a private company) were more likely to recognise instrumental forms of internationalism given that their employment is seen to be increasingly subject to 'global forces'. Interestingly, regardless of privatisation levels, the majority of participants claimed that health, education and local government are more likely to be supportive of affective forms of solidarity. Often, examples were given that identified how such activity was possible due to health being visible and tangible – affective connections could easily be made because of this. The following participant works in local government and argued that it is difficult in her view to make a connection between local government and internationalism, because local government work is often not very visible to the public:

"I mean I totally agree sort of as I say the NHS like some of the things they've done in the North West they've sent ambulances to Cuba, that's something the NHS can get behind, what are we going to send? You know what are we going to do support with? We can't.

I think if you work for the NHS it is more visible and you can tangibly see what you do, if you work for Local Government no one knows what we do and we don't have an impact even though we are there doing all the bits behind the scenes, no one thinks even in this country, Local Government has got any value.

I must admit international issues are mostly...the ones I come across are either in Education or the Health Service. So most of the delegates that I see come from abroad and are nothing to do with Local Government whereas in other sectors that UNISON are involved in you don't find any. All the ones that I have known have either come from the Health Service or Further Education"

(Branch E P1)

Links here are seen to be visible in terms of affective ties, just as links were evident for the utilities branch in terms of instrumental activity. Following the rational actor theorisation identified in Chapter 4 and extracts from discussions with lay members in previous sections it could be assumed that all members would support instrumental internationalism, but that it may prove difficult to promote affective forms of internationalism where it is deemed difficult to produce tangible connections. Instrumental activity is seen to be interrelated with daily working practices unlike issues of affect which is depicted as abstract. Unlike the utilities branch identified earlier, many branches identified that as well as member issues and internationalism being distinct, so too are local issues and internationalism thus reinforcing notions of internationalism as an 'add on' to branch practice as opposed to being intertwined with daily conduct and expressions of the 'union ideal'.

6.7.1   Branch international activity

As briefly mentioned towards the beginning of this chapter, all but one of the fifteen branches interviewed conduct international activity. We saw in the previous chapter how individuals identified that internationalism can be conducted in a variety of ways – I wanted to ascertain whether this was also the case for branches and so asked participants to outline their branch international activity. Often, responses resulted in the reeling off of a list of campaign affiliations and/or monetary donations. I found over time that the same campaigns would be listed, or participants would refer flippantly to action 'Cuba stuff, Palestine, all that type of thing', which suggested that often these campaigns were supported but with no real understanding of where the monetary donation would go and how it would be used. It concerned me that many officers may not be able to defend international activity should lay members query it or want further information:

> "We're affiliated to I suppose the usual suspects! Cuba stuff, Liberty, campaign for Southern Africa, there's quite a few actually"
>
> (Branch O P1)

It is interesting here that the branch officer refers to all the 'usual suspects', perhaps suggesting that branches tend to all support the same campaigns, possibly guided by UNISON national policy, a perception commonplace with interviewees. The research provided evidence to suggest it may often be the case that branches tend to use the UNISON international website as a kind of 'tick list' for international campaigning

advice. This may be for a number of reasons including time/resource constraints and/or reliance upon centralised control on policy decisions.

This brings us to debates surrounding organisational culture and democracy – who makes decisions such as this, who owns a trade union? As previously identified the past few decades have witnessed major debates between the proponents of a centralised, bureaucratic model (Gamson, 1975; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) and those asserting a decentralised, informal model of social movement orientation (Gerlach and Hine, 1970; Waterman and Wills, 2001). For trade unions, such debates address what Voss and Sherman (2000) identify as the long standing association of trade unions with Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy' whereupon organisations supposedly dedicated to democracy and participation are eventually controlled by a small elite group. This was evident during interview discussions on whether internationalism could, and should be, member-led or whether direction was necessary from centralised decision makers at Regional and/or National level. For some, too many decisions were left to whom Michels would refer to as the small elite – branch executive officers instead of lay members. Issues of leadership and organisational decision making procedure are key elements here. Recent years have seen trade union culture move towards the organising model (Heery et al, 2000) with arguments for a strong moral and normative dimension. The model's proponents often represent it as a vibrant, democratic and participatory alternative moving away from hierarchical practices to more horizontal, social movement orientated roots (Brofenbrenner, 1998). However the shift towards the organising model faces challenges, as highlighted in the following discussion with a branch executive member on member-led internationalism:

"It's a difficult one; it raises a whole number of questions. I mean clearly you know we have a number of national affiliations and I would want branches to stick primarily within those that have gone through that. I know we're a lay member-led union and you know the people who vote at branches you know are lay activists. But you know the fact that we are all still part of UNISON. I mean a branch is not an autonomous vehicle that can do whatever it wants and there has to be some recognition of that.

And you know it could be that there are people who would do things that are quite actually dangerous to the union. There could be others who would do things that are more just naïve and this is the difficulty you have because you don't want to stomp on somebody's enthusiasm, you don't want to say no, and it would be impossible to say to somebody "no you can't be involved in that, you've got to be involved in Cuba, or you've got to be involved in Columbia, or you've got to be involved in South Africa"

(Branch H P1)

The aim therefore, is to engage grassroots members and enable them to participate – yet with guidelines so that UNISON as a collective is represented, not merely one individual pursuing their own interest. Although theoretically speaking it is evident that a binary may exist in the bureaucratic versus informal debate, it must be argued that how it is applied as an organisation and/or what should be promoted for effective mobilisation is very much context specific. In this case, evidence suggests that UNISON is a centralised structure (national and regional hubs) with semi-autonomous locals (its branches). It should be argued that the leadership approach is dependent upon the particular international campaign or potential aims.

Although activity quite often appeared to be limited and static in that it was directed at monthly/annual direct debits for particular campaigns, some branches spoke of a more reactionary approach to international activity, such as responses to disaster relief suggesting associations with internationalism as international development and/or charitable aid:

"The branch has historically always been quite good at donating money into causes where requests have come up. Whether it's hurricane relief, or other disaster relief, or just general help to South Africa in particular"

(Branch E P2)

During discussions, activity was automatically associated with campaign affiliations and monetary donations, therefore conversation would often lead to branch financial resources. Just as internationalism is not often seen as a priority in terms of branch positions, this too appears to often be the case in terms of directing financial allocations:

"We used to have a lot of direct debits going out when I became treasurer for the likes of Greenpeace and Amnesty International and all the rest of it, but as funding's got tighter and tighter...and to keep the branch running we've kind of had to reel it in a bit in terms of we don't do the standing orders any more, the direct debits, we get a letter yearly from Greenpeace for example, yeah we subscribe to that and we keep it going"

(Branch L P1)

Again, international activity is ascribed here to monetary donations to causes, something evident throughout interviews and observations at branch executive meetings and AGMs I soon began to recognise that only a few spoke of practical or in-kind forms of assistance. International activity was thus perceived by many as a one-way charitable activity which was also evident during focus groups with lay members. The notion that internationalism is not a branch priority was reinforced throughout such discussions with many arguing that finance must be allocated towards other branch responsibilities before international activity is considered – thus returning to the suggestion that member issues and internationalism are separate entities with the former always taking priority. The availability of resources, in particular finance, was seen throughout

interviews to be integral in the potential success and effectiveness of branches' ability to mobilise and maintain international activity. Limited funds meant that branches experienced difficulty in decision making with regards being able to allocate funding towards internationalism, and when possible in prioritising international activity:

"We're not affiliated to any one particular organisation, you can't affiliate to everybody who writes in, it's an impossibility, so we just look at them on an ad hoc basis...although we support them all you know War on Want or whatever, there's that many different organisations...

...But the message I'm saying is just because we're not affiliated doesn't mean to say that we don't support, we do support and you know if people ask or if people have got an interest in a whole variety of things, we give out money every quarter, we are giving out money you know! But it's got to be manned hasn't it?"

Many of the difficulties branches face are detailed in this quote above – if a branch conducts international activity then how do they prioritise campaigns? Is it more effective to focus upon one or a number of campaigns? How can a branch get its members involved in this decision making process? This branch officer above, amongst many others, stresses the need for a transparent, accountable decision making procedure on international activity.

For many it is a simple procedure:

"How do you decide which ones to affiliate with?"

"We get requests in and decide at branch execs whether to take them up" (Branch F P1)

208

Here it is a decision taken at branch executive meetings. Other branches' decision making procedure is less scrupulous and appears to reflect difficulties in engaging members of the branch executive committee in internationalism:

> *"As a branch how do you decide what international activities to be involved in?"*
>
> "It would be up to me because nobody else would give it a thought. It is only really me, it is really difficult"
>
> (Branch E P1)

Like this international officer above, the following quote reinforces that many of the international officers I spoke to find their role to be solitary in nature. Unless the branch is particularly internationally active many find themselves collating information and making decisions on behalf of the branch without any input from other branch executive officers:

> "I usually decide from the many requests we get which groups we should support. Obviously there is a finite amount of resources so I have had to choose which campaigns are more worthy of our support than others. Most of the groups are endorsed by UNISON nationally. We do sometimes have requests for members to support particular campaigns as a one-off or for a specific reason"
>
> (Branch O P1)

Here the international officer describes how he chooses a campaign according to which is 'more worthy of support'. I queried with him and other international officers how this judgement was made with responses based upon notions of 'gut instinct', personal interest, whether the campaign is contemporary and/or particularly needs help at that point in time i.e. disaster relief. Others, like the international officer above, relied upon

UNISON international guidance on endorsed projects or acted upon branch members' suggestions (which did not appear to happen very often).

Given that the majority of branch international activity appeared based upon monetary donations and that the decision making procedure was often the responsibility of one individual, notions of accountability were queried. All participants justified this process as being put to branch executive meetings for discussion and final decisions. Only one branch provided a clear understanding of the necessity of accountability. Furthermore, the branch executive committee was depicted as representing grassroots members, therefore although not present at the decision making process, it was argued their perspectives were always taken into account:

> "I know it's very important that people they have reports, and it's a transparency and it's your honesty and it's everything in fact that everyone should know. So if they have any objection, if they need any more information then we provide it.
>
> I believe in accountability, I think there should be accountability. People spend money because this money belongs to the organisation, and this money is given in trust, so they could be accountable, so there should be proper accounts".

In attempts to address notions of branch transparency and democracy, branches were asked to describe international communications – again this was outlined as being discussions at branch executive committees. For some, accessing members posed difficulty:

> "I mean we have our offices here but there's a lot more people, there's a lot of young people at leisure centres and there's a lot of, all of the members you know based in the parks and, I think it's about reaching them. And I mean I can't imagine, my dad works on the parks and stuff and I can't imagine any of the members really getting to hear about international issues there, I mean they don't, they only have like one

computer and like they don't have like offices and stuff, they're out and about in their daily job, I don't think they really hear about it, I really do"

<div align="right">(Branch F P2)</div>

Therefore, UNISON structures and communication strategies often produce difficulties for branches to engage members in internationalism. Others found that even when able to discuss within branch meetings, they did not necessary have a captive audience:

"At our union meetings we don't get time really to look through international issues. We often have fourteen or fifteen items on the agenda you know and the one where I'd come in as the international officer is on branch officers' reports and that's kind of quite a long way down, anything to do with strikes or pay and conditions, that kind of thing.

By the time you get to your issue, you know international bit you think God, we're all tired, this situation I'm going to be talking about is like a chronic boil, can I bring it up next time? If you're triaging, you're not going to triage it you know. If you've got a union meeting of two hours and you've got people there who are being disciplined or who have a problem with employment or who are representing somebody who has a problem with their employment or you have a health and safety issue, you have to triage it, that's got to be dealt with straight away.

So it's sad to say isn't it, but the sort of problems of workers in Guatemala or street children in Ethiopia which as I say is sort of chronically there all the time and has been and will be, is not going to come first. I mean the sort of situations that we discuss most in our branch, I can't talk about any other branches or indeed about UNISON generally really, is Stop the War stuff, anything to do with war that we are actively engaged in, because that's our business and I don't even have to bring that up, I mean other people will bring that up"

<div align="right">(Branch M P2)</div>

We see here that members' interests take priority during branch discussions, reinforcing earlier discussions on the 'bread and butter' politics of trade unionism. It is interesting however, that this branch readily discuss the 'Stop the War' campaign and yet this does not appear to be placed within the internationalism agenda. Furthermore, we must query

<div align="right">211</div>

why this campaign is seen as 'our business' by the branch and internationalism is not when other activists readily associated anti-war campaigning with internationalism.

As identified during Chapter 4 RMT stresses that there is the link between collective interests and the pooling of resources. Collective interests are assumed to be relatively unproblematic and exist prior to mobilisation instead of being social constructed by the mobilisation process. However, collective identities are often emergent and evidence from this research suggests that collective grievances and/or interests should not be assumed; nor when they do exist should collective agreement exist upon how to mobilise:

> "We usually get full support for the international activities and have only once had any problem and that was regarding the medical aid for Palestine. One rep felt that the branch were taking sides in the conflict by condemning Israel and supporting the Palestinians and this rep felt that this decimated against some of the member she represented who were Jewish. I did feel personally offended by this as the statement were specifically worded in a neutral way to avoid taking sides and the money given to the charity would be used to assist innocent victims on both sides.
>
> I think it is good that there is sometimes a debate surrounding these issues as it shows there is an interest in the international picture and that members have an opinion about what is being done in their name on the international scene. How we communicate, who we support internationally and why, again comes down with the time given to publicising this work which is limited"
>
> (Branch O P3)

The Israel/Palestine debate is without doubt a very emotive subject, one which causes great debate during each of the National Delegate Conferences I have attended. It is an international issue that often causes divisions within branches, and yet the International Officer quoted sees such debate as encouraging as it emphasises that some members do recognise the importance of international activities being carried out in the name as members of UNISON. Difficulty engaging others in discussions on internationalism

was reflected throughout interviews; particularly frustrations in attempts to engage and mobilise members:

> "Trying to get things off the ground, like at meetings and "oh nobody is going to come" and you are just hit by negativity all the time and it is just so difficult. I kind of signed to everything that was going when I started...years ago we did that book and 10p campaign for Community Heart, well that went well. Members could just get rid of all their old books and I think that also a lot of departments did that and some of the libraries helped because it wasn't just UNISON it was the Authority that did it so we were in conjunction with them and they were pushing it from their side as well as we were which made it a lot easier. I think it worked because the people that had helped funnily enough were actually from the library departments.
>
> So whether they thought they can understand the value of what we were doing...and we did have a go at trying to make up toiletries to go to Cuba, we had a go at that one time and that was not quite as successful because it was just UNISON and not the Authorities it was a case of when anything was brought in of where to store it and it sort of fizzled out and that was difficult. I don't tend to get that much done because a) its finding the time and b) you've got to start with what people are likely to be interested in and then it's a case of how do you publicise it.
>
> I suppose it depends on whether the Council will get on board with some things but they don't tend to be that keen on a lot of things so...and I must admit I don't try to push it because I don't think I am going to get any support in it. You sort of go along and do these things but you don't really think you get anywhere you just feel you are knocking your head against a brick wall"
>
> (Branch E P1)

From this we are able to identify a number of constraints to mobilising members related to resource mobilisation and political opportunity structure as discussed in Chapter 4. The International Officer describes the difficulties as a lack of resources – time, resources, space for storage, lack of employer support, lack of communication materials. Interestingly, the officer identifies that having a tangible link i.e. distribution of books and library services is effective; connections such as these and the

opportunities they provide for mobilisation will be explored in more depth in the final section of this chapter.

Within the extract above, the international officer is querying why her branch is unable to mobilise international campaigns and others are. Frustrated by the lack of time she was able to devote to internationalism and the lack of resources available to assist in she was left feeling demoralised. The question here should be directed exploring a comparison of resource availability between branches to identify whether this has a profound impact on mobilisation. Or more importantly, why is it that some individuals are able to mobilise branch members with regardless of resources?

6.8   Making tangible links with international others

The final extract in the previous section referred to the negative impact constraints on resources can have on international activity. However on discussing the book distribution project it was apparent that the international officer was able to mobilise members working in libraries because of the personal connection made between the individuals who wished to participate and the nature of the activity. The following quote is from a Branch who make such connections part of their daily branch practice. In framing international and local issues as intertwined and by mobilising campaigns linking into areas beyond the workplace they receive a great deal of support from both members and the wider community. In recognising that the global is created locally (Massey, 1994) this branch is able to produce revitalisation at the grassroots level of the union:

"Well I suppose the biggest project that we are involved in is the Holocaust Memorial Project which was founded about...eight/nine years ago by myself and a then full time officer. Erm...ostensibly it was...the catalyst for its creation was the evolution of the BNP locally really....The project was set up entire funded by UNISON locally and then later-ly at a Regional and GDF level via the International Committee. It got the International Committee's approval and it's about taking people, young people to Poland around the Concentration Camps, meeting them up with a Holocaust Survivor and helping to understand about international issues, about history, about the Holocaust...trying to make sense of the history.

And I suppose the motto; the philosophy of it is that we don't want racism in our community because thousands of miles away, this is the end result of what may happen.

So that's one of the main links that as a local branch we have on an international level. More recently in the last four years I think Cuba has probably been the biggest project that we've embarked on, on a whole range of different levels. Now as a branch the way that's been supported is to fund people doing some of the trips that go out to Cuba – the cycle challenge, for example. And then to pay for the DVD which I think we gave you yesterday was funded via our branch.

So you've got the two things in tandem – you've got Poland which is the anti-racist stuff and you've got Cuban stuff which is the much more traditional, in inverted commas, 'international type' links. But in order to raise money to produce the DVD 'The Iron Men in Cuba' we had a whole host of community social events which tied into the 'Love Music, Hate Racism' events which stemmed from the Holocaust projects, so they kind of meet together"

(Branch B P1)

In discussing this branch's activity a number of issues where illuminated. Firstly in citing the existence of racism in local communities it is evident that they effectively connect international issues with implications for community cohesion. This is in keeping with Waterman's call for a new labour internationalism whereupon 'international solidarity at home'. The Branch conduct a wide range of international campaigning which exemplifies arguments raised earlier within this thesis for a new labour internationalism based upon a collapsing of geographical scales. A number of branches recognised that internationalism and local issues can overlap (in anti-racism

and community cohesion projects for instance) but this was often dependent upon the demographics of a branch's surrounding area. It was identified that branches with local workplaces, communities and membership bases consisting of a large number of ethnic minorities were more conducive to producing strong affective ties and generally more outward looking with regards internationalism:

> "We've got a large Asian community so they rally round, particularly when the Pakistan earthquake hit last year there was a lot happening in Burnley to support the victims of that and similar Asian disasters over the last few years – floods in India and things like that, there's been a lot of the ethnic community activism in Blackburn in particular rallying around to help friends and relatives abroad"
>
> (Branch G P3)

Such activity was often seen as being interrelated with local issues such as community cohesion and anti-racism initiatives – issues that would have workplace, community and international implications. A number of branches recognised that this could occur, yet as identified would be dependent upon the branch demographics and that of the surrounding area:

> "Our branch never puts motions in on anything so we are not in that culture and because we are very secular, as a whole I think our branch reflects...we just work within *our little area* [my emphasis added]"
>
> (Branch E P2)

Here the extract returns to a distinct binary between bread and butter member issues and internationalism. Branch activity is focused prominently on member issues, with international issues being secondary if in fact existent at all. Ideas of secularism and parochialism frustrated many and were often cited as the cause of such dichotomy. Whereas in the previous example branch demographics were seen to assist the natural

linkage of local and international politics, here we see how branch demographics can produce challenges to effective mobilisation, 'influencing branch understandings and strategies':

> "I think the difficulty with X is, in terms of when you talk about the community it's not a homogenous place, it's a bizarre place. It's big – it's 22 miles of coast, but it's such a diverse area demographically. You've got quite an affluent north and all the high indices of poverty in the south so the communities are different"
>
> (Branch B P4)

Here one can query whether homogeneity is necessary for a branch to be able to mobilise its members. Trade unions are often composed of diverse and heterogeneous individuals and subgroups (Gerlach and Hine, 1970), they have unstable memberships and boundaries, they have distinct subsectors – in this case, service groups, geographical locations, identity groups, all varying in character. This is an issue that receives scant attention from the RMT framework although it may be one of the critical determinants of movement mobilisation and outcomes. Intra-branch diversity can be seen as a both a potential asset or liability. It could be beneficial by expanding a collective's potential constituency, a possible recruitment tool for potential members and broaden as well as strengthen arguments. What gives them tendential unity is their relations with opponents or by assembling diverse subjects around shared projects of social justice (or in this case labour internationalism). As a liability however, it could be seen to produce factionalism, reducing mobilisation potential (Gamson, 1975) as appears to be the case here. The officer appears to be suggesting that demographic diversity within this branch equates to an inability to produce a collective action on internationalism. Branch politics produces tensions for branch solidarity on what would be deemed local, member based issues, perhaps making any discussion on international

solidarity (as it would be deemed a separate issue) an impossibility as even daily

activities are affected, as this steward from the same branch explains:

"I would say the perception is that the south of the borough, this area, is more militant, comes out when we need industrial action, attend the branch execs, the AGMs and such like and that up in the north it's not as active. I think there's always been this difference as well, not just in the branch in terms of you know the north and south split, but as a council, as an area anyway I think there's always been a feeling, almost antagonism almost between the north which has always been thought of as the affluent bit, well it's got bits of affluence but it's also got bits of real hardship as well. So I think maybe the split demographically might be represented also in terms of the branch"

(Branch B P2)

From this we gain the understanding that divisions within a branch produce challenges

to overall branch management and organisational decision making. Issues such as

demographics and even geographical territory are perceived as hurdles:

"Well when I first came here I thought it was a very funny joke actually, no one laughed at it at all, when I first came here the big film was 'A River Runs Through It', I don't know if you remember Brad Pitt and someone. And I remember a bloke saying "oh yeah we used to walk across the bridge and have a good old fight and go home, give them a good whacking.

"Give who a good whacking?" "Well you know the Runcornian people". So I'd be like "Oh where do you do your shopping?" "Oh I don't go to Runcorn to do my shopping, I go to St Helens, why would I go over there?" All sorts, hundreds of different little things like that, where I started getting the picture. "Oh but you won't understand because you're not from round here". I thought socialists' ideology we were going to rule the world, I'm not aware that the [River] Mersey was going to become a big problem you know!"

(Branch I P3)

In citing socialism, the steward is attempting to identify that we must overcome notions

of difference to act as a collective and mobilise members. This was recognised by

participants who claimed that instead of producing difficulties, diversity within

218

branches and the surrounding area should in fact be beneficial to branch internationalism:

> "I think there's about sixty different nationalities and you know in X we've probably got as many different communities as there in the United Nations. So people have an opportunity now to meet people and learn things. I think some people are fearful of it but we do have much more opportunities than I think we've ever had before to hear people's accounts of their experiences firsthand, whether that they've left as economic migrants and you know millions do, and always have done, for whatever particular reason but their experiences are probably just as interesting in many respects as somebody who has been forced to leave a country because of you know war or famine or persecution or whatever"
>
> (Branch H P1)

Internationalism here is seen as being all around us. The officer outlines peoples' fear of difference - issues of difference if accentuated in this way may reinforce notions of individualism and the rational actor model. Instead, as identified during the theoretical chapters 'difference' can be depicted as providing opportunities to engage in understandings of internationalism and make the link between local areas and internationalism more apparent.

6.9   Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to illustrate grassroots' perception of trade union internationalism. To do so we first examined understandings of trade union membership in an attempt to clarify whether there exists a sense of collectivity between members exists and whether this would be extended across geographical borders. Often lay

members primarily join a trade union for individualistic reasons and initially they appeared unaware of trade union international activity; with ongoing discussions primarily negative and revolving around charitable activity deemed not the role of a trade union. However, discussions on instrumental forms of internationalism produced positive responses and linked into their understandings of, and reasoning behind, trade union membership.

On examining branches' approaches to international activity it was apparent that it is very often led by one individual and based upon the characterstics and culture of the local membership. Within the field, I found that activists and officials claimed lay members are wholly negative towards internationalism resulting in some branches being cautious when acting internationally. However, empirical evidence within this thesis has show that this claim is not entirely true. Lay members do act internationally – they express internationalism through charitable/international development activity; their faith; choices as consumers. What is required therefore is to make a connection between individuals' multiple agencies and trade union internationalism – a connection readily made by activists. Therefore the following chapter will explore this in more detail through the presentation of a series of activists' personal narratives to understand what makes some individuals think and act internationally whilst making connections with international others and whether such motivations can be instilled within others in attempts to construct international solidarity.

Chapter 7

The individual and internationalism

7.1   Introduction

During this chapter a number of UNISON activists will be introduced and focused on in great depth as their personal narratives encapsulate the notion of the 'union ideal' discussed in the previous chapter. Related discussion will draw upon theoretical debates from social movement theory highlighted in Chapter 4 on the role of leaders and imagineers to show how each of these individuals take on such a role and mobilise members. It soon became evident during research that where a branch had an enthusiastic, politicised, well motivated international activist then awareness of international activity was often high and/or positive within the branch membership. This thesis will argue that by identifying those that are internationally active, they then be encouraged to provide leadership to others to revitalise branches through new labour internationalism.

In arguing this the following chapter is attempting to move away from structuralist accounts of internationalism and towards understandings of labour internationalism based upon individual's multiple agencies and what this means for international collective action. I will show that an individual's internationalism can be enacted in many ways sometimes outside of trade unionism. Although the characteristics of activity and understandings of labour internationalism may be different, and so too the political and cultural context in which they are developed, the narratives presented over the next few pages will reveal much more than just random

commonalities. The test for trade unions is to uncover these commonalities and identify international activists.

7.2 "The only thing I do internationally..."

The theoretical chapters within this thesis identified that labour internationalism can be interpreted and exploited in a number of ways: politically, economically, historically, spatially, culturally and socially. Chapter 6 engaged with the numerous interpretations of internationalism that are produced by grassroots members, identifying that during initial discussions the majority of lay members who participated in this research were unaware of its existence and unable to exemplify how it is enacted in practice resulting in negative responses. I found that lay members were unable to provide explicit narratives on how they perceive internationalism, thus in an attempt to open up discussions and draw out more personalised accounts on internationalism, they were asked whether they act internationally in *any* way? Discussions identified that their inability to express internationalism in terms of trade union activity did not mean that they do not engage with international issues or do not have an international outlook. Instead, many participants expressed their own personal internationalism through a number of other means, for instance, through their faith, buying fair trade, making monetary donations to international development charities as evident in the quotes from the following two participants:

"We take so much for granted that our forefathers had to fight for even just the right to go on to strike, having a day off or having a weekend or whatever, pay issues. I mean some people can't even earn enough to buy food that they need, even if the food's available and things like that. *The only thing I do internationally myself* [my emphasis added] is I buy things from the Tear Fund because I get a catalogue sent and I give to the British Red Cross every month. Now that's my contribution if you like to international...I buy Fair Trade"

(Branch E P3)

"I think it's important to make people aware of things like Water Aid and things like the situation in Zimbabwe over sanitary protection. Things like that are really important, you know the Nestle products - I boycott certain things and buy Fair Trade"

(Branch G P1)

Interestingly, we see in both accounts here that neither participant identifies these international issues with trade unionism. Both participants appeared apologetic in their explanations: "The only thing I do internationally..." I noticed on a number of occasions that participants often appeared to feel as they had to justify their level (or lack of) international activism – that I would somehow judge them according to their responses. Furthermore, neither of these participants, nor many others depicted international development and worker issues as interlinked. Here associations were made with activities in their home life or with their role as consumers. It could possibly be argued that through consumer choices or charitable donations, they feel they have a position of power in decision making, perhaps this is not recognised in trade union membership - that there is in fact an outlet for such expression through trade union international activism or that they are able to influence trade union international policy.

A research diary extract from February 2010 explained how a senior member of UNISON staff recalls being approached by a number of lay members who queried "what UNISON was doing about Haiti" and whether it was "involved in Help for

Heroes". Here members' personal connections were coming to the forefront, issues of personal interest were seen to be relevant to the role of a trade union and yet each could be associated with internationalism. However, in response to this during personal discussion, activists were quite dismissive explaining that quite often such approaches by lay members were merely reactive to events and short lived. The understanding here being therefore that there is a need to capture this interest in international issues that lay members are displaying and find a way to engage with and sustain their enthusiasm by raising awareness that their trade union is an outlet for such international expression through daily core tasks. This along with the quotes in the previous chapter served to substantiate claims that workers are embedded in various structures and political processes that can be exploited for the support and mobilisation of new labour internationalisms; thus potentially revitalising trade unions based upon grassroots interests and concerns. How therefore do we make a transition from personal international activity such as this, to activism through trade union international activity? Furthermore, as identified towards the end of the previous chapter, each branch with an international activist conducted effective internationalism - how can we encourage individuals such as lay the members just referred to make the transition from lay member, to activist, to leader? Perhaps the following sections exploring international activists' narratives can illuminate some answers.

7.3 Personal internationalisms – *this* is what makes me an international activist

During interviews with international activists they produced particular associations with trade unionism and how they enact this through internationalism. The narratives are based amongst other things upon personal accounts of experience; international familial links; the inspiration of others and the influence of their upbringing. Exploration will be made of what triggers activism, is it a political socialisation process; or perhaps a spontaneous, unsolicited decision to participate? Participants' theories about their actions, their private narratives, showed intense engagement and depth of critical thinking. Although semi-structured, through the course of interviews, individuals produced narratives that were chronologically, thematically and spatially unruly; diversions were often made to the past, as a respondents 'delved back' to pick up some form of motif moment that could possibly explain their actions or decisions. Many identified a catalyst to action, an event or issue that triggered their activism:

> "I think my Vietnam or sort of Soweto or whatever moment was probably the massacres in Sabra and Shatila in '83. That's when I started getting involved in the Palestinian issue. But I'd always had an involvement in anti-apartheid as well. When I joined Manchester City Council in 1986 I immediately became a steward and I started find out more things as part of the union and getting involved... And it's just grown from that really. I don't know why some people don't sort of think "well why am I like that" or "why do I get involved", they just do. It's something I think I've always done"
>
> (Branch H P1)

Interestingly, this participant adopted an international outlook previous to becoming a trade union activist. Vietnam and Soweto are referred to in somewhat mystical

terminology, as if these two events acted as a catalyst to inspire and politically motivate others to take political action – for him, this catalyst for action was produced by the massacres in 1983, seeing such atrocities triggered activism, an activism that could be explored through participation in the trade union on joining and becoming a Steward. Referring to Vietnam and the time period in which it occurs also links into academic understandings of social movement unionism and that era as outlined in Chapter 4. For this participant he was originally interested in international affairs, then he joined a trade union, started to find our more and became involved – this is key.

Trade union activism here is seen as an opportunity for raising awareness and political education often resulting in increasing mobilisation, a view shared by Stirling (2009) in his claim that individuals quite often join a union to meet their own needs in the workplace; but the process of political education promotes a wider picture beyond that of individualistic, workplace and nation based needs.

Each participant was asked to discuss why they joined a trade union, what their motivations were for doing so, if they had an international outlook, or if an international perspective was presented it was explored in more depth. Each participant was given the opportunity to recall experiences and draw upon memories freely in an attempt to engage with an understanding of what triggered and maintained their international activism. Each chosen narrative encapsulates a particular theme drawn out from analysis and will be explored throughout the remaining part of this chapter individually with my account placed alongside – the aim is for the activist to tell their story; their international perceptions and motivations to act often speak for themselves.

7.3.1i   Born into internationalism

The first narrative is from a nurse, an active member of a health branch based outside of a major North West city, describing herself as an activist, she explains how she often finds herself frustrated by her inability to conduct more international campaigning due to ill health, but stresses that she 'does what she can'. I ask her to tell me about her international outlook on life (Branch M P2):

"I think international things are important. My father was an active trade unionist and my mother was as well but to a lesser extent. He worked for his union and all my childhood we had delegations from other countries, you know we had people from the Eastern Block and we had people from South Africa. He got a magazine called 'China Reconstructs' at one point, which was beautiful, it used to have wonderful stamps.

So in my family there's always been an interest in situations elsewhere, you know, like when there was a Junta in Greece we didn't support that, we couldn't really afford to go on foreign holidays anyway, but we wouldn't have gone to Greece, and we didn't go to Spain because of Franco, do you know what I mean? So there was this sense of solidarity with downtrodden people and so on. My parents had lodgers when I was growing up and we nearly had the son of the then Sierra Leonean foreign minister or something! I think he was assassinated so that didn't come to anything. But do you know what I mean?

As a kid we had a Nigerian student called Marco who lived in our house and I've got a very strong memory of him cooking his own food with his friends. that sort of thing. So it was like normal for me to mix with people of different places".

From the outset. she recognises that her parents being trade union members and activists influenced her internationalism. Visual imagery is very powerful and emotive in this account – the magazine, stamps, cooking of food, students' friends in her family kitchen. These memories are drawn upon fondly, attaching positive sentiment with internationalism. Political expression is identified at a young age with the understanding that family holidays are predetermined by politico-economic circumstance. Internationalism here is in her personal space, her home, it is an opportunity to meet new people, learn new things, it is social and a positive experience. Such experiences are reflected in the setting of our interview – it is relaxed, jovial, set in the kitchen at a table overflowing with food prepared for what she describes as an 'international lunch' in celebration of our discussion on internationalism. "It is all sourced from the local area" she tells me and explains how lucky she is to live in an area with such an international community. After lunch we take a break from interviewing and move to the living room – the walls are covered in international artwork and holiday photographs. She tells me all about the different places her and her family have visited, her time spent in Western Sahara. She points out a statue of a mother and baby elephant. a gift from a young Nigerian woman to thank her and the UNISON branch for assisting with her successful asylum claim. The nurse seems to exude internationalism. Everything about her life is international and is best encapsulated in her interpretation of internationalism:

"...anything that involves talking and communicating with people from elsewhere, from outside your little remit has an international dimension to it. There's a number of strands. I mean 1) there's tradition. There's a historical sense of solidarity between workers of all nations....And so there's a tradition that it's all for one and one for all isn't it, that you support people if they're in strife, regardless of where they are...

So there's that dimension which is sort of like our duty as human beings really, to be aware of other people, and we're lucky enough in this country to be allowed still to be members of a union and to organise. There are other places like Guatemala comes to mind, where people are not and where you know, if you're a trade unionist in some places you are summarily arrested and you disappear, just for wanting to have a decent wage or for organising people to be members of the union, just to get their basic rights...

So it's that sort of concept of support. And I think what you get from it is if you need help, people support you don't just do it because of what you get back, you do it because it's right, it's the right thing to do".

We can see that for the nurse everything has an international dimension. She was brought up in a household with a very positive international outlook – be it in the holidays they took; family conversations during meal times or as a result of the visitors they had staying. I was able to see how this had been built into her mindset, the way she interpreted and understood issues on a daily basis and in turn the way she brought up

her own family. It was during my discussions with the following the following activist, that I began to realise that international relations and specific events do not always have a positive influence upon all families, yet can still instigate activism within an individual.

7.3.1ii   When your own internationalism is at odds with your union

Like the previous narrative, childhood influences this activist's internationalism and outlook, but in a very different way. He works for a Local Government branch in a rural, community orientated location; as well as this he is a member of the Territorial Army and despite being active within UNISON international campaigning, finds that often his own personal politics and UNISON campaigns are often at odds. I wanted to identify how these tensions are played out so began by asking him where his international outlook stemmed from, and found his reflections underpinned a lot of his current thinking (Branch L P1):

"Well world events really, world events have affected our family for years, although we're all born and bred round here for hundreds of years. My granddad was killed in the RAF and he's on the plaque as you come in the door downstairs [interview took place in his workplace, a local government building].

He was sat in the pub and had a bomb drop on him, he was very unlucky! So he certainly was killed in action! You know if you go for a quiet pint

and then somebody drops a bomb on your head! So that's always been the focus of my family. My dad grew up without his dad and you know you think oh gosh somebody could be really bitter and twisted and all of that couldn't they you know, you've lost your dad, and very anti-German. But it was never a problem when I wanted to go on exchange trips to Germany".

In stating "although we're all born and bred round here', he appears to be claiming that he still has been affected and influenced by world events despite being brought up in a rural location. He appears to be suggesting that the geographical positioning and perhaps cultural characteristics or socio-demographics of the area makes his family particularly locally orientated, possibly parochial in some respects. There is a plaque on the wall commemorating his grandfather's death – such gestures epitomise a local community that has a great deal of respect for the devastating loss of life whilst serving ones country and it is particularly revealing within this narrative that he walks passed this each day on his way in and out of his workplace – perhaps a constant reminder of the importance of internationalism. Furthermore he explains how despite this tragedy, his father remained open minded to international others and did not prevent his son from attending a fieldtrip to Germany. This explanation appears to suggest that he believes normally, people may act in a different way than his father did, perhaps becoming nationalistic and inward looking. On the contrary, he was brought up to be outward looking devoid of any discriminative feelings and he goes on to explain how other aspects of his life, in particular, being a member of the Territorial Army influence this mindset:

"Well it's [being a member of the Territorial Army] opened up a lot of doors especially in terms of, there's no real sink council estates here, there is a working class or what would be perceived as the working class but not on a huge scale, I'm dealing with lads in the TA, they come to join the TA, they're out of estates in Liverpool and Manchester that can't read and write, in this day and age, they're coming to join the TA and you're having a bit of crack with them and they cannot read and write. Well that's a system that's certainly failed isn't it? Good heavens! But I wouldn't have exposure to that side of society up here, I just wouldn't.

It's been interesting, certainly working as a team and everybody getting on together, I spent seven months in Iraq, I got pulled out of here at a week's notice, shock horror, pack your kit, "where am I going?" "Don't know". "When you coming back?" "Don't know". "What am I doing?" "Don't know"".

It seems that being a member of the Territorial Army, has enabled him to witness other aspects of life and society other than his own local community. Interestingly, he expresses a form of class distinction, perhaps unintentionally in his discussion on the types of individuals he is meeting "I wouldn't have exposure to that side of society up here", and in further discussion it could be said he relates to ideas encapsulated in the union ideal, yet under very different circumstances – "working as a team", expressing notions of working as a collective. He goes on to talk in great detail about his own personal politics – his pro Monarchy stance, at odds with many of his UNISON colleagues' republican beliefs and his time in Iraq: "Do I feel I personally brought

benefit to the people of Iraq while I was there? Yes I do", carefully explaining to me his justifications for the war in opposition to UNISON's anti-war campaigning. From his childhood, through to present day, he and his family have either experienced or been influenced directly by war. This has produced a particular interpretation of internationalism for him, yet it is still in keeping with other activist's expressions – that of solidarity with others and promotion of the opportunity to live and work in a safe and equal society, something he found himself fighting for in Iraq; promoting in his local workplace and community in anti-BNP campaigning; and in his thoughts of his grandfather each day on passing the memorial.

7.3.1iii "Experiencing struggle made me internationally active"

For this individual, the experience of struggle is something that has influenced his interpretation of internationalism throughout his life. His account of internationalism – how he perceives it and enacts it is very different to the previous narratives. An international officer for a Local Government branch in an urban area of the North West region, he has been internationally active since a young age and pursued this through trade unionism on entering the world of work. In striving to provide for his own family and others experiencing similar circumstances, his activism has been pursued in a particular direction (Branch G P3):

"Because my background is...well belong to a very poor family and my childhood, I mean I had love and affection from my parents but because we came from India where my father and grandfather used to be

233

employed by the British Army but we lost everything because after partition you had to leave"

Immediately he points out that he received "love and affection" emphasising perhaps that this is important, if not more so, than material goods. It could be argued that this influences his activism in terms of affective action, as we will see later in his narrative. We see here also how accounts and direct experiences of recent history impact upon individuals – it is interesting to draw together this narrative in relation to an earlier activist's quote in the previous chapter who spoke of the guilt she feels for the part Great Britain has played in colonialism and other foreign policy decisions. Looking at the two narratives alongside one another enables us to identify how activists' understandings are quite often interlinked through a series of events, despite the fact they may have very different experiences they all still relate to injustices. Explaining to me about arriving in Pakistan – how his parents had lost everything, the uncertainty of not knowing what would happen, their reliance upon the Red Cross I could see in his eyes how he still struggled to comprehend how this happened to him and his family now, forty years on. But as he spoke, he did so with real passion and I could see how this would inspire him to act, to do something about this. The uncertainty and struggle he experienced motivated him to enter education – he recognised the value of learning in his attempt to improve his own and family's conditions:

"And I grew up, when I got the employment, as I said I didn't have the electricity so I used to go outside to study under the lamppost, so I know the value of how you have to make struggle".

Access to education and basic needs such as electricity are issues quite often taken for granted in the developed world – this narrative emphasises the fundamental importance of a right to quality public services, an issue that could not be more evident on explaining the death of his nephew:

"The other turning point in my life is my elder sister, after three daughters she had a baby son and she was very pleased but when he was three months and ten days old he died on the 10th April 1971. We did not have the money actually to look after him. The health service in Pakistan is basically nothing, I remember we were running from one doctor to the other, from one person to the other but there was no help. So my nephew he died. And I used to think I mean how you can help those people. I did not take it in a negative way; I made it very positive in the sense of how you can be in a position to help".

For this participant, this alongside his other experiences was a catalyst for international activism. His activism crosses a number of organisations - trade unions, local communities, local businesses and faith groups. He argues that people can and should work together regardless of difference – surely this narrative encapsulates the ethos of new internationalism and can be epitomised through what he described to me as his own philosophy:

"So in this room I am 62, you are maybe 30, so we'll have 90 years experience in this room. If we use this in a positive way we can make a better...Your life easy, my life easy, if we were together sometime we

can make the lives of other people easy...This is my philosophy, and I don't make any distinction colour wise or creed, I work with all communities, all nationalities, it doesn't matter to me who that person is, so long as there is an issue on which I can help".

Unlike the previous narrative, an individual's activism or how they perceive internationalism is not always instigated by their own personal experience of struggle or hardship. Activists often spoke to me of how they read about or spoke to others about their involvement in particular moments in modern history. Many drew inspiration from others to encapsulate their internationalist thinking and action. Two examples were drawn upon quite often during discussions with activists: the first was Cuba. Activists saw Cuba as 'the alternative', that despite all odds the people of Cuba face daily, the developed world has a lot to learn from their public services - something embedded within the mindset of many public service activists during this period of cuts to their sector. The second example was that of one particular individual – Jack Jones[10].

---

[10] James Larkin Jones (1919-2009) former General Secretary of TGWU, served in the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War.

7.3.1iv.   "I was inspired by others to become active"

On discussing his understanding of internationalism, this activist (Branch I P2) spoke of Jack Jones with real passion and respect:

"When I was a kid Jack Jones was inspirational to me, he was the epitome of internationalism and we used to sit for hours listening to him and he used to bore you, you know, he went over to Spain when he was a kid you know and he got shot and he come back but he didn't give up, and he used to go down all this area, he used to go down to the banks of the canal preaching to people. I mean I never knew him then but certainly when I did meet him in the 60s like, that's what started me off. Because it's the same the world over, there's injustices the world over, it doesn't matter whether you come from here, some have it worse than others, there's good employers, there's not so good employers and there's bloody downright bad employers you know. And it doesn't, it's not just about employment it's about political rights, some people are politically starved, they're not allowed the free speech, we're very fortunate here, very fortunate, I mean we can have duck houses, we can have bloody moats and servants' quarters [referring to MPs expenses], these people haven't got fresh water to drink you know!"

For him, Jack Jones embodies internationalism. His rhetoric is of injustice, political rights, freedom of speech – something Jack Jones fought for during the Spanish Civil War. The finance officer sees internationalism as recognition of the need to raise

awareness of the injustices others face globally – he claims that Jack 'didn't give up' despite being injured. His passion whilst telling me this was enlightening as it represented his understanding that the working class cannot give up on internationalism. Now a full time Branch Secretary in a politically active Local Government branch, he appears to have had this understanding throughout his working life, he told me how despite being blacklisted in the construction industry for trade union activism, he returned after a period of time away and 'fell back into it':

"I got involved in the late 60s on the building sites in the North West. As a young steward I got involved with the national building strike in the early 70s. I was an activist, I was a site convenor, probably one of the youngest at the time because nobody else would do it you know so that was the way it went. And I was on a site up on the Leyland Prison, we had about 2000 fellas on it building a new prison when the national building strike was called, and I was given that site to look after and the Inland Revenue offices in Liverpool and the Sun Centre in North Wales.

Then after the strike I got blacklisted. I couldn't get a job anywhere, so I went back to Ireland, stayed there for six months and then I went to sea, done two years there, and then I came back I promised never to get involved with trade unions again! And the first day back in work I got elected as a steward because I was well known in the area anyway, so I just kind of fell back into it like and I just carried on being an activist".

From the outset, he took on the trade union role because 'nobody else would do it'. This was a period of great industrial relations unrest, so this may have deterred many individuals from adopting such a role given the negative impact this could have upon their working lives. Furthermore he goes on to say that he decided he would never get involved with unionism again, yet most probably because of his activist outlook and the culture of trust and leadership within trade unionism was immediately nominated as a steward on his return to the industry. He talks of how he just 'fell back into' taking an active role, perhaps to suggest that this characteristic of activism is one that has happened naturally throughout his life course. He pursues his international activism through UNISON structures – committees, meetings, events, branch positions and was referred to by other participants as a 'leader', making it apparent that Jack Jones really did have a huge influence over his activism.

7.3.1v.   "Being brought up in a political household inspired me"

In Chapter 4 I discussed theoretical debates surrounding leadership and in the previous narrative we can see quite clearly that the participant adopted a leadership role. However, not all activists take on such positions despite having similar influences and experiences. We can therefore query what makes one individual adopt a leadership position whilst others prefer to follow? The following narrative is from a steward within the same branch as the previous participant (Branch I P3).

"I've always been a member of the union, I've always tried to be sort of active but I've never really had positions if you like as far as being secretary or anything like that. But you know I think it's essential, I'd always join a union wherever, or if there isn't one you set one up don't you?!"

I went on to ask where he thought this understanding of trade unionism stemmed from, his response being as a result of his parents' political activism and further discussion on this outlined the notion that an individual's activism, their politics and how they perceive internationalism can vary over a lifetime indicating that interpretations of internationalism and how it is conducted can be a very personal response related to life experience and current circumstance as we have already noted through these narratives:

"My dad, he was a member of the Iron and Steel Trades Fed from its conception where he was from, so I've always you know, always been interested in politics. You know they continue to be interested in politics but of course my dad's mellowed a bit! He's moved across I think they say, but not that far! But yeah always had a political sort of background. I've been a member of the Labour Party since the early 80s, right from when I was about 20 or 18 or something like that. I've left the Labour Party a couple of times and gone off into other organisations but I've come back and I'm currently a member of the Labour Party".

"What made you leave?"

"The Labour Party? Well I sort of, I went to university and I did this classic thing where I sort of, I did a swerve to more radical politics, but then I think you know there's a certain amount of pragmatism that I suppose you could say New Labour plays on, they say yeah but you've got to be elected etc etc etc, so...I've always sort of come back so to speak".

Like the other activists within this section, he expresses a relationship with his own personal politics that appears to be innate – something that he always returns to. There is always an underlying attachment to activism; it just plays out differently across different periods within an individual's life course. During discussion he exemplified that international activists often active in a number of ways, with different organisations yet still interrelated with internationalism:

"A lot of people who are active about things are active about lots of different things and you find there's people with about ten different hats on, you know if you're involved with the union it means you're involved with this voluntary group, it means you're involved with this charity organisation, all broadly spread out like that.

I work for Oxfam as well, that's my other thing, I work for Oxfam but only on a sort of minor capacity, but I'm quite, being a nosey parker of course I have to find out about everything that's going on!

I think you shouldn't be allowed not to have an outward view on this you know, you are part of your world. That's why I think you know people should have a good knowledge of their immediate history because how do you know who you are when you don't know where you sort of come from?"

We can see that he is active, and appears to encapsulate the same ideals as the previous narrative yet he has never aspired to adopt a trade union leadership role. Furthermore, he goes on to discuss 'more practical matters', appearing to make a distinction between international activity and what some deem the daily role of a trade union. Other activists most often saw the role as being interlinked:

"But you know I'm certainly not somebody that goes to meetings or I'm not somebody that goes to union meetings and you know cuts across with a sort of radical revolutionary message because there's more practical matters in hand really, which I didn't used to think but I do acknowledge now"

"What do you think those practical issues are?"

"Well people having jobs is one thing! Obviously, I suppose I sort of detected that union involvement, well I'm not sure how this is worked out in numbers or percentages, I mean you'd have a better view of it in the region than I would, but I sort of detect a certain amount of dilution of activism and involvement. There's lots of theories that people have

about why that would be you know, the different ways that we live, the different circumstances, different viewpoints, but I've certainly found that there doesn't seem to be as many people taking up the cudgels".

We see here despite the individual being an activist that the participant makes a distinction between 'practical' issues and internationalism. Therefore it can be argued that it is necessary to frame internationalism within the culture of branch meetings and daily practice. In discussing issues of apathy he draws upon issues of individualism, an issue the Social Worker also raises in relation to today's society.

7.3.1vi.   "Labour internationalism is just part of my wider lifestyle choice"

For some internationalism is just one interrelated component of lifestyle choices – a mindset that influences what he calls his 'personal politics'. He depicts choices he makes as being interrelated, be that consumer choices; environmental politics or dietary choice and vents his frustration at claims that his trade union does not support such strategies at a national level:

"For me I'm a vegan, that's really important to me, green issues are integral to me, they're integral to me politics, what I eat is integral to me politics – internationalism is the same. But at times you feel like a bit of a freak 'cause there isn't a national strategy backing up those sorts of local, personal politics. But there should be"

From this extract it seems the social worker feels his actions and beliefs are depicted as unusual: 'at times you feel like a bit if a freak' and thus not represented by his trade union, perhaps this further highlights the various interpretations of internationalism in existence. Further frustrations were vented during discussions of ideological influences on the conduct of work, education and industrial relations over the past few decades. On discussing political apathy and young peoples' perspectives on trade unionism in the following quote, the activist discusses issues similar to those raised during Chapter 4 on individualism:

> "It's a generational thing. That's not just me being ageist. Having taught on social work courses for about fifteen years I've noticed massive, massive change in the sociological input, the sort of social input, the politics input – there is not politics input on a social work course. The correlation between child abuse, social work intervention and poverty isn't taught. And at that point I left, I'd had enough. So we're going to create a generation of social workers who could not be more removed from what they were in the seventies when the emphasis was upon the social – socialist and socialism. That's just one example of how I think it's moved on.

> I mean, I could go on for ages, but the meritocracy that was introduced in Thatcher's era about people getting on with it themselves, people making themselves rich...it has massively damaged the sort of social infrastructure that's been reflected in a declining trade union membership. I think there's issues that – I think the international issues

are one – but I think there's issues if I'm being sort of cheap about it that if UNISON doesn't grab the green agenda then we will lose the younger generation because it's massive, absolutely massive. But I have to say it's not high on the agenda. I think there's a bit of tokenism within UNISON nationally and locally regarding the green agenda".

By relating to the impact of political ideology to current perspectives on internationalism and trade unionism in general, his thinking concurs with an extract earlier in this chapter on how meritocracy and individualism has damaged the social infrastructure over the past few decades – how collective thinking has been eradicated and thus trade union membership has declined. If there is no collective thinking then what does this mean for the future of internationalism? He has made choices here, lifestyle choices – to become a vegan, pursue green politics. He depicts internationalism as a component of this lifestyle choice. The previous narratives appeared to be active according to something innate; here we see it as a choice that is made nevertheless something that he passionately follows.

7.4   Narrating Internationalisms

By introducing personal narratives, the intention of this section was to illuminate particular themes that were encapsulated by these individuals – their associations with internationalism based upon their personal experience, familial links, upbringing, inspiration from others – all issues that according to this research produce an individual who is aware of current affairs and internationalism, wants to be active,

and caters their activism according to these influences. We can see from the use of personal narratives that activists have multiple connections with labour internationalism. The in-depth narratives identify that there exist many other roles, traits, aspects of an individual's life that form connections with 'international others', embedding them in structures and processes at different stages of their life course. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, lay members too have these connections, yet the challenge is teasing these connections to the forefront and raising awareness as to how such connections can be forged, maintained and enacted through trade union internationalism. It can be argued that political education is required to change perceptions - without talking activists into some form of political elite. The activists who participated in this research do recognise internationalism and its numerous interpretations, be that affective or instrumental because of their own personal, multiple connections and because they have an innate understanding of the union ideal. Therefore there is a necessity to move away from structuralist accounts to individual multiple agencies as this is necessary for our own understandings of labour internationalism.

7.5   The Personal *is* Political...but "You've got to keep banging that drum"

The last section identified that international action can be influenced and mobilised in a variety of ways furthermore resources, organisational culture and external environment have a major influence. The following section will explore how these can be used practically through strategies to mobilise lay members. I will argue

that mobilisation occurs through the construction of collective identity by framing connections with international 'others'. This can be achieved through political education and awareness raising techniques conducted by international activists, referred to as 'imagineers' (Routledge et al, 1996) who provide a vital role that links trade union leaderships with their lay membership. Moreover, the role of emotions is crucial in forging and maintaining connections between individuals producing catalysts for international activism.

Throughout interviews activists outlined the necessity of raising awareness of internationalism in order to instigate support or challenge any opposition in a public arena. It was argued that an effective way to do this was by drawing parallels with the UK experience and discuss international issues as often as possible to raise consciousness:

"Well you've got to keep banging the drum, you've got to draw parallels, you've got to tell people...I mean people will say "Peru, where's that, why am I worried about a miner in the Congo or wherever?" And it's until you say to them why, and "yeah but you can do a little bit to help.

I think people don't think about it all day and every day, but once you get them to associate their selves with trade unions, it's not a big step to say in other countries you don't know how lucky you are because in this country they start, you know, I mean they're not keen to tell people that in some countries trade unionists get shot because they might be...ooh, it might be us next you know! But yeah, on a serious note I don't think, some people live and breathe it because they're that way"

The activist identifies that the first step to producing collective awareness is to enable individuals to associate with trade unionism. This links back to discussions in the previous chapter on the notion of the 'union ideal' a commitment to trade unionism that goes beyond the member-union service agreement. By outlining what this relationship brings, the activist is able to highlight what this process means for others elsewhere –

that their lives can be in danger for simply being a trade unionist. Although in humour, the officer fleetingly states their response to this would be that 'it might be us next!', this may hint at officers' comments that lay members are entirely instrumentalist in nature as opposed to a moral commitment to supporting fellow trade unionists face constant danger. Furthermore, the participant identifies that particular individuals readily relate to this 'because they're that way', most probably the same types of individuals outlined in the previous chapter through the personal narratives.

It was evident that a combination of emotions and motivations can produce solidarity for trade unionists in such situations. Although a major motivation was one of sympathy for their experience and indignation at their treatment another was that of admiration for the struggles being waged in the face of such enormous personal and collective risk:

> "You know it's fairly obvious when you sort of look at it, you know why are in a union? Well I want somebody to defend me when things go wrong, I want some job security and I think the union helps with that, you know, when we have pay disputes we need someone to inform us and give us support, if we have an individual problem, like you know haul over the coals, they want representation. And then you sort of present to them the situation in some countries you know people are disappearing because they're trying to do just that and it kind of brings it home"   (Branch H P2)

In SMT terms (see Chapter 4) these officers are making claims about the importance of trade unions through use of the frame amplification process 'look what can happen when there aren't trade unions'. By doing so they appear to attempt to engage with both the instrumental and affective characteristics of their audience by presenting what members have to lose as well as what others suffer. For this participant above, international connections can be made by raising awareness to the fact that as workers

and trade union members, we all have the same motivations. Campaigning in this way around purposive and solidaristic incentives focused upon what may be deemed pre-existing groupings, such as being trade union members, are often effective (Jenkins, 1983: 538). Identifying such 'natural' groupings is integral, in doing so, activists spoke of the need to show how internationalism is relevant to their local workplace context.

7.5.1   Making internationalism relevant for effective mobilisation

> "I would start to talk about some of the reasons and how it affects us locally, even though it is an international let's say bigger picture, how that affects us here in our everyday work, and try and relate that to them"
>
> (Branch F P2)

Making internationalism 'relevant' to grassroots members was a theme identified throughout interviews: 'you need to present the actual situation to them' (Branch B P4); 'it is about just tapping into something that has to be relevant' (Branch E P1). It was suggested that 'relevance' is mostly based upon a common issues workers experience – for instance as we saw earlier, workers within the same service groups can relate to each other; as can workers employed by the same employer. This claim is supported by Castree et al (2003) who argue that a sense of common issues is the driving force behind grassroots identification with internationalism.

It is argued that to overcome notions of rational actor theory, groups must develop initiatives that offer the collective incentives of group solidarity and commitment to moral purpose (Gamson and Fireman, 1979). Tilly (1978: 62-63) argued that groups sharing strong distinctive identities and dense interpersonal networks

exclusive to group members are highly organised and hence readily mobilised. By providing prior solidarities and moral commitments, these identities and networks provide a basis for the operation of collective incentives. Evidence from this research suggests that prior solidarities exist at the level of activists within UNISON, yet the question is how this can be extended to lay members. We have seen so far the distinction between rational actors acting instrumentally and those motivated by solidaristic concerns, a dichotomy that can be overcome according to Stirling (2009) through political education. As previously mentioned, he argues that individuals may join trade unions for instrumental interests, yet are motivated to act as a collective following awareness raising through political education initiatives.

During an informal conversation with one participant, she spoke of how she came across a magazine produced by her employer. One of the articles represented profiles of UK and German workers comparing their daily routines. During a previous focus group discussion, this individual had appeared to exemplify the rational actor model and interestingly after the following conversation outlined below went on to become a young persons' officer and workplace steward, providing evidence to support Stirling's theory (2009). Having read the article she told me that she understood [the following quote is paraphrased] 'workers in other countries experience the same things as here and we all want the same things really don't we?' Although not explicitly identifying a working class consciousness, this participant understood that learning more about her foreign counterparts meant she had an understanding of the commonalties they experience. In turn she felt a form of solidarity, alluding to the idea that if trade unions were to develop strategies informing lay members on internationalism, members would have greater understanding of their connections with counterparts, thus producing a potential basis for solidarity and increasing support for

international initiatives. For many officers however, the difficulty is in determining the most effective form of education to meet the needs of all individuals:

"The problem is assisting them to make a connection. And it depends doesn't it, when you say the average grassroots member, it depends in what context and how much time you've got basically. You know if it's somebody who is not really interested in an issue then I'm not sure whether you ever would. If somebody is actually interested in the issue of internationalism or wants to know more about Cuba for example, you have to give people some historical information but you know you don't want to sort of like bore them for hours with a history lesson.

But part of that history actually explains the injustice that goes on in respect of the way that Cuba has been treated. And I think you know you need to put into context that injustice. But I also think you need to put into context the inspiration that Cuba provides as well, what it's achieved against all the odds and you know that I think is far more important that simply saying look, there's an injustice going on in the world, I think that has to be understood that another world is possible.

And we talk about these things and we pass motions, on the one hand there's a union that say we're in favour of free healthcare, comprehensive free education and all the rest of it, they're actually doing it, and again I think that, we need to, people need to understand that and respect that and support what they've tried to achieve as part of that process"

(Branch H P1)

This quote epitomises the notion of political education as a necessity for mobilisation and uses a number of key phrases that facilitate connection – information, injustice, inspiration. He shows that Cuba has many of the resources and strategies in place that UK public sector trade unions strive for, and yet they are doing it 'against the odds' despite the political and economic limitations compounded on it by its closest geographical neighbours. Through such examples we identify how the linkage of individual interests, values and beliefs and movement activities, goals and ideologies can be highlighted as congruent and complementary through the frame alignment

process (Snow et al. 1986: 464). History also provides moralistic and affective standpoints upon which to mobilise individuals:

> "For Holocaust Day, we did a thing about it, just to get people thinking about it, and it was great, 'send in your old shoes'. Simple thing, massive pile of shoes and it just got people. That was thought provoking, little bit of a display. It was on the television, it was on the news, local news on the TV, it was in the local paper. Just a little tiny thing like that, send in your old shoes, get a pile of shoes and all of a sudden you've got people thinking about the Holocaust and the consequences of people's actions etc"
>
> (Branch L P1)

Having participated on a UNISON study tour to Auswitchz, this participant spoke of how he had felt motivated to do something on his return. The campaign he mentions here was very simple – a pile of shoes placed in the reception of his workplace to symbolise the piles of Nazi victims' shoes at Auswitchz. The campaign was highly contemporary in that it was intertwined with anti-racism initiatives being conducted in light of the BNP campaigning in their local area during the run up to the 2009 European election. The participant spoke of how since the study tour he was readily able to make associations between international issues and those within his local community and workplace.

7.5.2   Study tours: "But isn't it just a junket?"

For many of the research participants, study tours were depicted as an effective form of political education. The tours were described as transformative experiences supporting Chatterton et al's (2007) contention that emotional experiences

enable transformative encounters and often a sense of injustice for which individuals are prompted to act upon.

> "That was a fantastic experience; it was a very moving experience. We went with a survivor of the camps who's now died, he died a few years ago, Leon Green, and I found that almost I'd say life changing experience really because I'd always obviously been aware of the Holocaust, been aware of the camps, but actually going there, having the opportunity to go to the camps with a survivor...Leon was able to say you know "oh that's where I saw my friend you know shot", "that's the punishment block where I was experimented on", and all these kinds of things.

> It was an incredible experience which had a profound effect afterwards really, I remember coming back and just sort of having moments where I just sort of burst into tears and it was quite a moving experience. I think it probably did make me more active. I'm just thinking about the time when it happened, I think that, we then shortly after that went into another industrial dispute and I think I was more fired up by it because I thought we're looking at things that are bigger than ourselves"
>
> (Branch B P4)

For this participant the study tour to Poland had a profound effect – this extract alone shows the power of emotions and issues of affect in framing international solidarity with the past and our present. It forges commonalities between workers. The participant argues that it provoked mobilisation resulting engagement with an industrial dispute on his return.

Many theorise emotions as a large component of what forms oppositional consciousness (Manbridge and Morris, 2001) and their consideration helps us understand why individuals become active, sustain such activism or why activism declines. Throughout the narratives detailed previously and across activists' interviews we can identify that emotions have a major role in instigating and maintaining activism as well as forging links between individuals. As we see in the previous quote the

experience of the Auswitchz (in particular experiencing it alongside an individual who was interned there) has had a profound impact upon this individual. He argues that the experience made him more active, that on his return to the branch in the event of industrial action he was motivated to act because he recognised and could relate to the bigger picture. The study tour acted as a connection for the individual to acts of injustice what Goodwin et al. (2000) refer to as a geography of emotions that triggers the dynamics of activism.

The following participant discusses his experience of the same study tour conducted a few years later and outlines the importance of shared feeling and collective understanding:

"I wanted to, wanted to bear witness to it really, never seen anything like that before, you read about it in books, then you get the President of Iran saying it never existed, it never happened, and unless you actually see something for yourself and see and believe something with your own eyes, don't listen to what people tell you, go and bear witness to it, which I've done, you know I've been there, I've seen the actual horrors, it was worse than what I thought it was going to be, there's no doubt about that.

It was a really good group of like minded people, I'm sure if you'd gone into the ins and outs of different subjects you'd find totally different political views right round that table! However, on this particular subject you know it was all likeminded people and it was important to go and see that. What have I done about it since I've come back? I've spoke with members of the branch, we've been involved in it with the children at home, the whole thing's endless really"

(Branch L P1)

On discussing the group of people he travelled with, the participant outlines that emotions are subjective and contextual, affected by place and our interactions with other people – intersubjectivities – thus we are always being produced and producing ourselves (Askins, 2009). In doing so, individual interests, values and beliefs are intertwined as a collective through a frame alignment process whereupon articulations

of internationalism are, in this case, more closely related to questions of citizenship involving broad notions of solidarity (Josselin and Wallace, 2001). Emotional responses that come out of such transformative experiences, the sense of injustice, how feelings of frustration and anger can be harnessed into activism (see for instance Chatterton et al., 2007) these feelings can be strategically deployed in that they also produce feelings of resistance, hope solidarity and morality (Bosco, 2007).

7.5.3   Testimony...making the political personal

A strategy that was often referred to as having powerful effect on international understandings and activity is that of testimony. Askins (2009: 8) explores physiological humanism were similar feelings are experienced across social and cultural difference and space and place. Many participants recognised this when recalling the impact of international delegates speaking at annual National Delegate Conference. For many, this was depicted as the only opportunity to hear about internationalism and argued that this initiative should be more wide reaching, filtering down to branches for awareness raising. Speakers were often deemed inspirational, motivators, catalysts to international action. The connection here was affective and powerfully so. Those discussing instrumental connections were not referred to with such emotion and connection by participants. The speakers presented personal powerful narratives that engaged their audience emotionally. Evidence from research suggested that everyone in that audience would be affected in different ways – most participants discussed the impact it had on their return home, to their branch and to the workplace. This

longitudinal impact supports the importance of emotion in enabling transformative encounters with others and the resultant sense of collective identity and subsequent mobilisation as we see from the following two participants:

"For me the most powerful affect that I've ever seen on a large group of people can have is hearing guest speakers from different countries"

(Branch B P1)

"One thing I was in tears over, a situation in Zimbabwe, a women's issue there and the speaker came and it was awful to think that the woman on return would probably be arrested you know on return to the country, the issues she actually talked about were very emotive and that did get to me"

(Branch A P1)

From this we see that testimony from this Zimbabwean guest speaker created feelings of proximity and shared identity thus solidarity (Bosco, 2007: 546) despite the social distance between her and the participant. As we saw in Chapter 4, emotional labour can be conceptualised as acts of 'channelling, transforming, legitimating and managing ones' and others' emotions to cultivate and nurture social networks'. Each participant who referred to experiences of testimony had experienced it at National Delegate Conference. Many spoke of their frustrations that other members were unable to experience this as it is highly unusual for international delegates to visit branches due to limited time and resource constraints. Often this cannot be overcome due to issues of travel visas and even just the mere safety of the delegate. Therefore, how can messages of testimony be filtered down to branch and lay member level? At present it is the role of branch international activists to act as a vehicle for these messages. The research identified that a well motivated, passionate international activist often produced effectively mobilised campaigns at branch level.

7.5.4 The Imagineers – linking trade union leaders with the grassroots

Tarrow (1998:3) outlined the need for theoretical attention to be placed upon accounts of leadership, stressing a richer sense of agency and the importance of the role of organisers who exploit political opportunities, create collective identities and produce mobilisation. Following the work of Robnett (1997) discussed in Chapter 4, the concept of leadership is presented here as being positioned throughout trade union structures; it is not 'leader' singular, as Melucci (1996) suggested, instead 'movement leadership' distributed amongst people at different levels (Robnett, 1997). This relationship is described as complex by Robnett (1997), with antagonism and co-operation between local bridge leaders and the formal leadership at the top – what Routledge et al (2006) refer to as 'imagineers', individuals who translate the significance of internationalism into local settings.

Goodwin and Jasper (1999) claimed that certain individuals are gifted at knowing what to do and when, how to invent new tactics, how to time action or response, how to mobilise members – this was recognised by a number of participants in discussing individuals in their branch who adopted a leadership role with regards internationalism:

> "You know he is a shining example of defeating everything that should be distracting them elsewhere...he's following the main path...everybody knows him you see and he's involved with the Labour Party so everybody knows him. But he's a really good example of somebody who's not going to be distracted from the main issue and he is great...you know he's a mate of Jack Jones and you know he knows Rodney Bickerstaffe and all that, he's involved in older people's issues, but you know he's one that you know "we're sitting here but there's a big world out there It's a very old fashioned expression, "he's the man", you know he's "the big man", I shouldn't imagine it happens very often that somebody has a toe to toe with him. So they follow"
>
> (Branch I P3)

There is an understandable desire to avoid the 'great man' theories of history and give proper theoretical weight to both the circumstances in which international campaigns develop and the part played by grassroots members (Barker, 2001: 1) but in many cases we must recognise that although grievances are real enough, an individual leader still needs to articulate these grievances and suggest a pragmatic course of action. Such individuals act to play the role of 'organisers' or 'imagineers' whose contention is to raise awareness. exploit political opportunities, create collective identities and mobilise branch members as recognised here by the following two participants:

"He's always going on about Cuba! You couldn't not know about Cuba could you?! We put pictures up on the wall of each branch exec member, and we had to write little captions like things that they do or have said, and his was "Cuba Cuba Cuba!" He's always going on about it!"

(Branch B P3)

"Maybe it is just that some people think 'well that's something I'm interested in and I know about and have done something about as well', it's not just knowing about it, it's actually doing something, therefore we'll pass it on and try and get them interested"

(Branch B P4)

The rhetoric of internationalism that the imagineers are seen to articulate produces identifications across vast social and spatial distances. They provide a connection between internationalism, daily branch activities and grassroots members. In doing so, they translate the significance of international solidarity into local settings by rendering events and occurrences in peoples' lives as meaningful, framing the function to organise experience and guide action. By raising awareness of internationalism and making it relevant to branch activity, imagineers produce feelings of frustration and

anger within branch members that may be harnessed towards activism since these emotions also contain hope that can thus be played out through prefigurative politics linked to notions of solidarity, care and responsibility. The necessity for the imaginer is to be able to distinguish between individual and collective identities (Melucci, 1996) and therefore individual and collective strategising e.g. what 'I' can and should do in light of my situation or how 'we' can and should act.

7.6   Conclusion

The use of personal narratives during this chapter allows us to make a number of interesting assumptions. Firstly, they identify that understandings and interpretations of internationalism, as well as whether and how they are acted upon are determined by an individual's personal experience and multiple identities. This in turn influences their association with trade unionism, their outlook on life and what it means to be international. We are able to identify that connections are made with international others through a variety of means – common issues, interests, experiences, emotions and employers. Thus both instrumental and affective internationalism act to construct international solidarity.

Importantly, the findings within this chapter refutes perceptions of lay members as selfish and instrumentalist – often they do not recognise their trade union as an outlet for international expression something that can be overcome through awareness raising resulting in support for labour internationalism. This claim was

supported by the activists who participated within this research who readily identified and supported notions of internationalism because of their positioning within trade union communication networks. In moving away from abstract and institutional understandings of internationalism and promoting a more grounded internationalism and how it is practiced daily allowed all participants to engage with the concept and relate it to their own being. Furthermore we begin to identify the role key individuals can play within branch structures in mobilising and organising members to produce internationalist identifications.

Chapter 8

Labour internationalism as a revitalisation tool for public sector trade unions?

8.1   Introduction

This chapter draw upon empirical evidence to ascertain whether labour internationalism is, or could be, an effective tool in revitalising public sector trade unions. I will outline how revitalisation has been promoted particularly through (and as a result of) engagement with other trade unions and civil society actors in joint campaigning. Coalition building such as this is arguably both a litmus test for, and necessary feature of contemporary trade union revitalisation, whether at local, national or international levels. Furthermore I wish to problematise understandings of internationalism identified earlier in this thesis by exploring public sector internationalism and arguing that it cannot be categorised as simply 'affective' *or* 'instrumental'. Instead I suggest that trade unions such as UNISON promote a universal public sector ethos that combines both instrumental and affective strategies that epitomise grassroots' experiences and conduct as illuminated over previous chapters. I will argue that UNISON is well placed to do this as its history of, and current international activities, have shown. Pertinently to this thesis however, having identified that not all grassroots members are aware of international activity nor are they necessarily supportive, I argue that grassroots level organising and campaign strategies based on new labour internationalism must be conducted. This chapter will argue that

there exists real potential in revitalising public sector unionism by increasing grassroots support for, and involvement in, internationalism.

8.2   Revitalising trade unions

Chapters 2 and 3 argued that the world has changed and so too must trade unions to rebuild their strength to counter neoliberal policies and the onslaught of globalisation. This thesis has showed that both grassroots members and those at elite levels within the labour movement recognise this:

> "Yeah, well it has changed. In fact I was down at Tolpuddle on Saturday giving a speech, and ended up having a rant at Channel 4 for a programme they're doing which they've titled tentatively 'Brothers', and I said to them well what about 'sisters'? So that's a big change you know that I mean UNISON's got 1.3 million members, a million of them are women, that wasn't the case 100 years ago, it was all male dominated, as society was of course, yeah.
>
> So I mean there are changes like that, and there are changes in you know, obviously different jobs, different industries, different you know, you don't have the old smoke stack industries where you've got 1000 to 2000, 5000 people, men in particular, all together. I grew up in Doncaster, it was the mining industry, yeah, every village had a pit. Every pit had 100, 200, 300, 700, 1000 men, and there was the railway, what they called the plant, which is where the railway works, where they built trains and they built you know, 4000 people, nearly all men. That's not around now, ship building's gone, ship repairing's gone, you know, the smoke stack industries have gone, in fact most of manufacturing has gone if it comes to that. So we're a service based industry.
>
> So the unions follow in a different way, in a sense there isn't that almost life and death, which it was in the pit, you know, you needed the solidarity and the camaraderie and the togetherness of being in the union, yeah, because it built you closer. *But the basic principles of the trade unions are exactly the same"*.

(Rodney Bickerstaffe, former UNISON General Secretary)

Rodney Bickerstaffe's quote encapsulates the changes he has witnessed during his time within the labour movement. He argues that it is not only necessary for trade unions to revitalise according to the changes around them but also for recognition of internal changes such as changing demographics within their own membership. We saw in Chapter 2 how Touraine (1981) and Castells (1996) both dismissed the contemporary relevance of trade unions due to accounts of post-industrialism. But for many others, despite shifts in the politico-economic arena trade unions retain an important function both instrumentally and affectively – they simply need to revitalise their position:

> "Well I think trade unions greatest challenge is going to be regenerating itself, a bit like Dr Who, you know! But is there a future for trade unionism? Well you know my view. It's like saying is there a future for justice? Right?" (Billy Hayes, General Secretary of CWU)

For Billy Hayes as long as there is injustice then there will always be a role for trade unions. Some academics, most notably those mentioned above, have claimed trade unions have been historically superseded, whereas others instead argue that this is premature. Trade unions can revitalise themselves in ways befit to this era (Moody, 1997), an argument supported by Nick Crook (UNISON International Officer) who suggests that trade unions have undergone changes in the past, it is a constant development process to match the needs of members, thus challenges can be overcome:

> "Trade unions didn't develop in an environment that was friendly to them, they developed in a very hostile environment, and yet they developed. So it's hard work and it's not very nice but it is possible to grow trade unions in a hostile and changing environment...I think that's going to be the big challenge. I think there will always be the need for trade unions and I think if trade unions are clever then there is always a role for them, it's whether they're clever enough and capable enough of responding to the challenges".

During a speech at a Union Ideas Network conference in 2007 Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC on addressing an audience of trade union activists and labour academics reinforced Nick Crook's comments and offered a solution whilst claiming that trade unions are:

> "...experiencing a challenging time as a consequence of the growth in global capital...the trade union movement does not oppose globalisation, instead it must work to 'shape' it through establishing a new deeper internationalism to match that of global capital".

The timeliness of this research meant that for some, the experience of the global economic crisis should act to prompt trade unions into action, in particular international co-operation, enabling them to reposition themselves in the politico-economic arena. One of the participants espousing this was the MEP Arlene McCarthy:

> "What the crisis has shown us is that we've a crisis of global dimensions, so we can't manage or deal with or take on the challenges of this crisis at an individual member state level, it requires global co-operation or global co-ordination.
>
> And I think *trade unions are uniquely placed you know on these kinds of issues* because of who they represent to make connections and links across borders to do that.
>
> I think that's something that they will want to do more of, because when you see a lot of you know people losing their jobs, businesses going under, job losses...we're fighting to make sure that people don't lose everything...and you know for UNISON and their counterparts in the EU, *fighting to retain public services and public service workers' jobs* is very important I think in relation to global economic recession [my emphasis added]".

McCarthy raises a number of points here within this extract – such a crisis needs a response which is based upon global co-operation. Issues of nationalism, isolationism and protectionism will not produce an adequate response. For her, trade unions' cross-border work provides opportunities to counter the crisis and move towards strategies in

attempts to regulate the market. Regardless of the country in which they are based, each trade union represents the individuals who will be directly affected by the crisis – workers. Most notably for this thesis, McCarthy outlines a twin track approach to revitalisation: 'fighting to retain public services and public service workers' jobs'.

Within the extract above McCarthy appears to produce a binary in the extract, that of 'trade unions' and 'governments and all of them'. The latter is depicted as promoting reduced costs in public services as an aid to limiting the affects of the crisis whereas trade unions are seen as being able to counteract this by connecting with counterparts and fighting to retain quality public service provision and employment. For McCarthy, and many others, the international trade union movement remains a critical player in forging an alternative politics to neoliberalism (Cumbers, 2004: 830).

8.3.   Can new labour internationalism make up for the disappointments in the relationship with Labour after 1997?

Recent debates in labour geography have developed our understandings of the agency of labour as embedded in and variegated by different economic structures and political landscapes rather than autonomous (Coe and Lier, 2010). For public sector workers and their trade unions, political opportunities are very much conditioned by the state which plays multiple roles in the lives, employment and politics of its employees (Lier, 2009). Given that many trade unionists feel that the relationship between the unions and Labour is not as strong as it once was, and that as a result,

unions have struggled to influence policy making at a national scale, one could argue that trade union influence could be revitalised through an international rather than a national focus.

This thesis argues that the political realities for trade unions are based upon weakening ties to the British Labour Party. Moreover, Lillie and Martinez Lucio (2004) argue that such a situation can create scope for a more grassroots approach to internationalism as well as a proliferation of coalitions with trade unions and other organisations. Therefore the empirical evidence within this section does not seek to merely outline the strained relationship between the Labour Party and the labour movement, instead the intention is to outline whether public sector unions are tied to the nation state and whether this is a contributing factor on decisions about adopting new labour internationalism positions. However, this thesis argues that on making this decision trade unions must be careful to avoid being seen to fetishise the global scale. Instead, in conducting new labour internationalism in attempts to revitalise, the aim must be to transcend geographical boundaries whilst communicating with members on why such action is being taken.

When the Labour Party took power in 1997, British trade unions may have assumed that they would again have access to traditional channels of influence, meaning the development of social alliances with other groups may not have been so high on their agenda. This proved not to be the case. As a response to globalisation, it has become apparent that alliances with other groups are a vital strategy in the fight against privatisation and the quality of public services thus a potential revitalisation technique both within and across borders. It is ironic that at a time when there is much debate as to whether the nation state still has sufficient capacity to regulate markets in a global economy some unions continue to target the nation state as its primary scale of

action. Whilst international solidarity efforts are increasingly important and widespread, often they still occupy only a small portion of the overall union agenda. Yet many union members (including the majority of participants within this research) associated their frustrations with national politics, the transformation of the public sector and reduced union power within an overall narrative on political engagement over recent decades. The majority of participants expressed this through their understanding of UNISON's affiliation with the Labour government:

> "...if it's [Labour Link] presented to them as 'we're just paying the fat cat MPs and they vote to privatise our jobs', naturally our members are going to say 'well that's no good'. When it's presented to them as 'this is our opportunity to influence and persuade and we don't have this with anybody else', some may change their mind.
>
> And that's the real argument because on the one hand people argue 'well we've got the minimum wage, we got the Employment Rights Act, we got you know record investment in public services, so you would never have got that under a Conservative Government"
>
> (RO 2)

The participant, a UNISON Regional Organiser, clearly identifies two factions in UNISON – those who support affiliation to the Labour Party and those who call for a withdrawal of union funds. During research fieldwork the scandal of MPs' expenses claims and pensions had come to light in sensationalist claims throughout the media resulting in many trade union members querying UNISON's relationship with party politics. Many lost faith in the political system at this time and questioned why their membership subscriptions should be funding what they saw to be an inherently undemocratic system and furthermore not appearing to have an influence upon governmental policy. The Regional Organiser correctly identifies that under the New Labour government, public sector unions and the wider labour movement have gained

from legislative victories such as the minimum wage etc; but the relationship between the party and the majority of participants within this research was clearly strained. One way of attenuating the effects of a lack of purchase on Labour Party policy making could be to become more globally conscious: that is, not only to link up with foreign trade unions in solidarity campaigns but to learn the lessons of union successes and failures in other countries as well (Bacarro et al., 2003). Such debates have wider implications beyond national politics and employment legislation. A number of participants argued that the link with Labour did allow the unions to influence the then Labour government's foreign policy decisions:

> "I think all the unions to take a far more proactive role about what our foreign policy is and to put more pressure, we've got a Labour government in power which receives huge amounts of money from the union and isn't representing our views".

> *"Being linked to Labour...do you think that undermines UNISON's stance against the war on terror?"*

> "That's an interesting question, UNISON obviously is against the war overall isn't it? And yet it's giving money to a government who is promoting it, it's odd isn't it?"   (Branch M P2)

Therefore not only was the Labour Party seen to promote neoliberal reorganisation of the public sector but to also be moving away from the international values endorsed by trade union internationalism. However, the need for strategic access to government was outlined by Nick Crook, UNISON International Officer:

> "It is useful as it means we do have a way in to talk to Government Ministers and to MPs about international and European issues that we wouldn't necessarily have if the union wasn't affiliated and didn't have a link...I don't think that will continue in 6 months' time under the Tories, and that's because there is still an intrinsic link [with Labour], however

difficult it is after 12 years of a Labour government, there is still that link between the party and the trade unions. I think formally those forums will probably be shut down when the Tories get in".

A view supported by Keith Sonnett, Deputy General Secretary of UNISON:

"International work will suffer [under a Conservative government]....under a Labour Government for the last thirteen years, we've been able to undertake a number of solidarity issues up with the Government. As a union we've been able to speak to David Miliband to raise issues with him. So there has been a sort of constructive dialogue between ourselves and Government, where we can express views on international activities I guess. That won't happen in the same way in the future. And the relationships which may exist in the future between the trade unions and the Government will be much more formalised and our influence will be less".

Some argue that the neoliberal political agenda espoused by successive New Labour governments has created a disconnect between the Labour Party and its traditional supporters within trade unions and the wider labour movement. It is apparent that Labour's policies have had a huge impact in terms of public sector unions' ability to represent their members in the conduct of their daily practice. However, for those in an official capacity within UNISON the importance of a relationship with the governing party is clear.

The election result in 1997 produced great optimism within the labour movement with hopes that a Labour Government would result in increased channels of influence within the mechanisms of parliamentary politics. The proceeding years since have led to disappointment amongst many trade unionists. Instead of becoming a proactive insider, trade unions have found themselves to be external lobbyists and only able to react to Labour's policies. The implications of this for public sector unions is

integral to understandings of whether or not they will begin to look to build coalitions with counterparts both within and outside of the UK. This thesis argues that such decisions should be made on the basis of conceptions of the public sector beyond its ties to the nation state. New labour internationalism offers many avenues for revitalisation. The opportunity for expressions of two way solidarity and information exchange with trade unions counterparts as well as coalitions with other organisations offers a rejuvenated political stance for trade unions. Such activities enable them to collate information on how to best serve their members; whilst also opening up new areas for recruitment. However, this standpoint should not be seen as a recommendation for public sector unions to automatically 'jump scales' to international activity in a bid for rejuvenation because of a misconceived 'domestic failure'.

Instead, new labour internationalism should be seen as a strategy which collapses notions of scale thus allowing for unions to attempt to develop its political influence was also conducting international activities. Anything other than this combined approach would be ill advised and potentially widen the gap between grassroots members and union leaders:

"One real concern that is that members are worried that we've [trade unions] become so powerless to control things, to make decisions that control their lives that you know we're going off on one [acting internationally], talking about things much wider and further away, just to sort of cover up or substitute the fact that we can't do anything for them directly!

I don't think they're worried about the fact that sort of oh we just find that more interesting so we're just sort of you know using their money inappropriately. I think they're actually worried that it's an expression of failure, domestic failure".

(Owen Tudor, Head of the TUC's EU and International Relations)

This chapter, as with the theoretical and empirical evidence throughout this thesis highlight a key issue for trade unions, that of communication with grassroots members. In the extract above, Owen Tudor outlines the importance of ensuring trade union members are aware of, as well as supportive of, international activity. We saw earlier how participants within this research where often quite negative of internationalism until the process of awareness raising during discussions illuminated notions of both instrumental and affective forms of solidarity to which they could often connect. Relatedly, it is often argued that if trade unions are to undergo revitalisation they must recreate themselves as social movements (Voss and Sherman, 2000) suggesting a move away from instrumental forms of trade unionism.

However, this thesis argues that attempts at revitalisation should not be subjected to a binary between affective *or* instrumental forms of internationalism. This chapter will show that by adopting both, trade unions will be able to communicate with members arguing why such action is being taken and enabling them to construct international connections with other workers. Therefore, despite claims from Touraine (1981) and Castells (1996) that the labour movement is no longer relevant, this chapter will argue that trade unions are in a period of transition, adopting numerous international activities for revitalisation and still the most appropriate organisation to support the public sector and its workers.

8.4.   Instrumental revitalisation

Empirical evidence outlined in Chapter 6 highlighted support for instrumental forms of internationalism, that being able to 'act in concert with others on those issues where collective action yields better results' (Fox, 1985:192). As such, the following extract from a focus group illustrates union members' understandings of the privatisation of public services and the necessity for public sector unions to revitalise their positioning through strategies such as cross-border collaboration with other unions:

Branch N focus group

"I think it's become more important recently especially since we've got involved with people like [a private company] who's American. I think it's important to get involved to build links with trade unions in other countries where they're based to make sure we're all getting the same rights. And we can learn from each other. We've got so many multinational companies bidding for our work the unions got to be on the ball. I don't think people realise that"   (P6)

"I agree fully if you look at the politics of our local government work we're being affected by the global market and global workforce"
                                                                                                    (P7)

"Yeh, I mean, if you look at the work with X, it's good locally because we've got jobs getting moved here from like Suffolk, which is great for members here, but on your shoulder is that monkey who's telling you 'but what about when there's a more cheaper workforce in Mumbai?'"
                                                                                                    (P6)

The focus group members were based in local government and yet despite levels of privatisation being less than other service groups UNISON represents the effects were apparent to workers. The participants identify how local government is increasingly subject to international forces and what this may mean for their employment stability

and any resultant trade union response. I noticed that many participants seemed to find this approach encouraging in that it gave UNISON the opportunity for information exchange with trade union counterparts revealing information they might not necessarily have access to such as terms and conditions; the nature and characteristics of the employer; their counterparts relationship with the employer.

For UNISON the increasing number of private companies entering the public sector domain is of great concern. Nick Crook argued that a national response to issues such as this is not adequate, instead trade unions must learn from each others' experiences to improve public service performance and avoid public-private partnerships:

> "One of the things UNISON has been doing globally is about things like how you deal with the argument for public-private partnerships, and UNISON are very strongly pushing the public-public partnership idea, that you know the public sector in one country should learn from the public sector in another country and improve its performance that way, rather than assuming the only way to do it is to drag in a private sector supplier"

Here instrumental internationalism is readily identifiable as an opportunity for trade unions to co-operate and provide information on common issues. Trade unions across Europe have experienced (are experiencing) privatisation at varying levels, therefore UK trade unions such as UNISON are able to provide knowledge and experience on how best to resist or work with it to the benefit of their members. For many trade unions, decisions on revitalisation are often based upon opportunities for concretising this exchange through organisational restructuring such as mergers and alliances. The following section will first examine this in terms of whether it would be an effective

approach for UNISON before exploring if such strategies could (or should) now be conducted across-borders in attempts to revitalise public sector trade unions.

8.4.1   Mergers and Super unions – the public sector is a nice block to fight for

To introduce discussion on trade unions adopting cross-border mergers and/or alliances I asked focus group participants their views on trade union mergers within the UK as attempts as revitalisation. A number of participants raised concerns similar to Willman and Cave (1994: 395) that 'the tendency for concentration through merger often damages representative effectiveness' for instance 'big's not always better' (Branch G. P1) with this perspective furthered here:

> "Yeh. I think as a member how effective UNISON is actually one of the most important questions. I don't think UNISON should be blinded by the fact that UNITE are one of the biggest unions in the country – they may well be the biggest but it does not mean that they are the most effective. They've not got the membership density that we have and they're representing an awful lot so I think that they will be losing focus on who they are negotiating for".

> "I mean if you get too big you start to lose focus though don't you on what you're meant to be concentrating on don't you? UNISON isn't as focused as it was when we were members of NALGO. It's still public sector based but not as focused. If you started losing focus you'd probably lose members".

These two extracts raise numerous important issues. Both recognise that one of the suggested motives of a union merger – to increase its size, in accordance with Undy et al's (1981) analysis does not necessarily equate with effectiveness. Furthermore

'effectiveness' is associated with negotiating and representation on behalf of members as opposed to connotations of increased power and influence in relation to global corporation and neoliberal capitalism. Interestingly, the last quote refers to a perceived necessity to stay focused upon one sector – the public sector. The extract also raises the issue of a trade union's 'focus' in other words, the sectors and types of employment a union represents on behalf of its members. One participant queried: 'if you get too big you start to lose focus though don't you?' an argument raised in Heery et al's (2001) discussion of super unions. Participants anticipated union membership becoming more concentrated in relatively few super unions, each of which would operate with a recruitment base unrestricted by industry or occupation (ibid) a proposition that caused concern:

> "Public sector is like a nice kind of block to fight for; there's common themes there between everyone. If it's widened out this would mean UNISON could lose focus and be all over the place"
>
> (Branch B, P3)

The industrial logic of mergers – be it industry or sector was promoted by a UNISON NEC member:

> "If you are trying to get solidarity you are much better off trying to get people who are doing the same job or can have an impact if you work together rather than have an alliance with someone working in a completely different sector where if you asked them for support it is not going to help your dispute. So you would say that it would be the starting point, getting 'all the workers of all lands united' as Marx put it and not just start picking and choosing' [any merger partner regardless of sector base]".

In his discussion of revitalisation techniques employed by trade unions to counter globalisation, Ebbinghaus (2003: 325) argued that the 'persistence of differences and failure to overcome the plurality of different interests among unions despite the need for

more co-ordination indicates the salience of national traditions and organisational self interest'. Such obstacles were recognised by focus group participants as evident in this discussion following one participant mentioning the possibility of UNITE merging with American Steelworkers:

> "What a waste of time – that's just about money, large numbers and headlines"
>
> "It's about internationalism; having power and influence as the multinationals do"
>
> "I think it'd be hard that, pulling off a multinational trade union"
>
> "But companies are multinational so why shouldn't unions be?"
>
> "I can see the need for a greater kind of trade union movement to react to globalisation but there's massive differences between different countries"
>
> (Branch N discussion between P1, P3, P6 and P7)

This final quote may be used to indicate the obstacles preventing trade unions from conducting cross-border mergers, let alone the creation of a global union. It can be argued that there is a definite logic in forming trade union mergers across geographical space if the unions represent members based within a sector or an industry that is not tied to down geographically or in industries that are linked across space. This is the view advocated by Nick Crook:

> "You can see a logic in some of the big manufacturing unions, there's an interesting development for Amicus, T&G (UNITE) with the United Steelworkers in America. Now there is an industrial logic there because they've got members in the same industries and same companies...and this is the dilemma for public service trade unions as opposed to trade unions in the private services sector or the manufacturing sector - at the end of the day our members don't work for multinational companies. They still work either at national level or local government or regional government or for small NGOs who provide services. They're not working for big multinationals".

Although not explicitly stated, it could be argued that focus group participants agreed with this in their discussions surrounding focus and representation. If UNISON was to create cross-border mergers with unions not representing the public sector this could reduce their effectiveness:

> "We've already got a problem in UNISON Nationally with individuals not knowing who we are so if you go up a level then you just end up with more people not knowing who you are. You're just demoting us again. At the moment we've already got to go through Region and National structures"
>
> (Branch B, P6)

Furthermore in the previous quote Nick Crook identifies that international trade union collaboration is effective when based upon private or manufacturing sectors where an international link is more apparent – instead the public sector focus is depicted as local and/or regional. This thesis argues that although important, such notions have negative implications for understandings of internationalism. There is a necessity to move beyond conceptualisations and rhetoric of the public sector as geographically bounded. Instead it is increasingly subject to internationalising processes which reinforce the requirement of constructing connections between workers according to common issues and experiences.

One sector espousing a very definite international identity is that of the seafaring industry. Paul Maloney, Assistant General Secretary of Nautilus International was able to provide real insight into what has been deemed the first truly transnational trade union merger[11]. Their primary concern was that the identity of its members was preserved:

---

[11] 'Mariners score world first in transnational union' Issue 38(5) European Review, http://www.tueip.dircon.co.uk/er38-page5.html

"Ultimately our members see themselves as seafarers, I think it's hugely important for them to be able to know that they're a member of a seafarer's union.

I think around about 85, possibly 90% of the seafarers who could join unions, join us, and it's the same in Holland. And the reason for that is because people see it, it's the seafarers' union, it's our union. In France and Germany, two European countries that immediately spring to mind, that's not the case, in France you know the union is split into three different trade union centres really, so whichever port they're in, whichever their way back history politically it was, it's whichever union they're in. Seafarers' are part of a much bigger group and in Germany there's about 2,000 German seafarers within Ver.di.

So you know our mission statement had always been that there was never going to be a UNITE Seafarers' Section!

You know we're determined to maintain that we're a seafarers' union, but we're determined to grow and have the same sort of influence. So that's why we grow across nations rather than become part of something within the UK".

For this sector, identity is extremely important to union organising and is utilised as a tool for building connections with counterparts through internationalism as asserted by Nick Crook:

"There's a logic there [Nautilus], an industrial logic. And you can see that in the future of the telecoms industry where you might have at European level, or even international level a single trade union in the telecommunications industry because they're multinational companies and there is an industrial logic there and I think that is the way things are going.

Public sector is different – unless the pace of privatisation and liberalisation keeps going and actually, well, our health workers will be working for private health care monopolies or private health companies. And that's the threat! But at the moment I think the nature of international co-operation will be different in the public sector".

For both Nick Crook and Paul Maloney revitalisation can be achieved by same industry unions through international co-operation in the form of a merger. Nick Crook argues

that international co-operation for the public sector will adopt different characteristics. We must query this. Is it because the sector is deemed as being fundamentally tied to the state as employer? Is it because other sectors are able to readily identify the international aspects of their daily practices upon which to coordinate with counterparts i.e. negotiating and collective bargaining with common employers; common EU Directives and legislative frameworks? As reported during Chapter 6, participants were more likely to identify with instrumental forms of internationalism if they were based within branches subject to high levels of privatisation, or employed by a private company.

Nick Crook hints at the threat of public sector workers being employed by private health companies. Unfortunately, this proposition may not stray too far from the potential future of the UK public sector should it continue along the neoliberal path. In dealing with private actors who have entered the terrain of service provision is there not potential for public sector unions to act similar to other sector unions by adopting an international stance? Some of UNISON's current international activity reflects this.

8.4.2   UNISON cross-border alliances – instrumentalism in action

Visser (1997: 252) claimed that 'national systems of industrial relations have become irrelevant and unions must either co-operate across national borders or else become ineffective'. In arguing that trade unions must increase the level of information and co-ordination they exchange and identify what they have in common (ibid).

Alliances enable unions to do this whilst removing potential obstacles that formal mergers can produce. UNISON has adopted this strategy as opposed to merger resulting in some participants reminiscing about the UNISON merger as this Branch Officer explains:

> "Having been through a merger with a UK union, that took about six years and it was very difficult and in some areas they still don't seem to have merged properly. To actually think about merging with a European union and trying to get conferences; trying to get rulebooks...you are working in different countries with different laws and different regulations, it would just be too difficult and not worth it"
>
> (Branch O P2)

Differences across countries with regards industrial relations, political and economic circumstance is evident throughout discussions on strategies trade unions can adopt to counter the might of MNCs in this globalised era. Anner et al (2006: 8) present the analogy that comparing trade unions across geographical space is similar to that of a comparison of apples and oranges. However, when working on the basis of industrial logic i.e. creating alliances between public sector unions, the benefits to alliances can be invaluable, furthermore, working with others who have dealings with the same employer could be hugely beneficial as explained by Nick Crook:

> "I mean with Ver.di I think there's a good example which was when NHS Logistics was privatised to DHL and the sudden realisation that DHL is owned by the German Post Office, and who is the union in the German post office, it's Ver.di, and Ver.di have someone on the management board of the German post office who talks to DHL, and that, those links suddenly fall into place and you think OK, that's how we can use them, the agreement."

From this quote alone it is evident that UNISON and Ver.di identified a commonality of interests on which they could co-operate, reflecting one of Waterman's (1998) criteria for a new labour internationalism – to build horizontal, decentralised, democratic

international network for information exchange. This is exemplified in the

memorandum of understanding on the alliance which states:[12]

> 'The two unions, whose members are largely recruited from the public
> service providers, believe that they have a great deal in common and that
> by working more closely together they can considerably enhance the
> conditions of workers in both the private and public sector. The two
> unions will also work more closely on a range of policy issues,
> particularly at the European level. And they intend to undertake joint
> action in a number of transnational companies engages in the provision
> of public services where the two unions have members.
>
> While one element of the future co-operative working will be around
> developing common policies for public services there will also be a
> number of practical elements. These will include joint recruitment
> activity, joint negotiating and bargaining and joint campaigning'.

On discussing this with a Regional Organiser (RO 2) he identified potential in such

alliances, as long as they are strategically filtered down to activists:

> "We need to be doing that at a strategic level, at the general secretary
> level we do this you know...so stewards who work for a Danish company
> and are under pressure and in dispute with that Danish company, they
> need to meet the stewards who are doing it in France, Denmark,
> Germany or wherever. Now there might only be limited value in that,
> but I think at some point it should happen"

He continued, stating that direct information exchange at more local levels between

counterparts would be of benefit to branches claiming that:

> "The employer wouldn't like that, it's another source of solidarity and
> it's another source of information. And it may you know engender a sort
> of more meaningful link. I mean for example it would be good to go into
> a meeting with [the employer] and say 'well that's not what you agreed
> with the French'. I mean I can say to them 'that's not what you've agreed

---

[12] http://www.UNISON.org.uk/international/europe.asp

281

in London or Glasgow" but you know the different unions have got different facilities and different agreements and some of them will be a lot better than what we've got, and it would be really useful to have that kind of information".

This quote supports Waterman's (1998) criteria that solidarity should be conducted in a two-way or multidirectional flow of political support, information and ideas. It is encouraging that this type of instrumental internationalism is supported by both Regional Organisers, grassroots members (as evident during discussions in Chapter 6) and nationally as identified by this following extract from discussion with Nick Crook:

"I mean I think it is a positive and I think increasingly, certainly at the European level, that's where we're going to have to go. Part of the problem we still have in the public services is that you know despite 20 years of privatisation and outsourcing, actually most of our members are employed by national or local or regional Government, and it's the same in other European countries, so *we don't have that commonality of employers.*

There are as you say certain sectors where it is you know water, gas, electricity, outsourced services in the health service or local Government, but generally our membership isn't there. *But that doesn't mean that the policy issues aren't the same and it doesn't mean that it's not going to happen,* and I think we have to be fairly realistic that probably outsourcing and privatisation is going to continue, as much as we might want to resist it, you know it's UNISON's two track position, you know *we resist it, we fight it, but we also work with it by organising, and I think that will have to continue".*

Trade unions face the reality that privatisation is happening and they have to face choices as identified by a senior member of the regional management team 'whether to fight issues of privatisation or work with it to get the best for our members'. It is apparent from this quote that UNISON is in a transitional stage - the changing characteristics of the public sector from perceptions of it as nation state bound, primarily local, community based etc to recognition of the impact of global forces is

becoming increasingly recognised at strategic levels and also by lay members. It is argued that it may be difficult to produce links via common employers - although this is changing as more private, international companies infiltrate the sector. However, recognition of common policies and experiences, or simply the understanding that trade unions can learn from one another is becoming more apparent in the mindset of both UNISON staff and members as the trade union moves towards building alliances with counterparts.

I have shown throughout this thesis that labour internationalism can be conducted in various ways; instrumental actions such as the examples within this section are just one variation. I will now turn to affective internationalism to explore whether this is also, or could be, an effective revitalisation tool for public sector trade unions.

8.5 Affective Internationalisms in practice

Chapter 6 outlined a response from an activist where he discussed the 'union ideal'; his way of expressing the way he and other activists perceive their commitment to trade unionism. Theoretically this can be referred to as affective solidarity – 'a belief in trade unionism beyond the personal benefit it ascribes to the members themselves' (Healy et al. 2004: 452). For public sector unions, affective internationalism can be depicted as epitomising a 'public sector ethos', the idea that everyone should have access to quality services, with trade unions being an effective way to ensure such services exist and defend them when under attack from neoliberal policies. The

affective feelings and morals within a statement such as this can be used as a way of constructing international identities and connections between public sector workers as evident in Chapters 6 and 7.

8.5.1 Beyond trade unions – international social movement unionism

Waterman's New Labour Internationalism called for an interaction between trade unions and social movements in an appeal for the transcendence of 'old' style international labour practice that merely represented an extension of essentially national trade union policy to the international level. In contrast, a new global solidarity was proposed based upon merging all forms of internationalisms such as labour with the anti-globalisation movement (Waterman, 2005). Such action exemplifies that labour is just one actor besides many in the global justice and solidarity movement (ibid). Coalition building with a wide variety of interest groups and NGOs feature as a significant area of work for trade unions and provided evidence for Hale's (2004) optimistic perspective on this topic. As we saw in Chapter 6 UNISON is embracing activities that are not restricted to workplace and industrial issues. It is a union that has always been aware of and progressive with regards the social and political dimensions of the environment in which it operates. Beyond the defence of public services this thesis has identified that there is emerging evidence that many campaigns and coalitions of protest against contentious governmental policies have resonated deeply with trade unions, in particular the Stop the War Coalition. This was often evidenced by branch

affiliations to organisations and campaigns and political causes that had an international dimension. It was argued however that such activity did not always appear to have become an integral element in branch culture, often competing for airtime at branch meetings. I argued that to overcome this we need to recognise branch members who can adopt roles as leaders (or imagineers) who make links with internationalism more apparent thus building internationalist identities and mobilising members. The following sections will look at affective international activity being conducted by UNISON before assessing whether or not it plays a role in revitalising the union.

8.5.1i   Coalition building with NGOs

For a number of years now there has been increasing acceptance within the labour movement to seek alliances with other collective agencies once viewed with distrust and disdain (Munck, 2002). That is not to say that trade unions should become NGOs, unions have a distinctive constituency, agenda and terrain of action, they have a democratic rationale which not all NGOs possess, and they have the organisational capacity for long term strategy which many NGOs lack. Nevertheless, there is much that unions can learn from the imagination and spontaneity of NGOs, their capacity to engage the commitment and enthusiasm of a generation which in most European countries has failed to respond to the appeals of trade unionism as outlined most

coherently by Andrea Maksimovic International Co-operation Co-ordinator for the NGO Solidar:[13]

"There is a significant sort of expertise and skills around particularly campaigning and research and advocacy that NGOs have developed. I think particularly probably in the last 20 years the best example of that is the environmental NGO who have been able to drive an agenda in a way that I think is probably one of the strongest campaigns around.

And I think that you know trade unions on the other hand have a capacity for mobilisation but also have a role in terms of being so structured that they have a much closer relationship with people and citizens and of course are kind of accountable to some extent to their members in a way that NGOs aren't. So I think the two together can do a lot and I think they need to rely on each others' strengths to be able to work on these issues.

There's often a lot of misunderstandings and I think there's a lot of, how can I put it, mistrust perhaps, which is something that we try and deal with. And it's true that also from time to time it just becomes really evident how little each others' organisations understand about each others' structures. So for example when you come for some sort of joined campaign and you're trying to make decisions, I think you know NGOs are always much quicker off the mark because they can, according to a set of policies, go out and kind of react very quickly and move things on very quickly. Trade unions are not always in a position to do that because they actually have to go back to their members and get approval and endorsements from various structures. And I think sometimes this is funny to watch, from my point of view, having worked in trade unions and understanding how they operate, because NGOs can be quite impatient with trade unions because they take forever to make a decision!"

We see from this quote the complexities that can arise from coalitions between trade unions and NGOs, in particular the dichotomy of trade unions' often centralised, bureaucratic and rigid model of organising in contrast to Solidar's decentralised

---

[13] Solidar is a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. It has 56 member organisations including trade unions, progressive civil society organisations, social democratic and socialist parties. http://www.solidar.org/

network. Part of the revitalisation process for trade unions will be to find a balance to this model – being able to move towards a social movement orientation whilst remaining accountable to its members. Although often very different in approach, trade unions and NGOs can, and do, work together effectively. This is recognisable in UNISON actively courting alliances with labour friendly NGOs, such as Oxfam and Solidar, enabling the framing of members' discontent in terms of under-valuation or low esteem in public service work alongside the defence of public services and demands for universal citizenship rights as outlined by Nick Crook:

"We started the Million Voices campaign. Essentially it's about saying you know public services are important for a decent society. It's about putting a face to public service workers, it's not this generic you know 'the public sector', it's these are people who do these jobs, and you know do you not want them to be there anymore?"

For campaigns such as this to be successful he identified the need to build coalitions:

"If we're going to be successful, especially in defending public services here in the UK, you have to get a wider community on board, you have to create links with other organisations with similar aims, you know charities, NGOs. And it shouldn't be just about public service workers defending their terms and conditions, it's about having a decent hospital or a decent school in your community, about just getting access to something like health care or education. And I think that we try and work that way internationally as well".

We see very easily from this quote how the motivations of public sector trade unions can overlap into those of NGOs and other organisations. Although they have very different organisational cultures and modes of practice (Anner and Evans, 2004) Hale (2004) argued that trade unions and other organisations can quickly overcome this

providing the basis for genuinely new forms of internationalism. This process in itself is one of revitalisation as trade unions learn from the many different styles of approach and culture of others, whilst moving away from rather static, outdated traditions. Furthermore, coalitions such as these are an opportunity to revitalise trade unions in terms of its membership be that recruiting techniques, campaigning styles or identifying new activists as argued by Rodney Bickerstaffe:

> "UNISON's million voices stuff is another vehicle for renewing what in every generation of trade unionists is there: how do you get people into trade unions? How do you get them to understand you know more easily what the connections are between trade unions and internationalism?"

We saw during the theoretical chapters how for many trade unions the response to membership decline in the past has often been a move towards service unionism. For Rodney Bickerstaffe and others however although this is important, the key to recruitment, and relatedly to union revitalisation, in this current era is internationalism is raising awareness at the grassroots level of the connections between workers worldwide. For Waterman (1998) in his promotion of new labour internationalism this is possible by transcending geographical scales and recognising international solidarity within our own communities and workplaces thus reinforcing a quote from a lay member earlier in this thesis (see *Chapter 6) in stating* 'internationalism is all around us':

> "I think if you look around it's internationalism isn't it? People from different backgrounds working together. What efforts are being made to learn from each other's culture? I think this is what we need to develop, we need to understand each other, the values they have, the background they have and how they can contribute. And if you look around there are many people from all backgrounds and if we can create the internationalism amongst ourselves, I think it would be very good for bringing other people in".

For this lay member, as with Rodney Bickerstaffe affective internationalism has the potential to revitalise trade unions. The next section will provide an example of how UNISON utilises affective forms of internationalism in anti-racism campaigning – an issue that most definitely transcends borders.

8.6   Transcending boundaries: New Labour Internationalism at home

This tendency for trade unions to re-orientate as part of a broader movement must include a commitment to an active internationalism which was recognisable in a number of UNISON North West campaigns. Each campaign was depicted as dealing directly with local issues that also transcended national boundaries. The most notable was that of the anti-racism and anti-fascism campaigning during the run up to the European election in 2009. In conjunction with the organisations Searchlight and Hope not Hate, UNISON produced a campaign utilising social movement strategies in an attempt to raise awareness of the election, mobilise activists, anti-racism initiatives and deter voter apathy. Strategies included leafleting, home visits, telephone campaigning, community events and an intensive media strategy all organised and conducted in coalition with others. This along with the rise in media coverage on the BNP's campaigning enabled participants within this research to identify the link between local, national, European and international politics. They recognised that anti-racism is a trade union issue that transcends geographical boundaries and dictates the necessity for international solidarity at home (Waterman, 1998):

"I think prior to the European elections I would have thought of it [anti-racism campaigning] as primarily local, although with an international link because we know quite clearly what the BNP's links are to international far right groups.

But I think the European elections were a big wake up call for us because although we as a branch and nationally had a big anti-BNP campaign, for Nick Griffin still to get in for the North West [MEP seat in European Parliament], you know it was a big wake-up call I think. And I think that that does show for me personally the wider link to internationalism because they're now in European Parliament for the next 5 years"
(RO 3)

It is apparent that this participant initially recognised the local issues related to BNP campaigning i.e. tensions with community cohesion, racism in the workplace. However, UNISON campaigning illustrated how these issues are in fact international by promoting the need for mobilisation at the local level to impact upon European politics. Despite the BNP gaining a seat in the European Parliament, the campaign was effective in that it identified the potential for effective social movement unionism through its coalition with numerous organisations and local communities. The campaign was positioned in the workplace and local community yet transcended boundaries by mobilising members and activists through communication and organising strategies. One of the Regional Organisers heavily involved in the campaign outlined what made the campaign so successful:

"You go home, you're asked to do things, you find out what's going on, you can find out what's going on in your locality, you choose where you fit it in, every time you get an e-mail you're asked to do something and I think the aim in future is to put video links on as well".

The campaign used communication to raise awareness and mobilised members. Each participant involved used effective campaigning such as this and discussed the necessity

of getting members active in campaigning. Theresa Griffin, formerly a Labour Party candidate for European Parliament, now a Regional Organiser with UNISON North West argued:

"I think one of the practical things is, they did it with the Hope not Hate campaign, is you give people practical things to do, follow it up within a week while it's still fresh, and this is why the use of email etc is so important, and making sure that people have got access.

Give them three things to do, give them things that are achievable, that are smart, feedback on what they've done, regularly communicate with them, go back a year later and montage the achievements that they've been directly involved with, get them personally involved".

Throughout discussions participants, like Theresa Griffin in this quote, argued that campaigning is only successful if it involves grassroots members. As I have already argued previous revitalisation strategies such as the introduction of service unionism reinforce notions of trade union members as passive consumers of services in this post-industrial era (Cumbers, 2005). In contrast affective campaigning such as this overcomes such challenges and as it has the potential to produce active members who can draw connections between themselves and other workers. In attempts to suppress such passive notions of members we must reflect upon the personal narratives and notion of the 'union ideal' revealed across previous empirical chapters which argued for constructing activism by illuminating members' engagements with internationalism (be that via trade unionism or not and identifying how we can engage them in activities):

"I think giving people something to do is a much better way of activating them than simply passing on information because that builds up the commitment that people have to things. So the more we can give people things to do so they can become involved in solidarity work, the more likely they are to be infected by it and they'll become committed.

On the other hand we know people who do tend to pop up quite a lot with different hats on and things like that, but you know it's well how can you identify the people who are going to be interested? So whilst I think it's not a case that people become interested in international solidarity per se, I think it is the case that you can transfer people over from one campaign into another campaign, and if they're interested in that, they're likely to then become interested in something else as well".

The ongoing UNISON anti-racism campaign provides a perfect example of new labour internationalism in action encompassing notions of affective solidarity, grassroots level activism, the use of information technology and communications to raise awareness and involve individuals whilst promoting the understanding that internationalism transcends boundaries. From this we can convincingly argue that revitalising public sector unions can occur through strategies of new labour internationalism that do not necessarily 'go global'. Instead, as we saw in the previous section on instrumental internationalism choices should be made about the scale(s) of action appropriate to the requirements of a campaign or dispute.

8.7   Promoting a grassroots internationalism for revitalisation

In 2008 a selection of UNISON Regional Organisers participated on a study tour working alongside SEIU officials to learn about their campaign strategies that employ direct, personal approaches to their members encompassing worker issues but broadening out the campaign remit to the politicisation of members. The study tour took place during the 2008 American Presidential campaign with SEIU campaigning in collaboration with Blue State Digital in support of the Democrats and their candidate

Barack Obama. For the North West Regional Organiser who participated this was an opportunity for UNISON to learn about how to increase effectiveness during campaigns such as the anti-racism campaigning mentioned in the previous section:

> "We had a meeting with Blue State Digital which is an organisation who are currently working with Searchlight [anti-racism campaign organisation]. They used a system of action based emails to generate funds, to generate writing to papers, talking to your friends etc. I don't know what their e-mail list was but they raised three million quid for a half hour advert that Obama did. So if they had ten million people on that email list, that's thirty pence each, if you know what I mean. So that was impressive and as I say they do much smaller campaigns and so we're working with them on this".

Attempts to improve communication, utilise information technology and mobilise grassroots members to participate in campaigning is certainly in keeping with Waterman's new labour internationalism. Heery and Adler (2004: 60) suggested that while unions are faced with political policies of exclusion they are more likely to invest in organising strategies based upon the US model. Therefore as relations with the Labour Party become increasingly strained it may be that UNISON and other trade unions attempt to revitalise themselves through other means such as this. We see from this quote on information exchange with SEIU that the organising agenda is firmly recognised as a strategy for renewal:

> "UNISON has completely changed to an organising agenda with the Regional Organisers and the Area Organisers being introduced. It's a response to knowing that we just have to go back to basics".

Organising therefore is referred to as going 'back to basics', for many participants organising at grassroots level is a crucial role of a trade unionism particularly with regards revitalisation as Theresa Griffin explained:

> "We've got to absolutely keep sight of the fact that our core objective is recruiting and retaining members, because if we don't have a membership we actually don't have any clout either in terms of power because we can say we represent. So that's absolutely critical".

The necessity for organising grassroots members, particularly in internationalist campaigning, is best summed up by Ian Stewart, former Labour Party MP, now retired:

> "The strength of a trade union's internationalism can only be based on the strength of the trade union at the ground in the UK. You must do both things at once, one without the other will not work, but they are both inextricably linked.
>
> Because we live in a global society more than ever because of technological developments and other things, there is a necessity to actually, it sounds a contradiction in terms, but there is a necessity for trade unions to be revitalised on the ground, have an active and informed membership who can then rationalise why they need to be interested in international solidarity.
>
> Without that it won't work, it will deteriorate and you will have protectionism, self interest, which some would argue is the natural way of things. But if we are a civilised society then we can control ourselves and our natural instincts, but to be able to control yourself you need to have a reason to do that, to have a reason you need to have understanding and then you need to be active".

Ian Steward's quote supports both Theresa Griffin and Nick Crooks' arguments on 'going back to basics' and organising at the grassroots through political education on labour internationalism. Suggestions such as these emphasise discussions in Chapters 6

and 7 on the necessity to concretise internationalist identities and connections between workers:

> "The nature of capitalism and the nature of the labour market has changed so much that international activity is vital from just a basic point of view of survival [of trade unions]. So I think what we need to do is we need to make those links and draw those links for people possibly more often than we do, and I think that requires just a lot of education and awareness raising.

> I think also there are things that you [trade unionists] do because you defend fundamental freedoms and again that's about explaining the history and nature of the trade union movement and its internationalism, and remembering all those times when there were strikes in one country that were supported by other countries or workers in those countries. *So I think you need to appeal to people both at a pragmatic level and also at an idealogical level* [my emphasis added].

> I mean one could argue that there is nothing to be gained for you know workers in England from their trade unions working on what's happening in Zimbabwe, but you know fundamentally a threat to that kind of rights and freedom in one place is a threat to everyone's rights and freedom.

> I think those conversations need to be had. In my experience what works is to start from what people understand and know which is what happens in their home town or in their workplace or in their community, and to make those links very clearly about why they want to be interested in protecting the rights of people in a particular place or you know why international action is becoming increasingly important".

> (Andrea Maksimovic, Solidar)

For Andrea Maksimovic the international connections between workers are obvious as their lives and practices are intertwined as a result of capitalism and the labour market;

whilst the promotion of social justice connects workers in attempts to eradicate threats to rights and freedoms as workers in attempts to eradicate and global citizens. Replicating arguments throughout this thesis she claims that to concretise these connections to form internationalist identities trade unions must make internationalism relevant to their members by making explicit the links between international campaigning and local issues.

> "The whole point of collectivism is that you recognise others in yourself, or recognise yourself in others, that sort of nurses here are interested in what's happening to nurses elsewhere. So really as I said, what it means is the more you identify with what you're doing or with your union, the more likely you are to buy into the idea of solidaristic activity overseas".

Both instrumental and affective forms of internationalism can assert this link through pragmatic examples of information exchange and joint trade union campaigning. Strengthening ideological links through affective campaigning and drawing upon peoples' shared experiences, common issues and emotions (see Chapter 4 for theoretical understandings of this) is crucial as epitomised by this quote from Rodney Bickerstaffe:

> "Everything's about connections. Look, the South African trade unionists on the docks refused to allow the Chinese ships carrying arms to Darfur in, yeah. Now did they do that for themselves, I mean what was all that about? You have to think it through. Now I'm no expert in that particular incident, but a lot of it would simply be "we don't think it's right that guns are being given to x, y and z". It's not about the South African workers on the docks.
>
> But of course in the medium and long term there are connections, because if there are more guns and more bombs in Africa, then one day it might hit South Africa. So I don't think it's a spurious connection Becky, but you can make them because we're all, there's only about 6.5 billion of us on the planet, and with the best will in the world, what goes around comes around you know.

If you don't take notice of things, or you're not interested in them, or you're not positive about them, one day it might hit you in the eye, you know. The old one about, was it Niemoller who said you know, 'they came for the communists, and I wasn't a communist, so I didn't do anything', you know the poem do you?"

In citing the example of South African dock workers and the poem by Pastor Martin Niemoller (referring to the inactivity of German intellectuals following the Nazi rise to power and the purging of their chosen groups), Rodney Bickerstaffe produces a powerfully emotive, affective encapsulation of new labour internationalism. In no way could we draw connotations between Nazi war crimes and the politico-economic constraints within which trade unions find themselves today but the underlying message is clear, that of internationalism – of constructing internationalist identities between workers based upon social justice and emancipation. We have seen in the precluding sections how trade unions in general, and public sector unions in particular, are striving for revitalisation through new labour internationalism. Such strategies must be both instrumental and affective in nature. For revitalisation to be effective public sector unions must transcend notions of geographical boundaries and recognise the internationalisms within ourselves, at home, in our communities and workplaces. This chapter has shown that UNISON has adopted such strategies; the aim now is to make this more widespread and inherent within grassroots and branch cultures.

8.8   Conclusion

The developments described in this chapter mark a limited, but significant shift in strategy in the UK towards an attempt to reorient trade unions as social actors whilst highlighting the dramatically changing terrain in which trade unions are operating. Historically, the UK labour movement has been characterised by the close organic link between unions and the Labour Party however neoliberal policies amongst other challenges have exacerbated strains in the relationship meaning unions have moved from insiders to lobbyists. Therefore a space has emerged in which new political articulations, social movement orientations and the international identities of unions has emerged.

The public sector is beginning to look beyond borders for co-operation and co-ordination with trade union counterparts and other organisations in attempts to negate the effects of the continuing path of the neoliberal agenda. As unions move towards producing an ideal social movement unionism based upon the leverage of powerful global unions rather than symbolic bureaucratic lobbying bodies, a healthy scepticism must be directed at this new labour internationalism (Tufts, 2009; Waterman and Wills, 2001; Munck, 2002).

This thesis argues that in its current state the public sector is unique in that many of its workers regardless of geographical location share a universal commitment to a public sector ethos, which can be used to construct international connections. Of course there is potential for the interests of workers to collide as private sector firms infiltrate the sector in the future, but efforts made now in constructing connections may help alleviate such tensions. Nevertheless, as we have seen from this chapter, UNISON

is forming a range of international relationships that transcend borders in attempts to revitalise its positioning notably with some success. For some, these relationships are more accurately described as situated networks where actors exchange information that can be put into action at a range of scales (see Wills, 2002). We have seen that such activity can be effective in revitalising trade unions by organising grassroots members thus producing new activists, re-motivating current activists or simply increasing recruitment levels. Furthermore, in re-positioning themselves in this way, UNISON and other trade unions are projecting an image of themselves as revitalised and more effective in attempting to counter neoliberal attacks on its services. Awareness raising, concretising affective links with others and instrumental information exchange is the key to trade union revitalisation and UNISON international strategies are at the forefront of this.

Chapter 9

Thesis Conclusion

9.1   Introduction

By synthesizing the conclusions that have been reached during the research process this final chapter presents the main theoretical and empirical contributions of this research. I will then turn to look at emerging policy implications before providing reflections on research conduct and a discussion of future research.

The theoretical discussions outlined towards the beginning of this thesis firmly placed it within a labour geography tradition. Developing this I have presented an empirical analysis from a case study of UNISON North West exploring grassroots members' perspectives on labour internationalism within a field not often evident within discussions of this nature – that of public sector unionism. The theoretical chapters assisted in contextualising the challenges trade unions have faced domestically, and on an international footing. Such challenges include anti-trade union legislations; debates centred on concepts such as post-industrialism that query the relevance of trade unions; and the impact of neoliberal capitalism resulting in individuation theory. Having identified the challenges, I then presented the possibility for trade union revitalisation. I have argued that unions still have a vital role in the functioning of modern society: just as workers and their organisations of the nineteenth century adapted to change so too can those of the twenty-first.

Attempts have already been made through what may be deemed tried and tested, conventional methods such as business and service unionism in part to recruit and maintain members deemed to be attracted by related schemes. Admittedly such schemes have to a certain degree helped reduce declining membership, and maintained or in many instances increased member recruitment levels, however I argue this merely serves to reinforce stereotypes of trade union members as individualistic. Thus in promoting union membership as such trade unions are *perpetuating the individualism* they are trying to prevent at the cost of declining feelings of collectivity. Instead, this thesis has called for revitalisation based upon the concept of a 'new labour internationalism' (Waterman, 1998) a concept which promotes both instrumental and affective forms of internationalism.

Public sector unions such as UNISON are a highly appropriate case study on how trade unions can revitalise using this strategy. Increasingly subject to international forces the UK public sector can adopt both instrumental and affective strategies to produce a revitalisation agenda based upon new models of solidarity that require a mobilisation at the grassroots. Debates within social movement theory outlined in Chapter 4 have enabled me to theorise new labour internationalism in a way that is appropriate to this sector, developing understandings of leadership, frame alignment and agency in creating collective identities and producing international mobilisations.

9.2   Summary of key findings

The empirical findings of this thesis can be summarised according to the four research questions that frame this thesis:

(i)   In what ways, if at all, do grassroots members think about internationalism?

(ii)   To what extent, and how, do grassroots members make connections with international 'others'?

(iii) What, if anything, is 'new' about labour internationalism?

(iv)   To what extent is, and could, labour internationalism be an effective tool in revitalising public sector unions?

I will now look at each of these in turn.

9.2.1   In what ways, if at all, do grassroots members think about internationalism?

As identified within the first chapter the key motivation for this research from the outset, for both UNISON North West and from an academic perspective, was to gain an understanding of grassroots' views and interpretations of labour internationalism. UNISON is an organisation that prides itself on being member-led.

This alongside understandings within UNISON nationally that the North West region is a leader on internationalism led to the question as to how its members perceive this. Where they even aware of it? And if so, did they support or question its conduct?

These questions alone produced conclusions of theoretical importance. It led to an engagement with labour geography, with this thesis suggesting that although the discipline has developed considerably since its inception, it still fails to produce a complex understanding of the agency of trade union members with regards their perceptions of, and engagement with, labour internationalism. The thesis has explored this void, whilst focusing attention on public sector trade union members – a sector which has not yet been the focus of in-depth academic attention in accounts of internationalism. Quite often discussions of labour internationalism focus upon sectors such as manufacturing and industry therefore this thesis has also addressed this imbalance with a focus upon the public sector. Moreover, such accounts often focus upon the particularities of a specific campaign – its processes, its geographies, its outcomes. Often the perspectives of the grassroots members these campaigns represent and/or actively include are not presented in any real depth.

Within this research I presented a more grounded internationalism based upon exploring more nuanced understanding of grassroots' members interpretations, experiences and conduct of internationalism be that through their trade union activity or in their working, consumer or familial habits. In doing so, the research has demonstrated that trade union members should be identified beyond their role as workers. Individuals are differentially tied into international practices and understandings according to the various cultural, political and economic aspects and sites within which they are embedded. The trade union international activists who participated within this research readily made these associations between labour

internationalism and their own daily practices. Chapter 7 identified this by drawing upon a selection of activists' personal narratives. Quite often however, lay members discussed how they negotiated processes of internationalism daily without any real recognition of doing so. This research highlighted that by untangling these negotiations and bringing to the forefront the international aspects of sometimes mundane, daily, habitual practices grassroots members began to engage increasingly with internationalism. Moving away from institutional, abstract definitions of labour internationalism to how it is practiced daily by both individuals and their trade unions produced positive understandings of internationalism and promoted notions of collectivism.

Discussions with participants such as this illuminated the various interpretations of labour internationalism. We saw throughout the theoretical chapters how internationalism can be depicted as being elite led and bureaucratic in nature whilst adhering to a very definite dichotomy – that of affective or instrumental solidarity. It was shown how this dichotomy can be unpacked and problematised during empirical accounts. The research suggests that affective and instrumental internationalism are intertwined and overlap across both time and geographical space. Although a collective process between different sets of workers, this thesis has shown that it can be determined by individuals according to their embeddedness within particular processes and networks.

For lay members, labour internationalism was often expressed in abstract terms, reflecting attempts to counter the power of the employer; charitable acts and international development; or specific images such as a UNISON banner noticed at the Drop the Debt music concert. No implicit understandings as to how it is practiced or the motivations behind it were revealed on initial discussions. Activists produced very

different notions of internationalism. For them it was more or a lifestyle choice, a mindset as encapsulated by notions of the 'union ideal'. The personal nature of many of the accounts of internationalism, in which the narrative was portrayed clearly meant a great deal to the activist telling it, suggested something of the meaning of a more 'organic' rather than 'mechanical' (bureaucratic) form of solidarity promoted by some academics (Hyman, 1999a). It also resonates with a more active (and activist) conception of workers within the globalisation paradigm of much of the relevant literature thus supporting labour geography's calls to see the production of economic space through the eyes of workers.

9.2.2 To what extent, and how, do grassroots members make connections with international 'others'?

On exploring how grassroots members make connections with others, the research had to first identify two key issues: whether participants did in fact recognise a connection with others; and how this connection was framed, maintained and/or acted upon. Understandings of connections between workers within the literature are often framed around mythological, nostalgic reflections of international solidarity in the heyday of trade unionism. This is not to say this is not partially true, however this thesis explored if a homogenous working class really did ever exist, whether it still does and if it has changed over recent decades and what this means for contemporary workers. Some interviews and anecdotal expression did stress that the theme of solidarity was

complicated by counter themes such as employment competition in certain sectors such as manufacturing and that this may be something to impact upon public sector unions in the future. Nonetheless the overarching viewpoint that emerged was that of internationalism being of great importance, particularly in terms of its emotional and moral significance and the transnational networks of practical cooperation and communication that have resulted from solidarity initiatives. Thus internationalism was deemed both affective and instrumental in nature.

For the activists who participated in this research connections with other workers were recognised. Lay members expressed concerns framed within understandings of competition and protection. However, on unpacking such tensions often a common enemy would be framed. Quite often the employer would be framed as the enemy, enabling members to envisage instrumental connections with international counterparts so both could more effectively fight what they identified as a common opponent. Affective connections were framed through emotive positioning such as testimony and study tours. Relatedly, awareness raising on the situations and experiences of international others constructed international solidarity through understandings of common issues.

The thesis outlined the complexities of international solidarity highlighting that labour internationalism is often complex and sometimes contradictory and fragmentary in character. Furthermore, I have argued that solidarity is an ongoing process which can be constructed and developed based upon grassroots' common issues, not necessarily common identities. The key to promoting connections is identifying the networks within which individuals are embedded; decisions they make as consumers; familial background; and experiences for example. All of these are in some way intertwined with internationalist expression and identity as identified by the

personal narratives of activists and comments from lay members on decisions they make on a daily basis without readily identifying the process as internationalist.

9.2.3   What, if anything, is 'new' about labour internationalism?

During the initial stages of this research there appeared to be a sense of irony in using the term 'new' labour internationalism given that the concept was introduced over thirteen years ago by Waterman (1998). And yet despite the apparent un-timeliness and inappropriateness of the term, the academic literature presented throughout this thesis has identified that the concept has not been revised since its inception, nor has any academic attempted to dispute its originality. Instead, in Chapter 4 I identified that making reference to the concept as new is correct in that it represents a new approach to internationalism, a very old issue, suitable for a new era of neoliberal globalisation, working with and learning from new social movements and NGO actors. The new era necessitated a new toolkit enabling the international labour movement to strategise and revitalise its positioning in this politico-economic arena.

Indeed, in theory, new labour internationalism can be said to be 'new' in this respect. It represents an international campaign for social justice based upon equality of all workers and overcoming ideological and financial bias and dependencies of the past. However in practice, Waterman's (1998) understanding of, and motive for, producing his thirteen criteria for a NLI are as relevant as in 1998. In attempting to identify grassroots' perceptions of labour internationalism, this thesis has also highlighted

tensions surrounding the level at which internationalism is practiced, promoted and theorised. All too often anecdotal and recorded evidence appeared to suggest that official trade union practice seems implicitly to accept that internationalism is an elite concern, that it is safer if the membership does not learn too much of policies which they might perhaps oppose. In some unions, certainly UNISON, international issues are given reasonable prominence in internal communications and education: I fear this may be far from typical, though openness may be increasing as unions struggle to find a response to neoliberalism. In any event, since effective international solidarity is impossible without a willingness to act on the part of grassroots trade unionists, it is unattainable without an active strategy by union leaders and activists to enhance knowledge, understanding and identification of common interests across borders.

9.2.4   To what extent is, and could, labour internationalism be an effective tool in revitalising public sector unions?

The 'new' labour internationalism appears to be bringing with it new vitality into trade union structures and processes. This thesis therefore argues that there is a strong affinity between literature on labour internationalism and labour revitalisation. The thesis has demonstrated that contemporary trends in labour internationalism are best understood not purely as defensive responses to an increasingly hostile neoliberal environment, but rather as a much more complex repertoire of pro-active as well as reactive strategies. This suggests an understanding of labour internationalism that

places it much more within the arena of labour renewal and revitalisation than crisis. The thesis has shown that labour internationalism is both an area of activity that is contributing to revitalisation strategies as well as having itself been revitalised through a new labour internationalism.

The empirical evidence identified how international work brought new energies into trade union structures, whether this was to do with active members bringing political international issues to branch meetings or to individual grassroots members, the narrative was of the trade union benefitting in various ways. The benefits that became evident included: the health of internal debate; awareness of international issues within branches; the political sophistication of members; the general cultural levels of branches and in terms of tolerance and understandings of other cultures; and resistance to racism at home. Many of the examples given confirm the account given by Lille and Martinez Lucio (2004) of the dimensions across which a new, revitalised labour internationalism is developing.

We saw in Chapter 3 the theoretical understandings of how organised labour is responding to the economic, political, social and cultural changes in its environment. Those who have offered theoretical perspectives on contemporary labour internationalism fall into different, overlapping areas. Some have emphasised the interaction between organised labour and social movements of (Waterman, 1998; Munch and Waterman, 1999). Others have emphasised the significance of new formulations of purpose and organisational style within trade unionism (Harrod and O'Brien, 2002) as well as that of reformulations of the meaning of solidarity (Hyman, 1999a). Whilst the various directions of labour revitalisation suggest a divergence in empirical themes, the commonality often linking them is the notion of a resurgence in labour internationalism. Having highlighted the numerous revitalisation methods

identified by within industrial relations, social movement and geographical literatures it became apparent during analysis of the empirical data that new labour internationalism is but one of many revitalisation methods that should be used in combination.

Chapter 8 recognised that despite perceptions of the UK public sector being tied to the nation state, it is increasingly international as illustrated by research participants. In Chapter 2, and across the empirical chapters, the thesis identified that revitalisation strategies must reflect the identity and culture of the trade union involved. In this sense, traditional industrial relations methods such as merger were deemed only appropriate between trade unions belonging to the same sector or service group; whilst a union's culture based on being grassroots led resulted in many participants claiming that a move towards becoming a super-union would mean a larger membership, but less effectiveness in service provision and leadership quality.

Discussions on whether new labour internationalism could be an effective tool in revitalising public sector unions illuminated further understandings on interpretations of internationalism. Initially, a wide spectrum of internationalisms was presented to highlight the many ways in which the term can be theorised, understood and conducted. Each of these appeared, at first, to fall under a dichotomy – affective or instrumental according to the motivations and practice. However, on further exploration, this thesis has argued that the two are not separate entities, instead they overlap and intertwine. Just as trade union members are embedded in numerous networks and spaces so too are internationalisms. In recognising the many ways in which internationalisms can be perceived we recognise the potential to engage new and current members and promote international activism.

UNISON's primary ethos is to represent its members and be member-led. These members face common issues as workers employed by similar sectors elsewhere – thus, there is a very definite instrumental element to internationalism here for the public sector. The very nature of the public sector is affective – the work UNISON's members deliver is affective and there exists a public sector ethos which is universal. New labour internationalism is based upon social justice and equality – it encapsulates the public sector ethos that all should have the right to quality public services such as healthcare and education. These are universal rights. And in delivering these services workers should be protected.

Theoretically, new labour internationalism has great potential in revitalising public sector trade unions, but as yet it is not being conducted to full effect – put simply, trade unions are not getting as much out of it as they could. It is necessary to move beyond the mere rhetoric of NLI criteria to forging concrete links with employees of common employers where similar issues are experienced and exchanging information can occur across all levels of trade unions. This thesis has shown that revitalisation is not just about organisational change such as mergers, alliances and super unions. It is about going back to basics: recruiting new members, engaging current members, maintaining and organising the membership whilst promoting activism. NLI has the potential to assist in all of these – experience during this research has seen it act as a recruitment tool, recruiting new members and current members into activist roles. It is a campaigning tool. It is a branch development tool - this thesis has shown us that internationalism is not just beyond our borders. It is within the individual member, our workplaces and our communities. Thus branch work and communication in attempts to reflect its membership should reflect their numerous internationalisms. In doing so branches can begin to build a member-led internationalism.

Internationalism therefore is but one element of revitalisation, and yet it is all encompassing. For effective revitalisation it should be used in conjunction with alliances with the local community, social movements and other trade unions. In recognising issues that link workers locally we are able to identify international connections making often abstract arguments and policies relevant to all. As identified by an international officer in Chapter 6: "internationalism is all around us" and thus grounded, resulting in the potential for a bottom up, grassroots led revitalisation of trade unions, the epitome of a New Labour Internationalism.

9.3   Policy Implications

Since the early 1990s, when the mindsets within the world of international trade unionism were characterised by defeatism and a sense of malaise, a distinct shift has occurred. Assessments of the prospects for international trade unionism, whilst still realistic and grounded in an appreciation of the seriousness of the challenges being faced, by the late 2000s, nonetheless seemed free of the gloomy prognosis that had gone before. It has not been the case that advocates of internationalism have been mechanically repeating old and tired formulas in a radically altered environment. Rather, the narratives we have heard and the reflections that have been offered evidence a willingness on the part of UNISON and other organisations to engage with their changing environment in ways that are creative, imaginative and open to new influences. There is of course a high degree of cautiousness of the danger of not

responding to change and becoming irrelevant to the experiences of members and ultimately succumb to the challenges of political and economic neoliberalism.

Within this thesis I have presented evidence on how grassroots members understand and relate to the internationalisation strategies of one of the UK's largest and most internationally-oriented trade unions. We have related this to how processes of revitalisation union sector (such as growth through merger and the development of international solidarity) might be understood. I have argued that in practice and for many members, internationalist identifications and motivations co-exist in a complex and contingent fashion. I also suggest that there remains a big divide between the aspirations of unions and the grassroots perspectives upon labour internationalism of many members. Whether this divide can be bridged remains an important question for UNISON North West. Equally worthy of further enquiry is how far union international strategies can be successful *without* such engagement and buy-in from the membership base.

There are also numerous tensions here between different parts of the organisational structure: the relationship between international officials and others within the administration; the role of internationalism at union branch level; and the impacts of new or emergent civil society agendas such as global climate change, to name but a few. As trade unions increasingly recognise that the choice is between revitalisation or perhaps growing irrelevance furthering the gap between members and union leaders, it is clear that the way in which internationalism is understood by the grassroots will be of growing significance.

Overall this thesis contributes to understandings of what it means to be a trade union member – be that in terms of labour internationalism, acting as a collective

or decisions on becoming an active part of the organisation. In my role as an Area Organiser for UNISON North West during discussions with stewards and activists we often talk about the wide ranging techniques available for recruitment. On many occasions I have been told of instances were individuals when approached will respond by saying "Yes I'll join, I've never been asked!" This simple anecdote is used at training sessions and in conversations at recruitment events to identify that to recruit and organise members we need to speak to people and promote the message of trade unionism. The same can be said of labour internationalism. For trade unions, communication and raising awareness at the grassroots level is key. A number of lay members went on to become activists following participation in this research – from this we can infer that by targeting members as potential actors as opposed to passive consumers can result in a politically active membership.

Further to this, in keeping with theoretical calls to see workers beyond their worker identity we must tease out the many connections individuals have with internationalist sentiments and identities. In Chapter 7 it was evident that individuals 'wear many different hats'. Trade unions are already employing this tactic daily on identifying potential activists – how they address other people; explain issues to others; mentor individuals and adopt roles of responsibility both within and outside of the workplace (for example parent governor, volunteer, Guide leader). This must also be conducted in terms of internationalism – individuals who make consumer choices according to ethical trading; volunteers in the local Oxfam shop; anti-war campaigners – individuals such as these may not recognise trade union membership and/or activism as a potential outlet for such expression. In promoting international activity trade unions open up opportunities for capturing new audiences and new members.

For trade unions the key for revitalisation through new labour internationalism is to embed it more deeply within their structures. To do this, UNISON could incorporate internationalism into annual Branch development plans and make international officer roles a priority. Of primary concern however is the necessity to breakdown notions of internationalism as an 'add on' to the bread and butter issues of daily branch activity and produce a culture of internationalism transcending boundaries and linking into local workplaces and communities. I would argue the answer to this is to make internationalism relevant to the individual or branch concerned by relating it either to their multiple identities (as identified above) or link to service group issues; branch demographics. By making internationalism relevant a connection is made. Only once this connection is made will individuals support internationalism.

9.4   Additional suggestions for research

Many of the theoretical and empirical findings outlined within this thesis have illuminated areas of potential research and exploration. The thesis highlighted the role of international activists in mobilising members and constructing internationalist identities. In building upon social movement theory it would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal analysis of international activists – how their activism may change across their life course. Furthermore, the transition from lay member to activist to leader of others is of particular interest. I have recently discovered that a number of the lay members who participated in this research went on to adopt activist roles. This

reinforces the argument that it is possible to politicise, organise and mobilise members through raising awareness. An in-depth case study on this type of scenario would provide examples of best practice on how to engage with lay members and increase grassroots activism.

Whereas this produced an overall account of perspectives of labour internationalism in general, future research could select a case study of one or more particular campaigns or coalitions to increase knowledge on public sector campaigning with others. Whether the case studies were successful or not lessons could certainly be learnt on how to develop coalitions and overcome any tensions that may exist between diverse organisations.

Should it be possible to return to this case study of UNISON North West in the future, research could explore if public sector unionism has changed and in what way. With a period of time having passed reflections could be made on whether new labour internationalism has in face been an effective tool of public sector revitalisation.

Bibliography

Ackers, P. and Wilkinson, A. (2003) *Understanding Work and Employment: Industrial relations in transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Adkin, L. (1999) 'Ecology and labour: Towards a new societal paradigm', in Munck, R. and Waterman, P. (eds.) *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalisation: Alternative Union Models in the New World Order*, London: Macmillan.

Ahmed, S. (2004) 'Affective Economies', *Social Text*, vol. 79 (2): 117-139.

Allvin, M. and Sverke, M. (2000) 'Do New Generations Imply the End of Solidarity? Swedish Unionism in the Era of Individualization', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 21: 71-95.

Alvesson, M. and Skoldberg, K. (2000) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, London: Sage

Amin, S. (2003) *Obsolescent Capitalism: Contemporary Politics and Global Disorder*. New York: Zed Books.

Andrae, G. and Beckman, B. (2010) 'Union Power and Formal-Informal Divide', in Bergene. A., Endresen, B. and Knutsen, H. (eds.) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Anner, M. and Evans, P. (2004) 'Building bridges across a double divide: alliances between US and Latin American labour and NGOs', *Development in Practice*, vol. 14 (1-2): 34-47.

Anner, M., Greer, I., Hauptmeier, M., Lillie., N. and Winchester, N. (2006) 'The Industrial Determinants of Transnational Solidarity: Global Inter-Union Politics in Three Sectors', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 12 (1): 7-27.

Arrighi, G., Hopkins, T. and Wallerstein, I. (1989) *Antisystemic Movements*, London: Verso.

Askins, K. (2009) 'That's just what I do': placing emotion in academic activism', *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 2: 4-13.

Baccaro, L., Hamman, K. and Turner, L. (2003) 'The Politics of Labour Movement Revitalization: The Need for a Revitalized Perspective', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9 (1): 119-133.

Bacon, N. and Storey, J. (1996) 'Individualism and Collectivism and the Changing Role of Trade Unions', in Ackers, P., Smith, C. and Smith, P. (eds.) *The New Workplace and Trade Unionism*, London: Routledge.

Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. and Walsh, J. (2004) *Equality from Theory to Action*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Bakunin, M. (Year unknown) *Founding of the Workers' International*, [Online], Available: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/various/wrksint.htm [28/09/11].

Barker, J. and Smith, F. (2001) 'Power, Positionality and Practicalities: Carrying Out Fieldwork with Children', *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol 4: 142-147.

Barker. C.. Johnson. A., and Lavalette, M. (2001) *Leadership and Social Movements.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Barnes, T., Peck, J., Sheppard, E., and Tickell, A. (2007) 'Methods matter – transformations in economic geography', in Tickell, A., Sheppard, E., Peck, J. and Barnes, T. (eds.) *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography,* London: Sage.

Baxter, J. and Eyles, J. (1997) 'Evaluating Qualitative Research in Social Geography: Establishing 'Rigour' in Interview Analysis', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS, 22: 505-525.

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society,* London: Sage.

Behrens, M., Fichter, M. and Frege, C. (2003) 'Unions in Germany: Regaining the Initiative?', *European Journal of Industrial Relations,* vol. 9 (1): 25-42.

Behrens, M., Hurd, R. and Waddington, J. (2004) 'How Does Restructuring Contribute to Union Revitalization?', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benford, R.D. and Snow, D.A. (2000) 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology,* vol. 26: 611-639.

Berndt, H. (1996) *One World, One Voice, Solidarity: The International Trade Secretariats,* Bonn: Fredrich Erbert Stiftung.

Bergene. A.C., Endresen, S.B., and Knutsen, H. (2010) *Missing Links in Labour Geography,* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Bieler, A., Lindberg, I., and Pillay, D. (2008) *Labour and the Challenges of Globalisation,* London: Pluto Press.

Billig, M. (1996) *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical approach to Social Psychology,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bosco, F. (2007) 'Emotions that build Networks: Geographies of two human rights movements in Argentina and beyond', *Economic and Social Geography,* vol 3: 545-563.

Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Breitenfellner, A. (1997) 'Global Unionism: A Potential Player', *International Labour Review,* vol. 136 (4): 531-555.

Bronfenbrenner, K., Friedman, S., Hurd, R., Oswald, R., and Seeber, R. (1998) *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies,* Ithaca: ILR Press.

Bruhn, A. (1999) *Individualiseringen och det fackliga kollektivet,* Örebro University: Örebro Studies 15, Doctoral Thesis, in 'Are the Unions still Needed? Employees Views on the Relationships to Unions and Employers', *Economic and Industrial Democracy,* vol. 24(4): 573-594.

Brunt, R. (1989) 'The Politics of Identity', in Hall, S. and Jacques, M. (eds.) *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s,* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Buchanan, R.T. (1981) 'Mergers in British Trade Unions 1949-79', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 12(3): 40-49.

Burgess, R. (1984) *In the Field. An Introduction to Field Research*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Calhoun, C. (1995) 'New Social Movements' of the early nineteenth century, in Traugott, M. (ed.) *Repertoires of Contention*, pp. 173-216, Durham: Duke University Press.

Carter, B. (2000) 'Adoption of organising model in British trade unions: Some evidence from manufacturing, science and finance (MSF)', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol. 14 (1): 117-136.

Castells, M. (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Vol.I: The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford UK: Blackwell.

Castree, N. (2000) 'Geographic scale and grass-roots internationalism: The Liverpool dock dispute, 1995-1998', *Economic Geography*, vol. 73 (3): 272-292.

Castree, N., Featherstone, D., and Herod, A. (2006) 'Contrapuntal Geographies: the Politics of Organizing Across Difference', in Robinson, J. (ed.) *The Handbook of Political Geography*, London: Sage.

Castree, N. (2007) 'Labour Geography: A Work In Progress', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 31 (4): 853-862.

Castree, N., Coe, N., Ward, K. and Samers, M. (2003) *Spaces of Work: Global Capitalism and Geographies of Labour*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Chaison, G. N. (1980) 'A Note on Union Merger Trends, 1900-1978', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol, 34 (1): 114-120.

Chaison, G. (1996). *Union Mergers in Hard Times*, Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.

Charlwood A (2003) 'The anatomy of union decline in Britain: 1990-1998', Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, Discussion Paper No. 601 [Online] [Available] http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp0601.pdf [02/11/09]

Charlwood, A. (2004) The New Generation of Trade Union Leaders and Prospects for Union Revitalization. *British Journal of Industrial* Relations, vol. 42(2): 379-397.

Chatterton, P., Fuller, D. and Routledge, P. (2007) 'Relating action to activism: Theoretical and methodological reflections', in Kindon, S., Pain, R. and Kesby, M. (eds.) *Participatory action research approaches and methods: connecting people, participation and place*, London: Routledge.

Coe, N.M. and Jordhus-Lier, D.C. (2010) 'Re-embedding the Agency of Labour',in Bergene, A.C., Endresen, S.B. and Knutsen, H. (eds.) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp.29-40.

Cohen, J.L. (1985) 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', *Social Research*, vol. 52: 663-716.

Cohen, R. (1980) *The New International Labour Studies: A Definition*, Centre for Developing Area-Studies, McGill University, Montreal, (Working Paper Series, No. 27).

Collins, R. (1990) 'Stratification, emotional energy, and the transient emotions', in Kemper, T. (ed.) *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, Albany: State University of New York Press, pp.27-57.

Commons, J. R., Saposs, D. J., Sumner, H. L., Mittelman, E. B., Hoagland, H. E., Andrews, J. B. and Perlman, S. (1918) *History of Labour in the United States*. New York: Macmillan.

Contrepois, S. and Jefferys, S. (2003) 'Founding Values or Instrumentalism? Comparing Bank Sector Trade Union Activism in France and Britain', [Online], Available: http://www.hampp-verlag.de/ArchivIndB/1_04_Contrepois_Jeffreys.pdf [07/04/11]

Cornfield, D. and McCammon, H. (2003) *Labor Revitalization: Global Perspectives and New Initiatives*. London: Elsevier.

Costa, H. M. (2007) 'The Old and the New in the New Labor Internationalism', in De Sousa Santos, B. (ed.) *Another Production is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon*, London: Verso.

Cox, K.R. (1998) 'Spaces of Dependence, Spaces of Engagement and the Politics of Scale or: Looking for local politics', *Political Geography*, vol. 17 (1): 1-23.
Crossley, N. (2002) *Making Sense of Social Movements*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cumbers, A. (2004) 'Embedded Internationalisms: Building Transnational Solidarity in the British and Norwegian Trade Union Movements', *Antipode*, vol. 36: 829-850.

Cumbers, A. (2005) 'Genuine Renewal or Pyrrhic Victory? The Scale Politics of Trade Union recognition in the UK', *Antipode*, vol. 37 (1): 116-138.

Cumbers, A., MacKinnon, D., and MacMaster, R. (2003) 'Institutions, power and space: assessing the limits to institutionalism in economic geography', *European Urban and Regional Studies*, vol. 10(4): 327-344.

Cumbers, A., Nativel, C. and Routledge, P. (2008a) 'Labour agency and union positionalities in global production networks', *Journal of Economic Geography*, vol. 8: 369-387.

Cumbers, A., Routledge, P. and Nativel, C. (2008b) 'The entangled geographies of global justice networks', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 32 (2): 183-201.

Cumbers, A. and Routledge, P. (2010) 'The Entangled Geographies of Trans-national Labour Solidarity', in Bergene, A.C., Endresen. S.B., and Knutsen, H. (eds.) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp. 43-56.

Dahl, R. (1961) *Who Governs?* London: Yale University Press.

Dalby, S. & O'Tuathail, G. (eds.) (1998) *Rethinking Geopolitics*. London: Routledge.

Darlington, R. (2009) ''Leadership and Union Militancy: The Case of the RMT', *Capital and Class*, vol. 98 (98):3-32.

D'Art, D. and Turner, T. (2005) 'Academic Workers and Union Membership: An Inevitable Dilution of Solidarity', *Industrial Relations*, vol. 44 (3): 518-524.

Davis, F. (1979) *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: Free Press.

Denscombe, M. (1999) *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Denzin, N. (1984) *On Understanding Human Emotion*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Denzin, N. (1970) *The Researching Act in Sociology*, Chicago: Aldine.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2005) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, London: Sage Publications.

Diani, M. (1992) 'Analysing movement networks', in Diani, M. and Eyerman, R. (eds.) *Studying Collective Action*, London: Sage. pp. 107-135.

Dickens, L. and Hall, M. (2006) 'Fairness - up to a point. Assessing the impact of New Labour's Employment Legislation', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol. 16 (4): 338-356.

Drainville, A. (2002) 'Quebec City 2001 and the Making of Transnational Subjects', *Socialist Register: A World of Contradictions*, pp. 3-27.

Durkheim, E. (1964) *The Division of Labour*. New York: Free Press.

Ebbinghaus, B. (2002) 'Trade Unions' Changing Role: Membership Erosion, Organizational Reform and Social Partnership in Europe', *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 33 (5): 465-483.

Ebbinghaus, B. (2003) 'Ever Larger Unions: Organisational Restructuring and its Impact on Union Confederations, *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 34 (5): 446-460.

Edwards, P. (2003) *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Eisinger, P. (1973) 'The conditions of protest behaviour in American cities', *American Political Social Review*, vol. 81: 11-28.

Ellem, B. (2003) 'New Unionism in the Old Economy: Community and Collectivism in Pilbaras Mining Towns', *The Journal of Industrial* Relations, vol. 45 (4): 423-441.

Elwood, S. and Martin, D. (2000) 'Placing' Interviews: Location and Scales of Power in Qualitative research', *Professional* Geographer, vol. 52: 649–57.

Endresen, S. B. (2010) 'We order 20 Bodies', Labor Hire and Alienation', in Bergene, A.C., Endresen, S. B., and Knutsen, H. (eds.) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp. 211-226.

Kim England (2002) 'Interviewing Elites: Cautionary Tales about Researching Women Managers in Canada's Banking Industry', in Moss, P. (ed.) *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*, Blackwell: Oxford, pp. 200-213.

England, K. (1994) 'Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality and Feminist Research', *The Professional Geographer*, vol. 46 (1): 80-89.

Eschle, C. and Maiguashca, B. (2007) 'Rethinking Globalised Resistance: Feminist Activism and Critical Theorising in International Relations', *Political Studies Association*, vol. 9: 284-301.

Eyerman, R. and Jamison, A. (1991) *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Polity.

Eyles, J. (1988) 'Interpreting the Geographical World. Qualitative Approaches in Geographical Research', in Eyles, J. and Smith, D.M. (eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Eyles, J. and Smith, D.M. (1988) *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairbrother, P. (2000) *Trade Unions at the Crossroads*, London: Mansell.

Fairbrother, P. (2005) 'Book Review of G.Gall. (ed) Union Organising: Campaigning for Trade Union Recognition', *Capital and Class*, vol. 87: 257-263.

Falconer-Al-Hindi, K. (1997) 'Feminist Critical Realism: A Method for Gender and Work Studies in Geography', in Jones III, P., Nast, H. and Roberts, S. (eds.) *Thresholds in Feminist Geography*, Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp145-164.

Fantasia, R. (1988) *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fichter, M. and Greer, I. (2004) 'Analysing Social Partnership: A Tool of Union Revitalization?', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71-92.

Fimmen, E. (1924) 'Labour's Alternative', [Online] [Available] www.global-labour.org/edo_fimmen_5. Access 28/09/11 [02/10/09].

Flyvbjerg, B. (2002) *Making Social Science Matter*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ford, M. (2006) 'Migrant Labor NGOs and Trade Unions: A Partnership in Progress?', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 15 (3): 299-318.

Fox, A. (1985) *History and Heritage. The Social Origins of the British Industrial Relations System*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Franzway, S. (2000) 'Women working in a greedy institution: Commitment and emotional labour in the union movement', *Gender, Work and Organisation*, vol. 7 (4): 258-68.

Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (2004) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalising Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (2003) 'Union Revitalization Strategies in Comparative Perspective', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9 (1): 7-24

Frege, C., Heery, E., and Turner, L. (2004) 'The New Solidarity? Trade Union Coalition-Building in Five Countries', in Frege. C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.137-158.

Fuller, D. (1999) 'Part of the action, or 'going native'? Learning to cope with the 'politics of integration', *Area*, vol. 31 (3): 221-227.

Fuller, D. and Kitchen, R. (2004) *Critical Theory/Radical Praxis: Making a Difference Beyond the Academy?*, Victoria, Canada: Praxis e Press.

Gallagher, D.G., and Strauss, G. (1991) 'Union membership attitudes and participation', in Strauss, G., Gallagher, D.G. and Fiorito, J. (eds.) *The state of the Unions*, Madison, WI: Industrial Relations Research Association, pp. 139-74.

Gamson, W. A. (1975) *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Homewood, Il: The Dorsey Press.

Gamson, W.A. (1992) *Talking Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1968) *Time for Dying*, Chicago: Aldine.

Gerlach, L.P. and Hine, V.H. (1970) *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Ghigliani, P. (2005) 'International Trade Unionism in a Globalizing World: A Case Study of New Labour Internationalism', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 26 (3): 359-382.

Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Goffman, E. (1974) *Frame Analysis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Goodwin, J. (1997) 'The libidinal Constitution of a High-Risk Social Movement: Affectual Ties and Solidarity in the Huk Rebellion, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 62 (1): 53-69.

Goodwin, J., Jasper, J.M. and Polletta, F. (2001) *Passionate Politics*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Goodwin, J., Jasper, J.M. and Polletta, F. (2000) 'The Return of the Repressed: The Fall and Rise of Emotions in Social Movement Theory', *Mobilization*, vol. 5 (1): 65-84.

Goodwin, J. and Jasper, J.M. (1999) 'Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory', *Sociological Forum*, vol. 14 (1):27-54.

Gorz, A. (1980) *Farewell to the Working Class*. London: Pluto Press.

Guglielmo, M. (2007) 'Multinationals in the New EU Member States and the Revitalisation of Trade Unions', *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, vol. 15 (2): 177-193.

Gumbrell-McCormick, R. (2000) 'Globalisation and the Dilemmas of International Trade Unionism', *Transfer*, vol. 6 (1): 29-42.

Gusfield, J.R. (1968) 'The study of social movements', in Sills, D.L. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, NY: Macmillan, pp. 445-452.

Hale, A. (2001) 'Women Workers and the Promise of Ethical Trade in the Globalised Garment Industry: A Serious Beginning?', *Antipode*, vol. 33 (3): 510-530.

Hale, A. (2004) 'Beyond the Barriers: New Forms of Labour Internationalism', *Development in Practice*, vol. 14 (1-2): 158-162.

Hale, A. and Opondo, M. (2005) 'Humanising the Cut Flower Chain: Confronting the Realities of Flower Production for Workers in Kenya', *Antipode*, vol. 37 (2): 301-323.

Hale, A. and Wills, J. (2005) *Threads of Labour: Garment Industry Supply Chains from the Workers' Perspective*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Hall. S. (1982) 'The rediscovery of 'ideology': Return to the repressed in media studies', in Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. and Woollacott, J. (eds.), *Culture, society and the media*, London: Methuen.

Hamann, K and Kelly, J. (2004) 'Unions as Political Actors: A Recipe for Revitalization?', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 93-116.

Hamann, K. and Martínez Lucio, M. (2003) 'Strategies of Union Revitalization in Spain: Negotiating Change and Fragmentation', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9 (1): 61-78.

Harrod, J. and O'Brien, R. (2002) *Global Unions? Theory and strategies of organized labour in the Global Political Economy*, Routledge: London.

Hartley, J. (1996) 'The 'New' Service Sector: Employment Status, Ideology and Trade Union Participation in the UK', in Pasture. P., Verberckmoes. J. and De Witte, H. (eds.) *The Lost Perspective? Trade Unions Between Ideology and Social Action in the New Europe*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Hartsock, N. (1998) *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays*, Boulder: Westview Press.

Harvey, D. (1982) *Limits to Capital*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, London: Basil Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (1990) 'Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination', *Annals of the Association of American* Geographers, vol. 80: 418-434.

Harvey, D. (2001) *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, London: Routledge.

Haworth, N. (2005) 'You've got to admit it: it's getting better..: organised labour and internationalization', in Harley, B., Hyman, J. and Thompson, P. (eds.) *Participation and Democracy at Work*, London: Palgrave.

Haworth, N. and Hughes, S. (2002) 'Internationalisation, industrial relations theory and international relations', in Harrod, J. and O'Brien, R. (eds.) *Global Unions? Theory and strategies of organized labour in the global political economy*, London: Routledge, pp. 64-80.

Haworth, N. and Ramsay, H. (1983) *Grasping the Nettle: Problems in the Theory of International Sociological Association*, Strathclyde University: Glasgow.

Haworth, N. and Ramsay, H. (1988) 'Workers of the World United: International Capital and Some Dilemmas in Industrial Democracy', in Southall, R. (ed.) *Trade Unions and the New Industrialisation of the Third World*, Zed.

Healy, G. (1999) 'Trade Union and Career Development', *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 30 (3): 212-228.

Heery, E. (1998) 'The Relaunch of the Trade Union Congress', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 36 (3): 339-360.

Heery. E. and Adler, L. (2004) 'Organizing the Unorganized', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 45-70.

Heery, G., Bradley, H. and Mukherjee, N. (2004) 'Inspiring Union Activists: Minority Ethnic Women in Trade Unions', in Heery, E., Taylor, P. and Brown, W. (eds.) *The Future of Workplace Representation*, London: Palgrave.

Heery, E. and Kelly, J. (1994) 'Professional, participative and managerial unionism: an interpretation of change in trade unions', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol. 8: 1-21.

Heery, E., Kelly, J. and Waddington, J. (2001) *Union Revitalization in the United Kingdom*, Labour and Society Programme Discussion Paper. DP/133/2002.

Heery, E., Kelly, J., and Waddington, J. (2003) 'Union Revitalization in Britain', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9 (1): 79-97.

Heery, G. and Kirton, G. (2000) 'Women, Power and Trade Union Government', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 35 (3): 343-360.

Heery, E., Simms, M. and Simpson, D. (1999) *New Unionism Research Project*, Cardiff University: No5.

Heise, D.R. (1988) 'Affect Control Theory: Concepts and Model', in Smith-Lovin, L. and Heise, D.R. (eds.) *Analyzing Social Interaction*, New York: Gordon and Breach.

Herod, A. (1995) 'The Practice of International Labor Solidarity and the Geography of the Global Economy', *Economic* Geography, vol. 71 (4): 341-363.

Herod, A. (1997a) 'From a Geography of Labor to a Labor Geography: Labor's Spatial Fix and the Geography of Capitalism', Antipode, vol. 29 (1): 1-31

Herod, A. (1997b) 'Notes on Spatialized Labour Politics: Scale and the Political Geography of Dual Unionism in the US Longshore Industry', in Lee, R. and Wills, J. (eds.) *Geographies of Economies*, Arnold, pp.186-196.

Herod, A. (1998) 'The Spatiality of Labour Unionism', in Herod, A. (ed.) *Organizing the Landscape*, Mineappolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1-38.

Herod, A. (2001a) *Labor Geographies: Workers and the Landscapes of Capitalism*, New York: Guilford Press.

Herod, A. (2001b) 'Labour Internationalism and the Contradictions of Globalization: Or, Why the Local is Sometimes Still Important in a Global Economy', *Antipode*, vol. 33 (3): 404-424.

Herod, A. (2002) 'Organizing globally, organizing locally: Union spatial strategy in a global economy', in Harrod, J. and O'Brien, R. (eds.) *Global Unions?: Theory and Strategies of Organized Labour in the Global Political Economy*, pp. 83-99. Routledge: London.

Herod, A. (2003) 'The Geographies of Labor Internationalism', *Social Science* History, vol. 27 (4): 501-523.

Herod, A. (2010) 'Labour Geography: 'Where have we been? Where should we go?', in Bergene. A. C., Endresen, S.B. and Knutsen, H. (2010) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp.15-28.

Hotelling, H. (1929) 'Stability in Competition', Economic Journal, vol. 39: 41-57.

Hirschman, A.O. (1982) Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hirst, P. and Thompson G. (1999) Globalization in Question. The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance, (2nd ed), London: Polity Press.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983) The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Holmes, R. M. (1998) Fieldwork with children, London: Sage.
Hudson, R. and Sadler, D. (1986) 'Contesting works closures in Western Europe's old industrial regions: defending place or betraying class?', in Scott, A. and Storper, M. (eds.) Production, Work, Territory: the Geographical Anatomy of Capitalism, London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 172-193.

Hughes, A. and Cormode, L. (1998) 'Researching Elites and Elite Spaces', Environment and Planning A, vol. 30: 2098-2100.

Hyman, R. (1992) 'Trade Unions and the Disaggregation of the Working Class', in Regini, M. (ed.) The Future of Labour Movements, London: Sage, pp.150-168.

Hyman, R. (1994) 'Changing Trade Union Identities and Strategies', in Hyman, R. and Ferner, A. (eds.) New Frontiers in European Industrial Relations, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 108-139.

Hyman, R. (1996) 'Changing Union Identities in Europe', in van Leisink, P., Leemput, J. and Vilrokx, J. (eds.) The Challenge to Trade Unions in Europe: Innovation or Adaptation, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 53-73.

Hyman, R. (1997a) 'Trade Unions and Interest Representation in the Era of Globalisation', Transfer, vol. 3 (3): 515-553.

Hyman, R. (1997b) 'The Future of Employee Representation', British Journal of Industrial Relations, vol. 35 (3): 309-336.

Hyman, R. (1999a) 'Imagined Solidarities: Can Trade Unions Resist Globalization?', in Leisink, P. (ed.) Globalization and Labour Relations, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hyman, R. (1999b) 'National Industrial Relations Systems and Transnational Challenges: An Essay in Review', European Journal of Industrial Relations, vol. 5 (1): 89-110.

Hyman, R. (2001) 'European Integration and Industrial Relations: A Case of Variable Geometry?', Antipode, vol. 33 (3): 468-483.

Hyman, R. (2004) 'An emerging agenda for trade unions?', in Munck, R. (ed.), Labour and Globalisation: Results and Prospects, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.19-33.
Hyman, R. (2005) 'Shifting Dynamics in International Trade Unionism: Agitation, Organization, Bureaucracy, Diplomacy', Labor History, vol. 46 (2): 137-154.

Hyman, R. and Ferner, A. (1994) New Frontiers in European Industrial Relations, Oxford: Blackwell.
James, A. (2006) 'Critical Moments in the Production of 'Rigorous' and 'Relevant' Cultural Economic Geographies, Progress in Human Geography, vol. 30 (3): 289-308.

Jasper, J. (1997) *The Art of Moral Protest*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Jasper, J.M. (1998) 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions In and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, vol. 13 (3): 397-424.

Jasper, J.M. and Poulsen, J. (1995) 'Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests', *Social Problems*, vol. 42: 493-512.

Jenkins, J.C. and Perrow, C. (1977) 'Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946-1972)', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 42: 249-268.

Jenkins, J.C. (1983) 'Resource Mobilisation Theory and the Study of Social Movements', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 9: 527-553.

Jessop, B. (2002) *The Future of the Capitalist State*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Johns, R. (1998) 'Bridging the gap between class and space: US worker solidarity with Guatemala', *Economic Geography*, vol. 74: 252-271.

Johns, R. and Vural, L. (2000) 'Class, geography and the consumerist turn: UNITE and the Stop Sweatshops Campaign', *Environment and Planning A*, vol 32: 1193-1213.

Josselin, D. and Wallace, W. (2001) *Non-state Actors in World Politics*, New York: Palgrave.

Jovchelovitch, S. (2001) 'Social Representations, Public Life and Social Construction', in Deaux, K. and Philogène, G. (eds.) *Representations of the social*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp.165-182.

Juris, J. (2008) 'Performing Politics: Image, Embodiment and Affective Solidarity during Anti-corporate Globalization Protests', *Ethnography*, vol. 9 (1): 61-97.
Keller, B. (2005) 'Union Formation through Merger: The Case of Ver.di in Germany', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 43 (2): 209-232.

Kelly, J. (1997) 'The future of Trade Unionism: Injustice, Identity and Attribution', *Employee Relations*, vol. 19 (5): 400-414.

Kelly, J. (1998) *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London: Routledge.

Kelly, J. (2004) 'Social Partnership Agreements in Britain: Labor Co-operation and Compliance', *Industrial Relations*, vol. 43 (1): 267-292.

Kelly, J. and Waddington, J. (1995) 'New prospects for British Labour', *Organization 2*, vol. 3/4: 415-426.

Kelly, J. and Willman, P. (2004) *Union Organization and Activity*, London: Routledge.

Kemper, T. (1990) (ed) *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, Albany: State University of New York Press, pp.27-57.

Kessler, I. and Purcell, J. (2003) 'Individualism and Collectivism in Industrial Relations', in Edwards, P. (ed.) *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Kindon, S. and Latham, A. (2002) 'From Mitigation to Negotiation: Ethics and the Geographical Imagination in Aotearoa/New Zealand', *New Zealand Geographer*, vol. 58 (2): 48-22.

Kirton, G. and Healey, G. (1999) 'Transforming Union Women: The Role of Women Trade Union Officials in Union Renewal', *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 30 (1): 31-45.

Kitchen, R., Tate, R. and Nicholas, L. (2000) *Conducting Research in Human Geography: Theory, Methodology and Practice*, Harlow: Prentice-Hall.

Kitzinger J. (1994) 'The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants', *Sociology of Health*, vol. 16 (1): 103-21.

Krueger, R. A. (1994) *Focus groups. A practical guide for applied research*, (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage.

Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Analyzing and reporting focus group results*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage.

Kumar, P. and Schenk, C. (2006) *Paths to Union Renewal: Canadian Experiences*, Peterborough, ON: Garamond.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London: Verso.

Lambert, R. and Webster, E. (2007) 'Social Emancipation and the New Labor Internationalism: A Southern Perspective', in De Sousa Santos, B. (ed) *Another Production is Possible – Beyond the Capitalist Canon*, London: Verso, pp. 279-320.

Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1987) *The End of Organised Capitalism*, Oxford: Polity Press.

Lavalette, M. and Kennedy, J. (1996) *Solidarity of the Waterfront*, Liverpool: Liver Press.

Lawler S. (2002) 'Narrative in Social Research', in May, T. (ed) *Qualitative Research in Action*, Sage: London.

Kelly, J. (1998) *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilisation, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London: Routledge.

Leadbeater, C. (1989) 'Power to the Person, in Hall, S. and Jacques, M. (eds.), *New Times*, London: New Times.

Lee, E. (1997) *The Labour Movement and the Internet: The New Internationalism*, London: Pluto Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Leijinse, F. (1996) 'The Role of the State in Shaping Trade Union Policies', in Leisink, P., Van Leemput, J., and Vilrokx, J. (eds.) *The Challenge to Trade Unions in Europe: Innovation or Adaptation*, Cambridge: Edward Elgar.
Leisink, P., Leemput, J. and Vilrokx, J. (1996) *The Challenge to Trade Unions in Europe: Innovation or Adaptation*, Cambridge: Edward Elgar.

Lethbridge, J. (2004) 'Combining Worker and User Interests in the Health Sector: Trade Unions and NGOs', *Development in Practice*, vol. 14 (1-2): 234-247.

Levi, M. (2003) 'Organising Power: The Prospects for an American Labor Movement', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 1 (1): 45-68.

Levinson, C. (1972) *International Trade Unionism*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Lewis, A. and Lindsay, G. (2000) *Researching other Perspectives*, University Press: Buckingham.

Lier, D. (2007) 'Places of Work, Scales of Organising: A Review of Labour Geography', *Geography Compass*, vol. 1 (4): 814-833.

Lillie, N. and Martínez Lucio, M. (2004) 'International Trade Union Revitalization: The Role of National Union Approaches', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 159-180.

Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (2001) *Qualitative Methods for Geographers: issues and debates*, London: Arnold.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (2000) 'The Only Generalization Is: There is No Generalization', in Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. (eds.) *Case Study Method: Key Issues, Key Texts*, London: Sage, pp.27-44.

Lipset, S.M., Trow, M. and Coleman, J. (1956) *Union Democracy*, New York: Doubleday-Anchor.

Lichterman, P. (1998) 'What do movements mean? The value of participant observation', *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 21 (4):401–418.

Logue, J. (1980) *Towards a Theory of Trade Union Internationalism*, Kent: Kent Popular Press.

Lopez, S. H. (2004) *Reorganizing the Rust Belt*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Lopez, S. (2000) 'Contesting the Global City', in Buraway, M. (ed), *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, Berkeley: University of California.

Lorwin, L. (1929) *Labour and Internationalism*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Lorwin, L. (1953) *The International Labour Movement*, New York: Macmillan.

Lowenthal, D. (1985) *The Past is a Foreign Country*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D. (1982) *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D. (1988) *Freedom Summer*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. (1988) 'Social Movements', in Smelser, N. *Handbook of Sociology*, London: Sage, pp. 695-737.

McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. (1977) 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol 82: 1212-41.

McDowell, L. (1998) 'Elites in the City of London: Some methodological considerations', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 30: 2135-2148.

Machin, S. (2000) 'Union Decline in Britain', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 38 (4): 631-645.

Macmillan, R. and Scott, A. (2003) 'On the case? Dilemmas of collaborative research', *Area*, vol. 35 (1): 101-109.

MacShane, D. (1992) *International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War*, Leamington Spa, Clarendon.

Madge, C. (1993) 'Boundary Disputes: Comments on Sidaway (1992)', *Area*, vol. 25, 294-299.

Madriz, E. (2003) 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research', in Denzon, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, London: Sage.

Maier, C.S. (1977) 'The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War I', *International Organization*, vol. 31 (4): 607-633.

Mansbridge, J. (2001) 'The Making of Oppositional Consciousness', in Mansbridge, J. and Morris, A. (eds.) *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mansbridge, Jane and Aldon Morris. (2001) *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Manzer, R.A. (1970) 'Teachers and Politics: The role of the National Union of Teachers in the making of National Educational Policy in England and   Wales since 1944', in Edwards, G. (2004) *An introduction to membership participation in British trade unions, with reference to the National Union of Teachers*, Manchester: University Press.

Martin, A. and Ross, G. (1999) *The Brave New World of European Labor: European Trade Unions at the Millennium*, New York: Berghahn.

Martin, R., Sunley, P. and Wills, J. (1993) 'The Geography of Trade Union Decline: Spatial Dispersal or Regional Resilience?', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 18: 36-62.

Martinez Lucio, M. (2010) 'Dimensions of internationalism and the politics of the labour movement', *Employee Relations*, vol. 32 (6): 538-556.

Martinez Lucio, M. and Weston, S. (1995) 'Trade unions and networking in the context of change: evaluation the outcomes of decentralisation in industrial relations', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 16 (2): 233-251.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1998) *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Verso.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching* London: Sage.

Mason, J. (2006) 'Mixing Methods in a Qualitatively-driven Way', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 6 (1): 9-25.

Massey, D. and Miles, N. (1984) 'Mapping out the Union', *Marxism Today*: 19-22.

Massey, D. (1973) 'Towards a critique of industrial location theory', *Antipode*, vol. 5 (3): 33-39.

Massey, D. (1984) *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, London: MacMillan.

Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Massey, D. and Painter, J. (1989) 'The Changing Geography of Trade Unions', in Mohan, J. (ed) *The Political Geography of Contemporary Britain*, London: Macmillan. pp130-150.

Matthews, M. H. and Limb, M. (1999) 'Young People's Participation and Representation in Society, *Geoforum*, vol. 30: 135-144.

Matthews, H., Limb, M. and Taylor, M. (1999) 'Reclaiming the street: The discourse of curfew', in *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 31: 1713-1730.

Maxey, I. (1999) 'Beyond Boundaries? Activism, Academia, Reflexivity and Research', *Area*, vol. 31 (3): 199-208.

Maxwell, J. (1996) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, London: Sage.

Mazur, J. (2000) 'Labor's New Intenationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79 (1): 79-104.

Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the Present*, London: Hutchinson.

Melucci, A. (1992) 'Frontierland: Collective Action between Actors and Systems', in Diani, M. (ed.) *Studying Collective Action*, London: Sage, pp238-257.

Melucci, A. (1996) *Challenging Codes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Meyer, D. S. (2004) 'Protest and Political Opportunities', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 30: 125-145.

Meyer, D. and Fuchs, M. (2010) 'Trade Unions as Learning Organisations: The Challenge of Attracting Temporary Staff', in Bergene, A.C., Endresen. S.B. and Knutsen, H. (eds.) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Michels R. (1915) *Political Parties*, New York: Dover Books.

Mirola, W.A. (2003) 'Asking for Bread, Receiving A Stone: The Rise and Fall of Religious Ideologies in Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement', *Social Problems*, vol. 50 (2):273-293.

Mitchell, D. (1996) *The Lie of the Land*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mitchell, D. (2004) 'Radical Scholarship: A Polemic on Making a Difference Outside the Academy', in Fuller, D. and Kitchen, R. (eds.) *Radical Theory/Critical Praxis: Making a Difference Beyond the Academy?*, www.praxis-epress.org/rtcp/contents.html: Praxis (e) Press. pp. 21-31.

Mitchell, D. (2005) 'Working Class Geographies', in Russo, J. and Linkson, S.L. (eds) *New Working Class Studies*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Mitchell, K. (2006) 'Writing from left field', *Antipode*, vol. 38 (2): 205-212.

Moody, K. (1997) *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy*. London: Verso.

Munck. R. (1988) *The New International Labour Studies*, London: Zed.

Munck. R. (1999) 'Labour dilemmas and labour futures', in Munck, R. and Waterman, P. (eds) *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalisation*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Munck, R. and Waterman, P. (1999) *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalisation*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Munck. R. (2002) *Globalisation and Labour: The New Great Transformation*, London, Zed.

Munck, R. (2004) *Labour and Globalisation: Results and Prospects*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Nissen, B. (2002) *Unions in a Globalised Environment*, London: M.E.Sharpe.

North, P. (2005) 'Scaling Alternative Economic Practices? Some Lessons from Alternative Currencies', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 30 (2).

North, P. (2006) *Alternative Currency Movements as a Challenge to Globalisation: A Case Study of Manchester's Local Currency Networks*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Novelli, M., (2004) 'Globalisations, Social Movement Unionism and New Internationalisms: the role of strategic learning in the transformation of the Municipal Workers Union of Emcali', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, vol. 2 (2):161-190.

Oberhauser, A. (1997) 'The Home as a 'field': Households and Homework in Rural Appalachia', in Jones III. J.O., Nast. H. and Roberts, S. (eds.) *Thresholds in Feminists Geography*, Lanham MD: Bowman and Littlefield, pp165-182.

Oberschall. A. (1973) *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

O'Brien, R. (2000) 'Workers and the world order: the tentative transformation of the international union movement', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 26: 533-555.

Oinas, P. (1999) 'Voices and silences: the problem of access to embeddedness', *Geoforum*, vol. 30: 351-361.

Olle, W. and Schoeller, W. (1977) 'World Market Competition and Restrictions on Trade Union Policies', *Capital and Class*, vol. 2: 56-75.

Olson, M. (1965) *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University of Press.

Omvdt, G. (1993) *Reinventing Revolution – New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*. Sharp.
Pain, R. (2004) 'Social Geography: Participatory Research', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 28 (5): 652-663.

Panitch, L. and Leys, C. (2001) *Working Classes, Global Realities/ Socialist Register*, Merlin Fernwood: Monthly Review Press.

Parker, J. (2002) 'Women's Groups in British Unions', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 40 (1): 23-48.

Parker, J. (2007) 'The Trade Union Congress and Civil Alliance Building: Towards Social Movement Unionism?', *Employee Relations*, vol. 30 (5): 562-588.

Parry, B. (1998). 'Hunting the gene-hunters: the role of hybrid networks, status, and chance in conceptualising and accessing 'corporate elites', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 30: 2147-2162.

Pasture, P. and Verberckmoes, J. (1998) *Working-Class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity: Historical Debates and Current Perspectives on Western Europe*, Berg: Oxford.

Peck, J. (1996) *Workplace: Social Regulation of Labour Markets*, Guilford Press: New York.

Pfeffer, J. and Salancik, G. (1978) *The External Control of Organizations*, New York: Harper Row.

Pollert, A. (2009) 'Working Paper 13. Varieties of collectivism among Britain's low-paid unorganised workers with problems at work', *Working Paper. University of the West of England, Bristol*.

Polletta, F. and Jasper, J.M. (2001) 'Collective Identity in Social Movements', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 27: 283-305.

Pichardo, N.A. (1997) 'New Social Movements: A Critical Review', *Annual Review Sociology*, vol. 23: 411-430.

Pulido, L. (2003) The Interior Life of Politics, *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol. 6: 46-52.

Putnam, R. (2001) *Bowling Alone*, London: Simon and Schuster.
Radice, H. (2001) 'Globalization, Labour and Socialist Renewal, *Capital & Class*, vol. 75: 113-126.

Raess, D. and Burgoon, B. (2006) 'The Dogs that Sometimes Bark: Globalization and Works Council Bargaining in Germany', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 12 (3): 287-309.

Ramsey, H. (1997) 'Solidarity at Last? International Trade Unionism Approaching the Millennium', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, vol. 18: 503-537.

Regini, M. (1992) *The Future of Labour Movements*, London: Sage.

Ricoeur P. (1980) 'Narrative and Time', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7 (1): 169-190.

Roberts B. (2002) *Biographical Research*, Open University Press: Buckingham.

Robinson, I. (2002) 'Does Neo-Liberal Restructuring Promote Social Movement Unionism? US Developments in Comparative Perspective', in Nissen, B. (ed.) *Unions in a Globalised Environment*, London: M.E.Sharpe, pp.189-235.

Robnett, B. (1997) 'How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights', in Goodwin, J., Jasper, J.M. and Polletta, F. (eds.) *Passionate Politics*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 267-281.

Rose, G. (1997) 'Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics, *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 21 (3): 305-320.

Rosenthal G. (2004) 'Biographical Research', in Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. and Silverman, D. (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*, London: Sage.

Routledge, P. (1996) 'Third space as critical engagement', *Antipode*, vol. 28: 398-419.

Routledge, P. (1998) 'Going Globile: Spatiality, Embodiment and Media-tion in the Zapatista Insurgency', in Dalby, S. and O'Tuathail, G.. (eds.) *Rethinking Geopolitics*, London: Routledge, pp. 240-260.

Routledge, P. (2003) 'Convergence Space: Process Geographies of Grassroots Globalisation Networks, *Transactions of the Institute of British* Geographers, vol. 28 (3): 122-148.

Routledge, P., Nativel, C. and Cumbers, A. (2006) 'Entangled Logics and Grassroots Imaginaries of Global Justice Networks, *Environmental Politics*, vol. 15 (5): 839-859.

Roy, W. (1968) *The Teachers' Union: Aspects of Policy and Organisation in the National Union of Teachers 1950-66*, London: The Schoolmaster Publishing Company Ltd.

Ruggie, J.G. (1982) 'International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order', *International Organization*, vol. 36 (2): 379-415.

Rutherford, T. (2009) 'De/Re-Centring Work and Class?: A Review and Critique of Labour Geography', vol. 4 (7): 768-777.

Ryland, R. and Sadler, D. (2008) 'Revitalising the Trade Union Movement Through Internationalism: The Grassroots Perspective', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 21(4): 471-481.

Sadler, D. (2000) 'Organizing European Labour: governance, production, trade unions and the question of scale', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 25 (2): 135-152.

Sadler, D. (2004) 'Trade unions, coalitions and communities: Australia's Construction, Forestry and Energy Union and the international stakeholder campaign against Rio Tinto', *Geoforum*, vol. 35 (1): 35-46.

Sadler, D. and Fagan, B. (2004) 'Australian trade unions and the politics of scale: Reconstructing the spatiality of industrial relations', *Economic Geography*, vol. 80 (1): 23-43.

Sadler, D. and Thompson, J. (2001) 'In search of regional industrial culture: the role of labour organisations in old industrial regions', *Antipode*, vol. 33: 660-86.

Savage, L. (2005) 'Justice for Janitors: scales of organizing and representing workers', *Antipode*, vol. 38 (3): 645-666.

Savin-Baden, M. (2003) *Facilitating Problem-Based Learning: Illuminating Perspectives*, Maidenhead: SRHE and Open University Press. [Online] [Available] http://lutung.lib.ums.ac.id/dokumen/ebooks/Pendidikan/2011/7/25/Learning_Spaces__Society_f or_Research_Into_Higher_Education_.pdf [06/12/11].

Sayer, A. (2007) 'Method and politics: Avoiding determinism and embracing normativity', in Tickell, A., Sheppard, A.E., Peck, J. and Barnes, T. (eds.) *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*, London: Sage, pp. 95-104.

Smelser, N. (1988) *Handbook of Sociology*, London: Sage.

Smith, N. (1984) *Uneven Development: Nature, capital and the production of space*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Snape, E. and Redman, T. (2004) 'Exchange or Covenant? The Nature of the Member-Union Relationship', *Industrial Relations*, vol. 43 (4): 855-873.

Snape, E., Redman, T., and Chan, A. W. (2000) 'Commitment to the Union: a   Survey of research and the implications   for industrial relations   and   trade   unions', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, vol. 2 (3): 205-230.

Snow, D.A., Burke Rochford Jr, E., Worden, S.K., and Benford, R.D. (1986) 'Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilisation, and Movement Participation', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51: 464-481.

Snow, D.A. and Benford, R. (1988) 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilisation', *International Social Movement Research*, vol. 1: 197-217.

de Sousa Santos, B. (2007) *Another Production is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon.* London: Verso.

Steedman, C. (1996) 'About ends: on the ways in which the end is different from an ending', *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 9 (4): 99-114.

Storper, M. and Walker, R. (1989) *The Capitalist Imperative*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Storper, M. and Walker, R. (1983) 'The Theory of Labour and the Theory and Location', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 7 (1): 1-42.
Stroobants V. (2005) 'Stories about learning in narrative biographical research', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 18 (1): 47-61.

Sverke, M. and Sjöberg, A. (1995) 'Union membership behavior: The influence of instrumental and value-based commitment', in Tetrick, L.E. and Barling, J. (eds.) *Changing employment relations: Behavioral and social perspectives*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 229-254.

Swyngedouw, E. (1997) 'Neither global nor local: localisation and the politics of scale', in Cox, K. (ed.) *Spaces of Globalisation: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, New York: Guilford Press, pp. 137-166.

Tarrow, S. (1998) *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, V. (2000) 'Emotions and Identity in Women's Self-Help Movements', in Stryker, S., Owens, T. and White, B. (eds) *Self, Identity, and Social Movements*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Terry, M. (2000) *Refining Public Sector Unionism, UNISON and the Future of Trade Unions*, London: Routledge.

Tiejun, W. (2008) 'How China's migrant labourers are becoming the new proletariat', in Bieler, A., Linberg, I., and Pillay, D. (eds.) *Labour and the Challenges of Globalisation: What Prospects for Transnational Solidarity?*, London: Pluto Press, pp.81-97.

Tilly, C. (1977) 'Getting it together in Burgundy', *Theory and Society*, vol. 4: 479-504.

Tilly, C. (1978) *From Mobilisation to Revolution*, Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Tilly, C. (1995) 'Contentious repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834', in Traugott, M. (ed) *Repertoires of Contention*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 173-216.

Timar, L. And Enyedi, G. (2004) 'Applied human geography and ethics from an east and central European perspective', *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol. 7 (3): 173-184.

Tooke, J. (2000) 'Betweeness at Work', *Area*, vol. 32 (2): 217-223.
Touraine, A. (1981) *The Voice and the Eye*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Touraine, A. (1986) 'Unionism as a Social Movement', in Lipset, S.M. (ed.) *Unions in Transition*, San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies.

Tufts, S. (1998) 'Community Unionism in Canada and labor's (re)organization of space', *Antipode*, vol. 30: 227-250.

Tufts, S. (2009) 'Hospitality unionism and labour market adjustment: Toward Schumpeterian unionism?', *Geoforum*, vol. 40 (6): 980-990.

Tufts, S. (2010) 'Schumpeterian Unionism and 'High Road' Dreams in Toronto's Hospitality Sector', in Bergene, A.C., Endresen, S.B. and Knutsen, H. (2010) *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp 83-98.

Turner, L. and Hurd, R. (2001) 'Building Social Movement Unionism: The Transformation of the American Labor Movement', in Turner, L., Katz, H. and Hurd, R. (eds.) *Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for 21st Century Relevance*, Ithaca ILR Press, pp.9-26.

Turner, L. (2004) 'Why Revitalize? Labour's Urgent Mission in a Contested Global Economy', in Frege, C. and Kelly, J. (eds.) *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in Globalizing Economy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Undy, R., Ellis. V., McCarthy, W. and Halmos, A. (1981) *Change in Trade Unions: The Development of UK Unions Since the 1960's*, London: Hutchinson.

Valkenburg, B. and Zoll, R. (1995) 'Modernization, Individualization and Solidarity', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 1 (1): 119-144.

Van de Vall, M. (1970) *Labor Organisations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verma, A. and Kochan, T. (2004) *Unions in the 21st Century: An International Perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Visser, J. (1998) 'Learning to Play: The Europeanisation of Trade Unions', in Pasture, P. and Verberckmoes, J. (eds) *Working-Class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity: Historical Debates and Current Perspectives on Western Europe*, Oxford: Berg.
Voss, K. and Sherman, R. (2000) 'Breaking the iron law of oligarchy: union revitalitization in the American Labor Movement', *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 106 (2): 303-349.

Visser, J. (1997) *Learning to play: The Europeanisation of trade unions.*, Seattle, WA.

Waddington, J. and Whiston, C. (1997) 'Why Do People Join Trade Unions in a Period of Membership Decline?', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 35 (4): 515-546.

Waddington, J. (2000) 'Towards a Reform Agenda? European Trade Unions in Transition', *Industrial Relations Journal Annual Review*, vol. 31 (4): 317-330.

Waddington, J. and Hoffman, R. (2000) 'Trade Unions in Europe: Reform, Organization and Restructuring', in ETUI, *Europe in Trade Unions in Europe: Facing the Challenges and Searching for Solutions*, pp. 29-79.

Waterman, P. (1984) *For a New Labour Internationalism*, London: Mansell.

Waterman, P. (1998) *Globalisation, Social Movements, and the New Internationalisms*, London: Mansell.

Waterman, P. (2001a) 'Trade Union Internationalism in the Age of Seattle', *Antipode*, vol. 33 (3): 363-383.

Waterman, P. (2001b) 'Trade union internationalism in the age of Seattle', in Waterman, P. and Wills, J. (eds.) *Place, Space, and the New Labour Internationalisms*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Waterman, P. and Wills, J. (2001) *Place, Space, and the New Labour Internationalisms*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Waterman, P. (2005a) 'Labour and New Social Movements in a Globalising World System: A Future in the Past', *Labor History*, vol. 46 (2): 195-207.

Waterman, P. (2005b) 'The Forward March of Labour (and Unions?) Recommenced: Reflections on an Emancipatory Labour Internationalism and International Labour Studies', *Antipode*, vol. 37 (2): 208-218.

Webb, S. and Webb, B. (1920) *The History of Trade Unionism, 1660-1920*, London: Longmans.

Wengraf, T. (2001) *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi Structured Methods*, London: Sage.

Wibeck, V., Dahlgren, M.A. and Oberg, G. (2007) 'Learning in Focus Groups: An Analytical Dimension for Enhancing Focus Group Research', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 7 (2): 249-267.

Wilde, L., (2007) 'The Concept of Solidarity: Emerging from the Theoretical Shadows?', *Political Studies Association*, vol. 9: 171-181.

Wilkinson, S. (1998a). 'Focus group methodology : A Review', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, vol. 1: 181-203.

Wilkinson, S. (1998b) 'Focus groups in feminist research: Power, interaction and the co-construction of meaning', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 21 (1): 111-125.

Williams, S. (1997) 'The Nature of some recent Trade Union Modernization policies in the UK', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 35 (4): 495-514.

Wills, J. (1998) 'Taking on the Cosmocorps: Experiments in transnational labor organization', *Economic Geography*, vol. 74 (2): 111-130.

Wills, J. (2001) 'Community unionism and trade union renewal in the UK: moving beyond the fragments at last?', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS, vol. 26: 465-483.

Wills, J. (2001) 'Uneven geographies of capital and labour: the lessons of European Works Councils', *Antipode*, vol. 33: 484-509.

Wills, J. (2004) 'Re-scaling trade union organization: lessons from the European frontline', in Munck, R. (ed.) *Labour and Globalisation: Results and Prospects*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 85-104.

Wills, J. (2007) *Geographies of economies*. London: Arnold.

Wills, J. (2008) 'Making class politics possible: Organizing contract cleaners in London', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 32 (2): 305-24.

Wills, J. (2009) 'Labour geography', in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Gregory, D., Johnston, R., Pratt, G., Watts, M.J. and Whatmore, S. (eds.) Chistester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Wills, J. and Hurley, J. (2005) 'Action research: Tracing the thread of labour in the global garment industry' in Hale, A. and Wills, J. (eds.) *Threads of Labour: Garment Industry Supply Chains from the Workers' Perspective*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 69-94.

Willman, P. and Cave, A. (1994) 'The Union of the Future: Super-Unions or Joint Ventures?', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 32 (3): 395-412.

Wood, E.J. (2001) 'The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador', in Goodwin, J., Jasper, J.M. and Polletta, F. (eds.) *Passionate Politics*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 267-281.

Woods, M. (1998) 'Rethinking elites: networks, space, and local politics', *Environment and Planning A*: 2101-2119.

Wrigley, C. (1996) 'The Early May Days: 1890, 1891 and 1892', in Charlesworth, A. (ed.) *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain 1750-1990*, London: Macmillan, pp. 112-115.

Yang, G. (2000) 'Achieving emotions in collective action', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 41 (4): 593-614.

Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: design and methods, applied social science methods series*, California: Thousand Oaks.

Zoll, R.C. (1995) 'Failing to modernize?', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 1 (1):119-128.

Zuo, J. and Benford, R. D. (1995) *Mobilisation processes and the 1989 Chinese democracy movement, Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 36: 131-156.

Appendices

Membership and branch perspectives on trade union internationalism and international development activity

A research collaboration between the University of Liverpool and UNISON North West

UNISON

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Rebecca Ryland
PhD Student

Department of Geography
Roxby Building
University of Liverpool
Liverpool
L69 7ZT
UK

Telephone: 0151 794 2874
Email: r.ryland@liv.ac.uk

Please contact:

Rebecca Ryland if you have any contribution to make to this research.

All comments and advice welcome!

Invitation to Participate

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to contact me if you would like more information or is there is anything that you do not understand. Please feel free to discuss this with your friends and relatives if you wish.

I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this,

Rebecca Ryland

Research Objectives

This research is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and is being conducted by the University of Liverpool in collaboration with your trade union UNISON.

UNISON has a long history of campaigning on issues of social justice and international development. Increasingly it seeks to build solidarity with other trade unions across the world. As grassroots members, UNISON would like to know what you think of these international activities.

UNISON prides itself on being a grassroots member-led organisation, as such gaining members' views on international activities is vitally important to help shape future policy development.

Participants Required!

✱ You must be a member of UNISON North West to participate

✱ It is intended that the research will be representative of all types of UNISON North West members – therefore we would like a good mix of participants covering both genders, all ages and ethnicities, different areas of the North West and different sectors (e.g. health, education)

✱ You do not have to be a UNISON activist to take part. We would really like to have the views of all members regardless of whether you are involved in UNISON activities or not

✱ There are no other requirements to being a participant, other than your consent and assistance

What will participation involve?

✱ Research information will be gathered through audio recorded interviews and focus groups and conducted under the strictest of confidence with all information anonymised

✱ Audio recordings will be transcribed immediately after with information stored safely on files that only I have access to

✱ Interviews and focus groups will be held at either your UNISON branch office or UNISON Regional Office at Arena Point in Manchester. The decision on location will be determined by convenience to all those participating

✱ All efforts will be made to ensure you feel comfortable at all times and you may withdraw at anytime

✱ Following research, the anonymised information will be used to write up the

PhD thesis and for academic publications. It is intended that UNISON North West will be able to use the research findings to help develop and guide future International policies in line with members' views

✱ You will then be invited to attend a workshop whereupon you will receive feedback on the research findings. Here you will have the opportunity to discuss any issues raised and identify implications for future International policy

What to expect

✱ Professionalism
✱ Confidentiality and Anonymity
✱ Access to recording transcripts upon request
✱ Results feedback and the opportunity to comment
✱ Invite to a research workshop to discuss the issues raised from the research
✱ Remember, participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation. Results up to the time you withdraw may still be used – but only with your consent. Otherwise you may request that they are destroyed and no further use is made of them

If you have any queries whilst deciding whether to participate, or following participation please do not hesitate to contact me on 0151 794 2863 or 07776134599.

If you have a complaint or there is a problem and you feel you cannot come to me with it then you should contact the Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 or email ethics@liv.ac.uk. On contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide

UNISON   UNIVERSITY OF **LIVERPOOL**

UNISON NORTH WEST – UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONALISM

As you may be aware, for the past few years UNISON North West and the University of Liverpool have been collaborating on a variety of projects. Currently we are working on a piece of research that explores UNISON members' perspectives on international activity.

The research is a three year project, with the final report to be published in 2010, offering UNISON a unique insight into how UNISON members can best engage with international issues at various levels within the union to ensure UNISON can maximise its influence in a global setting.

We would like to invite your branch to take part in this research.

There are two stages of Research Participation:

Stage 1

With permission, we would like to conduct face-to–face audio recorded interviews with Branch Officers and key activists within your branch.

Each interview will be conducted by Rebecca Ryland (Postgraduate Researcher, University of Liverpool) at a time and location of the participant's convenience during the months of September and December 2008.

Stage 2

Your Branch may then be re-contacted and asked to nominate six to eight individuals to participate in a one hour focus group at a mutually agreeable time and location during April 2009.

All information collated from the interviews and focus groups is strictly confidential and all personal data will be anonymised.

If you wish to discuss the project further you can do so by contacting Rebecca Ryland via email on rryland@liverpool.ac.uk or on 0151 794 2863. Exploratory research with a number of branches within the North West region has been conducted with initial findings available on request.

May I take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your assistance in this research.

Rebecca Ryland

Postgraduate Researcher, University of Liverpool

Appendix 3 Participant consent form

Grassroots' Perspectives on labour internationalism

Please read the information sheet before reading and placing your initials in the boxes to confirm that you agree with the following statements:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated January 2008 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason and without my rights being affected.

☐

3. I understand that under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.

☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

Participant Name _____Date _____ Signature _____ ____
Person Taking Consent _____Date _____ Signature _____ ____
Researcher _____Date _____ Signature _____ ____

Please do not hesitate to contact the lead researcher with any queries:

Rebecca Ryland
Department of Geography
University of Liverpool
L60 3BX
0151 794 2836 / rryland@liv.ac.uk

Appendix 4 Branch Sampling Procedure

	Geographical Comparisons across UNISON NW sub-regions		

		Greater Manchester	**Lancashire & Cumbria**	**Merseyside & Cheshire**
AFFECTIVE INTERNATIONALISM	**PUBLIC** *(core public sector)*	Branch O	Branch F	Branch A
Spectrum % of services privatised within Branch	**PUBLIC/PRIVATE**	Branch G Branch H Branch M	Branch J Branch K Branch L Branch N	Branch B Branch E Branch I
INSTRUMENTAL INTERNATIONALISM	**PRIVATE** *(completely private)*	Branch D	No branch fitted this criteria.	Branch C

Further comparisons enabled by selecting active/passive branches within each category (according to levels of political activity and internationalism).

Appendix 5 Activist interview

Would you say your branch is politically active?

      In what way?

What types of issues are your branch currently dealing with?

Do global issues affect your branch? In what way?

      International employers, European legislation

Some people say that the public sector is becoming increasingly international, what are your views on this?

Branch Internationalism

Is your branch involved in international activities?

What campaigns are you affiliated to?

What does this involve exactly – affiliation, campaigning, practical action, contact, monetary donations?

Who decides what issues your branch is involved in?

      Some kind of procedure, check list?
      How check that campaigns are legitimate?

Does everyone always agree on what international activities you take part in?

What do you think influences what international activities are given the go ahead?

      Money, time, resources, members' views

I've heard it said quite that international activities can be driven by a particular person's interests within a branch – do you have that experience here in your branch?

Do you discuss international activities as a branch?

      AGMs, events, newsletters, on a daily basis

Other branches' international activities?

What do you think UNISON's main international concerns for the future should be?

'Membership and branch perspectives on trade union internationalism and international development activity'

In a commitment to build relations between academia and the trade union movement, UNISON North West and the University of Liverpool have engaged in ongoing collaborative activity since 2004 resulting in the aforementioned ESRC funded PhD research project. Both partners recognise that the current economic climate and the increasingly globalised world in which we live dictates that the international role of a trade union has never been so relevant.

Research aim
To collate UNISON members' perspectives on labour internationalism – are they aware of the existence of, and extent of, UNISON's internationalism? Do they support it, and if not how can support be achieved? The answers to these questions are integral if UNISON is to ensure its international policies are grassroots orientated.

We also recognise the importance of other perspectives, in producing a thorough understanding of the international role of trade unions. Therefore:

UNISON North West and the University of Liverpool would like to invite you to participate in a research interview.

What would participation involve?

With your consent, an audio-recorded interview, lasting approximately 30 minutes, at a time and place of your convenience.

Discussion would be based upon issues surrounding the international role of trade unions such as the impact of the current economic crisis and what trade unionists have to gain from information exchange across borders. Further to this, your opinion would be sought on UNISON members' perspectives on internationalism collated during earlier fieldwork.

It is intended that interviews will be completed by end November 2009 - below are some possible interview dates, however flexibility is available to ensure your contribution should you agree to participate. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face, via telephone or conference call.

Current availability - anytime during weeks commencing:

13th September (14th – 17th TUC conference, Liverpool); 21st September; 12th October; 1st November.

For more information, or to organise an interview, please contact Rebecca Ryland: rryland@liverpool.ac.uk;   0151 794 2863.

Personal history question - current role; background; understanding of how became involved in labour movement?

What union/organisation are you from and what issues is it currently experiencing?

What do you think is the role of the modern day trade union/what is its greatest challenge?

There have been some debates surrounding the demise of the old form of trade unionism, and the rise of a so-called social movement unionism, characterised by among other things links with wider civil society and its concern with issues other than labour i.e. the environment, local issues etc. What do you think about such claims?

Is your union/organisation involved in international activity?

What do you think is the motivation behind trade union internationalism?

Thoughts on grassroots' perspective on internationalism.

Do you articulate a common interest with workers globally during your campaigns?

Do you think that grassroots trade union members make connections with other global workers?

Given developments in international trade unions i.e. we now have Global Union Federations; ITUC; PSI; what do you think is the basis of international worker solidarity? How does your organisation work within these structures?

Do you think that the current economic crisis will have, or is having any effect upon trade unions' international work?

Trade unions are becoming bigger (i.e. UNITE merger) does this mean an increase/decrease in their ability to create/maintain relations with other trade unions globally?

What benefits are there for public sector unions working in Europe and further afield?

Do you think trade union internationalism could be an effective tool in revitalising public sector unions? In what way?

What do you think trade unions in the UK learn from other trade unions? i.e. those facing violence and/or oppression.

We are hearing a lot about public sector cuts – what do you think this will mean for public sector trade unions (and their international activity)?