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Collisions of Local and Global: Transnationalizing a South African Domestic Workers' Union

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**COLLISIONS OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL: TRANSNATIONALIZING A SOUTH
AFRICAN DOMESTIC WORKERS' UNION**

by

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B.A. December 2014, Old Dominion University

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ABSTRACT

COLLISIONS OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL: TRANSNATIONALIZING A SOUTH AFRICAN DOMESTIC WORKERS' UNION

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Old Dominion University, 2016
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This thesis explores how domestic worker trade unions' functions have experienced a shift in their priorities as a result of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 189, which standardizes rights for domestic workers worldwide. The adoption of this policy has diverted local unions' efforts away from their original goals of mobilizing workers in this marginalized sector to focus instead on implementing this international policy. I argue that this shift reflects a larger tension where goals defined by international governance institutions and the dynamics of a larger transnational movement collide with the objectives and aspirations of a once autonomous grassroots trade union. With the help of international funding made available through transnational partnerships formed at the ILO, worker bodies are no longer defined solely by their advocacy, but have also become key implementers of the international institutions that crafted the Convention and quickly have become primary stakeholders. In this thesis, I focus on how union functions are affected by the involvement of funders and the rising visibility the domestic workers movement has gained by participation in the ILO conference on domestic labor.

This thesis is dedicated to the women who have inspired and empowered me to use my gifts in the struggle toward women's social, economic, and political equality. In many ways this thesis represents my first tangible contribution to this greater movement, but it is certainly not the last.

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This work is would not have been possible without the guidance and assistance of American and South African women dedicated to empowerment and success of individual women and the entire collective. I have had the great joy of working incredible feminist women and men throughout this process, and am eternally grateful for the love that I have received through this process.

I'd first like to thank Myrtle Witbooi and Hester Stephens without whose groundbreaking work with the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union this thesis would not have been possible. Witbooi and Stephens, together with SADSAWU members and staff including Susan Jacobs, Sindiswa Ningiza, Gloria Kente, Gladys Mynzinga, and Elizabeth Ely demonstrated an unfailing belief and dedication to effecting real change that will shape my identity as a scholar activist. I hope that this work reflects my appreciation for you and the incredible work you've shared with me.

Thank you to my mother and grandmother, who have demonstrated the importance of women's reproductive work as family caregivers. Thank you for continuing to care for and nurture me throughout my life journey. You both are reminders of the patience, strength and courage it takes to build loving families. I hope that you always know how much you are loved and appreciated.

To my amazing mentor and friend, Jennifer Fish, thank you so much for guiding me through this experience. I am so inspired by your work and the peaceful energy you bring to everything you do. Amongst the many things we've share, this work now stands as a reflection of a love of South Africa and the care labor movement that runs so deeply for us both. Your

presence on this journey has been an invaluable gift. I hope that this thesis is a worthy extension of scholar-activist work you started. And I look forward to our continued work and friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank my grandfather and partner, two feminist men who constantly supported me with lots of hugs, words of encouragement. To dear friends Nina and Jasmine Callaghan, Sara Matchett, and Erna Curry, I am so grateful for your friendship and creating a home for me in a distant world. You each had a profound influence on my experience in South Africa and continue to be a source of inspiration as I look toward the next phase of my activism.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: DOMESTIC WORKERS ORGANIZING GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

In 2011, the largest transnational governing institution on labor made a landmark decision that brought “decent work for domestic workers” to global attention. The International Labour Organization adopted Convention 189 (ILO C189), which standardized global labor standards for domestic workers across all locations, and brought the large proportion of migrant workers into the realm of protections. The struggle to overturn the sociopolitical dynamics that relegate women, especially those from the so-called third world, to labor in the informal (invisible) sector has transformed grassroots organizing and opened a space for the growth of transnational activist networks. One of the most notable developments can be seen in the establishment of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), the only global union run by women, which grew out of a need to merge local movements into a transnational collective and raise global awareness about the labor rights central to the Convention. The IDWF¹, became one of the most influential actors in calling the ILO’s attention to the previously nonviable sector.

This thesis explores how trade unions’ functions have experienced a shift in their priorities, from advocating for severely marginalized workers to implementing this international policy. I argue that this shift reflects a larger tension where goals defined by international

¹ Formerly the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN)

governance institutions and the dynamics of a larger transnational movement² collide with the objectives and aspirations of a once autonomous grassroots trade union. With the help of international funding made available through transnational partnerships formed at the ILO, worker bodies are no longer defined solely by their advocacy, but have also become key implementers of the international institutions that crafted the Convention and quickly have become primary stakeholders. In this thesis, I focus on how union functions are affected by the involvement of funders and the rising visibility the domestic workers movement has gained by participation in the ILO conference on domestic labor. I am interested in how union activities grow to accommodate international concerns expressed through partnerships with international capacity-assistance and funding agencies. I demonstrate how trade unions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) become important actors in the implementation of international policy and how ILO Convention 189 created a shift in the goals and daily functions of South Africa's national union of domestic workers. Based upon my direct work with the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU), I demonstrate the tensions that arise as local efforts become increasingly determined by outside actors.

Like many feminist development scholars, I am interested in questions of the effectiveness and sustainability of development efforts that are often mobilized by local organizations. Namely, trade unions and NGOs become the implementers of global initiatives (and values) recommended by international regulatory bodies and donor organizations. This project focuses specifically on the effect of the international attention resulting from ILO C189 and the investment of international funders on the operation and mobilizing efforts of domestic

² In this thesis, the term transnational refers to dynamic occurring or present across national boundaries. I use this term to highlight the centrality of transnational feminist networks and to highlight a need for transnational action to address the varied outcomes of globalization.

workers on the ground. This collision of global and local dynamics captured my interest throughout this research, as a national trade union responded to international pressures to incorporate the growing numbers of migrant laborers into local labor organizations and to extend labor rights. My primary questions are: How has the partnership of foreign funding agencies, which emerged from the ILO focus on Convention 189, shifted the efforts of the local South African domestic workers' movement to address transnational concerns? How does SADSAWU balance local needs with international funders' interests and recommendations? These questions draw attention to the complexities that arise as local mobilizing efforts are affected by international initiatives around global issues. Through a review of union documents including budgets and strategic plans, I will highlight the ways that union activities have grown to incorporate the interests of global donors who bring newly emerging, and often external, concerns to the table.

The combination of injustices that domestic workers face across globe—dangerously low wages and exclusion from occupational safety and social security, to name a few—serve to exacerbate the primary context of isolation that most domestic workers face. In addition, this characteristic isolation makes it particularly difficult to organize workers in a sector in which there is generally one worker per employer. These conditions have resulted in struggles to build a strong and financially stable trade union without some form of outside assistance. Given the unique circumstances of the domestic service sector, efforts to organize workers into trade unions have revealed corresponding limitations. Stagnant membership growth emerges in response to a poorly paid membership base that struggles to afford annual membership fees and the limited impact that the union's small number of staff members can make. These difficulties reveal themselves within the organization's struggles to generate funds independently, leading

them to rely on resources received from foreign donor agencies. However, worker organizations' reliance on the support of outside donors often ties their hands to carry out specific campaigns and initiatives.

SADSAWU leaders and members experience these global-to-local tensions on a micro level, limiting their capacity to be fully autonomous and member-led. Just as scholars predict that transnationalizing grassroots movements will become increasingly beauracratized and deradicalized by outside involvement (Basu, 2000; Desai, 2007; Moghadam, 2015), one of the most successful unions of domestic workers in the world finds itself caught between aspirations of a local movement and the interests of a transnational women's labor movement. Some corollary questions include, how do members and staff experience the union's efforts to incorporate internationally directed activities, particularly that of migrant-focused mobilizing strategies? What are some limitations the union experiences? And what can we anticipate for the future of this union? These questions guide my analysis of data gathered directly from the South African domestic workers union in Cape Town and the International Domestic Workers Federation.

Setting the Global-Local Contexts

But 45 years ago, I was sitting in my employer's garage and I was organizing domestic workers. Today I'm here. And I'm here because of the cause of so many domestic workers. And if you did not believe in us, if you were not so passionate, we would not have been able to win this fight. But because all of you believe, you believe there's a better life for domestic workers, you believe that the time of repayment has come now for all of us. We want to be free. We don't want to be

called slaves anymore. We want to get what every other worker has in this world.”

-Myrtle Witbooi, 2011 International Labor Conference, Closing Statement

Four years after the ILO adoption of Convention 189 and two years after its ratification by the South African government, I worked alongside international labor activist, Myrtle Witbooi, as an intern at SADSAWU’s headquarters in Cape Town. Witbooi has been at the forefront of domestic worker organizing in South Africa as early as the seventies and has served as General Secretary of SADSAWU since its launch in 2000. She has also gained international recognition for her activism and now serves as the President of the IDWF. During my internship and through my continued work with Witbooi, I observed both the local realities of a national trade union as well as the workings of international unions and NGOs. It is from this experience that I draw the observations that direct this thesis.

The global movement around domestic work emerges from joint international efforts to empower women across the globe and to protect some of the world’s most vulnerable workers. Though the ILO had attempted to formulate coverage for domestic workers several times throughout its early history, the establishment of international standards for domestic work has only recently taken place (Oelz, 2014; Tomei & Belser, 2011). For domestic workers, these joint projects came together in 2006 when national and international leaders galvanized their transnational organization around the goal of gaining rights within the UN’s International Labour Organization. In 2011, domestic workers’ unions, associations, and affiliated NGOs participated in the International Labour Conference (ILC) as civil society representatives in the “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” Convention 189 negotiations. After debating the first standardized

terms and conditions, workers won Convention 189, an international policy outlining rights and protections for domestic and household workers worldwide. The Convention now functions as an international treaty to be signed and ratified by national governments and is the first legal standard to outline the fundamentals of decent work for domestic workers. This new standard along with Recommendation No. 201 reinforced the human rights of these workers regardless of citizenship or undocumented status. The Convention covered standards ranging from the right to safe and healthy working conditions, reasonable working hours and overtime pay, contracts of employment, and social security, to freedom of association. Special stipulations were also applied to include protecting migrant workers from abusive practices of private employment agencies, requirements of written job offers prior to travel, and the right to repatriation at termination of employment (Boris & Fish, 2014a; Oelz, 2014; Tomei & Belser, 2011).

The adoption of Convention 189 spurred a shift in the movement toward national ratification. Unions, NGOs, and worker associations found themselves entrusted with the task of bringing word of this international standard to their home governments to be ratified and implemented into national law. With the help of a newly created International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) and an influx of international funds from donor agencies eager to be at the forefront of the struggle, campaigns for national ratifications quickly arose. As a result, union functions grew from worker mobilization and advocacy to incorporate lobbying efforts that ensured ratification in their own countries. Efforts to ratify and implement the Convention were joined by goals to mobilize the most vulnerable workers in the sector—migrants with both documented and undocumented status.

Today, for trade unions like SADSAWU who have successfully campaigned for national ratification, union efforts continue to be shaped by a need for full implementation of the

convention. This means that while continuing to mobilize workers and represent cases of labor abuse, the union must also organize campaigns and strategies to make all domestic workers aware of their expanding rights. Efforts to reach migrant workers are a notable difference between the union's historical functions and its contemporary goals. In line with the Convention's recommendation, SADSAWU and other domestic worker trade unions in the world are learning to adapt their mobilizing efforts and advocacy strategies from a citizen-member rights focus to a transnational human rights framework. These changes in union strategies accompanied by the added concerns of the transnational labor movement create a kind of double-day for union members and staff who experience the added pressures from international organizations.

During my time with SADSAWU, I witnessed the center point, the intersection, where the distant policies constructed by international governmental institutions take form at the level of the state. Through my involvement with field organizing efforts and international campaign promotion, it became clear that trade unions were not only sources of allyship and worker advocacy, but they also served as implementers of international policy. These transnational standards created a doorway for international funders to enter into the process of strategic plans and the union's organizing efforts. The work of implementation was not only taken up by the worker groups as the primary stakeholders, but it was also reinforced through funding and partnership agreements with agencies seeking to reach the sector's most vulnerable workers. For SADSAWU, these new objectives served to exacerbate the union's financial struggles, leaving it dependent on its funders and vulnerable to cooptation.

Methods

This thesis is the culmination of participant observations and interviews I collected during a six-week internship with SADSAWU completed in July-August 2015. As a scholar-activist,³ I spent routine business hours at SADSAWU's office working directly with both national leaders and the regional organizers for the union's Cape Town provincial chapter. I engaged in union activism by assisting with mobilizing efforts, monitoring membership growth, attending national executive conferences, joining in capacity-building workshops, and participating in worker demonstrations. Following my focus on the union member and staff experiences of recent shifts, the majority of my collected data were gathered at SADSAWU's national office with a few observations from remote field locations as I participated in organizing activities. I also conducted some interviews in employers' homes where union leaders work. I document my daily observations in the form of handwritten field notes that I digitized during analysis. I also collected audio recordings of interviews, executive meetings, and daily interactions, which I later transcribed. While joining the inner workings and daily activities of the union, I took note of the overlapping forces that created the unique objectives and campaign efforts and the many partnerships that brought these goals to life.

This scholar-activist project takes the form of a feminist ethnography, which seeks to emphasize the voices of the leaders and activists with whom I worked and highlight their experiences of the processes that shape my inquiry. Thus, interview narratives, field notes, and supporting union documents such as budgets and partnership agreements make up my primary

³ By situating myself as a scholar-activist, I highlight how this work is informed by my own participation in this movement and how it was influenced by the powerful international leaders I worked with, ultimately impacting my own activism and analysis of what I witnessed. As a representation of activist scholarship, this thesis seeks to contribute insights to the movement that inspired this work.

data sources. By combining participant observations and important union documents, I demonstrate how partnerships with international funding organizations shape new objectives for SADSAWU and ultimately strain the union's ability to function efficiently. Through recurring interviews with ten key activists and SADSAWU leaders, I foreground the voices of union leadership and members to emphasize the lived experience of these changes, as SADSAWU stakeholders adjust to the union's expanding functions and goals. Insights from leaders, staff, and members are reflected in my work in the form of narrative excerpts. SADSAWU quotes are joined by excerpts of an interview with Tony Ehrenreich, General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and long-time supporter of domestic worker unionization. I also cite scheduled interviews Elizabeth Tang and Fish Ip Pui Yu of the IDWF, who gave insight into the dynamics of the transnational domestic workers' movement.

By communicating my own interest in this unique grassroots movement, and strengthened by my mentor's, Dr. Jennifer N. Fish's, long-standing connection to the union, I secured the two-month internship with SADSAWU that made this work possible. My research has also been enhanced by my continued connection to SADSAWU and IDWF leaders, which facilitated my involvement in a regional meeting of the IDWF and a global seminar hosted by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2015. It is from this meeting that I gathered interviews with IDWF leaders and follow-up conversations with SADSAWU delegates who also participated. This ongoing work has allowed me to continue to observe the global dynamics of the domestic workers' movement, giving me a deeper understanding of this local South African movement's place within this larger context.

In my attempts to practice feminist qualitative research methods, I paid special attention

to the power relations between the workers and worker leaders and myself as a researcher. Given my status as an educated middle class multiracial woman, it was important for me to establish solidarity by communicating a shared struggle against racialized capitalist domination that places Black women's labor in an undervalued position. My own family history with domestic work during the United State's Jim Crow era helped me to build critical ties of trust and some form of common experience. Through sharing stories about my grandmother who had worked with her mother for White homeowners in the American South, I built a certain level of solidarity with SADSAWU leaders, who shared an appreciation for the similarities of women of color in this profession around the world. By building a solidarity based on diasporic identities and a shared lineage of servitude and racialized labor, I fostered a comradeship with SADSAWU's leadership founded on the mutual struggle against interlocking systems of race, gender, and class that define our diverse experiences. In this way, I was able to frame this work around a joint interest to tell our own stories and determine the circumstances of our own movements and futures.

Despite my attempts to restructure power dynamics between the women I worked with and myself as a privileged researcher from the West, my positions as the union's intern and outsider to South African society often placed me under SADSAWU's guidance and influence. The powerful women who formed SADSAWU's core leadership deeply impacted me as an activist and strongly influenced my collection of data, framework, and eventual analysis. Myrtle Witboi, Hester Stephens, and SADSAWU's executive board exemplify the competence and skill of activists seasoned by over 40 years in the struggle against race-, class-, and gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Their influence over high-level international organizations such as the ILO and access to networks of international funding agencies made the collection of this data and interviews with key leaders possible. Not only did the union provide me with the

necessary connections to conduct this research, but their thoughts and perceptions on the current state of organizing also shaped my own analysis of the data.

During the course of this project, language has emerged as an important tool used to communicate the unique experience of employment in the domestic service sector and to describe the importance of building a grassroots movement to meet the needs of those marginalized workers. To remain consistent with my chosen method and coinciding ethic to highlight the voices and experiences of those that I worked with, any narrative quotation used in this thesis is a direct transcription of what participants said. Because of some language barriers, grammatical corrections may be made to ensure the reader's understanding. However, no changes have been made to alter the meaning of what was said. It's worth noting that as these interviewees had varied levels of comfort with English; there may be times when the words they used does not accurately capture what they meant.

I utilized the inductive methodology of *Grounded Theory*, which creates analytic categories from the data rather than testing a pre-established hypothesis (Charmaz & Emerson, 1983; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The first step in my analysis of the wider collection of these narrative, ethnographic, and organizational data forms was to categorize each piece of evidence found by type (i.e. interview, field note, budgetary document, organizing plan, etc.). Next, I used a process of focused coding to identify my generate thematic codes, or threads, and compile the points of interest, which now link this work together to form an original knowledge contribution (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Though the bulk of this research was gathered in a professional office environment, due to the sensitive nature of worker cases and staff relationships as well as the personal relationships I built with several of the union's leaders, I have taken an ethical consideration to leave some information off the record.

Conclusion

Through this project, I contribute my own voice to feminist development critiques. Using a framework put forth by feminist scholars such as Basu (2000), Desai (2007), and Moghadam (2005, 2015), that has closely examines the effects of transnationalizing grassroots movements, I explore the benefits and pitfalls of globalizing local organizing and activism. I place this work in conversation with scholars who have noted the unique characteristics of domestic labor in a South African context, highlighting the gendered and racialized forms of domination that relegate Black women's labor to a social and economically marginal position in society (Ally, 2011; Cock, 1981, 1989; Fish, 2006a; Rollins, 1985). By examining how SADSAWU negotiates between the pressures of local members and international funders' recommended campaigns, we can better understand the collision of the global and the local, as international policies and initiatives are pushed into implementation.

I argue that what I witnessed was a tension that seemingly arose from an attempt to situate transnational concerns within a local context. Just as previous scholars have predicted (Alvarez, 2000; Basu, 2000; Moghadam, 2015), the interests and suggestions of international funding agencies and the implementation of international policy has begun to shift grassroots organizing from a bottom-up worker-centered design to a top-down framework that emphasizes rights and policy-based efforts. Relationships with international funders became strained as the union sought to meet funder directed organizing plans in order to widen their access to funding. By focusing on questions of how SADSAWU's navigates these complexities, I highlight the precarity that domestic worker unions face as a formerly non-viable sector for worker mobilization (a status ascribed to domestic worker groups due to historical difficulties with generating enough revenue to support union functions). I posit that this South African domestic

worker union thrived under the growth of legal protections extended to them through national and international legislation, but was also crippled by its need to accommodate the goals and motives of the next phase of the movement to regulate and improve the standards and conditions of migrant domestic workers.

I argue that this specific case demonstrates the complexities of transnational coalition building. Though these coalitions have been celebrated for their contributions to women's movements throughout history (Bessis, 2004; Desai, 2002), they have also resulted in the bureaucratization of local movements and the deradicalization of feminist development goals. While these coalitions have been central to the growth and success of the women's care labor movement – ensuring rights and protections, streamlining mobilization efforts, and supporting local movements – they also disrupt the fundamental goals of worker organizations to advocate on the behalf of and provide for the needs of their constituents. I place my work in conversation with that of other scholars interested in both the significance of transnational activist networks and working towards sustainable development efforts. I hope that the arguments and recommendations made in this thesis will assist others in my field as we work to reshape global-local partnerships.

In order to explore these tensions and complexities, this thesis is comprised of four chapters to follow this introduction. The second chapter will provide an in-depth look at the theoretical backgrounds that inform my work. I will explore varying perspectives on women's labor with an examination of how this labor has been understood and valued historically according to race and class dynamics. I will then contextualize this value within the current era of globalization to better understand how women's labor is linked to the economic growth and the competition among nations, paying special attention to dynamics that spur migrant flows to

destination countries with perceived opportunities for women workers. I will close the chapter with a brief overview of efforts to mobilize around women's informal labor, looking specifically at the role of trade unions and NGOs in promoting the rights of workers.

Following the literature review, my third chapter will introduce SADSAWU as a case study, outlining why this union presents a unique opportunity to better understand global to local collisions around worker rights advocacy. I will detail the history of domestic worker organizing in South Africa and SADSAWU's participation in the international care movement, as well as some dilemmas the union has experienced in its tenure. Using interview data and participant observations, I will highlight the complex nature of international funding agencies' influence on grassroots movements. Chapter Four is designed to show how international attention, by way of funders' involvement, comes to shape the union's goals and strategies. I will use archival documents, such as union histories, meeting reports, budgeting agreements, and strategic plans to reflect the growth of union activities and the increasing involvement of funders in union planning. The concluding chapter will provide a brief overview of the project while gesturing toward some solutions to the problems presented. By highlighting the strain of accommodating global interests within a national context, I suggest some new ways that funders, as well as national governments, might provide some relief to an overextended trade union tasked with advocating for both citizens and noncitizens.

CHAPTER II
FRAMING DOMESTIC LABOR AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZING: A LITERATURE
REVIEW

Recognizing and, more importantly, counting women's invisible remunerative work would challenge our empirical understanding not only of the informal sector but also the economy as a whole. (Chen, 2001)

Domestic work has long been of interest to feminist scholars and activists longing to make women's labor visible (Chen, 2001, 2011; Hoskyns & Rai, 2007). Marxist feminists have even argued that full recognition of domestic work and other forms of women's reproductive roles is bound up in unionization and governmental regulation (Hartmann, 2006). The undervaluation of women's work, both productive and reproductive, face constant erasure in economic accounts, despite the undeniable contributions that women make to the sustaining of families and the progress of nations. In today's rapidly globalizing world, we are facing a rise in women's participation in labor outside of the home, while simultaneously experiencing increasing costs and needs associated with care and domestic assistance as a result of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) (Desai, 2002; Nancy A. Naples & Desai, 2002; Parreñas, 2001). These contrasting dynamics have resulted in the drastic increase in women's labor migration to be the first responders to this new need for care. In destination countries, these workers risk everything to earn remittances that will contribute to the sustenance of their own families and subsequently their countries of origin. For this reason, women's organizing around domestic work represents an important intersection of informal labor rights, migrants' rights and women's

development. This survey of literature highlights the complex nature of women's informal labor, particularly that of domestic labor, and demonstrates the importance of women's work to the progress of nations.

In this chapter, I will review key sources that inform the arguments of this thesis. First, I will highlight foundational theories of domestic work and the valuation of women's labor, giving some context on my region of focus and the state of domestic labor in relation to the global care crisis. I will then follow with an overview of women's grassroots efforts and the progress of their global organizing around informal labor as a reflection of the transnational dynamics that call for policy reform that recognizes the unique circumstances of domestic work. This thesis situates itself in a three-part theoretical framework of feminist critiques of the global economy, care labor scholarship, and studies of transnational activist networks as related to women's movements and organizing. Its theoretical framework calls attention to the concentration of third world women's labor in the informal sector, which is reflected in the growing number of women finding work in the domestic/care sector. I will review the development of international standards for domestic workers, the establishment of transnational networks and the importance of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and trade unions as implementers of international labor policy.

Understanding Domestic Labor

Feminists have long recognized the centrality of women's labor to social reproductions of the family and the nation paying particular attention to the ways this work is largely invisible. Despite their contributions to the success of societies and economies, women workers continue to remain amongst the most vulnerable labor groups worldwide. As a highly vulnerable segment of the workforce, women are typically overrepresented in the most underpaid and unregulated

sectors. The overrepresentation of women workers in agricultural and informal sectors of employment reinforces this stratification of labor. Domestic labor stands as one of the most prevalent forms of women's informal work and is steadily growing as women from the global south migrate in hopes of securing a caretaking position in more affluent countries. In 2011, the ILO estimated that there are a minimum of 52.6 million domestic workers worldwide (Simonovsky & Luebker, 2011). In this section, I will focus on the interlocking systems of oppression that relegate women from the global South to informal labor in the domestic sector. I will also highlight some of the characteristics of domestic work that shape women's experiences.

As an informal and typically unregulated form of women's employment, domestic workers represent a particularly vulnerable sector. All over the world, domestic labor has been characterized by isolation and invisibility, low wages, few legal protections, and dependence on employers (Ally, 2011; Cock, 1981; Gaitskell, Kimble, Moira, & Unterhalter, 1983). As Fish (2006b) notes, feminists should take concern for these vulnerable women workers for three reasons:

“First, their employment is seen as an extension of what is considered innately ‘women’s work.’ Second, their labor takes place in the private household, which has traditionally been associated with unpaid labor. Third, because the sector is comprised almost completely of women in marginalized race and class positions, predominant macro-structures of inequality shape the further devaluation of this particular sector” (p.6).

Thus, one of the main reasons for the poverty wages that many domestic workers receive is the notion that female domestic workers are simply performing tasks ascribed to their gender, thereby rendering domestic work as unskilled labor. Additionally, the concentration of third world women of color leads us to question the added marginalization of other forms of racial and

class-based domination. Here, I call upon a definition of third world women as a nonhomogeneous strategic category of women identified with the developing world or non-Westernized countries (Mohanty, 1984).

Looking at domestic work within a South African context provides an ideal opportunity to observe the interwoven systems of race, class, and gender that relegate women of color to this sector. Gaitskell et al. (1983) state,

“In South Africa it is often said that African women are oppressed in three ways: oppressed as Blacks, oppressed as women, and oppressed as workers. Domestic service comprises one of the major sources of employment for African women in South Africa, and is an important nexus of this triple oppression” (p. 86).

Domestic labor in South Africa is deeply connected to the country’s colonial history and apartheid regime. Through institutions of systematic racial segregation, domestic labor effectively reinforced notions of Black women’s domesticity while also solidifying racialized notions of class difference (Ally, 2008; Cock, 1981; Gaitskell et al., 1983). Because domestic work takes place in the confines of private homes, scholars have noted how apartheid has only truly ended in the public sphere and now recognize this kind of labor as one of the last vestiges of the colonial regime (Fish, 2006a).

The overrepresentation of Black, Coloured¹, and migrant women in South Africa’s domestic service sector has resulted from the interlocking systems of social stratification of race, class and gender. However, this phenomenon is observable worldwide as a reflection of the informalization of women’s labor and the feminization of the workforce. Feminists have

¹ Coloured refers to another racial minority group in South Africa, whose ethnic identity is typically understood as mixture of indigenous Black African, South Asian, and Dutch lineage. Coloured people were among the non-White groups targeted by the nation’s apartheid regime.

connected women's unpaid labor in the home to the devaluation of women's paid labor and to their economic disenfranchisement in the public sphere (Hoskyns & Rai, 2007). Although employment in the informal sector allows for the flexibility many women need to earn wages while balancing reproductive responsibilities, it is seen as unskilled and for women is often connected to their duties in the home. The perceived low value is also reinforced by the high concentration of women of color within the sector. This subsequently leads to its devaluation in the market (Cock, 1981).

Feminists have pointed to the rising number of women, most notably migrant women of color, seeking informal employment, calling it the feminization of informal labor (Moghadam, Ferree, Lorber, & Beth, 1999; UNFPA, 2006). During the current wave of globalization and economic restructuring, many third world women find themselves seeking waged work to overcome strains placed on developing country economies, which have reduced access to social assistance, such as public education and affordable healthcare (Moghadam et al., 1999; Parreñas, 2001). Scholars have connected the market-oriented development goals of the Bretton Woods system, which call for an increase in women's economic participation, with structural adjustment policies (SAPs) that reduce women's access to various forms of government assistance. Desai (2007) exposes some of the ways SAPs increased third world women's responsibilities in the home, stating, "Women are expected to make up the cuts in public services by providing unpaid care at home and by buying it in the marketplace." Stressors women face in home countries as a result of structural adjustment are joined by additional pull factors such as better employment prospects, opportunities to escape discrimination and violence, and increased access to social mobility, which ultimately contribute to significant increases in women's international migration (UNFPA, 2006). By evaluating the causes, we can begin to see that many third world women are

caught between structures that call them to work both outside and inside of the home simultaneously, making flexible labor in the informal sector particularly appealing. As a result, more women are entering the workforce than ever before and now make up over half of the current number of legal labor migrants in the world (Everett & Charlton, 2014; Parreñas, 2001; UNFPA, 2006). Meanwhile, the low value placed on third world women's labor and lack of family-oriented policies in Western destination countries creates unprecedented demand in for migrant women's labor.

It is within these circumstances that domestic labor emerges as a key component of the informalization of women's labor. The study of care work, which refers to the reproductive work of domestic workers, nannies/au pairs, elderly care facilitators, and other laborers in private homes, has moved into a more central analysis of development, globalization and human rights. Moghadam (2005) sees a direct correlation between first world women's rising presence in the public sector and the growing demand for affordable care and domestic assistance. While the success of the second wave of Western feminism catapulted many (predominantly) White middle and upper class women into the professional labor sphere, it left many dual-income families lacking household caretakers. Third world women have become the primary responders to families in the developed world in need of care. This has resulted in the formation of the global chains through which many migrant women leave their families in search of work in destination countries. Scholars argue that Western nations' dependence on these global care chains (Hochschild, 2000) directly contributes to the precarity of third world women's lives (Desai, 2002; Parreñas, 2001). While employment in the care labor sectors of Western and developed countries offers women a multitude of benefits, it also exposes them to the precarious conditions of this highly unregulated sector.

Mies (1994) argues that the globalization of care exacerbates the disparities between the developed and developing world, and reflects the global North's dependence on the global South to facilitate its growth and progress. Though globalization is often mistakenly understood as the great equalizer, leveling the playing field and eradicating social disparities by increasing access to economic and social mobility, feminists have vehemently critiqued this perceived universal truth (Desai, 2007). By identifying who performs domestic labor and observing the growing demand for care laborers in the home, it becomes clear that while women's labor is essential for the social reproduction of the families and societies, those who perform this valuable work are among the least paid and most marginalized. The informalization of third world women's labor in the form of domestic work reflects the global sociopolitical and economic dynamics that place them there, leading workers to put themselves and their families at risk. Similar to circumstances that characterize domestic labor in post-apartheid South Africa, third world women from all over the global South are increasingly called to perform care for the same affluent nations that contribute to their underdevelopment. These conditions make the regulation of domestic work in policy form that much more imperative. Furthermore, as those most often forgotten in the global economy, the persistent conditions of household labor exploitation make domestic worker organizing that much more critical.

Domestic Worker Organizing: A Global Picture

Domestic workers' transnational organizing emerged within a larger context of global feminist activism during a time when many Northern feminists were beginning to look south in hopes of establishing coalitions for solidarity and influence international norms by way of regulatory treaties (Alvarez, 2000). Feminist transnational activism has been traced as far back as

the League of Nations where women's issues gained momentum in connection to growing interests in universalizing basic human rights (Bessis, 2004). The participation of transnational feminists also signaled women's extended involvement in efforts to build sustainable development strategies that reach the most marginalized populations. Desai (2002) marks the eras of women's transnational organizing in four phases of UN efforts to create gender-focused development goals. The first phase followed the model of the Western feminist movement, which focused on extending legal rights and protections. The second phase was primarily concerned with eradicating social discrimination by encouraging women's economic participation. The third and fourth stages, representing the most recent trends, have demonstrated a need for sustainable development and the multiple effects of globalization on women. Following the capitalist expansion and political displacement that characterized the 90s, major international conferences focused on feminist activist networks and facilitated the rapid growth and involvement of both intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations in efforts to build sustainable development practices (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). The final era of transnational organizing with the UN was marked by a rapid rise in the activity and visibility of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the influx of funding available for women's grassroots movements (Alvarez, 2000; Desai, 2002; Jad, 2007b). As Basu (2000) highlights, North-South alliances have been plagued by internal disputes arising out of complex coalitions between Northern and Southern feminists; Northern feminists tended to mobilize around political and social rights, whereas Southern feminist focused on economic empowerment and basic needs. Both continue to be central to the continuance of women's struggles worldwide.

Women have also taken active roles in the trade union movement. Union feminism has grown out of joint struggles for women's equality and respect in the workplace and out of efforts

to protect and unionize the workers in the informal economy (Fonow & Franzway; Spooner, 2004). Following the UN's interest in women as political and economic actors and the effects that globalization and development has on their lives, women's increasing participation in wage employment and overrepresentation in the informal sector prompted the International Labour Organization's (ILO) interests in ensuring women's labor policy protections (Tomei & Belser, 2011). Labor organizations, including worker associations, national and international trade unions and NGOs, have been an essential tool for labor organizing (Gallin, 1999; Spooner, 2004) and have grown to incorporate women and female dominated sectors as their labor participation increases. NGOs and other organizations grew in the wake of trade union failures to adequately address the needs of women workers. These dynamics set the stage for women's participation in policy making through the ILO.

The ILO was one of the first spaces where women's labor organizations could access national and international political networks that enabled them to influence policy change. Drawing from the boomerang theory proposed by Keck and Sikkink (1998), activists have used transnational networks of NGOs, grassroots movements, and intergovernmental agencies to successfully lobby their governments and win workers' rights. Through the use of these transnational networks, activists are able to move beyond the confines of organizing nationally and lobby at the international level. Local leaders are then able to use partnerships with international regulatory bodies as a source of momentum and support for national change. This process facilitates the politicization and global awareness of localized movements.

Many activists, trade unionists, and researchers have begun to theorize on the current state of the women's labor movement and its response to the growth of transnational corporations and the global market system, highlighting the development of informal labor and

with it the rise of labor migration (Desai, 2007; Moghadam et al., 1999). Gallin (1999) details the history of partnerships between trade unions and NGOs in advocating for workers' rights across national boundaries. While the role international regulatory bodies such as the United Nations and its corresponding agencies has been seen as a reserved space for addressing international issues, our rapidly globalizing world has presented a new need for actors who can now implement solutions on a global scale (Riisgard, 2005). This has both negative and positive effects. Though international policy has served as a springboard that local movements use to frame their advocacy, once radical goals are often watered down in the negotiation process (Desai, 2007). Bessis (2004) speaks of the limitations of advocating at the UN level, stating, "The multiplicity of interests that crisscross at the heart of the UN system and the time-honored politics of 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' have watered down a number of the organization's resolutions concerning women...and reduced the application of the organization's principled resolutions at the grassroots level to next to nothing" (pg.263). Additionally, after international standards and solutions are created, actors capable of carrying out plans for implementation are still needed. Thus, trade unions, NGOs and other grassroots organizations have become key actors in the implementation of international labor standards and policy. For women's labor issues, particularly those pertaining to third world women's informalized work, this means increased dependence on women's NGOs, trade unions, and activist networks to make sure that these policies are enacted on the ground. As women represent a marginalized position in most social, political, and economic arenas, a number of limitations complicate the implementation process for the groups that carry it out.

Third world feminists have long debated the advantages and disadvantages of transnational organizing and coalition building, and concerns have grown as grassroots

organizations have become increasingly involved on the international level. It has become clear that local groups are unable to facilitate their new role as implementers of international policy and strategic plans without considerable amounts of assistance from transnational networks and international funding agencies (Alvarez, 2000; Basu, 2000; Jad, 2007b; Moghadam, 2005).

While Western tendencies to focus on rights based advocacy and mobilization have historically conflicted with developing world feminists' focus on needs, new dilemmas emerge through the framing of transnational partnerships with Western feminist organizations and grassroots women's movements. These dilemmas emerge through the language used by international organizations to frame their partnership and through funding and partnership agreements that disturb the structure of grassroots movements. Often, international partners rely on the construction of third world women's identities as marginal and disempowered to conceptualize their solidarity (Mindry, 2001; Mohanty, 1984). This repositions third world women as marginal and reinforces notions of the need for Western leadership.

Scholar-activists have also analyzed funding and partnership agreements between women's grassroots organizations and foreign development funders to reflect Western cooptation of local movements. Alvarez (2000) and Moghadam (2015) describe this process, arguing that extensive reporting stipulated in funding agreements with international donors circumvents grassroots leadership and disrupts the community-based framework of grassroots movements. Therefore, while grassroots goals risk deradicalization through negotiation at the international level of the UN, grassroots movements simultaneously face westernization/bureaucratization through partnerships that utilize stereotypes of third world womanhood and impose hierarchal structures through funding and partnership agreements (Basu, 2000; Moghadam, 2015).

Noting the rise in funding available for women's development programs and organizations resulting from the increase in global awareness of gender related issues, the literature reflects a growing concern for the effects of this newly available funding. Between 1998 and 2008, U.S. based foundations increased their giving to women's causes from \$240,000 to a jaw dropping \$3,250,000 (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Basu, 2000). Though many local movements have attempted to keep Western involvement to a minimum, many women's movements are simply incapable of success without assistance (Jad, 2007b). They clearly do not have the finances or capacity to sustain their efforts. Basu (2006) notes the strain created by the circulation of international funding. She states, "Some organizations actually have found it harder to sustain the commitment of their members when ample funds dry up than they did before those funds first became available" (p.80). In addition, transnational governmental bodies that require organizations to shift their focus to implementation of international conventions by pressuring national governments to ratify further complicate grassroots mobilizing.

"The focus of the women's movement on transforming the state has been responsible for its increasing reliance on institutional and legislative means rather than on grassroots mobilization. For different reasons and in different ways, state agencies and international donors both seek to fund organizations that can deliver the goods, whether this takes the form of policy recommendations, reports, or implementing development projects. The very success of women's organizations at achieving these tasks can divert them from movement activities" (p. 80; Basu, 2000).

These observations direct my focus on the ways that funding and international partnerships compromise the effectiveness of grassroots efforts.

Domestic worker organizing has been plagued with many of these issues. As third world women are marginalized within the informal sector, organizing has been stifled by limited technical capacity and financial status of the sector. For this reason, the transnationalization of the domestic labor movement has been essential to its success. Driven by the gross violations of human rights experienced by workers in the private homes of their employers and a growing awareness of the centrality of women's unappreciated reproductive labor, women's grassroots movements have emerged out of a need for recognition of the circumstances that characterize the sector and for indisputable protections of domestic worker rights (Gallin & Horn, 2004; Oelz, 2014; Tomei & Belser, 2011). Grassroots movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have been strengthened by the development of trade unions, NGOs, and transnational advocacy networks that have connected grassroots leaders with other worker-activists, researchers, and policy makers that now shape the movement to incorporate domestic and household care into international labor law (Fish, 2006; Everett & Charlton, 2014).

After years of organizing and mobilizing local domestic workers, the movement has gone global as women have successfully formed transnational alliances and assert their centrality to national and global economies. International recognition of domestic labor has largely resulted from the rising flow of third world women into the informal sector as maids, housekeepers, and nannies in destination countries (Oelz, 2014). Though much of the organizing has taken place at the local grassroots level, researchers have noted that migration associated with the global care crisis dictates a need for transnational movement. The creation of the International Domestic Worker's Network, which formed as a strategic network striving for the recognition of domestic work on the international level responded to this gap (Boris & Fish, 2014a). In 2011, their demands were answered by the International Labor Organization (ILO) with the adoption of ILO

Convention 189. This convention represented the first international treaty to recognize and standardize the basic conditions for domestic labor and even included a recommendation that all protections be extended to both documented and undocumented migrants employed in the sector (Boris & Fish, 2014a; Tomei & Belser, 2011). This new policy has become the foundation of the current wave of domestic worker mobilization as local unions and groups shift focus towards national ratification. Today, the Convention has been ratified in 22 countries², but still discriminatory legislation of national constitutions remains a barrier to full implementation.

The ILO's recommendations did recognize that many domestic and care workers are migrating into the sector by including a clause calling for all recommendations to be applicable across nationality and documented status. However, as a nonbinding portion of the Convention, provisions have yet to be made to ensure the practical implementation of protections for migrant workers (Oelz, 2014). This is further complicated by national governments whose constitutions limit the rights available to migrant workers in destination countries. Because migrants, especially those with undocumented status or visas which tie them to an employer, often have precarious relationships with the legal systems of their destination countries, the likelihood that they will be successfully organized, and thusly protected, exponentially decreases (Brennan, 2014; Chen, 2011; Gallin & Horn, 2004). This often creates tension between the advocacy frameworks of local organizations and unions whose rights-based advocacy excludes those who are unprotected by the law of the land. Moreover, migrants and domestic workers in general are often not granted the right to unionize, further complicating domestic worker groups' ability to organize across nationalities. This ultimately creates barriers to the protection of rights for

² To date, according to the ILO, the Convention has been ratified in the following countries: Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Guyana, Ireland, Italy, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, Uruguay.

migrant domestic workers and disempowers unions to effectively mobilize them.

While the conditions of domestic labor remain largely the same, these new complexities shape local domestic worker organizing in South Africa and all over the world. Grassroots movements have greatly benefited from UN interests in gender-sensitive development issues, vast transnational feminist networks, and the availability of funding for women-centered development initiatives. On the other hand, they have also experienced the deradicalization of their goals and initiatives through international negotiation and recolonization by seeking support for their work through foreign partnerships. Today, remaining questions include: How will local movements accomplish ratification and implementation of Convention 189 in nations that have not yet ratified? What role will funding play in the successes and failures of grassroots movements? And, how will increased regulation affect the circumstances of domestic labor? The South African case at the heart of this thesis offers grounded perspectives that begin to answer these questions by evaluating the current circumstances that domestic worker and union leaders are facing in their local contexts.

Now that I have outlined the foundational literature that directs my analysis, I will turn to the specific case of trade union organizing in South Africa. I have overviewed the role of the global economy in the feminization of labor and women's increased informality, demonstrating that much of the circumstances third world women face directly correlate with improved social and economic status of women in the global North. I have highlighted the growing number of women labor migrants and the emergence of global care chains, noting the vulnerability experienced by women working in private homes who may have precarious legal standing. And finally, I have summarized the importance of feminist coalitions and transnational activist networks in securing rights and protections for these invisible workers. In the next two chapters I

will demonstrate some of the complexities that arise in the theoretical analyses of the globalization of domestic work through my observations of a grassroots movement and trade union as it collides with global efforts to regulate this rapidly growing labor sector. Using the South African Domestic and Allied Worker's Union (SADSAWU) as a case study, I will show how international interests, by way of policies, foreign funding and international partnerships, call for the expansion of union activities. The next chapter will use narrative data from interviews with key activists and union leaders to emphasize union members' and staff experiences with the union's transnational reach. The fourth chapter then utilizes union documents such as strategic plans and reports, partnership agreements, and budgets to demonstrate a disruption in the union's efforts to be member led.

CHAPTER III
GLOBAL AWARENESS MEETS LOCAL ORGANIZING: A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE
STUDY

While the institution of hired domestic labor is observable across many locations and contexts, South Africa's history of recent colonial rule and social unrest provides an intriguing locale for such observations. Scholars have long noted the uniqueness of domestic work amidst the country's apartheid regime. The laboring of Black and Coloured women in the homes of White employers is argued to reinforce state policies of racial hierarchy (Ally, 2011; Cock, 1981; Gaitskell et al., 1983). Black¹ and Coloured women are caught in overlapping structures of social and political racist oppression and the simultaneous lack of recognition of women's reproductive labor relegates them to invisible toiling in the nation's dirty work (Ally, 2011). Though they are merely expected to reproduce the households that employ them, in actuality their work amounts to reproducing the nation as they perform the care labor in their own homes as well as in their workplaces. Still today, an overwhelming number of middle class South African homes continue to exclusively employ non-white women as domestic workers in their homes. Scholars have noted that while much of South African society has been transformed through the establishment of a democratic government, private homes where housekeepers, nannies, and cooks labor remains unchanged, calling it "the last bastion of apartheid" (Cock, 1981; Fish, 2006b; King, 2012).

Today the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) is the only nationally recognized trade union for domestic workers and serves as the primary body

¹ For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'Black women' refers to both indigenous South African women as well as Black migrant women from other African nations.

for worker assistance and empowerment. Launched by members that have rallied against apartheid and led the struggle around domestic work since the early 1980s (Spooner, 2004), the union now holds a unique position in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the national labor movement. SADSAWU has also grown to global recognition due to its involvement with the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF). SADSAWU joined the network of domestic workers groups from around the world in 2006 to lobby the International Labour Organization (ILO) to establish protections for their labor sector. After domestic worker bodies succeeded in winning international protections for workers worldwide with the ILO Convention 189, a wave of change reached the shores of national movements as the push to ratify and implement the Convention became the next phase of organizing (Boris & Fish, 2014a; Tomei & Belser, 2011). This new development forms the focus of my thesis. In this chapter I deal specifically with the case of domestic labor in South Africa. Before exploring the data I have collected, I will briefly outline the unique nature of domestic work as it appears in South African society, while also recounting the growth and development of domestic worker organizing. Following an overview of this context, I will discuss the latest dilemmas in the movement to bring domestic worker rights into the full scope of South African labor law, highlighting some complexities emerging since a national struggle and its actors have become part of a broader global movement.

Beginnings of a Movement: Challenging Apartheid

The prevalence of domestic workers in South African homes is a widespread institution that many have connected with the nation's colonial regimes of racial inequality and apartheid, which systematically called for the separation of its four primary racial categories – Black

African, Coloured, Indian, and White (Ally, 2011; Cock, 1989; Fish, 2006a; Gaitskell et al., 1983). This racial division of South African society transcended the public sphere and became a feature of the private household through the institution of hired domestic help. Household workers including maids/servants, housekeepers, nannies/au pairs, and cooks were exclusively Black and Coloured women. White employers were able to reinforce the institutionalized racial hierarchy at home by employing domestic servants to take care of menial household chores or ‘dirty work’(Ally, 2011; Gaitskell et al., 1983). Many workers lived on their employers’ premises and experienced extended separation from their own families while earning inadequate means for them to change the circumstances of their work. Hardships for live-in workers were (and still are) often exacerbated by their isolation. By “living-in” they are constantly at the disposal of their employers and thus do not have regular working hours. South Africa’s 1966 Group Areas Act and systems of influx control, which were designed to monitor the presence of non-whites in areas reserved for Whites only, often limited the mobility of workers. These regulations required those traveling in and out of White areas to carry passbooks in order to move and made it nearly impossible for workers to travel freely or to be accommodated with their families at the homes of their employers. This created great difficulty for workers to exercise any independence on days off; the added expense of transportation back to the townships meant that workers sometimes only saw their families once or twice a year.

Scholars of domestic work in South Africa and worldwide have also noted the contradiction between societal valuation of domestic work and its concrete contributions to the growth and development of the nation (Chen, 2011; Cock, 1981; Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2001; Rollins, 1985). In their role as domestic workers, women were expected to bear the heavy load of reproductive labor in private homes - cooking, cleaning, child minding, care of the

elderly, and at times monitoring other household staff—while being forced to neglect the same duties in their own homes. By relieving employers of the labor necessary to reproduce the home, domestic workers allow their employers to seek employment in the formal sector (Desai, 2002; Moghadam et al., 1999). Domestic workers' ability to free White men, and sometimes women, from wageless laboring in home created the opportunity for their employers to make considerable contributions to the economic growth and success of the nation (Cock, 1981). Thus, though her work would rarely ever be acknowledged, this labor effectively reproduces the productive labor power of the nation. This fact is also an important piece in understanding how class difference is constructed in South African society. Because household help became such a widespread occurrence in White South African homes, Marxist theorists have argued that the value of White labor power has been constructed to accommodate the expense of Black workers in the home (Cock, 1981). Meanwhile, little has changed in the perceived value of Black labor, as wages are set merely at the level of individual subsistence. Thus, while White workers are more likely to be awarded breadwinner wages, which are typically designed to accommodate the expenses of a family and some domestic assistance, Black households struggle to operate on wages built to sustain just one person. As a result, Black families are forced to become dual wage-earning households in order to attain similar levels of financial stability. Therefore, it is Black families' reliance on multiple wage earners coupled with historical constructions of non-white women as reproductive laborers that propels Black and Coloured women into this highly vulnerable labor sector. Furthermore, the absence of women from Black households often leads the reproductive duties to fall on the eldest girl child until she is of working age, at which point the cycle begins again with many domestic workers being daughters of current or former workers.

Though institutionalized segregation of racial groups has ended, many of the characteristic inequalities – various forms of political, economic, and social exclusion from adequate services like education and health care, as well as limitations on the movement of South Africa’s Black and Coloured populations – are still alive and well. We have come to understand the cyclical nature of race and class-based oppression as hardships emerge from an exacerbated economic division and restricted access to proper education that reproduce themselves on today’s generations. These inequalities have failed to be transformed by the fall of the apartheid regime and the installation of democracy (Ally, 2008; King, 2012). Black women continue to be a concentrated presence, working in the homes of White middle and upper class citizens in what has been argued to be one of the longest standing vestiges of the apartheid regime.² Still today, the number of upwardly mobile and affluent homes with domestic workers far out numbers homes without. Meanwhile, domestic work remains largely invisible, unaccounted for, and unappreciated. Interlocking oppressions that forced women into this vulnerable sector serve to perpetuate the racial divide put forth by the apartheid government by relegating women of color do to the invisible dirty work of the country’s mainly White elites.

Domestic Worker Organizing: Pre- & Post-Apartheid

The birth of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union took place within a vibrant space for labor activism that shaped a large part of the push for democracy in South Africa. Mobilization around labor rights was a center point in efforts to develop what would go on to become one of the most liberal and human rights focused constitutions to date. The establishment of the Congress of South African Trade Unions in 1955 and its subsequent

² Fish (2006) argues that in South Africa the concentration of Black and Coloured women in domestic work is one of most visible remaining vestiges of the apartheid regime.

organizing stood in stiff opposition to the nation's apartheid regime, which would go on to ban all political organizations just five years later. Women were engaged in the anti-apartheid movement early on and had begun to protest against Pass Laws, which restricted their movement, and organize for better education and working conditions as early as the 1970s. SADSAWU's parent body, South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU; previously an association), the first woman-led union in South Africa, had emerged in a context of the heightened political atmosphere that had begun to characterize trade union activity. Comprised of several domestic worker groups across a number of regions, SADWU was created in the organizational form of an association, SADWA, in 1982. Today in post-apartheid South Africa, SADWU is survived by SADSAWU, which carries on the legacy of women's grassroots leadership and resistance to racist dimensions of the sector.

Domestic workers had been an established presence in the anti-apartheid movement, often meeting in churches and the garages of their employers and demonstrating in the heated last days of the regime. While engaged in the struggle, workers brought attention to the particulars of domestic labor while also becoming symbols of women's struggles under apartheid. Guided by the leadership of worker-activists like Myrtle Witbooi in the Western Cape and Eunice Dhladhla in Johannesburg, domestic workers' groups began developing across provinces. These groups' early efforts focused on skills trainings and worker education while avoiding negative attention from the nation's oppressive regime. Regional groups successfully joined, forming first a national association. This woman-led activist group gained national recognition by becoming a registered trade union, SADWU, in 1986 and affiliating with COSATU shortly after (Nyman, 1997). This was the first trade union organized and run by women in the history of South African and boasted record membership numbers for a new union

in the informal sector. In contrast to the objectives of the former association, SADWU actively participated in the anti-apartheid regime by violating laws prohibiting Black trade unions to fight for worker rights to be extended to domestic workers in private homes (Fish, 2006).

As apartheid came to an end, SADWU also began to dismantle as internal complications took their toll after ten years of steady activity. Though the union experienced a number of obstacles, the decline in membership growth was a feature that scholars and workers have attributed to the extension of labor protections to domestic workers in 1993, just before the official installation of democracy (King, 2012). However, the prominent work of this union remained an important part of domestic worker mobilization and served as the foundation for the development of a future organization. After SADWU proved that organizing in the informal sector of domestic labor was possible, another domestic worker union was in the making. SADSAWU launched during the spring of 2000 in Durban, installing Hester Stephens as its first president with a focus on aligning domestic worker rights with the nation's newly formed democracy. Its goals focused on addressing the inequalities and exploitation experienced by domestic workers and other women working in similar sectors, who had yet to see the promises of South Africa's new Constitution realized. This union focused on mobilizing domestic workers around labor laws that had specifically differentiated them from other workers in Mandela's 'new democracy.' SADSAWU and its members sought to be treated "just like all other workers"—with a living wage, unemployment assistance, medical coverage, and compensation for occupational harm.

SADSAWU grew to international attention in 2006 when SADSAWU delegates and members of other domestic workers organizations participated in an international conference on 'Decent work for Domestic Workers' in the Netherlands. This conference brought worker bodies

and allied groups together to begin campaigning for the inclusion of domestic work at the next ILO Labor Conference. The formation of the International Domestic Workers Network, the only international domestic worker body in the world, is arguably one of the most important results of this 2006 gathering. In 2013, it broke precedent again by becoming the first women-led international trade union (the IDWF) as a result of attentions brought by the ILO. Worker bodies from all over the world were joined by NGOs and feminist allies to push for the recognition of domestic work in international labor policy. Their demands were finally met with the ILO adoption of Convention 189 in 2011, which established protections and global standards for the conditions for this form of labor. This Convention was the first attempt to extend coverage to an informal and widely unrecognized labor sector, establishing protections such as fair terms of employment, remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security, and protections against violence and abuse. Though the adoption was the first step in securing rights for workers in this sector, including acknowledgment for the notable presence of migrants in this sector, the Convention was just the first step on the “long walk to freedom.”³

Shortly after the Convention’s adoptions, worker bodies realized that there was a new task at hand: national ratification and implementation. Although it established global standards and protections, the Convention itself proved useless without widespread acceptance on the part of national governments. Now the movement was in need of stewards to usher this new piece of legislation through process of ratification until its full realization on the ground. As the parties most invested in the success of the Convention, trade unions, NGOs, and other worker-aligned parties became the overseers of this process. Through the IDWN, workers defined the next phase of the movement with the launching of the “12 by 12” campaign, which set a goal of achieving

³ This term references Nelson Mandela’s iconic autobiography, *A Long Walk to Freedom: An Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*.

12 ratifications by the year 2012. With a newly generated wave of international interest and increased availability of funding, the transnational movement continues to grow stronger.

Though South Africa was amongst the first nations to ratify C189, many barriers have remained in place to prevent full implementation. Today, SADSAWU works in five provinces to push for the rights of domestic workers to be fully recognized and felt. With the presence of international funding, SADSAWU has been able to work around its dilemmas to continue organizing across the nation. Workers are often still exploited in the homes of their employers with little legal recourse. Social security remains elusive and pensions are not always guaranteed. Despite the crippling effect of low membership subscription rates and the increasing job vulnerability faced by workers as new wage standards are enforced, the union continues to work off of grants from international funders to sustain its daily operation, provide workshops and trainings, and continue field organizing efforts. Now, five years after C189, new objectives have been added to the union's strategy and a growing transnational interest has extended protections to the most vulnerable in this already insecure sector of migrant domestic workers.

Following Recommendation 201 of Convention 189, which suggests that all protections listed in the Convention be extended to migrant domestic workers, a new push to address the precarity experienced by these workers has been felt worldwide. As South Africa receives one of the largest influxes of refugees and migrants in the world, SADSAWU has taken on new efforts to mobilize these vulnerable workers. Despite the large number of refugees and migrants working in South Africa, both documented and undocumented, considerable complications arise in extending rights to non-citizens within the context of the widespread xenophobia that plagues the nation. In the section that follows, I will present my original findings on some of the tensions I witnessed as SADSAWU attempts to negotiate around efforts to organize migrants working in

the domestic sector while it struggles to become financially self-sustaining.

Case Study

Today, in the wake of C189, SADSAWU continues to advocate for workers rights with the added task of pushing the policy's implementation since South Africa ratified in 2013. Some of the daily functions of the union include organizing at various field locations, mediating worker-employer disputes, promoting union campaigns, and holding capacity building workshops. During my time interning with the union, I participated in many of SADSAWU's daily functions and was also invited to its National Executive Committee meetings in Johannesburg. Throughout this three-day conference, organizers from each of SADSAWU's provincial offices—Cape Town, Johannesburg/Gauteng, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, and Newcastle—met to discuss upcoming campaigns and membership growth. In the discussions, as organizers from each province gave a bleak update on new membership, it became apparent to me that efforts to mobilize new workers were failing.

This presents a serious problem for a union designed to sustain its basic functioning through the use of membership subscription fees. Without new and recurring membership subscriptions, the union cannot provide for its basic functions such as maintaining an office space, purchasing campaign materials and pamphlets, and providing transportation for its field organizers. These financial strains have a crippling effect and the declining number of members has been a growing problem for the union. Ongoing problems with SADSAWU's stagnant membership have resulted in many internal issues such as the closing of the Gauteng province's public office space, smaller salaries for organizers, fewer meetings between provinces, and unstable ties with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), an essential actor in

South Africa's national labor politics. Myrtle Witbooi, SADSAWU General Secretary, and Hester Stephens, SADSAWU President, have noted the dip in paying members since democracy came to South Africa in 1994.

On an afternoon at SADSAWU's national offices, Stephens gave some insight on one problem underlying membership growth. She stated:

Now that we have democracy, workers only come when they have an issue with the employer. They don't want to pay the fees unless there's a problem. Once the problem is fixed they don't come back.

Since the advent of democracy and the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela, many workers feel that their rights are sufficiently covered by the new South African constitution, which is recognized as one of the world's most progressive (Fish, 2006). This is just one of several barriers to membership growth I witnessed. On numerous occasions, union leaders and worker-members reminded me the difficulty of organizing in "the only sector where there is one employee per employer." Whereas this problem once created trouble in getting domestic work nationally recognized as work entitled to labor protections, the primary struggle of today is not only reaching this widely dispersed workforce but also convincing them that they are not fully covered by standard South African labor law.

Mobilizing domestic workers often requires SADSAWU organizers to spend a day away from the office, putting administrative tasks such as negotiation of worker cases and disputes on the back burner. At the main office of SADSAWU, organizers take buses to the many neighborhoods and suburbs of the Western Cape area. This is also the case in SADSAWU's other five provinces where two organizers, with the assistance of a national executive in the case of Johannesburg, run union operations from the office locations. As a result of SADSAWU's

small size, in comparison to some of the country's larger and more powerful unions, along with its limited staff of field organizers, efforts to effectively reach workers often fall flat.

Membership growth has been trickling in at a rate too slow to sustain the union's functions and worker cases pile up in the absence of organizers.

In an attempt to express the troublesome nature of having too few organizers to effectively organize in the Western Cape, Witbooi candidly shared with me,

When organizers don't bring new members I have to ask the funders for money for the organizers' salaries. But they don't want to pay for the organizers. They pay for the workshops and the trainings.

Ultimately, this means that organizers' salaries must be supplemented by taking funds from the General Secretary's salary, who is paid by international funders, in order to make up the difference. This not only cripples the financial stability of leaders like Witbooi, but also creates a dependency amongst organizers who grow to expect assistance from the 'well-off' leaders and places leaders in the compromising position of providing for individuals rather than focusing efforts on development of the union. In addition, the lack of growth means that the union is unable to take on more organizers to redistribute the heavy task of organizing.

The logistical complications inhibiting membership growth are at times intensified by issues of ability. During SADSAWU's national executive conference, I noted the absence of younger workers. Most of the union's delegates, which included the two organizers from each province as well as the union's national executive members, were over forty years old with executive leaders ranging from sixty to seventy. Many union members had also sustained health complications or injuries as a result of several years of hard labor in the domestic sector. Because organizing often requires union leaders and volunteers to stand, walk, and carry organizing

materials for long periods of time health and ability become important factors to organizing effectively. In the case of Gladys Mynzinga, SADSAWU's national treasurer who leads the street committee (a small group of workers who volunteer time to organize workers in their own neighborhood) that operates in her district of Khayelitsha—South Africa's fastest growing township—getting out on the streets to organize is a difficult task. Health concerns that have directly resulted from working with the same employer for over 30 years—two surgeries on both hands, and inflamed veins in her lower legs from extended periods on her feet—make door-to-door campaigning particularly difficult. In a conversation with Tony Ehrenreich, the General Secretary of COSATU and long time friend of SADSAWU, we discussed some concerns about the repercussions of the lack of younger membership. He stressed a need to cultivate leadership skills amongst active members, noting potential complications that may arise once current leadership retire from daily management of union activities. Though the union is often occupied with the immediate concerns of daily functioning, there is a clear need to develop leaders among the SADSAWU's younger and able-bodied membership to both alleviate the hardships of field organizing and to prepare new members to take on executive roles in the future.

In exchange for the union's services, which include workshops and trainings, workers' educational study circles, and representation in worker disputes, SADSAWU requires members to pay a yearly subscription of one hundred and twenty Rand, the equivalent of about seven US dollars and fifty cents per year. To some this may seem dangerously low in comparison to the subscription fees of other nationally recognized trade unions. Witbooi told me one afternoon, "We used to charge more, but it was too high for the workers. They didn't want to pay." Despite having lowered annual subscription fees workers remain unwilling or unable to afford membership. For workers who sometimes earn as little as two hundred dollars a month (and at

times even less) and often support dependents, saving enough to afford subscription fees is difficult. Thus, tensions jointly arise out of interwoven complications of slowly growing membership and a membership base too financially strained to afford an annual subscription. The struggle for workers to afford union fees emerges across the most poorly paid sectors, notably the domestic service and agricultural sectors. These sectors in particular have come to be viewed as nonviable for successful unionization in South Africa and worldwide. In SADSAWU's case, limited access to funds from low rates of annual subscription has resulted in instable trade union status with the South African Department of Labor and a tenuous relationship with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the largest trade union organization in the nation. Though the Department of Labor asserts that trade unions do not have to be registered, formal registration comes with additional rights and national recognition. The most notable benefit SADSAWU receives as a result of securing trade union status is its right to represent workers and mediate worker-employer disputes at CCMA (the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration). Because this facet of the union's work represents a point of entry to advocate for change within employers' homes, it reveals the importance of maintaining national registration status. The process to register with the Department of Labor requires an organization to submit a copy of its constitution to ensure that it meets requirements stipulated in South Africa's Labor Relations Act, such as member-elected leadership and freedom from gender and race-based discrimination. Unions seeking registration must also prove that they are member-based and free from control by employer parties. Thus, membership roles and financial documentation is generally submitted as proof to prove of legitimacy. SADSAWU's unstable membership keeps them under constant surveillance, requiring them to repeatedly ensure that pre-existing members renew their subscriptions annually

and participate in union activities. As a result, maintenance of the membership files is one of the union's most important administrative tasks and organizers must balance mobilizing new members while simultaneously stressing the importance of continuing membership for those who feel they have exhausted the union's resources.

Affiliating with COSATU also comes with many benefits, which are now strained by its unstable relationship with SADSAWU. Ehrenreich outlined the many reasons unions are encouraged to join the National Congress,

If you are an affiliate of COSATU, COSATU is part of the alliance of the ANC. And so COSATU has a lot more access to government departments, to government officials, to the political leadership of government. And so if you're an affiliate of COSATU you technically have access to all of those things through the leadership of COSATU.

Thus, SADSAWU's political power is strengthened by affiliation with COSATU and through this powerful alliance union representatives are able to ensure legal recourse to violations of workers' rights during the dispute process. Currently, SADSAWU lacks the financial stability required to sustain official affiliation with the federation, however its long lasting connection with South Africa's labor struggle has allowed it to build a sort of unofficial affiliation. Though being an unofficial delegate of the federation disables SADSAWU's leadership from exercising voting rights at COSATU's congressional meetings, the union still benefits from the federation's political connections.

After exploring the dilemmas of slow membership growth, another deeply connected struggle became apparent. While field organizers have been organizing domestic workers across South African provinces for years – going into public parks where nannies sit on benches while children play, and tracing the scores of women in aprons travelling by public transit to

employers' households daily – the most notable change has been the inclusion of migrant workers. Though workers and union leaders expressed that it was important to end the exploitation of all domestic workers and build solidarity across national identities, organizing migrant workers was not always accepted. Today, South Africa represents one of the highest receiving country of refugees and migrants in Africa with the most recent census data estimating that about 2.2 million non-nationals currently live in the country (Africa, 2012). As a result of migrant influxes South Africa's largest city, Johannesburg, has become the site of numerous xenophobic attacks targeting foreigners that threaten local job security (Crush, 2000). Though many migrants find odd jobs in the informal sector to earn a wage without drawing attention from skeptical locals or revealing their undocumented status, only a small number of women – mostly Zimbabwean and Malawian—become domestic workers. This small faction of female labor migrants, who due to their circumstances are forced to accept lower wages, worse working conditions, and fewer legal protections, are often seen as a threat to the job security of South African domestic workers. Given South Africa's recent decision to increase the national minimum wage, these anxieties are heightened. Union members often held mixed feelings about South Africa's rising minimum wage, fearing that by demanding higher wages many would lose their jobs— usually to migrants willing to accept lower pay. On these grounds, Witbooi argued that building solidarity across lines of citizenship was important to protecting the job security of South African workers. She insisted:

The aim is not really about making the union stronger. The aim is more about mobilizing and not letting workers get exploited... We don't want to build because of migrant workers. Our union must work because of our own workers in South Africa. But we want to have a strong sector by protecting migrant workers.

Although the ILO's Convention only directly mentions migrant workers once in its list of recommendations, SADSAWU's efforts to organize migrant workers are understood as an extension of the action plan to implement C189 and seen as an important step toward the inclusion of workers who fall outside of national regulations and protections. But this often conflicts with the immediate needs and goals of the union itself and the added interests of international agencies and funders often result in the fracturing of the unions' mobilizing efforts (Alvarez, 2000; Basu, 2000; Jad, 2007a). For trade unions, such plans are often constructed around the needs of the union's dues-paying members who are almost always national citizens. This poses some difficulty for the inclusion of undocumented migrants.

SADSAWU's leadership drew up its first Migrant Organizing Plan in early 2015 with the support of international funding agencies, The Solidarity Center and FOS-Socialist Solidarity (I will refer to this funder as FOS throughout this work), who also send delegates to the union's executive meetings. These funding agencies' primary contribution is through the planning and financing of capacity building workshops, training programs, and executive retreats. The organizing plan reads,

Domestic Workers from South Africa are still hugely affected by their historic position of 'maid vs. master' and are not necessarily strong enough to demand their rights from employers. Many employers exploit this and workers are threatened – mostly with 'foreign' workers – the migrant worker who came into South Africa looking for an opportunity, not well informed about minimum standards in the law, and being desperate for an income, accepts work at a lower rate of pay in worse conditions. This has the result of South African Domestic workers being suspicious and resentful of migrant domestic

workers, and at the same time allowing the migrant worker to be exploited by unscrupulous employers.

These are the grounds upon which SADSAWU began organizing migrants within the sector.

Though funders contribute both financial and technical assistance to build mobilizing efforts amongst the migrants in the domestic labor sector, organizing this new group of workers remains strained. Because the primary focus of national trade unions is to serve the needs of worker citizens, many have raised the question of whether the union should be organizing outside of a rights-oriented framework. In South Africa, NGOs and refugee centers dominate the available services for migrants working across the nation's provinces. In the eyes of SADSAWU leaders, many of the services they offered by NGOs are similar in nature to the skills trainings and workshops put together by unions, but additional services are more centered around overcoming obstacles emergent from migrant and refugee status rather than labor-oriented services and activities. NGOs are more likely to provide assistance in the form of language courses, health and educational consultation, and immigration counseling. These services are also correlated with needs that impact working migrant populations specifically and that the union is typically unprepared to meet. Language is often the first barrier to recruiting more migrants. The small group of SADSAWU organizers appointed to migrant organizing committees have little experience with the various languages need to effectively communicate with migrant workers such as French for Congolese or the many indigenous African languages spoken amongst the peoples of Southern Africa, and English is not always a comfortable middle ground. Additionally, the union's limited finances are ill-equipped to meet the added costs of translating essential campaign materials such as worker rights pamphlets and flyers into each common language.

At the July 2015 executive meetings strategies to reach migrants were also discussed. Addressing organizers from each province, President Stephens urged organizers to get out into each province in search of the places that migrant workers gather on days off. Much like other cultural groups living in South Africa, migrants generally reside in communities isolated from other migrants and South Africans. This means that organizers must often travel by bus, train, or taxi to work in these areas. Similar to previous efforts, organizers target parks and churches on Sundays in hopes of finding new recruits, but such plans are often met with resistance from organizers who find it difficult to travel on a day that is culturally associated with rest and little travel.

Though mobilizing migrants presents a number of opportunities for the union— such as membership growth, stabilized wages and job security across the sector, the chance to represent more worker cases, and opportunities to build national recognition—without the necessary support from funding agencies, the added demands of these functions may also inhibit the union’s effectiveness. I argue that these dilemmas as well as the other I have detailed have stretched the union to a breaking point where it ceases to live out its functions effectively. Often it seems that while active members benefit greatly from their involvement with the union and participation in awareness raising initiatives, financial trainings, and skill-building workshops, general and prospective members are caught between the union’s conflicting efforts to enforce labor legislation and build a broader membership base. It has become apparent that without more freedom to direct initiatives and stipulate the use of available funding, the union will cease to be an easily accessible and effective space to mobilize and advocate for domestic workers rights.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed some of the most pressing dilemmas the union faces today. Using participant observation and interview data, I have highlighted some complexities of organizing in a unique sector where a small supply of union workers are often asked to do what seems impossible: single-handedly mobilize workers across each province in this highly isolated sector. Because of the small size of the union, SADSAWU leaders must often choose between administrative tasks of monitoring worker cases and continuing to bring more and more workers into the fold of the union. These difficulties are further complicated by financial strains, logistical and travel related issues, and an aging leadership base with few youthful members able to take on the physically demanding requirements of field organizing to mobilize the sector. Meanwhile, the involvement of international funders serves to fragment the union's goals by pushing staff members to organize the growing number of migrants in the domestic labor sector and provide workshops and trainings for worker's skills development.

The next chapter will explore the success and failures in SADSAWU's strategic planning, paying particular attention to the involvement of internationally directed efforts through global campaigns and funding agreements. I will highlight the complex nature of balancing its role as a nationally recognized trade union with strategies to organize and advocate for non-citizen workers sparked by the direction of international funding and the desires to build solidarity across national identities. By conducting a content analysis of union documents, I hope to draw attention to the contentions that emerge when funding is directed to activities and initiatives that stretch the union's capacity to work effectively.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSNATIONAL TROUBLES: EXPLORING THE OUTCOMES OF FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The focus of the women's movement on transforming the state has been responsible for its increasing reliance on institutional and legislative means rather than on grassroots mobilization. For different reasons and in different ways, state agencies and international donors both seek to fund organizations that can deliver the goods, whether this takes the form of policy recommendations, reports, or implementing development projects. The very success of women's organizations at achieving these tasks can divert them from movement activities. (Basu, 2000)

Grassroots movements have, and continue, to take on a transnational dimension, where local movements are increasingly influenced and directed by international actors (Basu, 2000; Mohanty, 2013; Nancy A Naples, 2015; 2002). As new legal standards to extend rights to people across national boundaries are created, local movements have become increasingly influenced by global interests to homogenize national legislation and universalize rights and protections, as we see with the standardizing effect of Convention 189. Scholars have noted the effects of these changes, arguing that the transnationalization of grassroots struggles coincides with a deradicalization of movements and the uprooting of insider leadership (Basu, 2000; Desai, 2002; Mindry, 2001). Through the exchange of funds and various forms of structural assistance, partnerships with foreign donor agencies serve to complicate the chain of command for what a movement and its subsequent organizations' strategies and objectives are.

In this chapter, I argue that these complexities can be observed through the language of union documents such as partnership agreements, organizer reports, strategic plans, and budgets. These documents allow us to detect the way grassroots organizations like NGOs, worker associations, and trade unions frame their partnerships with international funders and union confederations. They also give us new insights about how localized issues are framed internationally, then adopted into national and international concerns of foreign partners. Additionally, we can see how these issues emerge in the form of campaigns to be carried out on the ground. Once again, using SADSAWU as a case study, I demonstrate how this South African domestic worker's union works with international trade unions and funders, setting up systems of reporting and accountability through partnership and funding agreements with union leadership. I explore the ways in which union activities and goals are complicated by the participation of these added stakeholders and how cycles of dependency inhibit union progress.

A Brief Overview of Transnational Women's Movements

While recent studies of globalization have focused on its economic, social and political dimensions, feminist scholars have developed a distinct conversation centered on the disproportionate gender dimensions of this expansion. In doing so, we often tune our attentions to observations of these dynamics on a micro or local level of analysis where global standards and policies, formulated through the assistance of transnational activist networks, eventually become realized at the level of the individual. Transnational activist networks made up of women's groups and associations, church communities, national and international trade unions, NGOs, and individual activists played a key role in bringing women's issues into the forefront of development initiatives, while also providing a network of funding and assistance to grassroots

movements (Bessis, 2004; Keck & Sikkink, 1998). For this reason, a brief historical overview of feminist transnational activism and the networks that contribute to their success is useful.

Arising out of attempts to build coalition across national boundaries and extend social, political and economic rights to women as a marginalized group, networks of women's rights activists have been organizing transnationally since the early 20th century (Nancy A Naples, 2015). These groups were often founded and strengthened by their participation at congresses and conventions of international regulatory agencies and brought women's issues to the forefront of the conversation on international development goals. Activists' efforts culminated in such successes as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Bessis, 2004). Today, these standardized tools mark an era of strategic campaigning and awareness-raising dominated by Western powers in efforts to rapidly globalize the underdeveloped world. In addition to establishing women-centered development goals, women's transnational activism also helped to spark an interest in cross-national partnership on radical local struggles.

While hesitant to discount the contribution of these networks to the international women's movement, scholar-activists have questioned the outcomes of transnational partnerships sponsored by the leading NGOs and international women's groups (Basu, 2000; Desai, 2002, 2007; Moghadam, 2005; Mohanty, 2013). Though they provided a new wave of funding and assistance to "third-world women" leading these struggles, a disruption occurred, turning the movement on its head. Ramifications of this influx of financial and capacity support has been critically evaluated and contested by both local activists as well as feminist scholars. Through these transnationalizing processes, women's groups became the disseminators of feminist messages and goals without directly challenging the power dynamics that reproduce women's

subordination. Transnational movements have also become increasingly bureaucratic (Mohanty, 2013), shifting leadership from a bottom-up framework to a top-down hierarchical structure that echoes historical dynamics of Western domination rather than partnership. Essentially what has taken place is an NGOization, or deradicalization, of women's grassroots efforts as they are co-opted into a larger project.

SADSAWU

Today, SADSAWU receives assistance from a number of funders and is also a member of the international trade union, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), lending its General Secretary, Myrtle Witbooi, as the federation's current President. Through SADSAWU's participation in world forums on domestic work, the union was able to arrange a number of partnerships and gather funders to assist in the continuation of the domestic worker movement in South Africa. Through the assistance of these partners, new campaigns shaped union strategies for ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 189. These new efforts were combined with previous objectives to advocate for full recognition of domestic workers' needs and rights. Through these partnerships, international agencies provide both capacity support and financial assistance, which make much of the union's daily functions possible. As a stipulation of funding agreements, the union must facilitate an open line of communication with funders, which often means extensive report writing on spending and the outcomes of strategic organizing plans. Funders are also allowed participation in national executive meetings and where delegates are present to express the agencies' perspectives on goals and best practices. These added dimensions require more time and energy from already overstretched leaders.

Though done in the spirit of partnership, funding agencies and their involvement with union planning and spending serves to co-opt the struggle and overshadow union leaders by stepping in and redirecting objectives and strategic plans, and by suggesting how funds should be spent. By exploring the language used in SADSAWU's partnership agreements with their primary funding agencies—FOS, The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV), and Solidarity Center—we can see how the union's goals are eclipsed by international interests, which often receive more direct funding. I will also show how the international framing of issues pressures a local movement to address global concerns like migration, trafficking, and worker precarity.

While many major funding agencies have identified women's movements as a key component of the progress of civil society, the appropriation of these movements by Western actors has impeded the growth and development of the radical dialogue and change these movements seek to create (Basu, 2000). Through a process of NGO-ization by means of the increased participation of nongovernmental funding and aid agencies, ideas of gender parity and racial justice are adopted with no critical examination of power relations as development projects are taken up (Mohanty, 2013). I noticed this tension emerging in the language of the partnership agreements between SADSAWU and foreign funder and development NGOs. Notably, the regional program of FOS-socialist solidarity, a prominent Belgian funding agency, reflected a language that valued transnational solidarity but failed to disrupt the Western domination that reinforces grassroots struggles. In its program for the Southern Africa region, FOS frames its 2014-2016 partnerships as addressing the need for "social protections for all people living in precarious conditions in Southern Africa" (pg. 1). It further specifies its broad objective by emphasizing the right to decent work and health, and seeks to do so through joint strategies and activities with a number of worker groups across the region. FOS sees trade unions or

organizations of agricultural workers, domestic workers, and other informalized groups as primary partners that should participate in regional cooperation and solidarity. Despite its identified position as a partner to these grassroots movements, FOS emphasizes that it should remain the “owners of the regional programme”(pg.3) and facilitate this cross-sector solidarity, arguing that by doing so it contributes to enforcing cooperation on joint goals to ensure the protection and rights of workers.

Another funder working in partnership with SADSAWU, FNV based in the Netherlands, posits that, “Solidarity is at the core of the trade union movement,” but further information about the foundations of this solidarity reveal that FNV’s conception of partnership is depend on essentializing notions of the so-called “third-world” as unprotected and underdeveloped. On its webpage, Global FNV outlines its goals for its multiple partnerships with nations in the global South and expands upon is ideas of North-South solidarity. It reads:

Solidarity is the core of the trade union movement and the FNV is also in solidarity with unions in countries in Africa, Asia and Middle East, Latin America. Why these countries? Because they do have fewer resources and human rights (and therefore trade union) are less respected. So [sic] that trade unions can use [sic] properly support their commitment to work just fine for the workers. And therefore FNV Global supports them. Together we are stronger.

This quote reveals that rather than framing solidarity around a shared struggle against capitalist exploitation, FNV Global bases its solidarity on a need to rescue workers in the developing world from poverty and a lack of legal protection. It is clear that both funders’ framing of global partnership rely heavily on the essentialist notions of third world identities and perceptions that worker precarity and insufficient protections characterize all forms of employment in the global

South. It is important to note that while workers in the domestic labor sector do tend to experience high levels of vulnerability due to lack of rights and resources, FNV's framing of global solidarity around these disadvantages erases the agency domestic workers and others have shown to mobilize the most marginal workforces. Furthermore, funders position themselves as Northern saviors capable of circumventing national politics to enforce justice and protections for these workers. By positioning themselves as the owners of regional programming and facilitators of cross-sector exchange, FOS makes clear that it can best assist by leading local organizations rather than allowing worker organizations to be fully self-determining.

In addition to the framing of North-South partnerships, funding and partnership agreements also contribute to the collapse of local leadership by organizing systems of accountability and reporting, and by stipulating how budgets should be spent. Extensive reporting to international funders about success or failures keeps union leadership accountable to international stakeholders rather than enforcing accountability to its membership. This takes place in direct contradiction with the trade union organizational form, which demands that a union be member-led. Such perspectives were reflected in an agreement between SADSAWU and Solidarity Center, an international non-profit that assists with trainings and capacity building workshops and seeks to strengthen worker organizations by supporting a variety of grassroots social movements. The letter of agreement stipulates reporting requirements for both activities and spending, stating, "SADSAWU will submit activity reports no later than 10 days after the end of the month. The report should include a brief background section...Reported expenditures must follow the approved budget line items and be allocable and reasonable." Later, the agreement expands upon what is meant by 'reasonable costs':

A cost is reasonable if, in its nature or amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs. The question of the reasonableness of specific costs must be scrutinized with particular care in connection with organizations or separate divisions thereof, which receive the preponderance of their support from awards made by Federal agencies.

Through this statement it becomes clear that when it comes to spending, the union's accountability should be to its funders – and any federal agency contributing to those funds— rather than to its members or executive committee. This disrupts the bottom-up structure of grassroots movements, effectively bureaucratizing local movements into a hierarchical structure that imitates Western control and domination of the so-called third world.

Similar themes also emerged in a letter from Merle Browne, a representative of FNV Global in the Southern Africa region, as well as preparatory documents for a regional meeting of the IDWF (International Domestic Workers Federation). In Browne's letter, shortly after suggesting that, "SADSAWU controls what it is doing and where it is going," the funding representative makes a sweeping gesture of what SADSAWU's primary goals for 2015 should be, which includes efforts to link the South African domestic worker struggle to that of workers around the world. This is repeated by the IDWF and Solidarity Center in documents concerning an upcoming conference on worker rights and shared prosperity. Both artifacts represent the ways in which transnational movements use local leaders as the voices and faces of their motives. In doing so, they force leaders to balance outside interests with local priorities. While the global movement gains dedicated and charismatic figures who will disseminate their

messages, local movements suffer from the restructuring that calls their leaders to account to those on high rather than those soldiering in the trenches.

Funders also disturb a trade union's foundational ideal of self-determination and self-sufficiency by controlling the allocation of funds and creating cycles of financial dependence. This emerges across several union documents including budgets and expenditure reports, funding agreements, and applications for financial assistance. Funding agreements are typically written to include expenditure reporting to ensure that funds are spent according to the terms of agreement. Funds are allocated by categories of use, which breaks down into line items and expected costs. Some standard categories to which funds are allocated include campaigns and lobbying, constitutional structures, capacity building, and recruitment. In response a question about how allocation is determined, Witbooi clarified that funders often divide up funds into percentages according to categories of use. She explained, "When funders give you money, they give you a 'percent for'", meaning that the union gains only a percentage of the total cost of any given line, forcing leaders to cover remaining costs. Thus, the union not only has limited control of how its funding is used, but the practice of funding only a percentage of union expenditures leaves SADSAWU depend on multiple financial partnerships to fully cover the cost of its functions.

Often, union leaders are called to align the goals of their organization's membership with broad objectives of funding agencies. In doing so, international organizations demonstrate their solidarity with grassroots efforts and domestic worker organizations gain political capital through these powerful alliances. The interests of international partners are often revealed within the construction of these broad categories. For a partner like Solidarity Center, which emphasizes trade union strengthening and labor migration, recruitment is often expanded to address migrant workers. For development funders such as FNV, which incorporates health and gender related

issues into discussions of labor, capacity building might grow to encompass workshops on HIV/AIDS or women's empowerment. These *enclosed* goals and initiatives result in a fracturing of the union's functions, ultimately diverting attention away from activities that might contribute to its independence. As old forms of union activity are expanded to incorporate new ideas about the movement's goals, activities become less effective. Despite considerable contributions funders made to assist organizing efforts, both SADSAWU meeting reports and FOS' Mission Report cite reaching recruitment goals as a main challenge for the year 2014. For SADSAWU, this challenge relates to the limited capacity of its organizers. The union's narrative report on activities taking place between June and December of 2014 sheds light on the issue.

The growth rate is slow due to organizational capacity – specifically the number of organizers in the union. As a partial solution, union branch committee members are tasked with recruitment as well, but due to long hours of work and general time constraints the hours they are able to put in are few.

It is clear that SADSAWU's organizers and active members are stretched and that recruitment goals remain unreachable. However, I would like to highlight the added complexity of pressure to begin to organize migrants. As recruitment efforts continue to grow and incorporate new potential constituencies, organizing successfully will become a more and more difficult goal to meet.

Organizing dilemmas also point to another interconnected issue. Because the union is financially sustained by outside funds rather than by member subscription fees, there is less incentive to focus on strategic efforts that contribute to the union's self-sufficiency. Instead, a cycle of dependency is created and perpetually reproduced. In my analysis, that creates two primary results. First, SADSAWU's ability to make decisions about how to use its funding and

meet the needs of its members becomes increasingly limited. Second, as a result, its efforts gradually grow to reflect the ideals of its partners rather than the goals of its members. This dependency was again revealed in an earlier quote, where Witbooi expresses some disappointment about unfulfilled promises and SADSAWU's inability to be a fully self-determining body. She says:

We still have to depend on funding to have our workshops, to have our education, and to have assistance for our organizers... We're secure, but we're not secure when it comes to organizers. That is a problem. We want more organizers, and we cannot run away. We need more organizers. You cannot have six organizers serving a million domestic workers... So we need to still create funding for that. Our aim is we need to work towards making our own money.

While Witbooi recognizes that the funders keep the union running and enables SADSAWU staff to provide services to its members, funding also leaves her incapable of managing this important issue. These concerns were echoed in partnership agreements, like that of FOS, who agreed to facilitate workshops with aims to "focus on strengthening regional cooperation and exchange among FOS partners by means of joint strategies and activities" (Regional FOS Programme in Southern Africa, pg. 1). The Programme outlines the partnership in terms of a regional exchange program and offers some additional assistance in developing future campaigns along with a small subsidy of R700 per month for the General Secretary's salary. But many of SADSAWU's other concerns were not addressed. It becomes clear that SADSAWU's operation is sustained by these important partnerships, but the achievement of self-identified goals relies on the eventual termination of its dependency.

Partners have at times fallen short of the promises stipulated in partnership agreements, which also results in strain on the union's trust of funders and creates a barrier to the union reaching full efficiency. As expressed in a number of interviews, SADSAWU's requests for financial assistance clearly reflect a need for more organizers. In a partnership application to Dutch funders, FNV, SADSAWU proposed a budget that would include salaries for a total of 12 fieldworkers and administrative assistants. Though it is unclear how much of the proposed budget was adopted, the number of organizers the union can currently sustain is merely half of that proposed. Additionally, agreements with partner Solidarity Center date for the 2014-2015 unambiguously states plans to install an administrative assistant as a member of SADSAWU's office staff. The agreement reads:

The SC will provide administrative support for the salary of an Assistant to the General Secretary who will focus on maintaining the SADSAWU database and all administrative matters to the national office. The SC and SADSAWU will jointly prepare a job description and recruitment plan for the assistant to the General Secretary.

Now, nearly a year later, assistance has yet to be provided and I have been unable to uncover a coinciding job description or posting. Meanwhile, SADSAWU staff continues to juggle administrative tasks in tandem with casework, campaigning, and recruitment.

It appears that these foreign partnerships exacerbate already stretched capacities. By funding specialized initiatives that align with international interests and enabling a national trade union to become dependent on foreign funders, the South African domestic workers movement has reached a plateau. Sustained by foreign funding, opportunities for SADSAWU to work towards its own prosperity and self-reliance slowly disappear. By accepting outside aid, this grassroots movement becomes compromised by its attempt to meet the terms of its partnerships.

I argue that it is through this process that local movements become deradicalized by restructuring bottom-up grassroots organizations as they are absorbed into Western-led development projects using a bureaucratic top-down framework.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have contextualized SADSAWU's transnational partnerships with international funding agencies and trade union federations within a historical discussion of women's transnational organizing. In doing so, I have called attention to the ways that these transnational networks of activists and their respective organizations have contributed to the formation and strengthening of grassroots movements, elevating issues to the awareness of global regulatory bodies and civil society. Though many of these local women's movements have depended on activist networks and foreign funders for support and assistance, these have had detrimental effects on the long-term stability of and success of grassroots movements (Alvarez, 2000; Jad, 2007a). Often these partnerships have had the effect of disempowering grassroots leaders and imposing a top-down structure where movements are forced to consolidate their goals into the development efforts of their funders.

SADSAWU has also experienced the duality of these relationships. Catapulted into international attention through the powerful lobbying of members who participated in several global forums, including the ILO Convention on Decent Work, SADSAWU has benefitted from the financial and capacity assistance it gained through transnational feminist networks. It has also suffered a loss of its radical roots that emphasized women's grassroots leadership. As the movement has grown to work towards implementation of a new international standard and expands to include non-nationals working in the sector, the trade union organizational form is

increasingly strained. The acceptance of outside funding inhibits SADSAWU's ability to remain a member-led organization, and attempts to organize migrants push against a framework that prioritizes gaining rights for workers under the existing political structure in South Africa. Though, as Witbooi acknowledges, it will take time for SADSAWU to become self-sufficient, I argue that funding partnerships are enabling the extension of this timeline. By creating cycles of dependency where SADSAWU relies on foreign funds to keep it in operation, these same funds also disincentivize efforts to become self-sustaining. This leaves the union and its leadership slightly off center, bargaining for member-directed needs and goals like organizing while accepting new tasks and objectives as a stipulation of partnership agreements. While I do not wish to discount the valuable work that many of these partners contribute, what I have observed is an overwhelming need to restructure these agreements. I argue that it is imperative that future partnerships preserve the praxis and politics of grassroots movements, which situate the marginalized as the primary voices of local struggles. Rather than framing North-South partnerships around differences of protections and resources, partner organizations must outline solidarity in terms of a joint struggle against global restructuring and capitalist expansion and organize a protocol that consistently decenters Western-led development as its goal. This resistance is important since the effects of Western-led development are likely to be felt worldwide, as many in the underdeveloped world will be affected by structural adjustment and various development projects while those in developed nations experience rising levels of competition from rapidly progressing nations in the South. By adopting this new definition of solidarity, activists can move beyond Western actors' tendencies to rely on essentialist notions of developing and 'third-world' identities and begin working toward new ways to ensure protection against global capitalism. Furthermore, union staff must remain primarily accountable

to members rather than outside parties. All executive members should participate in budget proposal and adoption to ensure that all members' interests are protected and that union needs stipulated in partnership agreements are met. Similarly union executives and staff members must demand that partners recognized the limitations of its staffing and come to an agreement about any new activities or objectives before launching. And finally, partners and unions together must generate programs to develop the union's capacity for self-sufficiency and acknowledge a joint goal to dissolve financial assistance in the future.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: FUTURE TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZING AND RESTRUCTURING SOLIDARITIES

Today, our world is punctuated with the dynamics of a rapidly globalizing world. For some, this means a wider access to the human, natural, and economic resources that are more plentiful than ever before. For others, it pronounces the pervasive social stratification structures that dictate who has access to these resources, a dialectic that often results in further marginalization. Feminists have recognized that globalization often results in the further marginalization of women and minorities (Hoskyns & Rai, 2007; Mies, 1994; Moghadam et al., 1999). As a result of the social value ascribed to women, their rising participation in the labor force has been characterized by a devaluation and informalization of traditionally feminized work. The effects of these dynamics are significantly heightened for women of color living in the so-called third world, evident in the global feminization of poverty (Moghadam et al., 1999).

Care labor activists and scholars have paid close attention to the varied results of women's growing participation in the workforce, noting that while it has greatly enhanced the social position of Western women, many third world women have become even more marginal. As women of the global North trade household labor for employment in the public sector, women from the global South are filling needs for care in the home. Migrant women are now over-represented in the sector, making up 15 of 50 million women employed in the domestic sector worldwide (ILO, 2015). The nature of labor in private households leaves these workers isolated and even more vulnerable to abuse. As women laborers in the informal sector are some of the most vulnerable workers in the world (Chen, 2001), the state of domestic worker

organizing is a reflection of grassroots activists' ability to overcome the global system's exploitation and of the world's willingness to protect the most vulnerable populations among us.

On the foundations of years of national organizing, the global domestic worker movement grew out of a need to address an increasingly transnational issue. After first coming together in 2006 to raise awareness about the sector's need for universal protections, local domestic worker organizations formed a movement strong enough to take on the ILO. The movement gained international attention by connecting the rising demand for care workers with the need for decent working conditions and "decent work." After winning universalized protections outlined by ILO Convention 189 in 2011, domestic workers bodies, international funding agencies, informal labor organizations, and feminist development groups, established networks to ensure the full realization of this policy. In the previous chapters, I examined the effects that Convention 189 and the involvement of these new stakeholders on local movements. Utilizing SADSAWU as a case study, I argue that local domestic worker movements became key implementers of the Convention as its most deeply invested proponents. I have demonstrated how grassroots organizing has become strained by the expansion of its activities to ratify and implement this policy at the national level. These new objectives exacerbate preexisting difficulties of organizing in 'the only sector with one employee per workplace.' Rather than an accountability to the demands of their own domestic worker membership bases, small unions must also be accountable to the new request of transnational organizations and international governments. The union's efficiency is compromised by pressures to split time between organizing and lobbying the national government for full inclusion. Membership growth remains stagnant as SADSAWU organizers struggle to realize their goal of mobilizing South Africa's one million domestic workers and growing migrant labor pool.

Noting the increased access to international funding and capacity assistance organizations that resulted from transnational organizing, I have highlighted the complex nature of partnerships between international organizations and grassroots movements. Though the involvement of these foreign actors provided wider access to funding and capacity assistance, these partnerships have also undermined SADSAWU's methodology of grassroots leadership by establishing systems of reporting and accountability in exchange for access to funding and assistance. This grassroots methodology historically emphasized a worker-centered approach, which kept the union's leadership and staff primarily accountable to its membership. By shifting the union's accountability from its membership to its funding agencies, grassroots movements (largely, in many ways) replace their radical bottom-up structure—originally designed to provide a voice to the sector's most vulnerable workers—with a Western-centered hierarchical structure. This bureaucratic structure creates an opening for outside leadership from Western organizations to begin directing union goals and objectives. I also posit that funding partnerships create cycles of financial dependence, which serve to impede the union's ability to plan for a self-determined and self-sustaining future.

Clearly, the recent post-Convention phase of local domestic worker movements reveals the complex nature of transnationalizing grassroots organizing and activism. International organizing has successfully standardized rights and protections for domestic workers and strengthened support networks for worker organizations. The recognition of international regulatory bodies such as the ILO and partnerships with powerful Western development agencies has given local movements the political leverage necessary to lobby national governments. Yet, despite these positive outcomes, local organizing efforts remain strained. This South African case study has demonstrated the collision that occurs when global issues and interests meet local

organizing. By focusing on this complex national context, in its ongoing transition, I have shown how international interests infiltrate local movements in the form of campaigns and partnerships with global organizations, shifting the daily functions of women's groups on the ground. In the remaining pages of this thesis, I turn to some concluding arguments, recommendations, and suggestions for future work.

Recommendations

Through my extended work with SADSAWU, I have noted some positive outcomes of partnerships between the union and foreign organizations. I have also called for the recognition of some unintended consequences of transnational solidarities. I argue that Western organizations who base North-South partnerships on the construction of third world women's identities as marginal and disempowered imply that third world women and their movements rely on White western leadership and support to succeed. This results in both accidental and intentional attempts to circumvent grassroots leadership by directing local activities that would otherwise emerge from the shared goals and objectives of membership-based unions. This complex relationship calls for more vigilance on the part of local activists and groups. While the importance of transnational activist networks instituting positive social change cannot be disputed, we must learn to anticipate potential tensions emerging as local movements are made to address globally constructed issues. I stand in solidarity with previous scholars who have called for a reframing of North-South partnerships that emphasize a shared struggle against global economic restructuring and interlocking systems of oppression that place third world women of color at the bottom of social and labor stratification. By embracing a shared struggle rather than a conditional one that relies on the unequal distribution of power amongst women,

partnerships could take a more equitable approach to empowering the world's most marginalized.

In the future, I would like to see a return of grassroots methodology to local organizations like SADSAWU. Cycles of dependency created by outside funding must be broken and funding partners should incentivize efforts toward self-sufficiency. The future of women's organizing around informal labor, as well as other issues, depends upon this change. This thesis, along with the work of other scholars, has shown that local women's movements are marked with limited organizing capacities and financial instability. Thus, grassroots leaders must require that international partners not only provide funding and technical assistance, but also create opportunities to build the capacity of local leaders, rather than choosing to direct from afar. They must also work closely with local leadership to generate interests and create opportunities for experienced members to develop the skills necessary to take on leadership roles to sustain local movements and organizations. Furthermore, systems of reporting and accountability must keep union leaders accountable to their membership, preserving the bottom-up structure that has characterized women's grassroots movements.

This thesis stands as yet another testimony of an ever-evolving care labor movement. It demonstrates the will of local movements to join forces transnationally in hopes of raising awareness and transforming the circumstances that define reproductive labor done by third world women in private households. As the growing demand for care workers gives rise to an increasingly visible domestic labor movement, domestic workers are experiencing standardized protections for their labor for the first time in history. This triumph is one that not only speaks to the domestic labor struggle itself, but is situated within a wider context of struggles against racialized capitalist oppression that now defines many women's lives globally. It is my hope that

this work captures the power of women's transnational organizing around core social justice issues that become even more pervasive in the context of globalization. Though the ramifications of these networks and partnerships produce both positive and negative outcomes, I believe that we can greatly reduce some of the harmful effects. By restructuring our foundations of transnational solidarity, feminist development scholars and activists participating in transnational networks can eliminate dynamics that seek to institute a Western-led hierarchical structure on local grassroots movements. In doing so, we create a space for future grassroots movements and contribute to the sustenance of those currently active. The successful organizing and future of SADSAWU and other local women's movements is closely linked with our ability to affect this change. Though transnationalizing domestic workers' struggles has brought a wealth of funding and protections to the movement, local groups have faced the risk of deradicalization of their objectives and cooptation of their original goals into the broader interests of a global movement. Let this case study stand as a call to activists, scholars, and foreign development agencies to beware of the effects of transnationalizing grassroots movements and to be vigilant about the ways that we structure our solidarities.

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