

Articulating Agency

A case study of the strategies used by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union in servicing South African seafarers.

By

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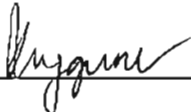
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Centre for Industrial, Organisational, and Labour Studies

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation is the result of my own original investigation and that it is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any other degree.

Signed:  Date: 21/01/2002

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I certify that the above statement is correct and authorize this dissertation to be submitted for examination.

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D. Bonnin

For Julian Deonarain

Who taught me that, rough seas make for skilful sailors.

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Abstract

In theorising globalisation, capital is represented as all-powerful and proactive in its mobility and ability to transcend national boundaries in search of new labour markets. It is this mobility of capital, which is argued to be instrumental in shaping the processes of globalisation (Ohmae: 1989, Allen: 1995; Thompson et al: 1998, Dicken: 1998). Labour in contrast is portrayed as fixed within territorial boundaries unable to shape or influence its own destiny or the processes of globalisation. These opposing discourses of capital as the prime agent of globalisation and labour as a passive participant in the process have predominantly informed the debates about globalisation, and have remained mostly unchallenged in the literature.

This dissertation interrogates claims of capital being all-powerful via its mobility and labour being 'agentless' in influencing the processes of globalisation. In order to achieve this I use the global shipping industry as an example to explore these arguments. This is achieved by investigating the complex ways that relationships between shipping capital and seafaring labour have changed and how these changed relationships are articulated. Specifically I examine the strategies used by South African Transport and Allied Workers to service a transnational and flexible membership. My findings suggest that the 'agentless' nature of labour in shaping the processes of globalisation is exaggerated by proponents of the transnational neo-liberal discourse of globalisation.

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List of Acronyms

AATUF	All African Trade Union Federation
ACSA	Airports Company of South Africa
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour-Council for Industrial Organisations
ANC	African National Congress
BLATU	Black Transnet Allied Trade Union
COCOSA	Coordinating Committee for South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CNETU	Council of Non European Trade Unions
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FOC	Flag of Convenience
FOFATUSA	Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ITF	International Transport Federation
ITGLWF	The International Textile and Garments and Leather Workers Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NDLS	National Dock Labour Scheme
MATIBCO	Maritime Bargaining Council
PAC	Pan African Congress
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SAIC	South African Indian Congress

SAMSA	South African Maritime Authority
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SARWHU	South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union
SATS	South African Transport Services
SATUC	South African Trade Union Council
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TATU	Transnet Allied Trade Union
TAWU	Transport Workers Union
TETA	Transport education and training authority
TGWU	Transport and general Workers Union
TNC	Transnational Company
TMN	Traditional Maritime Nation/s
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa

Introduction

(A1) Aims and background of study

In theorising globalisation, capital is represented as all-powerful and proactive in its mobility and ability to transcend national boundaries in search of new labour markets. It is this mobility of capital, which is argued to be instrumental in shaping the processes of globalisation (Ohmae: 1989, Allen: 1995, Thompson et al: 1998, Dicken: 1998). Labour in contrast is portrayed as fixed within territorial boundaries unable to shape or influence its own destiny or the processes of globalisation. These opposing discourses of capital as the prime agent of globalisation and labour as a passive participant in the process have predominantly informed the debates about globalisation, and have remained mostly unchallenged in the literature.

The aim of this dissertation is to assess the validity of claims of capital being all-powerful via its mobility and labour being 'agentless' in influencing the processes of globalisation. In order to achieve this I use the global shipping industry as an example to explore these arguments. This is achieved by investigating the complex ways that relationships between shipping capital and seafaring labour have changed and how these changed relationships are articulated.

I will examine the way the shipping industry has restructured since the international economic crisis of the 1970s and the impact of this restructuring process on seafaring labour. The shipping industry is the most global of all industries and seafarers are considered to be the most global of all labour. Furthermore seafarers and their unions interact with the labour market on the global, local, flexible and transnational levels. As such I argue that seafarers as well as shipping capital are agents of the processes of globalisation. Hence any assessment of globalisation and the agency of transnational capital and labour will benefit from the analysis of the way relationships between shipping capital and seafaring labour are articulated

Theorists such as Standing (1999), Castells (1991) and Harvey (1989) argue that the world of work is going through unprecedented change. They situate their arguments within the framework of globalisation and shifting labour markets. They argue that the increased mobility of capital, since the 1970s, to seek out new, cheaper and more flexible labour markets has resulted in a New International Division of Labour (NIDL) whereby there has been a spatial reconfiguration of labour's location. This spatial restructuring of labour and capital has resulted in new patterns of inequality between labour of the North and labour of the South in terms of levels of skill and labour process used (Herod: 2000, Urry: 1996, Massey: 1994). These patterns of inequality are complexly articulated and illustrated in the way shipping capital has restructured since the 1970s and the impact this has on seafaring labour. The restructuring of the shipping industry also provides an opportunity to investigate and assess the strategies used by labour to organise when faced with the challenges of globalisation.

Through a number of post 1970 mergers, acquisitions and organisational restructuring processes, shipping companies have become the epitome of the transnational company (TNC). These organisational restructuring processes have consolidated shipping capitals' power, increasing their mobility to seek out cheap and flexible labour markets. At the same time, the restructuring of shipping TNCs has presented seafaring labour with unique opportunities and challenges in an increasingly globalising world. This dissertation examines how labour organisations are using these opportunities to service their memberships.

The highest cost factor in operating merchant navy ships is seafaring labour. Before the economic crisis of the 1970s, merchant shipping was a national affair. It was dominated by the shipping companies of the traditional maritime nations of Europe such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany. Merchant ships and seafarers from these states were viewed as extensions of their nation states. There was thus a link between the Flag State and the ships of its merchant fleet. Ships were owned, registered and crewed in the same national state. The flag that was

flown on the ship was the flag of the state where the ship was owned, registered and crewed.

From the mid 1970s due to global economic crisis, a shift in the way shipping companies operated became necessary if they were to continue operating. The new economic pressures on shipping capital required them to drastically reduce their operating costs. With seafaring labour representing the highest operational costs to ship owners, it was inevitable that labour would be the prime target of cost reduction policies. In keeping with the general trend of capital at the time, shipping capital aimed to seek out cheaper more flexible labour markets outside of the traditional European maritime nations.

The labour market for seafarers is not an occupationally homogenous one. It is two-tiered. The first tier are the officers and the second tier are the ratings. Officers are the senior, tertiary educated crew members, with the most senior being the captain or the master of the ship. Ratings on the other hand are the 'working class of the seas', firmly situated at the lower end of the crewing hierarchy and labour market. This occupational differentiation of seafarers contributes to new patterns of inequality in the global and local labour markets for seafarers with regard to their recruitment, wages and working conditions. Further the operation of merchant navy vessels necessitates ships being crewed with more ratings than officers. Therefore ratings are the highest labour cost for ship owners. These occupational categories have implications for the way the labour markets for seafarers operate. Ratings, as the highest cost factor as well as being low skilled are recruited from outside the traditional maritime nations (TMN). Countries such as the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Russia, Poland and North and South Korea are the new ratings supply sources. Ratings from these regions are largely un-unionised and work for far less income than their TMN counterparts would. Officers on the other hand are not subject to the low wage and job insecurity that characterises ratings employment. Officers are highly sought after in the labour market for seafarers. Currently there is a shortage of officers and surplus of ratings in the global labour market that further exacerbates the divide between them (BIMCO/ISF Report: 2001).

In order to locate the cheapest sources of labour possible, shipping capital had to escape the unionised, regulated and expensive labour markets of the TMN. To facilitate the sourcing of cheaper labour as well as to escape high fiscal expenses, they began the process of registering their vessels outside their countries of ownership. This means for example that a vessel may be owned by a British company, but is registered (and flagged) in another country, for example Liberia where legislation (or lack of it) permits the hiring of foreign unprotected crew. In addition the fiscal burden of registration in flag of convenience (FOC) registries is greatly reduced.

An obvious consequence of FOC registering is that it contributed to the multinational crewing of ships on a scale unprecedented before the 1970s. FOC shipping and the consequent multinational crewing of ships is a recent phenomenon in merchant seafaring. FOC shipping has risen from 4.5 percent in 1950 to over 40 percent of merchant shipping in the 1990s and is rapidly growing (Koch-Baumgarten: 2000).

The move towards shipping companies registering their vessels under FOCs (predominately in the South) combined with the increasing employment of ratings from the South and eastern Europe has altered the traditional geographic organisation of the shipping industry. The rise of multinational crewing combined with the increase of FOC registries has created new shipping hubs and labour markets in different regions of the world.

This new landscape of shipping capital presents labour with a unique set of conditions to operate in. Therefore the particular focus of this dissertation is on the opportunities and challenges faced by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) and the international trade secretariat for transport workers, the International Transport Federation (ITF) in servicing their seafaring membership. In particular, I argue that given the transnational nature of shipping capital and seafaring labour, labour unions need to adopt new strategies in servicing their seafaring membership that simultaneously takes into account the way scale and space (local, regional and global) will influence the type of response needed to service a transnational membership.

The following section provides summaries of the arguments of the dissertation's chapters. In addition it provides the structure that the dissertation follows in making these arguments.

A.1.2 Structure of Dissertation

A 1.2.1 Chapter One Labour and the production of economic geographies

This chapter draws on the theoretical formulations of labour geographers to frame the arguments that follow. Labour geography provides a significant contribution to theorising labour's agency in producing globalisation. Furthermore it serves as a vital 'corrective' to the 'spaceless' perspectives that dominate labour process and industrial relations studies. By adopting an explicitly geographical perspective on trade unions, this chapter argues that labour plays a significant role in shaping the geographies of transnational capitalism and globalisation.

A 1.2.2 Chapter Two Research methodology

Chapter Two discusses the rationale behind choosing a qualitative research process. The research strategy adopted for this dissertation is that of a case study. The case study as a research strategy is discussed. Moreover the qualitative research techniques of in depth-interviewing and participant observation that inform the case study are brought to the fore.

A 1.2.3 Chapter Three The economic geography of FOC shipping.

In order to assess the veracity of the way capital and labour are theorised in the dominant discourse of globalisation, I use the shipping industry as an empirical example to examine the complex ways in which capital and labour relationships have been structured since the 1970s. In order to do this, I investigate the factors that contributed to this global restructuring. This chapter empirically investigates the consequences of the 1970s economic crisis for the shipping industry. This calls for an empirical investigation and overview of the factors that required the shipping industry to restructure. Moreover the

development of new shipping capital hubs outside the TMN is not solely a result of the agency and mobility of capital or willingness of ratings to work for low wages: rather it is the result of a complex interaction between labour and capital in the shipping industry. Neither could have achieved the creation of new shipping capital hubs and sources of labour without the agency and participation of the other. As such I examine the way finance, technology and the organisational restructuring of shipping companies impacted on the labour market for seafarers.

To further understand the way the global labour market for seafarers has reconfigured necessitates an examination into the rise of FOC shipping. In particular I look at how ratings from the South (the Philippines in particular) and eastern Europe proactively marketed themselves in order to obtain work (with and without government intervention) as cheaper and more flexible than labour from the TMN and other regions of the world, such as South Africa, in order to obtain work. This involves workers willingly and knowingly competing with each other on a global scale to attract the benefits of capital, such as jobs. It is indicative of the agency of labour even if such agency contributes to the uneven development of regions in terms of employment and capital investment. By labour proactively defining new geographical contours of the labour market for ratings outside the TMN, necessitates that shipping capital invest productive capital (buildings, shore based administration-jobs) in regions where ratings are to be sourced. A result of this is that new shipping company hubs and labour markets are being created, as ratings in regions of the South and eastern Europe compete to attract jobs and shipping capital to their shores. Ratings from different geographic regions do not only compete with each other in a purely economic labour market where low wages automatically imply favoured employment status as the empirical study of the shipping industry in this chapter illustrates. Labour markets for ratings are more subjective with shipping capital having a preference for certain nationalities and ethnic groups, such as Filipinos. The same finding holds true for the recruitment and employment of officers. When given a choice of hiring officers from regions of the South and eastern Europe, shipping companies show a clear preference for officers from the TMN. This is one of the challenges encountered by

national maritime unions of these regions that are faced with labour market discrimination of seafarers based on nationality, racial and ethnic identities.

A.1.2.4 Chapter Four Geographies of Organising

In theorising about globalisation, the agency of labour to influence the processes of globalisation is an oft-neglected factor. Globalisation is constructed as an exclusive project of transnational capital. This chapter uses the example of the shipping industry to challenge such claims.

In order to assess the validity of claims that locate labour in the globalisation discourse as a passive object for capital to act on and mould, I investigate the nature and form of agency seafaring labour uses to actively shape the workings of shipping capital.

To do this I investigate the way the ITF in conjunction with SATAWU articulates international labour solidarity as a form of agency to service their memberships. I argue that the nature and form of how solidarity is practised is informed by the economic and political concerns of the era. I demonstrate that the geo-politics of the cold war often meant that imperialism informed international labour solidarity with South African trade unions. The extent to which imperialism still informs practices of solidarity with South African trade unions, specifically between SATAWU and the ITF are investigated. This has important implications for the effectiveness of international labour solidarity as a form of agency in servicing memberships.

This entails an exploration of the strategies employed by SATAWU in servicing its South African ratings membership. Due to the transnational nature of the occupations of SATAWU's ratings membership, SATAWU has adopted the transnational strategy of international labour solidarity by affiliating itself with the ITF. This allows the labour union, through its affiliation to the ITF to simultaneously service the needs of its ratings membership on a local and global scale. An example of this transnational labour

solidarity in practice is the ITF's campaign against ships that fly FOC and employ unorganised labour. Further, the ITF in conjunction with its national affiliates is involved in the setting of global minimum wage and working condition standards for ratings. It is argued that the act of forging solidarity between the national union and its federation has given labour greater agency to influence the processes of globalisation by being able to proactively respond to capitals mobility faster and more efficiently. In addition international labour solidarity often counteracts capital, using the same technology that capital uses as it moves from place to place, as the ITF's FOC campaign does.

Whilst a national union like SATAWU may be spatially fixed, by affiliating with a federation of unions that is networked throughout the world, this spatial fixity is countered. The relationship between SATAWU and the ITF is not unproblematic. The reasons for this can be traced historically to the imperialistic manner in which American and European international labour solidarity articulated with the emerging independent Black unions in South Africa during the cold war era.

This solidarity is further undermined given that the nature of capitalist labour markets necessarily requires that labour competes with each other and that the global labour market for ratings is one of the most competitive of labour markets. In other words international labour solidarity may serve to benefit one geographically or spatially distinct group of workers over another without challenging capitalism's allocative mechanisms.

The chapter then argues that labour can achieve greater agency in influencing the processes of globalisation by working towards a transformatory solidarity as opposed to accommodatory solidarity as currently practised between SATAWU and the ITF. I use Johns (1998) spatial labour solidarity model to assess the type of solidarity (transformatory or accommodatory) and level of solidarity that exists between the ITF and SATAWU. This is an important assessment if transnational labour solidarity is to be the main tool of agency for labour to influence the processes of globalisation.

In sum this chapter empirically investigates and assesses the agency of SATAWU and the ITF in organising and servicing their transnational membership and hence influencing the processes of globalisation by controlling the wage rate and working conditions of labour. This is achieved by exploring the nature of this agency. This agency is articulated by the forging of solidarity between the ITF and SATAWU as a strategy to service their transnational membership. I demonstrate that international labour solidarity is not an unproblematic way of labour practising its agency. The central purpose of this dissertation is to assess the validity of claims that assert that labour is a passive object of globalisation. This chapter aids in this assessment by evaluating the nature and form of this agency as expressed in the act of forging international solidarity between the ITF and SATAWU.

A.1.2.5 Chapter Five Jumping scales?

This chapter explores the agency used by SATAWU on a *local scale* to service South African seafarers. I argue that SATAWU has a sophisticated notion of scale that allows it to simultaneously articulate agency on local and global scales. The focus of the chapter is on local strategies used by SATAWU. In order to do this I explore local training, employment and equity initiatives undertaken by SATAWU to service its seafaring membership. This entails an exploration of the concept and practice of *social partnership* by SATAWU. Social partnership as used in this chapter refers to social dialogue or partnership between labour unions and a host of labour market institutions (such as employers, training institutions and bodies government and non-government agencies) as a means of addressing the concerns of a union's membership.

SATAWU has developed such social partner relationships with seafarer labour market institutions such as the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) and the South African Maritime Safety Association (SAMSA) to address the training employment and equity needs of its ratings membership. The social partnership between the TETA and SATAWU reveals the agency SATAWU uses to influence local training and equity policy of South African seafarers. More specifically this chapter focuses on

the social partnership dialogue SATAWU has developed with SAMSA. This allows me to focus on role SATAWU plays in the SAMSA training and equity initiative for Black South African ratings officers.

The formation and practice of social partnerships between SATAWU and national labour market institutions like the TETA and SAMSA allows SATAWU to articulate agency by influencing and informing national training and equity programmes and policy. Since South African seafarers operate in a global labour market, the effect of SATAWU's national initiatives to service its seafaring membership has repercussions for where South African seafarers are located in the global labour market.

In sum this chapter, by investigating the way SATAWU articulates its agency through the formation of social partnerships with labour market institutions, helps address the central purpose of this dissertation, which is to evaluate the validity of theorising labour as passive in shaping and informing the processes of globalisation.

Chapter One

Labour and the production of economic geographies

1.1 'Globalisation': A myth at work?

A growing body of critical work by labour theorists (Massey: 1993, Martin: 1993, Sunley: 1993, Herod: 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2001, Agnew and Corbridge: 1995, Hirst and Thompson: 1996, Wills: 1998, Johns: 1998) argues that the dominant neo-liberal discourse of 'globalisation' is a political weapon mobilised by those on the Right to further disempower labour. Many of these theorists (especially Koffman: 1996) build on Foucault's (1966, 1969, 1971) theory of the relationships between knowledge, power and discourse. Their work is important since it destabilises prevailing, often oversimplified ideas of 'globalisation'. Further it has given a boost to the labour studies field by creating new theoretical spaces from which a new and more critical labour praxis can be developed. It is not the aim of this chapter to deny the existence of 'globalisation': others have far more eloquently aimed to that (Hirst and Thompson: 1996). Instead, it is argued that whilst globalisation is a discursive product of neo-liberal capital, it none the less has very real material implications for labour and is used to undermine labour around the world (Johns: 1998, Wills, 1998, Standing: 1999, Herod: 2000). As such this chapter explores how discursive production of globalisation has resulted in material consequences for labour. Further, the agency of labour in producing and resisting the processes of globalisation and its material impacts are examined, thus proactively inserting labour in the debates about globalisation.

This dissertation acknowledges discourse is powerful. It has the ability of making myth reality. The academy needs to be more self-reflexive and critical in its theorising of globalisation and recognise that theory influences the way globalisation is practiced. In this sense, knowledge is indeed power and as Freire (1978), Koffman (1996) and Scholte

(2000) argue academic discourse results in knowledge production that assists in shaping the contours of the way globalisation is understood.

Scholte (2000) contends that globalisation is a concept that most people, be they labour or capital, part of the Left or the Right, believe as key to understanding the transition of humanity to the third millennium. Giddens (1999) furthers this point by asserting that we live in a world of transformations, affecting almost every part of what we do. For better or worse we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt on all of us.

Whilst there have been many rigorous examinations of prevailing theories of globalisation from a diverse range of theoretical perspectives such as Ohmae (1989) Giddens (1990), Hirst and Thompson (1996), Scholte (1996,2000), they all uncritically locate capital as the main actor in the globalisation process. Capital is portrayed as the final winner in the historic struggle between labour and capital. Globalisation is viewed as the end game of this struggle. This kind of theorising is ultimately constraining and self-defeating for those on the Left, as it leaves no space for the recognition of the power and agency of labour. This form of theorising moves discourse from the ethereal to the concrete, from myth to 'reality'. This 'reality' of labour as fixed, weak, and fragmented becomes internalised within the academy and implicit in its theorising and practice of globalisation. As such the dominant discourse of globalisation achieves its aims by obfuscating the theoretical spaces where challenges can be made to the way it is articulated.

Before further critiquing the dominant neo-liberal discourse of globalisation, it will be useful to examine some of its theoretical and empirical claims. An examination of theorists definitions of globalisation (McGrew, 1992, Agnew & Corbridge, 1995, Perraton et al: 1997, Gray: 1998, Herod et al: 1998, Standing, 1999, Scholte, 2000) point to two commonalities about globalisation in the literature. Firstly is the argument that it is qualitatively different from previous forms of international economic and social

interactions. This is mainly due to the increased pace, scale and mobility of capital. Contemporary 'globalisation' it is argued has increased the scale and pace of interconnections and interdependence between people and places. For example a business decision taken in Los Angeles can have an immediate impact on workers in Japan.

Closely related to the above argument is what Giddens (1990) refers to as time-space distancing. This refers to the way the rise of new technologies (especially communication technology) has meant that local institutions become increasingly easier to influence by distant events or policies. This 'shrinking' of distances between places was what Marx decades earlier referred to as annihilation of space by time. Many places that may be thousands of kilometres apart from each other become much closer in terms of the ease of access, interaction, and travel between them. As Herod (2000), Scholte (2000) and a host of other theorists argue there are very few places on the globe that are not within twenty-four or at least forty-eight hours distance. Some of the consequences for capital (and labour) are for example: Clothes manufacturers in the Philippines, Honduras or the Dominican Republic can supply the US market almost as easily as producers in Los Angeles or New York. Labour theorists (Massey: 1993, Wills: 1998, Johns: 1998, Herod: 1999) have illustrated how Santo Domingo, Tegucigalpa and Manila have become the manufacturing suburbs of New York. Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago, Seattle and St. Louis. New York insurance companies regularly fly claims overnight to Ireland where they are rapidly processed and the information sent back to Manhattan via satellite ready for the next day's business. Supermarket chains in the USA ship coupons used by shoppers to maquiladora plants in northern Mexico for processing and crediting of appropriate vendor accounts.

Cox (1996), O'Tuathail et al (1998) and Rodrik (1998) agree following Marx that capital has always been global. The distinguishing feature of the contemporary processes of globalisation, they argue is the process of time-space distancing. O'Tuathail (1996) cautions that a critical understanding of the processes of globalisation demands that we distinguish between its materialist and its discursive or ideological understanding. A

theoretical distinction does not imply that such neat markings can be made in the way globalisation is practiced. In practice discourses informs materiality and materiality informs discourses. Where the one starts and the other ends becomes blurred. From a materialist perspective, globalisation has its roots in the international economic crisis of the 1970s. This entailed a move away from the Fordist mode of national regulation, which had structured the capitalist organisation of production since 1945 (Sayer & Walker: 1992). The Fordist mode of regulation entailed an economic relationship between states and markets, which was characterized by nationally regulated, inward focused economies. These economies, according to O Tuathail (1998) practiced an inward focused or embedded liberalism. When the shift from Fordist to post Fordist modes of regulation and practice began occurring during the mid 1970s the relationships amongst capital, states and markets underwent a metamorphoses. The international economy that consisted of strongly regulated national states became increasingly drawn into a global economy in which "production and finance were being organised in cross border networks that could very largely escape national and international regulatory powers" (Cox: 1996:22). Materially then, globalisation marks a crisis of the relationship between territorially constituted state rules and regulations and capitalism.

Cox (1996) argues that globalisation marks a shift to an unruly and ungovernable form of capitalist organisation. This unruly and ungovernable form of organising capital is one that capital itself promotes and seeks, both materially and discursively. As Harvey (1989) O'Tuathail et al (1998) and Rodrik (1998) and Herod (2000) note, the global economy grew by taking advantage of the territorial fragmentation of the international economy.

This then facilitated capital to take advantage of the different economic geographies of the world that would maximize the profit making ability of capital. Hence capital was able to distribute its various production processes geographically, taking advantage of low labour costs, low production costs, taxation incentives and lax environmental regulations for example. As will be argued later in this chapter the extent of the mobility of capital is overstated and is not a homogenous process.

If these were the material roots and consequences of globalisation, then it was driven by the increasingly dominant discourse of transnational neo-liberalism. Transnational neo-liberalism holds at its heart that the movement of free trade and open markets at a global scale is in the interest of the global population. In the discourse of transnational neo-liberalism, globalisation is presented as inevitable and unstoppable. The “there is no alternative” and “there is no other way” are two of the slogans espoused by Reagan and Thatcher when advocating neo-liberal globalisation (Bradley et al: 2000: 1). Transnational neo-liberalism is argued (Bradley et al: 2000, Giddens: 1990) to be a latent form of free market capitalism.

Proponents of this transnational neo-liberal discourse, promote the idea that state regulation of markets is anti-progress and ultimately self-defeating. The idea of markets as unruly and economic growth as aversive to being binded by state formulated rules is a central tenet of the transnational neo-liberal discourse that informs globalisation. Advocates of a rule-less and unruly transnational neo-liberalism exaggerate the extent and level of the unruliness of markets when they assert “markets need to be emancipated from “the fetters and discipline of state regulationists” (O’Tuathail et al: 1998:5). To achieve this ‘emancipation’ of markets they invoke ideas of rationality, growth and efficiency to sway government opinion, policy and practice in their favour. This in turn informs legislation that effects both labour and capital. The consequence is often, the deregulation of labour and economic markets.

Vogel (1996) in O’Tuathail (1998) contends that by the discourse of transnational neo-liberalism advocating for an increased deregulation of rules that govern labour and economic, it obfuscates the fact that what is being achieved is not a deregulation but rather a re-regulation of rules and laws. He adds that formulation of new rules and regulations is contingent to the survival of transnational-neo-liberalism. These rules may be ‘unruly’ but are an institutionally inbuilt form of ‘economically correct’ unruliness. The forms that these new rules take may differ from state to state, but these countries have to institute or re-regulate the rules for transnational-neo-liberalism to succeed. The territorial state then is instrumental in this process. As Webber (1998, 2000) demonstrates

in his study on how states produce globalisation, the state continues to have more agency than the discourse of transnational-neo-liberalism proposes.

Another manner, in which the discourse of transnational neo liberalism informs the practice of globalisation, is the manner in which it conceptualises the state. This is part of a larger argument intertwined with the process of time-space distancing. This implies the dilution of the power of local economic and social institutions to determine local economic and social processes. Gray (1998:57) refers to this as "de-localisation". Theorists from the schools of international relations and political geography (Agnew & Corbridge: 1995, Cerny: 1995, Dalby: 1995, Taylor: 1995; 2000) argue that de-localisation carries with it implications for our conceptualisation of the state. They argue that global institutions and processes have severely undermined the sovereignty of the state. The local (as in the state or other institutions) has a weakened and insignificant role to play in an increasingly global world. Johnston (1994), Bradley et al (1998) and Hart and Landsberg (1998) however critique this view, by arguing that the state has been instrumental in the rapid financial growth of the newly industrialised countries (NICs). Though Hart-Landsberg and Burkett (1998) point out that the growth of the newly industrialised countries (NICs) is indicative of increased international participation in trade. For example in 1963 the countries of East and South East Asia were responsible for 1.51 percent of world trade. By 1995 their share had risen to 19.9 percent.

Further empirical work by Johnson (1994), Sharma (1997), Tesfahuney (1998), Rodrik (1998) and Djankov et al (2000) on the role of the state in restricting and facilitating the mobility of both capital and labour demonstrates that the powerlessness of states to shape the processes of globalisation is greatly overstated. Roberts (1998) contributes further to the debate on the way the discourse of transnational neo-liberalism sets the terms of the debate on the role of the nation state. According to Roberts (1998), to assume that transnational neo-liberalism has restructured all states in a homogenous manner is to ignore the agency of states in resisting aspects of transnational neo-liberalism. By presenting transnational capital as monolithic in its intent and consequences one is blinded to an analysis of the differential ways in which globalisation restructures states.

Moreover critical theorists of globalisation like 'O Tuathail et al (1998:13) contend that it makes no sense to write about the 'end of the nation state'. Instead they argue, it is more productive to speak of the "globalisation of the state and the globalisation of governmentality" with globalisation being understood both in materialist and discursive sense. Conceptualising the state in this way places its restructuring (through globalisation) in an historical perspective. According to Cox (1996), the 'globalisation of state' is then viewed as part of a historical and evolutionary adjustment to the processes of capitalism that can be traced to the 1930s. In sum then one of the material effects of transnational-neo-liberalism has been to restructure the state. The extent of this restructuring however is exaggerated and uneven. States continue to be proactive in resisting and producing globalisation.

One way in which states articulate their power to resist as well as to produce globalisation centers around the way they facilitate or constrain cross border activities. Due to the unprecedented scale and pace of capitalism, certain areas of the world are experiencing a phenomenal increase in cross border activity as measured by the flows of people, trade flows, flows of goods and services, flows of capital and information (Castells: 1996, 1997, Standing: 1999,). For Roberts (1998:116), this give rise to a series of processes of globalisation that combine to "enact new geographies through a restructuring of scalar or spatial relations".

These new geographies are the product of unique and differential relations between the local (state) and the global (transnational neo-liberalism). They are uneven since they are the result of heterogeneous relationships between the local and the global. Transnational neo-liberalisation does not create uniform economic geographies, neither is it in its best interest to do so. The new patterns of unevenness and inequality created by differential cross border flows counter the transnational-neo-liberal discourses that globalisation means the increased interconnectivity of people and places.

For example, if the measure of new foreign direct investment (FDI) is used to assess the flows of capital, then FDI inflows to all countries averaged some US\$50 billion annually for the first half of the 1980s, by 1993 they had risen to US\$194 billion and are currently over US\$200 billion per year¹ (Herod: 1995, 2000). Upon closer analysis of the flows of FDI, it becomes clear that its flow is uneven. For example the greatest flow of US FDI goes to countries like Germany, France and the Netherlands, largely bypassing the global South (Taylor: 1999). Diwan (2001) argues that proponents of transnational neo-liberalism marshal evidence of worldwide economic growth to garner support for their ideas and policies.

For example it is claimed that at present, world transnational trade is growing at about 8% per year, a rate three to four times faster than the growth in global production rates (Herod: 2000). Diwan (2001) however argues that it is important to distinguish between finance capital and real economy. Finance capital has shown a massive growth and internationalisation. Again however this growth is uneven. From 1980-1992, the annual growth rate of financial assets among OECD countries outpaced the growth of their real economies by more than two to one (Diwan: 2001). The total stock of the world's financial assets reached US\$35 trillion and is steadily growing. The transaction in foreign exchange in various stock markets in the world is more than 50 times that of trades in goods and services.

The real economy on the other hand is defined in terms of jobs, and its success measured in terms of job growth. Real economy has declined over the last twenty years, whilst finance capital is growing. Diwan (2001) suggests that there is a negative correlation between the two. His investigation into the correlation between the two supports his claims. For example 1994 was the US stock markets worst year since 1990, but was the US real economy's best year.

¹ See Campbell (1994) for more in-depth analysis of FDI as a measure of capital mobility and labour's immobility

Later in this chapter I make the distinction between productive capital and finance capital. By deconstructing the different types of capital, capital is not conceived of as some homogenous all-powerful force in influencing the processes of globalisation.

Another implication of distinguishing between different forms of capital is that it makes clearer the patterns of inequality that have emerge from the processes of 'globalisation'. As Garcia (2001:2) points out, increased economic integration has not produced a global village instead it has produced "a series of archipelagos with global identities and interests". This has resulted in uneven development on a scale never witnessed before. For example the main players in this increased economic integration are the triumvirate of North America, The European Union and Japan (and increasingly the southeast Asian region). This highlights the tendency of theorists (e.g. Ohmae: 1994) to overestimate the magnitude and interconnectedness of the international economy.

As Johnston (1994), Hirst and Thompson (1996) Bradley et al (1998) and Herod (2000), assert there is evidence to indicate that the world was more financially integrated prior to 1914². An example of this assertion is that international activity has been occurring on a global scale for centuries now (Hirst & Thompson: 1996, Bradley et al: 1998, Scholte: 2000). The most common examples of this are the Atlantic slave trade during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This operated across national borders and was crucial to the development of capitalism in the western Europe during this period. The historical expansion of economic activities on a global scale from the fifteenth century onwards is well documented by theorists such as Wallerstein (1979), Scholte (1998, 2000).

A further example of Hirst and Thompson's (1998) assertion (see above) would be that of Sub-Saharan Africa. It is more isolated economically in the third millenium than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century when it served as the main supplier of raw materials for manufacture in the North. Castells (1996) takes up the issue of the relegation of certain areas of the world to 'fourth world status'. It can therefore be

² For more on the financial integration of the world between 1860-1914 see Kozul-Wright (1995)

contended that that whilst there is an increased internationalism in the economy this should not be conflated with 'globalisation' (Hirst & Thompson: 1996).

Another tenet of the 'globalisation' discourse is the attention given to the power of capital to be increasingly footloose and mobile. It is argued that the mobility of capital in the form of transnational and multinational companies is directly attributable to the processes of 'globalisation', namely increased financial integration, time- space distancing, and the rise of new technologies. The restructuring of capital along spatial lines from the late 1960's led to what Froebel (1981) refers to as the new international division of labour (NIDL). The NIDL was a consequence of the rise of the transnational organisations' interaction with the processes of 'globalisation'. International capital required an unregulated and unprotected working class, due to the de-industrialisation of the North. Further, many regions of the South have lured Northern investment by special tax and regulatory measures. Fordist production methods and organisations have under these conditions, been relocated to the South. Many theorists argue (Perraton et al: 1997, Ohmae: 1994, Dicken 1998) that globalisation has made capital fancy free and footloose, capital is mobile enough to locate wherever labour is most cost effective.

The emergence of the TNC's and their appearance as ubiquitous and mobile provided all the evidence required for those arguing that 'globalisation' represents the final victory of capital over labour. Labour was fixed in space as argued by the NIDL thesis and at the mercy of capitals' restructuring practices. All agency was attributed to capital and the decline in trade union membership through most of the world, the drop in wages, increased forms of work and employment security (see Standing: 1999) all seemed to affirm and reinforce the power of capital. The end of the working class organisation was nigh. The decline of the nation state (Cerny: 1996, Williams: 1996, Taylor: 2000) meant that the state could no longer protect workers, the most it could do was make itself attractive to TNC capital. The idea that labour might have agency in shaping the 'globalisation' processes and the geography of capital was displaced by the notion that labour has little or no future at all.

Proponents of this view (Burawoy: 1985, Korten: 1995) argue that since the 1970's and the consequent triumph of a 'global' market, the industrial relations climate is one in which places, and those who live in them, are forced to compete for employment, ensuring that employment conditions and regulations are "ratcheted down to the lowest common denominator" (Wills: 112:1998). This process is seen as so inevitable that many within and without the labour movement seem unable to or unsure of how to take action against omnipotent mobile capital. As Wills (1998), Herod (1998, 2000) and Cumbers and Atterton (2000) point out this prevailing discourse of capitals' despotism has made academic or political responses seem futile.

If 'globalisation' is nothing but a political discourse as argued by Hirst and Thompson (1996) and more recently by Herod (2000) and Garcia (2001), then we need to be cognizant of its political motives. Globalization need not be the handmaiden or foot soldier of capitalism. Conflating the two concepts does not allow us to imagine a globalisation without capitalism. As Herod (2000:1781) points out the "very nature of social and technological evolution means that globalisation may have emerged under different economic systems (though that is not to say it an historical inevitability)

Secondly, capital is not as footloose as its proponents would have us believe. Wills (1998) argues that wages and conditions still vary a great deal across Europe and despite this, the majority of investment is still attracted to locations where social costs are relatively high. She further argues that access to markets, skilled labour, social networks and communications all play a role in keeping capital (particularly service capital) in the North. An example of this would be that despite the opportunities for profitable investment in countries like China, 70 percent of FDI originated in the advanced capitalist economies between 1993 and 1995.

Whilst some capital may be footloose, little or no distinction is made when discussing what components of capital are footloose. Massey (1993) and Johns (1998, 2000) argue it is important to distinguish between monetary and production mobility. Monetary mobility refers to the flows of money from one region to another through technological

networks. Monetary capital is intangible and flows in placeless spaces of cyberspace, eventually becoming concentrated in the regions of the North. Production mobility by contrast refers to the more tangible aspects of capital, such as factories and machines and the ability of capital to up and relocate at the slightest whim. An increasing number of writers (see Sunley, 1993, Massey, 1993, Johns (1998) Bradley et al: 1998, Herod: 2000) are arguing that the ability of production capital to up and move has been overstated. They point out that the extent to which TNCs invest in fixed production capacity in host nations is not superficial, and that it is often quite difficult for capital to up and leave without incurring significant financial losses.

This then points to the paradox initially raised by Harvey (1985) that in order for capital to operate successfully it must be both mobile and fixed. It requires mobility because it must constantly seek out opportunities for accumulation through profit making. It requires fixity because only through the creation of fixed capital (plant and machinery) can surplus be extracted from the labour process. Thus wherever fixed capital is located the ability to move capital around to search for greater profits is constrained. Johnston (1994) and Castells (1996) argue that to a extent these barriers are overcome by the devaluation of fixed capital and the removal of the released liquid assets (monetary capital) to other places, where the perceived profitability potential is perceived as greater.

Whilst fixed assets today may have a shorter life span than in previous eras, mainly due to the greater mobility of capital and new technologies, it is the contention of this chapter that as long as capital still requires a fixed physical form from which to operate, challenges can be made to it by both the State and labour. Even though Harvey (1985:150) argues

“...a tension exists within the geography of accumulation and the fixity and motion, between the rising power to overcome space and the immobile spatial structures required for such a purpose. This instability, I wish to stress, is something that no amount of state interventionism can cure...”

There are many examples of the role of the state and labour countering or attempting to counter the mobility of capital, at all scales.³

1.2 Implications of the 'globalisation' discourse for labour.

Arguing that 'globalisation' is a discourse does not detract from its very real impact on workers everywhere. Due to intensified time-space distancing and the increased pace of interconnections across the globe, workers are likely to feel the consequences of global economic and political events in ever shorter periods of time. As such their window of time to organise and to respond to such events is shortened. (Warhurst & Thompson: 1998, Walker: 1998, Cumbers and Atterton: 2000). Shortening of response time is bound to have several further consequences for workers. Foremost will be the increased pressure from government and employers for workers to be ever more 'flexible' both in terms of skills and work organisation so that organisations can respond quickly to the impulses of the market (Thompson et al: 1998, Standing: 1999). This increasing pressure is going to lead to a core-periphery work based society, where secure employment (well-paid, full time, relatively skilled workers) will be enjoyed by 20% of the working population, with the remaining 80% involved in various forms of flexible labour (part time, share jobs, few or no benefits and low wages) (Thomson et al:1998)⁴. A flexible contingent workforce allows organisations the opportunity and ability to change production levels in response to rapidly changing economic conditions.

A second consequence of 'globalisation' is the rhetoric put forward by proponents of the globalisation discourse that countries "must get on the globalisation bandwagon or lose out in the global marketplace" (Herod: 2000: 1784). This is an attempt to discipline workers and labour markets (Standing: 1999) and to shift the balance of economic power in capitals favour. 'Global competition' has become the mantra that is used to justify

³ See Johnston (1994) for American and European examples of state intervention. See Cumbers and Atterton (2000), Johns and Vural (2000) and Herod (1998, 2000) for examples of how labour has countered and attempted to counter the mobility of capital.

every aspect of contemporary political thought, from economic policy to government regulation to welfare reform. An increasing number of government policies are directed at facilitating workplace flexibility to undermine organised labour in the name of global competition. For example the USA's Team Work for Employees and Management Act of 1995 suggests that "the escalating demands of global competition have compelled an increasing number of employers in the USA to make dramatic changes in the workplace and employer and employee relationships"³ (Herod: 2000: 1785).

The veracity of such claims, is irrelevant to those making them. The argument that globalisation provides threats to local and national markets and competitiveness is nonetheless used to restructure work and the workplace. Herod (2000), Scholte (2000), Johns (1998) and Wills (1998) point out that globalisation as a neo-liberal discourse is being used to undermine workers rights globally. For example the empirical evidence points to the global undercutting of labour standards and levels of pay and worker protection as conditions in countries such as Thailand, Mexico and the Czech Republic are used to ratchet down, rather than up conditions and wages for workers in countries such as Japan, the United States and Germany (Standing: 1999, Herod: 2000).

A third consequence of globalisation for workers is the increased migration of workers from the South to countries of the North. The growth of transnational flows will in main be due to changing demographics in the North. For example in the case of the United States, in 1997 27.4 percent of the population was younger than 18 years and 12.7 percent were over 65 years old. Thus 40 percent of the population was either too old or too young to work (Herod: 2000). Based on projected demographic trends, this pattern will continue to grow. Similar demographic patters are reported from Japan, western and northern Europe and Canada (Sharma: 1997). One of the implications is that an increasing number of workers (of all skill levels) will have to be imported into these regions to keep their

³ See Standing (1999) for an in depth discussion of global flexible labour, and Ozaki (1998) for how the pressures of globalisation are restructuring the Japanese workforce (once the bastion of the full time secure job) into a flexible core-periphery one.

⁴ For more on the impact of the 1995 Act see Herod (1997a).

economies functioning. This increased transnational flow of labour carries with it implications for both the receiving countries and sending countries. The former may become more culturally closed and resort to parochialism whilst the latter will have to find new ways of dealing with the absence of many of its brightest skilled and unskilled workers (Barber: 1995).

All of this then begs the question, how do workers on a local and global scale respond to these changes. If as the literature suggests (Harvey: 1989, Standing: 1999, Thompson et al: 1998, Herod, 2000) labour is becoming increasingly fragmented, and undermined in its organising power, then what are labours' options if any? Is globalisation then the end game in the historical struggle between labour and capital? Do we heed Fukuyama's assertion that we have reached the end of history and the end of class and hence class struggle?

1.3 Labour Geography: A new labour praxis?

Before examining some of the key ideas and value of labour geography as a theoretical tool and labour praxis, it is important that its historical development be reviewed. This will also help to locate it alongside other forms of labour theory, allowing comparative comments to be made about its contribution and usefulness to labour studies as a whole.

The political upheaval and labour struggles of the 1960's influenced the theoretical directions taken by labour studies. First of these directions was a focus on the labour process approach to theorising the world of work. This entailed understanding how work and workplaces were organised. Fordist and Post-Fordist ways of producing and organising, the skilling and deskilling of workers and class relations were some of the key subjects of study. The seminal tome of the labour process studies was Harry Braverman's (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. One also can place work by Burawoy (1979,1985), Shaiken (1984), and Beynon (1972) firmly in this category of labour analysis. From the late 1970's onwards the volume of work on theorising the labour process increased dramatically (Walker: 1998). The focus was mainly on the workplace

as a site of struggle and control as well as managerial strategies to obtain the control and consent of the workforce in the workplace. Hence the workplace was viewed as a site struggle independent of international struggles and analysis. The labour process approach remains a popular and widely used approach in labour studies. Even though post Fordism saw labour studies focus on a wider range of issues such as the just-in-time production methods of Japanese firms and flexible manufacturing techniques, the emphasis was still overwhelmingly on bounded notions of organizational space. An examination of various editions of *the South African Labour Bulletin* (a publication close to the heartbeat of South African labour studies), from 1977 to 2001, indicates an overwhelming emphasis of South African labour studies to use labour process approaches in their work (Webster: 1984, Southall: 1984, Von Holdt: 2001).

The second direction of focus in labour studies was a focus on working class history. In this regard the seminal work of the period was E.P. Thompson's (1963) "*Making of the English working class*". In the United States work on labour and class was been done most notably by Gutman and Montgomery (Walker: 1998). As Castree (1998), Wills (1998) and Johns (1998) argue the focus on the labour process approach and on working class history was a result of the resurgence of interest in Marx's work on class⁶. This meant the use of the classical labourist belief in "the point of production as the key to all questions of work, exploitation, and organisation"⁷ (Walker: 1998:xii). Thompson however in his work on the creation of a working class, was less interested in the mechanics of class relationships in the workplace. Instead he focused on the lived experience of the working class and was specifically interested in working class culture (Walker: 1998)

According to Walker (1998) and Castree (2000) both the labour process and class based streams of labour studies (see above) lost their favoured theoretical status during the mid 1980s. There were a myriad of reasons for this. The rise of Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the USA and their decidedly neo-liberal, flexible labour rhetoric provided

⁶ See Castree (1998) and Smith (2000) for a more detailed discussion on the reasons for the predominance of class as an analytical category in the 1970s.

labour and labour theorists with challenges that class and the labour process could not adequately address. This was compounded by the fall of communism in the Soviet bloc. For many this indicated the final triumph of capitalism and the death of class (Fukuyama: 1992). As Walker (1998:xii) points out “ Capitalism suddenly and unceremoniously revolutionized the landscape of industrial production, rendering obsolete any number of articles of faith about the course of mechanization, de-skilling, corporate concentration and the nature of work”

Furthermore postmodernism provided the impulse for the reexamination of geography and more particularly, space. Soja's book (1989) *Postmodern geographies* was critical in this regard. He along with Harvey (1989), Massey (1993), Agnew and Corbridge (1995), O'Tuathail (1998), Luke (1995, 2001), Scholte (2000), Herod (1995, 1998, 2000), and were arguing for a non-territorialist conception of space. Their arguments were based on the fact that the globalisation process has significantly increased flows of people, capital and information across borders and places and in the case of finance these flows take place in 'placeless spaces' (cyberspace) Further time-space –distanciation, and the growth and operation of TNCs is increasingly (not always successfully) eroding the power of the state

1.4 From the workplace to the landscape: A review of the theoretical roots of labour geography.

In order to address the theoretical crisis in labour studies, and the crisis labour is facing in an increasingly globalising world, analyses of labour moved from the workplace to the global landscape. No longer was it useful to only focus on the workings of the workplace, the scale of analyses had to be shifted to outside the workplace to local, national, regional and global scales of analyses. In sum, the spatial or geographic analysis of work, workers and workplaces came to the fore. This body of work steadily increased in volume from the late 1980's, and is now beginning to enter the fold of mainstream labour studies

⁷ See Braverman (1974) for an example of this

analysis (Massey: 1993, Herod: 1998, Walker: 1998). The geographic or spatial analysis of labour is not merely a locational study of labour, that is the study of where labour should optimally be located for capitalist development. This locational understanding of labour is very much part of the neoclassical school of economics.

Labour geography, not surprisingly was spearheaded by an interdisciplinary group of theorists. Academics from sociology, politics, and economists all contribute to it. Chief among them were several British geographers such as Doreen Massey, Richard Meegan, American geographers such as Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone. These theorists gave birth to what Herod (1995), Walker (1998) and Wills (1998) refer to as 'The New Economic Geography'. The main premise from which these theorists worked was that capitalism was not as orderly as it seemed during the Fordist (post 1945) era and that it was assuming new forms such as flexible specialization, just- in - time production and creating new industrial spaces.

The New Economic Geography is interested in three main streams of inquiry. Firstly it is interested in reconceptualising the way technical and organisational change is traditionally conceived of in the literature. There is a recognition that there is "no single labour process to be mechanized and de-skilled, but complex bundles of work and work sites to be orchestrated in the immense social division of labour" (Walker: xiii: 1998).

Further, there was no single pattern of where corporations were located as the product cycle theory of Fordism suggested there would be. New industrial districts in central Italy, California, and Japan proved this. This also contributed to the evidence that capitalism was not as homogenous or predictable as traditional labor theory and economics claimed. The seminal theorists in this regard were Allen Scott, Michael Storper, Annalee Saxenian, Andrew Sayer, and Richard Walker.

The second stream of inquiry centered on capital and finance. David Harvey's *Limits to Capitalism* (1985) was the key text in this regard. Attempts to understand the rapid and changing landscape of global money flows soon resulted in many new studies coming to

the fore. Chief amongst these according to Herod (2000) were Barney Warf, Nigel Thrift, Susan Roberts and Ron Martin. Michael Webber, David Rigby and Meric Gertler are also key theorists in studies of profit rates, investment cycles and uneven development. Their work has proved critical in undermining the thesis of capital (in its purest form as finance) being homogenous, ubiquitous and having a predictable logic.

The third dimension of economic geography was concerned with the issue of business culture. Mark Granovetter spearheaded work in this field. He was concerned with the peculiarities of place and how its structured capitalism on a social economic level. Hence much of the work done in this regard has concerned managerial behaviour in boardrooms, consumer culture, financial operations in the city and how they influence gender relations. Work in this regard has been done by Linda McDowell (1992) and Jane Jacobs (1996), among others. This dimension of economic geography has been an important contributor to anthropological and cultural studies (Herod: 1995, Walker: 1998)

What the above streams of inquiry served to do was shift the analysis of economics and labour studies from the "brilliant organisational strategies of the new capitalism, the financial wizardry of Wall Street or the competitive advantage of the Japanese" (Walker: 1998 xiv) to inserting labour as a proactive agent in and of the globalisation process. Further the new economic geography must bring to the fore the divergent "histories and trajectories" (Walker: 1998 xvii) of cities, regions and countries which cannot be reduced to a single logic of capitalism

1.5 Spatiality and its influence on Labour geography

It is now possible to move from the above general review of the new economic geography to examine more specifically its contribution to labour studies, with a focus on trade unionism. I contend that labour geography offers the most appropriate form of theoretical analysis to answer achieve the aims set by this dissertation.

Postmodern social theorists were arguing for new concepts and a new language in understanding and discussing how the processes of globalisation were reconfiguring space and our social understanding of it. One such concept that is useful for purposes of this dissertation is Scholte's (1996, 2000) notion of supraterritoriality. Scholte (1996, 2000) suggests that social theorists move beyond a three dimensional territorial mapping of space, alongside longitude, latitude and altitude dimensions. Firstly he argues that we need to conceive of space as supraterritorial. This concept refers to the:

"proliferation of social connections that are at least partly-and often substantially -detached from [the] territorial logic." (Scholte: 2000:47).

He then urges social theorists to add globality as the fourth dimension to their mapping of space. Globality is an integral part of supraterritoriality. It refers to circumstances where territorial space is substantially transcended. It points to the ability of flows of capital, information, technology, organisational interaction images, people, sounds, and symbols (Castells: 1989) to 'extend anywhere in the world at the same time and unite different locations in the world in effectively no time.' (Scholte: 2000: 48). For Castells (1989) globality is the space of flows. Space is the material support for global flows. Harvey's (1990) notion of globality is found in his thesis of time-space compression. So globality is a term that succinctly refers to time-space compression, a transworld *instantaneity and simultaneity*. Globality then adds the fourth dimension to conventional or territorialist ways of mapping space.

Scholte (2000) and Harvey (1990) point out that to argue for, a new logic of spatial reconfiguration is not to argue for a non-territorial world. Scholte (2000) is at pains to point out that the end of territorialism owing to globalisation has not meant the end of territoriality. Harvey (1990) further underlines this point by asserting that we must not completely abandon the materiality of space. To deny the materiality of space, would then be to deny the material practices and processes, such as capitalism, that help construct spaces. O'Brien (1992) and Castells (1989) are two of many theorists that analyze globalisation in terms of networks and flows. Often they work from the assumption that these flows are placeless and disembedded. Thus financial transactions

occur instantaneously and time annihilates space. Places do not matter in these analyses of globalisation. Yet, whilst time may annihilate space, places still matter. Sassen (1991, 1994) argues that certain global cities serve as hubs for economic activity including labour migration. Even these global cities do not operate in a totally disconnected way. These global hubs operate on local, national and global levels simultaneously. Hence, many global issues are often dealt with at local levels. Thus place still matters.

Economic geographers, influenced by a group of scholars from politics and international relations (Ashley: 1988, Weber: 1992, O'Tuathail: 1992, Walker: 1993) as well as encouraged by the debate in the social sciences around spatiality, began to use 'space' in a particular way. 'Space' is taken by economic geographers to refer to "the presumed effect of location and spatial setting (or where political-economic processes are taking place) upon those processes" (Agnew and Corbridge: 1995:79). Spatiality then refers to how space is represented as having effects (Agnew and Corbridge: 1995). These are concepts and terms borrowed by a sub field of economic geographers (Massey: 1993, Herod: 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001, Wills: 1996, 1998a, 1998b, Johns: 1998a, 1998b, Sunley: 1993, 1996, Marin: 1993, 1996) that specialise in studying and theorising spatiality and labour unionism.

1.6 The Spatiality of Labour Unionism

Within the field of economic geography, a group of theorists emerged who focused on labour issues and the way labour interacted with economic geography. This was and remains especially significant for labour studies, as it warrants a break from traditional labour process approaches of understanding and researching labour.

Labour geographers represent a very small group of American and British researchers and theorists. Their work has only recently come to the fore, with the first book collection of labour geographical perspectives on labour unions published in 1998. The seminal theorist in this regard is Andrew Herod, a prolific writer (Herod: 1991a, 1991b, 1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d, 1997e, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2001). He has written

extensively on international labour solidarity movements, the impact of the Cold War on labour in eastern Europe, the role of the international trade secretariats and on US dock workers and the strategies employed by their unions to organise them. As such this section draws from much of his work. In addition, the work of other labour geographers is examined.

A seemingly commonsensical notion is that place matters (Massey: 1994). As a recent debate between Massey (1994), Painter (1994) and Martin et al (1994) illustrates, the extent to which place matters in the geography of trade unions is still an open question. This chapter is content to assert that place still matters in so much as social identities and social relations are constituted spatially. Thus what it means to be a worker or a trade unionist varies geographically and historically (Massey: 1994, Painter: 1994, Martin et al: 1998, Herod: 1998). As Herod (1998) points out "Whether workers have grown up in Santiago or Soweto, Prague or Paris, Toledo, Ohio or Toledo, Spain, New York or New Delhi makes a difference to how they constitute themselves as social, political and geographical actors". This is an argument taken up by Hudson and Sadler (1986), Castells (1983) and Martin et al (1996) when they explore how working class traditions become reproduced in particular places over time. They argue that working cultures of places may prove to be critical social resources which workers can draw on in times of need (e.g. in regions known for their traditions of labour radicalism) or may serve as an impediment when workers are trying to organise in regions known for their history of anti-unionism.

In this sense then, labour geographers build on the idea that social life is fundamentally spatial. They argue that social actors, be they individuals, governments, corporations or labour unions operate within economic, political and cultural landscapes (Herod: 1995, 1998ab, 2000). These landscapes may either constrain or enable their actions. In the case of labour unions and their members, the operation of labour markets, the gender and

racial makeup of the workforce, wage rates, working conditions and labour laws can all vary geographically.⁸

For example the creation of national collective bargaining agreements (also referred to as master contracts in the US) is designed to take certain conditions of work and wages out of competition. We see that such union goals may require negotiators to address dramatic regional and local differences in work practices and wage rates amongst other conditions (Herod: 1998). An example of this is Herod's (1997) case study of the geography of contract bargaining in the US east coast longshore industry. Herod (1997) argues that national agreements are an explicit recognition on the part of unions that employers may use variations in conditions across the economic landscape as a source of economic and political power to 'whipsaw' workers in different places against each other. As a result of capital's whipsawing capabilities, developing national agreements⁹ can be one way for unions to confront capitals (geographic power).

Yet unions abilities to develop such national agreements also conditioned by the vacillating nature of uneven development of capitalism. Whereas a union may be able to force reluctant employers in low unemployment regions to accept the conditions of nationally negotiated pay raise because such employers face a tight labour market. In areas of high unemployment local employers may have more economic and political space to resist such pressure (Campbell: 1994, Sharma: 1997, Herod: 1998, Standing: 1999). Therefore in order for successful national bargaining contracts to be negotiated, it must take into account the myriad geographical landscapes to which they are applied. This may mean considering intensely local geographies of labour such by focusing on a city (Savage: 1998) or national labour geographies within a State (Herod: 1997, Martin et al: 1996, Massey & Painter: 1994)), or regional or global labour geographies such as the North-South divide (Cravey: 1998, Wills: 1998, Johns: 1998, Castree: 2000).

⁸ See Herod (1995, 1997, 1998), Martin, Sunley and Wills (1996), Cravey (1998) Page, (1998) and Castree (2000) for empirical case studies on how spatiality impacts on labour unions in terms of wages, identity, working conditions and law.

⁹ This as Herod's (1995) case study demonstrates, is not to suggest that all unions seek national agreements. Sometimes local branches may seek to break out of national agreements because they believe they will be better off bargaining locally.

Herod (1998) contends that national bargaining contracts are as much geographic agreements as political ones. Therefore a union may pursue a number of geographic solutions to address global or local variations in workers wages and conditions of work. For example a union may take the spatial average of conditions across an industry as a compromise basis for a national agreement, taking the best available conditions at one particular location and seeking to impose them in a geographically uniform fashion throughout the industry. This may serve to ensure a minimum floor around the worst conditions in the industry and ensuring the rest of the industry does not fall below them. See Cumbers and Atterton (2000) for an example of how this was achieved in the international oil industry.

1.7 Geographies of Organising.

Another aspect identified by Clarke (1987,1989), Herod (1998), Wills (1998), Johns (1998) and Waterman (1998) that influences the geography of labour unionism is the differential way unionism is regulated around the world. This regulation occurs mainly through labour laws enacted by states. For example work by Clarke (1987,1989) investigated how the differential labour laws that exist in the different states in the US placed certain constraints on unions activities. Not only do labour laws determine the form that labour unions assume, but they shape the geography of capitalism. This is demonstrated in the next chapter within the context of the shipping industry. Often labour laws are used as a means by states to prevent labour from achieving solidarity. For example during the 1984-1985 coal miners strikes in Britain, the Thatcher government set up roadblocks to prevent miners from travelling to other strike sites to express their solidarity with other striking miners. This according to Herod (1998) was a conscious spatial strategy used by the state to undermine worker solidarity.

Unions are also quite powerful in determining the economic geography of capitalism. For example Herod (1997) demonstrates how by destroying local radical and anti US unions in South America, the AFL-CIO played a significant role in helping US capital expand

into Latin America during the twentieth century. This dissertation will provide a further example illustrating how trade unions of the North are attempting to attract shipping capital and seafaring jobs from the South and eastern Europe back to the North. By using the empirical example of the shipping industry I argue that the role of labour in shaping the economic geography of capitalism at a transnational scale is greater than has been theorised.

A third factor identified by labour geographers as pertinent to union organising is the political geography of union organising. The political geography of organising is concerned with the formation of labour solidarity as an example of the agency of labour in a transnational neo-liberal economy. A key aspect of international labour solidarity is the ability of workers located across the vast spaces of the globe to make contact with each other. Solidarity amongst workers in a national or global context means that both workers and unions need to acknowledge and come to terms with the way working conditions and remuneration differ geographically. According to Herod (1998) organising workers within prescribed national borders is far easier, even though regional or differences may exist within such borders. Workers within a country, despite their many differences, share common cultural, economic, political or historical points of reference. Examples of these reference points are common labour legislation, currency, or political institutions

Organising across borders for solidarity is a far more difficult process. There are fewer points of commonality. Despite this labour unions have persevered and given rise to International Trade Secretariats (ITS) and World Industry Councils (WIC) to share information and form global labour policy such as global standardised working hours for particular sectors or companies. For example standardizing working hours for employees of Ford Motor Company wherever its branches are located in the world.

Such efforts however are not problem free and depend significantly on the goals of workers involved in achieving cross border solidarity. The relations between International Trade Federations of the developed world with national unions of the

developing world illustrate this. This leads us to distinguish between two types of cross border worker solidarity. Johns (1994) in Herod (1998a: 22) makes the distinction between *accommodatory solidarity* and *transformatory solidarity*. She argues that the difference between the two is related to “the geographic objectives that the workers share”. Therefore workers that espouse accommodatory solidarity are usually those from the developed world, that occupy privileged economic spaces. They are interested in maintaining this privileged space and prevent job losses and capital flight from these spaces to less developed countries where pay and working conditions are much worse. If this happens then these spaces are destroyed and recreated with less privileged characteristics. Thus their goal is to improve the conditions for workers in the developing world, for example by asking for wages to be increased to a level equitable with workers from the developed world. The hope is to prevent the flight of capital across borders and the subsequent loss of jobs and job security.

In transformatory solidarity however, class interests prevail. Campaigns based on transformatory solidarity challenge the social power of capital and aim to change the “basic relations of social relations of production and consumption” (Herod: 1998a: 22). Johns (1994) in Herod (1998a) asserts that in practice, it is not always possible to distinguish between these two types of solidarity. Moreover the type of solidarity practiced will be dependent on current political and economic contexts. For example the accelerated pace of globalisation and its effect of speeding up the spatial reconfiguration of the world, is the contemporary context.

1.8 Conclusion

To reiterate the aims of this dissertation I argue that, in theorising about globalisation, capital is represented as all-powerful and proactive in its mobility and ability to transcend national boundaries in search of new labour markets. It is this mobility of capital, which is argued to be instrumental in shaping the processes of globalisation. Labour in contrast is portrayed as fixed within territorial boundaries unable to shape or influence its own destiny or the processes of globalisation. These opposing discourses of capital as the

prime agent of globalisation and labour as a passive participant in the process have predominantly informed the debates about globalisation, and have remained mostly unchallenged in the literature.

The aim of this dissertation is to assess the validity of the above claims of capital being all-powerful via its mobility and labour being 'agentless' in influencing the processes of globalisation. In order to achieve this I use the global shipping industry as an example to assess these claims. This is achieved by investigating the complex ways that relationships between shipping capital and seafaring labour has changed and how these changed relationships are articulated. The theoretical framework used in this dissertation to achieve these goals is informed by the sub disciplines of economic and labour geography.

Chapter Two

Research methodology

2.1 Rationale

In theorising globalisation, capital is presented as all powerful whilst labour is constructed as passive and without agency. This form of theorising has come to dominate the literature on labour studies and globalisation. This represents a possible lacuna or silence in the literature. The task I engage in is to assess the validity of the above claims in the prevailing literature. To do this I engage in a case study of the strategies used by SATAWU to service South African seafarers, particularly ratings. Seafarers, specifically ratings, are the epitome of transnational flexible labour. Further they work on capital (ships) that is literally mobile. As such they present unique challenges to the labour organisations servicing and organising them. An assessment of how they are being serviced and organised by SATAWU will then help me address the central concern of this study, which is to assess claims that capital through its increased mobility has rendered labour agentless to influence the processes of globalisation. The findings of such an assessment will contribute to current policy and academic debates about the role of labour and trade unions in an increasingly globalising world.

2.2 Wider research context

This case study informs and is informed by three other commissioned research projects. The first two focus on the human resource development (HRD) of seafarers. The Seafarer International Research Centre (SIRC) based at the University of Cardiff, Wales, funded the first of these projects. The research team for both these projects constituted Debby Bonnin and myself. The brief of the SIRC project was to assess the HRD of South African seafarers. This involved an investigation into all aspects affecting the training, employment, and career pathing of South African seafarers. A report on our findings was submitted to SIRC in June 2001. The second project was ITF (International Transport Federation) funded. The brief of this project was to assess the effectiveness of an ITF

funded training programme for ratings African ratings, that was conducted at the Unicorn Training Centre, Durban.

The third project that this study informs is a National Research Foundation (NRF) funded project on organisational reconfiguration in the context of an increasingly globalising world. The organisational reconfiguration that this dissertation focuses on is that of SATAWU with a particular emphasis on its global and local strategies in servicing a transnational flexible membership.

2.3 Research Design

The methods and techniques adopted for research **design** depends on the research problem and its purpose. Research methods can be **distinguished** according to whether data are submitted to qualitative or quantitative treatment (Gordon: 1980, Baker: 1988 Denzin & Lincoln: 1994). For purposes of this investigation, the qualitative method was adopted. The adoption of a qualitative framework effects the way data is treated. Qualitative treatment of data describes what processes are occurring and details the differences in the character of these processes over time (Breakwell et al: 1997). This can be contrasted to the quantitative treatment of research that states what these processes are, how often they occur and what differences in their magnitude can be measured over time.

Denzin & Lincoln (1994:2) as well as Filstead (1979) argue that qualitative research at its core involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter. As such it attempts to make sense of or "interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". Social life is therefore a product of the **shared** creativity and experiences of **individuals**. This social life however would be **meaningless** if it was impermeable and **unknowable** to others. However as Filstead (1979) contends, this social life is knowable **to all participants** in social interaction. Without this basic premise that we all have access to the social worlds created by others, research is not possible. Whilst there is this 'common' social life that we all have access to, the qualitative paradigm recognises that social life is constantly shifting and dynamic. Therefore the paradigm does not conceive

of the world as an external force, objectively definable and independent of people: rather there are multiple realities.

The qualitative research design and treatment of data allowed this study to gain access to the interpretations that people brought to their lives and social worlds as trade unionists, employers, trainers and policy makers. A qualitative research design allowed me access to these multiple and common social worlds created by people.

A qualitative research design demands rigour. Rigour in turn demands accountability and responsibility. Some of the ways that this rigour was achieved in the qualitative paradigm of this dissertation was for the researcher to be self-reflexive and situate himself clearly in the research landscape. Self-reflexivity requires that one have insight, a critical awareness, of where one is located in the representation landscape. This requires an honest appraisal of ones relationship to the material or people being researched and how this may affect the research process.

Fay (1996) cautions the researcher using qualitative research design to be critically intersubjective. Critical intersubjectivity provides us with a method that allows the research of others to occur. It is not an infallible process. It in fact relies on fallibilism. Fay (1996) agrees with Funani that research is value laden. He however does not throw the baby out with the bathwater. He argues for a continuing critical dialogue between researchers and the researched. This intersubjective dialogue is to give voice to rival opinions and interpretations. Each interpretation is to be rigorously probed to destabilize conscious and unconscious stereotypes and preconceptions.

It is thus my contention that using qualitative research methods provided me insights into how trade unionists, employers, trainers and policy makers make sense of the crisis effecting South African seafarers and what they thought should be done to resolve the crisis

2.4 The case study as a research strategy.

The qualitative research techniques of interviewing and participant observation are the key methodological tools that inform this case study. A case study according to Denscombe (1998), Bishop (1994) and Robson (1993) is not a method of collecting data but rather is a research strategy combining a variety of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. This is one of the strengths of the case study method as it allows the context and needs of the case to determine the methods used. Further, these authors contend that the researcher must be able to separate some aspect of social life so that it is distinct from other things of the same kind. Without a notion of a boundary it becomes difficult for the researcher to state what the case is. With this in mind, my focus is on one South African national transport union (SATAWU) and its relationship to South African seafarers. This then defines the boundaries of my case study. Whilst the study will inevitably demand an investigation of the institutions and social processes that exist outside SATAWU, the nature of the research strategy demands that these investigations be focussed enough that they remain central to me answering my research question.

The rationale for me choosing a case study as the preferred research strategy is based on the following factors. Firstly due to the pragmatic constraints of a research dissertation of limited scope, it was necessary for me to focus on one instance or example of the social phenomena I was investigating. Hence whilst my research question is quite broad, it is by focussing on a particular example (SATAWU and its strategies for servicing South African seafarers) that I hope to address a range of more general issues posited by my research question. The case study strategy allows me then to gain insights from a particular example that can have wider implications. Further the case study allows certain issues to come to the fore that may not come through when using research strategies that attempt to cover a large number of instances, such as surveys (Denscombe: 1998). Secondly the case study strategy by focussing on one trade union allows me a more in-depth study, hence providing me with valuable and unique insights to my research problem than other end-product focused research strategies (such as surveys, questionnaires, experimental) allow for. The case study approach further appeals to me due to its focus on processes and relationships as opposed to neatly defined outcomes or

findings. Whilst findings of this case study are of critical importance, the focus is on the complex interplay of processes and relationships that occur amongst the different actors and institutions that is investigated. The strength of this is that complexities of social processes are not reduced to dichotomous and discrete good/bad or valid/invalid findings (Bishop: 1994, Robson: 1993). Thirdly the case study allows an investigation to take place in the 'natural setting' of the case. In other words the case already exists and is not artificially constructed or manipulated for the purpose of the investigations. Hence there are no controls of variables as found in qualitative research designs. In sum, the case study strategy is for the purposes of this study the most appropriate research strategy.

2.5 Sampling

In order to address the aims of the research, it was necessary to define the research field. The universe was defined as those organisations that impact on the occupational lives of South African seafarers. The following list is an outcome of this process.

1. The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union

2. The International Transport Federation

3. Employers of South African seafarers

a) Smit-Pentow Marine

b) DeBeers Marine

c) Safmarine (now part of the AP Moller/Maersk shipping company)

d) Unicorn Shipping

4. The South African Maritime Safety Authority

1. Maritime training institutions

a) Natal Technikon Maritime studies department

b) Cape Technikon Maritime studies department

c) Wingfield College Maritime studies department

5. The maritime chamber of the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA)

The process of snowball sampling prospective interviewees in the above organisations and the conducting interviews took began in May 2001, with the last interview conducted in October 2001. Initial contact was made with respondents, in the above categories, who worked closely with seafarers or with issues regarding seafarers. Once an initial contact was made with one respondent each from the above categories, snowball sampling was used to obtain further interviews with respondents within each category. Snowball sampling is the preferred method of sampling when research population lists are difficult to obtain or non-existent. Hence a small number of known members of the target population are asked to introduce you to other members who, in turn are invited to nominate other members to help you (Fife-Schaw: 1995). In total there were 12 interviews conducted. Interviews were conducted in both Cape Town and Durban, as these are the two maritime hubs of South Africa. The table below lists information on the interviews in addition to indicating the interviewers identity. (Refer to interview reference page for list of dates and venues of interviews)

Table 2.5.1

Organisation	NAME	Position	Interviewer
SATAWU	Sam Ntombela	Dockworker	S. Ruggunan
		Organiser	D. Bonnin
	Thulani Dlamini	Senior negotiator	D. Bonnin
	Jane Barret	Senior Official	S. Ruggunan
ITF	Sprite Zungu	ITF Inspector	S. Ruggunan
			D. Bonnin
Smit-Pentow Marine	Capt. MacLennan	Crewing Manager	S. Ruggunan
DeBeers Marine	Capt. Hagan	Crewing Manager	S. Ruggunan
Unicorn Shipping	R. Snook	Crewing Manager	S. Ruggunan
Natal Technikon	Capt. Parkinson	Head of maritime studies	S. Ruggunan
Cape Technikon	Capt. Stohl	Head of maritime	S. Ruggunan

		studies	
Wingfield College	Capt. Fourie	Head of maritime studies	S. Ruggunan
TETA	Ron Fable	Head of Maritime Chamber	S. Ruggunan
SAMSA	Capt. Zanders	Deputy-Head SAMSA KZN	S. Ruggunan
	Francis Chilalika	Equity Officer SAMSA	S. Ruggunan

In addition personal correspondence over email was conducted with:

Table 2.5.2

SATAWU	Jane Barret	Senior official
Wingfield	Andy Morris	Head of ratings school, table bay campus

2.6 Data gathering techniques

2.6.1 The interview and interview instrument

“To collect information about another person’s beliefs, behaviours, perceptions, motivations or plans, our first recourse is to often ask them questions”.

(Judd, Smith, & Kidder: 1991:214)

Keeping the above in mind, the main form of data gathering was comprehensive *semi-structured interviews*, which according to Bailey (1978), Denscombe (1998), Bishop (1994) and Robson (1993) allows for flexibility and spontaneity in order to assess the **validity** of the respondents answer. Separate interview schedules were designed for each

of the above categories of respondents. The interview schedule was designed along the lines of a *semi-structured interview*, comprising of open-ended and probing questions. In other words only the major questions were prepared in advance, and the probing questions were formulated as needed to allow for greater flexibility. Breakwell et al (1997) argue that this is a key feature of *semi-structured interviews*. This type of interviewing further allows more opportunity to respond to and provide more accurate information more quickly (Gordon: 1980). There is also the opportunity to clarify points for both the respondent and the researcher. Copies of the interview instruments used are provided in the appendix.

Due to the nature of qualitative research as well as the objectives of this research, it was imperative that information be recorded verbatim. This would also ensure that data could be verified and certified as reliable. Audio recording for purposes of reliability and validity is documented in Breakwell et al (1997). Recording data is also away of keeping interviewer bias in check. Recording ensures that there is a permanent copy of the data that is open to verification by other researchers. Breakwell et al (1997) also points out that there is no convincing evidence that shows that audio recording constrains what respondents will say.

Recording was achieved through the use of an audio tape recorder. Using a recording device allowed me as the interviewer to focus on the interview as opposed to constantly having to write down interview notes. I was thus able to pick up certain details and nuances I may have otherwise missed. Respondents were asked for permission to record the interviews. Further they were informed of the nature of the research and its intended use. Certain respondents asked to speak of the record, which entailed the switching off of the audio recorder. Where respondents asked for certain information not to be used, care has been taken to follow their instruction.

2.6.2 Participant Observation

This is distinguished in the literature from casual and formal participation (Breakwell et al: 1997). As its name implies it involves the observer been part of the events being studied. This was the case at the Natal Technikon Job Creation workshop for seafarers held in Durban in July 2001. I was invited to participate in my capacity as a researcher. As (Wilkinson: 1997) argues the advantages of participant observation is that it enables access to private events which respondents would not allow an outsider to observe. This was particularly true in the case of the workshop, as only stakeholders in the maritime industry were invited. Had I been perceived as an outsider, I would not have been invited. The main critique of participant observation is that it makes it difficult or impossible for the researcher to be 'objective'. Further a tension exists between the dual roles of researcher and participant. Given that this was a one-day workshop and only instance of planned participant observation, I contend that the research design was not compromised in any way. The main research method of obtaining data, i.e. interviewing was complimented by the participation observation. Observation helped to add a further dimension to the validity of many of the interviews that were conducted before the workshop. The workshop and participating in it further provided me access to respondents that I was not aware of or had been difficult to reach. Detailed field notes were taken in addition to audio- recording some of the workshop sessions.

2.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews requires a thematic analysis. Due to the vast amount of data collected, a method was required that simplified and organised the data. This was imperative if I was to form a clear overview of the data that had been collected. I chose to organise the material by organising it thematically, keeping in account the aims of this study. With this in mind I wrote a summary of each interview conducted, attempting to identify the themes needed to help me address the central concerns of this dissertation. These summaries gave me a sense of the whole project as well as providing a context for the emergence of themes. Further it helped me identify

any contradictions amongst interviewee responses. Where contradictions occurred, second interviews were conducted to explicate confusing and contradictory statements.

2.8 Research problems

Two main problems are identified in the research design. The first is that interviews with ratings and officers were not conducted. This is due to the difficulty in contacting and interviewing seafarers that are at sea for weeks and even months. I do not believe that this has impacted significantly on the study itself, since the aims of the study concern themselves with the organisational aspects SATAWU's strategies in servicing South African seafarers. Secondly the case study method is most vulnerable to critiques regarding the credibility of generalizations made from its findings. Given that no previous study has being done on South African trade union strategies to service seafarers it is difficult to demonstrate the extent to which the case is similar to or different from others of its type.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research process and strategy followed in this dissertation. Further it has pointed out the method and techniques used to elicit and analyse data. Possible weaknesses of the research design are also mentioned. As an outcome of these processes, the results of the research are discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter Three

Shifting spaces and changing places

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to empirically investigate the factors leading to the restructuring of shipping capital since the 1970s. It then demonstrates how these factors have contributed to the processes of globalisation, by giving rise to the multinational crewing and FOC registering of ships. The impact of FOC crewing of ships on shipping capital and seafaring labour in addition to the creation of new shipping hubs is then examined. The respective ways in which the agency of labour and capital is articulated to create new hubs for shipping capital and new labour markets is examined and assessed.

There is a strong tradition of shipping being a global industry. Historically shipping companies provide us with examples of the worlds first globalised companies. The globalisation of the shipping industry can be traced back to the age of mercantilism and the logistical networks they created for the construction and maintenance of European empires (Barton: 1999, Grey: 2001). Grey (2001) contends that the globalised shipping companies of mercantile Europe, such as the Dutch and East India companies were even more economically consolidated and powerful than contemporary shipping and electronic multinational companies. The European dominance of the shipping capital continues today, though American shipping capital enjoys a sizeable share of the market (Brennan: 1999).

Empirically therefore the shipping industry provides us with a mature working example of how capital and labour have adapted and responded to the restructuring of capital over centuries. It further illustrates the argument that the current phase of capitalism is not a complete disjuncture from the previous metamorphoses of capitalism as Albrow (1996) and other postmodern theorists suggest. What is clear though, is that the most recent phase of capitalist restructuring (circa 1970) has profoundly impacted on the way shipping capital interacts with seafaring labour. Shipping capital continues to be

dominated by companies from the TMN, but the seafaring labour market is dominated by ratings from the South and eastern Europe.

3.2 The economic geography of FOC shipping and crewing.

According to article 5 of the 1958 Geneva Convention on the High Seas, it is necessary for vessels to be registered on either national or FOC shipping registers. By flagging a ship out to another country's flag, shipping companies circumvent the labour and maritime laws of the country where the ship is owned. The owners of most ships are based in the TMN. Due to high ship registration costs, regulatory labour laws and the high cost of seafaring labour in the TMN, ship owners register their ships offshore, mostly in smaller countries of the South. Ships registered in these countries then fly the flags of these offshore registry nations. These states are paid a registration fee. As such FOC registration provides a means for these countries to earn foreign income (Northrup & Rowan: 1983, Barton: 1999, Barret: 2001, Brennan:2001).

In most cases, the ship owners can register their vessels to another country, without physically leaving the country of ownership. For example, Liberia has FOC ship registration offices in the United States. Panama has an Internet site that ship owners can use to register their vessels (Barton: 1999, Barret: 2001) Hence, there is no link between the state where the ship is owned and the state where the ship is registered. The flag of the state under FOC shipping no longer serves as a symbol of nation state authority, but instead assumes what Barton (1999:144) refers to as geo-economic and geo-political significance. By taking advantage of the less regulated economies of the South, shipping companies have shifted the economic landscape of ship registration in order to reduce operating costs.

FOC registration allows for the following (see table 3.2.1 for a listing of the five major FOC registries).

1. The criteria for open registry are easily obtainable. This means that the standards of operating vessels are lower or non-existent. Further the country of registration allows ownership/control of its merchant vessels by non-citizens.

2. The country of registry is a small power that allows the manning of ships by non-nationals.
3. The country of registry has neither the power nor the administrative machinery to impose any government or international regulation, nor has the country any wish or the power to control the shipping companies themselves.
4. Taxation on shipping companies' profits is low or non-existent. The country of registry obtains a registry fee and an annual fee based on tonnage of vessels registered.

(Adapted from ILO Report 2001, Barret, 2001 & Barton, 1999)

Table 3.2.1 Nationality of effective ownership of the five major FOC registries by percentage (as of 31 December, 1997)¹

Country of effective ownership	Flag States				
	Liberia	Panama	Cyprus	Bahamas	Malta
Greece	12.4	11.1	72.6	19	56.3
Japan	7.1	40	0.6	1.7	0
United States	13.5	2.1	1	15.2	0.8
Hong Kong, China	7.8	13.1	0.1	1.4	0.4
Norway	8.2	1.3	0.4	21.5	11.7
United Kingdom	3.4	0.5	0.5	6.5	0.5
China	6.5	5.4	1	0	1.2
Republic of Korea	1.7	10.8	0	0	0.1
Sweden	7.9	0.2	2.3	4.4	0
Germany	6	1	7.8	0.1	1.2
Saudi Arabia	8.2	0.1	0	5.5	0
Taiwan, China	0.6	5	0.6	0	0
Singapore	1.2	1	0	1.6	0.3
Denmark	0.5	0.2	0	1.6	0
Russian Federation	2	0.1	4	0.6	1.5
Switzerland	0.9	1.7	0.2	0.5	4.6
Italy	0.6	0.2	0.6	2.9	5.2
Belgium	1.6	0.2	0.5	0.5	0
France	0.4	0.5	0	1.8	0
Spain	0.1	0.2	0.3	2.3	0
Croatia	0.7	0	0	0.1	2.5
Finland	0	0	0	5	0.3
Others	8.7	5.3	7.5	7.8	13.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

According to Koch-Baumgarten (2000) shipping was an intensely national affair until the 1970s. Merchant ships and their seafarers were viewed as extensions of their nation states. There was thus a firm link between the Flag State and the ships of its merchant fleet. From the 1970s, he argues this link begins to rapidly diminish. This however implies that prior to the 1970s, all ships and their crews were extensions of their nation

states. Such an attempt to neatly periodise the advent of FOC shipping inadvertently implies that the economic events of the 1970s provided a rapid almost overnight disjuncture in the way shipping capital operated. Whilst it is true that the pace and scale of FOC shipping accelerated post 1970, FOC shipping as a labour cost reducing mechanism existed prior to 1970 (Northrup & Rowan: 1983, Barton: 1999).

The practice of FOC shipping can be traced to the 1920s when US ship owners shifted the registration of their vessels to Panama and Honduras to reduce operating costs (Northrup & Rowan: 1983, Barton: 1999, ILO Report: 2001). Both Panama and Honduras maintained the monopoly on FOC registers till 1949. From 1949, after a series of negotiations with ship owners and oil companies from the United States, Liberia emerged as a new FOC registry. For the next 30 years the triumvirate of Panama, Liberia and Honduras (known in the shipping industry as the *PanLibHon* registries) would be the dominant FOC registers. Further whilst, labour historian, Rowan Cahill (1999) argues that, that shipping capital has always been driven to reduce labour and taxation costs. For example as far back as 1939 shipping capital sought to circumvent maritime trade unionism by registering under FOC. The extent of FOC shipping during this period was negligible when compared to present day use of offshore registries. For example in 1948 the Liberian ship registry only had two ships registered. By 1980, over half the worlds fleet were registered to Liberia (Barton: 1999, Cahill: 1999)

From 1980, spearheaded, by the economic crisis of the mid 1970s, shipping companies in an attempt to further reduce their labour and operating costs were spoilt for choice to register their ships offshore as more countries of the South began to compete with each by opening FOC registries in an attempt to attract European and American ships, and hence attract foreign income to their revenue. Soon Costa Rica, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Cyprus, Haiti, Oman, Somalia and Singapore were competing as new FOC registries (Cahill: 1999, Barton: 1999, Brennan, 2000).

The economic history of the shipping industry indicates that it is an inherently globalising one. Up until the 1970s the globalising nature of the shipping industry was steadily growing. Historically the industry is familiar with mergers, acquisitions, multinational

¹ Source: UNCTAD: *UNCTAD review of maritime transport 1998* (New York/Geneva: United Nations)

crewing and international capital finance. The advent of new technologies combined with the economic crisis of the 1970s accelerated its globalising tendencies. Hence FOC shipping and multinational crewing from the South grew exponentially from the 1970 *PanLibHon* registries to encompass more than 20 other registries. For example, according to the ITF (www.itf.org.uk), in 1950 5.5% of the global shipping fleet registered offshore under FOCs. By 1960, 21.6% had done so. By the late 1990s more than 50% of the global merchant navy fleet (equal to 80 000 vessels) had flagged out.

Table 3.2.1

Evolution of FOC fleet as a percentage of world fleet (tonnage)

YEAR	FOC FLEET	WORLD FLEET	% OF FOC FLEET TO WORLD FLEET
1989	182 533 014	410 480 693	44.5
1990	196 356 460	423 627 198	46.4
1991	210 261 430	436 026 858	48.2
1992	231 876 903	445 168 553	52.1
1993	243 668 349	457 914 808	53.2
1994	261 686 684	475 859 036	55.0
1995	280 026 076	490 662 091	57.1
1996	300 181 686	507 873 011	59.1
1997	321 279 935	522 197 193	61.5
1998	334 744 863	531 893 296	62.9
1999	347 822 402	543 609 561	64.0

Source: Adapted from ILO Report 2001:20

Contributing to the acceleration towards FOC shipping and the consequent increase in multinational crewing from the South and eastern Europe, was the manner in which finance capital precipitated the economic crisis for the shipping industry in the 1970s. These developments had a direct impact on the way shipping companies would be organised. Moreover it had an important effect on the sourcing and costing of labour as well as conditions aboard ships (Cahill: 1999, Brennan: 2000, Barret: 2001, www.itf.org.uk).

According to 29th Session of the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) held in Geneva, 2001 and Barton (1999), one of the reasons for the crisis in the shipping industry in the 1970s was irresponsible commercial bank lending. In the 1970's and the 1980's, banks were solely responsible for the funding of speculative

ship purchases which led to an over supply of ships, depressed freight rates and increased pressure on labour costs. During this period, ships were not financed by equity funds and as such banks had to bear sole responsibility for creating the structural problem of having too many ships on the market to allow for an acceptable profit. Banks could not sell ships of as scrap, since scrap prices were at an all time low. They were forced to keep their assets afloat and trade or sell them whenever the opportunity arose. This had the effect of compounding the situation since ships sold or auctioned at a fraction of their recent original costs were now re-entering the market at rates reflecting their new low value and thus exacerbated freight rates even further (Lorange: 2001, Pires: 2001, ILO Report: 2001).

Contemporary finance arrangements made by banks such as equity funds mean that the risk of ship ownership is diluted, but also that bank finance continues to be increasingly more available due to this low risk factor. The ILO (2001) report concludes, bank loans will continue to be the major source of funding for ship owners, due to the high level of capital required. In sum, the shipping industry from the early 1970s saw the increasing supraterritorial growth of finance and corporations. This meant increased competition amongst ship owners for market share. In order to survive ship owners had to be competitive by decreasing their main operating costs. Labour was thus the main target and FOC registries the transnational neo liberal answer facilitate the hiring of low cost multinational flexible labour

Another tendency that increased FOC shipping and the multinational crewing of merchant navy vessels, is the increased competition between shipping companies (Grey: 2001, Barton: 2001); as a result of mergers and acquisitions. Grey (2001, 209) contends that in the shipping industry size clearly matters where scale economies, fierce competition and market share drive shipping competitors to slash labour costs in an effort to stay in business and prevent being bought off. Over the last thirty years thousands of smaller shipping companies have been run out of business, due to their failure to cut operation costs (Barton: 1999, Grey: 2001)

Increasingly the privately owned limited company (PLC) is becoming extinct. Equity funded and listed companies are the norm when it comes to ownership of large fleets of

bigger and more sophisticated vessels. Throughout the twentieth century there has been a concerted move, by shipping capital in the traditional maritime nations, to concentrate ship ownership to a few global firms (ILO Report: 2001, Grey: 2001, Lorange: 2001). Now as shipping moves into the twenty-first century, it becomes clear that ship ownership will be concentrated in the hands of a few global corporations.

This is mainly a result of mergers, take-overs and acquisitions during the 1990's. At the beginning of the new millennium only six global carriers run containerised shipping, (Grey: 2001). This was the result of three major mergers that took place amongst containerised shipping carriers in the 1990s. The Wallenius – Wilhelmsen merger in car carriers; Hoegh-Unicool merger in reefers; and a Stolt-Nielsen purchase of Van Ommereen in the chemical transport sector. The Wallenius – Wilhelmsen merger created a fleet of 80 ships and a 35 percent market share and Stolt-Nielsen further consolidated its already dominant position (ILO Report: 2001). For example in 1997 alone the economic consolidation of three major players in the shipping industry took place. Pentow Marine merged with SmitWijis to form Smit Pentow Marine in 1997 (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: June 1997), the Neptune Orient Lines US\$825 million acquisition of American President Lines (APL) in 1997 (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: June 1997). In 1999 Danish shipping companies AP Moller/Maersk acquired South African shipping company, Safmarine for US\$240 million² (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: February 1999). These are just a few examples of the most recent mergers and acquisitions in the global shipping industry.

In keeping with the metamorphoses of capitalism, shipping companies are adopting integrationist and diversification strategies of their corporations. Through the "vertical and lateral" ownership of ports, terminals, warehousing, road transport, railways, freight forwarding and feederships, the shipping companies are consolidating their assets (Lorange: 2001, Pires: 2001, Grey: 2001, Van Der Linden: 2001). Whilst these strategies of consolidation are similar to those adopted by shipping companies in the nineteenth century, there are significant differences. Nineteenth century consolidations operated from the premise that shipping was its core function, and all other acquisitions were to be arranged around facilitating this function. Contemporary consolidations however are

² For more on the acquisition of Safmarine, see Lloyds List Africa Weekly: May 16 1997, November 13 1998, November 20 1998, January 29 1999 & 18 March 1999.

arranged around the formation of global corporations whose business is structured around global networks and transport flows, of which "ships are but one element" (ILO: 2001:6).

The implication of the above is that as shipping companies become more financially consolidated, they also become more diverse in their activities. Since their prime function is no longer just shipping, a distinguishing feature of contemporary shipping companies is the separation of the ownership and management functions of shipping companies.

3.3 The Rise of the ship-management company

The flexibility of organisations argues Castells (1996:16) is an outcome of the "new technological paradigm on social organisation". The ability of shipping capital to be flexible in terms of its management of ships, was key to the survival of the shipping industry in the 1980s. Flexibility of organisational structure occurs as a distinguishing characteristic of a new system of large-scale capital-labour relations. This new system was the development of the ship management company. It operates within a larger system of capital accumulation.

The crisis in shipping in the 1980's due to commercial banks oversupplying the industry, left many ship owners in the traditional maritime nations, looking for cost-cutting strategies (Interview: Snook: 2001, Barton: 1999). Generally three strategies were pursued. First of these was to simply abandon the shipping industry. Some companies left the shipping industry to focus on their more profitable subsidiaries that were proving to be more profitable. For example the British company Ocean Transport (also known as Blue Funnel) sold its shipping interests and restructured into a logistics company. The second common tactic was to flag their ships out to "open registers" which allowed them to make significant and immediate labour cost reductions. The third tactic was for ship owners to **manage** ships for other owners as a means of utilising spare management capacity (Barton: 1999, Brownrigg et al: 2001, Lorange: 2001, Sambracos: 2001, Interview: Snook). For example in 1983, P& O won a contract to manage four tankers owned by one of the Gulf States. This was in addition to the 15 ships it managed for various other companies.

Third party ship management prior to 1970 was practised in a limited way by the traditional maritime nations, but the scale was incidental (ILO Report: 2001, Interview Snook: 2001). The trend towards third party management resulted in a number of in house management buy outs or the creation of self-sufficient but wholly owned subsidiaries of technical and personnel management services. Many of these commercial activities were facilitated by the mergers and acquisitions that began to characterise the shipping industry, in the 1990's.

Again this had a direct impact on the way labour is sourced and valued. Ship owners were looking to cut their overheads, and these new ship management companies promised to do just that by cutting labour costs. By and large ship owners were unfamiliar with seafaring labour from the South (except India) and trusted the specialist knowledge of the ship management company to deal with this aspect of labour sourcing. In order to keep and renew their contracts ship management companies had to visibly reduce the cost of running these ships (Interview: Snook: 2001)

As ship management's companies have developed and expanded, they have become the worlds largest employers of seafarers. Such is the scale of their labour requirements and their "consequent need for efficient organisation" (ILO: 14:2001) that they have collectively become a powerful source of labour market stability. Ship management companies need reliable and predictable labour supply lines in order to function effectively. In order to assure the quality of seafarers provided, a number of ship management companies initiated their own training programmes for officers and ratings. By the 1990's ship managers had become located in the old² and new global hubs shipping: In Europe - Hamburg, Glasgow, the Isle of Man, Geneva, Piraeus and Cyprus; in the United States - in and around New York; in Asia -Hong Kong,, China, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. This is to ensure that they are geographically close to the new seafaring labour markets (Cahill: 1999).

The power of ship management companies is enormous and illustrates the global nature of the industry. For example the Belgian firm Univan, founded in Hong Kong has a fleet

² The traditional or 'old' maritime nations are considered to be France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany.

of more than 70 ships flagged to the Newly Independent States (NIS) Liberia, Panama, Cyprus, Hong Kong, China and the Bahamas. Of these ships 30% are owned in Norway, 25% in the United States, 12 % in Japan, 12% in India and 5% in the United Kingdom. Crews are mostly Indian (90%) with others from the Philippines and Myanmar (ILO Report: 2001). Another shipping company, Acomarit, employs a wider range of crew, from Russia, India, Poland and the Philippines.

It is firmly in the interest of the ship management company to maintain the status quo in the labour market. They have established deep and personalised networks in the labour supply countries, often reaching into the training institutions of those countries. As the ILO Report (2001:15) states "social capital of this kind is not easily accumulated", at the same time however the report suggests that an interest in maintaining the status quo of the labour market is no guarantee of its continuation.

"All it would take is one large ship management company to seek the short-term competitive advantage of opting on a large scale for a significantly cheaper source of labour to send competitors off in pursuit"

If this had to happen, the impact would be similar to the scramble by shipping capital towards FOC in the 1970's. According to (Barton: 1999, Paixao: 2001, Sambracos: 2001, Brownrigg et al: 2001) the geography of the ship management companies is now firmly established. Its main centres are in northern Europe including the Nordic countries, Greece, south-east Asia (China and Singapore), Japan and the United States, and its main customers are from the same regions. The total seagoing labour force of ship management companies was approximately 50 000 in 1994. Most of this labour was Filipino, Indian and Eastern European (Interview: Snook: 2001, ILO Report:2001, BIMCO Report:2001). One could argue that the move towards ship management companies is about the enhancing of organisational capacity by preserving economies of scale (Castells: 1996). In many ways, the ship-management company is capital's way of overcoming and adapting to the financial rigidities and complexities that the economic crisis provided.

3.4 Technology

Yet another factor influencing the restructuring of the shipping industry was the development of new technologies. The shipping industry from the late sixties onwards saw the increasing supraterritorial growth of finance and corporations. Parallel to this was the development of new technologies. The new technologies are developed within the economic ideology of supraterritorial capitalism and as such, aid and abet the process. In 1991, the Joint Maritime Commission recognised that the rise of new maritime technologies has had a significant effect in reducing employment at sea (ILO Report: 2001). Whilst there have been many important technological breakthroughs in the shipping industry such as increase in ship size and speed, perhaps the most significant breakthrough in the modern shipping industry was in the late 1950's. The development of containerisation remains the most important development in cargo unitization. Even though container systems require a high initial level of investment they more than make up for this in the turn around rate of cargo handling (Hemson, 2001, Interview: Snook:2001). Containerisation also provides a "seamless link with other modes of transport". This helps it fit into the horizontal and vertical integrationist nature of the new shipping company. Cellular guides do away with significant amounts of dock labour since lashing of cargo onto the vessel is only minimally, if at all required with containerisation. This also reduces the turnaround time of ships at ports and hence the number of hours or days of labour for dock-workers (Hemson: 2001). Turnaround times in single digit figures are now the norm for container services. Containerisation is one of the technological developments that Harvey (1996) argues facilitates the annihilation of space by time.

The development of the microchip in the 1970's saw computers introduced onto ships, to monitor and control engine room activity. This led to a reduction in the engine room staff. The introduction of satellite communications has also had major repercussions on ships' crew. Ship management is now able to communicate directly with shore management effectively reducing the notion of line management. Also the introduction of electronic distress communications has abolished the position of radio officer (ILO: 2001).

The effect of the new technologies on the labour market is not to be underestimated. According to Richard Snook (Interview: 2001) the crewing manager for Unicorn Shipping, the size of crews since the introduction of new technologies has drastically diminished.

"In the old days ships were running around with a crew of a hundred, now we are looking at a crew of twenty, twenty-three operating a 40 000 ton ship. That is quite feasible."

3.5 The Global labour market for seafarers

For centuries, labour from the traditional maritime nations (TMN) dominated the world of seafaring. These labour markets were firmly secured and fixed. That is until the accelerated scale and pace of globalisation began to revolutionise the way we perceive and conceive of space and time. As these traditional labour spaces declined in importance due to the necessarily growth orientated aspect of capitalism, new labour sourcing spaces were created in the South. Whilst new labour sourcing spaces were being created in the shipping industry, capital remained firmly entrenched in the hands of the traditional maritime nations. Whilst labour and capital occupied the same geographical space in the traditional maritime countries, the way they experienced that space from the 1970s onwards changed radically. Labour in the TMN was made vulnerable by this spatial reconfiguration, whilst capital was able to exploit supraterritoriality and consolidate its economic power by employing cheap labour from the South.

This is in keeping with one aspect of the Froebel et al (1984) new international division of labour thesis. That skilled labour is sourced from the North, whilst unskilled labour is sourced from the South. The sourcing of seafarers does provide a critique of the NIDL thesis as well. The NIDL argues for a working class fixed in space. Ratings however occupy shifting spaces. They represent a mobile flexible working class. This lack of organized labour in the South made seafarers even more attractive to shipping capital.

This is also indicative of the way power operates in the destruction of old spaces and the creation of new ones. Capital pits seafarers in the new labour spaces of the South against each other in order to accumulate more surplus. This often leads to what Doreen Massey (1996) refers to as 'power-geometry' of place. Harvey (1996) cautions us that if we are

to conceive of space possessing power, then we need to be specific about how we define space. He suggests that it is only possible to speak of the power-geometry of space if we understand place as a social process. We then have to investigate why “and by what means do social beings invest in places”? In addition, we need to question for what reason is that power then deployed and used across differentiated places (Harvey: 1996:21).

The answer with regard to shipping is that the articulation of differential power relations in these new spaces is imperative for the reproduction of capitalism. As such it is a process initiated by capital. Hence the low wage reservoirs of seafaring labour in the South aids this survival and reproduction of capitalism. Jameson (1984) and Harvey (1996) put forth such an argument. The problem however is that they give an overwhelming credence to the agency of capital and not enough credence to the way ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationality’ or gender may facilitate or hinder ones movement or position in these spaces and places. This Massey (1996) argues is to give far too much emphasis on economism. Further seafarers from the South are agents of the globalisation process as much as they may experience its consequences. As such they do initiate flows across spaces and are not simply waiting for capital to initiate these flows.

Filipino seafarers, for example, recognised the reconstruction of the TMN labour spaces and initiated the construction of a new labour space through the social process of offering cheaper waged labour than their Northern and Southern counterparts. They were not merely inserted by capital into this time-space compression process. As much as it is correct to say that seafarers’ mobility is controlled by capitals needs, it is also correct to say that this mobility is mediated by identity. It may also be initiated by labour itself.

Further the nationality, race and ethnicity of seafarers often determines how power operates on the floating place of the ship (Osler: 1998). My empirical work indicates that nationality, race and identity mediates ones status. Hence a preference for officers from the TMN exists even if equivalently qualified and cheaper officers are available from the South. Further, the predominance of ratings employed in the merchant navy are from the South and eastern Europe. Even here all ratings are not equal and are paid according to the perceived value of their nationality. For example, the lowest paid seafarers are from

Russia and other eastern European countries. Chinese, African, Indonesian and Filipino seafarers are paid more than their eastern European counterparts. Japanese seafarers on the other hand are the highest paid nationals (Osler: 1998). The nationality of ratings determines their "differential mobility" in the labour market (Massey: 1996)

Theorists like Samers (1998), Elson (1999), Tesfahuney (1998) and argue that most theorising of globalisation and labour markets is purely economic. Hence overwhelming credence is given to theorising international finance, production and trade and their effects on the labour market. The labour market in this instance is conceived of as neutral. Evidence of the labour market for seafarers clearly indicates that the labour market is highly subjective and that the labour market for seafarers is a bearer of identity (Elson:1999).

These theoretical arguments problematise the simplistic notion that the labour market is governed dichotomously by supply and demand factors. A complicated web of various economic and subjective factors governs the labour market. To analyse it based on economism only is to miss the point. As Massey (1996:60) writes:

"to argue for this greater complexity is not in anyway to be anti-materialist, it is simply not to reduce materialism to economism".

Empirical evidence for the above theoretical arguments is illustrated in the way the contemporary global labour market for seafarers operates. Collectively, the commercial lending crisis of the 1980's, the accelerated increase in FOC registration, the drive to cut labour costs due to increased competition and the development of ship management companies contributed to restructuring the labour market for seafarers, leading to the increased multinational crewing of ships. Whilst the multinational crewing in itself is not unique, it is the fact that crews overwhelmingly recruited from the South and eastern Europe, and are deliberately composed based on perceived national characteristics that is unique. The rise of crewing companies means that a whole industry is devoted to the 'mixing of crews' to attain objectives of cost and efficiency. The ILO Maritime Report (2001) states that the composition of multinational crews is the result of clear policy and not chances. Interviews conducted with crewing managers of shipping companies, the ITF, SATAWU and tertiary maritime training institutions, confirm that the nationality, race and ethnicity of seafarers determines where and how seafarers intersect the labour

market. (Interviews: Snook: 2001, Maclellan: 2001, Hagan: 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Zungu: 2001, Dlamini: 2001). Empirical work by Northrup & Rowan (1983), Brownrigg et al (2001), Ostreng (2001), Sambracos (2001) confirm these findings.

My fieldwork brought to light another aspect of the labour market for seafarers, namely the way occupational status intersects with nationality or 'race'. Therefore the majority of officers are recruited from the TMN but the majority of ratings are from the new global hubs of labour recruitment. This is indicative of several trends in the labour market. Firstly, there is a preference for officers from the traditional maritime countries. This is based on the perception that cheaper crews often mean the lowering of nautical training standards in the labour supply countries of the South and eastern Europe. If officers from the new seafaring labour markets, with similar quality training, are available, they are inevitably overlooked for officers from the traditional maritime countries. This points to the subjectivness of the labour market. It also raises issues of how power and identity form a complex geometry in the labour market. This theme will be explored in more detail in chapters three and four. If one looks at tables 3.5.1 and 3.5.2, it becomes clear as to how FOC vessels are predominately crewed by ratings from the South. These tables indicate the trend towards the multinational crewing of ships. The subjective nature of the labour market impacts on how crews of different nationalities are paid. A clear example of this (SIRC report on crewing: 1992-1993) is the crewing strategy used by one European ship owner with a large fleet of Panamanian flagged ships. The report reads:

"Seven of his companies ships employ Italian and Croatian officers, in that order of seniority. The petty officers and ratings are similarly employed in a consistent pattern of nationality and seniority except that this part of the crew had a triple-layered price structure. First and second were the 'Western' and 'eastern European' layers consisting of Italians and Croats. Third was the 'developing world' layer consisting of Samoan or Malagasy."

Table 3.5.1 Percentage contribution of selected nationalities to crews: 1992-93

Flag	*Nationality as percentage of total crews (ratings)										
	Ph	Ko	PRC	It	Ru	Cro	In	Pol	BI	Nor	Ger
Panama	17	16	12	10	8	7	0	4	5	0	0
Liberia	27	10	0	1	9	10	12	2	4	1	0
Bahamas	28	0	0	0	0	7	8	25	5	0	0
St Vincent and the Grenadines	26	0	0	0	0	44	0	0	7	0	0
Bermuda	25	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	33	0	0
Antigua and Barbuda	49	0	0	0	4	0	0	18	0	0	21
Cyprus	31	0	0	4	9	4	2	10	0	0	5
Malta	17	0	20	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0
Hong Kong, China	37	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	28	0	0

* Nationality Key: Ph: Filipino; Ko: Korean (Rep. of Korea); PRC: Chinese; It: Italian; Ru: Russian; Cro: Croatia; In: Indian; Pol: Polish; BI: British and Irish; Nor: Norwegian; Ger: German.

Source: ILO Report 2001:37

Table 3.5.2

Percentage contribution of selected nationalities to crews: 1998-99

Flag	*Nationality as percentage of total crews (ratings)										
	Ph	Ko	PRC	It	Ru	Cro	In	Pol	BI	Nor	Ger
Panama	46	5	12	0	1	<1	6	2	1	<1	<1
Liberia	32	<1	8	0	7	4	7	2	2	2	3
Bahamas	33	2	<1	<1	4	5	5	15	10	<1	<1
St Vincent and the Grenadines	42	0	0	<1	28	21	0	<1	2	0	<1
Bermudas	57	0	0	0	<1	3	20	1	17	0	0
Antigua and Barbuda	21	0	0	0	8	1	<1	30	<1	<1	11
Cyprus	19	0	0	0	17	4	<1	11	1	0	2
Malta	29	0	0	4	10	3	14	8	1	1	1
Hong Kong, China	15	0	55	0	0	0	28	0	2	0	0

*Nationality Key: Ph: Filipino; Ko: Korean (Rep. of Korea); PRC: Chinese; It: Italian; Ru: Russian; Cro: Croatia; In: Indian; Pol: Polish; BI: British and Irish; Nor: Norwegian; Ger: German.

3.6 The new labour geography of seafaring labour

Never before in the history of seafaring or international migrant labour has the ethnic and national composition of a labour force changed so much in such a short period of time. The ILO Report (2001:26) states "nothing of this sort had ever happened before [in the history of the labour market]". This change in the composition and location of the labour market was in full swing by the 1980's. By 1987 alone, the employment of Filipino ratings in European owned ships increased from 2 900 to 17 057 ratings. If we translate this figure into crews, the results are astonishing. It means that European owned ships with a majority Filipino crew leapt from 200 to 1 130 ships within a year. This preference for ratings of the South meant the displacement of ratings from the traditional maritime nations of Europe. For example P & O, one of the worlds largest merchant navy shipping companies announced in 1998 that all 300 of their British and New Zealand ratings serving on 19 of their ships would be replaced by low cost Filipino seafarers (Lloyds list: August 28 1998).

According to the BIMCO/ISF: 2000 Manpower Update there are currently 404 000 officers and 823 000 ratings in the global labour supply market. The updates estimates that during the 1998-99 period the total number of seafarers at sea aboard ships was 934 000.

Increasingly the number of seafarers from the traditional maritime countries are declining whilst the percentage of seafarers from eastern Europe, south east Asia and the Indian subcontinent are increasing. Seafarers from the OECD countries constitute some 27.5 percent of the global maritime workforce compared to 31.5 percent in 1995 (ibid.) Seafarers that work on FOC ships are estimated to be composed of 20% Filipino. The other nationalities on FOC ships are Russian, Chinese, Indian and Polish.

The first source of cheap labour was Asia in the 1970s and then eastern Europe in the 1990s. In the ILO Asian Maritime Report of 1965, Korean seafarers are not featured at all. Filipinos and Indonesians are reported as working on "small inter-island" ships. By

1988 though, there was an estimated 50 000 Korean seamen, half of them working aboard Japanese owned ships, flagged mainly in Panama. Six years later, in 1994, ship owners in the Republic of Korea were pressing their government to be allowed to employ Chinese seafarers that could be paid half the Korean wage (OECD: 1996, ILO: 2001,). By hiring crew from these regions, capital evaded the sophisticated labour regulatory regimes that developed in the traditional maritime nations.

The trend of re-crewing with cheaper and hence more flexible crew from the South and eastern Europe continued throughout the eighties. By flexible crew, I refer to the wage flexibility dimension of the labour market. Capital is attracted to ratings that price themselves well below union negotiated wages. In order to secure work, ratings engage 'in a race to the bottom', by reducing the wage level they require, to secure work. In order to take advantage of cheaper crews, ships had to register offshore on second registers. By 1986, for example 45% of German-owned ships were registered under FOCs. This trend was mainly spearheaded by the need to drive down operating costs. In 1987 Dutch tanker owners were saying that it cost US\$1 million a year more to crew a ship with nationals as opposed to cheaper labour. The Danish also acknowledge that it could reduce its crewing costs by half since employing cheaper labour. Japan also joined the bandwagon in 1988 when the Japanese Ship Owners Association, announced that the cost of crewing Japanese ships with 11 Japanese nationals a year was US\$ 1.5 million a year as opposed to US\$0.4 million a year for a south east Asian crew of 22, for the same period of time.

If one looks at the following statistic tables 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 on crewing of FOC ships, it becomes clear that the predominant crew nationalities to be found on ships show increases in the number of nationals of the Philippines and China. When one looks at the percentage of officers on board these ships another picture emerges. The statistics show a decrease in the percentage of non-nationals employed as officers on the flags listed except for the United States. Table 3.6.2 also indicates an increase in the number of seafarers employed on FOC ships.

Table 3.6.1 Crew nationalities (officers) aboard selected national flag fleets: 1992-3

Flag	%nationals	%others
Japan	71	29 (Ph)
Netherlands	57	18 (In) 10 (Pt)
France	91	8 (Pt)
United Kingdom	74	6 (In) 6 (Pt)
Italy	94	0
Greece	57	34 (Ph)
Denmark	87	6 (Pol)
United States	100	0

*Nationality key: Ph: Filipinos; In: Indians; Pol: Polish; Pt: Portuguese

Source: ILO Report: 2001: 38

Table 3.6.2 Crew nationalities (officers) aboard selected national flags 1998-9

Flag	% nationals	% others
Japan	31	47 (Ph) 12 (Mya) 9 (In)
Netherlands	49	23 (Ph) 8 (Indo)
France	43	18 (Ph) 18 (Cro) 14 (Rom)
United Kingdom	56	13 (Ru) 10 (Ph) 6 (Pol)
Italy	77	12 (In)
Greece	52	34 (Ph)
Denmark	43	22 (Ph) 17 (Pol)
United States	100	0

*Nationality Key: Ph: Filipino; Pol: Polish; Mya: Myanmar; In: Indian; Indo: Indonesian; Cro: Croatian; Rom: Romanian; Ru: Russian.

3.7 Conclusion

Clearly, capital had a significant role to play in the creation of new labour markets for seafarers. The uneven nature of this development however was as much labours doing as it was capitals. Ratings from the South and eastern Europe actively chose to market themselves at a lower rate than their Northern counterparts. Further, these ratings chose not to become unionised by either national unions or the ITF, the international trade secretariat for seafarers and main lobbyist against FOC shipping and crewing practices.

The lack of unionisation of ratings in these countries, combined with little or no labour protection legislation, has contributed to the spatial patterning of the labour market for ratings.

Given that there currently exists a surplus in the labour market for ratings (BIMCO/ISF Report: 2001), competition amongst ratings from the South and eastern Europe for work is high. Ratings are willing to work for cheaper wage rates in order to obtain work knowingly pitting themselves against other ratings in the global labour market. Seafaring labour from the South and eastern Europe takes an active role in shaping space even to the point of creating and supporting uneven development. This is in keeping with the arguments of Herod (1998), Wills (1998) and Johns (1998) who suggest that labour is proactive in producing uneven development by ensuring that capital is attracted to some regions instead of others. Wills (1998:115) contends that the "internationalism of capital has brought the threat of chauvinism, competition and self interest to the labour movement."

The unprecedented shift to hiring labour from the South and eastern Europe instead of the TMN, has resulted in a drop in the ratings labour pool in the North. The last few years have seen attempts by a number of unions, and states to ameliorate the effects of a decreasing labour pool of European ratings. For example in the United Kingdom, labour has lobbied for the British government to offer British ship owners' fiscal concessions if they hire British ratings (Brownrigg et al: 2001). Similar labour lobbies have occurred in Australia (Chinnery: 1997, Brennan: 2000.), Greece (Sambacos: 2001), Germany (Van Der Linden: 2001), France (Cahill: 1999, Spurrier: 1999) and the European Union (Paixao: 2001). Labour in these TMN (and Australia) are growing increasingly frustrated at the monopoly that ratings from the South have in the global labour market for seafarers. All are lobbying for the end of FOC shipping, as a means of attracting ships and jobs. So whilst a strong regional labour solidarity exists amongst labour in the global North, global labour solidarity amongst ratings remains fractured.

Workers struggle to keep capital in their communities because doing so increases or protects their standards of living. Ratings of the South and eastern Europe are not unwilling pawns, dependent on forces outside their control that disrupt their lives, destroy

their traditional livelihoods and create new cleavages in local economies and societies. By law Filipino ratings, for example, have to remit 80% of their wages, to their families. Jones (1998) investigation into migration demonstrates how remittances received from migrant labour improves the socio-economic conditions of families of migrant workers. Ratings from the South seeking employment at lower wages than their counterparts in the North are doing so to prevent themselves from becoming marginalised.

Is a global labour solidarity then possible as a means of labour articulating its agency in an increasingly uneven socio-economic world? Johns (1998), Wills (1998), Waterman (1998) and Herod (1998) argue that it is. They argue for a shift from imagined solidarities to transformatory solidarities, that take into account both space and class as an alternative praxis in strengthening the agency of labour on both a global and local scale. Transformatory global labour solidarity as an articulation of labour agency is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Geographies of Organising

4.1 Introduction

In theorising globalisation, labour's agency in influencing these processes is an oft-neglected factor. Globalisation is constructed as an exclusive project of transnational capital. Transnational corporations and capital are presented as all pervasive and powerful. The power of trade unions to meaningfully service a transnational flexible workforce is viewed as difficult or impossible. The purpose of this chapter is to assess these claims through a case study of the global strategies used by SATAWU in servicing South African seafarers. Seafarers, specifically ratings are the epitome of a transnational flexible working class. This combined with the transnational and literally mobile nature of global shipping capital (in the form of ships) makes such a case study appropriate to achieving the aims of the chapter and dissertation as a whole.

In order to do this, I engage in two arguments. Firstly I argue that SATAWU's engages in a global strategy of international labour solidarity to service South African ratings. This strategy involves SATAWU's affiliation to and relationship with its international trade secretariat (ITS), the ITF. The relationship is part of a historical continuation of international solidarity between the South African trade unions and international labour organisations. As such, any investigation into the effectiveness and nuances of the way labour solidarity is articulated between SATAWU and the ITF necessitates a brief review of the factors that inform the formation and articulation of international labour solidarity as an example of agency. To this end I argue that international labour solidarity as a form of agency, is informed by the dominant political and economic policies of specific eras, such as the cold war or globalisation. An analysis of international labour solidarity that takes into account these factors allows the complexities and contradictions of solidarity to come through in this case study. Explicating these contradictions and complexities then allows this chapter to critically address the aims of the

dissertation by assessing the nature, form and effectiveness of international solidarity (as agency) as articulated by the ITF and SATAWU.

4.2 The geo-politics of international labour relations during the cold war

A brief history of the way in which the politics of the cold war informed the policies and practices of international labour solidarity contextualises and contributes to my assessment of international labour solidarity as an effective contemporary tool of agency used by SATAWU. I argue that the contemporary practice of this form of agency should not be divorced from the history that informs it: This then allows for a more effective and informed assessment of international labour solidarity between the ITF and SATAWU in servicing their memberships.

Cold war politics demonstrates the tendency and agency of labour to organise internationally to protect and advance geographically discrete interests. Whilst this may create uneven economic geographies for workers, it demonstrates the power of labour to shape and be informed by larger political and economic struggles. Given that the development and maintenance of uneven economic geographies is a key criticism of the ITF's global solidarity campaign with SATAWU, the following discussion will help frame the arguments located later in this chapter.

Transnational labour relations are not a new phenomenon to the South African labour movement. South African unionism has always been tied to the wider global context (MacShane et al: 1984, Mather & von Holdt: 1991, Naidoo: 2000, SALB: April 1991, von Holdt: 1993, Hudson: 1991, Mather: 1991, SALB: April-May 1986, von Holdt & Zikilala: 1993, Flanagan: 1990, Southall: 1998.). Historically South Africa's international labour relations, was informed by the geo-politics of the Cold War. By describing the Cold War as a geo-political struggle, labour geographers refer to the way politics was constructed along geographical East-West blocs (Herod 1998a, 1998b, Waterman: 2000, MacShane: 1992). Post 1989, the processes of transnational neo-liberal globalisation has shifted the neatly defined and spatially fixed East-West geo-political blocs to geo-economics flows of spaces and networks. This shift in geographies has an impact on the way labour solidarities are shaped. The decline of the Soviet bloc has made possible new geographical spaces for financial and trade activities.

For the international trade union movement, this means a shift away from the East-West ideological battles that have informed it for most of the twentieth century towards the geo-economic concerns of transnational capital. For labour geographers the transition from geopolitics of the Cold war to the geo-economics of transnational neo-liberal globalisation¹ re-mapped the way international trade union relations are inscribed on the new global economic landscape.

International trade union politics has a rich history dating back into the middle of the nineteenth century with the founding of the International Working Men's Association in 1864 (Waterman: 2000, Herod 1998b, Southall: 1995, MacShane: 1992). According to Marx and Engels in Southall (1995:31) the emancipation of labour was neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists.

Prior to 1939 several international trade union organisations were established to develop closer ties with workers located in different countries. The formation of the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) can be traced to this period. The ITSs were organised in particular industries such as metalworking, mining, transport, agriculture etc. to which the various national trade union centers in different countries affiliated. In addition to the ITSs, there were a number of more broadly constituted organisations to which national trade unions affiliated. Chief amongst these was the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). Most countries of western Europe as belonged to IFTU, with limited participation by the North American unions. With the beginning of world war two the IFTU and the ITSs restricted or dissolved their functioning.

As soon as it became apparent that the Allied forces were to be the victors of world war two, representatives of the US, British and Soviet labour movements came together to establish a new international labour organisation to replace the IFTU. This new organisation was the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The Federation's goals were to unite trade unions of the world regardless of race or political ideology (Herod: 1998b, Waterman: 2000, Southall: 1995). This was not easily achieved, since the US-based Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) was unhappy belonging to an organisation that contained communist trade unions as members.

¹ See Chapter one for characteristics of transnational neo-liberal globalisation

The WFTU was the largest and most geographically extensive of any international labour movement. This was mainly due to the significant boost in membership from the Soviet Union (that had been absent in the IFTU). At the surface, the WFTU presented a coherent picture of international worker solidarity. Lurking beneath the surface were a range of internal differences, most being ideological in nature. A splintering along ideological lines began. The mainly Western unions of Britain and the US became increasingly uncomfortable with communist led unions of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Latin America and Asia. In addition several of the communist dominated ITSSs wanted to become part of the WFTU, but according to MacShane (1992) and Herod (1998b: 167) "...the Secretariats as a whole and the federation could not agree upon the means by which this was to be achieved". This created even further tension between communist and non-communist trade unions since non communist trade union officials in the Secretariats did not want to cede their power to the WFTU whose executive organs were dominated by Communists (MacShane: 1992).

As the intensity of the Cold war escalated, so did tensions between the Western and Communist trade union officials. Western and non-communist affiliates left the WFTU and formed a new international trade union organisation, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) (MacShane: 1992, Southall: 1995). For the next 40 years, the WFTU and ICFTU would dominate international trade union relations. Competing communist-capitalist ideologies of the cold war informed their relationship during this period. The WFTU had an extremely close relationship with the Soviet Union and was often used as a tool to carry out its foreign policy².

One of the first undertakings of the newly formed ICFTU was to increase the regional influence and representation of the organisation. Hence regional branches of ICFTU were established in Latin America in 1951, Asia in 1951 and Africa in 1960 (Southall: 1995). The African branch was soon dissolved however due to internal wrangling and accusations of the ICFTU being imperialist, and was replaced with a regional body unconnected to ICFTU.

² See Herod: 1998b and MacShane: 1992 for examples of this.

The WFTU chose to follow a different strategy. Instead of setting up regional bodies, the federation chose to focus on its preexisting regional bodies with communist leanings (Southall: 1995, Waterman: 2000, Herod: 1998b). The WFTU, in response to the ITSs created a number of Trade Union Internationals (TUIs). Unlike the formally separate relationship between the ICFTU and the ITSs, the WFTU incorporated the TUIs into their organisational structure.

The relationship between the ICFTU and the WFTU was adversarial, especially during the 1970s. There were occasions however when the two federations did work together albeit in an unofficial capacity (Waterman: 2000). They were sharply divided along cold war ideological lines and attempted to draw their affiliates into these ideological battles. These geopolitical rivalries as played out within the international trade union movement had a profound effect on workers lives in places, especially, of the developing world, such as Latin America, where actions by the AFL-CIO facilitated the arrival and dominance of American capital. These rivalries continued until the 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union. Post 1989 international labour relations theorists argued that a non-partisan labour internationalism is required if global labour solidarity is to be meaningfully achieved (MacShane: 1992, Waterman, 1998, Herod: 1998b, Wills: 1998ab, 2000) The end of cold war politics saw the international trade union movement dealing with a new set of challenges posed by the geo-economics of transnational neo-liberal globalisation. The ideological certainties of the cold war are being replaced by geo-economic uncertainties of globalisation. Whilst the ICFTU and the ITSs were criticized for practicing imperialist solidarity with trade unions of the developing world, they now are accused of being economically imperial in their practice of labour solidarity by securing employment for workers of the North at the expense of workers of the South. A key aim of this chapter is to assess whether such practices exist in the practices of international labour solidarity between SATAWU and the ITF.

4.3 Informing the context: International labour relations and South Africa: 1960-1990

This section demonstrates the complex manner, in which labour relations were articulated amongst the ICFTU and the WFTU in South Africa during the cold war. In so doing it demonstrates some of the contradictions and tensions in the practice of international labour solidarity as a form of agency. It also illustrates the fiercely independent nature of the independent Black trade unions in their relationships with international labour. I argue that an informed assessment of SATAWU's current practice of solidarity with the ITF must be made against this background.

The complexities of trade union cold war politics were played out in particular reference to the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). SACTU represented the third major Black trade union initiative and was formed in 1955³ (Lambert: 1995). SACTU consisted of some Council of Non European Trade Unions (CNETU) as well as some progressive unions devoted to the ideals of non-racialism. According to Maree (1985), Lambert (1985), Southall (1995) and Bezuidenhout (2000) SACTU from its very inception was interested in political unionism. Political unionism for SACTU meant that the struggle against apartheid needed to extend beyond shopfloor issues and into civil society. In order to further its aims of emancipation it allied itself to the Congress Alliance that included the African National congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured Peoples Congress and the (White) Congress of Democrats (Lambert: 1985, Maree, 1985). From 1960 however, SACTU experienced a diminution in its power, as the state became more active in its repression and the congress became embroiled in internal disputes.

Internationally, SACTU had been active in establishing relationships with trade unions in Africa, North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand (Southall, 1995). After the WFTU divided along cold war ideological lines, SACTU decided to affiliate itself to the communist dominated WFTU as opposed to the ICFTU (Southall: 1995, Maree: 1985). Its affiliation however was never regarded as official by the WFTU, and SACTU never paid any affiliation fees for reasons of "political security" (Southall: 1995). Further there is no record of SACTU ever receiving financial aid from the WFTU. SACTU realised it would not

³ The first two Black trade union initiatives were the establishment in 1919 of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) and the 1941 formation of the Council of Non European Trade Unions (CNETU)

receive much financial aid from the WFTU and its eastern bloc members, but as Luckhardt & Wall (1980) suggest, SACTU's affiliation with the WFTU was a historical continuation of CNETU's 1945 affiliation with the WFTU. Secondly SACTU leadership felt strongly that the ICFTU was more active in imposing its ideological views on third world trade unions. Southall (1995) takes Luckhardt & Walls (1980) analysis of SACTU's international relations strategy further by asserting that SACTU was more ideologically comfortable to affiliate with the WFTU than the ICFTU. According to von Holdt (2001), the WFTU was a better ideological choice for SACTU due to its historical commitment to non-racial trade unionism. The ICFTU on the other hand had maintained informal links with the conservative Trade Union Congress (TUC) of the United Kingdom that supported racially parallel trade unions. As von Holdt (2001) and Southall (1995:103) wryly suggest whatever the impact of the WFTU's campaign, it was far less substantial than the support given by ICFTU to the independent black trade unions from the 1970s.

The ICFTU perceived SACTU's alliance with the WFTU as confirmation of SACTU's communist ideological leanings. The ICFTU then made an ideologically strategic decision to come out formally in support of the South African Trade Union Council (SATUC), proclaiming SATUC to be the labour organisation best suited to furthering the interests of South African labour. This was a brave move considering that SATUC, predecessor to the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), was a conservative federation of multiracial trade unions (as opposed to non-racial trade union) that extended apartheid thinking into the realm of trade union activity. TUCSA advocated for racialised parallel unions with a purely economist focus as opposed to the political unionism of SACTU. Whilst the ICFTU acknowledged the conservative nature of SATUC by excluding the body from membership of the federation in 1954, it nevertheless maintained informal ties with SATUC. By 1959 however, following SACTU's affiliation with the WFTU, the ICFTU made a strategic decision to come out in support of SATUC knowing full well its politically diluted nature. The federation made it clear that its material assistance would be best directed at SATUC to help organise African trade unions.

The ICFTU knowing full well that material assistance of trade unions was vital to their success in South Africa, agreed to withdraw their endorsement of SATUC and support SACTU financially and politically if the latter agreed to two conditions. Firstly it had to suspend its ties with the Congress alliance; secondly SACTU had to separate the political from the economic in terms of its struggle against apartheid (Luckhardt & Wall: 1980). These strong-arm tactics worked to no avail. Instead it is suggested by Feit (1975) in Southall (1995:103) that ICFTU in their attempt to secure a "stoutly non-Communist centre" may have inspired the formation of an African rival to SACTU in the form of the Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa (FOFATUSA) in 1959⁴. FOFATUSA however soon faded from the union landscape through SACTU's campaign that denounced FOFATUSA relationship with the ICFTU as imperialist. SACTU then emerged as the only representative of South African Black labour in the international community. However as Southall (1995) asserts this was to be a pyrrhic victory.

Firstly SACTU had alienated itself from the ICFTU. The ICFTU was an essential link to western trade unions, and their support was an essential part of the larger international struggle against apartheid. Secondly SACTU had overestimated the unity and support it would receive from the non-aligned All African Trade Union Federation (AATUF). AATUF's support was more a triumph of rhetoric than substance. Thirdly the increased repression of the state, forced SACTU into exile. The period from 1964 to 1973 have been characterized as the lean years for trade union internationalism in South Africa. For the Apartheid state however, this represented the golden age of apartheid since the liberation movements had been suppressed internally, SACTU forced into exile and TUCSA, even though White dominated, its multiracial policy allowed it to pose as the most legitimate labour organisation to represent South African labour interests. The ICFTU had been weakened on a global scale by the withdrawal of its largest and most financially powerful affiliate the AFL-CIO. Further the ICFTU was increasingly being treated with hostility by the Pan African labour organisations that viewed the federation with deep suspicion. Moreover the ICTFU's anti-apartheid movement internationally was also proving to be more a triumph of rhetoric than substance.

⁴ FOFATUSA was comprised of five trade unions aligned to the Pan African Congress (PAC).

It was against this pessimistic background that the 1973 strikes occurred in Durban, reinvigorating the Black trade unions in South Africa⁵. The rise of the independent Black trade unions also had important ramifications for South Africa's international labour relations. For SACTU in exile, the emerging trade unions posed a dilemma. On the one hand they could not condemn the actions of the new trade unions and on the other hand SACTU's claim as the only legitimate representative of African labour was threatened by the activities of the new unions. SACTU officials asserted that it was impossible for there to ever be a democratic trade union movement in South Africa. It was convinced, that despite the dramatic growth in trade union membership in the new unions (for example by 1984 membership of the new unions stood at 500 000) that the only unionism possible under the Apartheid state was "sham unionism" (MacShane et al: 1984:119). It was in this vein that SACTU demanded of international labour organisations such as the ICFTU and British TUC that all funds for the independent Black unions be channeled through it.

The ICFTU saw in the emerging labour movement a chance to be perceived as more legitimate by aligning itself with it as opposed to the conservative TUCSA. Moreover the federation realised that strategically, in order to establish a meaningful presence in Africa, it made more sense to align itself with what appeared to be the a rapidly growing labour movement. Further the ICFTU bypassed dealing with SACTU since the emerging unions presented, for the federation an appealing non-political, read as non-communist rival to SACTU. The increasing influence of the social democratic trade unions of Scandinavia combined with the departure of the zealously anti-Communist AFL-CIO also provided the ICFTU with more leeway in supporting some of the emerging unions, communist leanings.

The ICFTU as early as 1973, instead opted to deal directly with the new unions by liaising and channeling material assistance through TUACC. TUACC insisted that material assistance be channeled via it, in order to prevent the new unions from becoming overly dependent on external international funding, thereby risking external ideological manipulation. Further TUACC serving

⁵ The Durban strikes of 1973, were the largest strikes since world war two. See Marce (1985) for more on the implications of these strikes.

as distributor of funding, fostered greater cooperation amongst the independent unions since it forced them to cooperate about how resources were allocated and used.

In 1974 it set up the Coordinating Committee for South Africa (COCOSA). The role of COCOSA was to organise international boycotts of South African goods, provide the emerging unions with legal and financial assistance and attempting to achieve recognition of the emerging unions by transnational companies. ICFTU provided the emerging unions with more than US \$ 6.6 million from 1976 to 1984 (Southall: 1995). This money funded the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). In November 1985, after a complex process of trying to unify the Black trade union movement, COSATU was formed. In 1986, unions that committed themselves to a "Black working class leadership" as opposed to COSATU's principle of non racialism, formed, NACTU. International funding and relations would be articulated with these two national federations, though COSATU was the more powerful of the two in terms of membership and affiliates.

Whilst the ICFTU initiated many contacts with the newly emergent unions, these unions articulated their own form of agency during the 1970s and 1980s, campaigning for international recognition and assistance. Maree (1985), Lambert (1985), and Southall (1995) concur that the emerging unions conducted extensive campaigns for international recognition. According to these theorists, the emerging unions obtained more substantial responses when they made direct contact with international unions, than when they worked through the international federations or secretariats or the British TUC. Maree (1985) attributes this to the unions inexperience in dealing with international labour organisations as well as a more inwardly focus of the unions to developing their own organisations.

Hence the unions deliberately bypassed the formal structures of international labour organisations, such as the ICFTU and the ITSs and communicated directly with individual unions and factory unions. At the same time however it was the ICFTU and the ITSs that were able to secure for the new unions essential material support that proved vital to their survival⁶.

⁶ See MacShane et al (1984) for examples of international solidarity strikes during the 1980s.

From their inception in the 1970s the independent trade unions made active decisions to follow a policy of non-alignment, hence sidestepping the Cold war ideological battle as well as protecting itself from the imperialist impulse of the ICFTU. The South African trade unions were fiercely independent and assertive in their dealings with the ICFTU. They did not allow the donor-recipient relations to denigrate into a patron-client relationship (Southall: 1995). The ICFTU often in its dealings with the independent unions operated in an imperial manner. For example they excluded the unions from being present when discussing the allocation of financial aid to the unions. Further the ICFTU planned to use the independent unions, particularly FOSATU (later COSATU) as a weapon against SACTU. However FOSATU refused to be drawn into the ICFTU's Cold War politics and hence avoided being manipulated against SACTU. Further COSATU refused to receive aid from the ICFTU directly but rather chose to receive aid from international unions directly, all of them affiliates of the ICFTU. Jay Naidoo, secretary general of COSATU, in a 1991 interview with Mather & van Holdt contends that international policy has never being a priority for COSATU, since the federation was more focused on building its national capacity. Naidoo further asserts that COSATU's policy of active non-alignment was a means of not becoming embroiled in the Cold war politics of the era and not an attempt to undermine the ICFTU.

The years from 1985 to 1990 were tumultuous for the trade unions in South Africa. The state of emergency in 1985 and its extension in 1986 saw thousands of trade union activists detained and trade unions activities repressed severely. That the union movement suffered is clear but it did not acquiesce to the repressive measures of the state. By 1989, the state had realised that a stalemate had been reached between itself and the movement for democracy in South Africa. The change in leadership from Botha to De Klerk and the subsequent unbanning of the ANC, SACTU, and PAC set in motion the movement towards a democratic South Africa. This period also signaled an end to the Cold war as the Soviet Union crumbled and the WFTU's membership and power fell dramatically. This also impacted on SACTU, since they no longer had a powerful international labour ally.

On the 15 of March 1991, COSATU appointed Mcebisi Msizi as its first international officer. Msizi's first goal was to increase COSATU's linkages with unions in Africa (Bezuidenhout: 2000). This indicated a shift from COSATU's historical practice of receiving support from and forming linkages with unions of the North. Towards the end of the 1990s both COSATU and NACTU formally affiliated with ICFTU. In 1998 FEDUSA followed suit. In terms of its active international campaigns however, COSATU has been more involved in the southern African region. This is part of what it terms its policy of 'new internationalism' (Bezuidenhout: 2001). This policy is targeted at labour unions becoming involved in broader campaigns for democratisation. In other words adopting a social movement unionism. For COSATU this entails a shift from focusing on its relations with the union federations of the North to focusing on relations with unions of the South (specifically Africa). COSATU is further attempting to make unions of the North, specifically ICFTU more sensitive to labours problems of the South. For example enlisting ICFTU's support in the protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organisation.

The post-cold war era has proved to be damaging for the WFTU. It continues to exist but in a greatly reduced manner and therefore no longer represents a powerful entity in international labour relations (Waterman: 2000). The ICFTU on the other hand continues to thrive, though not unproblematically. It remains an institution formally subordinate to its national affiliates, and to its richest and most powerful members. It remains several times removed from members it serves at the shopfloor level. However it is an organisation open to change. At its millennial conference held in, Durban South Africa in 2000, ICFTU general Secretary Bill Jordan said:

"In periods of revolutionary change, and we are in one now, we must be able to think and act outside the straight jacket of our traditions... The trade union movement, once again, needs new ideas for the needs of new workers, new occupations, new forms of work organisation and new employment relationships."
(SALB: 2000)

In its June 2001 COSATU produced a draft document on international labour solidarity titled "*A strategic perspective on the international trade union movement for the 21st century*" (www.cosatu.org.za). This document raises what COSATU sees as the ICFTU continuing to exercise its imperial powers on "less independent trade union movements of the developing

world". It further points out that the ICFTU and the ITS's should be more sensitive to issues of divergent economic geographies of the world. This is an issue that continues to be divisive in the international labour movement, and is one, which this chapter explores.

4.4 The International Trade Secretariats (ITSs)

In order to assess the agency of labour to counter international capital entails an investigation not only into the international federations, but also of the ITSs. The ITSs are vital role players in the international labour movement, since their support tends to be more functional and practical than that of the international federations of trade unions, such as the ICFTU or the WFTU. For Wills (1998b) the ITSs form the bedrock of labour internationalism today.

An ITS can be defined as a coordinating body of the national unions of workers employed in the same trade or sector in different countries (Douwes Dekker: 1980:35)

The ITSs were formed in 1890 and grew significantly by 1914. According to Wills (1998b) and Douwes Dekker (1980) the main functions of these secretariats were decided upon as early as 1929. They can be summarised as follows:

1. To spread information about trade conditions in different countries.
2. To keep members informed about strikes in their trade.
3. To make appeals for financial aid in case of large strikes.
4. To prevent workers of one country acting as strike breakers in another.
5. To promote trade unions in countries where labour is less organised.

The influence of the ITS is considerable. Today more than 200 million workers across the globe are represented by the ITSs (Wills: 1998). ITSs span the spectrum of different work related sectors such as metal, Transport, Chemical, Food and Clothing to name a few examples. In order to better coordinate its international action for worker solidarity, the ITSs, have in the past established, world councils, the International Metal Workers Federation (IMF) for example established a world council to deal with work related issues in the multinational motor companies of Ford and VW. Further the ITSs operate on various sub committees of the ICFTU and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Historically in South Africa, the ITSs have proved to be independent from the ICFTU in their policy. Thus when the ICFTU ended its relationship with TUCSA, and demanded that the ITSs do the same, compliance from the ITSs was not immediately forthcoming. Hence the ITSs such as the FIET, IMF, ITF, ITGLWF and IUF, continued their affiliation with TUCSA well into the 1970s, despite ICFTU disapproval. The ITSs argued that the involvement with TUCSA might in some way aid the functioning of the African trade unions. The reasons for their relative independence were according to Southall (1995) twofold. Firstly, the ICFTU 1951 constitution guaranteed the ITSs a significant amount of independence from the federation. Secondly the ITSs chose to adopt a low profile on COCOSA, with the exception of the IMF which provided generous financial assistance towards the independent Black unions. However increasing pressure from the ICFTU eventually forced the ITSs to redefine their affiliation with TUCSA and other racist unions. By 1975 however, the ITSs had established ties with the independent black unions and supported them in a number of campaigns such as the ITF's support of the Transport and General Workers union strike against South African Transport Services (SATS) in 1982 and the Putco bus strike of 1982. The International Textile and Garments and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF) as early as 1972 supported the emerging Black unions in their struggles for recognition.

Whilst ITSs may have been slower than the ICFTU in their support of the independent trade unions, they nonetheless provided much needed functional and material support to the independent black unionism. If the ITSs had been less swift in their affiliating with the new black unions, TUCSA would not have dissolved as quickly as it did (Webster: 1988).

4.5 The International Transport Workers Federation

Since this chapter uses the empirical example of the shipping industry to assess the nature and form of agency articulated by seafaring labour in countering the mobility of capital, it is

necessary to focus on the machinations of the ITF since it is the ITS to which a significant number of international seafaring unions including SATAWU are affiliated to.

The ITF was initially founded by representatives of the traditional maritime nations⁷, in London in 1896 after a series of transport worker protests and strikes that occurred from 1896-1920 (Waterman: 2000, www.itf.org.uk). The trade secretariat remained dominated by maritime unions till 1904 when railway unions began to join in droves. Since then railway workers and seafarers remain the largest industrial contingents of the ITF. During the interwar years it was formed an important part of the Social-Democratic union internationalism that was both independent of Moscow and opposed to the rise of fascism (Waterman: 2000, www.itf.org.uk). The ITF contributed significantly to anti-Nazi war efforts of the British and the US during World War Two and thus, according to Waterman (1980,2000) discovered the benefits of collaboration with liberal democratic states and their intelligence operations. Post war the ITF gained many new affiliates in North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America. By 1953 it was the second largest trade secretariat in the world, with a membership of five million members around the world, spread over forty countries. When the ITF met in 1946 and 1948 it was decided that it needed to be reorganized along regional lines to accommodate its new affiliates from the South. Subsequently sub-secretariats were set up in Havana, Cuba and Bombay (now Mumbai), India in 1949. The ITF was firmly on its way to increasing the role it played in the trade union affairs of the South as part of its ideological struggle against the spread of communism. Apart from the trade unions of China, most of the worlds maritime unions are members of the ITF. The number of ITF-affiliated maritime unions increased by 10% between 1994 and 1998, although their combined membership fell by 9%. This tends to suggest a reduction in the size of national maritime unions, a phenomenon that is most apparent in the traditional maritime nations. The ITF also employs 105 inspectors in 39 countries (ILO Report: 2001:51).

The ITF has a checkered history regarding its involvement with the CIA during the Cold war, particularly in the violent repression of Communist dock worker unions in France and Italy, as

⁷ Britain, Sweden, Germany, France and the United States of America were the only members present at the first meeting of the ITF. (Northrup & Rowan:1983)

well as in the even more violent repression of Communist and radical-nationalist unionism in Latin America and Africa (Waterman: 1980). In Africa, the ITF was in cahoots with the CIA, in its attempt to subvert Nigerian nationalist trade unions (Waterman: 1980). In South Africa, the ITF, was slow to end its relationship with TUCSA, but nonetheless offered support to a FOFATUSA railwaymen's union during the early 1960s. In TUCSA the ITF played a role in the coordinating body of the mainly White and Coloured bus, haulage and TUCSA's Trawler and Fisherman union (Southall: 1995). TAWU's general secretary challenged the ITF's involvement with TUCSA in 1977. This resulted in the ITF committing itself to working with and promoting the recognition of the independent Black unions. The emerging unions in 1977 became full affiliates of the ITF, even though the secretariat refused to completely abandon TUCSA. The independent union's tolerance of this was in large part due to the significant material assistance that the ITF gave the GWU and TGWU during this period.

Waterman (1980, 2000) cautions that the ITF's methods of servicing its third world maritime unions are based on paternalism, in which the ITF provides services for a third world labour force that has no direct or even indirect control over the secretariat. He refers to this relationship as one similar to state funded development cooperation. Waterman's (1980, 2000) contention about the ITF will be assessed with regard to its relationship with SATAWU.

In 2001, the ITF serves as a hub for receiving and passing information to and from its affiliated unions since the structure of the modern shipping industry makes it impossible for a single nationally based union to influence significantly their members employment situation, especially when working on foreign vessels (Barton: 1999, Barret: 2001) It further aims to negotiate wages and working conditions of crew employed by shipowners that operate vessels registered outside their country of ownership, in other words FOC vessels. As such the ITF has no jurisdiction of nationally flagged and owned vessels. It may intervene in the affairs of a national ship if it deems that " local practices undermine its global objectives" (www.itf.org.uk). In turn the ITF is a member of ICFTU, though not subordinate to it, and uses the networks and influence offered by ICFTU to involve itself in the ILO and IMO.

The ITF is also a unique trade secretariat when compared to the other ITS, in some important ways.

1. It directly represents employees, often without their consent.
2. It signs agreements with individual shipping companies. It has even signed an agreement with its counterpart in industry, the International Shipping Federation (ISF).
3. Due to the wide spatial dispersion of its affiliates it is able to wield enormous economic power through boycotts in order to meet its objectives.
4. As a result of point three, and more specifically its FOC campaign, the ITF has managed to accumulate immense financial reserves.

(Northrup & Rowan: 1995, Interview: Snook: 2001, www.itf.org.uk: June 2001)

Currently the ITF has 235 unions affiliated to it from 97 countries, with a total declared membership equaling 66% of the global maritime labour force. The ITF remains an organisation dominated by the traditional maritime nations. An analysis of its executive board indicates the marginalisation of countries of the South. Most of the board comprises of North American and western European members. Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East are represented in the minority (Northrup & Rowan: 1983, ILO Report: 2001, www.itf.org.uk: June 2001). This is ironic given that these regions are the chief labour supply countries of seafarers. On the other hand the majority of executive board members represent regions whose labour market has been undermined by the cheaper labour of the South. An analysis of the presidents of the ITF from 1896 to present again indicates a predominance of the traditional maritime nations, in particular Britain.

4.6 The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU)

At both COSATU's 1989 and 1997 national congresses, a strong recommendation was made by the federations leadership for greater unity amongst different national unions servicing similar or the same sectors. This is demonstrative of COSATU's large policy of achieving national labour

solidarity to increase the agency of unions to respond to capital's demands. It was against this background that the SATAWU merger took place in May 2000 after protracted negotiation (Cox: 1999)

"Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" It is with these words that June Dube opened the founding congress of a new giant transport union, SATAWU. Dube went on to say that instead of unions being hopelessly fragmented, that you may even find 15 different unions in one sector, often in intense rivalry with each other, all unions in a single sector or workplace should be joined into a single fighting organisation. (Jurgenson: 2000, Cox: 2000)

On May 18 2000 in Johannesburg, the new SATAWU was born, through a merger of the former SATAWU and the Transport General Workers Union (TGWU), both COSATU affiliates. What makes the merger even more interesting is that the former SATAWU, itself was a product of a December 1998 merger, called for by COSATU. In December 1998, the South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union⁸ (SARHWU) a, the Black Transnet Allied Trade Union (BLATU) and the Transnet Allied Trade Union (TATU) merged to form transport union giant SATAWU⁹. This was one of the few times in the history of the South African labour movement that mergers occurred between a COSATU (SARHWU) affiliate, a NACTU affiliate (BLATU) and an independent union (TATU). It marked the beginning of COSATU's campaign to consolidate South African unions, to consolidate bargaining power (Interviews, Zungu: 2001, Barret: 2001, www.costau.org.za). For COSATU and the South African Communist party in particular, the merger marks a historical continuation of the struggles of SARHWU, TATU and the TGWU (Nzimande: 2000) Further it marks the first time that all South African transport workers will be organised under one union. The new union has 102,916 members that work in the transport, cleaning and security industries. The ITF supported the merger and views it as part of the global struggle to achieve worker solidarity (www.itf.org.uk).

⁸ For more on the history of SARHWU see Kiloh & Sibeko (2000) *SARHWU: A fighting Union. An oral history of the South African railway and Harbour Workers Union*, Ravan Press, Randburg

⁹ For more on the politics between BLATU and SARHWU see *IR, Data and Union Profiles: Vol.9 No.6 pp. 7-10.*

A result of the two mergers sees 46 percent of SATAWU's membership comprised of Transnet workers. Transnet (formerly South African Transport Services) is the largest public sector transport parastatal. These workers are overwhelmingly employed in the various divisions and subsidiaries of Transnet such as Spoornet (railways) and the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) and provincial bus parastatals. Governments stated policy of privatization of parastatals including Transnet, means that SATAWU's greatest contemporary struggle is against the privatization of Transnet. At the founding congress of SATAWU (18-19 May 2001), the issue of privatization of Transnet dominated the agenda. An analysis of SATAWU press statements for 2001 (<http://gate.cosatu.org.za/pipermail/press/2001.html>) confirms this stance as do various speeches by the unions leadership (Howard & Barrett 2001). For SATAWU the jobs of thousands of transport workers employed by Transnet divisions such as Spoornet and ACSA and Portnet railway are under threat. A loss of thousands of jobs also means the loss of thousands of SATAWU members and a diminution of its bargaining power. SATAWU has therefore tailored its strategy over the last 6 years to focus specifically on servicing and organising its huge membership in the aviation, railway, and harbour sectors. Truckers also comprise a significant part of SATAWU's membership (Interview: Dlamini: 2001). To service thousands of its truckers, the union has initiated various plans of actions to address the needs of its trucking membership, such as its AIDS education campaign for road transport workers. Further it has a skills development programme for truckers that have been retrenched, to enable them to retrain for other kinds of jobs.

The overwhelming emphasis and mobilization of resources by SATAWU is aimed at servicing and organising its workers employed by Transnet. Further it has thousands of members amongst in the truckers, industrial cleaners and security guards. The transport union's national ratings membership of 50 pales in comparison to the thousands of SATAWU members in other sectors. I argue that that by the union focusing on the majority of its membership, the resources devoted to servicing ratings is proportionate to their membership. It is with this in mind that I examine the maritime section of SATAWU.

4.7 The Maritime Section of SATAWU

Historically, the organisation of South African maritime workers has focused on dock and harbour workers (see Hemson: 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, Harvey: 1995, Wellman: 1997, Stratton: 2000). In this respect the TGWU was particularly active in the establishment of a National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS) and the National Industrial Council for the Maritime Transport Industry (Forerunner to MATIBCO). With regard to servicing and organising seafarers however, the results are not as clear. Black seafarers (all ratings) were historically organised by TGWU and the Seamen's Maritime Union (SMU). The SMU has since deregistered and its members incorporated into the Transport and Allied Workers Union (TAWU), an affiliate of NACTU. Both the TGWU (now SATAWU) and TAWU are ITF affiliates (Interviews: Zungu: 2001, Ntombela: 2001, www.itf.org.uk). Officers in the merchant navy have remained un-unionised in South Africa, though this is not the case internationally (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 1997).

The vast majority of ratings historically as well as currently remain un-unionised. One of the reasons that unionisation of merchant navy ratings has proved difficult (Interview: Zungu: 2001) is that the overwhelming majority 4000 qualified South African ratings (4000) are unemployed. Of the 550 employed ratings, 50 work on nationally flagged South African vessels and members of SATAWU. The ITF inspectors based in Cape Town and Durban service the remaining 500 that work on FOC vessels. These inspectors work closely with SATAWU and are physically based in SATAWU offices. The high unemployment of ratings can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly technological changes in the way ships are built enable modern ships to be operated by fewer crew members (See Chapter Three). Secondly, the surplus of ratings, gives un-unionised a greater chance of being employed. Thirdly there exists no coordinated job creation programme for ratings in the South African maritime industry. (Interviews: Barret: 2001, Zungu: 2001).

SATAWU currently has two regional offices, one in Durban and the other in Cape Town aimed at servicing and organising merchant navy ratings. Based at each office is an ITF inspector. The role of the ITF inspector is to service South African ratings aboard FOC vessels. In addition he is to monitor the working conditions on board the ship and deal with any complaints received by seafarers regarding their working conditions and remuneration. The two ITF inspectors in South

Africa are both former SATAWU officials that now work for the ITF. They are both experienced labour organisers, and seafarers having worked as TGWU organisers in addition to having extensive seafaring experience (Interview: Zungu: 2001, Barret: 2001). Both inspectors are formally employed and paid by the ITF, but informally there is a large overlap in their SATAWU/ITF functions. The key player in SATAWU in servicing its seafaring membership, is Thulani Dlamini. He is based in the union's Johannesburg office and is active in representing the needs of seafarers in a number of labour market institutions. Hence he represents the union in SAMSA and TETA. As such he is able to service the unions membership through establishing social dialogue with these institutions. This represents a strategy of labour articulating its agency, which differs from traditional shopfloor employer-employer adversarial relations. This is a theme I explore in the following chapter.

According to the constitutions of the ITF and SATAWU there is supposed to be a strict division between the role and reach of the ITF inspectors and officials of its national affiliates (www.itf.org.uk, SATAWU Constitution: 1998, Interview: Zungu: 2001, Barton: 1999). However in practice this proves not to be the case for several reasons. Firstly the SA ITF inspectorate is charged with servicing South African seafarers on FOC vessels only. According to the Durban based ITF inspector there are approximately 500 South African ratings working on FOC vessels and 50 South African ratings working on SA flagged (national) vessels (Zungu: 2001). Hence, according to the constitutions of the secretariat and the union, a separate official would need to service the needs of South African seafarers working on nationally flagged vessels. Logistically this is difficult for the union (Interviews: Zungu: 1998, Barret: 2001) since it is perceived as a drain on the resources of the union to employ separate officials to service the needs of 50 members, that can be attended to by the local ITF inspectors. Moreover the maritime section of SATAWU has traditionally focused on its dock worker constituency, that are larger in number and require more financial and human resources to service (Radebe: 2000, Hemson: 2000, Interviews: Zungu: 2001, Ntombela: 2001). Given that significantly greater membership fees come in from dock workers than from SATAWU's 50 national ratings, it makes organizational sense to use the ITF inspector to service seafarers working on both FOC and nationally flagged vessels. Given that most ships owned by South African shipping companies are registered offshore (Interviews: Hagan: 2001, MacLennan: 2001, Snook: 2001, Zungu: 2001,

Financial Mail: Special Report: 6 June 1997) and that this will be a growing trend, the Durban ITF inspector contends that South African seafarers, on national and FOC vessels are best serviced by the ITF. In addition both South African ITF inspectors have a history of organising South African maritime workers, particularly seafarers, and are sensitive to the political, social and economic context in which they operate. In other words, the ITF inspectors are not foreign or alien to the needs of the membership they service and have to being imposed on SATAWU by the ITF (Personal Correspondence: Barret: 2001, Interview: Zungu: 2001, Barret: 2001, www.itf.org.uk). This is not to suggest that the relationship between the ITF (as embodied by its inspector) and SATAWU is unproblematic. According to Zungu (Interview: 2001) there have being several occasions when the ITF/SATAWU relationship has proved tense and difficult.

Of further note in the maritime industry is that until October 9 2000, no centralised bargaining system existed for the maritime section. Wage negotiations, for example took place on a company by company basis (Radebe: 2000, Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Snook: 2001). According to senior negotiator of SATAWU, Thulani Dlamini, the establishment of a Maritime Bargaining Council (MATIBCO) will allow SATAWU to be more effective in servicing its seafaring membership. By providing a central platform for employees and employers to negotiate wage levels and conditions of work, will allow SATAWU to use its human resources more strategically. Hence for example the geographical disparities in pay between Cape Town and Durban based seafarers on nationally flagged vessels can more easily addressed.

MATIBCO, however has not been used to date as a forum to address the concerns of seafarers (Interview: Zungu: 2001). For example the most recent wage negotiations that took place for seafarers (March/April 2001) occurred on a company by company basis (Interview: Snook: 2001, Dlamini: 2001, Zungu: 2001). According to Zungu (Interview: 2001), Dlamini (Interview: 2001) and Snook (Interview: 2001) the main reason for this is that MATIBCO can only be used to negotiate the wages and working conditions of seafarers working on nationally flagged vessels. Given that only 50 such seafarers are so employed, MATIBCO is viewed, as an unnecessarily bureaucratic way to negotiate wages for 50 seafarers. Wages and working conditions for South African seafarers working on FOC vessels (by far the majority of South African seafarers) have to be negotiated by the local ITF inspector according to ITF rates and

regulations. The most feasible way to do this is to negotiate on a company by company basis, since MATIBCO does not have any authority over FOC seafarers (Interviews: Zungu: 2001, Personal Correspondence: Barret: 2001, www.itf.org.uk). Further in an attempt to avoid creating a segmented labour market in terms of differing wage scales for South African ratings working on FOC vessels and those working on nationally flagged vessels, whereby FOC ratings are paid a higher ITF mandated wage rate than ratings working on nationally flagged vessels, Dlamini and Zungu negotiate a standard wage rate for both categories of workers (Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Zungu: 2001, Osler: June 1998). Hence, instead of entering into two round of negotiations for wage rates and working conditions, for both categories of workers, the SATAWU/ITF negotiating team of Dlamini and Zungu circumvent MATIBCO in negotiating wage rates for ratings.

There is also a perception amongst employers in the industry that MATIBCO, is targeted more at shore based maritime workers, including port and dock workers (Interviews: Snook: 2001, MacLennan: 2001, Hagan: 2001) This perception of MATIBCO was reflected in the Minister of Public Enterprises. Jeff Radebe's speech at the launch of MATIBCO. The speech focused exclusively on the use of MATIBCO's function for shore based maritime workers (Radebe: 2000). This reflects the relative invisibility of South African seafarers when compared to dock workers or other port workers, when discussing the maritime industry. This again highlights the unions focus on workers employed in other transport sectors as discussed in section 4.6.

SATAWU, in order to best service its national membership of 50 ratings as well as the 500 South African ratings employed on FOC vessels engages in a strategy of global solidarity with the ITF. Even though, officially, SATAWU has no jurisdiction over South African seafarers working on FOC vessels, it remains committed through its affiliation with the ITF, to ensuring that both national and FOC South African ratings enjoy the benefits of union representation. The next section deals specifically with the way SATAWU draws on the considerable resources of the ITF to service South African ratings. Its affiliation to the ITF frees the union to mobilise most of its national resources to address the needs of the majority of its membership whilst drawing on the considerable resources of the ITF to service South African ratings.

4.8 Articulating Agency: Solidarity?

The issue of FOC shipping, crews of convenience and the spatial reconfiguration of the labour supply countries has been dealt with in the previous chapter. It is against this background that this section critically examines the ITF's campaign against FOC shipping and the impact this has on SATAWU. International labour solidarity is essential for the successful operation of the FOC campaign due to the campaign's global reach. Further, I demonstrate how the FOC campaign, by drawing on international labour solidarity allows labour to articulate its agency on a global scale to counter the mobility of capital. In the case of the shipping industry this capital is literally mobile in the form of ships. It is argued that international labour solidarity can be an effective strategy for labour to express its agency. At the same time however, it is argued that aspects of the way labour solidarity is expressed by the ITF's FOC campaign are problematic and serve to dilute as oppose to consolidate the agency of labour in shaping the processes of globalisation. This then necessitates a more critical understanding of international labour solidarity as a strategy of labour to articulate its agency in a globalising world.

The international campaign against FOC shipping has been in operation over the past 50 years (Barret: 2001, www.itf.org.uk) The campaign represents one the most comprehensive and extensive attempts by organised labour to counter the spread of transnational neo-liberalism (Barton: 1999). As the worlds economy becomes re-regulated in favour of capital, FOC registries represent how highly developed a commercial strategy may become over time, to the extent that it transcends the constraints of the nation state, in order to exist as much as possible "territorially unbounded" (Barton: 1999:151). Prime motivation shipping capital to register ships offshore is the allowance it makes for the hiring of cheap flexible, unorganised labour of the South and eastern Europe. Further, given that nation states were not protesting or constraining the activities of shipping capital, and in some cases encouraging it (Barton: 1999, Spurrier: 1999, Chinnery: 1997, Lloyds List Africa Weekly, 23 May1997), it was up to organised labour to provide a response to it. Further, because FOC ships have "no real nationality" seafarers are jurisdictionally beyond the reach of national unions (Barret: 2001:26). This makes FOC seafarers one the most vulnerable occupational categories in workers in the world (World of Work: No.38: 2001, Barret: 2001, Osireng: 2001, Barton: 1999).

The ITF's campaign is two pronged in approach. Firstly it is a political campaign to end FOC shipping. Secondly it is an industrial and collective bargaining campaign to protect workers on board FOC ships (www.itf.org.uk, Barret: 2001, Brennan: 2000, Cahill: 1999). On the political front the campaign is waged to establish a tangible link between the flag a ship flies and the nationality and residency of its owners, managers and seafarers. It achieves this by making public the correlations between FOC ships and poor employment and safety records. It lobbies governments and international organisations such as the IMO (part of the ILO) to monitor and enforce international shipping treaties and conventions that set wage rates and working conditions for seafarers. Whilst the ITF has had limited success in eliminating FOC registries, it has, in conjunction with its national affiliates achieved several major concessions, that are indicative of the power that labour can wield in a globalising world. It has convinced many governments and shipping companies from going the FOC route. For example in western Europe and Australia there is a concerted effort by national maritime unions in conjunction with the ITF to work in partnership with their respective governments in bringing nationally owned fleets back to their shipping registers (Brownrigg et al: 2001, Sambucos et al: 2001, Van Der Linden et al: 2001, Paixao et al: 2001, Barret: 2001). Further it has resulted in national port authorities, monitoring FOC vessels more tightly than nationally flagged vessels.

In 1999 the ITF launched an international public relations campaign against FOC shipping. This campaign involved ITF officials visiting many of the ports of its affiliates, and FOC ports on board the ITF vessel, *Global Mariner* (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 26 February 1999, www.itf.org.uk). At each port of call the ITF met with stakeholders in the maritime industry, including national affiliates to discuss FOC issues. FOC workshops were held over a period of four days on board for members of the public as well as trade union officials. The *Global Mariner* visited Durban South Africa on the 15 October 1999. SATAWU (former TGWU general secretary, now SATAWU general secretary) said the following in his welcome speech to the ITF officials on board the *Global Mariner*:

"Global capital is moving at a very rapid pace. They've got technology, they've got the skills, and they've got the resources. We have to organise in the same way. Unless workers and their organisations unite, collectivise their resources, their strengths, their organisation, our struggle will not be as effective as it could be. This is a message for unions in Africa and the world over" (www.itf.org.uk)

This is indicative of SATAWU's recognition of the value of global labour solidarity as a means of labour articulating its agency. The ITF was not received warmly globally though. For example the *Global Mariner* was not allowed to berth at ports of states that are serve as FOC registries, such as Panama (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: February 26 1999).

The collective bargaining and industrial component of the FOC campaign is unique in that involves an annual meeting between the ITF and all its affiliates, where a minimum wage is set for seafarers. The wage that is agreed upon at this meeting is extended to all seafarers on FOC ships as well. Moreover this minimum wage is not negotiated with employees "but is a unilateral demand of the ITF based on an assessment of the profitability of the industry combined with cost of living conditions internationally" (Barret: 2001:27, World of Work: No.38: 2001).

Any FOC ship owner that does not comply with the agreement faces the threat of industrial action, by dock workers belonging to ITF affiliates. According to Barret (2001) in 1999 dock workers in 30 different countries took action against FOC ships. This is the most effective action against non-compliant FOC ships. By dock workers refusing to load or off load a ships millions of dollars are lost, to the shipowner. For examples of ITF initiated industrial action against non complaint FOC ship owners see Lloyds List Africa Weekly (16 May 1997, 27 August 1997, 26 September 1997, 24 April 1998, 1 May 1998, 21 August 1998, 27 November 1998).

At present there are 5600 FOC ships, representing one third of the worlds FOC fleet that are covered by the ITF collective agreement. The main feature of the collective agreement is the minimum wage. The most recent round of wage negotiations at the ITF saw the minimum wage set at US\$ 1, 250 (World of Work: No38: 2001). When the FOC ship owner signs the collective agreement with the ITF, s/he pays the ITF a penalty fee for flying a FOC. The fees collected by the ITF are channeled towards paying their 100 inspectors world wide.

When a FOC vessel docks in port, the ITF inspector boards the vessel and asks the captain to produce an ITF Blue Certificate as proof that the vessel meets standards imposed by the ITF. These include wages paid to crews. If no Blue Certificate is produced then the national unions of

the country it has docked in boycott the vessel. This boycott continues until an agreement is signed with the ITF. The levying of fines, joining fees and payments for the Blue Certificate generate income for the ITF (Interview: Zungu: 2001). The argument made by the ITF is that FOC ships are more prone to be substandard than nationally owned and flagged vessels. In South Africa, the two ITF inspectors, on average inspect about 100 vessels a year (Barret: 2001).

The ITF in conjunction with its national affiliates has been instrumental in securing back pay for thousands of seafarers. In 1998 for example the ITF secured R235 million in back pay for seafarers (Barret: 2001). It has also proved instrumental in securing compensation for families of victims of shipping disasters on FOC ships. For example in 1997 the merchant navy vessel the *Leros Strength* sank due to structural failure and inadequate maintenance. Initially victims families were paid compensation of \$US 40 000 per family. However 12 families wanted to pursue the matter further and take the shipping company to court. ITF lawyers provided the families with free legal counsel, and traced the real nationality and residency of ownership of the vessel, hence holding accountable the shipowner, for the disaster (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 19 February 1999, Interview: Zungu: 2001). The ITF also assists seafarers that have being abandoned by shipping companies, and have no means to return to their homes. This is part of the ITF's social and welfare programme provided to seafarers. According to the ITF (www.itf.org.uk) the interest from fees obtained from the FOC campaign is used to fund the ITF seafarers trust. This trust is targeted at servicing the social and welfare needs of seafarers the world over. A large percentage of these funds were used to establish the Seafarer International Research Centre at the University of Cardiff in Wales. The aim of this centre is to research the economic and social lives of seafarers (Barret: 2001, www.itf.org.uk).

4.9 Articulating Agency: Imperialism? The ITF and the global wage push.

There is no doubt that the ITF has articulated its agency and power as a labour organisation, in countering the power and mobility of capital. It continues to be an example of how labour can successfully organise on a global scale against capital. For Waterman (2000) the ITF is more than just a trade secretariat, it is akin to a social movement in its goals and actions. At the same

time however, the ITF, has come under increasing criticism for ignoring the geographical disparities in the economic conditions of its affiliates seafaring membership. In an attempt to organise and mobilise workers by invoking class as a homogenous identity, the secretariat overlooks the myriad of other factors that effect how seafarers negotiate the labour market. For example ethnicity, race, nationality, gender and geographical location all effect how workers experience the labour market. By not paying heed to the way class is complicated by these identities, creates a tension in how labour solidarities are expressed. If we accept that labour solidarity is a key strategy in labour expressing its agency, then in order for this form of agency to be successful, labour organisations need to be cognisant of the contradictions between workers' class interests (Johns: 1998). For labour geographers this raises an oft-neglected aspect in labour studies, that of space and its intersection with class (Herod: 1998, Wills: 1998, Johns: 1998). They argue that whilst the manner in which capital creates uneven spaces is well documented, the way labour creates uneven economic spaces is often overlooked. This is an issue currently facing the ITF.

Accusations by employers and some of the Asian trade unions, that the ITF's practice of international labour solidarity is imperialist are based on the way FOC shipping has altered the labour market for seafarers. The rise of FOC shipping left the traditional maritime nations, including North America and Australia, in crisis. FOC shipping had a direct impact on the economies of these nations due to the shift in the employment of ratings from the TMN to the regions of the South and eastern Europe. The national unions of traditional maritime nations, including North America, Australia, and Scandinavia, approached the ITF to intervene, when it became apparent, that national maritime unions were losing members, since members were losing jobs (Interview: Zungu: 2001, Sambracos et al: 2001, Brownrigg et al: 2001, Grey: 1999, Brennan: 2000, Northrup & Rowan: 1983). Many of these unions made the argument that the majority, up to three-quarters of ITF dues was paid by the unions of the North. Unions from the South pay reduced rates to the ITF. Arguments of loyalty were invoked to protect jobs. The unions of the North perceived then as they continue to do that the ITF is a labour organisation created to protect labour of the North from the cheaper labour of the South. For example in November 1998, tensions between the national unions of Japan, Singapore, India and Pakistan, threatened to disaffiliate from the ITF, due to the what they perceived as the dilution of the

representative power of Asia in favour of the TMN on the ITF executive board (Osler, 13 November 1998). This is the second instance in the ITS's history that national maritime unions of Asia have threatened to split from the secretariat over perceived biases in favour of seafaring labour from the North, the first instance occurring in 1972 (Northrup & Rowan: 1983).

As Richard Snook, crewing manager of Unicorn Shipping points out:

"You know this FOC campaign generates millions of pounds for them every single year. The ITF will tell you that FOCs attract substandard shipping that the controls are lax, that crews on those ships are abused because of poor controls. They say all those kinds of things. And yes there are examples of that kind of thing in FOCs. But by and large it isn't the case." (Interview: Snook: 2001)

South African shipping companies and SAMSA reiterates this view. They contend that the FOC campaign is a ploy of the ITF to continue generating an income for their campaign to service their European and North American affiliated unions (Interviews: Parkinson: 2001, Snook: 2001, Hagan: 2001, MacLennan: 2001, Zanders: 2001)

Omar Becu, a former ITF president was quoted as saying:

"The main reasons for the growing concern on the part of seafarers and dockers unions were that they saw in this growing fleet of merchant ships...a recognition that its continued development would ultimately threaten the very jobs of its members" (Northrup & Rowan: 1983: 49)

Further according to the ILO Report (2001), over 60 000 seafarers have lost their jobs in Britain alone over the past 22 years. These positions are now filled by seafarers from the South and eastern Europe.

This section raises the issue of how labour can through its own agency create and maintain uneven spaces. The geo-politics and imperialism of the cold war engaged international labour in an ideological battle. Workers in the South did not threaten the jobs of workers in the West during this period. The end of the cold war and the advent of the geo-economics of transnational neo-liberal globalisation, sees international labour engaging in a struggle to protect and create jobs and hence the hierarchy of place in a global world. The next section demonstrates in more detail how labour is involved in development of uneven spaces. This highlights a central purpose

of this dissertation, which is to demonstrate that labour is a proactive and significant actor in shaping the processes of globalisation.

4.10 Labour and the production of space

My fieldwork indicated that employers in the shipping industry were extremely critical of the ITF's policies and argued that the ITF was intent on protecting the jobs of western European seafarers. One employer said the ITF does not express any brotherhood with its affiliates in the South. Again, this concept of brotherhood works from a romanticized notion of the working class. Employers in this instance were indicating their frustration at having to pay what they consider first world ITF rates to seafarers from the developing world. Employers argue that the ITF is not sensitive to the differing economic geographies of the world. Employers in the shipping industry clearly have their own agenda for their anti ITF stance (which I will examine later in this chapter) but they none the less raise an important point.

Labour geographers concur with this point albeit for different reasons. They argue that capital in its transnational neo-liberal form, especially since the 1970s is responsible for the production of uneven economic spaces. The economic crisis of the 1970s and the development of new technologies made transnational neo-liberalism possible. Hence it was possible for capital to relocate to less developed areas, that promised cheaper labour, easier access to raw materials and potentially higher rates of profit. Hence the new international division of labour [NIDL] was coined (Frobel et al: 1980). The NIDL saw capital seesaw to underdeveloped regions. According to Smith (1990:149) and Johns (1998:254) this seesaw motion of capital lies at the centre of capitalist reproduction as capital uses space to ameliorate crisis of over production and falling rates of profit and to divide the working class. As patterns of uneven development create a hierarchy of places, in which some places are privileged with large amounts of capital investment, job security, and decent wages, while other places are not. This hierarchy of places in turn creates a hierarchy of labour, in which some groups of workers are more privileged than others. However due to the growth of transnational neo liberalism since the 1970s, there has occurred a weakening of traditional hierarchies of labour and places. Hence for example the spatial reconfiguration of the labour market for seafarers due to FOC shipping has undermined the monopoly that seafarers of the TMN in the labour market

The NIDL has also called for a more critical response from labour that invokes more than class in its attempt to mobilise workers. This is an issue that labour theorists and activists have been grappling with for the past twenty years (SALB: May 1980). According to the SALB (May 1980) new analyses of international labour solidarity are required if the labour movement is to move away from superficial and purely economist attempts at solidarity. The SALB suggests that labour organisations take into account the economic, social and political geographies of workers, when mobilising for solidarity. Johns (1998:254) takes this argument further when she argues that

“...as long as there are workers in less developed areas who are willing, of necessity, to work for lower wages, fewer benefits and with fewer rights, workers in the developing world will have difficulty organizing.”

The weakness of much of the theorising about the agency of capital in shaping uneven spaces, is that it ignores the ways in which the international labour movement has historically, especially during the cold war, and currently actively shapes and supports the uneven development of space. As demonstrated in sections 4.2 and 4.3, the solidarities expressed by international labour organisations were shaped by the geo-political concerns of the cold war. The international labour federations were important actors in fragmenting worker solidarity according to ideological lines. In the same vein the geo-economic concerns of the contemporary era inform and fragment the formation of worker solidarities. If capital finds the production of certain kinds of space and spatial relations conducive to its developments and growth, then labour too finds certain spatial arrangements conducive to its survival. As work by (Herod) (1995,1998ab, 2000) Johns: (1998) and Castree (2000) on international labour solidarity demonstrates, workers may struggle for global economic justice or for an uneven distribution of opportunity that works in their favour. Hence self-preservation often wins over ‘working class interests’.

Hence for example according to Richard Snook, crewing manager of Unicorn Shipping in Durban:

The UK had massive tonnage, probably the biggest fleet in the world at one stage. And then suddenly the whole face of shipping changed. It wasn't necessary the case where shipowners

managed their own ships, suddenly shipowners outsourced the management of their ships to ship management companies. It's become the way things are done. In order to get around red tape, bureaucracy, and that and for reasons of tax and various other commercial reasons they started registering their ships offshore. All over the place in so called FOC countries. And what happened suddenly was that British officers in particular were battling to find employment because third world countries started offering officers at far lower rates of pay and that's where the ITF FOC campaign has its roots. The ITF said well, if we can get an international system going which is going to ensure a minimum standard of pay across the board, the shipowner given a choice between a Filipino for US\$ 1250 a month or a British seafarer for the same salary is going to choose what? Obviously the British seafarer who has got a decent education, speaks English, has a western culture and all those sorts of things. That was their stated objective, to look after the interest of European seafarers. That is documented."

(Interview: Snook: 2001)

The ITF further adopted a policy through its Fair Practices Committee in 1968, which demanded that Asian seafarers serving on national ships (i.e. Non-FOC ships) belong to an ITF affiliated union in the country of the national flag. Further to this demand was that the crew then be paid rates that were negotiated by the national union, provided the wage is not less than the rate provided by the ILO recommendation. The ILO recommendation was merely a rubberstamped approval of the ITF suggestion (ILO Report: 2001, Northrup and Rowan: 1983). Union officials in India and the Philippines vehemently protested against this policy, especially when it came up for renewal in 1972. The unions of India and the Philippines argued that the wage rate negotiated by the European unions were unrealistic for seafarers from low wage areas and would endanger their opportunities for employment (ibid).

By the early seventies it became apparent that the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India were firmly on their way to being the new major maritime labour supply countries. The ITF demanded that all Asian labour sailing on FOC vessels be paid the ILO/ITF minimum rate for their particular rank. For example the minimum wage for able seaman in 1973 was £48 per month. The unions in consultation with their national governments of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines forbade domestic shipowners registered in their countries from offering more than £32 per month and according to Northrup and Rowan (1983:98) "even threatened to withhold crews from companies that offered employment at the ILO rates".

This was an unusual situation in that national unions (and governments) were asking for their workers to be paid less than other workers were. It was done to protect their members' jobs and

prevent shipowners from taking away their businesses by leaving their national registries to register elsewhere. The Indian government and unions in particular were concerned that by raising Indian seafarers wages on FOC ships, which were all European, might lead to pressure being exerted to raise wages of crew employed on Indian nationally flagged ships. If this were done it would make the Indian merchant navy uncompetitive in a fiercely competitive industry (ibid.)

Tensions between the Indian union and the ITF came to such a head over this issue that the ITF suspended the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) from the federation in 1978. NUSI at the time had 24 000 members and was the largest Indian affiliate of the ITF. Their suspension undermined the ITF's ability to represent seafarers of the developing world (ibid.) NUSI was reinstated to the ITF in 1980, after the ITF agreed in principle not to contribute to the loss of jobs of Indian seafarers and not to undermine national collective bargaining agreements.

Richard Snook, crewing manager of Unicorn Shipping in Durban, has the following to say about the South African shipping industries experiences with the ITF:

"I don't like to deal with those guys. They sit there in their marble tower in London and you try and explain to them the realities of life in this country and you may as well be talking to a man on the moon. I went there and I said, you guys sit here, you got no problems really with unemployment, you've got excellent social security benefits and all that, whereas back in my own country we've got 40% unemployment and here you guys sit here and dictate European rates of pay, which no shipowner is prepared to pay for an African seafarer. Their attitude is like it or lump it, that sort of thing."

Unicom Shipping is not alone in its anti-ITF stance. The ISF at a conference on crewing in London in September 1998 launched a scathing verbal attack on the ITF over its wage rate policy. Peter Cremers vice-president of the ISF appealed to the federation to embrace pragmatism. He pointed out that many third world seafarers earned three to six times the pay of equivalent shore based jobs in their home countries and that the ITF wage rate was completely out of context (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 18 September 1998).

The above discussion has highlighted the contradictory and often problematic nature of international labour solidarity as a strategy in servicing South African seafarers, specifically ratings. No clear-cut accusations of imperialism or of solidarity can be made against the ITF. What emerges from the discussion is that whatever the motivation(s) may be for the practice of international solidarity, the agency of labour to preserve privileged economic geographies or create new economic geographies, by countering or attracting capital exists. The next section examines an example of how this takes place.

4.11 The ITF, SATAWU, and the wage push for South African seafarers.

4.11.1 Employers strategies

Following an agreement between the ITF and SATAWU, the ITF negotiates wage rates for South African seafarers working on FOC vessels. SATAWU then mandates that the same rate be paid to South African seafarers working on nationally flagged vessels. However South Africa does not own a substantial fleet of merchant marine vessels and most of the vessels owned are flagged offshore. Of the one hundred South African merchant navy vessels, only five are flagged nationally. So the ITF effectively determines the wage rate of South African seafarers employed on 95% of these ships.

According to employers in the shipping industry, the ITF wage rate prices South African seafarers out of the global market, hence the preference of shipping companies to hire seafarers from elsewhere. Safmarine, prior to being sold to shipping giant, Maersk/AP Moller, employed a large percentage of South African seafarers, more than any other South African or global shipping company (Interview: Snook: 2001, Hagan 2001, Maclellann 2001, Parkinson 2001). According to Durban ITF inspector Sprite Zungu, AP Moller Maersk is now in the process of shedding South African crew in favour of Filipino, Russian, and Greek crew, because these crews are 30% to 50 % cheaper than South African ITF wage rated crews.

Richard Snook, crewing manager of Unicorn shipping and chief wage negotiator for the company contends that the wage structure decided by the ITF has an adverse effect on South African seafarers and that if the ITF agreed to a special wage rate for seafarers from South Africa, seafarers will benefit in two ways in two ways.

1. Firstly that by agreeing to a lower wage South African seafarers would be more competitive on a global scale,
2. Secondly that by paying a reduced wage, Unicorn would not have to retrench seafarers.

(Interview: Snook: 2001)

The current ITF minimum wage level for an able seaman (the lowest rank on deck) is US\$ 1250, which is the equivalent of R11 250 per month. There are currently talks underway in the ITF to increase this to US \$ 1 400 per month (Interview: Zungu, www.itf.org.uk). Snook (Interview: 2001) argues that South African shipping companies are prepared to pay able US\$ 800 a month which is approximately R7 200 a month. This according to Snook is well below the ITF minimum wage and is considered by Unicorn to be a living wage.

He further contends that that there are very few shore-based people in the maritime industry that earns salaries equivalent to the ITF minimum wage for able seaman (see Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 18 September 1998 and World Of Work: No. 38, 2001 for more on disparities between shore and sea based wage structures). Employers in the South African shipping industry as a whole made representation to the ITF in London in 2000, to agree to set a reduced ITF rate for African seafarers throughout the continent. As of October 2001, there has been no response from the ITF.

4.11.2 Retrenchments

The ITF wage rate also makes it easier for employers to retrench South African ratings. The current BIMKO labour market statistics indicate a surplus of ratings in the global labour market for seafarers. This implies that the negotiating position of South African ratings is severely hampered. As Snook asserts:

"If they had to chuck in the towel today, tomorrow we could go and get those guys who had been retrenched and they would be only too willing to work for only half the wage. So it doesn't put them in a strong negotiating position."

(Interview: Snook; 2001)

In 1998/1999 Unicorn was faced with an employment dilemma regarding their ratings. The company had to retrench 30 to 40 of its South African ratings. These men were fully STCW-95 compliant and had several years of experience as ratings. Faced with increased ITF minimum wage rates, Unicorn claims it could no longer afford to employ these ratings. Dlamini of SATAWU and Zungu of the ITF were approached and asked by Unicorn to make urgent representations to the ITF in London, asking for a reduced minimum wage for South African ratings.

Unicorn had its own agenda in pursuing this wage reduction agenda:

1. Firstly as a profit driven enterprise, its goal was to save on millions of rands to be paid in retrenchment costs. It would be more cost effective to keep the ratings employed at a reduced wage level.
2. It would be advantageous for Unicorn to retain the high levels of skills and experience embodied in the STCW-95 compliant South African ratings.

4.11.3 Labour Responds

According to Zungu (Interview: 2001), Dlamini (Interview: 2001) and Barret (2001) seafarers represent one of the most vulnerable groups of transnational workers. Given that the vast majority of seafarers are not unionised, these labour officials contend that without ITF intervention, shipping capital, would force seafaring labour in a race to the bottom, in terms of wages and working conditions. This would exacerbate the situation in an industry where working conditions are already so precarious. They point out that the shipping industry in South Africa and abroad is continually frustrated by the ITF in its efforts to operate substandard vessels with cheap crew. The actions of the ITF, such as regularly publishing a list of the 10 worst shipping companies (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 10 July 1988), campaigning for the unionisation of seafarers (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 21 August 1998), and solidarity campaigns with dock workers (Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 22 August 1997) have provided a collective global

response to shipping capital that requires labour theorists to reexamine their neglect of the agency of labour in an increasingly global world.

According to Dlamini and Zungu (Interviews: 2001), South African shipping companies, are attempting to shed their South African crews by organisationally restructuring their operations. Dlamini, chief negotiator of SATAWU argues that AP Moller/Maersk and Unicorn will not get away with casting off South African crew, because the ITF through SATAWU will not issue the shipping company with Blue Certificates. Dlamini contends that:

“They [Safmarine/AP Moller/Maersk] have been doing that for some while. But the good thing is that we are in control of that situation. They can't. For as long as they have South African's there they will have blue certificates from us and the ITF. They dropped South Africans, they will not get the certificates and they will be subject of action anywhere, in any court in the world, if the inspectorate is capable of doing that and they know they are at risk. Because places where they trade we can pull action Unicorn also tried to do that two, three years ago, we gave them the go ahead. We said go ahead and take these guys out and put your people there. We will see where it will all end. We will pull out the certificates. So they stopped. (317) But they've hit us now. They've hit us in a different format now, because what they've done now is that when claiming to be selling ships and people are being retrenched on the basis of that.”

(Interview: Dlamini: 2001)

SATAWU through the ITF can delay the shedding of South African ratings jobs at Safmarine (now part of the AP Moller/Maersk group) or other shipping companies that prefer to hire cheaper crews, but shipping companies inevitably find loopholes, and ways to circumvent union threats and actions. One strategy employed by shipping companies to cast off expensive South African labour is to 'sell' their ships off due to 'difficult economic conditions'. They then claim to the unions (ITF and SATAWU) that they need to retrench seafarers, since there are not enough ships to operate. Upon closer inspection of this policy, the 'selling' of ships is in fact the chartering of ships to charter companies. The ships are 'rented' from the parent company. All profits are paid to the parent company. However since they are not officially part of the parent company, they can employ any crew that they want. Inevitably it is cheaper non- South African, non-unionised crews that are employed. (Interview: Dlamini: 2001).

4.12 Solidarity, space, and class: A contradiction in practice?

The above exploration of the way labour through the strategy of international solidarity articulates its agency raises a number of issues. For labour geographers such as Johns (1998) key to understanding international labour solidarity as a form of agency, is to understand the relationship between class and space. Johns (1998:255) asserts that the primary aim of international labour solidarity is to "build a spatially conscious workers movement that is fighting for better working and living conditions worldwide". Such a definition she argues calls for a movement based on class interests. However as Waterman (2000) and Hyman (1999) point out working class interests are not the same the world over. Johns (1998:255) takes this point further, by arguing that class interest that may be universal such as employment, job security, a living wage and health benefits may conflict with material interests that workers recognise as a result of their unique location in the hierarchy of places that is the manifestation of uneven development. Hence workers may have certain class interest they share with each other across international borders yet at the same time have spatial interests that divide them, such as continued employment in a certain locale or a higher standard of living relative to workers in other places (Waterman: 2000, Hyman: 1999, Johns: 1998). It is this conflict between spatial interest and class interest that makes the articulation of global solidarity by labour so difficult.

For example, seafaring labour of the North enjoyed high incomes and standards of living. Since the 1970s, seafarer's wages in the developed world have declined by up to 65% (World of Work: No 38:2001 pp. 24-25). This combined with massive decline in the jobs available for labour in these places has seen efforts by their maritime unions to preserve their spatial material interests at the expense of class interests with workers in other places. Hence in order to regain the hierarchy of place and labour, many TMN seafaring unions use the ITF as a means of maintaining the old borders between development and underdevelopment. Hence there exists this contradiction. On the one hand there is this desire to assist workers in other places in their struggles against capital, on the other hand, there is the selfsame desire to protect the privilege that place affords some workers.

For Harvey (1982:441)

“...class struggle yields a terrain of compromise between capital and labour within a region, organised labour may rally in support of such alliances in order to protect jobs and privileges already won. Yet much of what passes for imperialism rest on the reality of the exploitation of the peoples in one region by those in another region. There is then a material basis for the perpetuation for the...regional and national rivalries within an evolving framework of uneven geographical development”.

Theoretically then the space-class conflict according to Johns (1998) requires us to conceptualise labour solidarity in two forms. Johns (1998) and Herod (1998a: 22) make the distinction between accommodatory solidarity and transformatory solidarity. They argue that the difference between the two is related to “the geographic objectives that the workers share”. Therefore workers that espouse accommodatory solidarity are usually those from the developed world, that occupy privileged economic spaces. They are interested in maintaining this privileged space and prevent job losses and capital flight from these spaces to less developed countries where pay and working conditions are much worse. If this happens then these spaces are destroyed and recreated with less privileged characteristics. Thus their goal is to improve the conditions for workers in the developing world, for example by asking for wages to be increased to a level equitable with workers from the developed world. The hope is to prevent the flight of capital across borders and the subsequent loss of jobs and job security.

In transformatory solidarity however class interests prevail. Campaigns based on transformatory solidarity challenge the social power of capital and aim to change the “basic relations of social relations of production and consumption” (Herod: 1998a: 22). Johns (1998) asserts that in practice, it is not always possible to distinguish between these two types of solidarity. Moreover the type of solidarity practiced will be dependent on current political and economic contexts. For example the accelerated pace of globalisation and its effect of speeding up the spatial reconfiguration of the world, is the contemporary context.

Johns (1998:257) and Herod (1998a) contend that as long as workers struggle is over the geographic distribution of a limited number of jobs across a terrain of uneven development, workers cannot win. As labour geographers point out there will always be workers in other places who in order to survive will work for lower wages and tolerate harsher conditions, hence

attracting capital to them and away from other places. This dissertation argues that in order for seafaring labour to more effectively articulate its agency, it needs to focus on the criteria for transformatory solidarity instead of accommodatory solidarity. This requires a privileging of class based interests over spatially based material interests. Soja (1989) argues that labour must fight capitals attempt to fragment its class identity along spatial, economic, social and political lines. He along with Johns (1998) contends that even if labour seeks to operate across national boundaries to achieve international labour solidarity, such solidarity can often serve to maintain or create the uneven development of spaces. This then both intentionally and unintentionally serves to aid capital in its production of uneven spaces.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that organised labour is a proactive agent in shaping the processes of globalisation, by using the strategy of international labour solidarity. In so doing it has helped in addressing the central concern of this dissertation which is to assess claims that portray labour as passive in shaping the processes of globalisation. International labour solidarity has been a strategy of the international labour movement ever since the founding of the First International in the nineteenth century. The way the agency of labour articulates this may be informed by the dominant political and economic policies of the era, such as the cold war or globalisation. The historical example of how international labour expressed its solidarity to the South African trade unions during the cold war demonstrates that solidarity as a strategy is effective but is also highly contradictory and problematic. As the world shifted from geo-politics of the cold war to the geo-economics of transnational-neo liberalism, organised labour has had to shift its strategy of solidarity. For the ITF, its practice of global solidarity campaigns against FOC shipping has assumed a social movement status, that has managed to match and in some cases outpace the mobility of capital, in protecting the rights of un-unionised workers. Its FOC campaign has further alerted the world to the consequences of a re-regulated¹⁰ world economy. Politically the ITF provides one of the best examples of labour articulating its agency through the strategy of global solidarity. At the same time ITF policy regarding the wage levels of developing world seafarers is highly problematic. It has opened itself up to criticism from the shipping industry, to

¹⁰ See Chapter One for why labour geographers prefer to speak of a re-regulated instead of a deregulated world.

being imperial by setting first world wages under third world economic conditions. This employers and maritime training experts argue drives shipowners to seek seafarers not regulated by the ITF minimum wage rate. The restructuring of shipping companies has further allowed capital to find innovative new ways to circumvent hiring unionised workers. This chapter concludes that the ITF needs to have a spatialised agenda, which takes into account the differing economic geographies of the world. In so doing so it recognises class as one factor that is complicated by the different economic geographies of the world.

Chapter Five

Jumping Scales?

5.1 Introduction

International labour solidarity is an important strategy for labour in attempting to influence the processes of globalisation. SATAWU through its affiliation to the ITF services the needs of its seafarers on a global scale. Equally important, and contributing to the global strategies of SATAWU to service its ratings membership, are local strategies. The nature and scope of the shipping industry is global, as is the labour market for ratings. SATAWU however has to deal with characteristics unique to South Africa in servicing its ratings membership at a local level. Hence the union at a local level addresses issues of employment equity, job creation and training unique to the historical political and socio-economic context of place. Since South African ratings operate in a global market, the effect of SATAWU's national initiatives to service its seafaring membership has consequences for where South African ratings are located in the global labour market. This chapter demonstrates the local strategies employed by SATAWU in servicing South African seafarers. The chief local strategy examined is that of SATAWU using social partnership as a means of articulating agency on a local level. This examination highlights the complex ways the global intersects with the local, and the tensions inherent in this intersection.

In theorising the interaction between the local and global, the local is often constructed as discrete from the global. Whilst some theorists have asserted that the 'local is the global is the local' (Scholte: 2000), in an attempt to understand the complex and myriad ways that the global and local interact, an epistemologically rigorous notion of scale is often missing from their work. It is in this regard that labour geographers (Jones: 1998, Judd: 1998, Cox: 1998, Smith: 1998, Herod: 1998, Mitchell: 1998, Jonas: 1998) have entered

the debate, with specific attention to scale, building on the work of political and economic geographers.

These theorists argue that when investigating the global-local paradox, it is not sufficient to merely 'jump' from the local to the global as if the local and global were discrete geographical objects. Instead as Cox (1998) and Jones (1998) argue, a sound epistemology of scale, involves conceptualising the local and global in a far more critical way. Instead of thinking about scale in as an area of locally or globally circumscribed space, it is more useful to think of scale as a: *"network or a strategy linking local struggles to regional, national or global events"*(Jones: 1998:26).

It is in promoting a more critical reading of scale that Cox (1998ab) argues for a closer analysis of the content of local politics as opposed to the form such politics assumes. This involves a shift from discussing scale in a dichotomous local –global manner. Hence he proposes that in discussing scale, a distinction be made instead between *spaces of dependence* and *spaces of engagement*. Spaces of dependence refer to areas that are localised and fixed by the unique socio-economic and historical conditions of place. Spaces of dependence may occur at a range of scales, but all involve an immobilisation in particular spaces of dependence, such as local economies, local labour markets and local government jurisdictions. Spaces of engagement on the other hand according to Cox (1998:2) and Jones (1998:25) refers to those sets of relations that extend into spaces of dependence, but also beyond them to construct networks of associations, associations and politics. In this sense then, jumping scales assumes a more complicated nature, as it involves strategies of shifting between spaces of engagement, which may be broader or narrower than spaces of dependence.

Local interests for example (even in the same geographic location) can differ significantly and even be contradictory. Hence as Smith (1998) points out the local cannot be reduced to a homogenous set of interests or a shared condition. To do so implies that the local is a unitary subject. This obfuscates the contradictory and competing power relations that make up the local. The relationship between spaces of

dependence and spaces of engagement therefore is sustained and informed by these contradictory tensions that cannot be reduced or resolved at discrete local or global levels.

This conceptualisation of scale also recognises the agency of people and organisations to be active in more than one sphere of space at the same time. For example labour geographers write about multi-locational organisations as opposed to multi or transnational organisations, to emphasise the way capital organises simultaneously across different scales (Jonas: 1998). For trade unions the issue of scale is equally important, in informing the way labour shapes the processes of globalisation. Historically, in South Africa, as the previous chapter has demonstrated, South African independent trade unions operated in spaces of dependence, as created by political and economic conditions unique to South Africa at the time. The local in South Africa, at the same time did not provide a unitary experience for all agents. The way one experienced the local was dependent on how one was categorised racially for example. The experience of the independent Black trade unions was vastly different from the experiences of the White unions affiliated to SATUC/TUCSA. It was by strategically participating in spaces of engagement, through the formations of networks of solidarity in the international labour movement and international anti-apartheid movements that the independent Black unions were able to express their agency at different scales.

5.2 Social partnership as local agency.

The processes of globalisation have presented trade unions with unique challenges. There have been calls for unions to reinvent themselves and offer alternatives to the traditional antagonistic relationship between labour and capital (Noyoo: 1999, Dlamini: 1999, Bezuidenhout: 2000, Waterman: 2000). One such alternative is the practice of social partnership. Social partnership as a 'new' practice in labour relations has its roots in western Europe (now the European Union) during the 1980s (Ozaki & Rueda-Catry: 2000, Velasco: 2000) and has been further consolidated since the 1990s, by the

Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties and the European Work Councils Directive of 1994 (Wills: 1998b) that make it mandatory for EU authorities to consult social partners such as trade unions, prior to drafting any legislation. The ILO in recognition of the importance of social partnership and alliances has declared 2000-2001 to be devoted to the strengthening of social partnerships in its members states (Velasco: 2000).

Despite the widespread use of social partnership by trade unions as a strategy to service their membership across the globe, there remains little clarity as to what such partnership entails (Velasco: 2000, Ozaki & Rueda-Catry: 2000, Greaves: 2000, Ermida, 2000). A number of terms have been deployed to describe social partnerships, such as corporatism neo-corporatism, social pacts, social consultation and social dialogue to name a few. Some practitioners and theorists of social partnership understand it to mean all forms of tripartite and bipartite negotiations and consultations on social issues that can take place at any scale, national, industry or company based, whilst others rule out company based partnerships in favour of regional or community based partnerships (Lapeyre: 2000).

Social partnership was traditionally defined by the ILO as tripartite institutions between government, capital and trade unions that consult in a regular way on labour, economic and social policy (Velasco: 2000). The goal motivating for social partnership is industrial peace. Social partnership with this goal in mind was defined in terms of institutional structures instead of rules and procedures (Gostner: 2000). Further underpinning the move to social partnership was the recognition that labour has a right to articulate its agency through labour market institutions. There also exists a more critical body of work that conceives of social partnership as part of a new managerial strategy to co-opt the workforce into the capitalist system of production as opposed to workers and unions challenging ownership of the means of production (Adler & Webster, 2000, Adler: 2000, Sitas: 1999, Maller: 1992) Hyman (2000) for example contends that a conservative interpretation of social partnership sees it as means for labour to react to employer's policies. Labour in this sense is not viewed as a proactive agent that can initiate change or policy formulation.

Appropriate to the South African experience of social partnership is Gostner & Edigheji's (2000:84) definition of social partnership. They define it as "processes and institutions which facilitate the participation of social partners in socio-economic policy processes." This definition allows for the entire spectrum of social partnerships that occur in South Africa be they tripartite, bipartite or even, quadripartite. Further social partnerships can be institutionalised or non-institutionalised and include formal regular consultation or informal consultation and negotiation. This definition of social partnership makes a firm move away from the classic golden triangle' of state-business-labour (corporatism) to include other agents in the process such as a range of civil society partners. This implies that social partnerships with labour moves away from traditional foci of labour markets and economics to a host of civil rights and civil society issues such as social exclusion.

5.3 The South African experience of social partnership

5.3.1 The socio-economic context

South Africa after Brazil, is the second most unequal society in the world (Gostner: 2000, Nicholson: 2001). Apartheid's legacy of racialised and gendered poverty and employment are still very much apparent. In 1995, a year after the first democratic elections saw the country reaping what many economists call the 'democracy dividend' as economic growth rose from less than 0 percent to in 1995 in the early 1990s to 3.5 percent in 1995 and 3 percent in 1996. The ensuing economic crisis in south – east Asia in 1997 had a ripple effect on the South African economy as the growth rate fell to less than 1 percent (Nedlac: 2000). As of 2000 and 2001, the economy has been marked by a sluggish growth rate.

Contributing to the economic woes of the country is the high unemployment rate. Since 1994, the formal sector has shed more than 500 000 jobs. This situation is exacerbated by the inability of the labour market to absorb tens of thousands of new entrants into the labour market. South Africa's unemployment rate (using the ILO's expanded definition of unemployment) stood at 36.2 percent of the economically active population in 2000.

The labour market is steeped in racialised and gendered inequalities. For example 48.8 percent of African men and 54 percent of African women are unemployed. The gauntlet has clearly been laid down for South Africa's social partners, especially labour, to confront these inequities and challenges.

5.4 A brief history of social partnership in South Africa.

The late 1980's in South Africa were characterised by some tentative moves towards informal dialogue between labour, capital and some political parties. By the early 1990s, a series of high profile 'stay always' and marches was coupled with informal social dialogue in response to the apartheid states unilateral attempt to impose economic policies on South Africans (Gostner: 2000, Gostner & Edigheji: 2000:85). These tactics resulted in the institutionalisation of tripartism in South Africa (Baskin: 1996). The institutionalisation of tripartite social partnership occurred through the creation of two bodies, the National Manpower Commission (NMC) which focused on labour market policy and was restructured to include representation from independent labour movement and the National Economic Forum (NEF) the purpose of which was to prevent the apartheid state from unilaterally restructuring the economy during the transition period (Adler & Webster: 1995, Baskin: 1996). Neither of these structures contributed substantially to policy or legislature formulation, though the NEF did facilitate South Africa's membership to GATT. According to Baskin (1996), Adler & Webster (1995) and Gostner (2000) these bodies merely served to curb the power of the apartheid state during the transitional period to democracy. In this sense then the aim of social partnership was to constrain the ability of an undemocratic state to impose its will on society (Gostner & Joffe: 2000, Adler: 2000, Adler & Webster: 2000).

The unique history of South Africa was to influence significantly the way social partnerships were to emerge post 1994 in South Africa. The South African government passed the Nedlac Act in September 1994, establishing the National Economic Development and Labour Council. The act increased the scope of social partnership beyond the triangle of labour capital and state to include civil society organisations.

Labour, in the form of COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA is a key social partner in Nedlac. One of the functions of Nedlac is to review all labour legislation relating to labour market policy before it is introduced to parliament. Of further relevance to labour is Nedlac's aim of promoting goals of economic growth and participation in economic decision making and social equity. Most of labours' work is done through the labour market chamber of Nedlac.

Soon after its launch in 1994, Nedlac's goal in terms of labour was to replace the repressive labour legislation of the apartheid state. As a social partner in Nedlac, COSATU was proactive in formulating an alternative labour market policy to address inequities in the labour market, specifically the racialised underdevelopment of skills and unemployment. After much debate and discussion, COSATU in conjunction with the other social partners of Nedlac concluded its successful negotiation of the Skills Development Bill, the Employment Equity Bill, and the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill in May 1998. These bills were the products of conflictual negotiation amongst social partners involved. COSATU often mobilised its membership in mass 'stay always' or protest marches, when negotiations reached deadlock, to pressure business social partners into accepting the bills. COSATU also appealed to former trade unionists in the African National Congress (ANC) government to present the bill to parliament (Adler & Webster: 2000).

The fact that all three pieces of legislation were soon passed by parliament points to the agency of labour in servicing its membership at a local scale. This is not to imply that COSATU did not have to compromise and accede to many of the demands of business to achieve its goals. The road to getting legalisation approved was often rocky and painful with the federation having to make many compromises. This further points to the agency of labour to shift between global and local scales, as the characteristics of place change. Apartheid South Africa saw independent trade unions articulate their agency at a global level through a global solidarity campaign. Post apartheid South Africa sees a more localised scale of agency being practised by trade unions. At the same time is the recognition by trade unions that the scales of local and global do not operate mutually

independently of each other, rather they intersect. This intersection of different scales can be demonstrated in the labour market for seafarers, more specifically ratings. The labour market for seafarers, specifically ratings is a global one. However, how and where ratings are located in that global labour market, is dependent on training, employment and equity policies that are shaped by unique local conditions of place. This brief history of social partnership in South Africa has demonstrated how labour has been instrumental in shaping local training, equity and employment policies in post apartheid South Africa. The next section demonstrates how SATAWU has used social partnership to service its ratings membership, hence demonstrating the way the local agency impacts and intersects with the global labour market for ratings.

5.5 South African seafarers and equity and training.

5.5.1 Training and development of South African seafarers: A fragmented affair.

The training, development and employment of seafarers in South Africa has been a highly political and racialised affair (Kujawa: 1996, Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Zungu: 2001, Snook: 2001, Hagan: 2001, Parkinson: 2001). If one looks at the South African labour market statistics for seafarers, the racial division between officers and ratings becomes clear. **Insert manpower graph.** The fragmented and multiplicated state of seafarer training in South Africa is directly attributable to apartheid-based education programmes. This meant that education and training for South African seafarers was uncoordinated and duplicated due to the existence of different racialised education authorities. The South African shipping industry was also largely unconcerned with the training and career pathing of African ratings. (Kujawa: 1996, Interview: Dlamini: 2001, Parkinson:2001).

The main training institution (for officer training) was set up in Cape Town in 1921 (Grutter: 1973). This was the General Botha College. Only White men benefited from this college since it legislatively excluded other 'race' groups. The college was handed

over to the Cape Technikon in 1990. Natal Technikon, in Durban is a more recent provider of officer training. It has until 1996, been 'a white male only' affair in terms of its student population (Interview: Parkinson: 2001).

In terms of ratings training, the Training Centre for Seamen (TCS) was established in 1963 for 'Coloured' men wanting to train as ratings. It is now part of the Wingfield Technical College (WTC). The Wingfield Technical College was established for the training of South African Navy cadets. Since 1993 it has shifted its focus to general engineering training. The ratings training programme offered by Wingfield is not accredited (Interview: Fourie: 2001, Personal correspondence: Morris: 2001) As such ratings that qualify there cannot compete in a global labour market. The only nationally, i.e. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and internationally i.e. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) accredited ratings training institution in South Africa is the Unicom Training Centre. Natal and Cape Technikons are also SAQA and IMO accredited providers of officer training only.

As far back as 1996, the government was aware of the training problems encountered in the maritime industry. The 1996 White Paper on national transport policy states

"The crisis of skills and basic education in the maritime labour market will be urgently addressed through a concerted programme of education and training to meet the growing demand of seafarers and to increase the skills base of existing employees of the industry." (White Paper on National Transport Policy, Department of Transport: 1996:40)

The skills development and employment equity acts are the tools government employed to deal with the training and development concerns in the shipping industry. These Acts have been met with some resistance by the shipping industry and as such have achieved little in terms of redress.

Dlamini (Interview: 2001) contends that South African shipping companies deliberately manipulated the racial segmentation of the labour market.

“Our people were trained to a level and then stopped. The employers were so cunning that they would rather give them employment than train them further. You see that. So they keep you there, you get stuck there. You don't even have the opportunity to study further because you are sailing at that low level. You see that.”

As such, employment equity poses a serious challenge to a conservative shipping industry. In May 2001 at the seventh national Maritime Conference, Minister of Transport, Dullah Omar laid down the gauntlet for the shipping industry. Indicative of the peripheral role equity and training plays in the shipping industry, was the lack of any paper presented on equity at the seventh national maritime conference. He challenged them about issues of equity and transformation, particularly in the shipping industry.

5.5.2 The Employment Equity Act (EEA)

The EEA is a result of the Labour Market Commission Report and intense lobbying by South African trade unions to address racialised and gendered inequities in the labour market. The Employment Equity Act was passed in 1998. As such it is a key achievement of social partnerships amongst various stakeholders in South African society. The purpose the EEA is to achieve equality in the workplace by requiring a designated employer¹:

1. “promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and
2. Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages experienced by designated groups (Africans, Indians, Coloureds, Women and the disabled), in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

(Employment Equity Act: 1998:12)

The Act (1998) also requires designated employers to remove barriers that discriminate against designated groups in the workplace. These may include the many visible and invisible aspects of organisational culture. Numerical goals (not quotas) are also called for in facilitating equality of opportunity. The issue of merit also strongly punctuates the EEA. The Act (1998) does not allow for unsuitably qualified people to be hired and /or *promoted*. The Act, further requires all designated employers to conduct an equity audit of their workplaces. On the basis of this audit they are required to submit an Employment Equity Plan to the Department of Labour, indicating the barriers to achieving employment equity and the measures to be implemented in order to overcome those barriers (Human: 1999, Thomas and Robertson: 1999)

The EEA provides for the establishment of the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) which produced an executive summary report on 23 August 2001 on the progress achieved by both the public and private sector in meeting the obligations of the act (www.labour.gov.za). Further the CEE has developed an Employment Equity Register. This register is a public database of employers who have reported to the Department of Labour (DOL) on employment equity. The executive summary report as well as the public register indicate that the labour market in South Africa is still racialised, but that significant inroads have being made in certain sectors (see www.labour.gov.za for detailed statistics).

According to the public register all four South African shipping companies that employ South African ratings have submitted employment equity plans for review by the DOL. The DOL has granted Smit-Pentow and Safmarine/AP Moller status 0 level, which means that they are fully compliant with the requirements of the EEA. Unicorn is currently at status 1 level which means they are not fully compliant with the EEA and need to resolves certain issues with the DOL. DeBeers Marine is not on the registry. This according to their crewing manager HR department is due to their impending relocation

¹ Designated employer means: (a) an employer who employs 50 or more employees. (b) an employer who employees fewer than 50 employees but has a total turnover that is equal to or above of a small business in terms of Schedule 4 to this Act.

to Namibia, and extensive employment of Namibian ratings instead of South Africans (Interview: Hagan: 2001). Even though South African shipping companies have submitted (except DeBeers Marine) skills and equity plans to the department of labour, it is the perception of SATAWU and the major South African maritime training institutions that the implementation of these plans is slow (Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Hagan:2001, MacLennan:2001, Parkinson:2001, Stohl:2001,Fourie:2001, Personal Correspondence, Morris:2001).

5.5.3 The Skills Development Act

Apartheid was successful in fragmenting the training and development of South African seafarers along racialised lines. The South African shipping industry has a history of not wanting to be burdened with training costs for ratings, or with equity programmes (Kujawa: 1996, Interviews: Zungu: 2001, Dlamini: 2001, Fable: 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Fourie: 2001, Stohl: 2001). Unicorn Shipping however did establish the Unicorn Training Centre (UTC) in 1978 to train African ratings for its company needs as well as for other South African companies. The training provided by the UTC was, and continues to be limited to the needs of the local industries needs. Kujawa's (1996) investigation into the training policy of shipping companies found that South African shipping companies, pre-1990 were reluctant to train both ratings and officers for the following reasons:

1. Training costs were at least 5% of seagoing payroll
2. There was a high attrition rate amongst cadets
3. The cost of training was carried by relatively few participants in the industry
4. The rise of FOC shipping saw the greater utilisation of foreign cheaper seafaring labour
5. The number of ships owned in the South African merchant marine declined sharply.

The training of ratings in particular has also been very limited since the 1980s, since most of those employed, rarely leave their jobs until it becomes mandatory to retire². The

² A significant percentage of South African ratings are between 50 and 60 years old, due to the low turnover in their occupations.

findings of this study confirm Kujawa's (1996) findings that shipping companies are reluctant to fund the training of ratings and even officers.

Pressure from labour came to bear on industry from 1990 when COSATU, using the forum of Nedlac began to motivate an overhaul of training policy in South Africa (Kujawa: 1996, Ray: 1998). This push by COSATU to transform the fragmented and racialised training structures of Apartheid South Africa culminated in the Skills Development Act (SDA) in October 1998 (People Dynamics: May: 1999). Prior to the SDA training was governed by the Manpower Training Act of 1981 and employment services were governed by the Career Guidance and Placement act of 1981. Both these Acts have been repealed with the introduction of the SDA (Vlok: 2000). The general aim of the SDA is to address many of the legacies of apartheid such as the racialised and gendered inequalities in the labour market by developing the skills of workers. For a detailed list of the aims of the SDA see Barry & Norton (2000). The SDA further creates "significant opportunities" for trade unions to influence the type and extent of training to be provided by employers to workers (Barry & Norton: 2000:6) through the creation of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Further the SDA of 1998 allowed for the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, whereby a levy is imposed on an organisations payroll. This levy is channelled to the Skills Development Fund. Once an organisation has submitted a workplace skills plan that demonstrates how its intends to address skill inequities in its workforce, then a portion of the levy taxed is returned to the organisation. COSATU in negotiating the SDA demanded that a four percent levy be imposed on companies payrolls (Ray: 1998) but the levy currently stands at one percent.

5.5.4 SETAs

In March 2000 the minister of labour established the 25 SETAs (Barry & Norton: 2000). Each SETA has jurisdiction over the training needs of a specific economic sector. For example some sectors that SETAs have training and education jurisdiction over are. transport, financial and accounting services, tourism and hospitality. The primary aims of the SETAs are to:

1. Develop sector skills plans
2. Implement the sector skills plans
3. Promote learnerships
4. Approve workplace skills plans
5. Monitor education and training in the sector
6. Allocate grants
7. Support the development of learning materials.

A SETA consists of representatives from organised labour, employer and other relevant stakeholders. Each SETA must consist of an equal number of members representing employers and employees. As such it is considered a platform in which social partnerships can be formed allowing labour a greater agency to service its membership. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on transport SETA, the maritime section of the transport education and training authority.

5.5.5 Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA)

Prior to the creation of the TETA, maritime training was governed by the maritime industry training board (MITB). Employers in the shipping industry dominated the MITB. It was only in 1990, through an amendment to the Manpower training act of 1981, that organised labour was allowed to have representation equal to that of employers on the MITB. Further the financing of the MITB was dependent on donations from shipping companies. There was no enforceable skill levy that employers had to contribute. Between 1991 and 1994 the MITB had accumulated R180 000 in funds only. When compared to all other industry boards existent at the time, the MITB had accumulated the least amount of money from employers for training purposes (National Training Strategy Task Team: 1994, Kujawa: 1996, Interview: Fable: 2001). This points to the relative lack of funding of training in the maritime training sector, that the establishment of the TETA in 2000 hopes to offset. For a detailed financial report of the current state of the TETA see www.teta26.co.za.

SATAWU is the most prominent and active trade union involved in the TETA, due to the range of different transport sectors its services. For example the TETA is comprised of the following chambers: Aerospace, Forward & Clearing, Freight Handling, Maritime, Rail, Road Freight, Road Passenger and Taxi (www.teta26.co.za/chambers/index.htm). In terms of seafarers, the union has used its influence in the TETA to service the needs of its ratings membership, even when faced with reluctant co-operation from employer representatives on the TETA (Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Fable: 2001).

According to SATAWU, the trend for shipping companies is to pay lip service to the equity and skills development plans. This opinion is shared by the trade union (Interview: Dlamini: 2001), TETA (Interview: Fable: 2001) and Parkinson (Interview: 2001). Captain Parkinson, head of maritime studies argues that shipping companies are simply don't want to be part of the workplace transformation process:

We met with the TETA recently and the distinct impression I got was the majority of [shipping] companies have just looked at the skills development levy as another tax. And they just simply pay the money in and forget about it. They are doing nothing whatsoever to even attempt skills or equity development or learnerships. Now, that's what I picked up. There is 30 million in our TETA. The ship owners are liars. You go and stand with shipping senior management at cocktail parties and they'll tell you 'we don't want to employ South Africans, and that's the bottom line.' ”

(Interview: Parkinson: 2001)

As the labour market demographics indicate, skills planning, career pathing and training are essential in the maritime labour market where the majority of officers are white. Thulani Dlamini claims that employers in the shipping industry had not developed employment equity plans (EEP) as required in terms of the 1998 EEA. Despite the fact that the Union now has more authority, given its statutory position on the TETA, attempts to work with employers in promoting the training of seafarers have a history of been frustrated:

“We got involved on our side as the union... the idea being to then ensure that the programme could be located within the Industrial Training Boards because those were the proper facilitators of those. But it broke down on the question of employers having to put their money where their mouth is in terms of funding the programme and getting the training accelerated and things like that.”

(Interview: Dlamini: 2001)

SATAWU has used the TETA as a social partner to service its ratings membership, in terms of training and equity in some important ways. Thulani Dlamini, senior SATAWU negotiator is especially proactive in using social partnerships to service South African seafarers. He has a key position as chair of the transformation committee of the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA). SAMSA is another labour market institution for seafarers (see section). Before I demonstrate how the union has done this, I highlight the key obstacles in the training, employment and equity of South African ratings as identified by this study. This contextualises SATAWU’s strategies with the unique characteristics of (local) place.

5.6 Lack of training berths as an impediment to achieving equity, employment, and skill development.

Key to the training and equity of South African ratings and officers is the issue of seetime or training berths. In order for a rating or an officer to qualify as such s/he needs to serve 12 months of compulsory seetime on a vessel appropriate for his/her qualification level. For ratings seetime can be less than 12 months, depending on the qualification required but a compulsory seetime period is required. Failure to achieve seetime means that a candidate that is fully qualified academically cannot qualify as an officer or rating unless their seetime is served. In South Africa the only appropriate vessels that can offer these training berths are owned by the four South African-based major shipping companies (see below). Since the 1970s there has been a reluctance for South African shipping companies to offer training berths to South African cadets and ratings. According to Captain Stohl of Cape Technikon’s maritime studies department and Captain Parkinson of Natal Technikon’s maritime studies department, as more Black students entered officer

training institutions post 1994. South African shipping companies have been even more reluctant to provide seetime to cadets. My fieldwork suggests the following reasons for this reluctance.

5.6.1 The perpetuation of racial, ethnic and national stereotypes

Black officers are not perceived as 'natural' seafarers. Coupled with this is the perception that the employment of Black seafarers means a lowering of 'standards'. (Interviews: Hagan: 2001, Maclennan: 2001, Fable: 2001). The shipping industry remains one of the most conservative in South Africa. Racial and ethnic stereotypes abound in the organisational cultures of shipping companies. Shipping companies base their recruitment and training policies on these racial and ethnic stereotypes. Examples of these perceptions and stereotypes were provided by several of the respondents. Three examples are provided below.

“ If we have a work ethic that is a positive one, that makes a good impression that you have people that are hardworking and willing to work hard they are going to knock out a lot of the competition. Without sort of picking on any nationality, you've mentioned the Philippines as an example. The Philippine rating is regarded as a very low problem type of rating. He doesn't get into fights. he doesn't drink too much. he doesn't get into trouble and miss the ship, but at the same time they have no or little initiative. They need to basically be handheld by the officers and pointed out exactly what is required for them to do their job. The work ethic there is, there's a saving, but they actually have to have their hands held. Our experience of Cape Coloured ratings – I can't speak for the Black guys or Zulus based in Durban – is that they have a good work ethic in that they work hard, they're motivated, they have initiative, they have a natural inclination to go to sea but they also play hard and if you don't manage them properly they can be problems for you in terms of people going of the rails in port and getting drunk and stabbing each other and stuff like that. So there's the work ethic ” (Interview: Maclennan: 2001)

“Even though the Zulu and Xhosa lived on the [KZN] coast they've never been fisherman or seafarers. They've actually never been in the sea. But Cape Town, there's actually no place where you can't see the sea. Because everybody there, Black, White, Coloured has either got an uncle or a father that was on the tugs, trawlers or with Safmarine. Parkinson (Interview: 2001)

“There is a distinct impression in the shipping industry that Black people are not suited to seafaring as officers”
(Interview: Chilalika: 2001)

The persistence of these racial and ethnic stereotypes in the maritime industry is supported by the dearth of Black officers in South African shipping companies. As such whilst employment equity and skills development plans for seafarers may exist in shipping companies, it is the contention of the TETA, SATAWU and maritime training institutions, that the meaningful implementation of these plans has not been forthcoming (Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Fable: 2001, Stohl: 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Fourie: 2001, see also Bonnin et al: 2001, Bonnin & Wood: 2001).

5.6.2 The cost factor

The highest cost to any shipowner is crewing costs (Interview: Snook: 2001, ILO Report: 2001, see chapter three). It is too expensive for companies to run training or experiential vessels. (Interview: Hagan: 2001). The Skills Development Fund is viewed by industry as inadequate to run experiential training vessels (Interviews: Hagan: 2001, Snook: 2001, McLennan: 2001). It is cheaper for companies to obtain qualified officers from elsewhere, such as eastern Europe, without encumbering training costs. Parkinson however (Interview: 2001) contends that this is not a valid argument as there is currently 30 million rand in the TETA for maritime training. Shipping companies in regulated and unionised labour market, reduce their fleets by chartering their ships out to subsidiaries. This enables the charter company to make crewing decisions that reduce labour costs.

5.6.3 The lack of ship ownership in South Africa.

Until the mid-1970s international and South African merchant shipping had been expanding. The oil crisis of 1974/5 impeded the boom in South African merchant shipping. As a result there was a 40% reduction in seafaring jobs. Most of jobs lost were in the officer category (Kujawa: 1993). The implementation of international sanctions against apartheid South Africa marginalised South African merchant shipping from global markets. Captain Zanders of SAMSA (Interview: 2001) reiterates the view that the

sanctions era was detrimental to the employment of South African seafarers and the shipping industry in general.

“In the 60’s and 70’s there were a large number of international operating companies, not South African companies, that employed South African crews. Then we saw the total onslaught of the anti-apartheid, sanction business. It became politically unacceptable to have South Africans on your ship. They used to run into trouble in ports, where there would be fanatical anti-South African measures in place. It became a problem for ship owners to employ South Africans. It was not that they couldn’t do the job. Remember the big names in shipping had South Africans on their ships.”

The anti-apartheid movement and economic sanctions provide a convenient scapegoat for South African shipping companies. In a sense it was an excuse not to employ relatively more expensive South African crew. South African shipping capital in the seventies soon joined the international shipping trend of flagging their vessels out. This had a devastating effect on the employment and training of South African ratings, since cheaper labour was available elsewhere and South African shipping companies did not have to invest in high training costs.

There are only four shipping companies in South Africa. Since the acquisition of Safmarine by AP/Moller/Maersk, only three are “authentic” South African shipping companies. There are 100 South African owned ships. Of these only 5 are flagged in South Africa. The remainder fly flags of convenience. Efforts are currently underway by SAMSA to make the registration of ships in South Africa easier, but this is proving to be an arduous process. If ships are not flagged in South Africa, the shipping company is under no obligation to employ South African crew. (Interview: Zanders: 2001).

- 1.1.Smit-Pentow is registered in Kingston and is not South African flagged. It is not suitable for training berths since ships are out at sea for less that 12 months at a time. (Interview: McLennan:2001)
- 1.2.DeBeers which is an exploratory shipping company. DeBeers is not suitable for 12-month sea-time since their periods at sea are much shorter than that. (Interview: Hagan:2001)

- 1.3 Safmarine, now owned AP Moller/Maersk group. AP Moller/Maersk is one of the largest shipping companies in the world. Safmarine is now employing Greeks to crew their ships at officer level. (Interview: Fable: 2001, Interview: Parkinson: 2001). There have been concerted attempts by Safmarine's new owners to recrew their ships with cheaper non- South African labour. SATAWU has thus far managed to stave the retrenchment of South African ratings on Safmarine ships. However since the company is no longer South African owned, it remains unclear as to how longer these jobs will remain secure.
- 1.4 Unicorn Shipping which according to Alan Parkinson, head of maritime studies at Natal Technikon and SATAWU and ITF representatives (Interviews: Snook:2001. Zungu 2001, Dlamini: 2001) has not been receptive to offering sea time to its Black learners. None of Unicorns ships fly the South African flag. Unicorn has also reduced its fleet from 16 ships to five ships.

5.6.4 Maritime Fiscal Policy

A country's maritime taxation policy is an important factor when ship owners decide where to register their vessels. It is strongly felt that if more South African ships were registered in South Africa, more South African nationals would be employed as ratings on South African ships (Financial Mail: Special Report: 1997, Lloyds List Africa weekly: 20 August 1997, Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 6 November 1998, Lloyds List Africa Weekly: 21 August 1998, Lloyds List: 12 March 1999). However South Africa's maritime fiscal policy has proved prohibitive to South African ship owners wanting to register their vessels in the country. Though there has been a concerted move away from the fiscally rigid 1951 Merchant Shipping Act to the fiscally flexible 1998 Ship Registration Act, ship owners feel that the change in legislation has not gone far enough to attract owners to the South African registry³ (Interviews: Hagan: 2001, Snook: 2001,

³ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into the intricacies of maritime fiscal policies and legislation. The reader is referred to Floor's (1993) Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a National Maritime Policy for the Republic of South Africa and Lloyds List Africa Weekly 12 March 1999

Maclennan: 2001, Zanders: 2001, Parkinson: 2001). Ship owners argue that the income tax paid by ship owners is prohibitive to registering ships in South Africa. Most ship owners, under FOC registries, get taxed a flat tonnage rate on the ship, regardless if they make a profit or not. In other words, tax is charged on the weight of the ship not on the profit it makes. Every year a rate is set per ton. For example if the rate is R1000 per ton and the ship weighs in at 5 tons, the tax for the year is R5000, regardless of the profit made by the activities of the ship. In South Africa, however, taxation is paid on tonnage and profits made by the ship. SAMSA views the issue of equity and job creation for seafarers as part of a wider initiative to encourage ship registration and owning in South Africa. SAMSA argues that equity cannot be divorced from larger economic and business issues in the maritime industry. As Captain Zanders (Interview:2001) contends

“Its not simply about building training institutions. It's an incredibly complicated matter. Your first market for South Africans will be on your own ships... this will serve as a selling advertisement for your own crew... the 5 South African flagged ships for example are crewed mainly by South Africans.”

At the July 2001 *Job creation for Seafarers*⁴ workshop in Durban, a resolution was passed that recognised South Africa's maritime fiscal policy as being prohibitive to job creation. As such an investigation into fiscal policy is been undertaken by SAMSA. This is a problem that the Union is concerned with as well SATAWU has gone on record as stating that there can only be a substantial reemployment of ratings if ships are flagged in South Africa. The union argues that South African shipping companies employ South African seafarers by “force not by their wish” (Dlamini: Interview: 2001). Dlamini further contends that an overhaul of the Merchant Shipping Act is needed.

5.6.5 Internal training as opposed to training “for the nation”.

An implicit and often explicit belief exists amongst owners and management of shipping companies that training and development ‘for the nation’ ‘is not their problem.’ Victor Restis C.E.O. of South African Marine Corporation contends that:

“... one of the reasons could have been that you expected the ship owners to take the initiative and bear the cost [of training]. Well they will not because they already have access to trained professionals. If the country is serious to utilise this opportunity [to train for the nation], somebody will have to take the initiative and see it through... since many countries make professionally qualified seafarers available at internationally competitive rates, international ship owners and operators do not see the development and training of such staff as their responsibility. Why take on responsibility for and associated cost for something in country A when it is supplied for free by country B?”

(Comments made to 7th Maritime Conference: Cape Town: Restis: 2001)

A recurring theme throughout this study is that of shipping companies training South Africans for their internal requirements only and reluctantly at that. This confirms Kujawa's (1996) findings of her extensive investigation into the training needs of the maritime industry. The union argues that due to this fact the shipping industry in South Africa cannot be the driving force for job creation and equity. At the same time the union acknowledges that it needs resources from shipping companies such as training berths and training expertise to ensure the success of any national programme.

It is through the formation of social partnerships with the TETA and SAMSA that SATAWU is servicing the needs of its South African ratings. The next section examines two ways in which SATAWU articulates its agency at a local level in order to serve a transnational membership. In this way the local strategies of SATAWU complement its global strategy of international labour solidarity in servicing South African seafarers.

5.7 Training simulators, seetime, and equity: The role of SATAWU

The union in conjunction with the TETA is exploring an initiative that will enhance existing training methodologies for cadets and ratings. In addition it aims to reduce the

⁴This workshop was not representative of the shipping industry as a whole. Unicorn was the only shipping company to send a representative. Other representatives in attendance were from SAMSA, Natal Technikon and Portnet. SATAWU was not present, but subsequently liaised with SAMSA regarding the workshop.

amount of training time cadets and ratings will require in order to achieve their qualifications as officers. Training simulators for the merchant marine are in common use in western Europe and the United States of America. The concept and methodology of merchant marine simulator training is similar to that of simulators used to train airline pilots. Whilst not an entirely new methodology to South Africa maritime training⁵, the simulators from Europe are far more sophisticated than those employed in South Africa. Further a simulation college will allow for mass simulation training and thus make access easier. In other words the simulators will not be located at the technikons only, but will be located independently of them.

The technology simulates the deck of a ship in a variety of conditions (Interviews: Dlamini: 2001, Fable: 2001, Hagan: 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Snook: 2001). There are three simulation college initiatives underway in South Africa at the moment. All have been a product of negotiations and consultations of the TETA and the union with global shipping companies. The union asserts that global shipping companies are better placed to drive this programme since they are the ones with "real power" (Interview: Dlamini: 2001). If one examines the national shipping industry, it becomes clear that Unicorn Shipping is the only "truly South African shipping company" (Interview: Snook: 2001). Smit-Pentow is part of a wider global conglomerate, Safmarine is now part of AP Moller/Maersk, and DeBeers is slowly but surely moving its resources and activities to Namibia. Unicorn according to Snook (Interview: 2001) has greatly reduced its fleet, so the number of training berths it could offer would be minimal. Further Unicorn contends that its ship are full to capacity with its own trainees, as such training berths for new trainees are difficult for Unicorn to provide. It is no surprise therefore that the union is appealing to global companies to aid their training initiative. As part of the negotiation with global shipping companies, is the request to them, by the union and the TETA, to provide training berths to South African cadets. As such the union is adopting a two pronged approach in their dealings with global shipping companies. Firstly to secure simulator training and secondly, to secure training berths for cadets.

⁵ Cape Technikon and Natal Technikon use simulator training as part of its overall training programmes.

The first initiative is Danish DNI and Atlas Shipping are sponsoring it. The second one is a Dutch initiative and the third and most promising is the AP Moller/Maersk initiative. It is viewed as the most viable of the three due to the shipping companies link to and acquisition of Safmarine. This view was reiterated by many of the stakeholders at the *Seafarers job creation workshop* in Durban.

The union and TETA intend to use simulator training combined with new teaching methodologies to fast track its cadets to Class One officer level. Ordinarily in South Africa it takes seven years to reach this level of officer. In countries like India, that uses sophisticated simulator technology and different classroom teaching methodologies, it takes four years to achieve the same qualification. This is done with the sanction of the IMO and ILO and as such is fully accredited (Interview: Dlamini.2001). This process does not diminish the value or quality of the qualification. Indian seafarers are highly sought after in the global market (ILO Report: 2001). The union in conjunction with the TETA and Natal Technikon are working on a project to reduce the South African qualification level of Class One Officer from seven to four years. Captain Parkinson has managed to combine years T1 and T2 into one year of training (Interviews: Parkinson: 2001, Dlamini: 2001). As soon as this is complete the cadet will be ready to do his or her seetime for a year. Once the cadet finishes their seetime successfully⁶, they formally qualify as officers. SATAWU has arranged for these officers to then be employed by SAMSA in shore based positions. During their employment they attend courses at the simulator college to enhance their qualifications. This combined with further academic training will result in officers obtaining class one level and marine surveyor level whilst still working at SAMSA. The union and TETA would then via agreement with shipping companies, secure them employment.

The time scale to coordinate the logistics of implementing a simulator college and reaching agreements with global shipping companies has been set at two to three years

⁶ This means finishing allocated tasks to the captain's approval on board a merchant navy vessel.

(Dlamini: 2001, Snook: 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Hagan: 2001). Moves are currently underway to configure the best way to implement the simulator college system. Questions such as where to locate them and how to coordinate the efforts of the three shipping companies involved remain paramount. Whilst the simulators will enhance and improve the qualifications of seafarers, it cannot replace the IMO legislated 12 month seetime. Its effectiveness as a tool to achieve equity remains to be assessed. What is clear though, is that simulator training whilst not nullifying mandatory seetime, does reduce cadet training by reducing the academic training time by three years. This is significant if the TETA and SATAWU want to fast track the academic training of Black cadets. Another vital social partnership exists between SATAWU and SAMSA. The next section investigates how the unions agency is articulated in its relationship with SAMSA.

5.8 The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA)

The Department of Transport on the 1 April 1998 established SAMSA (Lloyds List Africa Weekly:10 April:1998). SAMSA was designed to take over the maritime activities of the Department of Transport. The main function of SAMSA will be to ensure safe, clean seas and to provide better services such as surveying and pollution prevention, to the shipping community. These services will be carried out by SAMSA on behalf of the government. SAMSA has both employer and employee representatives on its committees. A further important function of SAMSA is to ensure that the skills and employment equity acts are impacting on the maritime industry in South Africa. To this end it has a transformation committee to deal with issues of equity and skills development within SAMSA. Thulani Dlamini, chief negotiator for SATAWU is chairman of the transformation committee (Interviews: Zanders: 2001, Dlamini: 2001, Lloyds List Africa Weekly 31 October 1999).

5.8.1 The SAMSA project to address equity amongst seafarers: the role of SATAWU

In its attempt to speed up delivery to its membership, the union initiated its main equity through training programmes without consulting industry. As a result their programme

continues to be mired in controversy and may even be said to lack legitimacy in industry. It is the brainchild of, Dlamini, spearheaded in his various capacities as chief negotiator of SATAWU, chairperson of the transformation board of SAMSA and union representative of the TETA.

On April 11 2001, Thulani Dlamini in his capacity as chief negotiator met with Alan Parkinson, head of maritime studies at Technikon Natal and members of the transformation committee of SAMSA. The agenda of the meeting was to come up with an equity through training programme for marine surveyors. Marine surveyors are specialised officers that are shore based. Their role is to inspect, on behalf of SAMSA, the safety of merchant navy vessels that dock in South African harbours. There are currently no Black marine surveyors in South Africa. The training for marine surveying is the same as that for officer training, including the requisite twelve-month seetime. As such any training programme can only be successful if this seetime is served. Once cadets have qualified as marine surveyors through the SAMSA programme, they will be employed by SAMSA. The meeting was fruitful and the SATAWU/SAMSA equity initiative was subsequently launched. Scholarships are being offered to Black (African, Indian, and Coloured) matriculants who have obtained good passes, especially in mathematics and sciences. Scholarships are valued at R150 000 per student per annum. This amount is renewable for up to a period of four years. If a student performed badly in mathematics or physical science, SAMSA in conjunction with Technikon Natal is making available a bridging programme. This will enable students to rewrite subjects, in order to obtain acceptable passes in the required subjects (Interview: Zanders: 2001). Learners will then begin their academic careers in the Maritime Studies Department at Natal Technikon. After three years they would have accumulated sufficient credits towards achieving their STCW certificates. The only obstacle remaining will be the requisite 12-month sea time.

Francis Chitalika is SAMSA's representative on this programme. He is working closely with Thulani Dlamini. Mr. Dlamini wears two hats in this project. The first one as chief negotiator of SATAWU and the second as chairperson of the transformation sub-

committee of SAMSA. As such he is able to use his position in SAMSA to service the needs of the unions membership.

As of June 2001 more than 16 Black candidates from KZN have received a SAMSA scholarship. A further 9 have been recruited from Cape Town. SAMSA is aiming for a recruitment pool of at least 26 to 30 learners. Recruitment is going to take place throughout the year (Interview: Chilalika: 2001). Thulani Dlamini (Interview: 2001) views this equity training initiative as ground breaking in the maritime industry.

5.8.2 Employers' respond to the SAMSA project

The main point of contention for industry was that it was not consulted about the SAMSA project. According to Snook (Interview: 2001) it was irresponsible for SATAWU and SAMSA not to inform industry of the equity through training plan. Snook (2001) further contends that by not consulting with industry, SATAWU has further exacerbated tenuous union–industry relations. He points out that this is quite shortsighted of the union since they would be hard pressed to find the appropriate seatime for the cadets on the programme, and that South African shipping companies if consulted, could provide such seatime.

Snook also vociferously defends the South African shipping industry's, particularly Unicom Shipping's role in achieving equity amongst seafarers. He argues that the Union often unfairly demonizes industry for not initiating and sustaining equity programmes. Evidence such as labour market statistics, the track record of funding of the MITB, the lukewarm reception of shipping companies to the Skills Development Act indicate otherwise. SATAWU's experiences with industry and education providers experiences with industry indicate otherwise.

Dlamini contends that there were valid reasons for not consulting industry. In an industry fraught with adversarial labour–management relations, consulting industry was perceived

as been counterproductive. (Interview: Dlamini: 2001). Dlamini paints a picture of an industry that is slow to respond to the union's calls for transformation in terms of employment equity and training. As far back as the Maritime conference in 1993, the shipping industry had made a pledge to the union, to achieve equity through training. A business location document was drawn up to ensure greater union-industry involvement in achieving equity through training. The two main pledges in this 1993 document were:

1. South African shipping companies promised the Union that it would establish national training programmes to upgrade Black South African ratings to officer level ranks.
2. To collectively use their influence on international shipping companies, to obtain employment for Black South African seafarers.

Upon securing industry's commitment to train for equity, the union became actively involved in the establishing of ITBs (now the SETAs), to ensure that such programmes would be located within the ITBs. The ITBs would then serve as facilitators of the training programmes.

Soon after the conference, it became apparent to Dlamini that the document would remain just a document. According to the Union, the failure of industry to act on the contents of the document was due to their lack of interest in training for "national interests" and training only for their company specific needs. As the union asserts:

"But it broke down on the question of the employers having to put their money where their mouth is in terms of funding the programme and getting the training accelerated and things like that."

(Interview: Dlamini: 2001)

SATAWU's pre 1995 **experience** with shipping industry and the ITBs is conformed by Kujawa's (1996) **investigation** into the training needs of the maritime industry in South Africa.

Industry, according to the union, even refused to upgrade ratings qualifications to STCW-95 level. After much protracted negotiations with Unicorn shipping, it was agreed that Unicorn would send their ratings for refresher courses in order to obtain STCW-95 accreditation. SATAWU argues that if ratings qualifications were not upgraded then they would effectively be unemployable on the global market. Since all merchant navy shipping is global, the implication is that these ratings would be unemployable in any national shipping company as well. It also ensures that Unicorn would be able to source cheaper non-unionised STCW-95 compliant labour elsewhere in the world, since South African STCW-95 ratings are more expensive than Filipinos or Chinese ratings are, for example. Further is the fact that non-unionised labour is clearly preferable to shipowners (Interview: Snook: 2001) since it is a prime indicator of cheaper labour, that is also more flexible. For example, one of the main issues facing seafarers and shipowners is that of AIDS. Unionised South African seafarers are not allowed to be tested for AIDS, but non-unionised labour submits itself to any test required by shipowners.

Dlamini (Interview: 2001) claims that South African shipping companies have only been interested in initiating company level training programmes, and are not concerned with an organised national training programme. The union is quite firm on this issue of industry training for 'the nation' and not just for themselves. By training for the nation, the union means training and upgrading South African seafarers for the global market, that is creating jobs, beyond those required by the national shipping companies. They further assert that the TETA is besieged with administrative problems and as such is not necessarily the best body at the moment to run their equity programme. The union used its representation power on SAMSA's transformation committee to obtain funding from SAMSA for the programme. In the Dlamini's opinion, this is an example of the Union being proactive in servicing its membership.

These 'exorbitant' packages of R150 000 per student per annum further raised the ire of Unicorn shipping and other industry insiders. The packages, according to industry ignored training methodology and previous experiences of training.

As Snook (Interview: 2001) argues:

“The package was a sticking point. We said to them look, our cadets are on a package of R27 000 a year. Now that package is designed to enable them to subsist. It covers their costs. We look after all their training costs, their books, their tuition, all that kind of thing. That R27 000 a year is basically pocket money for them. Their meals and all are found when they are on the ship. It's a low cost. There are 2 reasons for paying that kind of money to a cadet. First of all before they become qualified, there is zero chance of anyone poaching a cadet. You do not poach a cadet. They are valueless. They may not stand a watch on a bridge, or in an engine room. They may not hold any position of responsibility on a ship. They are trainees. SAMSA gave their reason for offering the salaries they have offered. One of the reasons they gave was that they were scared that other people will poach these cadets which is a dismal argument. The fact that those guys didn't find jobs in the first place is indicative of the fact that no one was clamouring for more cadets. We said to them, look for a R150 000, if you've got that kind of money to spend on these guys, we would of recommended that you incentivise them towards achieving certain objectives and certain milestones in their training as soon as possible. Because one of the problems, we found with Portner cadets for example is that the guys carry on like snails, really. There is very little incentive for them to progress.”

A further concern for Unicorn and other South African shipping companies was the issue of having employees of the same level on disparate salary levels, as alluded to above. Unicorn argues that to have disparate levels of remuneration will cause a breakdown in workplace relations amongst cadets. He argues that trainees receiving R27 000 will want to be upgraded to R150 000 per annum. This it is argued (Snook: Interview: 2001) is another problem that the SATAWU and SAMSA failed or chose not to anticipate.

Another sticking point for Unicorn, was the issue of standards and how candidates were recruited. Unicorn argues that industry has a wide range of experience and knowledge for SATAWU and SAMSA to draw on, in the recruitment of cadets. Snook (Interview:2001) contends that SAMSA and SATAWU should have been more rigorous in their recruitment of candidates:

“They recruited all of these guys without putting them through any kind of an interviewing process for a start, which we believe, was wrong. We don't believe that SAMSA should be providing jobs to all comers, irrespective of their colour. There are lots of good Black maritime studies students around. They should have been looking to find the best of those guys who are available. We are not saying recruit Whites or recruit

Indians to maintains your standards. We are saying there are good Blacks around because we have them in our fleet. They should of been looking to recruit those guys. There was no process from what we have been able to understand from meetings with them, they signed these guys up all willy - nilly. Irrespective of results or anything else which does not augur well."

(Snook: Interview: 2001)

For Snook (Interview: 2001), the SATAWU/SAMSA project is not going to achieve meaningful transformation. He argues that it is a 'window dressing project' that ignores issues of standards as well as effective recruitment strategies. It is also important to point out that due to the high cost nature of the project, it is not going to be repeated on an annual basis. It is therefore doubtful to assume that transformation in the seafaring sector is going to occur based on this one programme. This is ironic given that Dlamini (Interview: 2001) abhors 'window dressing' equity programmes that he argues shipping companies are guilty of implementing.

Snook as an industry representative is at pains to understand why industry was not consulted about the planned SATAWU/SAMSA equity through training project. It appears that in an industry that is fraught with tenuous union-management relations, the exclusion of industry from this process has proved to be counterproductive. Trust that had previously been built up between industry and labour when working together on the TETA has now been undermined. Unicorn points out that there was no need to bypass industry to initiate this equity through training programme. Trade union accusations that industry resistance to such an initiative is false and unfounded, according to Snook. He contends that the union has bypassed using the maritime chamber of the TETA and the bargaining council as forums from which to launch their equity programme.

It is apparent that there is a contradiction between Snook's (Interview: 2001) sentiment that industry is geared towards meaningful transformation and the SATAWU's stance that the shipping industry is one of the slowest industries to transform in terms of equity and skills development in South Africa.

For Unicorn and other South African shipping companies, the most shocking aspect of the equity through training programme was that the union and SAMSA had not obtained a guarantee of berths for their new recruits once they had completed their three year academic programme. Berths provide the essential 12 months seetime, cadets need, in order to qualify. This study has identified the lack of training berths as a key impediment to achieving equity amongst South African seafarers.

Once a candidate has done his/her three years of academic training, he or she is required to obtain a berth. This means obtaining 12 months of on-board seetime experiential training. It is only on obtaining this 12 months of experiential training that a learner is certified as STCW 95 compliant. Due to the current shortage of officers in the global labour market, this certificate guarantees the newly qualified officer access to the global labour market. The problem is that sea time is not provided by the Technikons. It has to be provided by a shipping company. Shipping companies thus far have been reluctant to provide this sea time to students.

The success of the SAMSA initiative therefore rested solely on their recruits obtaining berths. Snook points out what he perceives to be a flaw in the SAMSA initiative.

“They thought about that after the fact. They approached us once they had already recruited these guys and they said, can you put the guy up at sea. Now earlier on I mentioned now that our fleet has reduced, we’ve had to bring all our cadets from a fleet of 16 ships onto a fleet of about 5 ships. So our ships are chock-a-block, and we are already doing training for Portnet and Namport. So not for reasons of being anti-transformation, because we already have 80% Black cadets between Portnet, Namport and ourselves. They are already on there. Not for any other reason than the fact that there are a limited number of bunks on the ship and short of putting the guys in the alleyways on mattresses, what do we do?
(Snook: Interview: 2001)

SATAWU’s rationale for not consulting industry about its equity programme goes back to their perception that industry is not training for the nation. Dlamini (Interview: 2001) points out that the aim of their equity programme is not to train for South African

shipping companies but to train for the global market. There is therefore no need for industry to be directly involved. This does mean that the union does not recognise that there is a role for industry in complementing their equity plan. The union acknowledges that South African shipping companies have the resources to assist them, in terms of offering training berths to the SATAWU/SAMSA cadets. At the time of the interview with Dlamini, the union had requested from industry, four to eight training berths per South African ship in the merchant navy to accommodate their cadets.

Unicom shipping, still smarting from been excluded from the SATAWU/SAMSA equity plan, pointed out to the union that their fleet had been severely reduced and as such they could only offer seven training berths. By agreeing to this, Unicom had to invest a large amount of money to make alterations to their ships. They subsequently agreed to make these alterations to their ships to accommodate seven cadets. The alterations involved turning single cabins into double cabins, and double cabins into quadruple cabins (Snook: Interview: 2001). By agreeing to do this Unicom would have been able to accommodate the newly recruited cadets for their seetime training. The union however remains unconvinced by South African shipping companies claims that since their fleets are been reduced, they can no longer supply training berths. Their own investigation into the operations and crewing management of Unicom for example, suggests that when shipping companies state that their fleets are been reduced, one immediately assumes that their ships are been sold off to other companies (see chapter three and four). Dlamini (Interview: 2001) maintains that this is not the case. Instead of selling their ships, shipping companies charter them out to other companies. This is done to reduce labour costs, since charter companies can crew ships with any nationality they chose. Inevitably cheaper, non-unionised crew are employed over South African crew. It also allows South African companies to neatly sidestep issues of equity, training, and negotiating with organised labour. The chartering of ships is common practice amongst South African shipping companies (Interviews: Hagan: 2001, MacLennan 2001, Parkinson: 2001, Snook: 2001). The union also states that the shipping companies retrench South African seafarers based on the same argument of reduced fleets.

Since July 2001, after intensive negotiations with SATAWU and SAMSA, ⁷AP Moller/Maersk (One of the largest global shipping companies) has agreed to provide berths to all the cadets when they finish the academic component of the training for their seatime. This is a result of extensive negotiations between SAMSA/SATAWU and AP Moller/Maersk.

Of particular interest in this example is the way in which the union sidestepped South African employers in achieving its goals. This highlights the adversarial and difficult nature of the relationship between SATAWU and the shipping companies. This points to a difficulty in the practice of social partnerships. Consensus, communication, and compromise are key practices that inform social partnerships. As this example demonstrates however there exists a lack of trust and communication between the union and employers. By not consulting with industry on this occasion, SATAWU reinforced these adversarial relations, making future work with the shipping companies all the more difficult.

5.9 Conclusion

The above discussion illustrates how organised labour in South Africa has helped shape the socio-economic conditions of labour in South Africa, through the formation of key social partnerships with stakeholders. COSATU used the forum of Nedlac to push through legislation to address equity and skills development in the South African labour market as a means of redressing labour market inequalities created and maintained by Apartheid. The legislation that COSATU helped enable has allowed unions more agency in the servicing and organising of its membership, by legislating representative union involvement on a number of labour market institutions. This chapter has investigated examples of SATAWU's role on two such labour market institutions in the maritime industry, the TETA and SAMSA. This investigation makes clear that SATAWU has a critical awareness of how the local intersects with the global in servicing the needs of its

⁷ Safmarine has been acquired by AP Moller/Maersk.

ratings membership. This is demonstrated by its TETA initiated training simulator plan that involves the union drawing on both local and global resources to help achieve equity and employment of its membership. Further SATAWU recognises that the formation of local partnerships must be used in conjunction with global social partnerships with employers outside South Africa to achieve its goals of national training as opposed to South African based company training. Hence there is not a jumping of discrete local/global scales but rather recognition of the complex interplay of the unique characteristics of local place (South Africa) with the unique characteristics of the global labour market for ratings and officers. In its role on the SAMSA board, the union has focused on another aspect of the local, the transformation and equity of local maritime institutions such as SAMSA itself. Hence Dlamini as chairperson of the transformation committee of SAMSA, played a key role in drawing up an equity programme for Black maritime surveyors for SAMSA. These surveyors, will be trained locally, serve their seetime with a global shipping company and be employed locally at SAMSA itself. South Africa for the first time in its maritime history will have Black maritime surveyors. This project is all the more interesting because it does not involve SATAWU servicing the needs of its existing membership, but rather drawing human resources outside its membership to achieve the aim of equity and employment. It further points to the union being cognisant of the plurality of the local as opposed to a homogenous idea of the local. Hence for SATAWU there is a need to service its local ratings membership, but at the same time the union is increasingly becoming concerned with equity programmes so that more Black officers can enter the local and global labour markets for seafaring members. On the one hand is the recognition that many of these newly trained officers will be exported abroad to work on foreign owned ships, but at the same time SATAWU wants to achieve transformation in the locally based maritime institutions like SAMSA.

The union's plans are not unproblematic though. In particular the its role in securing a generous scholarship of R150 000 per annum to attract Black cadets for officer/maritime surveyor training has opened it up to critiques of window dressing by employers. In addition, the union by not consulting local industry at the inception of the SAMSA project has reinforced traditional adversarial relations between management and the

union. More importantly however, the above examples also demonstrate that despite critiques of social partnerships diluting the power of labour in servicing its membership by forcing consensus SATAWU nonetheless articulates its agency at a local level. This complements and intersects with the union's global strategy of international labour solidarity in servicing the needs of South African ratings and officers.

This chapter then helps me in my task of assessing claims of labour being 'agent-less' in a globalising world, by demonstrating that along with agency articulated on a global scale, SATAWU articulates agency on a local level as well. This is not to imply that these are discrete articulations of agency in areal places but rather complex intersections of agency at various scales simultaneously.

Conclusion

In theorising globalisation, capital is presented as all encompassing and powerful due to its mobility. Labour on the other hand is presented as 'agentless' and passive in shaping the processes of globalisation. As mentioned in the Introduction, the aim of this dissertation is to assess these arguments by investigating the strategies used by SATAWU to service South African seafarers. The findings of this dissertation suggest that the agency of labour in countering capitals' mobility and servicing a transnational, flexible labour force is understated and under-theorised in the dominant discourse of globalisation. Further, the case study presented points to labour having a more sophisticated understanding and practice of space, scale and class than has conventionally been theorised. At the same time however, whilst agency of labour exists, my study points to this agency being informed and fractured by differing material spatial interests. Material spatial interests as argued in Chapter Four are according to this investigation, being prioritised over class interests. I contend that it is only when an agency of labour recognises that spatial interests intersect and complicate those of class interests can the agency of labour be transformatory as opposed to merely accommodatory (see Chapter Four).

I have argued in Chapter One that the prevailing discourse of globalisation is of a particular type – that is a transnational neo-liberal discourse of globalisation. This globalisation discourse has constructed labour as a powerless, unsophisticated actor, unable to significantly shape the processes of globalisation. Capital on the other hand is theorised as the exclusive agent influencing the processes of globalisation. Further I contend that whilst capital has become increasingly more mobile and multi-locational due to the development of new technologies and the dictates of transnational neo-liberalism, the scope and ramifications of this mobility are overstated. It is not useful to speak of a monolithic organised capital that is all pervasive and powerful. Rather it is more useful to distinguish amongst the different kinds of capital. It is in doing this that labour organisations can plan appropriate responses to different factions of capital. For example

the shipping industry is comprised of two different kinds of capital. Firstly it is constituted by financial capital. This capital consists of financial transactions that are constantly mobile and intangible in the cyberspace of transnational banking. Secondly is production capital, which consists of the physical structures of capital, such as buildings and ships. Ships in this case consist of literally mobile capital. This form of mobile capital is effectively countered through a strategy of political and industrial global solidarity amongst the ITF and its affiliates as demonstrated by the relationship between the ITF and SATAWU, in the campaign against FOC crewing and shipping. The ITF has not only reacted to the mobility of the shipping industry's production capital, it is proactive in shaping the economic geography of capital by setting minimum wage rates (without consulting employers) as well as setting and monitoring working condition standards for ratings in the global labour market. Proponents of the transnational neo-liberal discourse of globalisation argue that trade unions have become organisational fossils in an increasingly unruly, globalising world. The evidence of the strategies of global solidarity articulated by SATAWU and the ITF in servicing South African seafarers, countering the mobility of capital and influencing economic geography of shipping capital indicates that globalisation is also an unruly process for capital. This suggests a more complex picture of the way globalisation has impacted on labour and capital. It is too simplistic to argue that capital is the only agent and benefactor of globalisation. This implies that globalisation is the endgame in the historical struggle between labour and capital. Instead I posit that both capital and labour are active agents of the processes of globalisation. Neither are these agents homogenous groups with monolithic interests. To construct them as such is to present capital as far more coherent in its mobility and organisation that it actually is. To present labour in such a manner is to deny the diverse and often competing interests of labour in its articulation of agency

A further contention of this dissertation is that the dominant stream of transnational-neo-liberal globalisation has rendered less visible the strong tradition of trade unions' agency in forming international solidarities with workers to shape and influence the workings of capital on local and global scales. This is not to deny that many of these solidarities were 'imagined solidarities' as the politics of the cold war indicate. For the purpose of this

dissertation it is more important to note that cold war politic demonstrated the agency of labour organisations to contribute to uneven economic geographies for workers. Further as Chapter Four demonstrates the shift from the geo-politics of the cold war to the geo-economics of (transnational) neo-liberal globalisation has not nullified the agency of trade unions.

In chapter four, my discussion of scale included two theoretical concepts, that of *spaces of dependence* and *spaces of engagement*. These concepts were used to indicate how SATAWU by shifting amongst scales is able to service South African seafarers. SATAWU's strategic use of its position on a maritime labour market bodies set up by the SDA and EEA, such as SAMSA and TETA to service the local needs of South African seafarers points to the union being aware of the complex interplay of the local and the global and spaces of engagement and spaces of dependence. An intellectually rigorous notion of scale is essential to understanding how trade unions can express their agency in servicing transnational memberships.

Space and Class

As averred to in Chapter One, and related to the preceding discussion, there is a movement amongst a group of labour geographers to critically reinsert class back into theorising the agency of labour. There is not uniform agreement amongst labour geographers regarding the centrality or role of class as an object of geographical enquiry. See for example the critique by Castree (1999) of Gibson-Graham (1996) and Sayer (1995) with regard to them not giving 'proper' acknowledgement of class in labour geography. Proponents of class as an object of geographical analysis do not negate the importance of other identities of workers¹. Hence theirs is not an uncritical call for class analysis².

¹ Smith (2000) argues that the difference and diversity of identities espoused by postmodernism (see Barret & Phillips: 1992, Appiah: 1994, Beat: 1997) provided a much needed impetus to the social sciences in theorising and representing the social. However he argues that the post-modern impulse to fragment identity and give voice to all has had the unintended consequence of commodifying identity to such an extent that it no longer serves the subversive role of destabilising dominant discourses of globalisation or economics. Instead identities have been appropriated by those on the Right and entered the mainstream discourse. By doing so their subversive intent is diluted.

This dissertation argues that a spatial conception of class as conceived by its proponents in labour geography is an essential methodological tool in analysing issues facing trade unions, particularly the issue of labour solidarity across space as done in Chapter Four. In this regard I refer back to Johns' (1998) argument that any assessment of the way the agency of labour is articulated necessitates that a distinction be made between class and space (See Chapter Four) In other words she argues that class interests that may nearly be universal across space (e.g. employment, job security, a living wage) may conflict with material interests that workers recognise as a result of their unique location in the hierarchy of places that is the manifestation of uneven development (e.g. continued employment in a particular place, a higher standard of living relative to workers in other places).

This dissertation concludes that it is intellectually dishonest and politically questionable to suggest that working class people are too ignorant to recognise their 'true' interests at particular historical moments in particular places. I argue that by recognizing the geographical or spatial realities that workers face in particular locations it becomes possible to theorise how local class relations are spatially constituted and worked out and thereby to explain such activities by workers.

This then raises the issue of capitalist labour markets and the fact that they necessitate that workers across geographies (local, regional, and global) compete against each other. Some of the ways that trade unions have attempted to counter this is by the creation of national collective bargaining agreements (also referred to as master contracts in the US) is designed to take certain conditions of work and wages out of competition. We see that such union goals may require negotiators to address dramatic regional and local differences in work practices and wage rates amongst other conditions (Herod, 1998). See Herod's (1997) case study of the geography of contract bargaining in the US east coast longshore industry, for an example of this. Herod (1997) argues that national

² Some proponents of class are David Harvey, Richard Peet, Richard Walker, Rebecca Johns, Andrew Herod and Noel Castree to name some of the most prolific. Labour geographers that remain more sceptical

agreements are an explicit recognition on the part of unions that employers may use variations in conditions across the economic landscape as a source of economic and political power to 'whipsaw' workers in different places against each other. As a result of capital's whipsawing capabilities, developing national agreements³ can be one way for unions to confront capital's geographic power.

An example of labour's agency in confronting capital's geographic power is the manner in which the ITF and its national affiliates develop international agreements to prevent the whipsawing of capital. National unions affiliated to the ITF, like SATAWU, negotiate in conjunction with the ITF to set a standard minimum wage for unionised ratings in the global labour market. The ITF also seeks to protect the interests of non-unionised ratings that work on FOC vessels by regularly inspecting these vessels to investigate occupational health, safety and wage issues. Further, when inspecting a vessel the ITF encourages ratings on board to join a national union. If FOC ships do not sign an agreement with the ITF regarding working conditions and wage levels, these ships are subjected to solidarity boycotts from dock-workers at whichever national port they dock at. This action can cost shipowners vast amounts of money in loss of earnings and productivity. In this way then the ITF is interested in unionising as many ratings as it can in the global labour market. As more ratings become unionised and more FOC ships sign wage agreements with the ITF, it will become increasingly difficult for shipowners to whipsaw between regions to seek out cheaper labour, as a standard wage will be the norm.

This strategy suggests that the ITF's practice of agency is class based as opposed to spatially based agenda for agency. The findings of this dissertation suggest that the ITF's class based strategy conceives of workers as a homogenous category, by not taking into account their diverse material conditions. A spatialised agenda for agency implies that the material interests of one group of workers that are spatially divided from another

of how labour geography uses class as an analytical category see Gibson-Graham (1996) and Sayer (1995).

³ This as Herod's (1995) case study demonstrates, is not to suggest that all unions seek national agreements. Sometimes local branches may seek to break out of national agreements because they believe they will be better off bargaining locally.

group of workers are prioritised. The ITF's global wage push for ratings from the South and eastern Europe does not take into account the diverse economic geographies of workers. Thus far its FOC campaign has not prevented capital from using spatial divisions between workers and diverse economic geographies to exploit workers. National unions of Asia and employers in the shipping industry argue that the ITF is imperialist by setting a first world wage standard that ignores the disparate economics of place. Therefore the ITF is accused of not having a spatialised agenda sensitive to the economics of place. Further as Chapter three suggests, ratings in the Philippines, which has a strong tradition of labour organising, ignore attempts by the ITF and Filipino national unions to organise them, in fear that the ITF wage will whipsaw capital to even cheaper reservoirs of labour. These ratings, I suggest are instrumental, self-aware agents (as much as capital) in shaping uneven spaces of development. This is not to imply that there is no class-consciousness amongst non-unionised ratings but rather that it is class-consciousness bounded by local material spatial interests. This contradiction between class and space necessitates a more sophisticated notion of scale in servicing a transnational membership like seafarers, as referred to in Chapter Four.

This dissertation has assessed claims that labour is a passive player in influencing and countering the processes of globalisation, through a case study of the strategies used by SATAWU in servicing South African seafarers. It has found that the agency of labour is far greater than theorised in the discourse of transnational-neo-liberal globalisation. Further I have argued that academically rigorous notions of space, scale and class are integral to highlighting the many contradictions inherent in the processes of globalisation. Space as theorised by labour geographers, can provide the seeds to a counter discourse of globalisation that recognises the agency of workers and trade unions to influence and shape their own material conditions. The findings of this dissertation, not only contribute to a growing body of work that aims to introduce labour more critically into labour studies, it is also an invitation to others to build on my work. In so doing labour geography, as a sub-discipline of labour studies will continue to grow and provide much needed reinvigoration to labour studies.

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Transport education and training authority (TETA)

Ron Fable

Time: 2pm: 7 May 2001

Venue: Pinelands, Cape Town

South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA)

Capt. Zanders

Time: 8:30am: 24 May 2001

Venue: Kingsfield Place, Durban

South African Maritime Safety Authority

Francis Chilalika

Time: 10:30am: 24 May 2001

Venue: Kingsfield Place 2001

Employers:

DeBeers Marine

Capt. Nick Hagan

Time: 10 am, 10 May 2001

Venue: DeBeers Building, 101 Hertzog Boulevard, Cape Town

Smit-Pentow

Capt. Andy Maclennan

Time 11am, 8 May 2001

Venue: Smit-Pentow Building, Pardon Eiland, Cape Town

Unicorn Shipping

Richard Snook

Time 9 am , 29 August 2001

Venue: Unicorn, Durban

Training Institutions

Natal Technikon
Capt. Allan Parkinson
Time: 11am, 25 May 2001
Venue: Natal Technikon, Berea Campus, Durban

Wingfield Technical College
Capt. Anton Fourie
Time: 2:30 p.m., 17 May 2001
Wingfield, Cape Town

Cape Technikon
Capt. Stohl
Time: 1pm
Venue: Mouille Point Campus, Cape Town

Trade Union (SATAWU)

Thulani Dlamini
Time: 10 am, 21 April
Venue: SATAWU Head Office, Johannesburg

Sam Ntombela
Time: 10 am, 7 May
Venue: SATAWU regional office: Durban

Jane Barret
Senior research officer
Email interview
Date: 22-24 October 2001

International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

Sprite Zungu
ITF Inspector for Durban
Dates: 15 May 2001
29 October 2001
Venue: SATAWU regional office: Durban

Personal Correspondence

Wingfield College

Captain Andy Morris

Emails: 17 July 2001, 19 July 2001, 23 July 2001

SATAWU

Jane Barret

Senior research officer

Email: 23 October 2001

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