

**LABOR MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS:
A CONCEPTUAL AND TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS***

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines variations in the imbrication of labor movements are inserted into national political systems in capitalist countries of the Americas and Europe. The author shows how the differences in these modes of insertion depend on four dimensions: first, the historical process through which the labor unions reached their organizational consolidation; second, the unity or fractionalization of the labor movement; third, the nature of the links between unions and parties; and fourth, the kind of political regime in which labor must act. On the basis of this conceptual groundwork, the paper discusses five types of insertion of labor movements into national political processes—three under democratic regimes and two under authoritarian regimes. More such types can be developed by drawing finer distinctions.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo examina las variaciones que presentan los modos de inserción de los movimientos obreros en los sistemas políticos de los países capitalistas de América y Europa. Estas dependen de cuatro dimensiones: primero, el proceso histórico a través del cual los movimientos sindicales alcanzaron su consolidación organizacional; segundo, la unidad o el fraccionamiento del movimiento obrero; tercero, la naturaleza de los vínculos entre sindicatos y partidos; y cuarto, las peculiaridades del régimen político en el cual deben actuar los movimientos obreros. Dadas las diferencias en estas cuatro dimensiones, el autor discute cinco tipos de inserción de los movimientos obreros en los sistemas políticos de estos países, tres de los cuales son bajo regímenes democráticos y dos bajo regímenes autoritarios. Se podrían desarrollar más tipos si se hacen distinciones mas finas.

With the development of proletarianization, the extension of markets, and the emergence and diffusion of socialist and syndicalist ideologies and models for worker organizations, labor movements emerged in country after country over the latter part of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries. As they matured, they both influenced and were affected by the course of economic and social development, as well as the emergence of various forms of mass politics, democratic and nondemocratic. Given the variety of national and even regional contexts which molded their growth, labor organizations acquired many differences which have led to an abundant comparative literature that analyzes them. Much of this literature has an industrial relations focus. It examines the specific ways in which unions are organized, the considerable variety of collective bargaining procedures, the forms of state intervention in union affairs and in labor-management conflicts, and so on.¹ While the differences in such institutions are undoubtedly significant, the industrial relations perspective is too narrow to account for many variations in the characteristics of national labor movements. It is also necessary to examine the modalities such movements acquired given their insertion in national political systems; these variations depend basically on the nature of the respective political regimes and of the parties that established links with the unions during their formative processes. The characteristics of their political insertion affect the ability of labor movements to pressure employers and governments in state and legislative arenas, and even affect the morphology of unions and their relations with employers.

The importance and durability of these politically related differences have usually been underestimated. Many authors have simply assumed that the political colorations of labor unions (as seen from the parties to which they are linked) matter little in the long run, since the characteristics of unions' collective actions, their militance, and even the relative radicalism of their demands and their political outlooks are determined in the last analysis by the kind of technology used at the point of production. The technology structures the work force's level of skill, its degree of control over the productive process, its relative homogeneity or differentiation, its job security, and so on, and by creating different types of workers it generates as well very different types of unions. Hence, regardless of national political differences, artisans, miners, service employees, technicians in automated plants, and so on, have specific characteristics in common such that the political milieu in which they are inserted is clearly of secondary importance.² Taking

¹ For samples of this literature, see the many volumes of the International Labor Organization's *Labour-Management Relations Series*.

² This argument is most prevalent in French sociology of work, and owes much to the influential work of Alain Touraine. See his *L' Evolution du travail ouvrier aux usines Renault* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1955), and his *La conscience ouvrière* (Paris: Seuil, 1966). For an example of the influence of this conception on other works see Claude Durand, *Conscience ouvrière et action syndicale* (Paris: Mouton, 1971). The "new working class" thesis

a more general view, other authors have assumed that the general course of the process of industrialization determines the characteristics of worker politics and elite-worker relations. The early phases are marked by class conflict and radicalism, and may be led by elites having different degrees of toleration for worker organizations. However, in the long run industrialization moderates worker outlooks as their affluence increases and as they become used to the rhythm of industrial life, and it eventually generates the institutionalization of labor-management relations as the elites accept the necessity of worker interest representation both at the workplace and as citizens in political arenas. This perspective therefore assumes that there is a convergence between different national settings in mature industrialism.³ Consequently, by stressing the significance of technological and/or economic variables in determining the political colorations of both workers and their organizations, both of these perspectives underestimate the importance of the very durable ties unions develop to various kinds of political parties as well as the impact of their insertion in different political regimes. But the long-term programs and outlooks of labor movements, their effects on national political debates and situations, and even their internal organizational structure cannot be understood without factoring in the importance of these political differences.⁴

My purpose here is to contribute to the analysis of the politically related variations among national labor movements, exploring the differences which occur due to the specific characteristics of working class parties, their links with the unions, and the modalities of the relations between the movements and their respective states. To this end, by focusing mainly on the historical experience of the Americas and of Western Europe (and including mainly countries with capitalist labor markets), this paper presents five types of insertion of labor movements into national political processes. Beginning with those which may be found under democratic regimes, the types are: the *social democratic*, in which the unions link up to form basically one

was a further extension of this basic line of thinking. The classic statement is Serge Mallet, *La nouvelle classe ouvrière* (Paris: Seuil, 1969, fifth edition).

³ The classic statements of this view are given in Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegal, "The Structuring of the Labor Force in Industrial Society: New Dimensions and New Questions" in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 8, no. 2 (January, 1955); Clark Kerr, John T. Dunlop, Frederick Harbinson, and Charles Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). And from a different perspective but deriving the same conclusion regarding mature industrial society, Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

⁴ For a study that develops these points while criticizing the now not-so-new "new working class thesis," see Duncan Gallie, *In Search of the New Working Class: Automation and Social Integration within the Capitalist Enterprise* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978). For a broader view of the process of labor movement formation from this perspective, see Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, "Inducements versus Constraints: Disaggregating Corporatism," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 73, no. 4 (December 1979), and their *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

national organization that in turn connects itself with a single, relatively strong party; the *contestatory*, in which the labor movement is divided into different ideological and partisan tendencies with a segment linked to the Communist Party; and *the pressure group*, in which the unions link themselves with a preexisting party or fragments of it. The final two additional types may be found under various shades of authoritarian political regimes: the *state sponsored*, in which both the unions and the parties are generated by political elites from the government but attain relatively broad acceptance among workers; and the *confrontational*, in which the leaders of the labor movement are predominantly in opposition to the government, but must rely principally on union organizations to resist its policies since the regime curtails the activities of the union-linked party or parties and the channels through which they normally manifest their influence. The typology does not pretend to be exhaustive, and although it is based on concrete cases, it does not provide an in-depth discussion of any one of them. Rather, it aims to highlight essential differences.

The variations among the types are generated by differences along the following four dimensions: first, the manner in which unionism achieved its organizational consolidation; second, the unity or the fragmentation of the labor movement; third, the nature of the links between unions and parties; and fourth, the characteristics of the political regimes into which the labor movements insert themselves. A discussion of these factors is appropriate before presenting the typology.

SOURCES OF VARIATION IN THE TYPES OF LABOR MOVEMENT POLITICAL INSERTION

The Organizational Consolidation of Unionism

It is not possible to present here a detailed analysis of the formation of national labor movements.⁵ Suffice it to say that everywhere there were several groups of different political and ideological orientations that competed in the attempt to create them, and that the group or groups that succeeded did so because they were able to develop their organization(s) along the following four essential union-building dimensions: (1) worker allegiance, or obtaining the trust of the work force; (2) organizational linking, or developing a national network tying the unions together as well as to other organizations, such as parties and, on occasion, churches, cooperatives, cultural associations, and so on; (3) plant level penetration, or establishing a union presence within firms and a regular process of collective bargaining, allowing labor leaders to become brokers between workers and management over all disputes, large and small; and (4)

⁵ This topic is developed in J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Uno schema teórico per l' analisi della formazione del movimento operario" in *Stato e mercato*, vol. 1, 3 (December 1981).

state recognition, or obtaining the tacit or explicit authorization to build union organizations outside the plant level as well as to speak for the interests of workers in negotiations with governments and legislatures over questions of social and economic policy. The labor leadership group that succeeded in developing its organization along all four of these dimensions could be said to consolidate it, thereby virtually freezing its position as a leading sector of the labor movement, since each of these dimensions of the process of unionization becomes, once achieved, a resource which union leaders can use to stave off any challenges to their position. This analysis implies that the original consolidation of a union leadership group has the relatively lasting effect of fixing the ideological and political coloration of the labor movement as a whole. The process of union formation therefore contains one of the keys to determining the characteristics of working class parties in each national context, since no such party can claim to represent the organized workers' interests without establishing close links to union leaders and counting them among its members or at least sympathizers.

For present purposes it is only important to focus on the third dimension of the formative process. It is a critical factor for unions to acquire and hold on to mass memberships (or the tacit support of many workers where labor legislation and/or the characteristics of union organizations encourage free ridership). With the development of collective bargaining and a union presence at the plant level, the broad, usually nonmilitant segments of the workforce who were not participants in the earlier stages of union formation were able to appreciate the protective and proactive effects of the existence of unions. (Brazilian unionism as established under Vargas is a partial but peculiar exception to this.) Precisely because it encouraged the massification of the unions' audience, this third dimension of the formative process was the most significant one for the consolidation of a labor leadership group, with the lasting consequences noted above. The more complete the union penetration at the plant level, the greater the facilities the unions have to call meetings at the work place, post information, place delegates in all the sections, etc.; and the more regular, institutionalized, and comprehensive the collective bargaining, the greater will be the density of union's mass base (as membership or audience) and the importance of unionism in the national context.

The historic moment and the manner in which unions established their plant level presence and began regular negotiations with employers therefore had great significance for the subsequent creation of the national labor movement. There were two essential ways in which the fledgling worker organizations obtained the necessary employer acceptance to institutionalize these processes: through direct negotiations with employers (including the state as such) in a context of significant worker mobilization or its threat, and through government pressure on private employers. Let us examine these in greater detail.

In order to have a decisive impact over the subsequent characteristics of the labor movement, the direct-negotiation manner had to occur relatively early in its historic process of formation: in other words before circa 1920, or before the global upsurge of worker mobilizations at the end of the teens, the Treaty of Versailles and its provisions addressing the social question, and before the constitution and extension of the organizations of the Third International—all of which led to a greater governmental awareness of, and intervention in, labor-management issues. Given the characteristics of this form, the development of massive unionization generally had its point of origin in specific local plants and sometimes in regional pockets of production. Consequently, it extended nationally in a piecemeal fashion over a period of at least two decades. This process occurred where the owners did not present a strong resistance to unionization, perhaps because they chose not to do so, but principally because they were not able to do so given inadequate access to state repression, the existence of relatively tight labor markets, and expansive economic conditions. In what could be called a law of labor movement development, employer recognition of unions through direct negotiations at this early date invariably favored the subsequent consolidation of reformist or politically moderate labor leaders for two reasons. First, it indicated that a strategy of negotiating regularly with employers was a viable route to obtaining benefits and solving other day-to-day work related problems of the rank and file, thereby buttressing the position of moderate leaders who became involved in these negotiations against those who held more extreme views. Second, in the absence of legislation detailing the right of union leaders to represent the collective demands of workers, the inception of a regular process of collective bargaining occurred by mutual agreement among the parties. This implied not only the employer's recognition of the representational role of the union leadership, but also the tacit recognition by the latter of the propriety of the entrepreneurial function. A radical anticapitalist and prorevolutionary posture was incompatible with this relationship of regular negotiations by mutual consent; such a posture could threaten its continuity by giving employers an excuse to break it off, and this threat, in turn, would often lead—given the context of on-going negotiations—the rank and file to support a more moderate leadership.

Where employers resisted more strongly, or were able to resist more strongly, worker efforts to combine, unions achieved a plant level presence and regular collective bargaining with legislative and state support. These settings present greater complexity than the previous ones both in the manner in which the process occurred and in the kinds of labor movements it generated. Governments were more or less active in exerting pressures on employers aside from enacting a legislative framework for union and collective bargaining rights. The political colorations and coalitions of the governments that were instrumental in pressing for union rights differed considerably as well. Some included, formally or informally, all preexisting labor leaders of the embryonic labor movement; others included only certain ideological and political segments

among them; while still others fashioned what essentially became a new labor leadership group, displacing those that were active in the field previously (even if some individual labor leaders accepted the new situation and became a part of the new group). Nonetheless, despite these different modalities, in these cases the spread of unionism occurred rapidly across broad sectors of production, thereby contrasting with the more gradual and local plant-centered expansion of union affiliation that took place where plant level penetration resulted from direct negotiations between employers and workers.

The Unity or the Fragmentation of the Labor Movement

The development of a national labor movement can be favorable to one or more of the principal groups which originally competed to create it. In the first case, the union movement will obviously generate one main organization from the base units to the top. When there is only one important organization, the union leaders have a monopoly on representation, which means that the rank-and-file bases generally have less possibility of pressuring the leaders, particularly if the union leaderships above the plant level are selected in union congresses rather than through a broad-based vote, and if labor-management negotiations are centralized. This may lead to worker discontent spilling over into dissident (although mostly ineffective) movements.

In the second instance the labor movement remains fragmented into various important organizations. When these divisions exist it is necessary to examine the spatial distribution of the fragmentation. It can result either in the creation of unions or union tendencies which may extend themselves to the majority of the base units, or in the formation of parallel unions which recruit workers from clearly different segments of the workforce. The effects of one or the other type of division on the dynamics of union activity are quite different. When the divisions cut widely into base organizations—which is typically the case when they are generated by ideological or political differences, or even by splits among powerful leaders for personal reasons—the various union leaders must, in spite of their occasional collaboration, compete for the support of the rank and file. This competition undermines the formation of a common front among the various organizations when confronting the employers and/or the state, since each sector will try to present itself as the most dedicated defender of the interests of the rank and file, thereby weakening—paradoxically—the union movement as a whole and diminishing its capacity to defend those very interests. Ironically, the competition between the different sectors also generates union leaderships which are very responsive to the needs and aspirations of the rank and file; hence, these divisions produce a kind of unionism which is relatively weak but very permeable to worker demands.

The second kind of fragmentation (that which occurs when the various union organizations or tendencies capture different rank-and-file segments) normally results from unbridgeable ascriptive cleavages in the working class itself (along linguistic, racial, cultural, tribal, regional, and/or religious lines), for which the process of labor movement formation has led to the creation of different organizations for each segment. In these cases, the various unions obviously do not compete with one another for the support of the workers, since each has its own terrain cut out for it. However, the consequences for union action are again dramatically different according to the social standing of the various worker communities. When there is no marked difference or enmity between them, the union leaders can collaborate with relative ease in negotiations with the employer associations and/or with the state; as a result, the fragmentation does not seriously weaken the labor movement. But when there are one or more worker communities in a relatively inferior social, political, and/or economic position with respect to another or others, and/or a history of sharp conflict between them, the collaboration between the various units of the union movement becomes virtually impossible, since the unions which group the more privileged workers will normally be able to obtain advantages unattainable by, and even at the expense of, the others. The result is that the union movement as a whole is greatly weakened. Situations where there is strong racial or ethnic discrimination are the main cases in point.⁶ And yet, whatever the status of the various worker communities, this type of union fragmentation normally works against the spillover of worker discontent toward dissident organizations given the strength of the bonds which are created by the ascriptive identities that generate the divisions.⁷

The Characteristics of Union-Party Links

Virtually everywhere national union organizations have established, either from their inception or eventually, some kind of a relationship with one or more political parties or party factions. Both organizations benefit from such links. Unions need the support of parties when pursuing some of their interests, such as when attempting to change legislation affecting them, when pressuring the state or even employer associations over specific issues, or, in general, when they need to mobilize external support for their goals and actions. Parties expect to capture

⁶ For studies of unionism in settings of racial or ethnic discrimination, see Stanley B. Greenberg, *Race and State in Capitalist Development: Comparative Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); and George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), chap. 5.

⁷ The notion that expressions of discontent lead to the formation of new collective identities in order to generate new organizations is emphasized by Alessandro Pizzorno in his "Political Exchange and Collective Identity in Industrial Conflict" in Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno, eds., *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe since 1969* (New York: Holmes and Meir, 1978), vol. 2.

the political allegiance of the mass membership affiliated to the unions, which can provide them with votes when and if there are national elections, militants, demonstrators, an organizational network, and money.

Union-party links vary in their degree of closeness. In some cases the two organizations are weakly connected. While union leaders and the rank and file may identify to a large extent with a particular party, and the latter may view them as an important part of its constituency, the union leaders are rarely top party leaders, the party assigns equal importance to other social segments among its supporters, and both organizations have a high degree of autonomy in adopting their policy goals. In other cases the two are closely linked. Union leaders are assumed to be party members and are often important party leaders; the party views unions as one of its main sources of support regardless of how many other constituencies may attach to it, and social and economic policies affecting unions are the object of at least some measure of consultation among the two organizations. In those settings in which union-party relationships are close the parties can become in some cases an important unifying and directive force over unions. For this to occur, the parties must have a high degree of coherence regarding the policy issues of concern to unions, and the commitment of union leaders to the party and its overall strategy should take precedence over the particular interests of specific sectors of unions. In such situations conflicts within the union movement (at least within those segments adhering to the same party if it does not encompass all), be they jurisdictional, political, or sectional, are considerably reduced by the unifying and directive role played by the party. Unions also lose autonomy to make broad policy decisions, and although union leaders can very often convince the party to adopt the positions they espouse, the party remains an important forum for them to press their case.

These variations are largely the result of the historical origins of the parties and of the timing of the formation of the parties and the unions.

The first factor, the historical inception of parties, refers to whether or not the party originated to articulate the interests of workers and other subordinate groups in the class cleavage of society. A close union-party tie normally emerged where this was the case, provided that party militants or sympathizers were able to consolidate positions of leadership within the national union movement, and that its rank-and-file members and their families became an important source of party support. Most Social Democratic, Labor, Socialist, and Communist Parties of Europe and the Americas emerged to articulate such class interests, although many did not succeed in placing their militants at the helm of unions or in obtaining worker support.⁸ A weak tie will result from

⁸ The Argentinian Socialist Party is one of many examples of one that did not succeed on either count, although it was more important than others in the years between the teens and the 1930s. Most union leaders in the early years after the party's formation were linked primarily to the anarcho-syndicalist movement rather than the Socialist Party, while in the 1940s most adhered to the Peronist Party. Moreover, in the early years large segments of the party's potential working

unions establishing links with a party originally formed to articulate the interests of a variety of social segments other than (but not exclusive of) organized labor, regardless of whether party sympathizers or members occupy the most important union leadership positions and of how much union households support the party. This was the case, for example, with parties formed and from social cleavages other than class, such as religious identity or a clerical-anticlerical split. The Christian Democratic parties of Chile and of Italy are cases in point.

The historical-origin factor also pertains to whether the agents forming the party were in opposition to the governments of the time, or whether it was formed under governmental auspices. Assuming that union-party ties are close in both cases because the parties were formed originally to encapsulate mainly organized worker constituencies in the long run, parties formed in the opposition tend to be better able to exert a unifying and directive role over the unions. Being in the opposition forces parties to pay close attention to organization and to forging links to organized social groups since they must secure a capacity to mobilize support. It also enhances the importance of the party's ideological and programmatic discourses, since it must continually appeal for support on the basis of a certain vision of the future rather than on the ability to deliver immediate tangible benefits.⁹ The result is to build bridges between party and union militants in such a way that the party strengthens its capacity to exert the above mentioned role in the overall labor movement. By contrast, parties close to the unions but formed under government auspices—as was the case with Argentina's Peronist Party—are much weaker organizationally. They are also much more diffuse ideologically and programmatically, thereby allowing a greater dispersion of political opinions within the party and preventing it from exercising an overall leadership role in the labor movement. This latter feature becomes especially evident after the party's founding period around the leading governmental figure has concluded.

The second factor has to do with the timing of the formation of unions and parties. In some exceptional situations, such as those of the United States or Colombia, the unions developed their main links to parties whose formation long preceded them. These cases led to a weak link between the two, essentially for the above noted reasons: the parties were originally created to channel the interests of other segments of society, and their openness to include emerging, organized workers as well among their constituents is a manifestation of their great internal diversity. This weak link to a heterogeneous party leaves the national union movement bereft of the potentially unifying force that the party can exert within it, and great organizational

class constituencies were unable to vote given their lack of Argentine citizenship. When most workers became citizens the party was hampered, first, by the electoral fraud of the 1930s and then by the great appeal of Peronism in the 1940s. See among other sources Richard J. Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1977).

⁹ I thank Alessandro Pizzorno for this observation made in the context of a conversation on the characteristics of different parties.

diversity, autonomy, and jurisdictional and other conflicts can more easily develop within the various components of the national union movement. The links to the party in these cases will be most beneficial for the strongest best financed unions that can more effectively pressure the party to adopt their positions.

In those situations where the links between the parties and the unions have been close given a history of party formation to articulate and represent working class interests, the timing of the formation of unions and parties still affects the latter's capacity to exert a unifying and directive role in the labor movement as a whole. Such capacity is greatest, as noted by Adolph Sturmtal, when the party emerges slightly before, or at the same time as, the most important unions that form the principal axis of the national labor organizations, as in Sweden or Germany.¹⁰ In these cases, the party can play an active role through its workers and other militants in the formation of the unions, and it can discourage labor leaders in the stronger labor market positions from separating themselves from the rest of the union movement by pursuing a narrow policy of accommodation with employers, sometimes to the detriment of other workers.¹¹ After all, given their party connections, such leaders will also be politically motivated to develop solidarity ties across the board. The result will be a union movement with comparatively fewer organizational cleavages by skill or occupation (such as those that developed so sharply in American organized labor history), thereby facilitating, in turn, the task of the party at some later point to exert a directive influence over the unions. By contrast, working class parties that emerge long after the formation of large and important unions, as was the case with the British Labour Party, have much greater difficulty in becoming a unifying and leading center for the labor movement as a whole. In these situations the labor movement is very diverse organizationally, since the successful establishment of unions before the emergence of a party linked to the labor movement necessarily means that the unions were created early on, with little employer resistance, and from the bottom up. The diversity of unionism and the already established modus operandi of their organizations, of their relationships with employers, and among each other, cannot easily be changed.¹²

¹⁰ Although Sturmtal does not use the "unifying" and "directive" terms I use here, he indicates that where the party preceded the unions, his paradigmatic case being the German one, "political ideas...controlled the life of the unions. ...The unions appeared thus in a subordinate position to the party." See his *Unity and Diversity in European Labor: An Introduction to Contemporary Labor Movements* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 46, 48. He contrasts this pattern with the British one, where the unions preceded the party. In this case the unions have more influence over the party, pp. 39-45.

¹¹ This point is developed by Gary Marks, *Unions in Politics: Britain, Germany and the United States in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), especially chapter 6. It was also noted in the earlier Spanish version of this paper.

¹² Marks, p. 75, also notes this point which, again, was included in the Spanish version of this paper.

These effects of the timing of party and union formation can also be observed where the parties (and to a large extent the unions as well) were created under government auspices. When, as in Perón's Argentina and in Cárdenas's Mexico, the parties and the unions were created or recreated under government auspices (the latter with leaders tied to the new party), both organizations were linked by the same founding moment and its accompanying rhetoric. Becoming a union leader normally requires adhering to the party, and identifying with its symbols and values. However, as noted above, such parties are less able to become leading forces in the labor movement as a whole in the absence of the venues of government. When the unions are created before a party that is orchestrated by the government, as was the case with the Brazilian Partido Trabalhista, the link between the two organizations is very weak and the party has even less capacity to become a leading force in the unions than is the case with the parties, such as British Labour, that also originated after the emergence of the unions but did so from the opposition.¹³

The Effects of Different Political Regimes on Party-Union Ties

Despite the previous historical determinants of the relative closeness of union-party ties, the nature of the relationship between unions and parties can vary given the characteristics of the political regime under which they operate. It is the regime that molds, not only for labor but for all sectors of civil society, the organizational means through which political pressures must be exerted. Different types of regimes can enhance or diminish the importance of the parties for the unions and vice versa.

Although it is possible to trace the effects on the union-party relationship of different kinds of democracies and of different forms of authoritarianism, there is no space for such a detailed discussion within the confines of this paper. Hence, although some of those differences will be alluded to, the main distinction to be highlighted here is simply that between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Democratic regimes are those in which regularly scheduled elections are the only means to determine who will constitute the national governments, in which such governments—while following the normal limitations to their power established in broadly accepted democratic constitutionalism—are not subordinate to other nondemocratically generated powers such as monarchs or the military, and in which human rights, including the rights of political minorities, are fully respected. Authoritarian regimes are those that do not meet

¹³ This point is developed in all its implications in Ruth Berins Collier, "Popular Sector Incorporation and Political Supremacy: Regime Evolution in Brazil and Mexico" in Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Richard S. Weinert, eds., *Brazil and Mexico: Patterns of Late Development* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982).

these criteria, even if some may approximate certain features of democracies, such as holding elections which are less than decisive or less than fair.

Mature democracies normally have well established parties and party systems. This is largely a consequence of repeated electoral contests; parties are the quintessential organizations to capture the support of the electorate, and given the electoral method for recruiting top governmental and legislative officials, the latter tend also to be affiliated in a democracy to specific parties (even if in some instances individual political leaders create their own). Although the organizations of civil society can always pressure the state directly, the presence of the parties in the governmental, legislative, and electoral arenas of democracies leads to their becoming an important means for channeling demands as well as protecting the interests of various segments of national societies, and this stimulates the development of links between parties and organized groups. The labor movement is no exception. The unions can resort to direct action to manifest their discontent through strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, and so on, but in a democratic context the party or parties linked to the unions also usually become an important instrument for the expression of the political program and goals of the labor movement. This is the case even when such goals include strengthening the unions, their autonomy, and their ability to negotiate directly with employers over a broader and broader agenda of issues. Corporatist interest intermediation usually develops more securely where it is accompanied by a parallel political consensus forged by well established parties with links to the social actors.

Despite the reliance of unions on parties in democracies, the unions can rarely obtain party support for all their demands. This often leads them to put some distance between themselves and the party. When the party is in power, its reluctance to yield to many union demands is obvious; party leaders generally must implement an economic policy which does not satisfy all the aspirations of the worker constituency. When it is in the opposition, the party can certainly express itself with greater freedom in favor of union demands, but even then it cannot support them all the way. The electoral process generally leads the successful parties to acquire social bases of support which extend far beyond the purely labor union constituency. This obliges the party leaders (and with them, on occasion, some important top level union leaders) to occasionally disagree with certain union demands or strikes, since expressions of total agreement with them could undermine the broader support. Hence, the relation between unions and parties in a democratic regime creates a dilemma for the labor leaders. On the one hand, they hope to have a party which is supportive of their special interests, but, on the other, they require the party to be as strong as possible in order to be effective in providing that support. That strength can only be acquired in a democracy by broadening the party's electoral bases, but this necessarily

means that the party cannot support exclusively the interests of the unions, and at times must even turn its back on them.¹⁴

To be sure, the fragmentation of the party system (which is usually buttressed by proportional representation and the existence of multiple party-generating cleavages in national societies) may limit the degree to which the party linked to the labor movement can extend its electoral bases to nonunion sectors. Nevertheless, the dilemma also presents itself in the situations where there is a high degree of fragmentation of the party system, for even though this increases the viability of parties based exclusively on a union electorate, it is no less certain that in order for these to be efficacious they must enter into coalitions with parties which represent other sectors. Therefore, it can still be said, in general, that the more closely a party is identified only with unions, the greater will be its responsiveness to union demands, but the smaller will be its capacity to protect union interests. And the greater the political capabilities of the party, the lesser the possibility that the union will be able to subordinate it to its interests.

Hence, parties that from their inception are closely identified with unions must, in order to grow electorally and/or constitute governments or governmental coalitions, either establish agreements with the union leaders which will subordinate union demands to what are understood to be the economic and political possibilities of the moment, or cultivate a relative distancing of the ties between the party and the unions. Historically, the first option has only been viable in a limited number of those settings where the parties had ascendancy over the unions given their role in forming them, and where the unions were relatively centralized, as will be noted later. The second alternative has been more common. Unions have therefore often been forced to exert pressures to protect the interests of workers and of their organizations against the very parties with which they are linked when these have diversified their electoral bases and acceded to governmental power.

Authoritarian regimes generate an overall context that has different effects on the relationship between unions and parties. In general, given the absence of free, regularly scheduled elections for constituting governments and legislatures, the parties (i. e., all parties in the party system—not the government party of some forms of authoritarianism) do not have the fundamental means through which to express their political capabilities. Hence, it is far more difficult for them to play, if at all, the role of channels of the political pressures of the various social sectors that they partially have in democratic regimes. The organized groups of society must rely to a much greater extent on their abilities to pressure the state directly, using their own resources.

¹⁴ These notions, present in the original Spanish version of this paper, have been elaborated considerably by Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), as the “electoral trade-off,” pp. 104-111.

Another consequence of all authoritarian contexts is a tendency to party fragmentation, either through the formation of new political entities or in the creation of divisions in the already existing ones. The absence of free and competitive elections prevents party militants from pursuing more normal political careers apart from participating in political discussions and activities in interest groups and social movements. This permits even very small parties that would not stand the test of voter choices to have a level of activity and status similar to the electorally much more important parties. Thus it is not uncommon for dozens of party labels to proliferate under authoritarian regimes. This, again, tends to make the leadership of significant social organizations all the more important while weakening to an even greater degree the ability of the parties to provide some form of support for them.

The sharpest contrast with democracies is provided by authoritarian regimes that do not have any significant political arenas (such as a parliament, elections—however unfair—or local levels of government) where opposition parties and figures can act. In such especially closed regimes social mobilizations, petitions, declarations, and the like become the basic means to exert oppositional political pressures. Therefore, opposition party activists who lead groups that are able to organize such pressures acquire greater importance for the parties than they had previously. As party activities depend to a greater extent than in democracies on those of the particular interests groups, party activists will attempt to assume leadership positions in them and the parties' publicly expressed goals will tend to subordinate themselves as well to the objectives and discourses of such groups. If the authoritarian regime is, in addition, highly intolerant of demands formulated by autonomously organized social groups and of their efforts to mold public opinion, the link between opposition party activists and social organizations will be even more closely drawn. This is a consequence of the increase in personal risk involved in leading such groups, a risk that will be borne more by individuals with political commitments, and of the necessarily narrow field of possible group activities.¹⁵ The end result is a politicization of the organizations of civil society under regimes that usually present themselves as the means to stamp out such politicization in order to realize their vision of national unity and consensus.

Other authoritarian regimes, while equally closed to party actions in the political realm, may nonetheless provide significant room for the activities of social organizations, including unions.

¹⁵ It is for these reasons that students of labor movements, beginning with Selig Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), have long noted that strong state repression of unions leads to the politicization (and radicalization) of their leaderships. This does not mean that state repression explains, as Perlman and many subsequent analysts have thought, the success of these radicalized labor leaderships in forming the national labor movements. Repression does not operate as simply as this. For an elaboration of the effects of repression on labor movement formation see my Columbia University Ph.D. thesis, *Labor Movement Formation and Politics: Chile and France in Comparative Perspective, 1850-1950* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International # 8010420, 1979), part II.

While opponents of the regime will still be drawn to leadership positions in such organizations, their greater viability as a means to channel social demands will stimulate a more normal functioning of their internal governance, a better communication with their social constituencies, and—as a result—a larger autonomy of the leaders from the strategies formulated by opposition parties and figures.

Still other authoritarian regimes may contain significant arenas for the actions of opposition political figures, although by definition none of them are as open as democracies. In these settings the split between those opponents who favor attempting negotiations and compromises to seek an end to the authoritarian regime and those who prefer a strategy of social mobilizations and other forms of direct action—a split that characterizes oppositions to such regimes everywhere—can develop to a much greater extent than in other cases. If the regime is highly closed and repressive of social demands and organizations, the opponents who pursue a mobilizational strategy will generally gravitate to the popular organizations, including unions. If the regime is open to union and other social demands, as is the case with populist authoritarianisms, some sectors of union and social leadership will develop accommodations with the regime while others will seek to confront it with their mobilizational efforts, thereby generating a form of this split within the social organizations themselves.

THE TYPOLOGY

The criteria in the preceding section can be used to analyze any specific national situation, and can be combined conceptually to create, by deduction, logically possible “cases” which have not occurred historically. These may be useful exercises, but it is best for purposes of comparative analysis to construct types that approximate some of the principal variations that occur along these dimensions among national cases. Surely, a few cases will fit better than others into each type; but what is lost in specificity is gained in global vision.

In the previous discussion of the dimensions underlying the typology the variables were related to each other one by one; thus, the indicated effects are only to be found in that framework. In developing the various types or in analyzing a concrete situation, the variables are placed in a context such that in many cases the original relationships are modified. This does not invalidate but qualify it.

The Social Democratic Type

This type approximates the experiences of Scandinavia (except Finland), the United Kingdom, Austria, West Germany (the latter especially in the postwar period), Belgium, and The

Netherlands. In the Americas the case which most closely approaches it is that of Venezuela, although the historical origins of the organized labor movement there are different. In spite of occasional references to other cases this discussion will be based mainly on the Swedish, British, and West German experiences, since they contain the variations within the type.

Unions of the social democratic type are relatively strong, having obtained a high degree of affiliation in their respective countries.¹⁶ They have achieved a solid plant level presence, which enhances their national importance.¹⁷ Generally there is only one significant national union confederation or a certain fragmentation based on ascriptive differences, such as the linguistic ones that separate the Belgians or the religious ones that have long divided the unions and parties associated with the labor movement in The Netherlands. There is little local competition between politically and ideologically different union organizations or union tendencies; most unions are linked to a single social democratic or labor party, and this constitutes a main distinguishing feature of this type.¹⁸

Both the labor leaders and the allied parties have a political orientation which corresponds to a moderate socialist viewpoint with an incremental and reformist style of political action. This moderation has early roots in the historical development of the labor movement, and stems from the fact that unionism achieved an important degree of organizational consolidation at an early date (i.e., before 1920, as noted above) through direct negotiations with employers.¹⁹ For example, Turner points out that English textile unionism (including that of generally unskilled workers), began in the period prior to the 1824 abrogation of the anticombination legislation, and in the first half of the 19th century there already were collective bargaining agreements.²⁰ In Sweden Korpi says that: collective bargaining on the local level was common already in the 1890s" (even though employers at the time were trying to reverse union growth); the first national agreement in an industrial sector took place in 1905, and the following year the so-called:

¹⁶ For example, in Sweden the unionized proportion of the labor force reaches 80 to 85%; in Denmark about 80%; in Norway about 65%; in West Germany about 40%; in Great Britain about 46%. These figures are for the mid-1980s.

¹⁷ There are of course variations in the degree to which this is the case. Dutch unions, although strong at the national level, have historically been weaker at the plant level. Not surprisingly, they also have a lower density of affiliation (about 30%). For an introductory summary of Dutch industrial relations, see A. F. van Zweeden, "The Netherlands" in B. C. Roberts, *Industrial Relations in Europe: The Imperatives of Change* (London: Croom Helm, 1985). This book was sponsored by The Swedish Employers Confederation.

¹⁸ The Belgian labor movement created separate sections for the Flemish and French speaking communities of the same Socialist organization, which operates under a single central direction. The Dutch labor movement has had Socialist, Catholic and Protestant components. Its fragmentation was diminished by the 1976 merger of the Socialist and Catholic trade union confederations to form the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV). It is the most important workers' confederation, and it is loosely connected to the Dutch labor party.

¹⁹ This observation, of course, does not apply at all to Venezuela.

²⁰ H. A. Turner, *Trade Union Growth Structure and Policy: A Comparative Study of Cotton Unions in England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

December compromise” led to employer acceptance of the right to unionize.²¹ And although normally the German case is thought of as one in which there was considerable resistance to worker organization,²² it does not contradict the generalization established here. Lösche says that by 1907 collective bargaining agreements covered 900,000 workers, and that by 1913 this number had risen to 2,000,000.²³ In fact, the association between an early development (i. e., before the First World War) of regular collective bargaining and the emergence of politically moderate and reformist labor leaderships is so secure that this might well be called a law of the process of labor movement formation, although it must be added that this is not the only route that generates reformist leaders. Given this reformist orientation the parties associated with the labor movement were also accepted early on (although obviously not preferred) by capitalists and their political allies as possible organizers of governments.

The link between unions and parties in this type is close, a result of the fact that both emerged as part of the same opposition movement, and it constitutes a unifying factor for the labor movement. This is particularly so where, as in Sweden and Norway, the party intervened in the formation of the unions, and where there has been a direct historic continuity between both organizations ever since.²⁴ The German case is similar, although the fusion of the union

²¹ Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism: Work, Unions and Politics in Sweden* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1978) pp. 61 and 62.

²² For a rather heroic vision of the development of workers’ struggles in early twentieth-century Germany, see Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965). See also Mary Nolan, “Economic Crisis, State Policy, and Working-Class Formation in Germany, 1870-1900” in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Marks, pp. 55-63.

²³ Peter Lösche, “Stages in the Evolution of the German Labor Movement” in Adolph Sturmtal and James G. Scoville, eds., *The International Labor Movement in Transition: Essays on Africa, Asia, Europe and South America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 114. Even in the Ruhr area, where the employers most strongly resisted the organization of labor, there already was a change with regard to collective bargaining by the outbreak of the first world war. See Elaine Glovka Spencer, “Employer Responses to Unionism: Ruhr Coal Industrialists before 1914,” *Journal of Social History*, vol. 48 (September 1976).

²⁴ For useful introductory treatments of Scandinavian Social Democracy see Francis Castles, *The Social Democratic Image of Society; A Study of the Achievements and Origins of Scandinavian Social Democracy in Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), and Bruno Amoroso, *Rapporto dalla Scandinavia* (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1980). In the Danish case the unions developed one step ahead of the Social Democratic party. See Kenneth E. Miller, *Government and Politics in Denmark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 59.

The Scandinavian cases generated welfare state institutions that were unique given the universality of access to benefits without regard for employment conditions or means. These characteristics conform what Gøsta Esping-Andersen calls the “social democratic” model of welfare-state institutions, and he relates their origins to the political alliances that the social democratic parties could form with peasant sectors in Scandinavia to create legislative majorities that were impossible in other countries with equally strong labor parties. Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets: The Social Democratic Road to Power* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), part I; and Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

movement of Catholic origin with the Social Democratic one after the Second World War introduced—despite the relatively minor importance of the former—a certain discontinuity.²⁵ In Britain the unions greatly preceded the party and virtually created it; thus, the unifying impact of the party on the unions could not take place to the same extent as in the other cases. For example, jurisdictional conflicts between unions do take place in Great Britain, whereas in Sweden they are practically unknown.

As noted in the previous section, when the labor-related parties gain electoral strength, and especially when they gain government power, it is advantageous for them to either forge agreements with the unions over incomes and labor policies that can form part of a viable package of socioeconomic management, or to distance themselves from the unions. Given the size of the electoral support for the parties in the cases of this type, the frequency with which they participate in government coalitions or form governments by themselves, and the close historical associations between the parties and the unions that make any distancing between them more difficult, there are considerable pressures to reach clear party-union understandings over programs and policies. Since the viability of such policies depends in part on their acceptance by business, the labor linked parties become a major force pressing for agreements between labor and business associations on a wide range of socioeconomic policy issues. Social democratic cases with their large, moderate parties and their strong and well organized unions become, consequently, the principal (although by no means exclusive) grounds for the development of neocorporatism in democracies, the analysis of which has spawned a large literature since the mid seventies.²⁶ The prefix “neo” serves to distinguish these practices from corporatism under authoritarian regimes. In democracies the parties to the agreements are organized autonomously from the state, even if they may be recognized by the state as legitimate representatives of certain interests, while in the authoritarian regimes they are often organized under state auspices or are subject to its oversight and intervention.²⁷ Moreover, under authoritarian regimes corporatism is usually of a “sectoral” kind, as it takes the form of a direct relationship between favored interest groups and the state; by contrast, while such “sectoral” forms of corporatism can also be observed

²⁵ On the re-creation of German unionism after the Second World War, see Andrei S. Markovits, *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions. Strategies of Class and Interest Representation in Growth and Crisis* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 61-83.

²⁶ For a sample of some of the best articles on the subject, see Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1979); Gerhard Lehmbruch and Philippe Schmitter, eds., *Patterns of Corporatist Policy-Making* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1982); John H. Goldthorpe, *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Winn Grant, ed., *The Political Economy of Corporatism* (New York: Macmillan, 1985); and Suzanne Berger, ed., *Organizing Interests in Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁷ This distinction is developed by Philippe Schmitter under the terms of “societal” versus “state” corporatism; in his “Still the Century of Corporatism” in Schmitter and Lehmbruch, eds., *Trends towards Corporatist Intermediation*.

in democracies, the stress in neocorporatism is on “concertation,” i. e., the development of arenas for negotiation and compromise by a variety of partially antagonistic interests under state oversight.²⁸

A central focus of attention in the literature on neocorporatism as it pertains to labor has been the factors associated with the stability of its institutional arrangements. As noted by Regini, the most commonly mentioned factors are the organizational centralization and concentration of the relevant interest groups, their monopoly of representation, and the presence of the labor linked party in the government.²⁹ The first of these factors prevents the lower level leaders and even the rank-and-file from undermining through their job actions the agreements that are reached by the top leaderships of the associations. Centralized labor organizations, even in a social democracy, are much less responsive to local level demands, and this sometimes generates the necessary discontent among workers for local level leaders to break ranks with the main labor organization or for a surge in support for labor leadership segments with other political and ideological attachments. The second prevents other organizations from undermining the accords. And the third stems from the pressures that have already been indicated.

Other important factors, some of them related to the previous ones, can also be drawn from the literature. First, neocorporatist concertation is aided by the relative homogeneity of the economy, both within industrial branches and across sectors, and this condition is more easily found in smaller economies. Top level agreements that will be satisfactory to all who are supposed to be covered by them are difficult to reach in highly heterogeneous economies; workers in its stronger components are likely to press for greater advantages, sometimes with the sympathy of employers who may prefer to deal with local level labor representatives (especially when they are not unionized). Second, concertation is more likely to succeed when macroeconomic parameters are relatively stable, for this permits the various parties to the agreements a better estimate of their expected gains and costs under them. When such calculations are far off the mark, the actors will prefer to develop shorter term strategies. Third, the

²⁸ The distinction between “sectoral” and “concertive” forms of corporatism is developed by Gerhard Lehbruch, “Concertation and the Structure of Corporatist Networks” in Goldthorpe, ed.

Portugal under Salazar provides a good example of corporatism under an authoritarian regime. Its actual operation did not conform to Maïnoiescu’s conceptions despite the fact that they were its official ideology. Far from promoting a minimal state and the self-direction of the society and economy by organized groups, the Portuguese state intervened to an important extent in the formation of interest groups and had a heavy hand in guiding the economy. It also repressed labor organizations while it created the so-called “National Unions” as a means of worker containment. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between interests and economic policies during the formative period of Salazar’s regime, see Fernando Rosas, *O Estado Novo nos anos trinta, 1928-1938* (Lisboa: Imprensa Universitária-Editorial Estampa, 1986), especially pp. 268-283.

²⁹ Marino Regini, “The Conditions for Political Exchange: How Concertation Emerged and Collapsed in Italy and Great Britain” in Goldthorpe, ed., p. 132. The 1982 Spanish version of this paper emphasized these factors as well.

government and state bureaucracy must want and be able to implement effectively the policies that are contained in the agreements. No rational labor leadership can, for example, agree to help fight inflation through wage restraint if the state is unable to reduce its own deficit spending. Fourth, the agreements among the social actors must correspond to a parallel political consensus manifested in the government coalition (if it is such) and in the legislature. Otherwise political opponents of the accords may derail them. This consensus is more likely where there is an adequate transmission belt between interest associations and parties, where there is little interest group and party fragmentation, and where the parties have the necessary majorities to control the governmental and legislative processes. Fifth, concertation is aided by medium term economic growth. This permits the social actors (especially labor) to accept limitations to taking full advantage of momentary market opportunities given the expectation that improvements will nonetheless ensue. Finally, the onset and stability of neocorporatist concertation depends in part on the commitment of the labor movement to the political success of the labor linked party, which may result as much from a positive attachment to it as from an attempt to prevent other parties, unsympathetic to labor, from winning elections. A similar commitment from labor may be the result of an attempt to contribute the necessary stability for a smooth transition to democracy out of an authoritarian regime, or from a perception of national economic vulnerability.

These conditions are difficult to meet. As a result, neocorporatist concertation has not been particularly stable. Although it is not an exclusive experience of the social democratic cases, the above noted conditions have been best met in certain cases of this type, notably in Sweden, Norway, Austria, and The Netherlands. In Great Britain the decentralization of the unions prevented the Labour Party, when it was in office in the late 1970s, from having a successful program of agreements over income policies.³⁰ While neocorporatist concertation has been more successful in Germany, the accords have also been challenged by workers in the stronger industries.³¹ Even in Sweden there is evidence of wage drift as workers in the stronger industries pressure management for greater gains and to restore income differentials.³² In fact, the tendency during the 1980s was for a greater development of plant level bargaining and "micro-corporatism" at the firm level.

Nonetheless, in cases of this type, especially those with relatively centralized unions, neocorporative institutions will continue to be a more viable option than elsewhere as a framework

³⁰ See Regini, "The Conditions for Political Exchange." For a detailed analysis of labor relations in a British industrial workplace, see Ian Maitland, *The Causes of Industrial Disorder: A Comparison of a British and a German Factory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

³¹ See Wolfgang Streeck, "Neo-Corporatist Industrial Relations and the Economic Crisis in West Germany" in Goldthorpe, ed.

³² See Anders Leion, "Sweden" in B. C. Roberts, ed., p. 213.

for the political and industrial actions of the labor movement, although their short-term use and importance may show considerable oscillation.

The Contestatory Type

This type is based on the Chilean, French, and Italian cases, most typically during the 1950s and 1960s. Other cases that approach them at various times in their history are Uruguay, Finland, Spain, and Portugal. The contestatory type occurs under democratic regimes, so the features presented here do not correspond to the authoritarian experiences in these countries. The type is characterized by a labor movement that is divided politically and ideologically, with an important segment linked to the Communist Party. This discussion will be based principally on Chile and France.³³ In both cases labor organizations underwent most of their historically formative experiences since the late nineteenth centuries under political regimes that, given generally free multiparty competition in regularly scheduled national elections, can be viewed as democratic.

The early efforts of worker unionization in the cases of this type were invariably resisted strongly by capitalists. This produced (as always occurs in such circumstances) embryonic groups of radicalized union leaders, one of which opted for membership in the Third International. In contrast with what happened in other contexts where antiunion repression was also strong, in the Chilean and French cases the union leaders, both the radicalized and moderate ones, had early on a relatively broader impact in local and national politics in that they formed part of the anticlerical (and, in France, pro-Republican as well) coalitions. Although they had little success in obliging owners to accept their unions and to develop regular collective bargaining with them (unlike in the Social Democratic cases), the political importance of worker organizations stimulated their development outside the plant level as cooperatives, mutual aid societies, labor exchanges, and centers for political discussion and agitation—sometimes with local or national government subsidies. There was, then, a curious disjunction between strong social repression and political openness and freedom for the early labor organizers, which created a propitious context for the development of radical worker leaderships: they could develop the organizational capacity to disseminate their views on capitalist exploitation while the intransigence of employers lent credence to their arguments.³⁴

³³ Works by Alan Angell, *Politics and the Labor Movement in Chile* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), and Jean Daniel Reynaud, *Les Syndicats en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1975) are especially recommended for each case.

³⁴ For a full elaboration of this argument see my *Labor Movement Formation and Politics*.

Since the unusual political context that made this disjunction possible can be traced to the sharp clerical-anticlerical division at the time in which labor organizations were in their formative stages, this explains why the contestatory cases tended to develop in Catholic countries.³⁵ But a contestatory type of unionism did not develop in all such countries, as illustrated by most Latin American experiences. For this type to develop fully the leaders of the embryonic labor organizations, be they radicalized or not, had to succeed in consolidating them, for which they needed to establish a plant level presence and begin regular processes of collective bargaining with management. Unlike what occurred in Social Democratic cases, in all contestatory ones this took place after 1920, and only after capitalists were directly pressured by legislation and/or political events. State recognition of plant level union rights and its initiative in establishing rules for collective bargaining were necessary before these could be obtained by the unions.

This final state-induced stage of labor movement formation was notably characterized by the absence of political repression or even discrimination against any of the preexistent embryonic leadership groups, and by no officious attempts to create or foster the development of competing ones. This was due to the fact that the political context at the time was one in which the parties of the left with close links to the unions were participating directly in the government or at least in the governing consensus (in Chile and France during the Popular Fronts; in Spain, partially during the Second Republic; in Italy and again in France under the immediate post-war liberation governments, and in Portugal and Spain with their recent transitions to democracy). Given the prominent political positions occupied by the parties linked to the labor movement, they played important roles in channeling the overall political and industrial actions of the labor movement. Hence, the sharp massification of union memberships generated by the the development or strengthening of a plant level presence by labor organizations and by the inception of regular collective bargaining, as well as the consequent growth of middle level union militants, took place at a time in which the union-party links were closely drawn. This strengthened the political and ideological identities and divisions in the expanding labor movement, to the degree that labor union militance and even membership (where it was not obligatory, as in Chile's so-called "industrial unions") became to a significant extent a matter of political sympathy, identity, and even choice. The result was a form of unionism which was fragmented ideologically and politically from the national to the local level.

Given these historical origins, the associations between unions or segments of unions and parties in the contestatory type tend to be quite close, although many union leaders may

³⁵ Many analysts have tried to associate the strength of Communist parties in Latin Europe to Catholicism, by arguing that Communism represents the secular form of a totalistic and authoritarian religious framework that pervades Latin culture. Even French commentators have made this argument; see Alain Peyrefitte, *Le Mal Français* (Paris: Plon, 1976), pp.338, 397. I strongly disagree.

deny it. In the case of the Communist parties, the link is reinforced by the fact that they developed originally in direct relation with nuclei of organized workers, by their self-definition and identity as parties representing working class interests (which leads them to be especially active in unions), and to the party commitment and discipline they require from their militants—including the Communist union leaders. These reinforcing characteristics do not apply to the same extent, if at all, to the other parties (Socialist, Christian Democratic, laicist, or others) which are active in the labor movements of this group of countries. In these latter cases the union-party links, although much looser, are continually reproduced by the political divisions that are already institutionalized in the union environment, while these, in turn, are reinforced by the presence of the strong Communist segment. New generations of prospective leaders are usually forced to belong to one of the organized political-ideological nuclei in order to gain the positions to which they aspire, for union militance and support networks are closely drawn around them at the local, and particularly regional and national levels. The occasional individuals who build union leadership careers apart from the established political-ideological nuclei in fact end up creating, sometimes unwittingly, what they usually denounce: a new organized segment that must define itself (even if using labels such as “independent” or “autonomous”) as different from the others, which in the end only reaffirms the importance of the existing political and ideological divisions. Sometimes leaders that profess to be independent of the major segments (or those who are associated with a small group) can acquire important positions as the various political-ideological groupings need a neutral or bridge figure to lead an organization or a labor action; but this is, again, a result of the politicized environment.

The political and ideological divisions between the different tendencies lead to a process of competition for the allegiance of union militants and the rank and file. Each segment attempts to present itself as the best representative of worker interests. Unlike divisions created by ascriptive differences in the workforce, the political-ideological ones can potentially occur in all localities, although they usually do not extend at any given moment to all of them. The actual or potential competition generates union leaderships who are highly responsive and attentive to rank and file aspirations, and easily leads to an escalation of union demands and worker expectations. And yet unions in this type of labor movement are normally quite weak. This is partly a consequence of the very divisions that lead to the competition in the first place, and partly a result of the fact that employer resistance and repression of unions continues to be strong. Employers tend to view unions as tools of the parties of the Left, especially of the Communist Party, and this serves as a convenient justification for their antiunion posture. Such attitudes have the sympathy of government authorities during periods of conservative ascendancy, which further feeds employer intransigence, and it in turn recreates a union environment in which leadership cadre self-select from among those who have ideological and political commitments.

The weakness of unions is also a consequence of the fact that many rank and file workers view them as excessively riddled by “politics.” Given the combination of union weakness, the tendency towards demand escalation that stems from the competition between different segments of leadership, and the great capacity to formulate comprehensive programs for change that comes from the ideologically charged environment, this form of unionism typically generates a large gap between what it proposes and what it obtains. It easily articulates a critical discourse regarding social and economic ills that should be corrected, but it lacks the necessary strength (except during extraordinary periods of mobilization) to pressure employers and the state effectively.

The interconnections between unions, parties, and politics ensure that labor demands and actions become quite readily matters of general political debate. The public perception of labor conflict is therefore heightened. Moreover, the influence of the Left is reflected in the fact that its discourse pervades labor actions. Thus, a strike which in the United States would be no more than an attempt on the part of a limited group of workers to gain benefits, in the contestatory setting would tend to be presented as a manifestation of the class struggle by union and party circles. Partly as a reaction to this phraseology, the same events are frequently viewed as expressions of a national crisis by employers and the right.

It is not infrequent that one or more parties with union connections form part of the government while others remain in the opposition. The labor leaders linked to the government usually adopt a more moderate overall discourse, but the underlying competition in the union field makes it virtually impossible for them to develop neocorporatist concertation with the authorities over incomes or other medium to long term policies. Rather, such leaders try to use their government contacts to secure specific advantages for their constituencies, often in a clientelistic rather than universalistic fashion, that will help them retain or even enhance their union bases. Meanwhile those who are linked to opposition parties try to articulate maximal worker demands and to press for them through union actions and demonstrations.³⁶ Rank and file workers may oscillate between supporting one group or the other depending on their assessments of the relative utility of government connections or of oppositional mobilization.

Despite—or perhaps because of—the divisions, there are frequent calls for unity voiced by the various segments of the labor movement. Unity of action among them, though always subject to an undercurrent of competition, can be achieved in certain periods. They require lengthy preparatory discussions and sometimes difficult accommodations to reach common

³⁶ Although the leftist parties (Communist and Socialist principally) tend to be in the opposition, these differences in strategy do not depend on the type of party but on whether they are in the government or in the opposition. The roles tend to be inverted rapidly when the left forms the government, as was demonstrated under Allende in Chile, dramatically so in the case of the El Teniente copper miners strike of May and June, 1973.

denominators in union demands and objectives, as well as mechanisms for collegiate leadership. Such periods usually strengthen the labor movement, and are associated with increases in the number of unionized workers. When the parties associated to the unions are in government, top level neocorporatist concertation may develop, although it is not likely to prove stable. Periods of extensive unity of action increase the autonomy of the unions vis-à-vis the parties as union agreements over the common denominators take precedence. As a result, the contestatory type of unionism becomes more like the social democratic one of the decentralized form.

The overall political context influences the forging of labor movement unity. It can occur when all the labor linked parties find themselves in the opposition for a lengthy period, and a coalition between them is viewed as necessary to increase their political chances. This is what led to unity of action in France at the time of the *Programme Commun de la Gauche* in the early to mid seventies, as Socialists and Communists formed an alliance to seek to end Gaullist dominance of the Fifth Republic. Unity of action may also be stimulated as one of the labor linked parties seeks to end its overall political isolation. This was notably the case with the Italian Communist party as it attempted to position itself in the political mainstream as a viable government coalition partner.

The crisis of Communist parties and the end of the cold war have had a considerable impact on this type of labor movement. The decline of ideological distance among its various segments has enhanced the possibilities for greater collaboration among them and increased union autonomy from the parties. The labor movement's agenda has changed to focus more on specific reforms than on all-encompassing programs for change coupled with shorter term defensiveness. And yet, it is likely that the labor movements will remain divided, partly out of bureaucratic inertia, generating a highly pluralistic labor movement whose segments, while pursuing similar goals, will continue to compete as well as collaborate as the circumstances dictate.

The Pressure Group Type

This type is based on the United States, with the situations of England in the last decades of the 19th Century, and of Puerto Rico, Canada, and Colombia as ones that approximate it. The type is characterized principally by the fact that the unions developed without generating a new party; the union leaders developed, instead, links to preexisting parties. This discussion will focus exclusively on the American case.

J. David Greenstone argued that changes on both sides of the Atlantic have virtually eliminated prior differences between American labor politics and that of European countries with a social democratic orientation.³⁷ In the United States the unions strongly linked themselves to the

³⁷ J. David Greenstone, *Labor in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 2nd. rev. ed.).

Democratic Party, while in Europe the Social Democratic and Labour parties have moderated their political views to the degree that they cannot be distinguished from majority sentiments in the American party. This thesis has some merit, especially in the context of the 1960s, and if one compares the United States primarily with Great Britain—in other words, precisely the basic comparison of Greenstone's study. At that point in the United States the Democrats had developed a consensus over expanding welfare institutions, while the leftist and neutralist currents that were to flower a decade later within British Labour still had not expressed themselves with full force.

And yet, even in the context of the 1960s the Democratic Party did not have links to the unions that were as close as those between European Social Democratic and Labour parties. Just to take the British case, the unions have an institutionalized presence in Labor Party governance unlike anything in the Democratic Party; moreover, it would be inconceivable for British union leaders to openly ask for electoral support for candidates of the Conservative Party, while American union leaders can be found supporting Republican candidates. The influence of the unions in the Democratic Party depends on their always renewed effort to exchange electoral support for individual candidates for the latter's promises of support for union causes at the legislative and governmental level; if Democratic Party candidates are not in harmony with union interests the latter may sit the election out or support the Republican candidate if he or she seems attractive enough. Moreover, while in Britain a Labour Member of Parliament will virtually by definition vote for legislation that is viewed most favorable to union interests among the options being discussed, in the United States this by no means can be taken for granted with Democratic (or Republican) Party legislators, even after they have been elected with union support. In addition, by contrast to the British case, there is no reason why various union organizations following their perceived specific interests, may not vote for different candidates. A variety of conflicts between and within unions—jurisdictional, political, etc.—are much more frequent and open in the United States than in Britain, which is itself more contentious than comparable Northern European cases. The American union heterogeneity manifests itself in an organizational structure that generates relatively strong federations but not strong confederal leadership.

In sum, to an extent unknown in Europe, the political action of American unions consists of exchanging electoral and financial political support for individual candidates (of mainly the Democratic but also of the Republican parties) in the expectation that they will favor their legislative interests. And if in time American unions developed more frequently their ties to figures in the Democratic Party, this occurred primarily because the process of party differentiation generated by electoral competition led the Democrats to appeal more to popular sectors, immigrants, and non-Protestant groups (and to attract candidates that would do so), while

Republicans became the party of more elite groups and nativists; and also because of the experience of labor under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Yet it is not in the interest of the unions to commit themselves to loyally back the Democratic candidates. This would be prejudicial to them because it would imply losing part of their capacity to renew the exchange of promises for mutual support.³⁸ The candidates would simply count the union vote as secure and devote their energies to capturing the swing vote.

The fundamental question in the American case is why a new party did not develop along with the unions, as occurred in other countries. This question should not be confused (as it usually is) with the one originally formulated by Werner Sombart, namely, why did Socialist parties not develop along with the unions? The abundant literature regarding American "exceptionality" tends to conflate both questions, as if the unusual aspect of this case were the latter and not the former.³⁹ But many countries did not develop "Socialist" parties in connection with labor movement formation, while only a few did not develop any major or important parties at all—Socialist or otherwise. This is what should be viewed as the exceptional feature of the formation of the U. S. labor movement.

The discussions of American exceptionalism from the perspective of the absence of socialism usually contain a naive but unstated and implicit view of the process of party formation. The implication is that parties are simply formed when a segment of the adult population discovers it has common interests opposed to those of other sectors, which then somehow gives rise to a party to defend and express that interest. In other words, the absence of socialism in the United States would be largely due to the lack of a clear conception among workers that they have common interests in opposition to those of capitalists—i. e., a lack of class consciousness and its accompanying socioeconomic and political solidarity. Thus, analysts have stressed the fact that American workers largely accepted the dominant liberal values of its capitalist system with its emphasis on property rights and free markets, and many hoped to forge an independent business future for themselves. They have argued that workers' sense of class solidarity was impaired by their strong ethnic and racial divisions, by the very high rates of spatial mobility, by the lack of salience of class and status divisions given the unusual egalitarianism of American society, and by the relatively high standard of living many workers enjoyed—factors that all diminished the

³⁸ This is therefore a very different type of unionism from the contestatory type, where union leadership positions and subsequent careers as such are to a large extent predicated upon the prospective leaders' loyalty to a particular party or political group.

³⁹ For a sample of this literature which includes articles written from different viewpoints, see John H. M. Laslett and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Failure of a Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1974). This volume contains a brief selection from Sombart's book, *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?*, which was first published in 1906; in English it appeared as *Why is There No Socialism in the United States?* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976). The "exceptionality" obviously results from a comparison with Western Europe only.

appeal of socialist activists who tried to mobilize workers on the basis of a class identity. They have noted that white male workers did not have to organize politically to demand an extension of the franchise since they already had the vote when they emerged as a class, and therefore they did not—as in “Europe”—undergo the politicization that such struggles produced. The United States was therefore exceptional because its workers were, in sum, different.⁴⁰

A more nuanced conception of the process of party formation would shed greater clarity on this question. Very briefly, this process—as it applies to mass parties that did not emerge originally out of divisions among notables in predemocratic parliament—includes three elements: The first is a societal cleavage that leads sectors of the population to generate common identities and perceptions of shared interests exclusive of other sectors. This furnishes a potential mass base or constituency of support for parties and is the level of party formation that corresponds most closely to the class consciousness argument. The second ingredient is the existence of social organizations (such as churches, clubs, neighborhood committees, cooperatives, occupational associations, or unions) that group individuals who share a common position within the social cleavage. Such organizations provide leaders, militants, and members to form the new party and to mobilize broader support for it, and often help create the perception of common identity in the relevant population. Sometimes the coincidence between the social rupture and organized groups does not readily exist, and even when it does the latter’s leaders may be unwilling or discouraged from attempting to form a new party. Unions and churches (of religious minorities or dominant ones that are threatened by secularization) are usually the most party-generative of groups given their organizational continuity and shared identities and interests. Differences and divisions among these social organizations, for whatever reasons, can be at the origin of the formation of more than one party on the basis of a single polarity in a social cleavage.

⁴⁰ Many of these arguments, and their detractors for one reason or another, can be found in the selections in Laslett and Lipset. Most of them were anticipated by Sombart and redeveloped by Perlman in *A Theory of the Labor Movement*. The discussions since then vary in the emphasis they assign to the different factors.

Since the publication of the original Spanish version of this paper, only Gary Marks, *Unions in Politics*, p. 197, has defined—as far as I know—American exceptionalism as the absence of a new party rather than as the absence of socialism. However, he frequently refers back to arguments that pertain to the question of why no socialist class consciousness developed among American workers. For instance, at one point he speaks of the “absence of a revolutionary tradition” among white workers given their receipt, early on, of the “gift” of the franchise (p. 221). This regularly overstated argument forgets that workers in other countries, notably Denmark, France, Switzerland, and Chile also did not have to fight for the extension of the franchise as the process of building unions in the last quarter of the nineteenth century began.

A significant trend in the literature on the American working class experience stresses that workers did indeed have class consciousness, although it was not of the kind that led to socialism. See for instance Sean Wilentz, “Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement” in *International Labor and Working Class History*, 26 (1984).

And the third element consists of the constitutional, electoral, and state-administrative rules that either favored or discouraged the formation of all parties or of new ones.⁴¹

Regardless of whatever the peculiarities of American society and its working class actually were in comparison to others, and these points are always debatable, it is safe to assume from the record of occasionally bloody strikes and other labor conflicts that workers perceived the cleavage between them and the owners of the nation's firms. The discussion of the failure of a new and successful workers' party to become grafted unto that cleavage should center, therefore, on the second and third levels of party formation. There was an available mass for a working class party in the United States, but the union leaderships generally did not press for it, and the electoral and other state-generated rules strongly discouraged it. This paper will not focus on the latter aspect. Suffice it to say that it was very difficult for third parties to obtain a place on the ballot for national elections given the variety of requirements set by individual states for such inclusion; the rules were rigged in favor of the—by the latter part of the nineteenth century—already well established two party system. Moreover, political dissidents from the established parties encountered a quite heavy fare of repression. What follows will examine the union level of the party formation process.

The single most convincing explanation for the aborted development of a new major party coupled with the emergence of the American labor movement was the great flexibility and cooptive capacity of the two established parties, which were related to their lack of national coordination and absence of specific ideological and programmatic outlooks.⁴² This flexibility was accompanied by the rigidity of their virtual monopoly of access to the electoral market, providing a peculiar mix that was indeed exceptional when compared to other national experiences. The United States has a strong two-party system, but weak parties in terms of their national articulation.⁴³ The course of least resistance for the emerging union leaders and militants was to use the opportunities presented by the highly permeable parties to influence, first, their selection

⁴¹ See Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavages, Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction" in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967) for an analysis of party formation that stresses the importance of social cleavages and of state and legal rules under the rubric of "thresholds of representation." They emphasize much less the role of what I have identified here as the second level of party formation.

⁴² This factor has been part of the repertoire of explanations for American exceptionalism since Sombart and Perlman. My point here is to give it much greater weight, and to recast its explanatory value.

The British Labour party was, in the last analysis, a product of a lack of the same flexibility in the Liberal Party. Although many union-linked figures became Liberal MPs in the so-called Lib-Lab period, and some union segments resisted the formation of the Labour party, a majority in the labor movement was disappointed at the tepid reactions of the Liberals to the devastating decision rendered by the courts in the Taft Vale case. This spurred the formation of the Labour party. The British procedural rules and constitutional system were also more favorable to the formation of third parties than those of the United States.

⁴³ The closest case to it was the Colombian two-party system until the 1970s.

of candidates and, second, the outcome of the elections in ways that would enhance, or at least not prejudice, union interests. Thus, if American unions did not stimulate the formation of a new party it was, more than anything else, a product of the fact that they found greater short term rewards in not doing so given the political opportunities and obstacles they faced.⁴⁴

In the end, the political exchange of electoral for legislative and government (including local and state government) support that lay at the basis of the unions' associations with the parties led mainly to links with the Democrats given, as noted above, a process of political differentiation. And yet, this exchange had a history that was complicated by the fact that, more than elsewhere, the history of American labor union formation in the industrial sector of the economy contains not one but two distinct, albeit related, processes: one for skilled workers in mainly craft unions associated with the American Federation of Labor, and the other for the unskilled. The reasons for this are, once again, significantly tied to the political context.

The inception of regular collective bargaining and plant level penetration for the skilled workers in craft unions occurred by direct negotiations between such workers and employers before 1920. This resulted, as noted above, in the emergence of a labor leadership whose political orientations steered clear of radical attitudes. The same process for the unskilled workers (exceptions such as the coal miners aside) began with the enactment of the New Deal's National Labor Relations Act in 1935 and extended until the beginnings of the cold war, favoring, under legislative and other state pressures, the expansion of industrial or general forms of unionism. Some of the main leaders of the second process of union consolidation at one time belonged to the AFL, but clashed with it and eventually withdrew due to the fact that the Federation did not adequately support the difficult process of unionization of the unskilled workers; their labor market position was not as strong as the skilled workers', and the employers (with considerable help from the state, especially the courts, the national guards, federal troops, and on occasion the police), fiercely resisted all efforts to organize them.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The same argument can be made for Catholics in the United States. The Protestant-Catholic cleavage has been a strong fault line in American society, and given the minority and originally nonelite positions of the latter, in another context, assisted by the network of parishes, the Catholic population would have been an important source of support for the formation of a new party. And yet the flexibility of the established parties, in this case again mainly of the Democrats, absorbed it as well.

⁴⁵ Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Noonday Press, 1989), pp. 12-13, 208-209, 219, has once again usefully stressed the strongly antiunion attitudes of American employers. The skilled-unskilled cleavage within the American work force also coincided with an ethnic split: the former tended to be native born or older immigrants, while the latter were newcomers (p. 218).

For a very informative review of state actions in the labor field, including the early repressive role of the courts and the strong influence of the National Labor Relations Board in shaping the organizational structure of collective bargaining and unions, see Christopher L. Tomlins, *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

In the early years of labor movement formation, the skilled workers' tighter labor markets gave them everywhere a significant edge over the unskilled in forcing employers to accept their unions. They could develop a privileged bargaining relationship with management, while the latter compensated for the higher costs of skilled labor with lower wages for the nonunionized unskilled labor force. This arrangement was easily upset if the skilled workers took a leading role in the unionization of the unskilled. While some tension between the two types of workers can be found in most labor movement histories, the usual pattern was for those with greater skills to eventually take part in forming broader worker organizations. Some analysts have suggested that this process took place as a consequence of changes in industry at the turn-of-the-century years that led to a deskilling of important groups of skilled workers.⁴⁶ Perhaps, but this can hardly explain why the consequences of such changes did not show up to the same extent in the United States, which was unique regarding the depth and longevity of the conflict between the two categories of workers.⁴⁷ That most skilled workers were white males who were native born or long-time immigrants, and that many of the unskilled included recent immigrants and some women as well as blacks, did not help, as has been noted repeatedly, to engender solidarity between the two groups.

But there is a better explanation. The exclusive bargaining strategy of the AFL's skilled worker unions or, as Laurie calls it, their "prudential" form of unionism that stayed clear of the bitter conflicts staged by the broader masses of workers,⁴⁸ would not have been sustained for long if its leaders had been committed to forming a new party. Where labor movement formation entailed as well the creation of a working class party, the skilled worker leaders were forced to look beyond their immediate labor markets in order to build the broadest possible support for the party. Class solidarity followed from this political-organizational imperative. The AFL did not have this imperative. It could simply rely on the above noted political exchange to defend its interests given the openness of the established parties. And while increasing the numbers of workers it could mobilize by organizing the unskilled would perhaps have enhanced its ability to engage in the political exchange, this would have diluted the craft unions' specific political interests and threatened their already established relationship with employers, all for an uncertain gain in the political exchange. The unusually sharp organizational divisions and conflicts based on the

⁴⁶ See for instance Zygmunt Bauman, *Between Class and Elite* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), part III.

⁴⁷ The deskilling effects of technological change and their negative consequences on craft unions are well documented for the iron and steel industry. See David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Non-Union Era* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

⁴⁸ Laurie, *Artisans into Workers*, chapter 6.

In referring here to the AFL's skilled worker unions I am deliberately excluding the miners and others who do not fit the skilled worker profile. They did constitute a substantial portion of the AFL's membership, though a smaller proportion of its affiliated organizations.

overlapping effects of ethnicities and labor markets within American labor flourished, then, in part because of the permeability and lack of national articulation of the preexisting parties.⁴⁹ As noted previously, party formation has a unifying impact on labor movement formation.

The state's legislative and political pressures on employers in favor of the collective bargaining and unionization rights of unskilled workers came at a time when a Democratic administration sought a broad alliance to support its antidepression programs and to maximize its electoral chances. Coming on the heels of the conservative Republican administrations of the 1920s, leaders of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which had splintered off the AFL over the unskilled worker unionization issue,⁵⁰ jumped at the chance, and over the next decade the density of American unionism rose dramatically. This strengthened as well the association of the unions and the Democratic Party. The political exchange henceforth focused more heavily on the internal process of candidate selection and lobbying within that party. Sectors within the labor movement that favored developing a new worker's party in the '20s and the '30s still faced the hurdles created by the electoral procedures and rules, and those that did not—as became plainly evident during the New Deal—grasped the advantages of the openness of the (in this case) Democratic Party. Once again, third party formation in connection with labor union development was undercut.

Moreover, there was considerable repression against the leftist segments of the labor movement. In the late teens and early twenties it strongly affected the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World, and later, especially with the inception of the Cold War, it fell on the Communist militants that had gained a minority influence in the CIO through their activism in the unionization efforts.⁵¹ Hence, although the American labor movement—like the contestatory ones—had to draw on state support to gain regular collective bargaining processes and to extend unionization, the overall political context—unlike those in the contestatory cases—was one which through a variety of means discriminated against the left rather than supported it. In the last analysis, the fundamental difference was that the CIO leaders did not have firm alternative party

⁴⁹ Lack of space here does not permit a fuller discussion of the relationship between the peculiarly loose organization of American parties and the working class. An important aspect of it was the political machines in cities which engaged in a form of cooptive populism, in particular with immigrant workers, that reduced the ability of third-party organizers to expand their own bases of support. See Martin Shefter, "Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class in the Late Nineteenth Century" in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). The essential point was not that American workers (white and male) had the vote from early on, but who they could vote for—and in the case of the political machines, who they were enticed to vote for.

⁵⁰ The two organizations were reunited in 1955 forming the AFL-CIO.

⁵¹ For a history of the IWW, see Melvin Dubofsky, *We Shall be All* (Chicago, Ill.: Quadrangle Books, 1969); and for a treatment of the second, see Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism: The Conflict that Shaped American Unions* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1977).

commitments. Following the style begun by the AFL, they also relied on their ability to pressure the established parties, especially the Democrats. Hence, the New Deal coalition was one of social segments and interests within the cover of the Democratic party, whereas the Popular Front and other coalitions that pressed for the extension of unionization and collective bargaining in the contestatory cases took the form, first and foremost, of party coalitions.

Overall, American unions have probably been weakened by not having a more secure connection to the political system through a major party. As worldwide changes in the economy force a decline in the traditional areas of union strength, their capacity to use the political exchange successfully declines as well, and they cannot resort to organic party ties to compensate for their dwindling strength. It is also probably the case that this type of unionism generates a leadership self-selection process that favors individuals who are characterized more by attitudes and styles of functionaries than by their dedication to some larger cause.

The State-Sponsored Type

This type is based primarily on Argentina during the first Peronist era (1943-1955), Brazil until the mid 1970s, and Mexico. In significant aspects, this type of labor movement is also kindred to that of Communist regimes. Despite the considerable differences between them, the fundamental characteristic these cases share is the formation of a labor movement whose ability to act is significantly determined by its direct or indirect subordination to the state. This subordination is indicative of state authoritarianism in its relations with the organizations of civil society, although in the case of labor it is of a complex cooptive and populist kind that not only permits a degree of labor leadership influence over policy-makers but also provides benefits to unionized workers—especially in the formative period.

Numerous authoritarian regimes have tried to sponsor labor organizations and/or sought to impose labor leaders addicted to them only to have the former penetrated by militants that are linked to the opposition and the latter rejected by workers. Such situations are different from those of this type, in which state elites did succeed in large measure in orchestrating a labor movement that was accepted by workers, although with variations from sector to sector and between the national cases. Such acceptance explains in part the resilience of the labor organizations in the face of changing political conditions and challenges from labor oppositions. And yet, this type of labor movement is, in the long run, impossible to sustain under two different—and quite opposite—political contexts: a form of democratization that fosters the development of labor's organizational autonomy by changing the laws related to unions and industrial relations as well as the behavior of labor and state elites towards union organizations; and a turn towards a more repressive and restrictive form of authoritarianism in state-labor

relations.⁵² Both changes undermine the viability of the labor leaderships linked to the state; in either case they must transform their relationships with the union bases, the employers, and the state, or their opponents will gain a greater presence or even supplant them in the labor movement. During the best of times state-sponsored cases contain significant labor oppositions to the officious leaderships, but they are kept at bay as long as state elites continue to exercise their sometimes intricate mix of cooptation of labor leaders, a certain largesse in the face of worker demands, and repression.

The difference between successful and unsuccessful attempts at state sponsorship of unions has to do, once again, with the conditions that prevailed at the time unions first achieved regular collective bargaining and plant level penetration. State-sponsored unionism only succeeded in those contexts in which, first, the leaders of the preexisting embryonic unions have been unable to establish a plant level presence and regular collective bargaining, thereby leaving the organizational space of the working class largely vacant; second, where the government stimulated the formation of unions led by individuals who professed to support it, excluding those who did not; third, where the authorities were not perceived as acting simply in favor of employer interests, and had to force them to accept the worker representatives of the newly established unions and collective bargaining institutions; fourth, where this formative process was accompanied by considerable popular mobilization, including especially a massive increase of first-time union affiliations into the state-sponsored organizations;⁵³ and fifth, where the creation of these labor organizations was accompanied by a tangible flow of benefits for the working

⁵² Brazil's imperfect democracy between 1945 and 1964 did little to change the relationship of the state towards labor, although there were some variations over the period. The state sponsored form of unionism remained in place. The Brazilian military government after 1964 did more to undermine the system by using it exclusively as a tool for labor containment. By the mid '70s, with the development of the so-called "new unionism," the state-sponsored model can be said to have substantially broken down, although the leaders of the new unions took advantage of the old system in order to gain prominence in labor circles. The changes between the old and the new unions are basically two: 1) the development of leaders who favor the autonomy of labor organizations from the state, with leaderships whose careers depend primarily on rank and file support; and 2) an attempt to strengthen the plant level organization of unions, engaging employers in sometimes extra-legal plant level collective bargaining. For an analysis of the new union leaders see Leôncio Martins Rodrigues, *CUT: Os Militantes e a Ideologia* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1990).

⁵³ The massification of unionism in Argentina and Brazil led to the organization of large numbers of native-born and even rural workers who were not part of the European immigrant segments (or their sons and daughters) that characterized the artisanal and industrial work force of the first decades of the twentieth century. This led analysts to think that the populist leaders of state-sponsored labor organizations could succeed only because these were "available masses" that had no contact with the anarchist and socialist traditions of the previous generation of European migrants. For expressions of this view on Argentina, see Gino Germani, "El Surgimiento del peronismo: el rol de los obreros y de los migrantes internos" in *Desarrollo económico*, vol. 13, no. 51 (October-December 1973), and on Brazil, Leôncio Martins Rodrigues, *La clase obrera en el Brasil* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1969), p. 98. This factor has been greatly exaggerated; the organizational variables are more important.

class.⁵⁴ These necessary conditions are rarely met, but they were present, though with variations in degree and form, under the governments of Perón in Argentina, Vargas in Brazil, and Cárdenas in Mexico.⁵⁵

Union leadership careers in the cases of this type depend to a significant extent on retaining good relations with the proper government elites. The union leaderships' dependence on the government produces an ambivalent and problematical relationship between them and the rank and file. The leaders must maneuver between the many times opposite pressures generated by the need to retain official support and the ability to control worker demands and actions. Both are important for union leadership success: official support, tacit or explicit, is in the last analysis decisive, but it is retained insofar as the leaders are able to prevent worker mobilizations they do not direct or cannot terminate. To this end, they must try to avoid the buildup of worker discontent that could contribute to the development of alternative opposition leadership groups among the rank and file, which means that they cannot simply accept—or be perceived as accepting—state policies that may have a visibly negative impact on the rank and file's working or living conditions. For this reason, the leaderships of state-sponsored unions tend to be strong advocates of workers' rights and interests in public and semi-public state policy making circles, and yet, despite their rhetoric which is sometimes to the contrary, they usually do not foster worker mobilizations against state policies lest they lose the authorities' support. In fact, with the exception of worker mobilizations in favor of the government or a certain faction within the ruling circles when these are divided, or against specific employers to whom the authorities are indifferent or want to pressure for some end, labor leaders in this type of unionism are very wary of worker actions and initiatives for fear of losing control over them. As a result, this type of unionism is very top-heavy. Union organizations are highly undemocratic in their governance, the process of collective bargaining is secluded from rank and file influence, rival leaderships are coopted

⁵⁴ Needless to say, these characteristics do not apply to the formation of labor organizations under Communist regimes.

⁵⁵ There is a large literature of uneven quality on the formative period of state-sponsored unionism in these countries. The following are especially recommended as synthetic treatments: Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1971), especially part II; Leôncio Martins Rodrigues, "Sindicalismo e Classe Operária (1930-1964)" in Bóris Fausto, ed., *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira. Vol. X: O Brasil Republicano* (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1981); and Arnaldo Córdova, *La política de masas del cardenismo* (México, D. F.: Serie Popular Era, 1984, sixth edition).

An important new book by Juan Carlos Torre, *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón: Sobre los orígenes del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana—Instituto Torcuato di Tella, 1990), explains in careful detail why many pre-existing union leaders (principally non-communist ones) became supporters of Perón's rise to power before his election to the presidency in 1946 given his delivery of many of the benefits and recognition they had been struggling unsuccessfully to obtain during the previous decade. It also shows how Perón subsequently eliminated the most independent minded among them, subordinating the labor movement to his cronies. And yet, Torre also argues that the strong labor base of the resulting Peronist party-movement meant that it was always open to the renewed influence of labor demands and leaders.

or repressed, union leaders at even relatively low levels are professionalized, leaders are sometimes given control over hiring, and the leaders refine the art of controlling and manipulating all union meetings and congresses.⁵⁶ This type of unionism also tends to stimulate relatively high levels of affiliation, which may seem paradoxical at first glance because the larger numbers may enhance rank and file mobilizational strength; but it is, on the contrary, quite consistent with this form of worker control given the authorities' efforts to encapsulate large numbers of them in the officially sponsored organizations. And yet, in the final analysis, this form of unionism's basic weakness is worker allegiance to it. It is usually under constant challenge by alternative oppositional leaderships who sometimes take advantage of the spaces generated by the official structures to advance their leadership claims.

The cases of state sponsorship of unions led to the creation or re-creation, out of state initiatives as well, of parties linked to the labor unions (more belatedly and weakly in Brazil than in Mexico or Argentina).⁵⁷ By occupying more thoroughly the working class' organizational and political space, such parties also enhanced the ability of the authorities to generate a successful state-sponsored labor movement. An important function of these parties was to increase the cooptive capacity of the authorities over the labor leaders, since the individuals who embark on a career of labor leadership can be rewarded with sometimes lucrative party positions, seats in legislatures, governorships, or appointments in the labor ministries. And yet placing the labor movement as one of the main constituencies of the party also enhances the ability of the labor leadership to pressure the authorities in favor of their programs and interests. Cooptation is a two-way street. This is especially so if the authorities must periodically rely on political and or electoral mobilization (even if these take place under conditions that are not genuinely democratic), as was the case under Perón's first government and continues to occur with each electoral period in Mexico. Naturally, if the state elites promote the diversification of the social organizations that are affiliated with the party, the relative importance of the union leaders, and therefore their capacity to use the party to pressure the government, diminishes. José Luis Reyna points to this motivation

⁵⁶ Manuel Camacho, "Control sobre el movimiento obrero en México" in Centro de Estudios Internacionales, *Lecturas de política mexicana* (México, D. F.: El Colegio de México, 1977), provides a nuanced analysis of the mechanisms of leadership control over unions and workers in the Mexican setting.

⁵⁷ The formation of the Mexican Partido Revolucionario Institucional is the object of a thorough study in Luis Javier Garrido, *El Partido de la revolución institucionalizada. La formación del nuevo Estado en México (1928-1945)* (México, D.F.: Siglo XXI Editores, 1982). The creation of the Brazilian Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro—and other Brazilian parties—is analyzed in Maria do Carmo Campello de Souza, *Estado e Partidos Políticos no Brasil (1930 a 1964)* (São Paulo: Editora Alfa-Omega, 1990, third edition), part II. The Argentine Justicialista Party still awaits its historian. Writings on it focus too exclusively either on the figures of Juan Domingo and Evita Perón or on the labor leaderships.

as the reason for the creation of the National Confederation of Popular Organizations by the Mexican government in 1943.⁵⁸

There are numerous differences between the unionism of the three cases which serve as the base for this discussion, although it is not possible to develop them adequately here.⁵⁹ Briefly, Brazilian unionism developed with the least rank and file mobilization. Moreover, Brazilian labor legislation led to a union structure and collective bargaining institutions that limited plant level worker organization, resulting in a notably weak form of unionism that permitted eventually the successful emergence of a labor opposition in the “new unionism” of the mid- to late-seventies. By contrast, in Mexico and Argentina unions were created at a time of great social and political mobilization of workers. Union organizations effectively extend into the plant level, and in Mexico much collective bargaining takes place at that level as well. There is also a certain amount of union pluralism in Mexico that is officially accepted; in fact, it can be converted, as indicated by Erickson and Middlebrook, into one more mechanism of control over the state and party incorporated union sectors if they become excessive in their demands. The authorities can threaten to undermine them by favoring, sometimes tacitly or by default, the alternative union leaderships.⁶⁰

The three main cases of this type also differ in terms of their union-party relationship. In Brazil the unions were formed during the most authoritarian period of the Vargas government (the Estado Novo), during which it was neither necessary nor desirable to have an organized political base in order to mobilize the country in support of the regime; the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro only emerged when Vargas began to prepare for the electoral campaigns of the democratic transition he initiated at the end of the Second World War.⁶¹ Thus, the union organizations and their extensive social welfare bureaucracies established their relations with the state before the creation of the party; this resulted in a much weaker union-party nexus in Brazil than in the other countries.⁶² Both in Peronist Argentina and under Cárdenas in Mexico the unions were created

⁵⁸ José Luis Reyna, “El movimiento obrero y en el ruizcortinismo: la redefinición del sistema económico y la consolidación política” in José Luis Reyna and Raúl Trejo Delabre, *La clase obrera en la historia de México: de Adolfo Ruiz Cortines a Adolfo López Mateos (1952-1964)* (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981), p. 23. The labor leadership exerted greater influence and pressures over the Peronist party, which did not have other important organized constituencies, than has been the case for labor leaders in Mexico or, most certainly, in Brazil.

⁵⁹ Some of the differences are discussed in: Rolando Munck, “El movimiento sindical en Brasil y en Argentina: un estudio comparativo” in *Coyoacán*, vol. 3, no. 7/8, January-June, 1980, and Kenneth Paul Erickson and Kevin Middlebrook, “The State and Organized Labor in Brazil and Mexico” in Silvia Ann Hewlett and Richard S. Weinart, eds., *Brazil and Mexico: Patterns in Late Development* (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1982); and Ruth Berins Collier.

⁶⁰ Erickson and Middlebrook, p. 232.

⁶¹ See de Souza, part II, and Thomas Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) pp. 39-40.

⁶² This point is developed by Ruth B. Collier.

instead in contexts during which the political mobilization of the population in support of the government and against other political and economic forces was important. The unions and the parties were created (or re-created) in order to secure (and control) that mobilization, and a strong identification between the majority of the union leaders and the party was established from the beginning. This explains in part why after the 1955 military coup in Argentina the labor leaders became (and were forced to become by the new authorities' perceptions of them) the leaders of the Peronist opposition,⁶³ while in Brazil the majority of the labor leaders simply continued with their specific union tasks after the 1964 military coup, leaving the Partido Trabalhista to eventually become a very minor force in Brazilian politics.

The Confrontationist Type

This type occurs under authoritarian regimes of various kinds, primarily those that can be characterized as labor repressive. Labor movements of all the previously discussed types acquire the characteristics of this one if the overall political regime in which they are embedded changes to one of these forms of authoritarianism. In all these contexts the parties linked to the unions lose their ability to channel the political action and pressures of the labor movement, for which the unions become the primary center of its social as well as political actions. The party militants who can do so turn their efforts to acting within the unions, generating a significant conflation of the labor linked party or parties' interests with those of the unions. In some cases authoritarian regimes permit moderate labor linked party leaderships to continue their political activities in what are for the unions mostly ineffective legislatures, local governments, or other such organs, in which case a split develops between the unions and the parties (as well as between the segment most closely tied to the unions and the rest within the party). Collective bargaining and other institutions through which unions could pressure the state and employers are laced with a series of restrictions making them much less effective as vehicles to protect or enhance worker's rights and interests. In this environment, labor leaders (unless they are among the few favored by the authorities) must rely to a greater extent than in other situations on rank and file support to retain their claims to leadership, for which they show an even greater sensitivity and responsiveness to the problems of the workers than in the contestatory type, although they have an even smaller

Rodrigues, "Sindicalismo e Classe Operaria," p. 529, estimates that some 10,000 labor leaders had been promoted into various levels of the labor bureaucracy by the end of the Estado Novo, and points out that this number does not include the numerous employees of the unions who did not hold executive posts, nor the many professionals (lawyers, doctors, dentists, and social workers) who had permanent links with such bureaucracies.

⁶³ On the transformation of the Peronist party from a tool of the authorities to an opposition movement, see especially Marcelo Cavarozzi, *Sindicatos y Política en Argentina, 1955-1958* (Buenos Aires: Estudios CEDES vol. 2, no. 1, 1979).

capacity to do something about them. The labor-repressive authoritarian regimes (including the fascist as well as what Guillermo O'Donnell has called the bureaucratic-authoritarian variants⁶⁴) that most characteristically produce this type have occurred frequently in the twentieth century, and there are therefore many examples of it, from Mussolini's Italy to Park and Chun's Korea to Pinochet's Chile.

Most authoritarian regimes would simply prefer to eliminate worker organizations altogether, but twentieth-century technology, management, and marketing provide workers with many opportunities to disrupt production, for which a totally repressive stance towards labor is counterproductive. Thus, these regimes normally allow some form of worker organization to exist, and provide mechanisms to channel their grievances. But they lace both with many limitations and controls, not only to prevent labor from exerting economic pressures but also to prevent labor organizations from becoming platforms for political oppositions to the regime. Consequently, there is a tension between permitting worker organizations to exist in order to have a semblance of normality in labor relations, and the effort to limit their effectiveness. Since this tension is in the last analysis irresolvable, authoritarian regimes undergo cycles of repression and opening towards the labor movement: repression to eliminate opponents and reduce labor influence, and opening to secure worker commitment to the process of production.

Authoritarian regime policies toward labor organizations usually follow what can be called "corporatist" (in the sense of Schmitter's "state corporatism"⁶⁵) or "market" strategies, although both forms can often be found in the same national case. The first has similarities to the state-sponsored type, but of the failed variety, i. e., with very little worker acceptance or allegiance to the organizations that are established. This strategy closely monitors worker organizations and their financing, establishes compulsory membership, and sets boundaries to the sectors they cover. The leadership is designated by the authorities, or elected by workers after careful screening of candidates. Collective bargaining is generally centralized and controlled by state officials. There is little margin for autonomous action by union leaders. Many opponents of the regime will simply refuse to participate in the official structures, while trying to group workers into parallel clandestine or semi-clandestine organizations. Others will seek to turn the official channels to their advantage, while at the same time organizing an unofficial network that partly overlaps with the former. When this latter attempt is successful (as was the case for example with the *Comisiones Obreras* after 1962 in Franco's Spain), the characteristics of the workers' organizations and industrial relations eventually bear little resemblance with the original official intentions for them.

⁶⁴ Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1973), Part I.

⁶⁵ Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?"

The market mechanism for union control tries to weaken unions as bargaining agents to a maximum extent. Collective bargaining is decentralized completely. Strikes are rendered as ineffective as possible by preventing the use of union funds to support them, by permitting the hiring of strike breakers and by using lockouts, and by banning the strikes outright from sectors of the economy that are considered vital. Union affiliation is voluntary, exposing its militants to being singled out by employers, and union finances depend solely on dues paid by members. While labor opponents of the regime will usually dominate the organizations, they are mostly ineffective given their restrictions. Opponents will attempt to compensate for the atomization of the unions by strengthening the union federations and confederations, and by coordinating the demands the various small unions try to formulate. And yet these activities are, during the harsh periods of authoritarian rule, prime targets for state repression.⁶⁶

The national cases in which labor movement formation has taken place under longstanding authoritarian regimes (sometimes interspersed with unstable periods of democratization in which labor usually makes considerable gains) present few commonalities. They include at a minimum the following: first, in all of these cases the process of formation occurred (if it has reached a minimal completion) after 1920, and often after 1945; second, the necessary process of state (and often employer) recognition took place under periods of regime opening, or even during processes of democratization; and third, the labor leaders were closely tied to parties opposing the authoritarian regime that became important players in the politics of regime opening or democratization that permitted the development of plant level union organizations and collective bargaining. These characteristics are well exemplified by labor movement formation in Peru in the forties.⁶⁷ Since labor movement formation in these settings can ultimately favor groups linked to various parties (as was the case in Peru with APRA and the Communist Party), the resulting labor organizations can become ideologically and politically fragmented to the point that they approximate the contestatory type in periods of democratic transition. If the process favors basically one political group and it is a generally moderate one, as was the case in Venezuela, a transition to democracy may lead to an approximation of the social democratic type.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

⁶⁶ The preceding three paragraphs are loosely drawn from my "Labor Movements in Transitions to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis" in *Comparative Politics*, vol. 21, no. 4 (July 1989), pp. 447-448.

⁶⁷ See Julio Cotler, *Clases, Estado, y nación en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1978), pp. 265 et passim; and Piedad Pareja Pflucker, *Aprismo y sindicalismo en el Perú, 1943-1948* (Lima: Ediciones Rikchay Perú, 1980).

By outlining five types of political insertion of the labor movements in mainly European and American capitalist contexts, this paper has tried to demonstrate that the differences in this understudied dimension are highly significant, since they affect both the organizational forms assumed by labor movements as well as their actions. Thus, the variations in patterns of industrial relations hardly exhaust the study of the morphology of labor movements.

As is the case with any typological analysis, the conceptual abstractions that are necessary to construct the types gloss over important specificities of the cases which inform them in the first place. Moreover, it is always possible to construct more types, and even subtypes within them, that will capture important additional patterns. Similarly, some cases can be found to have aspects of more than one type in different segments of the labor movement, and changing conditions—political ones especially—can produce oscillations of specific cases from one type to another. And yet, the institutional and organizational configurations that create these various political insertions of national labor movements produce certain rigidities as well as opportunities that, when taken together, make some forms of change more difficult while enabling others. As occurs with other social organizations, labor movements are also creatures of their past circumstances.