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Precarious Politics: Working Class Insecurity and Struggles for Recognition
in the United States and South Africa, 1994-2010

By

Marcel Emil Paret

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
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Sociology
in the
Graduate Division
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Committee in charge:

Professor Michael Burawoy, Chair
Professor Sandra Smith
Professor Peter Evans
Professor Michael Watts

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Michael Burawoy, Chair

The closing decades of the 20th century were devastating for the working class. Across the globe the widespread embrace of free markets led to growing capital mobility, flexible and informal employment, and union decline. A key result of these shifts was the expansion of the precarious working class: insecurely employed, low-income, and non-unionized segments of the urban working class. Scholars have increasingly highlighted this transformation, but they have paid little attention to collective struggles emerging from the precarious working class. Members of the precarious working class are instead commonly dismissed as too weak or fragmented to engage in politically relevant action. We thus know very little about their political orientation: what do members of the precarious working class struggle for, who do they struggle against, and from where do they derive power?

This dissertation is a study of *precarious politics*, which refers to the political content of collective struggles by members of the precarious working class. The study focuses on two groups that were actively engaged in collective struggles during the late 1990s and 2000s: low-wage noncitizen workers in California, United States; and poor citizen communities in Gauteng, South Africa. The two groups shared a common structural position based on insecure employment and livelihood. But they also reflected the uneven development of the precarious working class across the world system. Low-wage noncitizen workers in California were prototypical of the precarious working class under advanced capitalism, which was increasingly organized around insecure formal sector employment and international migration. Poor citizen communities in Gauteng were, in contrast, prototypical of the precarious working class under peripheral capitalism, which was increasingly organized around high unemployment, informal economic activity, and “internal” rural-to-urban migration.

In both cases precarious politics were rooted in demands for recognition, dignity, and respect. Given their marginalization, recognition was an important end in itself for members of the precarious working class. But it was also a source of symbolic leverage, enabling them to compensate for their detachment from unions and lack of economic leverage. Symbolic leverage was, in turn, crucial for achieving more concrete ends. Given the economic insecurity of the precarious working class, economic struggles for basic survival were central. But economic struggles in both places fed into and overlapped with citizenship struggles around official inclusion in the political community, broadening the terrain of precarious politics.

Beyond this basic similarity, precarious politics in California and Gauteng were very different. Oriented towards *participation*, low-wage noncitizen workers in California sought to increase their access and leverage within the economy and society. Their economic struggles were organized around an Equal Opportunity politics, which sought access to the labor market and basic labor protections, while their citizenship struggles were organized around a Membership Inclusion politics, which sought official legal status and freedom from criminalization. Oriented towards *protection*, poor citizen communities in Gauteng instead sought to protect themselves against the ravages of the market. Their economic struggles were organized around a Collective Consumption politics, which sought state delivery of basic public goods, while their citizenship struggles were organized around a Membership Exclusion politics, which sought the expulsion of noncitizen outsiders. Precarious politics in California and Gauteng thus ran in opposite directions as they moved from economic struggles to citizenship struggles. Whereas low-wage noncitizen workers in California sought to broaden the political community, poor citizen communities in Gauteng sought to contract it.

Labor responses to precarious politics tended to reinforce the divergence. Understanding the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers as crucial to their own revitalization, unions in California embraced precarious politics as part of a broader labor movement. This fusion affirmed the recognition of the precarious working class, reinforcing their struggles for participation. Focused on negotiating with the state and protecting their own privileges, unions in Gauteng treated precarious politics as separate from the labor movement. This separation isolated the precarious working class from broader struggles, reinforcing their struggles for protection.

The concept of precarious politics provides a new lens for examining working class struggles in an age of marketization and insecurity. Using this lens, the two case studies show that a common precarious politics is emerging in very different parts of the globe, but that it takes very different forms depending on where the precarious working class is located within the world system.

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PREFACE

In the late 2000s, the United States and South Africa both experienced major eruptions of struggle by economically marginalized groups. Both eruptions revolved around issues of citizenship, but their content and political orientation were very different.

In spring 2006 the United States had a wave of massive protests for immigrant rights. From mid-February to early May, between 3 and 5 million protestors took to the streets to march and rally against HR4437, legislation that would have made it a criminal offense to either be in the country without legal documentation or to provide assistance to somebody who was (Bloemraad and Voss 2011). The protests were nationwide, but they were most prevalent in the state of California. There were 68 different protest events in California including just under 1.5 million participants, accounting for more than one-quarter of the events nationwide and more than one-third of national participation. The majority of the protesters were Latino, including many foreign-born and undocumented residents. The protests were largely animated and driven by working class communities, as captured by the prominent slogan, "I am a worker, not a criminal."

The 2006 immigrant rights protests shocked the nation. In the United States there had never been such massive and widespread protests that were animated by the demands of noncitizens. The closest parallel were civil rights era protests, but these were largely concerned with the interests of native-born residents. Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers, who represented a key wing of the Chicano civil rights movement, had in fact been hostile to noncitizens and favored restrictions on immigration. On top of this, the protests were largely propelled by the participation and the demands of undocumented or "illegal" residents. Not only did their lack of citizenship undermine their legitimacy to make political claims, but they also faced the risk of deportation. They were therefore unlikely candidates for public resistance. Despite these legacies and obstacles, however, the 2006 protests were some of the largest in the Western Hemisphere in recent history (Bloemraad and Voss 2011). Dubbed the Great American Boycott, the May 1st protests also featured a boycott of work, school, and businesses, effectively creating the first general strike in the United States in several decades. Such a massive convergence of political force was nothing short of remarkable.

Two years later, in May 2008, a wave of xenophobic violence spread through South Africa. The violence emerged in the township of Alexandra, just north of Johannesburg, but quickly spread to townships and informal settlements across the country. Black South Africans physically attacked foreign-born black Africans, chased them from their homes, looted their property, and demanded they return to their countries of birth. The spread of xenophobia antagonism left 62 people dead, many more injured, and up to one-hundred thousand displaced from their homes (Misago et al. 2010). The attacks were nationwide but they were most prevalent in Gauteng province. Estimates suggest that between one half and three quarters of the total number of locations where violence occurred were in Gauteng province, as were more than half of the "most serious" incidents (Misago et al. 2010; Nyar 2010; Bekker et al. 2010). Though they did not necessarily take place

in the poorest communities, most of the attacks occurred in communities with high levels of economic deprivation and informal housing (Fauvelle-Aymar and Segatti 2012).

The 2008 xenophobic attacks clashed with the celebrated notion of South Africa as the “rainbow nation” where diversity and tolerance flourish. The anti-Apartheid struggle had united black Africans from across the continent against colonial rule, and favored popular democracy over racial and ethnic divisions (e.g. Neocosmos 2006:30-31,52-69). Producing three Nobel Peace Prize winners along the way – Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, and FW de Klerk – the subsequent transition to “nonracial” democracy made South Africa a global model of ethnic and racial inclusion. But the attacks in 2008 shattered this rosy image, replacing it with violent intolerance and exclusion. As the introduction to a volume on the attacks remarked, “The surprise and anxiety triggered by the violence of May derive from the implosion of fantasy – the fantasy of an inclusive ‘rainbow’ nation whose citizens regard difference not merely with tolerance, but with respect” (Hassim, Kupe, and Worby 2008:3).

Why were these recent struggles so different from the struggles of the past, and so different from each other? Given the emphasis of previous literature on these two countries, we would expect the answers to revolve around issues of race. As paradigmatic examples of white supremacy, the United States and South Africa have long been a focal point for comparative racial studies. Classic studies showed how the 19th and early 20th century economies in the two places were similarly organized around state-sanctioned racial domination and a black/white divide (e.g. Andrews 1987; Fredrickson 1981; Cell 1982; Greenberg 1980; Alexander and Halpern 2004). More recent scholarship highlighted their parallel histories of black-led racial resistance to white supremacy (Marx 1998; Winant 2001). But the recent events do not fit easily into the white supremacy paradigm. Black/white tension was noticeably absent, and issues of national citizenship appeared to supplant or trump race. The two events also deviated from the traditional convergence narrative, as they were clearly very different. These new dynamics suggest the need for an updated perspective.

Another domain of scholarship on the recent events focuses on issues of immigration and citizenship. These perspectives better capture the divergence of the two events. Whereas the United States protests reflected the struggles of noncitizens for political inclusion, the South Africa attacks reflected the struggles of citizens for the political exclusion of noncitizens. But this leaves unresolved the question of why we should compare the two events in the first place. They were led by two different groups (citizens vs. noncitizens) in two very different places (United States vs. South Africa), and promoted very different outcomes (inclusion vs. exclusion) through very different methods (protest vs. attack). Each event would seem to call on a different domain of sociological analysis. Whereas the United States protests would seem to call for an analysis of social movements, the South Africa attacks would seem to call for an analysis of ethnic antagonism and exclusion. So why compare them?

I argue that to make sense of these surprising events, including both their comparability and their divergence, we must pay attention to a largely understudied phenomenon: *precarious politics*. The starting point for an analysis of precarious politics is the growing insecurity of the work class in the closing decades of the 20th century. Growing insecurity was fed by processes of marketization, which underpinned the growing mobility of capital, the declining legitimacy

and stability of unions, the increasing informality and flexibility of employment, and the reduction of state benefits and social protections. A key consequence of these processes was the expansion of what may be referred to as the precarious working class, a vulnerable segment of the urban working class defined by insecure employment, low income, and separation from trade unions. By the turn of the millennium, precarious working classes were a defining feature of the global political economy.

Noting the rise of class segments such as the “precariat” and “informal proletariat,” social scientists have increasingly highlighted this precarious transformation. But they have paid little attention to the collective struggles of the precarious working class. Rather than important political actors, members of the precarious working class have largely been dismissed as too weak, fragmented, or demoralized to have significant impact. There is some truth in this pessimistic analysis. Such political weakness stems partially from the growing detachment of working classes from traditional organs of representation, namely trade unions and political parties. But even if their resistance is weak and fragmented, members of the precarious working class are engaging in collective struggles. While rarely scoring clear victories or affecting lasting social transformation, in some places their struggles have begun to shift the political landscape. This study is about the political orientation of those collective struggles – precarious politics.

During the late 1990s and 2000s, precarious politics were especially prominent in California, United States and Gauteng, South Africa. I focus here on the collective struggles of two groups, one in each place: low-wage noncitizen workers in California, and poor citizen communities in Gauteng. Not only did these two groups wage visible and persistent collective struggles, but they also reflected the uneven development of precarious working classes throughout the world system. Low-wage noncitizen workers in California were characteristic of broader patterns of working class reorganization within affluent or advanced capitalism. These patterns included a downgrading of formal sector employment, and a growing reliance on international migration to fill the bottom end of the labor market. Poor citizen communities in Gauteng were instead characteristic of broader patterns of working class reorganization within less affluent or peripheral capitalism. These patterns included mass “internal” migration from rural to urban areas, as well as growing urban unemployment and informal sector activity.

Despite these different configurations there were remarkable similarities between the two sets of struggles. In both places precarious politics were organized around demands for recognition. Pushed to the margins of society, both groups struggled for a basic level of dignity and respect. These moral appeals enabled members of the precarious working class to compensate for their lack of resources, including most importantly their lack of economic power, by generating symbolic leverage. But they were not simply symbolic struggles. They were also struggles around the concrete, material expression of recognition. In both places precarious politics consisted of interweaving economic struggles and citizenship struggles. If the former sought recognition through basic economic livelihood, the latter sought recognition through official membership status in the national political community. The two recent events – the 2006 immigrant rights protests in California, and the 2008 xenophobic attacks in Gauteng – were the most visible examples of the latter.

The struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizens in Gauteng may thus be understood as comparable manifestations of precarious politics. But they nonetheless had very different orientations, showing that precarious politics may take different forms in different places. In California precarious politics were oriented towards *participation* in the economy and society. This included economic struggles for access to the labor market and basic labor protections, and citizenship struggles for official membership. In Gauteng, however, precarious politics were oriented towards the *protection* of society from the economy. This included economic struggles for delivery of public goods and services, and citizenship struggles for the expulsion of foreign nationals. As economic struggles gave way to citizenship struggles, precarious politics in the two places thus ran in opposite directions. Whereas the low-wage noncitizen workers in California sought to broaden the political community and expand the boundaries of inclusion, poor citizen communities in Gauteng sought to limit the political community and contract the boundaries of inclusion.

By focusing on the relation between the economic and the political, class and citizenship, this study continues in the theoretical tradition of the previous comparative scholarship on the United States and South Africa. This dynamic was always central to the comparative sociology of legalized racism, which led to a tight coupling of class and citizenship. The class-citizenship relation is no longer organized around legalized racism but it remains crucial – not only for understanding working class insecurity, but also for making sense of the new terrain of working class struggle. This study also picks up the story where previous narratives end: the dismantling of state-sanctioned racial domination. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa were crucial to the reorganization of the working class in California and Gauteng, respectively, partially because they created new openings and opportunities for nonwhite workers. But the process of racial inclusion went hand-in-hand with marketization and the growing insecurity of the working class. For many it meant inclusion in a world that was increasingly precarious. The following pages begin to unravel the consequences of this process, showing the different ways in which the precarious working class took form in the “post-racial” era.

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1. PRECARIOUS POLITICS

The closing decades of the 20th century were devastating for the global working class. With the opening of global markets and increasing capital mobility, the balance of power shifted away from workers and towards employers. Work was increasingly organized around flexible and informal employment relations, leading to an increase in insecure and low-paying jobs (Kalleberg 2009; Beck 2000; Webster, Lambert, and Bezuidenhout 2008; Standing 2011). In many countries the degradation of work was further compounded by the fact that the workforce was growing much faster than employment, particularly in urban areas, forcing workers to make their own living in the so-called “informal sector” (Davis 2007; Bremen 2009; Denning 2010; Webster 2005). In addition to these work-based hardships, nation-states increasingly moved to privatize social services while enhancing their enforcement apparatuses, thus replacing social protection with criminalization (Wacquant 2008, 2009; De Genova 2010). For working classes across the globe, life became increasingly precarious.

Growing precariousness went hand-in-hand with the declining significance of unions. In many countries, though by no means all of them, the legitimacy and stability of organized labor was undermined by the embrace of free-market ideologies and institutions (Harvey 2005). Even in those countries where unions retained some legitimacy, they were relatively ineffective at organizing the new workforce of casual and informal workers, who were often fragmented between multiple employers and work sites. Across the globe unionization rates plummeted from the 1980s. A review by the International Labor Organization (ILO) found that out of 66 countries with available time series data, 44 had declining union density between 1985 and 1998 (Visser 2006). Amongst 33 of the OECD countries, union density dropped from an average of 33 percent in 1980 to an average of 18 percent in 2010 (Visser, Martin, and Tergeist 2012).

These twin processes – growing precariousness and union decline – marked a downgrading of the traditional “proletariat” or working class. Recent scholarship captures this transformation by pointing to the expansion of marginalized and insecure groups, which have been variously labeled the “precariat” (Standing 2011; Wacquant 2008), “subproletariat” (Zlolski 2006), “informal proletariat” (Davis 2004; Bremen 2009), and “precarious popular classes” (Amin 2008). While reflecting somewhat different patterns of restructuring, these groups all point to the growth of the *precarious working class*. The precarious working class may be defined as a segment of the urban working class that is characterized by three overlapping forms of insecurity: insecure employment, due to either a lack of work or the contingency of work; insecure livelihood, due to low income; and insecure representation, due to a detachment from unions. While the experience of insecurity may be very different for working classes in different places, in the late 20th century the precarious working class expanded in countries across the globe.

This precarious transformation raises a number of questions about working class politics. What do members of the precarious working class struggle for, and who do they struggle against?

Where do they derive power, given their insecurity and economic weakness? How do their struggles differ from traditional union struggles? How do they interact with trade unions, which remain relevant despite being weakened? Finally, how do the precarious working classes vary across the globe, and what are the implications of this variation for their collective struggles?

Existing literature pays little attention to these questions. While commonly posing the question of agency, the recent scholarship on the precarious working class is pessimistic about its capacity for collective struggle. They note that the precarious working class is heterogeneous, fragmented, and detached from traditional organs of mobilization such as unions and political parties (Standing 2011; Wacquant 2008; Davis 2004). They also highlight the denigration of class identity within the precarious working class, which tends to have a “truncated status” (Standing 2011) and is “negatively defined by social privation, material need and symbolic deficit” (Wacquant 2008:246-247). Wacquant (2008:247) argues that while the traditional proletariat could hope to abolish class domination by universalizing itself, the precariat seek only to undo their insecurity. To the extent that scholars acknowledge the struggles of the precarious working class, these struggles are largely dismissed as “weak” (Wacquant 2008), “episodic and discontinuous” (Davis 2004), and “more theater than threat” (Standing 2011). Far from the revolutionary proletariat, these portrayals paint a picture that is closer to Marx's vision of the lumpenproletariat: a “dangerous class” that is susceptible to the external politics of religious evangelicals (Davis 2004) and right-wing demagogues (Standing 2011).

On the other hand is the literature on labor revitalization, which seeks to understand how unions may respond to both the growing prevalence of precarious work and their own decline. Recent decades have seen a proliferation of scholarship in this area, particularly in the United States (Sullivan 2009). There is also a growing literature on global and transnational labor responses to the new political and economic climate (Webster et al. 2008; Evans 2010; Bieler, Lindberg, and Pillay 2008). Much of this labor scholarship emphasizes the need for a more dynamic form of unionism – often referred to as “social movement unionism” – which deeply engages the rank-and-file, embraces non-class identities such as gender and citizenship, and develops ties with communities and non-labor struggles (Fantasia and Voss 2004; Clawson 2003; Chun 2009). But this research tends to view the precarious working class as a potential constituency that needs to be organized by unions, rather than one that is engaging in struggles on its own outside of unions.

Each body of literature offers valuable insights. Whereas the former provides insights about the vulnerabilities and challenges facing members of the precarious working class, the latter provides insights about how they might organize and mobilize. But neither focuses on the collective struggles of the precarious working class, outside of unions. This dissertation moves beyond existing accounts by taking members of the precarious working class seriously as agents of collective struggle. This does not mean affirming the unity or power of the precarious working class. Their struggles are often weak and fragmented, as the recent scholarship suggests, and they rarely achieve significant transformations that impact large numbers of people. But given the expansion of the precarious working class in countries across the globe, paying attention to their collective struggles is crucial if we seek to understand working class politics today. Not only do these struggles represent the primary form of political participation for a growing segment of the working class, but they are becoming a significant feature of the

contemporary political landscape.

To make sense of collective struggles emerging from within the precarious working class, we must also begin to wrestle with variation across the world system. While scholars commonly acknowledge the importance of the global context for understanding working class insecurity, they typically pay little attention to how that insecurity varies across the globe. It is especially rare for scholars to contrast the causes and consequences of working class insecurity in affluent countries and poor countries. This study addresses the gap by focusing on two places that lie on either side of the affluent/poor divide: California, United States and Gauteng, South Africa. As economic hubs within an increasingly integrated global capitalism, they were subject to many of the same pressures associated with globalization and marketization. But due to their different positions within the world system, they were characterized by different levels of economic development and different structures of class organization. Reflecting the uneven spread of a common global capitalism, California and Gauteng may thus be understood as two different capitalisms, an affluent or advanced capitalism and a less affluent or peripheral capitalism.

For each place I focus on the collective struggles of a particular segment of the precarious working class: low-wage noncitizen workers in California, and poor citizen communities in Gauteng. Both groups were characterized by economic insecurity, and both were actively engaged in collective struggles during the late 1990s and 2000s. But they also represented divergent patterns of working class reorganization, reflecting their different locations within the world system. Low-wage noncitizen workers in California represented patterns of working class reorganization that were prevalent under advanced capitalism. This included an expansion of flexible low-wage jobs, as well as a growing reliance on international migration to fill those jobs. Poor citizen communities in Gauteng represented patterns of working class reorganization that were prevalent under peripheral capitalism. This included “internal” rural-to-urban migration, growing urban unemployment, and increasing informal economic activity. The two groups, and in particular their collective struggles, thus provide an important window into the different ways that the precarious working class is taking shape across the globe.

My primary concern here is with the political orientation of these two sets of struggles. It is thus a study of *precarious politics*, which may be defined as *the content of collective struggles waged by members of the precarious working class, including the demands that they make, where those demands are directed, and how they are justified*. The essential feature of precarious politics, I argue, is that they are based on symbolic struggles for recognition. In both cases the collective struggles of the precarious working class revolved around moral appeals for dignity and respect. Due to the very different composition and context of the two groups, however, precarious politics took a very different form in the two cases. In California, the collective struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers were oriented towards participation in the economy and society. Precarious politics here revolved around demands for equal opportunity and political inclusion. In Gauteng the collective struggles of poor citizen communities were oriented instead towards protecting society from the economy. Precarious politics here revolved around demands for access to public goods and the political exclusion of noncitizen outsiders.

The remainder of this chapter develops the concept of precarious politics. To do so it wrestles with two questions. First, how do members of the precarious working class compensate for

their lack of economic leverage. Drawing from the work of Nancy Fraser and Jennifer Chun, among others, I argue that politics of recognition represent an important terrain of struggle for members of the precarious working class, enabling them to develop leverage without using traditional weapons such as strikes or collective bargaining. Second, how do working class struggles vary across the world system? Drawing from the very different theories of capitalism developed by Marx and Polanyi, I suggest that advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism provide a basis for struggles oriented respectively towards participation and protection. The chapter concludes by elaborating the central argument and outlining the dissertation.

Working Class Insecurity and the Erosion of Economic Leverage

Marx was notoriously optimistic about the agency of the working class. This optimism was rooted in an analysis of capitalist development. He predicted that members of the working class would become increasingly subject to common conditions of degrading work and poverty, and increasingly brought into contact with each other through socialized production. Generating a class consciousness of the unjust economic structure, he believed these conditions would propel the industrial working class or proletariat into collective struggles to replace capitalism with socialism. He was decidedly less optimistic, however, about the agency of the lumpenproletariat. Unlike the revolutionary factory workers, the lumpenproletariat included the surplus population of workers who no longer had a productive role in the economic system. Rather than an agent of social transformation, Marx understood the lumpenproletariat as an unorganized and apolitical mass, ripe for cooptation by the ruling classes. This view was laid out clearly by Marx and Engels (1848 [1978]) in the *Communist Manifesto*: “The 'dangerous class,' the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue” (482).

The notion of the lumpenproletariat, as a marginalized and excluded layer of the working class, often finds expression in contemporary sociological analysis. The legacy is apparent in concepts such as the “underclass” and “declassé,” the “working poor” and “sub-proletariat,” and now the “precarariat” and the “informal proletariat” (Offe 2011:466). The recent literature on the precarious working class mirrors Marx's pessimism. It similarly points to insecure segments of the working class that are stalled in the process of class formation. For some the precarious working class has yet to realized that they share a class interest, and thus has not yet engaged in collective struggles. Standing's (2011) analysis, which echoes Marx by referring to the precariat as the “new dangerous class,” follows this line of reasoning. For him “the precariat is a class-in-the-making, if not yet a class-for itself.” Others are even less optimistic, suggesting that the precarious working class is not likely to develop into a “class for itself,” or build struggles that wield any significant power (Davis 2004; Wacquant 2008).

What are the obstacles confronting the collective struggles of the precarious working class? More recent theories of working class struggle suggest that the capacity for collective resistance depends on two sources of power, structural power and associational power (Wright 2000:962). Structural power derives from workers' strategic location within the economic

system. This includes their positioning and leverage both within the process of production and in the labor market, or what Silver (2003:13) refers to respectively as “workplace bargaining power” and “marketplace bargaining power.” Associational power derives instead from workers' collective organization, which has traditionally taken the form of trade unions. The two can be mutually reinforcing. The leverage provided by structural power may create opportunities for organization, while increased organization can amplify workers' structural power, and in particular their capacity to disrupt production. Workers and unions have typically wielded these forms of power through strikes and collective bargaining, most commonly to improve their wages, benefits, and working conditions. At the heart of these struggles is the assertion that without workers' cooperation, production will stop and profits will drop. Such struggles may be defined as *labor politics*: collective struggles for better wages and working conditions that derive power from the collective economic leverage of workers, and in particular their capacity to disrupt production.

This traditional form of class struggle was increasingly undermined in the closing decades of the 20th century, especially for the precarious working class. A key reason for the shift was workers' declining structural power. Members of the precarious working class typically do not have the leverage or resources needed to significantly intervene in the labor market or disrupt production. The threat of withdrawing their labor power by going on strike often carries little weight. This decline in structural power is closely tied to the growing flexibility and informality of work. Beginning in the 1970s there was a rapid erosion of “standard” employment relations, based on full-time, continuous employment with a single employer, and including access to benefits and basic labor protections (Standing 2011; Vosko 2010). Stable working class jobs were often replaced with nonstandard forms of employment – such as temporary, part-time, on-call, subcontracted, and own account work – which enabled employers to avoid state regulations, cut labor costs, and shift risk onto workers (Kalleberg 2009; Beck 2000). Employment in this new “gloves off economy” (Bernhardt et al. 2008) is associated with various forms of insecurity, including uncertain length of tenure, absence of legal protections, little control over the labor process, and inadequate income (Vosko 2010).

This informalization from above, driven by employer profit-maximization, interacted with informalization from below, driven by workers' need for survival. This was especially true in less affluent countries, where rapid proletarianization and urbanization outpaced the growth of urban employment, necessitating reliance on informal economic activity. Gallin (2001) estimated that the “informal sector” accounted for 40-60 percent of urban employment in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Economic activities within the informal sector are incredibly diverse, ranging from successful small business to more traditional wage-labor to survivalism. Many of these activities are well integrated into “core” sectors of the economy, making any clear distinction between the “formal” and “informal” an exercise in futility. But at the very bottom “it makes more obvious sense to consider most informal workers as the ‘active’ unemployed, who have no choice but to subsist by some means or starve” (Davis 2004:25). Indeed, the vast numbers of workers who are forced to “make” their own living rather than simply getting a job and “earning” one (Webster 2005), highlights the fact that “you don't need a job to be a proletarian: wageless life, not wage labor, is the starting point in understanding the free market” (Denning 2010:81).

Precarious working classes thus experience the opposite of structural power: insecurity. The decline of workers' structural power has in turn amplified the importance of associational power (Silver 2003; Chun 2009). But members of the precarious working class are at a disadvantage here as well, and indeed it is along this dimension that recent scholarship is most pessimistic about their capacity for collective struggle. Recent literature points to three particular vulnerabilities or obstacles. The first is fragmentation. If the era of Fordist production created a foundation for organization by unifying workers in factories, the contemporary economy has instead divided them. Wacquant (2008:234) writes: "By becoming 'internally' unstable and heterogeneous, differentiated and differentiating, wage work has turned from fount of homogeneity, solidarity and security into a source of social fragmentation and precariousness." He concludes, pessimistically, that it would require "an immense, specifically political work of aggregation and re-presentation" in order to "enable this conglomerate to accede to collective existence and thus to collective action" (Wacquant 2008:247). Standing (2011) similarly argues that "the precariat is not a class-for-itself because it is at war with itself," seeing differences rather than "their common set of vulnerabilities." These portrayals suggest that the precarious working class is too diverse to become unified as a class and engage in collective struggles.

The second vulnerability highlighted by the recent scholarship is a denigrated class identity. Standing (2011) argues that members of the precariat "lack self-esteem and social worth in their work," and thus do not have a work-based identity. For him this distinguishes the precariat from the "traditional industrial working class," which "engendered a robust pride and dignity that helped make it a political force with a class agenda." Others note that the precarious working classes have a negative identity, meaning they are defined by what they are not: the stable working class (Standing 2011; Derluignan 2005:150; Wacquant 2008). For Wacquant (2008) the precariat are "stillborn" in the sense that they only wish to undo their insecurity: "Contrary to the proletariat in the Marxist vision of history, which is called upon itself in the long term by uniting and universalizing itself, the 'precariat' can only make itself to immediately unmake itself" (247).

These first two vulnerabilities culminate in a third, which is detachment from the traditional organs of class representation. Unions have been relatively ineffective at organizing flexible workers and especially the growing numbers who are unemployed or working in the informal sector. For scholars writing about the precarious working class, detachment from the established labor community represents perhaps the largest obstacle to collective struggle. Davis (2004), for example, laments that the "informal proletariat," having been moved out of the factory and "largely dispossessed of fungible labor-power," has "little access to the culture of collective labor or large-scale class struggle" (28). Standing (2011) similarly argues that the "precariat has a weakened sense of 'social memory'...[which] arises from belonging to a community reproduced over generations," and thus "does not feel part of a solidaristic labor community." Noting that traditional unions are "strikingly ill-suited" to meet the needs of the precariat, Wacquant (2008) goes further to suggest that the "nascent organizations of the dispossessed," unlike unions, "are too fragile and have yet to earn official recognition on the political stage to exert more than intermittent and pointed pressure" (246).

To some extent working classes have always faced these obstacles. Workers were never a homogeneous group, even at an economic level, but rather segmented by industries, workplaces, and levels of skill and authority. The process of working class formation, of becoming a "class

for itself,” has therefore always been contingent upon forging unity out of diverse experiences. It is in this sense that some scholars have sought to understand class as a product of class struggle, rather than its determinant (Przeworski 1985). As E.P. Thompson famously observed in his classic, *The Making of the English Working Class*, the working class does not simply exist, but rather is made as individuals begin to feel and articulate common experiences. Further, workers have not always been able to rely on a history of unionism and the institutional foundations that history created. Unions themselves had to be built from the ground up, through collective struggles.

This suggests that members of the precarious working class are capable of forging collective struggles, even if they do not unite as the “precarious working class” as such. Some members of the precarious working class may be able to do this by organizing around their collective economic leverage, essentially recreating the process of union formation. But for many such a labor politics is likely to remain out of reach. This is particularly true for those members of the precarious working class that are divided amongst a variety of employers, or who do not have an employer at all. In these cases, members of the precarious working class have little economic leverage to organize around. Instead they must forge an alternative politics that extends beyond the workplace and draws from non-economic sources of power.

Precarious Politics as Politics of Recognition

With little structural power, fragmented and denigrated identities, and blocked access to traditional labor organizations, from where do members of the precarious working class draw leverage? On what basis do they organize? A valuable work that begins to address these questions is Jennifer Jihye Chun's (2009) *Organizing at the Margins*, which examines the struggles of insecure workers in the United States and South Korea. Chun argues that workers can compensate for their lack of structural power and weak labor protections by building “symbolic leverage.” In contrast to traditional forms of labor struggle, symbolic leverage is about using “moral force” to gain “public recognition and legitimacy” for worker struggles. It has two dimensions. One dimension involves struggles to redefine what it means to be a worker or an employer. This enables workers in nonstandard employment relationships to access basic legal protections. The other dimension involves highly visible and dramatic struggles in the public arena. These “public dramas” are used to “rebuild the dignity and social worth of subordinated social actors who have been disenfranchised, devalued, and deemed inferior” (18).

Chun shows that by using symbolic leverage, marginalized workers in both the United States and South Korea were able to successfully organize into unions, establish collective bargaining relationships with employers, and improve their working conditions. A complement to Chun's work is Agarwala's (2006) study of informal tobacco and construction workers in India. Spatially dispersed and at a high risk of being dismissed by their employers, these workers had little structural power or potential for collective bargaining. Instead they drew leverage from their status as citizens, arguing that they deserved a certain standard of living as members of the political community. Rather than targeting employers, they demanded material concessions from the state such as education, housing, and health care. Whereas Chun emphasizes workers' relation to employers and issues of workplace representation, Agarwala highlights the important

domain of citizenship and representation with respect to the state. Agarwala also shows that subordinate groups may draw symbolic leverage from positions of privilege – in this case national citizenship – rather than simply disadvantage.

In both studies, workers were able to shift the struggle to an alternative terrain where they did not have to rely on their economic power. Following Nancy Fraser (1995, 2000, 2005), whose work provided an important foundation for Chun's conception of symbolic leverage, I refer to this as the terrain of recognition. Politics of recognition pertain to “institutionalized patterns of cultural value” and “their effects on the relative standing of social actors” (2000:113). They revolve around symbolic issues of esteem and respect, which are “rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication” (1995:71). The notion of recognition is based on democratic ideals of universality and equality, where all participants are treated as full members of society. Taylor (1994:26-27), for example, argues that “the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic culture,” and represent a historical shift from previous notions of honor to current notions of dignity. He suggests that honor was about establishing cultural superiority, and was thus appropriate for a social order based on status hierarchy and exclusion. But dignity marks a sense of social worth that all should enjoy. It is therefore appropriate for a social order based on status equality and inclusion.

While highlighting the importance of recognition, Fraser distinguishes herself from scholars who would argue that recognition can account for all forms of oppression (Fraser and Honneth 2003). For her misrecognition is only one dimension of injustice, analytically distinct from injustices such as maldistribution and misrepresentation, which pertain to issues of resource distribution and claims-making. Fraser is primarily concerned with establishing recognition as an independent and equally important terrain of struggle, but she also acknowledges the deep connections between recognition and other dimensions. This suggests that in addition to being an important goal in its own right, recognition may also be an important point of leverage for struggles that are less symbolic. As Chun's concept of symbolic leverage aims to convey, marginalized groups may demand recognition in order to compensate for their lack of structural power.

Precarious politics are rooted in collective struggles for recognition. Because members of the precarious working class lack economic leverage, recognition is an important source of power. Rather than strikes or collective bargaining, the terrain of recognition allows them to build symbolic leverage by making moral appeals for fairness, dignity, and inclusion as full members of society. As in Chun's study, these appeals may be deployed through public displays. If precarious politics are rooted in symbolic struggles for recognition, however, what is their concrete or material content? This is precisely the question that Chun (2009:176-177) poses at the end of her study: symbolic leverage for what? In some instances recognition may be an end in itself. For members of the precarious working class, who in many cases have been relegated to the margins of society, recognition is likely to be an important end goal. But even struggles for recognition are commonly organized around material conditions. Just as symbolic leverage may be a tactic for achieving more concrete goals, so those concrete goals may be important symbols of recognition. Either way the question remains: what are the material conditions that precarious politics seek to address?

Chun's study emphasizes workplace struggles. A central component of symbolic leverage in her cases was the redefinition of worker-employer relationships, which enabled insecure workers to secure union representation and collective bargaining agreements. But for an increasing proportion of the working class, including most importantly the long-term unemployed, these outcomes are a pipe dream. This does not, however, mean that working classes will abandon economic struggles. For members of the precarious working class, issues of basic economic livelihood are central, both as a matter of necessity and a matter of dignity. In some instances their economic struggles may focus on more modest work-related goals, such as the enforcement of existing minimum wage laws. In other instances, as Agarwala's study suggests, they may revolve around economic conditions beyond the workplace.

But working class struggles need not be restricted to economic issues. Indeed, the relation between collective organization around economic demands on one hand, and collective organization in the broader political arena on the other, has long been central to the problematic of class formation. Studies of 19th and 20th century working class formation have thus been interested in the connections between trade unions and political parties, and the orientation of working class political parties more generally (Katznelson and Zolberg 1986; Przeworski 1985). As Przeworski (1985) argues, movement between the economic and the political was challenging because the terrain of representative democracy was “defined on the dimension individual-nation, not in terms of class.” This forced political actors to shift “back and forth between an emphasis on class and an appeal to the nation” (28-29). These dynamics underpinned a central question for scholars of class formation during the first wave of industrialization: do economic struggles spill over into the political arena, and if so, what form do they take? We may pose a similar question now for precarious politics.

What is the political dimension of precarious politics? Though from different angles, both Chun and Agarwala emphasize the importance of national citizenship. Whereas in Chun's study some of the insecure workers sought to overcome their lack of citizenship status, in Agarwala's study they used their citizenship status as leverage. Despite processes of globalization, national borders remain a significant feature of political organization, and nation-states remain an important source of collective identity and belonging. It follows that there is a close link between national citizenship and a sense of recognition (Somers 2008; Glenn 2011; Bosniak 2001). As Bosniak (2001:247) notes, citizenship is “fundamentally grounded in experiences of collective identification with and attachment to others.” In a world organized around nation-states, national citizenship is one of the most concrete material expressions of belonging: “Citizenship is not just a matter of formal legal status, it is a matter of belonging, which requires *recognition* by other members of the community” (Glenn 2011: 3, original emphasis). Not only is it an important material expression of recognition, but citizenship is also central to precarious politics due to the centrality of the state. Due to their lack of economic leverage, members of the precarious working class must rely on the state – whether as a source of leverage or a direct provider of resources – in order to press for change. In many instance their capacity to make claims on the state will, in turn, depend on their formal citizenship status.

Following this analysis, I argue that precarious politics include two types of struggles, each taking place with a different domain: *economic struggles*, which pertain to the production of goods and persons; and *citizenship struggles*, which pertain to official membership in the

national political community. This distinction is based on a narrow definition of citizenship as a formal legal status. This definition departs from broader notions of citizenship that also encompass various rights and forms of participation (Bosniak 2001; Glenn 2000; Holston 2008; Jasper 1999:7). In this typology, struggles around what Marshall (1950) referred to as “social citizenship” are therefore designated as economic struggles rather than citizenship struggles.

Economic struggles and citizenship struggles are nonetheless likely to be deeply entangled. This is because, as Lie (2004) argues, “categorical inequality” or stratification within the national community is closely linked to “categorical exclusion” from national membership. Whereas categorical inequality “must bear the mantle of horizontal distinction” to be legitimate, categorical exclusion “reproduces itself because of economic inequality” (178, 183). The process of translation between economic struggles and citizenship struggles, just as nationalism more generally, may have positive or negative implications. Nationalism has often been a source of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion, but it has also been a source of solidarity, redistribution, and inclusion (Calhoun 2007). Just as working class struggles in the 19th and 20th centuries had a variety of orientations in the political arena (Katznelson and Zolberg 1986), so the citizenship struggles of the precarious working class may have a variety of orientations.

This ambiguity underscores the possibility that struggles for recognition, whether economic struggles or citizenship struggles, may have different political orientations. This suggests that we must also build on Chun (2009) by paying greater attention to variation. Chun's study of symbolic leverage is comparative, but it tends to downplay the differences between the two cases. Instead she emphasizes the surprising convergence of the United States and South Korea, as workers in both cases used symbolic leverage to overcome their economic weakness. This emphasis partially stems from the fact that she focuses on parallel groups (subcontracted janitors and independently contracted workers) and parallel forms of organization (unions) in both places. These structural similarities laid a foundation for parallel struggles. The two countries also had a somewhat similar position within the world system. While generally considered a middle income country, South Korea represents one of the few economic development success stories of the late 20th century, and in this sense it was converging with the affluent United States. But the precarious working class is organized very differently in affluent and poor countries. While globalization did reproduce similar forms of labor flexibility across the globe, it also reproduced uneven patterns of economic development, and thus very different configurations of working class insecurity. If we want to make sense of precarious politics, we must begin to wrestle with this variation.

Precariousness and Politics in the World System

There is significant debate over how to classify the wealth and power of the countries of the world. Arguments revolve around issues such as the variables that should be considered, how many groups there should be, and what those groups should be labeled, which in turn hinges upon the precise political and economic processes that lead to differentiation. But there is a general consensus that the world's wealth is primarily concentrated in a small handful of countries, including most of Europe and North America as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. This set of affluent countries has been variously labeled the First World, the Global North,

and the core, and is typically contrasted with the less affluent countries of the Third World, the Global South, and the periphery.

World systems scholars have emphasized the stability of this division over time (Babones 2005). This is because affluent countries are well positioned to attract economic activities that are associated with high rewards, while less affluent countries attract economic activities that are subject to greater competition and smaller rewards (Arrighi and Drangel 1986). A clear illustration of this stability was the reconstitution of the global wealth divide in the late 20th century, which occurred despite growing capital mobility and industrialization in less affluent countries. Between 1960 and 2000 the contribution of manufacturing to national GDP increased rapidly in less affluent countries, to some extent replicating the earlier development pattern of their affluent counterparts. But their share of global wealth remained essentially the same (Arrighi, Silver, and Brewer 2003:12-13). With the exception of rare cases such as South Korea, less affluent countries were largely unable to move into the affluent group.

While the post-1970s wave of globalization further consolidated the integration of a single capitalist world economy, the persistent divide in wealth suggests that we must be concerned, not with one capitalism, but with two different capitalisms: an *advanced capitalism* defined by high levels of wealth and income, and a *peripheral capitalism* defined by lower levels of wealth and income. In contrast to the literature on “varieties of capitalism” (Hall and Soskice 2001; Thelen 2012), which focuses on institutional variations within advanced capitalism, this typology prioritizes variation based on the level of national income. This does not rule out variation within each of the two broader groups. A hallmark of world systems theory has in fact been the contention that there is an intermediate category of “semiperipheral” countries, whose income level stands between the affluent core and the poor periphery (Wallerstein 1974; Arrighi and Drangel 1986; Babones 2005). The prototypes of the contemporary semiperiphery – South Africa, Brazil, Mexico – are countries that received significant foreign investment and underwent industrialization in the middle of the 20th century. But these countries remain poor relative to the affluent core. They also experience some of the same economic challenges, such as urban unemployment, as their more peripheral counterparts. Some scholars have in fact begun to note a hollowing out of the middle group, or to emphasize the distinction between rich and poor countries rather than the trichotomous model (Milanovic 2005; Arrighi, Silver, and Brewer 2003; Lee 2009).

The two-group typology is further reinforced by recent scholarship on the precarious working class. This research has tended to downplay variation across the world system, as scholars have been more concerned with highlighting the globalization of precarious living and working conditions. But a comparison of different works reveals dramatic variations. Two key books that highlight this variation are Standing's (2011) *The Precariat* and Davis's (2007) *Planet of Slums*. Each book highlights a relatively uniform “global” process, but they focus on very different sets of countries. While Standing's (2011) analysis of the “precariat” does make reference to peripheral countries, his discussion is primarily focused on insecure labor regimes under advanced capitalism, particularly the UK. In contrast, Davis' (2007) analysis of the “informal proletariat” highlights the growing populations of urban slum dwellers living under peripheral capitalism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Both authors emphasize the expansion of insecurely employed, low-income, and non-unionized groups. But they capture very different dynamics of capitalist development, and in turn very different experiences of precariousness. For Standing the precariat is a “class-in-the-making, if not yet a class-for-itself,” produced by flexible labor practices that lead to a variety of work-related insecurities. These insecurities are often compounded by a lack of citizenship status, since many within the precariat are international migrants. But despite this insecurity the precariat is central to the workings of the contemporary global economy, providing an important source of labor. In Davis' analysis on the other hand, the informal proletariat exists largely outside of the global economy. This segment of the precarious working class consists largely of “internal” migrants, who have been displaced from the rural areas but are unable to find employment in the urban areas. Rather than providing essential labor, the informal proletariat represents a “surplus humanity” whose “labor-power...has been expelled from the world system” (27,174).

These very different portrayals suggest that working class insecurity is experienced very differently under advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism. We might therefore expect precarious politics to vary with respect to location within the world system. To make sense of this variation, I develop a distinction between two different forms of working class struggle. Each form of struggle is rooted in a different theory of capitalism and a different working class experience, as elaborated by two prominent social theorists: Karl Marx and Karl Polanyi. Marx's theory of capitalism is grounded in relations of production, and organized around the antagonism between capital and labor. In this theory the central experience for the working class is exploitation, which entails the appropriation of their labor product by those who own the means of production. Polanyi's theory is grounded instead in relations of exchange, and organized around the antagonism between market and society. In this theory the central experience for the working class is commodification, which entails the treatment of labor as an entity to be bought and sold on the market.

These different theories of capitalism give rise to divergent visions of working class struggle. For Marx, working class struggle is waged from within the system of production by the direct producers themselves. In his narrative the working class begins by struggling against their employers to improve their working conditions and reduce their exploitation. As workers become more organized, first into trade unions and then into political parties, Marx believed they would eventually abolish capitalism altogether by seizing control of the means of production and eliminating private property. In this theory it is precisely the position of workers as producers that gives them revolutionary potential. Not only does their collective organization and common degradation at the point of production encourage collective struggle, but as collective producers they are the ones who provide the economic basis for capitalism's alternative, communism. It follows that Marx was decidedly pessimistic about the unemployed and those engaged in survivalist activity such as begging or crime. He viewed these parasitic elements of the working class as at best a “dead weight,” and at worst a “social scum” and “passively rotting mass.”

For Polanyi, working class struggle is waged from outside of the market system by members of society. In this narrative working class struggle is the second part of a double movement, whereby the movement towards marketization produces devastating effects that in turn produce countermovements for social protection. Traversing from the local to the national to the global, countermovements aim to defend society by placing controls on the market, such as through

cooperatives or state regulation. For Polanyi the emergent regimes of the 1930s – the American New Deal, Soviet socialism, German fascism – represented the triumph of market controls in various forms. Yet he is notoriously ambiguous about the class basis of the countermovement. While at times he suggests that the working class will lead the struggle for social protection, he also emphasizes the importance of elite-driven legislation. His central point, however, is that whoever leads the countermovement will do so for the general protection of society, not for their own interest.

Both Marx and Polanyi based their theories largely on the experiences of the working class in 19th century Britain. In this sense they are better understood as competing interpretations of history than portrayals of different empirical situations. Silver's (2003) historical analysis of world labor unrest, however, suggests that each theory may be relevant to particular segments of the working class, depending on their social location. She thus distinguishes between Marx-type struggles and Polanyi-type struggles, each of which has a different catalyst. Marx-type struggles include “the struggles of newly emerging working classes that are successively made and strengthened as an unintended outcome of the development of historical capitalism.” Led by working classes that are in the making, they emerge because advances in production increase working class “capacity and disposition to resist exploitation.” Polanyi-type struggles, on the other hand, consist of “backlash resistances to the spread of a global self-regulating market, particularly by working classes that are being unmade by global economic transformations.” Led by working classes that are in the unmaking, they emerge because “the extension of the self-regulating market overturns established and widely accepted social compacts on the right to livelihood” (20).

Both types of working class struggle are a response to capitalist development, but they also reflect very different experiences. Where Marx-type struggles reflect an experience of inclusion, Polanyi-type struggles represent an experience of exclusion. These two different starting points parallel the distinction between Standing's precariat and Davis' informal proletariat. We might therefore expect to find Marx-type struggles under advanced capitalism and Polanyi-type struggles under peripheral capitalism. But what are the implications of this variation for the orientation of precarious politics? Silver's analysis is primarily concerned with the capacity of the working class to struggle, and thus pays less attention to questions of political orientation. For this we must return to the original theories.

Marx and Polanyi capture two different orientations of struggle. For Marx, working class struggles are oriented towards participation. Based on the premise of inclusion, they are about building society within the economy, giving workers increasing control over the means of production as well as the distribution of the products. These struggles are expansive and outward-looking, increasing the power and well-being of the working class. Their logical conclusion is communism, which for Marx is a society organized around collective ownership and the principle of “from each according to ability, to each according to need.” For Polanyi, working class struggles are oriented instead towards protection. Based on the premise of exclusion, they are about building society outside of the economy so as to prevent its destruction by the market. In contrast to Marx's proletarian revolution, which increases democracy and well-being, their outcome is more ambiguous. They may be expansive, subordinating the self-regulating market to democratic society (234), or they may be restrictive, sacrificing democratic

freedoms. Polanyi hinted at this malleability in his analysis of market regulation in the 1930s, which came in the form of both the New Deal welfare state and the Nazi fascist state.

In addition to two different domains of struggle, economic struggles and citizenship struggles, we may therefore distinguish between two different orientations of struggle: *participation struggles*, which are oriented towards increasing the access and leverage of working classes within the economy and society; and *protection struggles*, which are oriented towards protecting the livelihood of working classes against the destruction of the market. We may also expect these different orientations of precarious politics to be concentrated in different locations within the world system. Marx's analysis suggests that participation struggles are based on the premise of inclusion. We should thus expect to find them under advanced capitalism, where the precarious working class is more likely to be incorporated into capitalist development. Alternatively, Polanyi's analysis suggests that protection struggles are based on the premise of exclusion. We should thus expect to find them under peripheral capitalism, where the precarious working class is less likely to be incorporated into capitalist development.

Precarious Politics in California and Gauteng

Drawing from these theoretical foundations, this study uses the lens of precarious politics to examine the struggles of two specific groups: low-wage noncitizen workers in California, United States; and poor citizen communities in Gauteng, South Africa. I focus on these specific groups for three reasons. First, both groups represent the expansion of the precarious working class. Though very different, both groups were largely comprised of those who were insecurely employed (including the unemployed), low-income, not unionized, and living in urban areas. Second, both groups waged particularly visible collective struggles during the late 1990s and 2000s. These struggles were often weak and fragmented, and they rarely secured gains that impacted more than a small group of people. But in both places precarious politics became a persistent feature of the political landscape, and in brief moments began to develop into a formidable political force.

Third, the two groups make it possible to examine variation in precarious politics. Each group represented a segment of the precarious working class that was characteristic of a different location within the world system. Reflecting the precarious working class under advanced capitalism, low-wage noncitizen workers in California exemplified Standing's precariat. They were largely found in insecure and low-paying service and manufacturing jobs, from day labor to domestic work to restaurant and hotel services. Comprising a significant portion of the low-wage workforce, they were central to the functioning of the global economy. Reflecting the precarious working class under peripheral capitalism, poor citizens in Gauteng exemplified Davis' informal proletariat. They were largely found in townships and informal settlements on the urban periphery, and subjected to classic "slum" conditions: "overcrowding, poor or informal housing, inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, and insecurity of tenure" (Davis 2004:13). Characterized by high rates of unemployment and informal economic activity, they were peripheral to the functioning of the global economy.

The argument revolves around two central claims, one regarding the similarity of precarious

politics in the two cases, and one regarding their difference. The first claim is that both sets of struggles revolved around demands for recognition. This was partially because both groups lacked collective economic leverage or the ability to disrupt production. But recognition was also an object of struggle and end in itself. Largely relegated to the margins of society, both groups sought a basic level of dignity, respect, and inclusion. In both places this included interweaving economic struggles and citizenship struggles. The second claim is that the two groups had a very different political orientation. Precarious politics thus took very different forms in the two places, despite their fundamental similarity. This divergence reflected the different position of the two groups in relation to global capitalism. If low-wage noncitizen workers in California were largely comprised of classes-in-the-making, poor citizen communities in Gauteng were largely comprised of classes-in-the-unmaking. These different positions laid the foundation for very different politics.

In California, the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers were oriented towards participation. As an important source of flexible labor in the heart of advanced capitalism, they sought to increase their leverage within the capitalist system. A central goal underpinning both their economic struggles and their citizenship struggles was access to and fair treatment in the labor market. But each set of struggles had a distinct politics. Participation-oriented economic struggles were organized around an Equal Opportunity politics. They included struggles by workers, outside of unions, for access to the labor market and basic labor protections. Low-wage noncitizen workers often called on the state to intervene, either by passing new laws or enforcing existing laws, but ultimately they sought concessions from employers. Participation-oriented citizenship struggles were organized around a Membership Inclusion politics. They included struggles for the inclusion of noncitizens as official members of the political community. These struggles were more directly aimed at the state, and demanded in particular the legalization of undocumented residents and freedom from criminalization.

In Gauteng, the struggles of poor citizens were oriented towards protection. Constituted as a surplus labor force on the outskirts of peripheral capitalism, they sought protection from the capitalist system rather than leverage within it. A central goal underpinning both their economic struggles and their citizenship struggles was securing a basic livelihood outside of market exchange. But as in California, each set of struggles had a distinct politics. Protection-oriented economic struggles were organized around what Castells (1983) refers to as Collective Consumption politics. They included struggles for the delivery of basic public goods such as housing, water, electricity, toilets, and roads. Rather than using the state as leverage to obtain economic goods, as in California, these struggles called on the state to provide them directly. Protection-oriented citizenship struggles were organized around a Membership Exclusion politics. They included struggles for the political exclusion of noncitizens as illegitimate members of the nation. These struggles were less directed at the state, but rather assumed the role of the state by attempting to expel foreigners from the country with violent force.

The case studies of California and Gauteng thus reveal four different types of politics, classified by the orientation and domain of struggle (see Table 1.1). Within each case, economic struggles and citizenship struggles were mutually reinforcing. If formal citizenship status was an underlying, and sometimes explicit, feature of economic struggles, citizenship struggles were understood as important for achieving economic security. In both cases the demand for

recognition tied the two sets of struggles together, giving them a coherence despite their different objectives. In California, Equal Opportunity politics and Membership Inclusion politics were mutually reinforcing. The unifying link between them was the demand that noncitizen workers and their families be recognized as valuable contributors to society, and deserving of a basic level of dignity despite their origins in another country. In Gauteng, Collective Consumption politics and Membership Exclusion politics were mutually reinforcing. The unifying link between them was the demand that poor citizens be recognized as valuable members of the political community, deserving of a basic level of dignity because they were native-born residents of the South African nation.

Table 1.1. Precarious politics in California and Gauteng

Domain of struggle	Orientation of Struggle	
	Participation struggles (California, United States)	Protection struggles (Gauteng, South Africa)
Economic struggles	Equal Opportunity politics	Collective Consumption politics
Citizenship struggles	Membership Inclusion politics	Membership Exclusion politics

Precarious politics in California and Gauteng thus ran in opposite directions. While both sets of struggles revolved around demands for recognition and dignity, their divergent orientations led to very different politics. Oriented towards participation, precarious politics in California sought to broaden the political community. In particular they sought to expand access to the economy and society for noncitizens. Oriented towards protection, precarious politics in Gauteng sought instead to limit the political community. Rather than expanding access to the economy and society, they sought to decrease it by excluding noncitizens. As economic struggles gave way to citizenship struggles, the politics of low-wage noncitizen workers in California became expansive and inclusive, while the politics of poor citizen communities in Gauteng became restrictive and exclusive.

Contrary to the implications of previous research, the examples suggest that it is possible for members of the precarious working class to wage collective struggles outside of unions. The emergence of precarious politics, in turn, created new challenges for unions, which were forced

to decide how they would respond. Given the historical legacy of unionism in each country, we would expect unions to be detached from precarious politics in California and fused with them in Gauteng. Prototypical of bureaucratic business unionism, unions in the United States were traditionally distant from broader non-labor struggles (Katznelson 1981; Lichtenstein 2002:185-187; Clawson 2003:20-23). They also commonly treated noncitizen Latinos as a threat, rather than a potential ally or constituency. Unions in South Africa were instead a model of social movement unionism. They played a central role in the movement against Apartheid, and in so doing became deeply involved in supporting and leading broader community struggles around issues such as housing, transportation, and democratization (Seidman 1994).

Alongside the expansion of the precarious working class, however, unions in both places underwent reorganization and reorientation in the late 20th century. Not only did unions in each place have the opposite response to precarious politics that we would predict, but the response that they did have reinforced the divergent orientations precarious politics in the two places. In California, unions came to understand the struggles of noncitizen workers as important for reversing their trajectory of decline. As a result they supported both Equal Opportunity politics and Membership Inclusion politics. Unions joined protests and community organizing efforts around immigrant rights, and began to develop partnerships with non-union worker organizations. Embracing the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers as part of a broader labor movement, unions thus reinforced the orientation of precarious politics towards participation. In Gauteng, democratization and labor's resulting partnership with the ruling party instead encouraged distance from poor citizen communities. Unions were generally supportive of Collective Consumption politics. But rather than joining community struggles they focused on negotiating with the state for better policies, and struggling to protect their own privileges as organized workers. While unions were explicitly opposed to Membership Exclusion politics, they thus contributed to a void of collective organization in poor communities that enabled them to thrive. Failing to incorporate community struggles as part of a broader labor movement, unions affirmed the orientation of precarious politics towards protection.

A Comparative Study of Precarious Politics

This study examines new forms of working class politics being forged beyond the ambit of unions. It thus sheds new light on the significance of the precarious working class, a group that is increasingly acknowledged but rarely considered a source of collective struggle. The scope of the study is defined by the collective struggles of two very different segments of the precarious working class in the late 1990s and 2000s: low-wage noncitizen workers in California, United States, and poor citizen communities in Gauteng, South Africa. I contrast the political orientation of these two sets of struggles, as well as their relationship to unions.

The analysis operates at four levels – local, regional, national, and global. Due to the persistent significance of nation-states for structuring the global political economy, working class struggles commonly vary along national lines. I have chosen the two case studies to emphasize national variation, between the United States and South Africa, in precarious politics. Because both countries are remarkably diverse, I focus on sub-national regions to make the study more

manageable. The specific regions are appropriate because they are, in a sense, extreme representations of their national contexts. To the extent that each set of struggles was national, California and Gauteng were the respective hotspots. Some of the struggles were coordinated at the regional or national level, but most were organized more locally. They often involved highly localized dynamics. The analysis aims to capture these local struggles, and thus to some extent reflects local variation, but this variation is not the primary emphasis. The central goal for each case, therefore, is to understand how national dynamics played out across various local contexts within a specific region.

The contrast between California and Gauteng also requires attention to dynamics at the global level. The two regions are not only located in different countries, they are also differentially situated within global capitalism. Chapter 2 highlights this contrast by connecting the expansion of the precarious working class in each place to three global transformations: racial inclusion, marketization, and mass migration. This study thus begins where previous comparative research on the United States and South Africa ends: the dismantling of state-sanctioned racial domination (Marx 1998; Winant 2001). But whereas previous scholarship emphasized the parallels between the two cases, I argue that racial inclusion was associated with divergent processes of working class reorganization. In California it entailed the decimation of unions, increasing demand for flexible labor within the formal sector, and the growth of the noncitizen workforce through international migration. In Gauteng it entailed instead the strengthening of unions, decreasing demand for unskilled labor in the formal sector, and mass “internal” migration of black citizens. Linking these divergent patterns to uneven global transformations, this analysis illustrates that low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizen communities in Gauteng were emblematic of a broader contrast between advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism.

These divergent processes of working class restructuring laid a foundation for very different collective struggles. The core of the study turns to these struggles. This analysis is based on 26 months of fieldwork in California and Gauteng, including participation in protests and community organizing as well as interviews with 57 workers, activists, and community members. It also draws from archival materials, a protest database assembled through newspaper sources, and secondary sources (see Methodological Appendix). Based on these sources, Chapters 3 and 4 contrast the orientation of precarious politics in California and Gauteng. In each place precarious politics were partially rooted in a particular constellation of social movement organizations. In California they were associated with the emergence of worker centers, which provided an alternative, non-union form of organization for low-wage noncitizen workers. In Gauteng they were associated with emergent social movements, which provided an outlet for collective struggles in poor communities outside of the established structure of organizations connected to the ruling party. But in both cases precarious politics also extended beyond these organizational forms. They included struggles initiated by other groupings as well as more loosely organized struggles. The analysis attempts to capture the most significant events associated with both moments.

Chapter 3 examines economic struggles around the material production of goods and persons. As with traditional labor struggles, access to economic resources was central for the precarious working class in both California and Gauteng. But these struggles did not revolve around strikes

or collective bargaining. They revolved instead around demands for recognition and treatment as valuable members of society. Both sets of economic struggles were, at their root, about dignity and respect. Yet they took very different forms in the two places, reflecting the orientation of precarious politics towards participation in California and protection in Gauteng. Economic struggles in California were organized around an Equal Opportunity politics, as noncitizen workers demanded access to the labor market and basic labor protections. Economic struggles in Gauteng, however, were organized around a Collective Consumption politics, as poor citizen communities demanded state delivery of public goods.

Chapter 4 examines citizenship struggles around official membership in the political community. These struggles were, to some extent, an extension of economic struggles. But as an important source of recognition and dignity, citizenship was also an end in itself. Citizenship struggles continued to reflect the different orientations of precarious politics in California and Gauteng, respectively, towards participation and protection. But citizenship struggles were even more divergent than economic struggles. In California citizenship struggles were organized around a Membership Inclusion politics, which demanded official legal status and freedom from immigration enforcement. But in Gauteng they were organized around a Membership Exclusion politics, which demanded the expulsion of noncitizens from the national territory. The shift from economic struggles to citizenship struggles thus took precarious politics in opposite directions in the two cases. Whereas in California they sought to broaden the political community and extend the boundaries of inclusion, in Gauteng they sought to limit the political community and contract the boundaries of inclusion.

With the precarious working class waging collective struggles on their own, outside of unions, labor was forced to decide how it would respond. Would unions embrace precarious politics as part of a broader labor movement, or would they reject precarious politics as part of a separate struggle? Chapter 5 addresses this question by examining how unions responded to the economic struggles and citizenship struggles presented in the previous chapters. In addition to interviews with activists both inside and outside of unions, the analysis draws from statements and resolutions by the major union federation in each place – the California Labor Federation (the California body of the AFL-CIO) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Contrary to what we would expect given the legacy of trade unionism in each place, I show that unions became fused with precarious politics in California but separated from them in Gauteng. These unexpected patterns reflected the reorganization of unions and thus the reorientation of labor struggles between the 1970s and the 2000s. Whereas unions in California understood noncitizen workers as central to their own revitalization, the close relationship between unions and the state in Gauteng created distance from community struggles.

The concluding chapter draws out the implications of the two case studies by situating them within a broader context. To what extent might precarious politics in California and Gauteng be representative of precarious politics more broadly? To pursue this question I reinterpret the two case studies through the lens of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. While the analysis focuses on questions around anti-colonial struggle and post-colonial transition, it is rooted in a contrast between advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism. Fanon argued that the working class could be revolutionary under advanced capitalism because capital was stronger, while the weakness of capital under peripheral capitalism encouraged the working class to be more

protective of its privileges. This analysis resonates with the orientation of precarious politics towards participation in California and protection in Gauteng, suggesting that the two cases may have broader relevance. Building on this theoretical analysis, I briefly examine the relevance of precarious politics to other recent struggles throughout the globe.

2. PRECARIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS

The working class was significantly reorganized in the second half of the 20th century. Worldwide this reorganization included a significant expansion of the precarious working class, defined by insecure employment, low income, and detachment from unions. I argue that to understand this expansion, and in particular how it varied across locations in the world system, we must examine three sets of transformations: racial inclusion, marketization, and mass migration. All three transformations were, to some extent, global. But they were also uneven, with important implications for the precarious working class. Under advanced capitalism the precarious working class came to resemble Standing's (2011) description of the “precariat”: a flexible labor force of insecure workers, including a significant proportion of international migrants. Under peripheral capitalism, however, the precarious working class came to resemble Davis' (2007) description of the “informal proletariat”: a surplus labor force relegated to unemployment and survivalist activity, including significant proportion of rural-to-urban migrants living in urban slums.

This chapter draws a link between these broader patterns of transformation, and the expansion of the precarious working class in California and Gauteng between the late 1960s and the early 2000s. In particular it shows that the divergent expansion of the precarious working class in the two places reflected a broader divergence between advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism. Reflecting the wealth and greater abundance of employment, as well as the prevalence of international migration, the precarious working class in California was organized around low-wage noncitizen workers. Reflecting instead the lesser wealth and lower amount of employment, as well as the greater significance of “internal” migration relative to international migration, the precarious working class in Gauteng was organized around unemployed and insecurely employed citizens. If the former was closer to Standing's view of the precariat, the latter was closer to Davis' view of the informal proletariat.

To make sense of this divergence we must trace the expansion of the precarious working class from the immediate postwar period. The precarious working class was not created from scratch. In both places it was already beginning to take form before the 1960s, as a marginalized segment of the working class. In California this marginalized segment included low-wage noncitizen workers, who were relegated to temporary contract labor in the agricultural sector, while in Gauteng it included migrant workers without urban residence rights, who were commonly subjected to harsh and insecure employment. The expansion of both groups, and thus the precarious working class, was partially propelled by the twin processes of racial inclusion and mass migration. Whereas in California the reform of immigration law partially facilitated the diffusion of noncitizen workers throughout the economy and society, in Gauteng the dismantling of Apartheid accelerated urbanization by enabling the movement of black South Africans between the rural and urban areas.

Sociologists have tended to treat racial inclusion, marketization, and mass migration as three separate transformations. But to understand the expansion of the precarious working class in

each place, we must examine how racial inclusion and mass migration interacted with uneven patterns of marketization and working class reorganization. In California, the expansion of international migrants went hand-in-hand with the growing demand for low-wage labor in services and manufacturing, but in Gauteng the expansion of “internal” urbanization occurred despite the declining demand for low-wage labor. In both places the expansion of the precarious working class marked the declining significance of unions. Yet the trajectories of unions in the two places were nonetheless very different. Whereas in California the expansion of the precarious working class went hand-in-hand with the persistent erosion of union density, in Gauteng the expansion occurred despite remarkable union growth. Before turning to these specific dynamics, I begin by tracing the triple transformation more generally, showing how the United States and South Africa were prototypes of a broader divergence between advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism.

Uneven Global Transformations

The reorganization of the working class in California and Gauteng reflected the intersection of three global transformations. All three impacted countries across the globe, but the United States and South Africa were prototypes. Perhaps the most remarked of the transformations was the formal political inclusion of nonwhites. Winant's (2001) *The World is a Ghetto* identifies this postwar shift as a “break” in the global racial order. He argues that the racial break was the product of overlapping resistance movements across the globe, which achieved a "ruptural unity" sufficient enough to render overt and state-sanctioned racial exclusion illegitimate. The break included the elimination of colonial rule, particularly in Africa, and in so doing reconstituted the global political economy around independent and sovereign nation-states. Within nation-states the break meant the legitimation of formal racial equality and ideologies of colorblindness. While the timing of the shift and the contours of resistance varied across contexts, once it was achieved in a given context, legal rights could no longer be distributed along racial lines. Citizenship was formally deracialized.

The United States and South Africa epitomized the postwar racial break. Indeed, the comparative sociology of race has long treated them as central case studies. The classic comparative studies focused on their parallel systems of racial domination (Fredrickson 1981; Cell 1982; Greenberg 1980; Andrews 1987), while more recent studies have emphasized their similar struggles for racial equality (Marx 1998; Winant 2001). Temporally situated at opposite ends of the break, with the Civil Rights Movement at the beginning and the anti-Apartheid movement at the end, the United States and South Africa became prominent symbols of the global transition towards racial tolerance and political inclusion. They also captured the global nature of the shift, given their different locations within the world system. If the Civil Rights Movement represented the achievement of racial equality within advanced capitalism, the anti-Apartheid movement represented the final eclipse of colonialism within peripheral capitalism (Mamdani 1996).

The expansion of working class insecurity must be understood in relation to this racial transformation. The process of formal racial inclusion went hand-in-hand with marketization, which entailed the reorganization of the global economy around principles of private property, individual liberty, entrepreneurial freedom, and free trade (Harvey 2007:22). Decolonization

facilitated the opening of international markets for free trade, unencumbered by political barriers, while formal racial equality eliminated constraints in labor markets. Marketization entailed both the decline of state controls and protections, and the increasing the capacity of private owners to control the allocation of resources, undermining the power and stability of working classes across the globe. The negative effects were amplified in the 1990s by market-oriented reforms in China, India, and the former Communist countries associated with the Soviet Union, which essentially doubled the size of global workforce and cut the capital/labor ratio in half (Freeman 2008). Racial inclusion, therefore, did not mean an extension of the economic privileges that had previously been enjoyed by white workers. Instead it meant that nonwhite workers were incorporated into a new economic order defined by capital mobility, flexible and informal employment relationships, and insecurity.

The ravages of marketization reached across the world system but they coincided with uneven patterns of economic development. A key aspect of the divergence stemmed from the geographic displacement of industrial capital from “expensive” labor regions to “cheap” labor regions. This spatial reorganization changed the composition of capital in less affluent countries, but it did little to undermine the global divide in wealth. Despite rapid increases in the contribution of manufacturing to GDP, between 1960 and 1999 the per capita income of countries in Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), and Latin America remained approximately 4 percent of the per capita income of countries in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (Arrighi, Silver, and Brewer 2003:12-13). The manufacturing boom was also short-lived for many countries. With much of foreign investment flowing towards China in the 1990s and 2000s, less affluent countries also began to experience deindustrialization (Davis 2007:13).

Economic development after 1960 in the United States and South Africa exemplified this broader divergence. Whereas the former experienced both steady deindustrialization and rapid economic growth, the latter had a short spike in industrialization and a much flatter trajectory of economic growth. Between 1960 and 2005, per capita GDP measured in US dollars increased by nearly 40,000 in the United States, compared to less than 5,000 in South Africa. As of 2005, the wealth enjoyed by residents of South Africa was only 12 percent of the wealth enjoyed by residents of the United States. Even if the figures are adjusted for the different cost of living across countries, per capita income in South Africa in 2005 was still only one-fifth of per capita income in South Africa (see table 2.1).

The geographic relocation of industrial capital tended to weaken labor movements under advanced capitalism and strengthen them in certain areas of the periphery. As Silver (2003:41-46) shows for the automobile industry, the locus of labor militancy shifted along with the relocation of investment from the United States and Canada, to northwestern and then southern Europe, and eventually to middle income countries on the periphery such as South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, and Mexico. Primarily impacting the more stable segments of the workforce, the spatial reorganization of capital strengthened unions in areas of investment by providing workers with economic leverage.

If we consider the working class more broadly, the changes of the late 20th century were even more divergent. Across the globe heightened capital mobility went hand-in-hand with the erosion of basic labor protections and the rise of casual and flexible labor arrangements. But countries

had different capacities for labor absorption depending on their location within the world system. Under advanced capitalism the high concentration of capital meant growing demand for flexible, low-wage labor. This included jobs in both the “downgraded” manufacturing sector, reorganized around the threat of capital mobility, and a low-wage service sector that catered to the needs of the professional middle class (Sassen 1988). Under peripheral capitalism, however, the low concentration of capital meant much lower demand for unskilled labor. Further exacerbating the inequality was the fact that the labor force on the periphery was growing at a much faster rate. This stemmed from market processes – the opening of global trade, deregulation, rural subsidy reductions – which accelerated the proletarianization of the peasantry.

Table 2.1. Industrialization and Economic Growth, United States and South Africa, 1960-2005

Year	Industry as % of GDP		GDP per capita (2011 US \$)		GNI per capita, PPP (international \$)	
	United States	South Africa	United States	South Africa	United States	South Africa
1960		37.8	2,881	422		
1965		39.8	3,665	553		
1970	35.2	38.2	4,998	808		
1975	33.2	41.2	7,517	1,494		
1980	33.5	48.4	12,180	2,927	12,130	4,010
1985	30.9	43.6	17,589	2,142	17,520	4,850
1990	27.9	40.1	23,054	3,182	22,850	5,540
1995	26.2	34.8	27,638	3,863	27,550	5,990
2000	23.4	31.8	35,081	3,020	35,690	6,610
2005	22.1	31.2	42,534	5,235	43,130	8,420

Source: World Bank Indicators. Retrieved July 8, 2011 (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>).

Finally, we must understand these divergent patterns of economic reorganization in relation to the spatial reorganization of the global working class. If racial inclusion and marketization enhanced the geographic mobility of capital, they also propelled the mass migration of people searching for work. Working classes were increasingly organized around migrant populations, which may be divided into two categories: international migrants who cross national borders, and “internal” migrants who do not. The former were typically constituted as noncitizens with a variety of legal statuses, from legal permanent resident to refugee to undocumented or “illegal.” The majority of international migrants live in affluent countries (approximately 60 percent), but migration between less affluent countries also increased considerably in the late 20th century (Ratha and Shaw 2004). Despite their different levels of wealth both the United States and South Africa were economic hubs, and thus were both primary destinations for international migration. The United States was by far the leading recipient in the world, home to more than one out of every five international migrants globally, while South Africa was the leading destination on the African continent (International Organization of Migration 2010; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2009).

Within advanced capitalism, international migrants thus comprised an increasing portion of the working class. Within peripheral capitalism, however, international migration was commonly dwarfed by rural-to-urban migration within countries. It was this massive “internal” migration that largely accounted for the worldwide expansion of urban populations. Between 1975 and 2009 the urban population in Latin America, Asia, and Africa more than doubled (209 percent), while in North America and Europe it increased by only 30 percent. The same increase was even more dramatic in Africa, where the urban population nearly tripled (269 percent), while in North America the increase was only 59 percent (Birch and Wachter 2011). The greater prevalence of “internal” migrants relative to international migrants had an important impact on the political composition of working class. Unlike international migrants, “internal” migrants were typically constituted as citizens. Due to the shift towards formal racial equality within nation-states, this meant they enjoyed formal political rights.

Not only were migrants constituted with different political statuses throughout the world system, but they also experienced different processes of economic incorporation. Under advanced capitalism, international migrants filled the bottom of the labor market characterized by non-unionized, flexible, and insecure jobs. These dynamics lay beneath the expansion of the “precariat” described by Standing. But under peripheral capitalism urbanization proceeded despite the lower demand for unskilled labor. Urban newcomers, mostly “internal” migrants but including international migrants as well, were thus forced to make their own economic activities, giving rise to the “informal sector.” These dynamics lay beneath the expansion of the “informal proletariat” described by Davis. In the remainder of this chapter I trace these processes in more detail for the cases of California and Gauteng.

California: Precariousness Under Advanced Capitalism

As in the rest of the country, the middle of the 20th century was a relatively prosperous time for many Californians. Fueled by an injection of federal investment during and after World War II, the manufacturing sector became a key driver of economic growth and employment (Teitz and

Shapira 1989). Between 1940 and 1960 the number of manufacturing companies more than doubled and the manufacturing labor force more than tripled, growing from 420,000 to 1,460,000 (Rhode 2001:88-89). Manufacturing growth fueled a surge in union membership and union density surpassed 40 percent in the early 1950s. Unions became a central institution of the postwar political economy, facilitating a modest redistribution of profits to the working class.

Native-born white workers dominated the postwar California workforce, accounting for roughly three-quarters of employed workers between 1940 and 1970. The remainder of the workforce was fairly evenly distributed between native-born blacks, native-born Latinos, and foreign-born whites, who were also becoming incorporated into trade unions. Greer's (1959:172-173) study of Los Angeles unions in 1950, for example, reveals that one-quarter of the unionized workforce was either black or Latino, and in several unions black and Latino workers comprised more than half of the membership. Foreign-born Latino and Asian workers, however, were an extremely small portion of the workforce, together accounting for just over 3 percent of all workers. Accounts of mid-century urban California confirm the limited presence of noncitizens, and non-European noncitizens in particular (Waldinger 2001; Walker 1996; Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1996).

A key exception to these patterns was the agricultural sector, where the state-sponsored Bracero program brought Mexican farm workers to California on temporary work contracts. The program confined migrant workers to rural agriculture, and repatriated them to Mexico when their labor was no longer needed. Mexican workers steadily replaced domestic workers in many segments of the industry, and studies show that the workforce harvesting a wide variety of crops was at least 75 percent "bracero" (Galarza 1964:87-97, 156-158; Runsten and Leveen 1981:70). Tied to coercive contracts and treated as disposable labor, these workers had few rights, were excluded from unions, and were highly exploited (Paret 2011). But the agricultural sector was a relatively small component of the California economy, accounting for only 5 percent of the workforce in 1960 (Rhode 2001:88).

In the closing decades of the twentieth century these labor market dynamics changed dramatically. Organized labor was decimated and the urban economy was reorganized around low-wage, non-unionized labor. At the same time international migration increased and spilled out of the agricultural sector, filling the low-wage urban sector with noncitizen workers from Latin America and Asia. The expansion of the precarious working class thus entailed the growth and diffusion of the low-wage noncitizen workforce. This process was partially enabled by the reorganization of United States immigration system to be more consistent with civil rights ideals, including the elimination of the Bracero program. But the policing of national boundaries nonetheless maintained the political vulnerability of noncitizen workers, particularly those without legal authorization to be in the country.

Labor Decline and Polarization

Union density in California peaked in the early 1950s, though union membership continued to grow into the early 1970s. Between 1950 and 1970 union membership grew by 57 percent, adding 770,000 new members. But as in the rest of the country, the heyday of postwar unionism proved to be relatively brief. After 1970 union membership growth stagnated, accelerating the decline in union density. Between 1970 and 1995 unions added just over 50,000 new members

for an increase of only 2 percent. By 1995 California's union density had dropped to a low of 18 percent, only slightly higher than the national rate of 15 percent. Union decline was particularly dramatic in the private sector, where density dipped below 10 percent in the 2000s (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2. Union Membership and Union Density, California, 1950-2010

Year	Union membership	Union density (all sectors)	Union density (private sector)
1950	1,354,500	42.8	
1955	1,618,500	40.2	
1960	1,755,700	36.3	
1965	1,871,700	32.3	
1970	2,124,500	30.3	
1975	2,141,800	27.5	
1980	2,246,650	23.1	
1985	2,123,121	20.4	15.8
1990	2,219,378	18.4	13.0
1995	2,176,364	17.7	11.0
2000	2,295,130	16.0	9.7
2005	2,423,855	16.5	9.7
2010	2,431,276	17.5	9.3

Source: California Department of Industrial Relations (1950-1970, 1950-1981); California Employment Development Department (1971-1981); Hirsch and Macpherson (2011). Estimates for 1980 are based on the average estimates of union membership in 1979 and 1981.

The rapid decline in union density from the 1970s stemmed from a variety of factors. These included the growth of service industries where unionization was less prevalent, increased employer hostility towards unions, and the growing use of flexible employment relationships such as temporary, part-time, and subcontracted work. Manufacturing decline was slower in California than the country as a whole, but this was largely due to growth in the high-technology and labor-intensive sectors where labor was weaker. Similar to the rest of the country, the capital-intensive manufacturing sectors that fueled postwar unionization declined from the 1970s to the

1990s (Rhode 2001:26,89). Perhaps most important, however, was the shifting position of the state, which increasingly failed to defend workers against employer attacks. This partially reflected the growing organization and political influence of business organizations, which in turn reinforced the increased reorientation of the state around market principles. Deregulation, failure to update labor laws, and the erosion of institutions designed to protect unions were among the most important consequences of this political shift (Hacker and Pierson 2010; Chun 2009:29-33). As the postwar economic boom began to wane in the 1970s and 1980s, the labor-hostile state emboldened employers in their efforts to undermine unions and reduce labor costs. Employers began to aggressively challenge and repress union organizing, and in many cases avoided unions altogether by opening nonunion sites (Milkman 2006; Clawson and Clawson 1999:102-103; Freeman 1988; Voss and Sherman 2000:311).

For their part, unions had developed into top-heavy bureaucratic institutions that were ill-prepared to respond to the state-backed employer offensive (Fantasia and Voss 2004; Lichtenstein 2002). As scholars have pointed out, American unions largely failed to join community struggles and harness the energy of the civil rights movement for labor growth (Katznelson 1981; Fletcher and Gapasin 2008; Clawson 2003:20-23). Notably, the national AFL-CIO did not support the March on Washington in 1963 or the Poor People's March in 1968 (Lichtenstein 2002:187). In California, a key exception to this pattern was the United Farm Workers (UFW), which became one of the key pillars of the Chicano wing of the civil rights movement. Using tactics such as boycotts and enlisting community support, the UFW acted more as a social movement than an institutionalized bureaucracy. While officially connected to the AFL-CIO, however, the farm workers remained politically independent and relatively detached from the rest of organized labor (Shaw 2008:27). The benefits of combining the Chicano movement and the labor movement were thus largely restricted to the agricultural sector. While the UFW registered a series of organizing victories in the 1960s and 1970s, as a whole the civil rights movement did little to stem the tide of union decline in California.

The decline of organized labor went hand-in-hand with the more general decline of the working class. This occurred despite continuing economic growth. While the rest of the country experienced economic downturn in the 1970s and 1980s, the California economy was red-hot. Employment increased by 5.5 million jobs between 1975 and 1990 while the gross state product reached \$700 billion, making the state one of the largest economies in the world in terms of income and output (Walker 1995:165-166). But job growth was extremely polarized between high and low paying jobs (Sassen 1988; Milkman and Dwyer 2002; Rhode 2001:24-26). At the bottom end there was an increase in sweatshop factories and industrial homework, jobs in retail, trade, and construction, and low-wage service jobs such as domestic and care work, restaurant and hotel work, and janitorial services.

Much of the contemporary low-wage economy was reorganized around nonstandard employment, such as a temporary and subcontracted work, which was characterized by lower wages, fewer benefits, and less security (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000). Enabling employers to increase profits by cutting labor costs, these insecure employment relations went hand-in-hand with the emergence of a “gloves off economy” in which employers choose to “evade or break the core laws and standards that govern working conditions” (Bernhardt et al. 2008). Not only did this mean an erosion of previously common work-related benefits, such as

subsidized health care, paid vacation and sick time, and pension plans, but it meant increasing violations of basic labor rights. A large scale 2008 study of workers in low-wage industries in Los Angeles found that 30 percent of workers were paid below minimum wage, 16 percent were underpaid for overtime work, 14 percent were made to do off-the-clock work without pay, and 70 percent were not provided with a proper meal break. The study concluded that on average, workers lost 13 percent of their wages due to various pay-based violations, adding up to an annual loss of more than \$2,000 (Milkman, Gonzalez, and Narro 2010).

The decline of unions and the degradation of work were mutually reinforcing processes. Labor's absence enabled employers to both violate labor laws and reorganize production around insecure employment relations. This reorganization in turn made it more difficult for unions to organize workers. The result was a sharp decline in wages and working conditions, and an increase in inequality. Between the late 1970s and late 1990s the richest quintile increased their share of total income by 28 percentage points, and the richest 5 percent by 48 percentage points (Peck 2002:206). By 1990 the number of millionaires in California surpassed 340,000, roughly one out of every ten people (Walker 1995:167). Meanwhile, incomes at the bottom of the distribution declined rapidly. Between 1969 and 1997, real male wages decreased by roughly 40 percent at the 10th and 25th percentiles, and by over 20 percent at the median (Reed 1999:xxiii).

Precariousness and Immigration Enforcement

To fully understand California's class reorganization in the late 20th century we must link these changing relations between labor and capital to parallel transformations of race and nation. Key to the latter was the reconfiguration of the migration labor system, which immediately impacted California more than any other state (Myers 2007). The Bracero program was abolished at the end of 1964, closing off a legal pathway for Mexicans to come to the United States for work, albeit under temporary and abusive working conditions. The program collapsed for a number of reasons, including mounting opposition from organized labor and employer frustration with regulations and wage increases. But one of the key factors was the disconnect between the racialized exploitation that the program promoted and the emerging civil rights consensus. During the early 1960s the Bracero program became tainted by media exposure of horrid working conditions, which went against ideals of racial equality (Massey et al. 2002:41). As debates over immigration policy picked up speed, the possibility of a new temporary labor or "guestworker" program was continuously rejected.

The following year, 1965, Congress enacted a wholesale change in the immigration system through the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Passed alongside the other major civil rights reforms of the day, the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965), the INA aimed to eliminate racial discrimination in immigration policy (Ngai 2004; Reimers 1992). Towards this end it reversed the long-held policy of Asian exclusion and provided for more admissions from Southern and Eastern Europe. It also reorganized immigration policy around family reunification, making it the primary means for legal admission. Subsequent immigration reforms would continue to provide pathways for legal admission. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 included a pair of amnesty programs, which led to the legalization of approximately 3 million undocumented residents. Roughly 70 percent of amnesty recipients were from Mexico (Massey et al. 2002:90). The 1990 Immigration Act also created openings by

increasing the total number of visas available for legal admissions each year.

This policy shift stimulated a significant increase in legal immigration (Reimers 1992). On average just under 70,000 noncitizens were admitted to California as legal permanent residents each year in the 1960s. By the 1990s the annual average had jumped to 300,000 per year. But the INA also had a restrictive side, as it placed quotas on migration from the Western Hemisphere for the first time in history. This had a particularly profound impact on Mexico. Not only did the ending of the Bracero program cut off avenues for legal entry, but Mexico was subject to the same limits as other countries – as per the ideal of racial and national equality – despite the fact that Mexico had a significantly greater supply of migrants than any other country. The implementation of these limits also coincided with population increases and economic decline, not just in Mexico, but in much of Latin America. The result was a massive increase in undocumented or unauthorized migration (Massey et al. 2002; De Genova 2005; Reimers 1992). With both legal and illegal migration on the rise, the migrant population in California expanded rapidly. By 1990 it had reached nearly 6.5 million, just over 20 percent of the total population, and by 2010 the figure had jumped to more than 10 million, accounting for 27 percent of the total population (MPI 2011).

Underpinning these processes was increasing demand for low-wage, flexible, noncitizen labor (Sassen 1989). As shown above, post-1960s economic reorganization entailed an expansion of the low-wage sector. In some industries this included a downgrading of existing jobs through deunionization, which encouraged native-born workers to seek better opportunities (Milkman 2006). The low-wage sector was in turn reorganized around migrant workers, particularly those from Mexico, Central America, and Southeast Asia (Milkman and Dwyer 2002; Lopez and Feliciano 2000; Waldinger 2001). By 2004, 67 percent of workers without a high school diploma were foreign-born (Peri 2007). Not only did this entail a massive increase in the volume of migration, it also marked a drastic shift in the pattern of migration. No longer funneled into rural agriculture for temporary periods through the Bracero program, migrant workers were now moving into urban industries and settling down with their families (Portes 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Marcelli and Cornelius 2001). The migrant influx thus transformed California's previously white and native-born urban areas into centers of racial diversity with large noncitizen communities (Walker 1996). Between 1970 and 1990, for example, the proportion of foreign-born residents more than doubled in San Francisco and more than tripled in Los Angeles (Waldinger 2001). Noncitizens came to dominate the most precarious segments of the urban labor market, defined by low pay and insecurity of employment (see Table 2.3).

With the low-wage economy reorganized around noncitizen workers, employers became heavily dependent on international migration. Employer surveys show that they preferred noncitizen workers for purposes of both hiring and discipline (Cornelius 1998; Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Karjanen 2008; Shih 2002). Not only did migrant social networks help employers identify and recruit workers, but they facilitated labor discipline and control because inside sponsors set expectations and monitored the performance of newcomers (Waldinger and Lichter 2003:107). Employers also believed that noncitizen workers were more compliant, docile, and hard working, and more suitable for dirty, low-paying work, than their native-born counterparts. As one employer explained, “Immigrants are here to work, and they're not afraid of hard work. There are a lot of young Americans who don't want to work...Immigrants will work for minimum wage and

won't complain, even if you keep them forever. They're used to this kind of job” (Waldinger and Lichter 2003:162).

Table 2.3. Selected Occupations with Majority Foreign-Born Workforce, California, 2008-2010

Occupation	Percent foreign-born
Sewing machine operators	92
Pressers for textiles and related materials	89
Agricultural workers and animal breeders	84
Graders and sorters of agricultural products	83
Textile cutting machine workers	81
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	79
Hand packers and packagers	74
Plasterers and stucco masons	68
Supervisors of agricultural workers	64
Grounds maintenance workers	64
Cooks	64
Dishwashers	64
Personal appearance workers	62
Drywall installers	60
Roofers	60
Painters, construction, and maintenance	58
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	57
Chefs and head cooks	56
Janitors and building cleaners	53
Gaming service workers	51

Source: Shamasunder and Alegria (2012).

These perceptions had some basis in empirical reality. Studies of the other side of the employment relationship, for example, show that low-wage noncitizen workers often responded

to precarious working conditions by adopting moral discourses of hard work (Gleeson 2010; Hallett 2009; De Genova 2005; Gomberg-Munoz 2010). If on one hand this enabled workers to develop a sense of pride and dignity despite their insecurity, on the other hand it enabled them to counteract their political vulnerabilities. The latter included the persistent threat of deportation, and particularly for undocumented noncitizens, the difficulty of finding a job without legal authorization to work. These conditions created pressure to avoid problems at work. It follows that noncitizen workers, and undocumented workers in particular, experienced higher rates of labor violations than their native-born counterparts (Milkman, Gonzalez, and Narro 2010).

The state's growing emphasis on immigration enforcement exacerbated this political vulnerability. Between the late 1960s and the late 2000s, federal, state, and local government agencies dramatically increased the amount of resources they devoted to policing noncitizens. This ramped-up enforcement activity revolved around three interweaving forms of policing: border policing; community policing; and workplace policing. The Border Patrol was first created in 1924, but through the 1960s “border policing remained a peripheral and low-profile activity” (Andreas 2000:50). The first sign of a serious border effort emerged in the late 1970s. Amidst a proliferation of public attention and concern surrounding undocumented migration, the Carter administration provided additional funds to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for staffing and equipment. The newly minted Reagan administration paid even greater attention to the matter, linking border control to both the War on Drugs and the struggle against communism in Central America. This led to a dramatic acceleration of border policing, including the introduction of the federal military (Dunn 1996). The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) solidified the commitment to border policing by authorizing the use of greater funds, leading to a doubling of the INS budget between 1986 and 1992 (Massey et al. 2002:97). The most dramatic examples of border policing, however, emerged in the 1990s with the introduction of a new “border blockade” strategy. In California this approach took the form of Operation Gatekeeper, which sought to create an impenetrable wall at the U.S.-Mexico border through additional personnel, physical barriers, and detection technology (Nevins 2002; Massey et al. 2002).

Substantial evidence confirms that border policing did little to deter unauthorized migration (Massey et al. 2002; Cornelius 2005; Cornelius and Salehyan 2007; Reyes, Johnson, and Swearingen 2002). The most visible effect was instead to make crossing the border more costly and dangerous. Rather than prevent undocumented migration, border policing promoted the settlement of undocumented migrants by discouraging them from circulating back and forth between California and their homes abroad. Perhaps the most important effect of border policing, however, was symbolic. As De Genova (2005) argues with respect to Mexican migration, border enforcement created a spectacle that differentiated noncitizens and affirmed their political status as non-national outsiders: “The border spectacle is necessary precisely in order for the spatial difference between the United States and Mexico to be socially inscribed upon Mexican migrants themselves, as their distinctive spatialized (and racialized) status as 'illegal aliens,' as Mexicans 'out of place'” (245).

Through the 1990s immigration enforcement was almost exclusively concentrated at the border, marking a (failed) strategy of control based on “prevention through deterrence.” Apprehensions and deportations of undocumented noncitizens inside the country did occur, particularly through

workplace raids, but in general there was relatively little emphasis on “internal enforcement” (Andreas 2000). This changed dramatically after 2002 when the responsibility for immigration control shifted to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a federal law enforcement agency under the newly created Department of Homeland Security. Between 2002 and 2010, ICE significantly expanded immigration enforcement within workplaces and communities. A key feature of the new enforcement regime was the implementation of programs, most notably 287(g) and Secure Communities, that enabled local law enforcement agencies to assist with immigration policing (Coleman 2012). If the border spectacle affirmed the perpetual “deportability” of undocumented noncitizens, local-federal collaboration affirmed their vulnerability by increasing the likelihood of apprehension and deportation.

The third pillar of immigration enforcement was workplace enforcement, which was underpinned by the “employer sanctions” provision of IRCA. While intended to create penalties for employers who hire undocumented workers, in practice the enforcement of employer sanctions was limited and the penalties were low. Evidence suggests that immigration officials were more likely to arrest undocumented workers than they were to penalize employers (Brownell 2009). Instead the employer sanctions law enhanced the vulnerability of undocumented workers by making their employment illegal. Undocumented workers were legally protected by labor legislation, but in practice these protections were undermined by immigration law. Court decisions privileged immigration law over labor law and worker violations over employer violations; and in some instances immigration officials were complicit in employer retaliation against workers (Wishnie 2004). Rather than penalizing employers, employer sanctions essentially “deputized” them as immigration officials, giving them further leverage over noncitizen workers (Nessel 2001; Bosniak 1988). During the 1990s and 2000s the Social Security Administration increased this leverage further through the practice of sending “no-match” letters, which notified employers of employees who did not have a valid social security number. This became a powerful tool that employers could use to suppress union organizing drives.

These three modes of policing – border, community, and workplace – were mutually reinforcing. They all affirmed the vulnerability of noncitizens who did not have the right to work, and who lived under the persistent threat of deportation. The vast majority of migrants were not deported, but the threat was real. The bulk of arrests made at the border were classified as “voluntary departures,” in which apprehended noncitizens chose to leave the country without a formal court hearing. The number of voluntary departures increased during the 1980s and 1990s, reaching a height of 1.7 million in 2000 alone, and then declined in the 2000s. Meanwhile the number of removals, which pertained to migrants who were deported after a formal hearing, increased steadily from 18,013 in 1980 to 393,289 in 2009. This reflected the increase in “interior” policing, particularly after 2000. Between 2000 and 2009 the state formally deported more than 2.5 million noncitizens, including 1.87 million from the interior (Coleman 2012:163-166).

Undocumented noncitizens, who were living in the country illegally, were the most vulnerable to deportation and relegated to the lowest positions in the labor market. But even legal permanent residents, noncitizens who were living in the country legally, were subject to potential deportation. A late 2000s report showed that as many as 20 percent of deportees were living in the country legally at the time of their deportation (HRW 2009:26; see also Nevins 2002:143).

Undocumented and documented noncitizens also tended to work in the same occupations, and thus the latter were often subjected to the same harsh working conditions and exploitation as the former. As Lisa Catanzarite (2000) has shown, the reorganization of the labor market around noncitizen workers included the formation of "brown collar" occupations, which were dominated by Latino migrants and characterized by low pay.

Gauteng: Precariousness Under Peripheral Capitalism

As in the United States, the Second World War propelled a significant expansion of South African manufacturing. By 1950 the manufacturing sector had surpassed mining in its contribution to national income (Davies et al. 1976:21-22; Legassick 1974:264,269). Gauteng province was the epicenter of this growth, accounting for just under half of all manufacturing employment in the country by 1965 (Seidman 1994:87-88). Combined with declining conditions in rural areas, economic expansion fueled a massive wave of black urbanization. Between 1936 and 1951 the black urban population more than doubled, overtaking the white urban population in 1946 (Posel 1991:24; Christopher 1994:28; Hindson 1987:53). Apartheid sought to manage the urban influx with two primary goals: maintaining white control and privilege, and extracting black labor.

Implemented by the National Party after coming to power in 1948, the Apartheid state created a sharp distinction between white and black workers. For white workers Apartheid was somewhat similar to the American system, as it combined a welfare state with unionized employment, securing a modest redistribution of profits and secure livelihood. But these benefits and securities did not extend to black workers, who were instead subject to political exclusion, repression, and low standards of living (Gelb 1991). Apartheid essentially constituted blacks as noncitizen foreigners in "white South Africa" (Neocosmos 2006). They did not have voting rights, basic labor protections, or the right to engage in collective protest, and were restricted from upper-level employment through job "color bars." Perhaps most importantly, black South Africans were subject to a series of legal restrictions regarding where they could live and work. In order to live in the urban areas they had to obtain authorization from the state, which was typically contingent upon employment. These "pass laws" were a persistent source of vulnerability for black residents, leading to police harassment, surveillance, arrests, and expulsion from the urban areas.

All black residents were constituted as noncitizens, but the Apartheid system also created divisions within the black African population. A key division was the Section 10 provision of the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act, which legalized permanent urban residence for a portion of the black population. Permanent residence rights were extended to large numbers of current urban residents in the early 1950s (Posel 1991:217-221). But for the bulk of black residents in South Africa, including many who lived in the urban areas, Section 10 rights were out of reach. These residents either lived in the urban areas illegally or on a temporary work contract, and were commonly subject to "the toughest and most grueling work, at the lowest pay, and under harsh treatment" (von Holdt 2003:42). The Section 10 law thus created a division within the black population between urban insiders with permanent residence rights, and rural outsiders within the urban who did not have these rights (Mamdani 1996).

As in California, these labor market dynamics changed dramatically in the closing decades of the twentieth century. But rather than union decline and expanding demand for unskilled labor, unions expanded rapidly while unskilled employment declined sharply, leading to growing unemployment and informal employment. At the same time, the dismantling of Apartheid and the installment of a democratic regime meant the extension of formal citizenship status to all black South Africans. The working class was therefore reorganized around citizens rather than noncitizens. International migration from southern Africa did increase significantly in the post-Apartheid period, but with respect to continuing patterns of urbanization it paled in comparison to the “internal” migration of black citizens.

Organized Labor and the Liberation Struggle

The Apartheid state grew increasingly repressive over time (Wolpe 1988). By the 1960s most opposition movements and organizations had been pushed underground. The black labor movement, which had witnessed a surge of activity in the 1940s, had largely disappeared (Alexander 2000; Bonner 1980). But this changed in the 1970s as opposition to Apartheid had a remarkable resurgence. This resurgence took two primary forms. On one hand was the revival of the black trade union movement, sparked by the emergence of a massive strike wave in the early 1970s. Independent black unions quickly formed, signing up 90,000 members by 1980 (Macun and Wood 2002). Throughout the decade strikes continued, grievances and demands escalated, and labor-affiliated organizations (e.g. press, lawyers, etc.) proliferated (Seidman 1994:176-179). On the other hand was the emergence of resistance to Apartheid in urban townships, ignited by the student uprising in Soweto in 1976. Blossoming township struggles fueled a proliferation of community organizations organized around a variety of issues, from housing and rent to transportation and women's issues to services and local governance. These struggles coalesced around opposition to Apartheid. Many organizations were incorporated into the United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella organization formed in 1983 with more than 500 affiliates nationwide.

The simultaneous increase in these two fronts of popular resistance fueled a fierce debate within the labor movement over how unions should relate to broader struggles. Some unions, particularly those that joined together as the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) in 1979, emphasized shop-floor democracy and worker control, and were reluctant to engage in broader political struggles. The so-called “community unions” instead called for a fusion of the two, arguing that labor struggles and community struggles were one and the same. Unions in the PWV region (later Gauteng) were slow to take this broader approach, rejecting participation in the UDF in 1983, but by 1984 they had begun to embrace community struggles. The formation of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985 represented the merger of the two sides, adopting an explicit commitment to political struggles against Apartheid. In the late 1980s COSATU became increasingly politicized, affirming its alliance with the UDF as well as the exiled opposition party, the African National Congress. It also took a leadership role in the national liberation struggle, becoming one of its most organized and powerful structures (Seidman 1994; Buhlungu 2010).

If employers launched an all out offensive against labor in California, with the support of an increasingly labor-hostile state, in Gauteng employers and the state sought to contain unions

through incorporation. This partially stemmed from workers' location within the world system. Just as deindustrialization was hollowing out the core of the industrial proletariat in the United States, rapid industrialization in South Africa, and Gauteng in particular, was creating a new semi-skilled proletariat with a significant degree of economic leverage. Union incorporation also reflected the growing concern amongst employers in the 1970s and 1980s about the viability of Apartheid and racial exclusion. This concern stemmed from a variety of factors: the onset and persistence of economic recession; increasing international isolation due to sanctions abroad and decolonization in the southern African region; skilled labor shortages due to racial controls in the labor market; and perhaps most importantly, growing unrest in the form of strikes and township struggles. With unions playing a significant role in an increasingly vibrant and militant national liberation struggle, pacification became a more attractive strategy than all out repression (Seidman 1994:125-139). A key development along these lines was the deracialization of the industrial relations system in 1979, which allowed black unions to officially register with the state. This was one of the first steps towards dismantling Apartheid, and also marked the beginning of labor's increasing political incorporation.

Official recognition facilitated continuing union growth through the 1980s and into the 1990s. Union membership in South Africa more than quadrupled between 1979 and 1996, growing from just under three-quarters of one million to more than three million (Macun 2000). This was a remarkable trajectory given the more common pattern of labor decline across the globe in the post-1980 period. Labor also underwent a remarkable process of political incorporation. Due to its leadership in the national liberation struggle, including a significant role in the negotiated post-Apartheid transition (Adler and Webster 1995), COSATU developed deep ties with the new democratic state. Most important was the federation's inclusion in the Tripartite Alliance: a political coalition including the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The Alliance gave labor privileged access to the state through both informal channels and formal bargaining institutions (Buhlungu 2010:164-165). Key to the latter was the formation of the National Economic Development and Labor Council (NEDLAC), which is a forum for the state, labor, and business to cooperate and negotiate.

This new participatory role enabled unions to consolidate their gains in the post-Apartheid period. One of the most notable gains was the passage of progressive labor legislation, such as the Labor Relations Act (1995) and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997), which secured workers' rights around collective organization and working conditions. These legislative gains provided a degree of organizational stability. COSATU's national membership stabilized around 1.8 million in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and grew slightly in the late 2000s to squeek past the 2 million mark by 2011 (Buhlungu 2010:90,172; COSATU 2011:195). By the turn of the millennium, COSATU (2001a) could boast that "South Africa has one of the highest rates of union density – the percentage of workers that belong to unions – in the world." Union density in the early 2000s stood at approximately 43 percent of the non-agricultural, formal sector workforce, and approximately 27 percent of all employed workers (Pillay 2006:175).

But these gains obscured deeper problems. Most important was the inability of unions to reach beyond the economic core, and thus to incorporate the more vulnerable segments of the working class – casual and subcontracted workers, those working in the informal sector, and the

unemployed. While COSATU and its affiliate unions recognized that these segments were growing, and did make some limited attempts to address them, unions were largely ineffective at organizing workers outside of stable, formal sector employment. Indeed, COSATU's organizational stability in the post-Apartheid period stemmed largely from membership growth in the public sector, where employment was more stable, thus offsetting stagnation in the private sector due to increasing labor flexibility. As of 2004 more than 90 percent of COSATU members were in permanent and full-time jobs. Despite their impressive growth, COSATU unions thus represented a segment of workers that was increasingly privileged relative to the broader working class. Between the late 1980s and the 2000s, COSATU membership became more educated and more concentrated in skilled, supervisory, and clerical occupations (Buhlungu 2010:100-112).

The growing precariousness of the working class mirrored its growing organization and power through unions. Both patterns stemmed from growing capital intensity in the 1960s and 1970s. Facing a shortage of white labor, the Apartheid state allowed job “color bars” to “float upwards,” enabling black workers to upgrade to better positions (Crankshaw 1997). The subsequent expansion of semi-skilled black workers, particularly in heavy manufacturing, laid the foundation for the resurgence of black trade unions (Seidman 1994). But the growing mechanization of the economy meant that there were fewer positions for unskilled workers, and during the late 1960s and 1970s unemployment expanded as well (Seekings and Natrass 2005; Posel 1991:131-133; Legassick 1974:270-280). This division overlapped significantly with political divisions within the black population. The benefits of growing semi-skilled employment, including training and rising wages, were primarily enjoyed by black workers with permanent urban residence rights. Unskilled “migrant” workers without urban residence rights, on the other hand, faced fewer jobs, declining wages, and high rates of unemployment (Crankshaw 1997:104-112). The polarization deepened in the 1980s as persistent economic recession exacerbated urban unemployment.

The disintegration of employment opportunities for unskilled workers continued in the post-Apartheid period. The official unemployment rate for the country hovered between 20 percent and 30 percent from middle of the 1990s through the 2000s, but these figures exclude discouraged workers who had given up searching for work. If discouraged work-seekers are included the rates hovered closer to 40 percent. The unemployed typically lacked education, with one-third having only a matriculation degree (equivalent to high school in the United States) and two-thirds having less than that (Altman 2006:8-9). For those who did find work it was often in insecure and low-paying jobs. Similar to California, employment was increasingly organized around flexible arrangements such as temporary, part-time, and subcontracted work (Webster and Kenny 1998). Von Holdt and Webster (2005) estimated this insecure segment of “non-core” jobs to account for almost one-quarter of employment nationwide in the early 2000s. Unemployment and insecure employment went hand-in-hand, as the vast pool of surplus labor enabled employers to push down wages and working conditions. The promise of high paying, unionized employment, which had “permeated the imagination of the national liberation movement” (Barchiesi 2011:2), thus failed to materialize for most black workers. From the perspective of the black working class, as Barchiesi (2011) highlights, the dismantling of Apartheid was instead a “precarious liberation.”

Precariousness and the Urban Reserves

As in California, working class reorganization was linked to transformations of race and nation. Particularly important was the lifting of Apartheid controls, which enabled the spatial reorganization of the working class. The Apartheid regime sought to prevent black urbanization by shoring up the boundary between “white South Africa” and the “reserves”: rural areas where, according to the 1913 Land Act, the black population was legally allowed to own land. The pre-Apartheid political formation was organized around the articulation of the reserve economy, which provided a basic level of subsistence, and the mining economy, which was based on the low-wage labor of black migrant workers. But this migrant labor system began to dissolve as the combination of rural economic decline and the growing pull of manufacturing employment propelled black urbanization (Wolpe 1972). The Apartheid state responded to these changes by extending urban residence rights to a portion of the black population, while at the same time tightening controls to keep the bulk of the black population contained in the rural areas. The controls include forced removals, strict regulations on movement, and heavy surveillance of black populations within the urban areas. These efforts were never entirely successful at preventing black urbanization, even during the height of forced removals in the 1960s (Hindson 1987; Posel 1991). But they did manage to contain the influx to a limited extent. As rural economies collapsed, the “reserves” essentially became containers for an impoverished surplus population (Legassick and Wolpe 1976).

This political formation began to unravel in the 1970s. Not only was there emerging resistance in the form of collective political struggles, both in workplaces and communities, but there was a resurgence of black urbanization, which exacerbated urban unemployment. Following the recommendations of the Riekert Commission, the Apartheid state responded by effectively sharpening the distinction between urban insiders and the rest of the black population. The Riekert reforms loosened controls on intra-urban movement for permanent urban residents, and at the same time tightened the mechanisms of influx control (Cobbett et al. 1987). The state justified these controls by promoting the rural areas as the true “homelands” of black South Africans. In accordance with this justification, the state sought to preserve the Apartheid regime by reconstituting the “reserves” or “homelands” as ethnically-based sovereign states, similar to the surrounding countries of Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana (Neocosmos 2006).

The attempts to prevent black urbanization and preserve Apartheid failed. Largely due to mounting resistance both inside and outside of the country, the state officially abolished “influx control” in 1986, undoing one of the most repressive features of the Apartheid regime. Not only did this reform legalize the presence of squatters who were already living in the urban areas illegally, it also made it legal for residents to escape rural poverty and overcrowding by moving to the urban areas. Lifting the barriers on “internal” rural-to-urban migration, these changes accelerated processes of urbanization that were already underway. Between 1990 and 2011 the proportion of the South African population living in urban areas increased from 52 percent to 62 percent (SAIRR 2013). The dismantling of Apartheid also opened the doors for international migration. While policies on permanent legal admissions remained restrictive, focusing primarily on recruiting skilled migrants, the ban on black migrants from African countries was lifted in 1986 (Peberdy 2009:141-151). Many crossed the border into South Africa with temporary visitor permits. The number of cross-border visitors from surrounding southern

African countries skyrocketed from approximately one million per year in the early 1990s to more than five million per year in the early 2000s (Crush, Williams, Peberdy 2005:6). Some international migrants found work on farms, away from the cities, but the vast majority landed in the urban areas.

Migration and urbanization had a disproportionate impact on Gauteng province relative to the rest of South Africa. Gauteng is the major economic hub of the country and also the most urban, with 96 percent of the population living in urban areas (Kok and Collison 2006). During the 1990s and 2000s, Gauteng thus became the primary destination within South Africa for both “internal” and international migration, and experienced the largest population increases (Landau and Gindrey 2008:12). These patterns went hand-in-hand with the reconstitution of Apartheid urban geography. The Group Areas Act of 1950, which had legislated the racial segregation of the urban areas, was abolished in 1991. But a key feature of Apartheid was effectively reconstituted in the post-Apartheid period: the relegation of poor black communities to the urban periphery. Some of these communities were located within formal townships, which had been established as black-designated areas during Apartheid. But a growing number were located within informal settlements, which are dense concentrations of shack dwellings, often located adjacent to existing townships or on other vacant land far from city centers. Informal settlements had already begun to proliferate in Gauteng during the 1980s (Sapire 1992), but they increased rapidly in the 1990s and 2000s. A third location for urban poverty were inner city areas, which were opened to black residents with the elimination of legalized racial segregation in 1991.

Townships and informal settlements, and to a lesser extent low-income areas within city centers, were primary destinations for migrant newcomers. This largely stemmed from the fact that they were the only areas in which the majority of migrants could afford to live. I refer to these areas as *urban reserves* in reference to the historical configuration of the working class in South Africa. As a defining feature of the post-Apartheid political economy, the urban reserves shared three inter-related characteristics with the rural reserves of the Apartheid and pre-Apartheid periods: they were spatially detached from core economic activities; they were containers for a surplus population of unemployed workers; and they were sites of peripheral economic activity. Whereas in the case of the rural reserves the peripheral economic activity consisted largely of the agricultural sector, in the case of the urban reserves the peripheral economic activity consisted largely of the informal sector. In neither case were the core and peripheral economies entirely disconnected, even if they were to some extent spatially separated. Just as the developed economy of “white South Africa” in the earlier period was structurally linked to the rural reserve economy, in the contemporary period the informal economy in the urban reserves is structurally linked to the formal economy through both production and consumption. Similar to the rural reserves, the urban reserves are defined by high levels of poverty.

The urban reserves were defined by three related sets of features. One set of features revolved around the demographics of the population. Mirroring the Apartheid past, the urban poor and thus the residents of the urban reserves were overwhelmingly black. The process of democratization and racial inclusion did enable the formation of a nonwhite middle and upper class, but these classes largely moved into more affluent areas (Crankshaw 2008). At the

bottom end of the economy the old racial and spatial divisions were reconstituted. A significant proportion were also migrants. Between 2001 and 2007, for example, Gauteng province added roughly 78,000 migrants per year. The bulk of these were migrants from other provinces, who accounted for 37 percent of the total population in 2007. There were also a significant number of international migrants, but they paled in comparison to “internal” migrants. During the 2000s international migrants only comprised roughly 5 percent of the population in Gauteng (Landau and Gindrey 2008:11).

Noncitizens in Gauteng faced many of the same vulnerabilities as noncitizens in California. State discourse and practices similarly treated noncitizens as a threat to the national body, subjecting them to surveillance and the threat of deportation (Peberdy 2009:162-169; see also Neocosmos 2006; Croucher 1998). But with noncitizens comprising only 5 percent of the population in Gauteng, compared to more than 25 percent of the population in California, these vulnerabilities were restricted to a much smaller portion of the working class. Popular beliefs, media reports, and even social science accounts often inflated the size of the foreign-born population. On average South Africans estimated that international migrants comprised one-quarter of the population. One report by the Human Sciences Research Council put the total number of foreign-born residents in the country at as many as 8 million. The study was later withdrawn due to poor methods, but the number was continually cited as proof of a foreign invasion (Crush, Williams, and Peberdy 2005:12). Despite these exaggerations, however, the vast majority of Gauteng residents, and thus the bulk of the population of the urban reserves, were poor black citizens, who were either born in Gauteng or migrated from other provinces within South Africa.

A second set of features pertained to infrastructure and public services. One of the primary challenges for residents of the urban reserves was housing. The ANC made housing delivery one its top priorities following the democratic transition, and indeed the right to adequate housing was enshrined in Section 26 of the new Constitution, established in 1996. Between 1994 and 2008 the state provided 683,343 housing units in Gauteng, more than any other province. While the ANC often pointed to housing delivery as evidence of its success, however, there were nonetheless a number of shortcomings. New housing was typically constructed on the urban periphery at a distance from commercial centers, often adjacent to existing townships or other greenfield areas, thus reproducing Apartheid spatial segregation. Many of the new houses also had poor infrastructure. A 2009 survey found that roughly one out of every five RDP houses within the metropolitan areas of Gauteng had an problem (South African Cities Network 2012:53).

But the most significant issue was that the number of houses provided paled in comparison to the number of units that were needed. As of 2009 there was still a backlog of 615,000 units in Gauteng alone. With a consistent influx of newcomers arriving in the province searching for a place to live, many were forced to create their own housing by building shacks and other makeshift accommodations. In some cases they were located within the backyards of existing houses, but more often they were packed together in open areas, creating informal settlements. The number and size of informal settlements grew rapidly in the post-Apartheid period. By 2009 there were 481,000 households in Gauteng living in shacks within informal settlements. According the 2007 Community Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa, 23 percent of the

roughly 3 million households in Gauteng lived in informal dwellings, with roughly one-third in backyards and two-thirds in informal settlements (Tissington 2011:30-37).

A common feature across the various forms of housing – inner-city apartments, township houses, informal settlement shacks – was insecurity. Shack dwellers were the most vulnerable to eviction, but across the urban reserves residents faced the threat of removal due to some combination of the following: an inability to pay rent or service charges; the poor quality of the accommodation, justifying the eviction of residents for the purpose of upgrading; and lack of a legal right to be residing in the location. Beyond the threat of removal, the urban reserves were characterized by poor infrastructure – such as roads and street lights – and poor access to public services. Residents of informal settlements were especially likely to be living without services such as electricity and water. But more general processes of privatization made it difficult for poor residents to access these services, even if the infrastructure was in place, because they were too expensive. Market-oriented policies of service provision spread across the country after 1994. But they were particularly thorough in Gauteng, as exemplified by the “corporatization” of municipal services in the City of Johannesburg through the iGoli 2002 plan (McDonald and Pape 2002; Barchiesi 2011:155-157). Combined with the decline in employment, the privatization of public services pushed families in the urban reserves deeper into poverty (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:357-366).

The inability of residents in the urban reserves to realize some of their most basic needs was captured by the 2007 Community Survey by Statistics South Africa, representing the roughly 3 million households in Gauteng. Many of households did not have access to electricity: 17 percent did not have electrified lighting; 19 percent did not use electricity for cooking; and 23 percent did not have electricity for heating. Twenty-nine percent of households did not have a refrigerator. Most households (98 percent) had some form of access to water, but only two-thirds had piped water in their homes. The remaining households relied on either a water tap in their yard (21 percent) or a water tap somewhere else in the community (11 percent). Finally, 14 percent of households relied on either a pit latrine, a bucket toilet, or did not have a toilet at all (Statistics South Africa 2009).

The third set of features of the urban reserves revolved around economic activity and survival. The collapse of formal sector employment left many residents, particularly those with limited education, without access to a stable job and source of income. As of 2010 roughly one-quarter of all Gauteng residents were living in poverty, and within this group 94 percent were black residents (Gauteng Provincial Government 2012:82). With no choice other than starvation, poor residents of the urban reserves commonly pieced together a living through a combination of both casual employment in the formal sector and informal sector activity. The latter ranged from small street trading operations to providing small services for cash to forms of non-wage labor and casual servitude (Webster 2005; Sitas 2001; Bezuidenhout and Fakier 2006:475-478; Rogerson 1996). Some informal economic activities included the extension of production and distribution chains, such as the use of “homework” for cheap manufacturing labor, while other residents were able to turn their informal activities into thriving business. But for many residents of the urban reserves, the informal sector represented subsistence-oriented survivalism.

With the insecurity of livelihood permeating throughout the urban reserves, the household became a crucial site for pooling and redistributing resources (Mosoetsa 2011; Bezuidenhout and Fakier 2006). Households were commonly a mix of employed and unemployed residents, who secured their survival by sharing the fruits of formal and informal income-generating activities. Households also enabled the spreading of state assistance. Cash transfers in the form of “social grants” were mostly directed to old-age pensioners and single parents, rather than the long term unemployed (Seekings and Natrass 2005:360-366), but within the household they provided a small buffer against unemployment and poverty. Klasen and Woolward (2008:14) found that roughly 60 percent of unemployed black residents in the country lived in a household that either had at least one working person or received remittances. The remaining 40 lived in households with no employment income. Approximately two-thirds of these “fully unemployed” households had access to a state-provided social grant, while the other one-third subsisted entirely through alternative means.

Precarious Divergence

Between 1970 and 2000, California and Gauteng were impacted by parallel processes of racial inclusion, marketization, and migration. This chapter examined how the triple transformation reconfigured the working class in each place, with implications for both organized labor and non-unionized groups. Both places underwent a process of class polarization. If racial inclusion and migration created new openings for prosperity and mobility, marketization ensured that their benefits would be unequally distributed. A key result in both places was the expansion of the precarious working class – insecurely employed, low income, and non-union segments of the urban working class.

Table 2.4. Selected Characteristics of the Working Class, California and Gauteng, 2000-2001

	California	Gauteng
Unemployed	7.0	39.6
Proportion who are foreign-born	35.8	4.0
Unskilled employed	15.1	27.4
Proportion who are foreign-born	63.1	8.4

Source and notes: United States Census, 2000; South Africa Census, 2001; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003. Includes economically active adults aged 16 to 64. The unemployment rate includes discouraged workseekers. The unskilled employed group does not include the self-employed. It includes those without a high school diploma or GED in California, and those who are not matriculant or an equivalent in Gauteng.

But the working class was constituted very differently in the two places. The differences are partially illustrated in Table 2.4, which provides a brief snapshot of the lower end of the working class in California and Gauteng at the turn of the century. This snapshot reveals two major differences. First, unskilled employed and unemployed workers made up a much greater proportion of the overall workforce in Gauteng. Perhaps most importantly, unemployment was significantly higher in Gauteng (40 percent) than it was in California (7 percent). This suggests that not only were members of the precarious working class more prevalent in Gauteng, they were also significantly less likely to be employed than their counterparts in California. Second, foreign-born workers made up a greater proportion of the workforce in California. This was particularly true amongst unskilled employed workers, who were nearly two-thirds foreign-born in California but only 8 percent foreign-born in Gauteng.

These figures do not completely reflect the transformation of the working class, largely because they do not capture the growing insecurity of employment. The bulk of the unemployed and unskilled employed likely experienced such insecurity, but the two measures are not equivalent. The figures do, however, capture an important contrast between the working class in the two places. If low-wage noncitizen workers were more prevalent in California, unemployed and insecurely employed citizens were more prevalent in Gauteng.

These contrasting patterns of working class reorganization reflected the unevenness of the global triple transformation. California was prototypical of working class reorganization under advanced capitalism. The welfare state and stable employment were dismantled, unions were crushed, and the bottom end of the labor market was reconstituted around international migrants. Within this context, low-wage noncitizen workers resembled Standing's precariat. Gauteng was instead prototypical of working class reorganization under peripheral capitalism. Industrialization strengthened unions but failed to keep pace with rapid proletarianization and urbanization, thus reconstituting poverty around internal migration, unemployment, and townships and informal settlements on the urban periphery. Within this context, poor citizens with limited employment prospects and living under slum conditions resembled Davis' informal proletariat. The following chapters trace the struggles of these two groups: noncitizen workers in California, and poor citizens in Gauteng.

3. ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

For insecure segments of the working class, daily survival with a basic sense of dignity was a primary concern. Despite their differences, insecure employment and insecure livelihood were common experiences for both low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizen communities in Gauteng. It follows that a large portion of their struggles took place in the economic domain. Working class struggles for economic improvement have traditionally been led by unions, which are largely oriented towards improving the compensation paid workers in the form of wages and benefits. But members of the precarious working class are largely detached from unions, and must therefore seek alternative modes of collective organization and mobilization. Emerging and developing in the late 1990s and 2000s, the economic struggles of noncitizen workers in California and poor citizens in Gauteng were rooted in community-based organizations as well as more fluid forms of association. In California they were based in what are popularly known as “worker centers,” which seek to organize low-wage noncitizen workers outside of the traditional labor framework. In Gauteng they came in the form of both social movement organizations and more loosely organized community protests. This chapter traces these two sets of economic struggles.

Not only were working classes increasingly detached from unions, but they often lacked structural economic power. This was especially the case for poor citizens in Gauteng, who were often unemployed or scraping by in the informal sector. But it also applied to low-wage noncitizen workers in California, who were often subjected to casual and flexible employment relationships. Both groups had few resources and little leverage over processes of production and distribution. Their economic struggles were therefore organized and demands for recognition. Rather than threatening to withhold their labor power, they made moral appeals for fair treatment, dignity, and respect. This held true for both sets of struggles, regardless of the fact that the two groups had very different experiences of employment and living conditions more generally.

Despite this fundamental similarity, however, economic struggles in the two places had very different orientations. The struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers in California were oriented towards participation. In particular they sought greater access to and leverage within the economy, and most importantly the labor market. Their economic struggles thus manifested in an Equal Opportunity politics, which demanded that noncitizen workers be allowed to participate in the mainstream economy, protected by basic labor laws, and given the chance to earn a decent wage. These struggles often called on the state to intervene, either by passing new laws or enforcing existing laws, but in most instances they sought material concessions from employers rather than the state. The struggles of poor citizens in Gauteng were oriented instead towards protection. In particular they sought to defend themselves from the ravages of the market and achieve a basic level of subsistence. Their economic struggles thus manifested in a Collective Consumption politics, which demanded the delivery of basic services as public goods. These struggles called on the state to be the direct provider of resources such as housing,

water, and electricity.

California: Equal Opportunity Politics

Precarious politics in California first emerged during the early 1990s out of a condition of siege. With the prosperity of the previous decades coming to a close, noncitizens became scapegoats for a host of structural issues: economic recession, increasing unemployment, declining wages and working conditions, and the collapse of the welfare state (Calavita 1996). The flames were fueled by a growing anti-immigrant movement, most notably the newly founded Save Our State organization, and politicians such as Governor Pete Wilson, who sought to ride the waves that movement created (Walker 1996:171-172). The most important product of this anti-immigrant confluence was Proposition 187, a ballot initiative which sought to exclude undocumented noncitizens and their children from public services such as welfare, non-emergency health care, and education.

The anti-immigrant backlash of the early 1990s sparked the first major collective struggles by noncitizens. Activist communities sprang into action, and pro-immigrant service and advocacy organizations were thrust into the fore (HoSang 2010:184; Diaz 2010). In 1993 immigrant rights activists convened a statewide conference in Sacramento to address the harsh political climate. They resolved to have a series of actions across the state, though the only actions that materialized were a series of marches in Los Angeles (Diaz 2010:266). The marches gradually grew in size, from 6,000 in February to 18,000 in May to 100,000 in October, marking the largest protest in Los Angeles to that date. The October 16th march, which was specifically about opposition to Proposition 187, was followed by a week of student walkouts that drew up to 10,000 students at their peak. Another 10,000 people attended an anti-187 concert just a few days before the election (Acuna 1996:158-159; Suro 1994). These protests, and in particular the October 16th march, began to reveal the enormous potential of the noncitizen community for collective resistance.

The protests in 1994 opposed "immigrant bashing" and the devaluation of noncitizen workers and their families. A primary critique of Proposition 187 was that it was racist and xenophobic, and would lead to discrimination against racial minorities, including native-born citizens (Bosniak 1996). As a representative from the Coalition of Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) argued, "The backlash against immigrants becomes anti-Latino sentiment" (McDonnell 1994). The leading banner in the May march demanded: "Stop Racists Attacks Against Immigrants" (McDonnell 1994). At their core the protests were about the recognition of noncitizens, and Latino noncitizens in particular, as valuable members of society, who deserve to be respected and provided with the same opportunities as their citizen counterparts. Drawing a parallel between the anti-187 protests and the struggles of the 1960s for racial equality, an activist from the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) remarked, "This is a civil rights movement for the 1990s" (McDonnell 1994).

The protests against Proposition 187 were economic struggles because they defended the right of undocumented noncitizens and their families to access state-provided economic goods. But the demand for state-driven redistribution was not central. As the Mexican American Legal

Defense Fund argued at the time, “immigrants come for jobs, for family reunification and to flee persecution...If anything, public benefits are the last thing immigrants want from this country...[U]ndocumented immigrants tend to avoid any institution that even resembles government or official authority” (Bosniak 1996: 562-563). Indeed, the most visible demand was for the children of undocumented noncitizens to be able to attend public school, a right that Proposition 187 sought to eliminate. A factory worker explained: “Our lives are here now, and we’re not going back to Mexico no matter what happens. I work hard, and I don’t think it’s fair that my son should be thrown out of school” (McDonnell and Lopez 1994). While defending the right of noncitizens to access basic services, the protests were thus largely about their ability to participate in the economy and provide for their families. It follows that opponents countered the logic of Proposition 187, which sought to cut off migration by restricting access to public services, by arguing that the best way to reduce undocumented immigration would be to enforce wage and hour laws (Bosniak 1996:565-566).

These protests were followed by economic struggles that demanded state-driven redistribution more directly. Proposition 187 was struck down as unconstitutional, but federal welfare reform two years later achieved many of the same exclusions, and went even further by extending the cuts to legal noncitizens as well as undocumented noncitizens. Collective protests emerged to oppose the exclusions. They demanded that noncitizens have access to public benefits, including food stamps and Supplementary Security Income (SSI) for elderly, disabled, and the blind. These struggles were largely focused on restoring benefits for noncitizens with legal resident status, as opposed to noncitizens more generally. As Fujiwara (2005) shows, the campaign to restore welfare benefits became focused on a specific group of elderly, Southeast Asian women who had come to rely on SSI benefits as legal permanent residents. There is some evidence that undocumented noncitizens supported these struggles under the banner of immigrant rights (Reese 2005:271). But they were not central actors, as they had been in the anti-187 struggles, and as they would become as precarious politics continued to grow.

Economic struggles by low-wage noncitizen workers persisted. But for the most part they did not revolve around access to public services. They revolved instead around workplace issues. By the late 1990s Latino and Asian noncitizen workers had become the foundation of California’s low-wage labor market. Their twin vulnerabilities as noncitizens and low-wage workers were mutually reinforcing, often resulting in harsh and insecure working conditions. But they were firmly rooted in the formal economy. This experience was captured by a garment worker:

“Most immigrants come to this country and we think there are lots of jobs. Well, there are many jobs, but they’re jobs of exploitation. They do all the jobs like domestic work, garment work, day laborers, janitors. All the jobs that are badly paid and strenuous that other people won’t do. But if you’re undocumented and don’t know English you can’t do anything else. You basically don’t exist. And I tell you because for me it was 13 years” (Carracedo and Bahar 2007).

Equal Opportunity politics thus centered on improving workplace conditions. As we will see in chapter 5, some low-wage noncitizen workers began to wage struggles within the context of traditional labor unions. But most low-wage noncitizen workers were not in unions. With little

leverage in the labor market, they also had little hope of establishing a collective bargaining agreement with an employer. Many workers did not have a stable employer, and among those that did they were often scattered amongst a variety of small employers. Low-wage noncitizen workers thus forged an alternative form of economic struggle. Drawing from symbolic leverage rather than economic leverage, they emphasized moral appeals for fair treatment and access to the labor market.

These economic struggles were rooted in non-profit organizations, now commonly referred to as worker centers, which emerged to fill the organizational void in the low-wage labor market created by the absence of unions. Worker centers developed across the country, but they were particularly vibrant and active in California and especially in Los Angeles (Milkman, Bloom, Narro 2010).¹ Unlike unions, worker centers tend to have difficulty sustaining permanent or long-term members, and typically do not seek “long-term collective bargaining relationships with employers” (Milkman 2010:11-14). Their activities revolve around a combination of service provision (e.g. English language classes, legal assistance), worker organizing, and advocacy (Fine 2006). But they do directly engage rank-and-file workers in grassroots organizing and public campaigns. As Fine (2006:13) concluded from her national study, worker centers typically “place enormous emphasis on leadership development and democratic decision-making.”²

Worker center-based economic struggles were largely organized around wage and hour issues as well as labor market access. While they often targeted the state, either to develop new policy or to enforce existing policy, most often their ultimate goal was to improve working conditions and compensation from the employer. A long-time organizer described the general model of worker center campaigns, which typically grew out of a specific crisis and into a broader struggle:

“You know every worker center has to deal with, its issue specific...the movement of worker centers, its not started strategically, its created out of addressing a crisis with a group of workers...and then what you usually get out of that is then, for the most part they are going to address wage and hour violations. And then in the process of addressing wage and hour violations they develop networks with lawyers and organized labor. But then in the process of doing that they get involved in policy campaigns. They start realizing the potential of really passing laws, or helping pass laws, to maximize their [impact]. So its small steps that lead to that. But most of them do end up doing policy work...but then they try to do local efforts to improve working conditions” (Interview 05.16.2012).

During the late 1990s and 2000s the most visible economic struggles were waged by day laborers, domestic workers, garment workers, restaurant workers, and grocery store workers. In the case of day laborers and domestic workers, who either did not have a regular employer (day labor) or were scattered amongst many different employers (domestic work), workers had to

1 Worker centers were especially prevalent in California. According to Fine (2006:271-282) there were 29 worker centers in California by 2005. The only other state to have at least 10 worker centers was New York, with 24.

2 The extent to which worker centers are either democratic or transformative is a matter of debate. For a critique of the typical worker center approach, see Jenkins (2002).

use particularly creative strategies to achieve better wages and working conditions. State policy figured heavily into these struggles. In the other examples economic struggles were more similar to traditional labor struggles. But rather than form unions they relied on moral appeals to justice and fairness, often accompanied by legal challenges. I take each in turn, and then return to the issue of state-driven redistribution.

Day Laborer and Domestic Worker Struggles

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) began reaching out to day laborers in the late 1980 and early 1990s. In 1989 CHIRLA launched the Adopt-A-Corner campaign, which sent volunteers to informal hiring sites to learn about day labor experiences and inform workers of their rights. The organization also established a hotline for day laborers who were being confronted by police or immigration officials. These early advocacy efforts led to the formation of two of the first day labor hiring centers in the country – in Harbor City in 1989 and North Hollywood in 1990 – which CHIRLA had proposed as a resolution to growing community concerns about the presence of day laborers soliciting work in public places. In 1996, CHIRLA and the Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA) won a city contract to manage the centers. They transformed the centers from simple hiring halls to locations for community services and organizing, and in 1997 began to organize a series of “inter-corner conferences” of day laborers from across Los Angeles. These conferences led to the formation of the Day Laborer Association (sometimes referred to as the Day Laborer Union) in 1998, which included hundreds of day laborers and a coordinating committee of 17 workers (Dziembowska 2010:149). The Association's mission statement read:

“The mission of the Los Angeles County Day Laborer Association is to build an autonomous, democratic organization of day laborers that can defend the human and civil rights of all day laborers, respond to the needs and problems of day laborers, influence public policy and attitudes that affect day laborers as workers and immigrants, and promote the rights of day laborers to participate fully in all aspects of society” (Dziembowska 2010:149-150).

This statement hints at key themes that resonated throughout the struggles of day laborers, namely the overlap between an identity as “workers and immigrants” and the desire for “full” participation as members of society. The Day Laborer Association only lasted for two years, with funding being one of the major obstacles. As one day laborer and organizer explained: “It crashes, because, well, the reason mainly was the money... You know unions are built and maintained by fees, by worker fees. And the workers they can't afford, so we got no fees, we got no money to pay them a salary to do the work that they were elected [to do], so that was the end of the union” (Interview 05.11.2012). But these efforts laid a foundation for further struggles. In 2001 day laborers and organizers from Los Angeles hosted a conference with representatives from across the country, leading to the formation of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON).

Day laborer struggles opposed two primary vulnerabilities: criminalization and employer abuse. In terms of the former, day laborers opposed the passage and implementation of city ordinances against the public solicitation of work, which typically grew out of public and business concerns about day laborers congregating in public places. An early example was the proposal of an anti-

solicitation ordinance in Agoura Hills, which prompted a march by over 100 day laborers in opposition. Protesters chanted, “We want work, not tickets,” and carried signs reading, “We want to work in peace.” One protester explained, “We want to work, that’s all we want to do” (Curtiss 1991). The Los Angeles Day Laborer Association opposed a similar ordinance for the entire Los Angeles County, launching a legal challenge on the grounds that it violated their First and Fourteenth Amendment rights. They won their case, spawning efforts by NDLON to eliminate similar bans across California (Narro 2005:95; Fine 2006:89). One of the most significant mobilizations of this kind was in Redondo Beach, where police used an anti-solicitation ordinance as grounds for arresting more than sixty workers. Two months after the police raid, the newly formed Redondo Beach Day Laborer Committee led a march of 250 people to City Hall – chanting “work yes, police no” – where they held a rally to announce a legal challenge to the ordinance as unconstitutional. Seven years later the court decided in favor of the day laborers, striking down the ban. Pablo Alvarado of NDLON reflected upon the victory:

“Today’s decision is an outcome of a struggle in the courts and in the streets that began in the early 90’s. The ordinances were intended to render day laborers invisible; but the struggle against these ordinances has made day laborers more visible, more powerful. For the past two decades, the ordinances have stigmatized day laborers as criminals – now they are civil rights leaders. So this victory is not just for them; it is for every American – a victory achieved by humble people for everyone” (MALDEF 2011).

This reflection illustrates the importance of recognition to economic struggles. On one hand the struggles against anti-solicitation ordinances were about increasing access to the labor market, and thus being able to provide for basic economic needs through employment. But on the other hand they were about making “day laborers more visible” and portraying them as “leaders” rather than “criminals.” Claiming that the victory was “not just for them” but “for every American,” Alvarado’s analysis suggests that access to the labor market is a basic condition of being part of American society. Struggles against the anti-solicitation ordinances demanded that day laborers be recognized as valuable workers and community members, and in turn provided with the opportunity to achieve a basic level of economic security.

The other major target of day laborer struggles was employer abuse, and in particular wage theft. Nearly half of day laborers experience nonpayment (45 percent) and underpayment (48 percent) of wages (Valenzuela and Theodore 2007). Wage theft was identified by day laborers as the primary issue of concern at NDLON’s 10-year anniversary assembly. This was underscored by an NDLON representative at the launching of a worker center-driven campaign in Los Angeles for a local Anti-Wage Theft Ordinance:

"Here in LA, three years ago the day laborers met in Los Angeles, 200 day laborers from different corners, to assess what’s the main issue that affects them as workers and their families; and they all agreed that wage theft was the main issue. Wage theft was something they wanted to fight against, and they felt helpless, and they felt that they weren’t able to feed their kids and pay their rent, even though they work really hard to earn their wages.” (Field notes 05.10.2012).

This particular campaign sought to create new policy, but most struggles around wage theft focused on enforcing existing laws and establishing basic standards. One of the goals of the Los

Angeles Day Labor Association, for example, was to establish minimum wages at the various corners (Bacon 1998). This practice was replicated at many day labor centers. While evidence suggest that the centers raise wages only slightly above informal hiring sites, they are more effective at reducing employer abuse (Melendez et al. 2010). In cases where wage violations occurred, day labor centers often helped workers with making wage claims, either by going to the employer directly or helping them file a claim with the state. Day labor centers also provided a space for launching public campaigns, such as demonstrations against employers with egregious wage abuses. As Alvarado of NDLO explained, “Last year we did three demonstrations in Harbor City. This really established business – a huge corporation – hired one of the workers and didn't pay him, as well as others...So we took it really far and mobilized the day laborers and demonstrated in front of his business. We only did it three times and next Monday he paid them. We've never lost when we do that” (Fine 2006:81).

Day labor centers resemble the hiring halls traditionally associated with craft unionism. But in contrast to the union model they do not have collective bargaining agreements with employers, and they have little control over the labor market. Instead of demanding concessions from employers on the basis of their skills, day laborers organized around their recognition as legitimate participants in the labor market. Day laborer struggles were, therefore, less about controlling the labor market, and more about securing access to and fair treatment within it. In short, they were about equal opportunity.

Similar to day laborers, domestic workers are a vulnerable, largely noncitizen workforce that is fragmented between many different employers. Some organizations established employment services for domestic workers, similar to day labor centers, but domestic worker struggles focused more intently on winning legislation that would include them under basic labor laws. The major legislative campaign was born through the convergence of housekeepers, child care providers, and caregivers during a 2005 meeting in San Francisco, which led to the formation of the Household Workers Rights Coalition. More than 50 household workers from across the state gathered to present the demands of their organizations and create a platform for new legislation. The subsequent campaign for the “Nanny Bill” called for domestic workers to be eligible for overtime pay and for their abusive employers to be penalized. More than 500 workers participated in the campaign, which included frequent trips to the state capitol for rallies and lobbying. The California legislature passed the bill but it was vetoed by the governor (Mercado and Poo 2008). The domestic workers responded by joining with associations from across the country to form the National Domestic Workers Alliance, and subsequently renewed their efforts – this time to pass a more comprehensive Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights (DWBR).

The DWBR campaign was organized around the claim that the vulnerability and exploitation of domestic workers is reinforced by their exclusion from labor laws, most notably the wage and hour provisions of the Fair Labor and Standards Act. Similar to day labor struggles against anti-solicitation ordinances, this campaign infused economic struggles with demands for recognition. On one hand, workers sought new legislation that would, at least in theory, guarantee improved wages, benefits, and working conditions. On the other hand, the struggle for the DWBR was deeply entangled with the demand that domestic workers be recognized as legitimate workers, and thus treated with dignity and respect. Most importantly this meant

protection by basic labor law. Two domestic workers captured these reinforcing themes in a campaign video:

“You have no rights. Its like we are slaves, property of our employers...The truth is we are completely unprotected by labor laws.”

“Its an abuse. To treat someone worse than a dog. I have heard many stories of people who were severely underpaid... We don't have the same benefits that other workers have...we need them to pass this law so we can be treated with respect.”

Both workers highlighted the discrimination and substandard treatment that is commonly endured by domestic workers. In response they demanded recognition as valuable workers who deserve to “be treated with respect,” rather than as “slaves” or “property.” These themes resounded at rallies and marches. The following were prominent signs and slogans during a DWBR rally at the State Capitol in August 2012: “Domestic Workers Demand Rights and Respect”; “End the Exclusion: Respect for Domestic Workers”; “All Workers Deserve Respect”; “We Deserve Respect as Domestic Workers and Value Our Work” (Field notes 08.21.2012). Domestic worker struggles were thus a prime example of Equal Opportunity politics, as they demanded that domestic workers be given the opportunity to work and earn a decent wage without employer abuse. An official statement by the California Household Worker Rights Coalition illustrated this orientation by explaining that the DWBR should be passed in order to “level the playing field,” enabling noncitizen workers to access basic labor rights:

“The domestic worker industry is riddled with abuse, mistreatment, and labor violations. The mostly female and immigrant domestic workforce is particularly vulnerable due to the isolated nature of the industry...Furthermore, domestic workers are excluded from or discriminated against by most labor and employment laws...[which] means they are unprotected when asking for respect of their basic rights and are unable to collectively bargain for conditions allowing them to labor in dignity. California can level the playing field by enacting the following comprehensive bill of rights which seeks to eliminate discriminatory provisions in the labor code and grant domestic workers basic rights that other California workers gain through collective bargaining” (NDWA 2012).

This statement illustrates the contrast between precarious politics and traditional labor politics. Not only does it highlight the exclusion of domestic workers from traditional processes of collective bargaining, but it suggests that they are discriminated against as noncitizen women. Instead of asserting their collective economic leverage, domestic workers waged economic struggles by drawing strength from moral appeals for dignity and nondiscrimination.

Garment, Restaurant, and Grocery Workers

Rather than creating new laws, garment, restaurant, and grocery worker struggles revolved around enforcement of existing laws. Similar to their day laborer and domestic worker counterparts, garment workers in California have also been vulnerable to labor violations such as below-minimum wages and unhealthy working conditions. The Garment Worker Center (GWC) was created in 2001 to address these conditions after union organizing efforts in the garment industry began to decline: “when we started the Garment Worker Center it was created

because UNITE left that industry...There was a crisis, there was a vacuum. So the Garment Worker Center was created as the attempt to fill in the gap, to try to organize garment workers, try to fill in the void” (Interview 05.16.2012).

One of the GWC's main activities was helping workers deal with labor violations. The most common violation was either nonpayment or payment of wages below the minimum wage, often adding up to lost wages of thousands of dollars. Through the GWC workers began to respond to these violations collectively, beginning with a letter to the employer demanding proper payment. Workers approached employers directly in teams of five to ten, with one worker delivering their grievance letter while the rest of the team provided support and passed out fliers. The employer then had to come to the worker center to resolve the dispute, where they would confront a larger group of workers:

“Eventually it evolved into not only helping deliver the letters, but also negotiations...Part of that was having the employer come to the Garment Worker Center and negotiate the settlement, and when the employer came there would be 20 of the workers there, and then the worker could say this is my case, and you have all of these workers that were witnessing but also supporting” (Interview 08.14.2012).

These negotiations were very different than traditional collective bargaining, which is underpinned by the threat of workers withholding their labor. Garment workers did not attempt to shut down factories or disrupt production. Instead they used moral and legal leverage to demand fair treatment as defined by existing labor law.

This alternative basis of power was even more clear in GWC's campaign against Forever 21. Shortly after the GWC opened, a number of workers arrived at the center with complaints pertaining to six different subcontractors who all produced clothes for the manufacturer Forever 21. Rather than targeting the individual subcontractors, the workers decided to wage a public campaign against Forever 21. While the GWC did launch campaigns against other manufacturers, such as Wet Seal, worker mobilization and energy was primarily directed towards the five-year Forever 21 campaign. The workers launched a boycott against the manufacturer, including pickets outside stores every Saturday and trips across the country to publicize the campaign. Forty-four workers were active in the campaign, which sought to improve wages and working conditions in the factories (Archer et al. 2010:160-161). The workers eventually reached a settlement with Forever 21, resolving backpay issues and ensuring a commitment by the company to not sell clothes made by sweatshop labor (Fine 2006:104-106). Reflecting the collective demands of the workers, as outlined in an 8-page document, the final settlement included the following language:

“the parties have agreed to take steps to promote greater worker protection in the local garment industry. The parties are pleased to announce the resolution of this matter as a positive and symbolic step forward in demonstrating respect and appreciation for garment workers. The parties share a belief that garment workers should labor in lawful conditions and should be treated fairly and with dignity. Forever 21, the Garment Worker Center and Sweatshop Watch all remain committed to ensuring that the clothing Forever 21 sells in its stores is made under lawful conditions.”

The agreement indicated that garment workers should have access to the same basic rights and protections as other workers (“lawful conditions”). It also argued that garment workers, as valuable and “appreciated” members of society, should be treated fairly and with respect and dignity. These conditions reflected the goals and tactics of the garment worker struggle, which demanded both recognition and opportunity in the form of nondiscrimination and labor protections.

The final two sets of struggles were associated with the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), a worker center that focuses on the Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles. After helping restaurant workers process thousands of claims for wage and hour violations, KIWA launched the Restaurant Workers Justice Campaign in 1996. This campaign sought to challenge the poor working conditions faced by the largely noncitizen workforce, as described by KIWA organizer Paul Lee:

“Its essentially a sweatshop industry...Its very typical for the 2000 Korean and Latino workers to be working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, with obviously no benefits, no job security, no voice in the job place. And are paid wages as low as about \$2.30 an hour... And of course any workers who attempt to speak, attempt to stand out for their rights, are very quickly retaliated against in terms of firing, retaliatory firings, or verbal or physical abuse, and even in certain cases blacklisting...About 70 percent of the workers are Korean, mostly women, recent immigrants; and 30 percent are mostly Latinos, mostly men, and they're also recent immigrants and monolingual” (Wong and Lee 1998).

The campaign included boycotts and pickets against restaurants where abuse was prevalent, and eventually led to the formation of the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown (RWAK). Including up to 350 workers and a core group of about 30, RWAK provided trainings on labor rights and organized protests outside of restaurants (Fine 2006:111-112; Kwon 2010:37,249). The restaurant campaign used symbolic leverage to improve working conditions in the Koreatown community, calling attention to labor laws and shaming employers who violated them. Lacking significant economic power, workers relied instead on moral appeals for fairness and justice. One of the most visible boycotts targeted the Elephant Snack Corner restaurant, in defense of a group of low-wage workers who had been fired without pay. The climax of the campaign was a joint march with 500 workers and supporters affiliated with various worker centers around Los Angeles. The restaurant eventually agreed to pay back wages to the workers, subject their payroll records to monitoring, and participate in labor rights training. Perhaps more importantly, the campaign's public presence began to reshape working conditions throughout the neighborhood. According to KIWA, by 2000 “labor law compliance in the [Koreatown restaurant] industry ha[d] dramatically increased to 50 percent,” and by 2005 RWAK had secured “an estimated \$71 million in wages that [restaurant workers] would not have otherwise earned” (KIWA 2012).

KIWA's subsequent campaign against the Assi Market grocery store was in some respects an exception that proves the rule. After approaching KIWA about labor abuses, a group of grocery workers decided to form an independent union. As KIWA founder Danny Park explained: “We felt that the next step in Koreatown was not fighting for minimum wage or labor law violations, but the next step was improving the wage and working conditions. So, the strategy was unions”

(Kwon 2010:40). Responding to KIWA's grassroots organizing effort, the store owner hired a well-known union busting firm and put heavy pressure on workers not to join the union. The union election ended in a tie, and the workers responded by launching a boycott of the store, opposing the poor working conditions and demanding union recognition. The market owners responded again by suspending many of the workers involved in the boycott on the grounds that they were undocumented noncitizens. The suspended workers in turn launched a persistent picket of the store, 8 hours per day, every day, for a full year (Kwon 2010:41-45; Fine 2006:139-143). While the unionization effort eventually failed, the moral struggle for fair treatment proved to be more effective. Due to the significant pressure that the workers placed on Assi Market, KIWA was able to secure private "living wage" agreements with three other markets who wanted to avoid public conflict. The Assi Market workers were also able to win a \$1.475 million settlement for discrimination and wage and hour violations (KIWA 2012). Despite their initial goal of collective bargaining, in the end the workers rooted their economic struggle for better wages in moral appeals for dignity and fair treatment as members of the Koreatown community.

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Entitlement

The above examples illustrate the importance of the state for economic struggles in California. Noncitizen workers held the state responsible for preventing discrimination, protecting their basic labor rights, and in general ensuring their equal opportunity to participate in the economy as workers. But if the state represented an important source of leverage, ultimately low-wage noncitizen workers sought better compensation from employers. They rarely mobilized for state provision of economic goods. When asked whether day laborers ever made economic demands on the government, such as for housing, an NDLO staff member replied: "No. I've never heard a worker saying anything like that" (Interview 05.08.2012). This reflected the orientation of their struggles towards participation. As a key source of low-wage labor, noncitizen workers did not need the state to protect them from the economy. Equal Opportunity politics were instead about unrestricted access to the labor market and basic labor protections, which would enable low-wage noncitizen workers to survive and provide for their families.

Perhaps ironically, this orientation was encouraged by their status as noncitizens. While viewing California as their home, and in many cases their permanent home, it was also common for noncitizen workers to understand themselves as outsiders. This view often translated into hesitation about making material demands, particularly on the state. As one worker, representing a committee of undocumented noncitizen workers who had been fired due to their "illegal" status, explained, "Our people, nobody wants to ask for help from other people or the government. So it gets complicated. Some of our folks did not want to accept help from the union" (Field notes 01.11.2012). Some workers did not believe that they deserved the same rights and benefits as their citizen counterparts, partially because they were already benefiting from being in the country. As one activist explained:

"You don't feel that you qualify to claim for, demand, claim for your rights because, you are nothing. Even when I got my residence [green card] it says alien. The message of who I am, is so strong, that here its like, do I really deserve?...Its not my country, and how do I dare, I am so happy, that at least I have a job and I can send money back to my country...its

just that we internalize what everybody said. We are in a system and we feel that we are like begging” (Interview 09.11.2012).

Emphasizing the internalization of a lack of entitlement to certain benefits, this comment suggests that noncitizens limit their demands precisely because are noncitizens. Some activists articulated this in terms of noncitizens not wanting to be a “burden” on society, or as taking too much. Such a worldview was reinforced by anti-immigrant attitudes and movements, which portrayed noncitizens as unworthy residents who use up resources that are meant for native-born citizens. As the same activist continued: “So many people that are anti-immigrant, they say that we use the services, the housing...[but] even people who are legal, once you become legal, once you get your residency, or your citizenship, you don't want to be a burden. So many people they are single mothers, and they don't ask for the [food] stamps, and they don't have housing.” An organizer that was active in the domestic worker campaign similarly described how noncitizen workers curtailed their demands on the state: "You're constantly hearing women give other women advice: 'Oh, don't apply for food stamps for your kid because its going to look bad if you ever decide to try to apply for citizenship'...they don't want to [take state benefits] because they think its going to look bad, or reflect bad, or they don't want to take, they don't want to burden anybody, or burden the system, or whatever" (Interview 06.16.2012).

Constituted as national outsiders, and in many cases “illegal” outsiders, noncitizen workers focused on improving their economic conditions through work, rather than through state provision. This orientation was consistent with research that reveals the centrality of "hard work" as a source of identity in noncitizen communities (Gleeson 2010; Gomberg-Munoz 2010; De Genova 2005). By taking pride in their work ethic and the contributions of their labor, noncitizen workers could maintain a sense of dignity in the face of insecure employment and legal status. As one hotel worker argued, "A Social Security number can't wash toilets or vacuum floors or make beds. Only humans can do that. Legal documents are very important, but real, physical work is what counts...All we want is to work. We're just fighting for the right to work" (Bacon 2008:11). A day laborer activist articulated a similar sentiment, affirming that day laborers “just want to be given the opportunity to provide for their families...they're just people trying to look for jobs...they want to show that hey, we are here, we want to help out the economy by getting a job” (Interview 05.15.2012). In short, they want to be recognized and provided with the same opportunity to participate in the labor market enjoyed by citizen workers.

Rather than an ideological commitment to individualism and free markets, Equal Opportunity politics are better understood as very basic struggles for participation. Some workers and activists, however, began to identify larger goals. One domestic worker, for example, spoke against the injustice of being excluded from protection in her old age after all that she had contributed: “We don't save money for retirement, and that's not fair...We never have Social Security to save money for us. That's in my case, that's why I worry, because I am getting old, and I have no security...But I pay taxes, I work in here, I have my son here, he born in here, he went to school, I buy shoes, I buy everything for him, so I spend all my money here. I don't have any help from the government. Nothing.” (Interview 09.29.2012). Another activist contrasted the current focus of domestic worker struggles with her own the ideals of a “socialist government”:

“I don't know what's going with Cuba, but I think Fidel Castro is more, probably successful, in probably providing free health care, free etc. We are not asking for the moon and the stars in this country, we are only asking the *basic* rights..[We] just want to live decently, to pay us a living wage that we can afford to pay our rent and we don't become homeless, to buy our food, to be treated when we are sick. For the seniors to die with dignity and respect...That's all *we* are asking, and we all live peacefully. But I think that the socialism is what *I* am asking.” (Interview 05.09.2012).

This analysis confirms that current economic struggles are largely organized around demands for a decent wage to support a modest lifestyle. But her own aspirations for socialism went beyond these basic demands, and were more akin to the state protection that she associates with Cuba.

These commentaries point to possibilities for broader reaching struggles, beyond Equal Opportunity politics. For some activists the struggles would expand over time as noncitizens became more politically integrated. In this scenario, state provision of economic goods represented a later stage of struggle, and in particular one that came after the important stage of obtaining legal status. One worker center staff member noted: “There is probably a great focus on legalization because it's more palatable...[organizations] think that once you get that legalization than it's more acceptable to push for the other things [state provisions]” (Interview 05.09.2012). Another activist referenced the history of struggle by oppressed groups in the United States, noting how they developed gradually over time, changing the terrain of struggle itself and creating new possibilities. For her, once noncitizens are legalized and recognized as members of society, broader struggles will be possible: “I think once people are able to really feel that they are a part of this country and don't have to be in hiding [due to fear of deportation], that that will be another level. It will be another level. It will be another movement. It will be something else...So it's all, you know, yeah, in different stages” (Interview 05.14.2012).

Economic struggles in California were thus underpinned by issues of legality and citizenship status. Not only were Equal Opportunity politics about undermining discrimination and economic disadvantage due to a lack of citizenship status, but legal residence and citizenship were to some extent prerequisites for building broader economic struggles. As one activist put it simply, “yeah, we want education for all, we want health for all, those are important, but for immigrants, the main, you need to be legal.” (Interview 09.11.2012). It thus makes sense that economic struggles fed into a more explicit citizenship-based politics, as we will see in the following chapter.

Gauteng: Collective Consumption Politics

Union density was higher in Gauteng than it was in California, but the majority of unskilled and low-income residents were still not in unions. Unemployment was high, and many who were employed had temporary, part-time, and subcontracted jobs that were less susceptible to union organization. Despite their greater legitimacy in the South African context, unions largely failed to incorporate the growing numbers of informal and insecure workers. At the same time,

the post-Apartheid state demobilized popular resistance by incorporating leaders and, more importantly, traditional resistance organizations – including trade unions – through corporatist relations (Neocosmos 1998). This left a gap in civil society in terms of organizations that could press for the needs of low-income communities. As Heller (2009:139) noted, “civil society has become deeply bifurcated between an organized civil society that effectively engages with the State and a subaltern civil society that is institutionally disconnected from the State and political society.” In the years immediately following the democratic transition, ideological opposition and critique of state policy largely took place within this "organized civil society." Most importantly they took place within the structures of the Tripartite Alliance, a political coalition including the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party, as well as the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

But in the late 1990s popular resistance began to emerge within "subaltern civil society," beginning with localized protests against the high costs of public services (Desai 2002). As these struggles persisted and developed in the 2000s they took two primary forms. The first form were organized social movements, often labeled "new social movements" (NSMs) because they were distinct from the traditional organizations of the anti-Apartheid struggle. I focus here on the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), an umbrella organization for a variety of smaller affiliates with roots in poor communities, which was perhaps the most significant of the NSMs in Gauteng. The second form were more loosely organized community protests. These local protests were often referred to as “service delivery protests” because they were commonly organized around state delivery of public services. The two sets of struggles were very different in their organizational form, but they were both aimed at protecting poor citizens from the ravages of the market. More specifically they both called on the state to provide for the basic needs of the poor through the direct provision of public goods. These struggles resonate with a recurrent theme identified by Castells (1983) in his historical study of urban social movements: “Demands focused on collective consumption, that is, goods and services directly and indirectly provided by the state” (xviii). Following Castells, I refer to economic struggles in Gauteng as Collective Consumption politics.

Collective Consumption politics were consistent with broader patterns of public opinion in South Africa. In a 2003 national survey, for example, 92 percent of black South Africans agreed that “government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for” (Pillay, Roberts, and Rule 2006). These attitudes must be understood within the context of democratization. As the hegemonic leader of the national liberation struggle, the legitimacy of the ANC rested on the promise that it would deliver on the demands made by that struggle. This meant, most importantly, undoing the exclusion and disadvantage of black citizens. A 2004 national survey thus found that 75 percent of black Africans agreed that “government should pay money to the victims of Apartheid as reparation for the history of discrimination” (Roberts, Kivilu, and Davids 2010). In short, most black residents viewed the ANC-state as responsible for reversing the legacy of Apartheid and putting an end to poverty. The APF and local community protests translated these attitudes into collective action.

The Anti-Privatization Forum

The APF was formed in 2000 in response to two different privatization initiatives, one at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits 2001) and one in the Johannesburg municipality (iGoli 2002). The organization initially served as an alliance between individual activists and other movement organizations, most notably trade unions. But unions withdrew from the APF within a couple years, and the base of the organization shifted towards affiliate organizations – community-based “crisis committees” and “concerned residents” groups – rooted in black townships and informal settlements. By 2003 there were as many as 14 community-based affiliates, and 19 affiliates attended the first annual general meeting in 2004 (McKinley 2012:14-15). Membership in the community affiliates included large numbers of unemployed, women, youth, and elderly (Buhlungu 2004:6-7). As APF activist Dale Mckinley (2012:18) explains, “the social base of movements such as the APF was always dominated by the 'other' working class – i.e. casualized workers, those in the 'informal sector,' the unemployed and more particularly, unemployed women.”

Basic Demands of the Anti-Privatization Forum

From the widely distributed pamphlet, “What is the Anti-Privatization Forum?”

OUR BASIC DEMANDS

An end to all privatization programmes and the return of all privatized services and assets to the public sector, including outsourced and corporatized services.

The immediate end and reversal of retrenchments that are the inevitable result of privatization.

The election of local government candidates who stand on anti-privatization platforms.

The free supply of 50l of water per person per day.

The free supply of the minimum amount of electricity needed for health, hygiene, cooking and heating.

The introduction of a progressive block tariff system, ensuring free lifeline services cross-subsidized from the rich to the poor, from high-end users to low end users.

The scrapping of all arrears of the poor.

An end to rent evictions and the attachment of household goods.

An end to water and electricity cut-offs.

A massive increase in the subsidy from national government to local government.

The repudiation of the Apartheid debt.

Source: South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File A1.9.3.2.1, 2002.

APF struggles were couched within a larger critique of market-based resource allocation. For example, the following goal lay at the center of an early formulation of demands: “An end to all privatization programs and the return of all privatized services and assets to the public sector, including outsourced and corporatized services.” The same list of demands called for the delivery of free water and electricity, an end to housing evictions and water and electricity cutoffs due to payment failure, and the scrapping of all debt. It also called for the redistribution of state funds to local government, presumably in order to cover these various costs (see box below). These demands highlight the orientation of economic struggles towards the state, which was held as responsible for providing basic services.

During its early years the APF protested against international financial institutions (e.g. World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Economic Forum), which were viewed as harbingers of privatization. But even more important were protests at international conferences, through which the APF built linkages with other post-Apartheid social movements. The most significant of these was a protest march of 25,000 led by the APF during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002.³ The protest was launched as a critique of the WSSD for ignoring the needs and perspectives of the poor. Perhaps most importantly, though, the protest focused on the role of the ANC-state in the summit, including the decision to host it in the ultra-wealthy suburb of Sandton. As an APF activist recounts:

“There was this struggle between those who were trying to make it a problem of poverty, the problem of the United Nations...and those who would say no the problem lies here in South Africa, the South African government and its agency for neoliberalism in South Africa. So part of the focus on WSSD must also be on the policies and on the problems in South Africa...politically it was clear in terms of the problems and the sources of these problems...WSSD sort of cemented politically, particularly the social movements [e.g. APF] in terms of their understanding and also their sort of need for unity amongst those who are opposed to the ANC government” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.1.6, March 17, 2010).

The WSSD march thus drew a clear line between the APF and the ruling party. The central critique was that the ANC was perpetuating poverty through “neoliberal” policies of marketization.

The state, and state provision of public goods in particular, remained at the center of APF struggles throughout the 2000s. In 2005, local APF activists in Alexandra township, an extremely poor community in Johannesburg, held a People's Inspection to expose the poor living conditions. The People's Inspection sought to open up the township to the public. It included presentations on “the social, economic, and environmental crises in Alexandra,” and “an inspection tour in and around the Alexandra area” to illustrate those crises. The public statement released by the APF in association with the event highlighted the centrality of the state to economic struggles:

“As part of the struggle against apartheid, we also took up the struggle for social services

3 This event led to the formation of a loose coalition of new social movements called the Social Movements Indaba (SMI). APF became the primary force behind the SMI. Most notably it represented the coalition at meetings of the World Social Forum and supported the Southern African Social Forum (McKinley 2012:17).

and the general improvement of the lives of the poor and the working class. We thought that our vote during the 1994 democratic elections and the subsequent national and local government elections would facilitate the delivery of services to the working class of Alexandra and other areas...Our message to all of the organizations responsible for uplifting Alexandra – local, provincial, and national government; the ARP [state-run Alexandra Renewal Project], Joburg Water, City Power, etc. – is that our lives have not improved. In fact, our lives have worsened in many respects” (APF 2005).

Not only does this statement identify various state agencies and projects as the “organizations responsible for uplifting Alexandra,” but it highlights the failure of the post-Apartheid state to deliver on the promises of the democratic transition. A 2007 march to the Constitutional Court on Human Rights Day, a national holiday remembering the 1960 massacre of anti-Apartheid protesters in Sharpeville, put forward a similar critique. The protest highlighted the gap between the promises of the liberation struggle and the post-Apartheid realities of life for poor citizens, as outlined in a memorandum:

“the South African Constitution grant[s] all citizens rights to a clean and safe environment, housing, education, water, food, basic services and education. These so-called ‘second generation rights’ were supposed to be part of the country’s programme of redressing apartheid-inspired social and economic imbalances. Furthermore, accessing these rights would have ensured the total restoration of dignity of all those who were victims of Apartheid...Local, provincial and national levels of government have dismally failed to realize the promises made in 1994 to deliver quality, accessible and affordable basic services for the working class communities in the country.” (APF 2007).

This statement affirms the basic orientation of economic struggles towards the state. In this instance the state included “local, national, and provincial levels of government,” which were held as responsible for meeting the economic needs of working class citizens. These needs were understood as a right, earned through the struggle against Apartheid, and now enshrined in the South African Constitution, which is one of the few in the world that provides guarantees for socioeconomic rights. Whereas in California low-wage noncitizen workers struggled for basic labor rights, poor citizens in Gauteng struggled for “second generation rights” in the form of “quality, accessible, and affordable public services.” But as in California the struggle for economic livelihood was grounded in a moral appeal for recognition and basic dignity. As the memorandum argues, meeting basic economic needs is essential for restoring the dignity taken away by the Apartheid regime. As one activist explained, APF struggles were about “something that was very basic...you know basic dignity, talking about basics, access to basic services and how to engage, how to make, give meaning to what democracy is about” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.1.6, February 17, 2010).

While the APF did bring together activists from around Gauteng for joint actions such as the WSSD march and the protest at the Constitutional Court, the bulk of APF's activities were carried out by the smaller community affiliates. The signature of the APF were direct actions and protests in poor communities, often targeted at local government officials (McKinley 2012:12,14). Similar to the economic struggles in California, these community-based struggles emerged in response to local crises. But these crises did not revolve around work. Instead they

were largely a response to conditions of unemployment, which underpinned poverty and insecure livelihood. Further, they were not aimed at employers, but rather the state and the ruling party in particular. As one APF activist explained: “I mean the campaigns that the APF was doing, we weren’t fighting against some arbitrary capitalist, white monopoly capital in some like factory district you know, these were campaigns in some shit poor black community against the ANC” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.1.17, March 23, 2010). With few opportunities for work-based income generation, poor citizens called on the state to protect them from the market by providing for their basic needs. Another APF activist remarked: “What is really important to a person? Water, lights, house. That's very important. If you haven't got those things, how can you live? You see government must pop out money for the poor people to make a living better because we need electricity” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.4, August 22, 2010).

Struggles around electricity and water were central. Two of the original APF affiliates – the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) – were organized specifically around these issues, and their early struggles laid the foundation for ongoing campaigns. The APF opposed market-based strategies of “cost recovery,” which had been implemented with particular force in Gauteng province and especially Johannesburg. This included opposition to “pre-paid meters,” which required residents to pay for water or electricity before receiving the service, as well as to the cutting off of services for those who had not paid. Through Operation Khanyisa (Operation Turn On) and Operation Vulamanzi (Operation Water for All), some communities also began reconnecting electricity and water on their own. This process of illegal connection was a direct response to immediate conditions of poverty, and in particular the inability of poor citizens to pay for their basic needs. This was made clear by an APF activist who was involved in reconnecting electricity in the township:

“I remember this one time we just went to Orlando West and there was this old lady, I think she was staying by herself and she didn't have electricity I think for three months...when we switched on the electricity I saw tears on that woman's face and I said to myself which means we're doing the right thing...it became a strong campaign on its own because what we were doing to people and how we were changing people's lives because people didn't care at that time that what I'm doing is illegal. To them it was, 'I now have electricity, I now can cook, I now can do whatever that I want to do without me paying anyone.’” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.11, August 23, 2010).

Water and electricity struggles placed clear responsibility on the state for delivering public services. The electricity campaign, for example, included a protest march to the Mayor's house, which led to 87 arrests and became one of the APF's most notorious protests. As a pamphlet later described the action: “Their aim was to FIRE THE MAYOR...for failing to deliver on *Free Electricity* promises and choosing to cut off people's power supply instead. So they disconnected the mayor's water in return” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File B3.1.1, April 2002). A statement the following year reiterated the demand, this time shifting blame to the national government: “President Thabo Mbeki promised us free water and free electricity...We will fight until we have a government and a system that puts people before profits” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File B3.1.2, 2003). The foundational

statement of the Coalition Against Water Privatization, led by the APF, similarly demanded that the state provide free water to South African citizens: “We demand that...the government make a firm political and fiscal commitment to roll-out universally accessible infrastructure...[and] publicly affirm the human and constitutional right of all South Africans to water by ensuring full public ownership, operation and management of public utilities in order to provide free basic services for all” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File B3.2.1.1, November, 2003).

The other major pillar of APF campaigns was housing and land. The APF opposed evictions of those who were unable to pay rent, as well as forced removals from squatter areas. In turn the struggling communities demanded that the state provide housing and allow people to remain in their current location. In September 2006, for example, the APF organized a joint march with the Landless People's Movement “to demand land and housing for the poor and the end to evictions in our communities.” As part of this protest the APF revealed a Housing Platform (APF 2006). The platform called for the state to “Redirect all state housing resources away from the capitalists and their profits towards state owned housing projects,” and to “provide enough housing on a mass scale, free and on a subsidized rental basis.” In order to make this possible it directed the state to expropriate the necessary land, infrastructure, and resources from private owners. It also called on the state to “employ the unemployed at a decent wage” in building projects, stop evictions and forced removals, develop abandoned and empty buildings into “decent homes,” and introduce rent control. While some of these stipulations pertain to the state's regulation of private economic activity (e.g. rent control), for the most part this platform understood the state to be the main provider of economic goods.

Organized around struggles for basic economic needs, community affiliates often had difficulty sustaining consistent membership. Community activists affiliated with the APF described how poor citizens would join in collective struggles, only to abandon them once they had some success:

“I think with the SECC it's that people came there when they needed help the most. People came there when they were desperate for their houses to get light, and when they got light then they sit down” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.11, August 23, 2010).

“As soon as we address some of these service delivery issues, other people will decide, 'No, we don't want to be part of this organization anymore,' because now we've got electricity, we've got water and so on. They don't see the need of belonging to that organization forever” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.16, August 20, 2010).

These reflections underscored a tension within the APF between the broader politics of the organization and the motivations of community members. The APF officially adopted socialism as its long term vision and goal in 2004, though the organization did not develop a precise definition or consensus about what socialism would entail (McKinley 2012:15). More generally, while the official orientation of the APF indicated an aspiration for a broader reaching transformation, much of the struggles were driven by the immediate needs of poor citizens for basic livelihood (Sinwell 2011). As an activist described the politics within one of the community affiliates: “You see these marches people are not talking about socialism as an

option so why impose ourselves...do we know what alternative people are looking for? We don't know. There has never been a single march where people had marched and said we want socialism” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.5, March 30, 2010). Another activist picked up on a similar vein in response to the notion that the APF is “anti-ANC.” He denied this characterization, arguing that the organization is “not anti because we are watch dogs. Because [ANC officials] have promised, we make sure of the promises...If they fail then you see us coming in consulting them or marching or do whatever so we are just rectifying what they are not doing well” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.9, November 22, 2010).

Rather than large-scale social transformation, many struggles waged by APF affiliates were thus more concerned with holding the state accountable for delivering on its promises. These struggles were largely driven by basic economic needs. Underlying these economic struggles, however, was the demand for recognition. As one activist remarked, “The government doesn’t come to us...doesn’t want to get the views of the people. But people they don’t have houses. Where is the water?” (Interview 08.13.2010). APF struggles were about highlighting the voices of poor citizens, and making sure that the state understood the harshness of their living conditions. Another activist with the SECC illustrated this orientation when describing the march to the mayor's house: “That was us trying to say, 'We marched, we gave you a memorandum, you don't give us any response so its better for us to give you a taste of your own medicine. Because in those memorandums we were raising issues of saying, please stop the cut offs...but you failed to listen to us so if you fail to listen to us we also have ways of making you listen!’” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.11, August 23, 2010). The dynamic of recognition was even clearer in the community protests that proliferated in the second half of the decade.

Community Protests

The APF began to experience internal problems as the decade wore on. Despite a period of reflection and renewal between 2006 to 2008, by the end of 2010 – a decade after its initial formation – the organization had essentially collapsed (McKinley 2012:18). But a new source of struggle was quickly emerging in the form of local community protests. According to Municipal IQ (2011), a private research outfit, the number of local protests in the country reported in major news sources increased from 46 between 2004 and 2006, to 59 in 2007 and 2008, to 216 in 2009 and 2010. The highest proportion of protests took place in Gauteng province (see also Nyar and Wray 2012). Also drawing from major news sources, Pfaffe (2011:45) identified 52 protests in Gauteng province alone in 2009 and 2010. Police incident reports suggest that the actual numbers were much higher, including 1,097 incidents of “unrest” in Gauteng province between mid-2007 and mid-2012 (Alexander 2012).

These local protests were more loosely organized than the APF-based community struggles, prompting Hart (2008:682-683) to refer to them as “movements beyond movements.” But they were rooted in similar conditions of unemployment, poverty, and spatial detachment from economic development. A significant portion of the protests occurred in informal settlements, where residents lived in unstable shacks and often faced the threat of state removal. In addition to lacking formal housing, residents of informal settlements also suffered from a lack of

infrastructure for amenities such as water and electricity. The remainder of the protests took place in more established townships. Evidence suggests that protesters tended to be poor and either unemployed or underemployed, and the protests were often driven by an emergent generation of unemployed young activists (Alexander 2010:25).

Local community protests typically demanded economic provisions from the state. A telling indicator was their popular label as “service delivery protests,” a label used by the broader public as well as academics and the media. This label was crucially important because it made a connection between basic needs (“services”) on one hand, and the state as the entity responsible for meeting those needs (“delivery”) on the other. Protests commonly placed demands on local political officials and deployed a range of tactics, from marches to the barricading of roads to burning tires to arson of public buildings (Alexander 2010:31-32). The majority of local protests were organized around the general improvement of living conditions, and often highlighted multiple issues at once. Demands commonly included improved access to housing, water, electricity, paved roads, street lights, quality toilets, and garbage removal. The common thread throughout the protests was the demand that the state improve delivery of services as public goods.

Perhaps the most explosive issue was land and housing. Some local protests were specifically around land and housing, while in other cases housing demands were incorporated into protests around service delivery more generally. Struggles around land and housing opposed attempts by the state to evict people due to non-payment, and to relocate squatters and shack dwellers to new areas. They converged on the demand that the state provide housing and enable residents to remain in their current location. One area with recurring struggles around housing was Diepsloot, a massive informal settlement that was slowly being developed with new housing and infrastructure. A series of protests in 2004, for example, erupted after rumors spread that residents without houses would be relocated to a new area. State officials later denied such intentions, but the events revealed the deep anxiety around housing that pervaded the community. Protesters expressed particular frustration with the state for attempting to relocate them instead of providing houses (Maphumulo 2004):

“We are tired of empty promises. We were promised [state built] RDP houses but we still live in the shacks. How can we move from shack to shack?”

“This is annoying – these people are not delivering. Is this what we voted for?”

“The people are angry. This is God's way of showing their anger. We cannot stay in shacks when officials live nicely” (South African Press Association 2004).

As these statements suggest, protesters appealed to the moral responsibility of the state to provide for voting citizens. Not only did they highlight the failure of the state to protect the poor, but they contrasted the poverty of shack dwellers with the plush conditions of local state officials who lived in nice houses.

A variant of community protests for better state services were protests around issues of political demarcation. A key example was the state's decision to demarcate Khutsong, which had previously been split between North West and Gauteng provinces, as part of North West province, effectively shifting part of the population from Gauteng to North West. The decision

led to outrage within the community. Residents opposed the demarcation for several reasons, which included their personal ties to Gauteng, but the key issue was access to resources. As Kirshner (2011:10) explains, residents “viewed the province to which they were being relocated as rural, poorly resourced, and less developed than Gauteng. In contrast, Gauteng...was seen as providing better access to social services. In particular, the hope of new housing projects dimmed once Khutsong was transferred to North West.” The Khutsong protests thus represented a slight variation from the other “service delivery” protests. But they were a response to similar conditions of poverty, and expressed a similar orientation towards the state as the key actor responsible for providing economic goods.

It follows from the emphasis on state provision that community protests often targeted symbols of the state. Many included attacks on public property, such as libraries or community centers or municipal vehicles, which were understood as local representations of the state. As one resident described the destruction of a public building: “People said, this is the municipality, we are going to burn it down” (von Holdt 2011:26). Protests also included direct actions at the personal homes of local officials. The targeting of local state representatives, and ward councilors in particular, reflected widespread frustration with perceived corruption and neglect. Residents often remarked that councilors only cared about winning elections and their own personal gain, and thus failed to follow-through on the promises that were made by the ruling party. The following statement, for example, was remarkably common: “They stand for election, [and then] they just disappear. They come back four years later” (Field notes 09.05.2010).⁴ It follows that poor citizens consistently blamed local ward councilors for poor living conditions:

“Because the government promises us everything for free. Now there’s nothing for free. Free education, free water, free electricity...Councilors, they don’t do their job. Where my sister stay you can’t go when its raining. There’s no drains, no tar roads. They not doing their job” (Interview 09.3.2010).

“We say what’s the use to have the councilors because they do nothing. They just go to the people, lies and lies to the people...and at the end of the day they get nothing” (Interview 09.3.2010).

There is some evidence to support these accusations. According to a 2005 AC Nielsen survey of urban residents, for example, 75 percent reported that they “hardly ever see” their ward councilor, and another 6-7 percent reported that they see them only “once a year” (Booyesen 2008:121). Likewise, a 2010 government report on the State of the Public Service concluded that “part of the challenge appears to be the caliber of some of the ward councilors themselves, with concerns having been raised that their first concern seems not to be Public Service but the accrual of wealth at the expense of poor communities” (Public Service Commission 2010:41).

For some residents the neglect of local officials was not only about poverty and unfair handling of public funds. It was also about detachment from broader processes of development, and especially the information and opportunities that were necessary to tap into those processes.

⁴ According to a 2005 AC Nielsen survey of urban residents, 75 percent reported that they “hardly ever see” their ward councilor, and another 6-7 percent reported that they see their representative only “once a year” (Booyesen 2008:121).

Local councilors were often understood as guarding opportunities and resources for their own personal gain, or friends and family, to the detriment of the community and youth in particular. The frustration articulated by one community activist begins to capture these widespread sentiments:

“Especially our leaders, they are having sabotage...they will not give you that chance... When there are some opportunities, our councilors, they are phoning their families from outside [the community]...We don't have any information...if you listen to the news there are some opportunities. Government is pumping money into those big institutions...but [the children] do not have that information...Things are going worse now, my brother. Apartheid is coming in full force, now. There's no more information, no more development, coming in the location...communication breakdown” (Interview 09.18.2010).

The reference to Apartheid here highlights the perceived gulf between poor communities and the rest of South African society. Not only do the poor suffer from harsh living conditions, but many feel detached from the ongoing project of post-Apartheid reconstruction. The commentary above alludes to a more distant comparison to more developed areas outside of the township (referred to here as “the location”). But in some cases the reference point was closer to home, such as an adjacent area within the same township or settlement. For instance, one resident explained protests around housing in Diepsloot by arguing that local political officials favored one area (Extension 2) over another (Extension 1): “The problem with the councilor is that he only looks after the people from 2 who are next to him and not those from 1. And so those people are crying and saying that their father is not looking after them and that's why they are protesting. They are protesting because the councilor is ignoring them” (Sinwell et al. 2009). Another protester explained simply that the protests were about “us showing our anger to the government that nothing has been done” (Field notes, 05.28.2010).

This analysis underscores the important dimension of recognition in economic struggles for state service delivery. Local protests were simultaneously about obtaining access to resources and opportunities on one hand, and getting the state to recognize poor citizens as valuable members of society on the other. It follows that they were often triggered by the non-responsiveness of local officials to popular grievances (von Holdt 2011; Sinwell et al. 2009). In many instances protests were preceded by attempts to engage local officials, such as by delivering a memorandum or setting up a meeting. It was then the failure of those officials to adequately engage and respond to the concerns of the community that led to the protests. As one protester explained: “That the houses were burnt down was the mistake of the premier. He promised to come but did not...Then people said, 'The premier undermines us. He'll see by the smoke we're calling him.'” (von Holdt 2011:10-11). Consistent with this line of reasoning, protesters commonly understood their actions as making it impossible for the state to ignore them:

“The only language the government hears is when we go to the street” (Field notes, 05.28.2010).

“These communities have gone through all the processes it is possible to go through to get attention to their plight and still they are ignored. So they take to the busiest road and block

it to get attention” (Schmidt 2007).

“Violence is the only language that our government understands. Look we have been submitting memos, but nothing was done.” (von Holdt 2011:28).

Community protests were thus deeply entangled with demands for recognition. Recognition was to some extent an end in itself, as protesters demanded to be heard and treated as valuable members of society. They were not simply struggles for economic goods, but for a certain amount of dignity and respect. At the same time, however, recognition was a source of moral or symbolic leverage. The demand for dignity and respect was also a demand for state delivery of public goods, and thus protection from poverty and unemployment.

Collective Consumption and Entitlement

Economic struggles in Gauteng were underpinned by a sense of entitlement. If noncitizens in California understood the United States as “not my country,” poor citizens in Gauteng felt the opposite about South Africa. Not only did the participants in community struggles have official citizenship status, but the recent legacy of the anti-Apartheid struggle meant that their citizenship status carried with it an added degree of moral leverage. The fact that the struggles were primarily led by black citizens gave them particularly legitimacy. Not only did black South Africans lead the anti-Apartheid struggle, but the ruling party was popularly understood as responsible for reversing the historical legacy of racial exclusion and oppression. The African National Congress thus came to power with the mandate of providing for poor black South Africans with new citizenship rights. Economic struggles drew on this mandate for moral strength. This could be done in various ways, from pointing to the promises made by the ANC, to emphasizing the Constitutional rights of South Africans, to more general appeals to the moral necessity of providing for citizens.

The APF's anti-marketization stance was rooted in a broader critique of capitalism and the connection between inequality and private property divisions. But economic struggles for service delivery were nonetheless oriented towards the state, which was held as the entity responsible for providing and guaranteeing the human rights of South African citizens. A pair of early foundational statements firmly rooted economic struggles in the context of South African citizenship:

“[Our goal is] to effect fundamental shifts in the basic service/needs policies of the state so that the majority of *South Africans* can enjoy the full realization of their basic human needs and rights” (McKinley 2012:11, emphasis added).

“We remember instead the principles...[which] say that government's resources should be mobilized to provide all *citizens* with piped water, electricity, health services, housing and other means to live with dignity. Therefore government should be the provider of essential services. The government has argued that it does not have the money to provide these services. But the issue is not if there is money or not but who controls it” (APF 2001, emphasis added).

These statements make it clear that access to basic economic goods should be the right of South African citizens. They also suggest that if necessary, the state should appropriate private

resources and redistribute them to the poor. As noted above, community struggles were motivated by more immediate economic needs, and to some extent less concerned with broader transformation. But even on the ground the promises of post-Apartheid citizenship loomed large. As one APF activist explained the emergence of community struggles at the end of the 1990s: “You know, in 1994 the ANC had promised us that they will give us houses, we will get jobs and everything will be easy and now it was 1999 and nothing like that was happening...” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.2.3, November 17, 2010).

The more loosely organized community protests placed less emphasis on privatization than the APF, but they strengthened the emphasis on citizenship. In particular they demanded that the state, and the ruling African National Congress in particular, take care of its citizens by delivering on promises made during the democratic transition. This demand was clearly articulated by two different protesters:

“People are demanding what is rightfully theirs. Government has promised them houses and basic services but they are getting a raw deal” (South African Press Association 2007).

“It is so simple. All we are demanding is what we have been promised for the past 13 years....” (Hosken 2006).

These statements illustrate the undercurrent of entitlement beneath the community protests. As South African citizens, protesters believed that they were entitled to state provisions. Another protestor put it simply: “All we want is what we're *entitled* to – basic services, and there's no way we'll rest before we get them” (South African Press Association 2008a, emphasis added).

Conclusion

Subject to insecure employment and insecure livelihood, improving economic conditions was a primary concern for members of the precarious working class in both California and Gauteng. As we would expect, economic struggles took a different form in each place. Whereas in California they took the form of an Equal Opportunity politics, focused on access to the labor market and basic labor protections, in Gauteng they took the form of a Collective Consumption politics, focused on the delivery of public goods. The state was central to both sets of economic struggles. But in California, low-wage noncitizen workers used the state as leverage in their struggles against employers, while in Gauteng, poor citizens called on the state to be the main provider of economic goods. These divergent politics reflected the different orientation of the precarious working class in each place. Whereas low-wage noncitizen workers in California were oriented towards participation within the market economy, poor citizen communities in Gauteng were instead oriented towards protection against it.

Despite these differences, however, there were also important similarities. At their core, both sets of economic struggles were also struggles for recognition. Members of the precarious working class demanded dignity and respect, which in turn meant access to basic means of survival. Recognition and livelihood were inseparable. Not only was recognition a source of leverage in economic struggles, but economic struggles were also about obtaining recognition. This held true for both sets of struggles, regardless of the fact that they were waged by

noncitizens in one case and citizens in the other. If low-wage noncitizen workers in California demanded recognition despite their lack of formal citizenship, poor citizens in Gauteng demanded recognition because of their formal citizenship.

Citizenship status did, however, reinforce the divergence between the two sets of economic struggles. In California, lack of formal citizenship status underpinned a lack of entitlement, which reinforced the demand for participation in the economy rather than protection from it. In Gauteng, formal citizenship status underpinned a sense of entitlement, bolstered by the recent history of the national liberation struggle, which reinforced the demand for state protection from the market economy. In this sense the divergent economic struggles laid a foundation for divergent struggles around citizenship.

4. CITIZENSHIP STRUGGLES

As economic struggles developed in the 2000s they became increasingly entangled with citizenship struggles. These were struggles around official membership and legal status in the national political community, codified by the nation-state. Citizenship struggles were, to some extent, an extension of economic struggles for basic economic livelihood. In each case they had the same orientation: participation in California, protection in Gauteng. But citizenship struggles were not simply an alternative form of economic struggle, even if this was one of their important features. Citizenship was also an end in itself. Not only does citizenship have practical implications, such as for the capacity of one to move around freely or remain with their family, but it is also deeply connected to a sense of recognition. In a world where nation-states remain a significant mode of social organization, citizenship status and national belonging are central sources of recognition. To be included as an official member of the political community is to be treated with dignity and respect. These dynamics lay at the heart of citizenship struggles.

As with economic struggles, citizenship struggles took divergent forms in California and Gauteng. Citizenship struggles in California were organized around a Membership Inclusion politics, which demanded legalization and freedom from criminalization. Sharing a common orientation towards participation, Membership Inclusion politics reinforced economic struggles based on Equal Opportunity politics. Both sets of struggles sought access and leverage for noncitizen workers within the labor market. Citizenship struggles in Gauteng were instead organized around a Membership Exclusion politics, which demanded the expulsion of noncitizen outsiders from the national territory. Sharing a common orientation towards protection, Membership Exclusion politics reinforced economic struggles based on Collective Consumption politics. Both sets of struggles sought to secure the basic livelihood of South African citizens through extra-market mechanisms.

Recognition lay at the root of both forms of politics. At their root, citizenship struggles were about determining who should be recognized and treated as members of the political community, and in turn have access to the resources that membership entails. Citizenship struggles in each place addressed this question very differently, taking precarious politics in opposite directions. If citizenship struggles in California sought to broaden the political community, marking an expansive turn in precarious politics, citizenship struggles in Gauteng sought to limit the political community, marking a restrictive turn in precarious politics. This chapter traces the divergence.

California: Membership Inclusion Politics

As California's worker centers matured their economic struggles increasingly fed into a growing immigrant rights movement. If Equal Opportunity politics treated the state as a tool or source of leverage, these emergent citizenship struggles treated the state as a provider. The core

issues of immigrant rights struggles centered around legality. Noncitizens, and undocumented noncitizens in particular, were subject to exclusion in the labor market, exploitation at work, police surveillance in the community, and the persistent threat of deportation. Immigrant rights struggles responded to these vulnerabilities by promoting a politics of Membership Inclusion. In particular they pressured the state to recognize noncitizens as legitimate members of the political community, to officially incorporate them as legal residents, and to stop criminalizing them through immigration enforcement.

In the second half of 1990s significant energy turned towards naturalization and voting. The anti-immigrant climate inspired legal noncitizens to apply for citizenship, and worker centers and other organizations facilitated the process by helping people fill out applications. They also put pressure on the state to process the applications quickly and efficiently. But collective struggles did not disappear, and over time noncitizen communities became increasingly involved in public protest. While continuing to emphasize issues of workers rights, these citizenship struggles expanded the range of demands to include other issues such as legal status, driver's licenses, criminalization, and family unification.

Immigrant Pride Day, MIWON, and May Day

Protests against anti-immigrant sentiment, initiated by the struggle against Proposition 187, continued in the late 1990s. In Los Angeles a march was held in October 1995 to carry on the spirit of the historic march the previous year. While gathering a much smaller crowd of less than 3,000, it marked a continued emphasis on immigrant rights (McDonnell 1995). One of the most consistently visible collective struggles, however, was Immigrant Pride Day in San Francisco, which began in 1995 and continued into the early 2000s. This was an annual event, organized by the *Movimiento de los Derechos de los Inmigrantes* (Immigrant Rights Movement) in conjunction with a wide range of labor and community organizations, combining political discussions and cultural performances into a day of activities. Countering the anti-immigrant mood, this event was about celebrating the presence of noncitizens: “The idea of the Pride Day, it was like more of the positive, highlight the positive things about being immigrant. Our culture, our food, our music” (Interview 02.21.2013). The event grew in the late 1990s, reaching as many as 60,000 participants.

Immigrant Pride Day also highlighted political demands, encapsulating the emergence of citizenship struggles. The central demands were for legalization, an end to discrimination against noncitizens and immigration enforcement, and local voting rights for noncitizens. The call for the 1996 event, for example, advertised a “Massive Demonstration of Immigrants” in order to “Demand Non-Compliance with Anti-Immigrant Laws, Immigrant Voting Rights for Non-Citizens and an End to INS Raids.” The event was scheduled to coincide with the culmination of a month-long Immigrant Referendum in which noncitizens were asked to identify their main concerns, and cast a vote on issues and candidates that were slated to be on the ballot in an upcoming election. Ballot boxes were set up around the event for people to cast their vote and register their concerns. One of the central conclusions to emerge from the Immigrant Referendum was the demand for legal resident status, or “papers” as that status is commonly referred to within noncitizen communities.

The organic demand for legal status led to the emergence of the Papers For All campaign. The

campaign was organized around the call for an unconditional amnesty for all undocumented workers, legalizing their presence in the United States. One of the organizers of Immigrant Pride Day explained how the campaign emerged from the Immigrant Referendum: “Papers for All was one of the campaigns that came out of the people voting on those referendums...that was kind of what, we were listening from everybody: 'papers, we want want papers, we don't have any papers’” (Interview 02.21.2013). Launched with a rally of 400 people, the Papers For All campaign began to receive national media coverage. It also began to get international attention, including support from the *sans papiers* (undocumented migrants) in France. As one of the organizers explained, the response was overwhelming: “So they present all of this on national television, the call of Papers for All, and we had an incredible response that we were unable to react to it.” (Interview 02.13.2013). This response was one of the early signs of the energy behind citizenship struggles. More specifically it was an indication of how important the demand for legalization would become to precarious politics.

As the 1990s came to a close, worker centers also became increasingly focused on issues of immigration reform. A long-time activist in the worker center community described the general shift from economic struggles around workplace issues to citizenship struggles around immigrant rights:

"Initially they may start off as addressing a local issue, or an impact issue, which usually deals with workplace related [demands]. But in the process of addressing that issue the members get engaged, and they get involved in a process where they get politicized...you see them then broaden the concept. Their not just focusing on servicing the needs of the members but they get them involved in the bigger struggle for immigrant rights. That's why worker centers have become good at doing that, and really become at the intersection between low-income immigrants and the broader movement” (Interview 05.16.2012).

An emblematic expression of this intersection between worker rights and immigrant rights was the Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network (MIWON), which was a coalition of worker centers in Los Angeles devoted to mobilizing for immigration reform. At the heart of MIWON was a committee that brought together noncitizen workers from different countries and industries: "MIWON was interesting then, because that was a complete microcosm of – you had Chinese workers, Filipino workers, Latino, all from different sectors. We would have meetings in four languages, and it was craziness" (Interview 08.14.2012).

One of MIWON's first efforts was to create an Immigrant Rights Platform. Through a series of focus groups roughly 600 workers participated in the formation of the platform, which was eventually adopted by the Los Angeles City Council in December 2001 (Osuji 2010:97). The Immigrant Rights Platform was a largely symbolic measure, as the council did not have the power to carry through on most of the demands. But it provides a good indication of the orientation of citizenship struggles in California. The overarching theme was the need to recognize noncitizens as legitimate members of the political community. The platform highlighted the economic contributions of noncitizens as workers on one hand, and their deprivation and exclusion on the other hand. It also emphasized a variety of basic needs – from education and health care to housing and healthy working conditions to basic democratic freedoms – that noncitizens deserve as human beings, though it was not specific about who

should be held responsible for meeting them.

MIWON IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PLATFORM

Adopted December 18, 2001 by Los Angeles City Council

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles has historically been a place of refuge for migrants escaping from political turmoil, natural disasters and economic hardships in their country of origin. Immigrants from across the world have built this city and its economy continues to thrive through the major contributions of their labor. Nowhere is this clearer than in the low-wage industries, where wealth is created by garment, restaurant, day labor, domestic, home care workers and other immigrant workers who receive poverty wages and endure exploitation; and

Whereas, immigrant workers have endured deplorable working conditions such as long work hours without overtime pay, no access to workers compensation, little regard for their health and safety, harassment, discrimination, blacklisting, and have little or now protection by government agencies in charge of enforcing labor laws; and

Whereas, immigrant workers lack job security, a living wage and are trapped in these low-wage industries without the hope of improving their lives and that of their families;

Whereas, immigrant workers face higher levels of exploitation because most lack legal documentation, and they are subject to threats and harassment to be thrown out of the country, incarcerated and deported thereby creating a fearful working and living environment.

Whereas, immigrant workers and their families, because of their immigration status, are also systematically denied access to a driver's license, decent healthcare, social services, and quality education.

Let it be resolved

That we, as leaders of a country built by immigrants, hereby endorse the following principles as guidelines for building a broader legalization program. We urge all others in the community to uphold these principles as we work together to improve the conditions for low-wage immigrant workers and their families.

JUSTICE: All immigrant workers deserve and must receive the following support to lead healthy, decent and productive lives:

True legalization in this country should be given in the form of permanent legal status and citizenship. This should not be limited to any country of origin or work industry.

Greater protection and enforcement of U.S. labor laws, which will guarantee at least minimum wage and security from blacklisting, harassment and intimidation of any kind.

DIGNITY: All immigrant workers and their families deserve:

Clean, safe and proper working conditions to prevent illness, stress and workplace accidents.

Access to decent and quality healthcare, and nutrition. Permanent, stable and secure work.

Access to quality education and financial aid. Access to safe affordable housing.

Access to a driver's license

DEMOCRACY: All immigrant workers and their families must hold basic democratic freedoms and rights as contributing members of this country. Immigrant families must be able to voice their concerns.

The strongest claims with the clearest target, however, were two demands aimed directly at the state: first, to provide noncitizens with “permanent legal status and citizenship”; and second, “greater protection and enforcement of U.S. labor laws.” The latter represented the object of economic struggles, while the former represented the object of citizenship struggles. These two goals, labor protections and legalization, were the central pillars of precarious politics in California. According to the platform, these are benefits that “all immigrant workers deserve and must receive.”

These two demands coalesced in MIWON's annual march on May 1st or May Day, which is celebrated across the globe as International Workers Day. The tradition originated out of KIWA's campaign against the Elephant Snack Corner, which included a 200-person picket line on May 1, 1999 to protest against labor violations. The following year various worker centers decided to build on this action with a march to “reclaim May 1st and make it an immigrant workers day, make it about immigration” (Interview 08.14.2012). The jointly sponsored march brought over 500 workers and supporters to Koreatown, and eventually led to the formation of MIWON. After this the May Day march became an annual event in Los Angeles. Participation ebbed and flowed, but the marches grew significantly after 2000 (see table 4.1). After the explosion of immigrant rights protests in 2006 (discussed below), the May Day tradition spread to other cities around the state. For example, in 2010 there were May Day marches in at least 10 cities in addition to the massive march in Los Angeles, including Fremont, Napa, Oakland, San Bernadino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, San Rafael, Santa Ana, Santa Rosa, and Stockton (partial list is available at <http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org/MayDay2010/lists.html>, downloaded 11.25.2012).

At the core of the May Day protests was the demand that noncitizens be recognized as legitimate and valuable members of the political community. Within this broad frame the specific emphasis of the march varied between years. In some instances it reflected a popular issue of the moment. For example, one activist noted the response to immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant attitudes after the 9/11 attacks: “2002 I think was big because September 11, all of the harsh stuff that came down, and all of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, people came out and said we want to stand up against all of this crazy government stuff going on” (Interview 08.14.2012). Particularly salient in the beginning, worker issues became less central over time, though they remained a significant feature of the protests. As one worker center staff member explained, “The focus has been really on immigrant workers and the rights of immigrant workers...[though] sometimes its been the workers part has even started to fall out a little bit and its really been about immigrant rights, other times that's been more front and center.” (Interview 05.14.2012).

Perhaps the most consistent demand, however, which remained front and center throughout the decade, was the demand for immigration reform and legalization in particular. This was articulated by two of the event organizers in Los Angeles:

“[May Day] was a common space where people could actually stand together in support of legalization...you were seeing immigrants coming together, coming out of the shadows... saying this is who we are, and we demand our rights, and we believe that we're contributing to this country and that we're here” (Osuji 2010:104).

“I think for MIWON we've been very consistent in our messaging...immigrant rights need to be addressed, and respected. And the form of that is a reform, a fair and inclusive immigration reform. Its not that we're asking for handouts...We're here now, we want to contribute to this society, but then we also want to be respected and be part of it as such” (Interview 05.14.2012).

These reflections capture a common sentiment that underpinned precarious politics in California: noncitizen migrants are in the country to stay, and must be understood as an enduring fixture of the political community. As the popular chant proclaimed: “*Aqui estamos y no nos vamos, y si nos echan, nos regresamos*. [We're here, and we're not going. If they kick us out, we're coming back].” On the basis of that presence, noncitizens demanded legal permanent residence rights. For protesters this was not about asking the state to take of care of them with “handouts.” Rather, it was about ensuring their opportunity to participate in the economy and contribute to the political community without having to “live in the shadows” as unwanted or “illegal” residents.

Table 4.1. Participation in May Day Marches, Los Angeles, California, 2000-2010

Year	Number of participants	Description
2000	300-500	KIWA, CHIRLA, and PWC organize a joint march against the Elephant Snack Corner, a restaurant that had withheld wages from Latino and Korean immigrant workers.
2001	3,000	March from downtown to MacArthur Park for immigration reform, immigrant workers' rights, and driver's licenses.
2002	10,000-15,000	March through downtown calls for amnesty for undocumented immigrants, and opposes the post-9/11 harassment of noncitizens and United States occupations abroad.
2003	3,000-6,000	March through downtown for immigrant rights and in celebration of international workers day; sit-in at Governor Gray Davis' office.
2004	300 (caravan) 800 (marching)	“Caravan of Justice” brings immigrant workers from campaigns against Assi Market (grocery workers) and Forever 21 (garment workers) to different sites on buses.
2005	7,000	International Workers Day march takes place on April 30 th due to Sunday religious services on May 1 st .
2006	600,000- 650,000	Immigrant rights protests climax with two rallies against HR4437: an afternoon rally led by the March 25 Coalition in conjunction with a boycott; an evening rally led by the We Are America

		Coalition, including MIWON.
2007	30,000-35,000	March to MacArthur Park ends with police orders to disperse and police-protester clashes. Turnout is less than anticipated.
2008	8,500	March 25 th Coalition and We Are America Coalition coordinate two separate marches, which converge downtown in solidarity. Traditionally supportive organizations put less effort into organizing.
2009	“thousands of protestors”	Separate marches highlight divisions within the immigrant rights movement.
2010	60,000	Renewed energy due to the emergence of the anti-immigrant SB1070 in Arizona.

Sources: Skalić (2002); Compagnone (2003); Gorman, Miller, and Landsberg (2006); Watanabe and Vara-Orta (2007); Watanabe, Gorman, and Bloomekatz (2008); Gorman (2009); Faturechi (2010); Watanabe and McDonnell (2010); Osuji (2010:101-104).

Driver's License Struggles

A key flashpoint for citizenship struggles was the issue of driver's licenses, which is a basic form of official identification for members of the political community. While not the same as legalization or citizenship status, for most activities of everyday life in the United States the driver's license is similar to a passport. A 1993 law made it illegal for undocumented workers to obtain a California driver's license, but many needed to drive in order to get to work and handle other responsibilities. As a domestic worker explained, “I was scared to drive without [a] license. But one day I say to myself, 'Hey, come on. You need to drive. You need to take your son to school, and you have to go to work.' And taking [the] bus to the school and then going to my work, I didn't make it” (Interview 09.29.2012). Protests around driver's licenses picked up in the early 2000s, as state Senator Gil Cedillo began to push for legislation that would authorize undocumented residents to obtain them. The driver's license campaign was not initiated by worker centers, but approximately 800 workers from the various Los Angeles worker centers participated (Osuji 2010:100).

The struggle for undocumented noncitizens to be eligible for driver's licenses had both practical and symbolic dimensions. In terms of the practical dimension, noncitizen workers needed a license so that they could drive to work. Without a license they risked being cited for a legal violation and having their car impounded. As one activist recalled the campaign: “The sentiment at that time was, 'I need to go to work. You know, I have a car. I have to make ends meet. I need to have a driver's license, because if I get caught, they're going to remove my car. They're going to give me tickets.’” (Osuji 2010:99). Driving without a license also put noncitizens at risk of deportation, as they were more likely to be stopped by police when driving a car. Beyond these practical concerns, however, driver's licenses were also central to issues of recognition. As the primary form of legal identification, they signaled belonging and

participation in the political community. A legal advocate explained: "For immigrants, there are few issues that are more emotional than the driver's license issue...There are some really basic issues there: people's identity, their legitimacy as human beings" (Simon 2004). The struggle for driver's licenses was, therefore, simultaneously about obtaining an official legal status, which made it possible to participate in daily life, and achieving a sense of membership and dignity as a member of society.

In 2003 the California legislature passed the driver's license bill but then repealed it before the law took effect. Noncitizens responded with protests. One of the protest responses was a four-day, 50-mile, "Pilgrimage for Human Rights." In explaining the long march, protesters reiterated the basic demand for recognition. For example, one protester proclaimed, "Whether they like it or not, we are a part of this society. We are part of California...We're not going to give up. We're going to continue." Another spoke to the practical complications of exclusion, underscoring the necessity of a driver's license for daily life: "They've taken my car away three times in the last three years...We need licenses. Not to do bad things. We need to get to work, take our kids to school. If we don't work, we don't eat." The protest also expressed a familiar justification that would continue to be prominent: the notion that noncitizens provide much-needed labor, and in turn should be treated as legitimate members of the community with equal rights. This was particularly salient in the case of driver's licenses, given that noncitizen workers often needed to drive to get to work. As one of the marchers explained, "It's a pilgrimage to make the statement that, look, immigrants are the backbone of our labor, the backbone of our society and, with that, immigrants are demanding certain basic human rights" (Hernandez 2003).

The argument that noncitizens should be given the right to drive due to their economic contributions as workers and consumers was thrust to the forefront just a few days later. On December 12, 2003, thousands of noncitizens participated in a statewide boycott of work, school, and business. This represented the expansion of a smaller, local boycott in the "Inland Empire" region east of Los Angeles two months earlier (Diaz 2010:179-180). The boycott was designed to illustrate the economic significance of the noncitizen community and demand access to driver's licenses. As one noncitizen remarked, "The state of California needs to find out what we are to them, doing the dirty jobs no one else will do" (Hendrix 2003). Similar to traditional labor struggles, the boycott sought to disrupt economic activity. But rather than being directed at employers, as in a typical strike, it was directed at the state and sought legal membership for noncitizens. Intended to demonstrate the worth and value of noncitizens to the political community, the boycott tactic would reappear on a much larger scale two years later.

The struggle to achieve driver's licenses for undocumented noncitizens had still not been won by the end of the decade. With the failure of the statewide campaign, citizenship struggles around driver's licenses shifted to the local level. Some campaigns focused on implementing a municipal ID that undocumented noncitizens could use to prove their identity. Others focused on reducing the harsh consequences of being pulled over without a license, such as by enabling undocumented drivers to avoid having their car impounded. One such campaign was the struggle in Santa Ana for a new car impound policy. The key goal was a policy that would allow another licensed driver to take the car, rather than having it impounded, and allow first-time impounds to be picked up the following day, rather than wait the typical thirty days. A

march and rally was held in downtown Santa Ana to support the campaign, with signs that read “Stop Stealing Our Cars.” One of the protest leaders shouted: "Our people should not have their cars taken away. Our people are here to work. We are not criminals. Can we do it?" The struggle was eventually won, and the new policy implemented (Diaz and Yang 2012).

Immigrant Rights Explosion

With the emergence of the May Day tradition and protests around driver's licenses, noncitizen struggles around immigrant rights gained momentum through the first half of the 2000s. In spring 2006 immigrant rights struggles exploded. The catalyst was the so-called Sensebrenner Bill (HR4437), proposed federal legislation which would have made it a criminal offense to either be in the country without legal documentation or to provide assistance to somebody who was. Similar to Proposition 187 a decade earlier, but amplified many times over, HR4437 was a threat that sparked an unprecedented mobilization by noncitizen communities. This time the response spread much further, reaching not just throughout California but to the entire country. One prominent activist remarked that “it was the cumulative response to years of bashing and denigrating of immigrants generally, and Mexican and Latinos in particular” (Bacon 2008:195). From mid-February to early May, between 3 and 5 million protestors across the country took to the streets to march and rally for immigrant rights. Protests occurred nationwide but the mobilization was greatest in California, which accounted for roughly one quarter of the protests and one-third of the total participants (Bada et al. 2007). The protests brought out a wide swath of pro-immigrant forces, but they were dominated and animated by working class Latinos (Pulido 2007).

The central demand of the 2006 protests was legalization, in the form of an amnesty for undocumented residents. But they also featured strong opposition to the criminalization of noncitizen communities, as well as broader themes of recognition and membership. Table 4.2 captures some of the prominent slogans that were featured during the rallies. These slogans highlight a commitment to American society, and a desire to be included in it as legitimate participants. For many activists and commentators the protests represented the emergence of a “new civil rights movement,” based on similar ideals of political inclusion and equal opportunity (Johnson and Hing 2007). One activist described the protests as an “I Am Man moment,” referring to the popular slogan used by black men during the Civil Rights Movement to demand recognition and respect. While contrasting the different ways in which blacks and Latinos migrated to the United States – via slavery versus economic circumstances – another activist drew a similar parallel between black civil rights struggles and immigrant rights struggles: “Its pretty much, its very, very similar...So many people became wealthy because of slavery, right. It was free labor...We need another Martin Luther King” (Interview 05.14.2012). The protest slogan, “I Have a Dream,” echoed King's famous speech envisioning racial equality, articulating a similar aspiration for noncitizens.

As during the protests for driver's licenses two years earlier, protesters often justified their demand for political inclusion by pointing to their economic contributions. One activist recalled that “so many [protesters] were saying that in 2006, we are part of this economy too. I think that we had the sense that we are part of the economy.” This was connected to the daily experiences of low-wage noncitizen workers. She continued: "Some people were saying, 'Oh a

giant woke up.' But it didn't wake up. It just moved a little bit. And it wasn't sleeping, it was working...I don't think that we are sleeping. I think that we are surviving, working” (Interview 09.11.2012).

Table 4.2. Protest Slogans During the 2006 Immigrant Rights Protests

Immigrants are the backbone of the United States, treat them fairly	Let America be American again, the dream it used to be
We are all Americans/We are America	Let us be part of the American Dream
We are a nation of immigrants	I have a dream
We are Americans, too, we are not criminals	I am not a criminal/We are not criminals
Immigrants are workers, not terrorists	I am a worker, not a criminal
We are workers and neighbors, not criminals	Amnesty
Not criminals, just undocumented	Justice for all/We want just laws
Si Se Puede (Yes We Can)	Today we march, tomorrow we vote

Sources: Baker-Cristales (2009:71); Beltran (2009:596); Lazos (2007); Galindo (2010:52); Shaw (2008:94).

The connection between work and the demand for legalization became especially clear on May 1st, which represented the pinnacle of the spring 2006 mobilizations. The May Day protests extended the newly established tradition of marches in Los Angeles to the rest of California and the country. Not only was May Day particularly significant in 2006 because it was part of a larger protest wave, but it also featured the expansion of the boycott tactic displayed during the driver's license protests in 2004. The March 25th Coalition, an alliance of immigrant rights organizations and activists that had emerged out of the March 25, 2006 protests in Los Angeles, called for a boycott of work, school, and business. Designed to illustrate the centrality of noncitizen communities to the economy and society, the boycott was labeled “A Day Without Immigrants” (Diaz 2010). During the rallies the economic contributions of noncitizen workers was a central theme, as illustrated by a number of protesters:

“I clean everyone's house...Some people don't want to do that job. We work here and live and should be treated fair. But we're not. That isn't right” (Reynolds and Fiore 2006).

“Most of us who work here are illegal and there aren't many Americans who will do what we do...If we didn't come, who will build the houses?” (Gorman, Miller, and Landsberg 2006).

“We are here because we are needed. We do the jobs Americans won't do...We don't want any problems. We just want to work” (Delson 2006).

“Without immigrants, this country wouldn't be anything...This protest is not about rebellion.

We're not criminals. We're in this country to work” (Keller and Gorman 2006).

Not only did the economic contributions of workers underpin their claims for legal status as members of the political community, but legalization was also important for gaining access to jobs and improving conditions at work. This was highlighted by an exchange I had with a day laborer who had become an active organizer. For him, legal status, the right to work, and better pay were all part of the same struggle:

Organizer: "They [undocumented workers] are losing their lives, they are losing their salaries, they are losing their families, they are losing everything. But they need to survive...So I tell them we have to stop this mess. How is this mess going to be stopped? Legalizing all the workers."

MP: "So its sounds like for you, the legalization struggles and worker struggles are –"

Organizer: "– are the same. Are the same because its the struggle for good salaries. First for the right to work” (Interview 05.11.2012).

This exchange illustrates the links between Equal Opportunity politics and Membership Inclusion politics. Noncitizens commonly understood citizenship struggles, and legal status in particular, as important for being able to find a job and have basic protections at work. Capturing a widespread sentiment amongst workers and activists, another worker center organizer explained how providing legal status would improve the conditions of undocumented workers: "It relates to workers' rights. People won't be so afraid to ask for their 10 minute break. Won't be afraid that if they say something, they're not going to be able to go look for another job...So it will definitely help a little” (Interview 05.14.2012).

A domestic worker expressed the connection in even more concrete terms. She had recently lost her job after 10 years because her client had passed away, and when she went to a hiring agency they offered her a job as a live-in domestic worker, working long hours, six days per week, for \$250 per week. She attributed this meager offer to her lack of legal authorization (“papers”) to remain in the country: “If [noncitizens] know their rights and they have papers, they are not going to work for \$250 a week. They do not...If I had my papers, I go straight to the [hiring agency] and say, 'Hey, I have my papers,' and they have to respect, because if I had my papers, I'm not going to work over 8 hours. I'm not. But a lot of people do it, because they don't speak English, they don't know their rights...a lot of people have problems without papers.” But legalization was not only important for achieving better working conditions. It also spoke to a deeper level of recognition, value, and self-worth. She continued: “You don't have papers, people look [at you as if] you are nothing, you are nobody. But if you have your papers, you do have social security number, you are ready to get your DMV ID [driver's license]...when you have your papers, everybody respects you.” (Interview 09.29.2012)."

Demands for official legal status thus blended together with demands for better working conditions. This blending was appreciated by one union-affiliated activist, who reflected on the 2006 protests: “It was a really a moment where people for the first time in a really long time, were just able to express their identities, 'I am a worker, and I am an immigrant.’” Yet for her the protests were not only about legalization and worker rights. They were also about recognition as respect as a person: “There was a recognition that a person's livelihood, their work life, is part of

who they are as a human being. To be respected as a whole, you have to be respected as a worker and a human being. And that's the part that came out in the immigrant rights marches. People were just demanding that 'I am a human being, I shouldn't be treated in this dehumanizing way.'" (Interview 10.24.2012). This reflection points to the impossibility of completely separating citizenship struggles and economic struggles. If the 2006 protests were first and foremost about legal status, they also reinforced demands for the rights of noncitizens as workers. This theme would persist throughout subsequent May Day protests, which often suggested that immigrant rights *are* worker rights. As comment above suggests, the binding thread between the two was the demand for recognition and dignity. An activist deeply involved in domestic worker struggles made this link even more explicit: "I think that what both the domestic worker movement and the immigrant rights movement is struggling for is just basic recognition and dignity...and humanity and being able to recognize that everybody has a place in society." (Interview 06.16.2012).

Anti-Enforcement and Families

While the 2006 protests were consistent with, and to some extent reinforced, the economic struggles of noncitizens, they also solidified legal status as an independent object of struggle. Opposition to the criminalization of noncitizens, for example, was not only about their ability to obtain work. It was also about being able to live without fear of being removed from the country; a fear that the Sensebrenner Bill threatened to exacerbate. Many protesters articulated their opposition to this threat in terms of the defense of families. With a significant portion of noncitizens making California their permanent or at least long-term home, deportations often meant that parents were being separated from their children. Opposition to deportation thus meant keeping families together.

While worker issues remained salient to immigrant rights struggles, citizenship struggles were increasingly organized around opposition to criminalization, deportation, and the separation of families. This reflected increased state spending on immigration enforcement, increased collaboration between local and federal enforcement agencies, and increased numbers of deportations over the course of the 2000s. These changes resonated loudly in noncitizen communities. One worker center staff member explained the dramatic shift, which for him began to take shape after the events of September 11, 2001: "There were always like horror stories in the community, but the numbers [of deportations], they were just much lower. They were a quarter, a fifth [in the 1990s]. The impact wasn't felt as greatly in the community, and the rumors didn't spread as much" (Interview 05.09.2012). Noncitizens responded by protesting against immigration enforcement in its many forms, including raids, detention of noncitizens in jail, deportations, local police collaboration with federal immigration officials, and security at the US-Mexico border.

Day laborers were an especially important base for anti-enforcement struggles. This reflected the particular vulnerability of day laborers to immigration enforcement, as they solicit work in public places and are frequently subject to police surveillance. An NDLO representative thus suggested that "the day labor community has been the face of the immigrant community" because "they were a really easy target...and a lot of them got deported." As a result, she concluded, "the day laborers have always been at the forefront of the immigrant rights movement in that sense. I think they are the first ones who suffer most of the attacks."

(Interview 05.09.2012). Ricardo, the former day laborer who now works organizing day laborers and families, similarly explained how the situation had changed in the 2000s, under the Bush administration, relative to the Clinton administration of the 1990s:

"Let me tell you what the people said at the corners. The people said, 'At the Clinton time, we were not having legalization but we were having work. And no persecution of people, no chasing immigrants. Not spending \$84 billion to chase people, to chase workers, to chase families. They said, 'Everything was okay. We were not having legalization but we were having work. Everybody works. Everything was fine.' But after the Clinton era the things started to change, with the Bush administration."

With day laborers easy targets for heightened enforcement, the National Day Labor Organizing Network became one of the leading opponents of the *polimigra*⁵ and programs such as Secure Communities, which enable local-federal collaboration. This opposition coalesced around the Trust Act, which was state-level legislation that sought to limit the implementation of Secure Communities in the state of California. In August 2012, day laborers associated with NDLO-affiliated day labor centers from across the state turned up at the capitol in Sacramento to march and rally for the Trust Act. They chanted and carried signs opposing Secure Communities, the racial profiling of Latinos by immigration enforcement, and deportations. As one sign read: "We have rights as anybody also in this country." Among the speakers at the rally was a woman whose husband had been deported after they had been pulled over by the police. In her support for the Trust Act, she captured many facets of citizenship struggles in California: "What I want to say is that all deportations have to end. We have the right to work. We have the right to live with dignity. And families have to stop being separated. The unjust laws have to change" (Field notes 08.28.2012).

The demand to end immigration enforcement went hand-in-hand with the demand for driver's licenses and the demand for legalization. They all targeted the state as the provider of official membership status, and called for noncitizens to be treated as equal members of the community. The cohesion of these various demands was illustrated by their combination in the annual May Day protests. For example, on May Day in 2012 the Southern California Immigration Coalition marched in support of five demands: Stop the Raids; Legalization for All; No Bracero Program; Right to Organize; Licenses for All. With the exception of the opposition to a temporary worker or Bracero program, which some organizations have been more willing to compromise on, these demands are widely endorsed within noncitizen and pro-immigrant activist communities. This platform emphasized struggles around citizenship, though workers' right to organize was also included. Along these lines, one activist argued that the concept of immigrant rights is useful precisely because it is so flexible: "I think that the great thing about the immigrant rights movement...it enables us to integrate sub-issues...the issue of immigrant workers, the hardship, raids, worksite enforcement...Because you know the workers rights movement can be an immigrant rights issue. Fighting back local enforcement, immigration enforcement, can be an immigrant rights issue" (Interview 05.16.2012). What unites these various struggles is the orientation towards greater participation, in both society and the economy.

5 *Polimigra* is the combination of "police" and "*la migra*," which refers to federal immigration officers. It thus refers to the enlistment of local police officers in federal immigration enforcement.

Gauteng: Membership Exclusion Politics

Citizenship struggles took a very different form in Gauteng. Rather than broadening the political community they sought to limit it by excluding national outsiders. In South Africa this form of national exclusion is popularly referred to as “xenophobia.” Xenophobic antagonism towards non-South Africans has been a consistent feature of the post-Apartheid period, but it became increasingly visible in the late 2000s, climaxing in a widespread string of violent attacks that spread across the country in May 2008. This politics of Membership Exclusion partially reflected the fact that poor communities were largely comprised of citizens. For poor citizens in Gauteng, official membership status was a source of privilege rather than vulnerability, and thus enabled very different struggles than those waged by noncitizens in California. But the politics of exclusion also reflected a broader orientation towards protection. Rather than seeking greater participation and leverage within the market, poor citizens in Gauteng demanded protection from it. If pressuring the state to provide public goods was one way of achieving such protection, another way was to exclude those who were competing for scarce resources. These approaches were not mutually exclusive or necessarily inconsistent. For some poor citizens they were mutually reinforcing. In contrast, a smaller group of poor citizens actually mobilized against xenophobia. Citizenship, and Membership Exclusion politics in particular, thus became an important terrain of struggle.

Post-Apartheid National Exclusion

South Africa's democratic transition in the early 1990s drew a firm line around the national border, creating a sharp distinction between national insiders and foreign outsiders. This reconfiguration was both symbolic and material. The post-Apartheid state's nation-building project was organized around inclusive principles such as democracy and socioeconomic well-being. But it was also based on a shared national history of division and oppression, including redress for those that had suffered under the Apartheid regime. This project excluded those from beyond South African borders. As the Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosutho Buthelezi, declared in his first speech to parliament in 1994, following the democratic transition: “If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme” (SAMP 2008:44). While known for its progressive stance, the new South African Constitution preserved some rights for citizens only, and did not protect against discrimination by nationality. State discourse and practices reinforced this exclusion by treating noncitizens as a threat to the national body. Similar to their counterparts in California, noncitizens in Gauteng faced the constant threat of arrest and deportation, as well as harassment and extortion by law enforcement officials (Peberdy 2009:162-169; see also Neocosmos 2006; Croucher 1998).

Popular attitudes mirrored these practices. In 2006, just two years before the mass attacks, the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) conducted a national survey of South African citizens, probing their attitudes around issues of national identity and the presence of noncitizens. Black respondents expressed a strong sense of national identity, with at least 90 percent agreeing with each of the following: “Being South African is an important part of how I see myself”; “It makes me proud to be South African”; and “I want my children to think of themselves as South African.” They also expressed a dislike for noncitizens, and African

noncitizens in particular. Whereas 57 percent of black respondents expressed “favorable” ratings of white South Africans, only 23 percent expressed such a rating for international migrants, and only 17 percent did so for migrants from other African countries. Likewise, 47 percent of all respondents supported the deportation of all foreign nationals, 74 percent supported the deportation of foreign nationals who were not contributing to the economy, and 76 percent supported the use of electrified fences at the national border to prevent illegal entries (SAMP 2008: 23, 26, 30).

These results demonstrated a widespread hostility towards noncitizens. The survey also revealed that a portion of citizens were prepared to act on this hostility. Just under one-third of respondents indicated that they would likely take action to prevent migrants from other southern African countries from either moving into their neighborhood or operating a business in their neighborhood (SAMP 2008:37). Consistent with these results, violent attacks were a consistent feature of post-Apartheid Gauteng, emerging well before the outbreak in 2008 (see table 4.3). Some of these attacks were led by groups of street traders seeking to curtail competition from noncitizen-owned businesses. But they also included incidents with more widespread participation and less connection to business competition.

Table 4.3. Incidents of Xenophobic Antagonism, Gauteng, South Africa, 1994-2007

1994	Alexandra residents march to demand that Zimbabweans, Malawians, and Mozambicans return to their countries. Gangs later launch physical attacks as part of campaign Buyelekha (Go Back Home) to evict them from the township, blaming them for crime, sexual attacks, and unemployment.
1996	South African traders attack foreign traders in Germiston and Kempton Park, shooting one trader to death in the former and preventing Somali's from trading in the latter. Alexandra residents protest against IDs being issued to foreign national, who are blamed for stealing jobs.
1997	South African street traders in Johannesburg attack foreign traders and loot their belongings over two consecutive days, producing a flier saying, “We want to clean the foreigners from our pavement.” A march of 500 traders through Johannesburg chants “chase the <i>makwerekwere</i> out” and “down with the foreigner, up with South Africans.”
1998	Three noncitizens are killed in a xenophobic attack on the train from Pretoria to Johannesburg following a rally where noncitizens were blamed for unemployment, crime, and AIDS. Two noncitizens are burnt alive in Ivory Park.
1999	Six noncitizens are kidnapped in Ivory Park after being accused of criminal activity. Two are burnt alive, three are seriously injured, and one escapes.

- 2000 A Sudanese refugee is thrown from the train in Pretoria in a xenophobic attack by a group of armed men. Fighting between South Africans and Zimbabweans in Zandspruit.
- 2001 South African residents chase Zimbabwean residents out of the Zandspruit settlement and burn dozens of their homes after accusing a Zimbabwean of killing a local woman.
- 2005 South Africans chase noncitizens from their shacks and shops in Choba informal settlement.
- 2006 Violent clashes between foreigners and local residents in Choba end in two being killed, including one Zimbabwean who is burnt to death. Somali-owned businesses are repeatedly burnt in Diepsloot.
- 2007 A clash between a Zimbabwean and a South African family in Mooiplaas leads to widespread attacks against noncitizens, leaving 2 dead, 18 injured, and 111 shops looted. More than 20 people are arrested for burning Somali-owned shops in Khutsong.

Sources: SAMP (2008:44-54); Misago et al. (2010); CORMSA (2010); Nyar (2010).

Physical attacks against foreign-born residents reached new proportions in 2008. Between January and April there was already a heightened level xenophobic antagonism in Gauteng. More than fifteen noncitizens were killed in various attacks, and many had their shacks burned down and looted (SAMP 2008:51-52). In May 2008 the xenophobic violence exploded. It originated in Alexandra township, where mobs began to evict foreigners from their shacks. During three days and nights of violence, the attackers looted and appropriated homes, raped women, and left many injured or dead. In the wake of this outbreak the xenophobic attacks quickly spread across Gauteng, and eventually reached most of the major urban areas in South Africa. Throughout the country, black South African citizens physically attacked foreign-born black Africans, chased them from their homes, looted their property, and demanded they return to their countries of birth. Nationwide the attacks left 62 people dead, many more injured, and up to one-hundred thousand displaced from their homes (Misago et al. 2010). The majority of the violence, including more than half of the “most serious” incidents, took place in Gauteng (Bekker et al. 2009).

Xenophobic antagonism calmed down after May 2008 but it did not disappear. The most significant moment of resurgence occurred in 2010, when South Africa hosted the World Cup soccer tournament. As the tournament emerged rumors began to spread about another round of xenophobic violence, to begin at the end of the tournament. As one man explained to an interviewer from the UK *Guardian*: “Did you see the war here [in 2008] ma’am?..It’s going to be

more than that. Its going to be more than that...There's going to be plenty war." Fear rippled throughout noncitizen communities. Many fled their homes in anticipation, and escaping families lined up along the freeways. There were scattered incidents of violence against noncitizens in Gauteng, but the anticipated wave of attacks never materialized. The episode nonetheless confirmed the continuing salience of Membership Exclusion politics.

The increased visibility of xenophobic antagonism unleashed a flurry of academic and popular debate over its causes. Exactly why the violence exploded in 2008 and threatened to re-emerge in 2010 remains largely unanswered, and the root causes were likely complex and varied. Xenophobic violence was intensely local. The 2008 attacks revolved around the immediate circumstances of local areas, including both the specific conditions of poverty and local power dynamics. They did not necessarily take place in the poorest communities, though they did occur in areas with high levels of economic deprivation. Evidence suggests that the attacks occurred in wards with high proportions of men, the presence of a group with intermediate income, and a high proportion of people living in informal housing (Fauvelle-Aymar and Segatti 2011). Evidence also suggests that instances of xenophobic violence were often led by local leaders and business people seeking to bolster their influence and affluence, but that they also seized upon popular frustrations and drew widespread support (Misago et al. 2010). In these respects the xenophobic attacks were quite similar to local community protests around service delivery. The main difference between them was the target: whereas community protests targeted holders of local political power, xenophobic antagonism targeted the foreign-born. But in practice the two were not mutually exclusive, and indeed, episodes of community protest often included or devolved into episodes of xenophobic antagonism (von Holdt 2011; Alexander 2010:35).

Xenophobic Orientations

As with immigrant rights struggles in California, collective xenophobic violence in Gauteng reflected a struggle over who should be treated as members of the political community. The 2008 attacks asserted that poor citizens should be recognized as legitimate members of the political community. Noncitizens, on the other hand, were to be treated as non-members, and thus expelled from the national territory. These dynamics were deeply entangled with issues of resource distribution and daily survival. By denying noncitizens recognition as legitimate members of the political community, the xenophobic attacks sought to affirm that they were not entitled to the pool of national resources. While xenophobic struggles were most directly about issues of citizenship, they were underpinned by a desire to remove noncitizens from the competition over scarce resources.

One of the main factors leading to hostile attitudes towards noncitizens was the belief that they take away resources from poor citizens. Competition for employment, in particular, was one of the main complaints. On the 2006 survey, 67 percent of South Africans responded that foreign nationals "use up resources," and 62 percent responded that they "take jobs." Over one-third claimed to personally know someone who had lost their job to a foreign national (SAMP 2008:30,33). Underpinning these figures was a common belief that citizens were more deserving of jobs than their noncitizen counterparts. As one man put it, "every foreigner who is employed has robbed a South African of that job" (Everatt 2009), suggesting that noncitizens were taking jobs that they were not entitled to. For many poor citizens the reason why

noncitizens were able to secure jobs was because they were willing to work for lower wages. This sentiment was articulated by two township residents:

“They don’t these people because they are taking people’s jobs...these people are cheap labors...I work for R150 per day, these people accept R8 per day. I am South African I won’t accept that.” (Interview 08.31.2010).

“Yes they do [take our jobs], the very same jobs we are talking about...They don’t even expect the basic amount. Whatever they get is okay with them.” (Interview 09.2.2010).

Perhaps equally as important as “stealing jobs” was the belief that foreign-born residents were using up housing. One resident spoke frankly about how he was able to appropriate housing for himself through the xenophobic attacks: “If they come back, where would they stay?...Lets us talk about myself; I did not have a space to stay. I used to sleep in a car. Now I have my own house. The problem is very simple; there is no more space for them” (Misago et al. 2010:62). Others who were not as fortunate nonetheless expressed similar statements in the wake of the 2008 attacks:

“They are back but it’s not nice to have them here again. They have RDP house and we don’t have. It’s like we are helping them; we vote, they get anything they want and we get nothing” (Misago et al. 2010:82).

“Councilors are looking at xenophobia, but people want to know how do foreigners get houses allocated to them, prior to the locals? This is why the locals are so upset” (Everatt 2009).

Condemning the fact that “foreigners” had obtained houses while voting citizens were left without them, these residents expressed a common sentiment that citizens should be provided with social protection before noncitizens. One woman explained how this idea played out in the daily life of the community through the example of communal water taps. She explained how citizens and noncitizens waited together in the same line for water, but that the citizens in line were frustrated with having to wait while noncitizens retrieved their water: “They make some offensive remarks that foreigners do not have IDs and they are getting free water like us. They simply will not be behind foreign women. They want to jump the line” (Misago et al. 2009:97). This dynamic indicates that there was more to xenophobic violence than simply poverty. It was also about who belongs in the political community and who is entitled to reap the benefits associated with that community. But conditions of poverty – exemplified in this example by residents' reliance on communal water taps, rather than water taps within their own homes – may nonetheless exacerbate the tensions. As one resident put it: “We don't have houses, we don't have jobs, we don't have anything...So, we are fighting over the little we have” (Unnamed 2008b).

Xenophobic attacks were oriented towards noncitizens, and therefore did not target the state directly. But the state was a consistent reference point. In justifying and explaining the attacks, citizens alluded to the responsibilities and failures of the state, drawing a clear link to economic struggles around service delivery. The clearest example of this dynamic regarded the distribution of housing. As we saw in the previous chapter, housing issues lay at the center of community struggles, with the demand that the state build housing for citizens in their current

location. Xenophobic attacks were the flip side of those protests. Evidence suggests that housing issues were central to xenophobic violence, with residents condemning the fact that noncitizens were being placed in houses for which citizens were waiting (Nieftagodien 2008; Misago et al. 2010). This complaint was entangled with the widespread concern about local government corruption. A common claim was that noncitizens were living in state-built RDP houses, illegally sold to them by corrupt political officials, while South African citizens continued to wait and live in shacks. As with community protests for service delivery, residents thus highlighted the role of local state officials when explaining the 2008 attacks:

“Government officials cause corruption, especially those from the housing department. They give RDP houses to people who pay bribery and leave *rightful owners* of RDP houses who applied a long time ago without houses....This what causes all this fighting between South Africans and foreigners.” (Everatt 2009:17, emphasis added).

“RDP houses...you see, I cannot comment much on that, that is a government problem because these officials are the ones who sell these houses to foreigners. So that is a problem which the government needs to resolve” (Misago et al. 2009:101).

These explanations revealed a consistent logic between Collective Consumption politics and Membership Exclusion politics. The former were directed at local political officials, while the latter were directed at noncitizens. But both sets of struggles focused on protecting poor citizens through state-provided resources. They also converged on the understanding that the state has a moral duty to take care of South African citizens. For the specific case of housing, economic struggles were directed at local political officials and demanded state-built housing, while citizenship struggles were directed at noncitizens and demanded their exclusion from that housing.

The links between economic struggles and citizenship struggles were further highlighted by the reactions of poor citizens to the humanitarian aid that was offered to noncitizens following the 2008 xenophobic attacks. As one woman bemoaned, “government would not offer us any help even if we approached them for help” (Everatt 2009:17). Poor citizens thus expressed frustration with the state for providing aid to noncitizens while they were also in need (Everatt 2009:17,19):

“Our government is too accommodating when it comes to foreigners...we are amazed to see government providing free food for foreigners when we are also hungry but are not catered for. Government provides foreigners with free maize meal but fails to do the same for us so that we can be able to feed our children. Our children go to bed on empty stomachs on some days.”

“Unemployed citizens don’t have food to eat but foreigners are sure that they are going to get three meals a day; they are provided with breakfast, lunch and supper whereas we have to struggle on our own to feed our families. Government is using the taxpayers’ money to feed foreigners at the expense of its people.”

These observations underscored the orientation of precarious politics in Gauteng towards protection. Not only did they emphasize the responsibility of the state in protecting the poor, but they established a hierarchy that prioritized citizens over noncitizens. Both commentaries

were critical of the state for protecting noncitizens when citizens were being left unprotected from poverty and hunger in particular.

This hierarchy of priority was central to citizenship struggles in Gauteng. Discussing the impending return of xenophobic antagonism in 2010, one man captured this hierarchy by using house-cleaning as a metaphor for the broader political community: “I think the SA government should start by tidying inside the house before cleaning outside. If they start with us we'll then share with the outsiders. We'll decide what we give them and where they can stay. But it must start at home. Tidy your house first. Who sweeps the yard and forgets to tidy the house?” (Spitz 2010). As with the women who did not want to wait behind noncitizens at the communal water tap, or those who were frustrated with noncitizens living in RDP houses, he argued that citizens should be taken care of before noncitizens. But the house-cleaning metaphor also placed poor citizens within a complex web of political relations. Not only does it identify the government as the entity responsible for ensuring the well-being of citizens, it also suggests that citizens would be responsible for taking care of noncitizens. If in the first instance there was an opposition between the state and its citizens, in the second instance the state and its citizenry were united and separated from noncitizens. On the surface these positions appear to be contradictory, but the house-cleaning metaphor points to their logical coherence, with poor citizens simultaneously understood as beneficiaries and representatives of the state.

Poor citizens' identification with the state underpinned xenophobic antagonism. On one hand the attacks reinforced state practices and discourses, which treated noncitizens as a threat to the national community. On the other hand they compensated for the failure of the state to protect the nation and its citizens from foreigners, who were using up scarce resources. The xenophobic attacks may thus be understood as an appropriation of state power by poor citizens for the purposes of immigration enforcement (Landau 2010). This was underscored by justifications of the 2008 attacks:

“We are not trying to kill anyone but rather solving the problems of our own country. The government is not doing anything about this, so I support what the mob is doing to get rid of foreigners in our country” (Landau 2010:228)

“The government is now pampering them and taking care of them nicely, as long as the foreigners are here we will always have unemployment and poverty here in South Africa. There was no poverty and unemployment in South Africa before the influx of foreigners...there is too much of them now. If the government does not do something people will see what to do to solve the problem because it means it's not the government problem it is our problem” (Misago et al. 2010:58).

Poor citizens thus adopted the role of the state, guarding the national border for their own protection. While they held the state responsible for keeping out noncitizens, if the state failed to do so they would take on the responsibility because they were the ones being affected. In short, citizenship struggles were about poor citizens handling immigration enforcement on their own, compensating for what they viewed as state failure.

Between Citizenship and Solidarity

This analysis suggests that poor citizens in Gauteng confronted a decision between two

potential sources of protection and survival: waging economic struggles against the state for better public services, or waging citizenship struggles against noncitizens for their exclusion from the political community. One resident's explanation of the 2008 xenophobic attacks conveyed the overwhelming nature of the decision: "Government is fighting against us, employers are fighting against us, and foreigners are fighting against us, that is why we fight against them because they are nearer; they don't support us in our struggle" (Human Sciences Research Council 2008:32). This explanation suggested that poor citizens targeted noncitizens because they were the closest or most convenient target. But it also goes beyond the convenience explanation. In particular it suggests that noncitizens were treated as antagonists, rather than community members, because they did not join poor citizens in their struggles for better public services. The unstated implication of this analysis, however, was the possibility of solidarity between citizens and noncitizens.

In 2008 there were instances of resistance to the xenophobic attacks. For example, in certain areas of Alexandra and Tembisa townships, residents successfully confronted attackers and prevented them from looting and beating noncitizens. These were important and potentially life-saving acts. Yet the evidence suggests that they were largely guided by self-protection instincts, as opposed to principled solidarity. Residents worried that attackers would mistake citizens for noncitizens and attack them by mistake, or that the burning of noncitizens' shacks would accidentally spread to their own shacks (Misago 2012:102-103). In a similar vein, for some residents the question of xenophobia was not about principles of solidarity, but whether the state would deliver on its promise to provide for poor citizens. They warned that xenophobia would return if the state did not significantly improve their material conditions:

"If the government continues to neglect us the way it has always done, this unfortunate incident [xenophobic attacks] might recur" (Misago et al. 2010:113).

"People have been stopped from attacking foreigners. They are relaxing and waiting to see what the government is going to do to address their problems. If government does not address the grievances of South Africans, people are going to resort to violence. (Everatt 2009:22)

These warnings point to a sequence of struggle that begins with economic struggles and then continues towards citizenship struggles. They suggest that the primary focus is on pressuring the state, and only once that effort fails do poor citizens turn to struggles against their noncitizen neighbors. One implication of this sequence, drawn out in the above statements, was that neglect by the state left poor citizens with no choice but to protect themselves by attacking noncitizens. This suggests that if the state were more responsive, poor citizens would not need or want to embrace a xenophobic stance.

This analysis further highlights the consistency between economic struggles and citizenship struggles in Gauteng. For some residents they were not in fact alternatives, but rather reinforcing forms of protest. In this view the xenophobic attacks were not only about doing the job of the state and expelling foreigners. They were also about highlighting the plight of poor citizens so that the state took notice. One resident put it simply: "Attacking foreigners sends a clear message to this government that we are serious. This government cares more about foreigners than us" (Langa 2011:65). This view underscores important similarities between

community protests and xenophobic attacks, even if they were quite different. Not only did they assert the privilege of poor citizens as national insiders, but they used physical spectacle to demand recognition. This parallel was made clear by a participant in the 2008 attacks, whose justification of the attacks was remarkably similar to the justifications used for community protests around service delivery: “Government is not thinking on our behalf. Government understands us only when we use violence” (Misago et al. 2010:118).

Principled acts of solidarity between poor citizens and noncitizens were rare, but they did occur. The most important anti-xenophobia struggles were waged by the Anti-Privatization Forum. Instead of promoting xenophobia as a way to bolster struggles around service delivery, the APF called for solidarity with noncitizens to build a broader struggle. In 2007 the organization condemned police harassment and detention of “illegal” migrants. It also called for the recognition of noncitizens as members of the community, who deserve to be treated with dignity and protected by the state: “It is the right of anyone living/residing in South Africa to be protected and treated with dignity by the Police Services and all levels of government” (APF 2007). In May 2008 the APF spearheaded the formation of the Coalition Against Xenophobia, an alliance built to develop an organized response to the brutal attacks. The primary result of this effort was a 5,000-person march through the streets of Johannesburg condemning the violence against noncitizens. The coalition did follow-up this event with a second march against the notoriously brutal Lindela detention center, though it did not remain a visible political force beyond 2008. This partially reflected the decline of the APF. Two years later the anti-xenophobia message was briefly carried by a newly emergent coalition named the Conference of the Democratic Left (later changed to the Democratic Left Front). With the threat of xenophobic violence after the World Cup, the coalition gathered activists from the townships around Johannesburg for a similar but much smaller march. Alongside opposition to South Africa's Olympic bid and state repression of political activists, the march flyer exclaimed: “No to Xenophobic Violence! WE SAY: WE ARE ONE CONTINENT, ONE PEOPLE!” (Field notes 07.11.2010).

These examples of solidarity with noncitizens pointed to tension around the growing politics of Membership Exclusion. But they were relatively rare. Indeed, even the APF efforts to oppose xenophobia revealed an underlying symbiosis between Collective Consumption politics and Membership Exclusion politics. While the organization as a whole was able to maintain a clear anti-xenophobic message, within the ranks there was more ambivalence. This was partially due to the fact that within the APF, activists drew a connection between improvement in service delivery and the expulsion of foreigners. This connection was illustrated by an APF activist, who reflected on the response to the xenophobic attacks in 2008:

“2008 did bring to the fore quite a disturbing level of xenophobia among, articulated by members of the APF...People would say they are not xenophobic, but that foreigners must just go...There is a sense in the APF that the notion of citizenship is tied to struggle. There seems to be a sense that if you struggle to defend your right to water, for instance, that is circumscribed by the fact that you are South African and that those rights are due to you, you know why else be petitioning your city to be fighting those services, so you can like take direct action and break the law, but only ever to reaffirm your rights to the fruits of citizenship. There is [a] moral sense of what citizenship entitles you to...there is a sense in

which petitioning the state to provide services has circumscribed the position that the organization can take to an exclusive and nationally circumscribed level.” (South African History Archive, Collection 3290, File D2.1.6, February 15, 2010).

This commentary captured two central aspects of precarious politics in Gauteng. First, it argued that economic struggles were grounded in notions of entitlement, and in particular that South African citizens have a moral right or entitlement to public goods and services. This placed struggles for livelihood and survival within a national context, such that the “rights to the fruits of citizenship” were “exclusive and nationally circumscribed.” Second, it follows from these arguments that non-nationals were not entitled to claim public goods. Struggles against the state for better delivery were therefore entirely consistent with the removal of noncitizens, or claims that “foreigners must just go.” In short, economic struggles and citizenship struggles went hand-in-hand.

Conclusion

Citizenship struggles were central to precarious politics in both California and Gauteng. Despite their differences, in both cases these struggles represented a shift in the terrain of struggle from the economy to the national political community. Citizenship struggles may have reinforced economic struggles, but official membership status was also an independent object of struggle in its own right. Perhaps even more than with economic struggles, recognition and a sense of belonging were central to citizenship struggles. Both low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizens in Gauteng sought recognition as legitimate and deserving members of the political community.

If precarious politics in both places shared these basic features, however, the shift to citizenship struggles nonetheless marked a crucial divergence. Whereas precarious politics in California became broad and inclusive, precarious politics in Gauteng became narrow and exclusive. The former reflected the orientation of struggles towards participation, which required expanding the political community to incorporate outsiders. The latter reflected instead the orientation of struggles towards protection, which could be achieved by contracting the political community to prevent the incorporation of outsiders.

5. LABOR STRUGGLES

The expansion of the precarious working class and the declining significance of unions were opposite sides of the same coin. Both stemmed from the same set of factors: capital's increased mobility and political influence, the expansion and integration of the global workforce, the rise of flexible and informal work regimes, workers' diminished structural power, and more generally, workers' decreased capacity to wield economic leverage through collective organization at the point of production. One challenge for unions was to devise strategies to turn the insecure and vulnerable segments of the working class into unionized workers. Most of the recent scholarship on union revitalization focuses on this question. But the rise of precarious politics in California and Gauteng created a new dynamic, forcing unions to decide how they would respond to working class struggles outside of their ranks. How would the “old” working class relate to the “new” working class? Would they embrace precarious politics as part of a broader labor movement, or would they reject precarious politics as a separate political force?

Some have suggested that aligning with broader struggles will be central if unions want to retain influence in the current political and economic climate. One of the most forceful statements of this position is Dan Clawson's *The Next Upsurge: Labor and the New Social Movements*, which argues for a “fusion” of unions and non-labor social movements. Lamenting the failure of unions to build connections with the movements of 1960s, which bred the “ossification and insularity of labor” (see also Katznelson 1981; Lichtenstein 2002:185-187), Clawson views this fusion as key to rebuilding labor in the contemporary period. The notion of labor-movement fusion is also often considered an important component of “social movement unionism” (SMU), which has become an especially popular notion in North America. Similar to Clawson's proposal, SMU refers to unions acting more like a social movement than a rigid bureaucracy (Fantasia and Voss 2004; Camfield 2011; Fairbrother 2008).

The recent celebration of SMU within the heart of advanced capitalism represents the revival of a concept that originated under authoritarian regimes on the periphery (Seidman 2011). During the 1980s, unions in countries such as South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, and Philippines became fused with broader struggles for democratization and social citizenship (Webster 2008; Seidman 1994; Scipes 1992). They “drew on the language of citizenship and democratic rights” by “articulating claims for inclusion...[that] linked workers' demands for rights at work to communities' demands for expanded services and rights” (Seidman 2011). For some scholars, SMU was a response to specific political and economic conditions that are unlikely to be replicated (Webster 2008; von Holdt 2002). But these examples nonetheless shed light on the question of how unions might relate to contemporary precarious politics, which are similarly organized around broader struggles that extend beyond the workplace.

What were the conditions that led to these early examples of union-community alliance? Drawing from a comparison of South Africa and Brazil, Seidman (1994) argues that such alliances were produced by the particular conditions of industrialization under authoritarian rule.

Industrialization was crucial because it gave workers structural power, thus enabling the formation of vibrant new unions. It also went hand-in-hand with urbanization, which fed the generation of collective worker identities rooted in the urban experience. Authoritarian rule solidified the link between work and community because repressive state polices “simultaneously reduced wages and denied services” (203). The link was particularly clear in South Africa, where racial exclusion by the Apartheid state served to marginalize nonwhites both at work and in the community.

On one hand, these examples suggest that union-community alliances emerge when unions are weak or in need of support. While unions in South Africa and Brazil were growing due to workers' economic leverage, at the same time their growth and workplace power was undermined by state repression and collusion with employers. This vulnerability created an incentive for unions to broaden their conception of labor struggle in order to gain political leverage. On the other hand, the examples suggest that unions will join broader struggles when they appear to be relevant. As Barchiesi and Kenny (2008) argue for the South Africa case, union-community alliances often stemmed from union members' articulation of identities and demands that extended beyond the workplace. With the usual struggles around wages and working conditions insufficiently speaking to the precariousness of urban-industrial life under authoritarian rule, workers began to develop struggles around housing and rent, transportation, and public services. At the same time the community alliances enabled unions to build a broader democratization struggle against the authoritarian state, which underpinned despotic working conditions and poverty wages. In this sense community struggles could also help unions to bolster their power at the workplace.

To what extent do these conditions apply to the contemporary period? A key difference is that most unions today operate in a democratic climate. This erodes a key basis for broader union struggles, as the authoritarian state encouraged unions to search for broader support and also created a common enemy or target. Though very different from authoritarian regimes due to their commitment to formal democracy, some scholars have suggested that “neoliberal” states play a similar role because they render traditional unionism ineffective (Clawson 2008; Robinson 2000). Clawson (2008), for example, argues that the thinning of the state requires unions to recruit broader community support for organizing and contract campaigns, which in turn requires unions to embrace a broader political agenda (see also Fine 2005). Capital-friendly state policies and practices are further compounded by the widespread implementation of casual and informal employment relations, which tend to undermine union organizing. If workers' structural power provided leverage for broader labor struggles under authoritarian rule, declining structural power in the contemporary period may create further incentive for unions to join those struggles in order to gain leverage.

The current global political economy may, therefore, create the conditions for a broader reaching unionism. But whether unions choose to embrace precarious politics as part of a broader labor movement will depend on how they perceive both their own strength and the relevance of precarious politics. As the primary site of union organization, workplace power is particularly important on both counts. The weaker unions are in terms of workplace organization, the more likely they will be to embrace broader struggles. Likewise, the more directly precarious politics relate to workplace power, the more likely unions may be to view

them as relevant. But the state is also extremely important. Just as a labor-hostile state may undermine union power at the workplace, unions may embrace precarious politics – which commonly target the state – in order to increase their political influence.

Given the legacies of unionism in each place – detachment from broader struggles in the United States, and fusion with them in South Africa – we would expect unions to reject precarious politics in California and embrace them in Gauteng. But unions in both places underwent major changes in the late 20th century, reorienting their struggles. In California the labor-hostile state and steady decline in union density reoriented unions towards an emphasis on organizing noncitizen workers. Unions thus came to understand the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers as important for their own revitalization. In Gauteng, democratization and labor's close partnership with the new ruling party instead reoriented unions towards policy and the state. In some instances this orientation fueled tension with social movements, but more generally it meant that unions could address the needs of poor citizens by using their own political leverage, creating distance from community struggles.

Despite these different responses to precarious politics, however, labor struggles in both places tended to mirror and reinforce their political orientation. Labor struggles in California were oriented towards participation, promoting the incorporation of noncitizen workers in the economy and society. Not only did unions increasingly defend noncitizen worker organizations outside of unions, but they joined in broader struggles for immigrant rights. Labor struggles in Gauteng were more oriented towards protection, defending organized workers against the growing leverage of capital. Unions did strongly oppose the xenophobic attacks. But having grown distant community struggles, they were ill-prepared to help build an alternative politics that moved in a more inclusive direction.

California: Fusion With Precarious Politics

Mirroring trends at the national level, organized labor in postwar California fit the prototype of "business unionism." Unions had developed into large bureaucratic institutions, and focused their energy on bargaining with employers and providing services to rank-and-file union members. Little attention or resources were devoted to organizing or building alliances with grassroots movements (Fantasia and Voss 2004; Lichtenstein 2002). As part of this inward-looking approach, unions maintained a hostile stance towards noncitizen workers, particularly the undocumented. During the 1970s and early 1980s unions promoted employer sanctions legislation, which was designed to penalize employers for hiring undocumented workers. This provision was written into law in 1986 as part of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). By the 2000s this dynamic had shifted dramatically. Rather than trying to keep undocumented workers out of the labor market, unions were now joining their struggles for legal status and labor protections. To understand this fusion of labor and precarious politics, we must begin by examining changes internal to unions as they responded to their growing weakness.

Organizing, Noncitizens, and Communities

With union density in decline and no sign of relief from the state-backed employer offensive, by

the early 1990s American unions were in crisis. This crisis created space for internal changes. In 1991 Stephen Lerner of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) remarked, “our continued inability to organize...threatens every aspect of the labor movement.” He warned that declining union density in the private sector, which could drop to as low as 5 percent by 2000, would diminish unions' ability “to improve wages and benefits for our members...to move labor's larger social and legislative agenda...to organize and protect public sector workers.” Low union density continued to be a crucial backdrop for unions throughout the 1990s and 2000s. As one union official put it simply, “You can't ignore the decline in union density. In everything we do we have to respond to that” (Interview 10.24.2012).

By the early 1990s a new organizing culture, focused on adding new members as the source of revitalization, had begun to emerge. A key moment was the SEIU Justice for Janitors (JfJ) campaign, which moved to Los Angeles in 1988 after limited success in Denver. SEIU Local 399 used a variety of innovative tactics to organize the largely noncitizen janitorial workforce, including strategic research on the financial structure of the industry, public shaming campaigns, direct actions of civil disobedience, and building support from the broader community. After the janitors faced brutal police repression during a march in Century City in June 1990, sparking public outrage, their employers finally signed a union contract ensuring better wages and working conditions. Subsequent successes followed, and by the mid-1990s roughly 90 percent of Los Angeles janitors were unionized (Silverstein and Meyer 1995). But the JfJ campaign in Century City was just one among a series of organizing successes in California during the early 1990s. Other notable victories included the workers at American Racing Equipment, who launched a wildcat strike and joined the International Association of Machinists, and drywall workers, who launched a massive strike across southern California and eventually joined the Carpenters union.

These victories demonstrated that it was possible to organize low-wage workers in some of the most precarious sectors of the economy, where employment had been reorganized around subcontracting and temporary jobs. At its convention in 1996 the California Labor Federation (CLF) celebrated and promoted the emergence of the new organizing culture:

“The efforts of workers to join unions have mushroomed in California in the last few years. Many unions have given a new and greater priority to these efforts, and increased the percentage of their budgets spent on organizing. Local officers and active members have formed organizing committees, and are creating a new culture of organizing among many affiliates. The Federation supports these efforts, and urges our affiliates to increase them” (CLF 1996:67).

The victories of the early 1990s were also significant because they were fueled by noncitizen workers. Prior to these successes the organized labor movement had largely assumed that noncitizen workers were “unorganizable,” but the impressive victories shattered that myth (Milkman 2006:126-144). As a former SEIU staff member recalls, “the early 1990s represented a huge turning point with regard to successful large scale immigrant worker organizing campaigns here in Los Angeles...[and they] had a huge impact nationally in breaking the myth that somehow immigrant workers couldn't be organized” (Interview 05.24.2012). Not only did the CLF celebrate the new organizing culture in 1996, it also celebrated the importance of noncitizen

workers to that culture:

“Thousands of immigrant workers, both with and without documents, have mounted large and effective campaigns to organize into unions in California in the last few years, including among others, janitors, hotel and restaurant workers, carpenters, farm workers, machinists, manufacturing and food processing workers, garment workers and health care workers. These efforts have created new unions, and strengthened and revived many others. All labor in California has benefited as a result” (CLF 1996:78).

The organizing turn received new energy when the “New Voice” slate was thrust to the head of the national AFL-CIO, with John Sweeney of the SEIU as President. The New Voice slate prioritized organizing and was supported by those unions with the most active organizing programs. The AFL-CIO had created an Organizing Institute for activist organizers in 1989, but after 1995 it was moved into a new Organizing Department and its budget was increased. The AFL-CIO also took new interest in promoting organizing throughout its affiliates. It challenged unions to devote at least 30 percent of their budgets to organizing, and released a blueprint in 1996 titled, "Changing to Organize, Organizing to Change" (Hurd 2006; Fantasia and Voss 2004:132-133).

Only a handful of national unions – particularly SEIU, UNITE, and HERE – responded positively to the organizing challenge, and within these national unions only some local unions actually transformed their practices (Bronfenbrenner and Hickey 2004; Voss and Sherman 2000). But these three unions were particularly prominent in California, which in turn became home to some of the most active organizing efforts. The most dramatic victories resulted from SEIU efforts to organize home health care workers, which began to pay off in the middle of the 1990s with successful unionization drives in a number of counties. The big breakthrough came in 1999 when 74,000 home care workers were unionized in Los Angeles, marking the country's largest organizing victory since the 1930s (Greenhouse 1999). Many of the workers were noncitizens.

These successes provided a beacon of hope in an otherwise bleak climate for organized labor. The California successes were particularly notable because they began to put a halt to the rapid decline in union density. In 2002 the CLF remarked enthusiastically, “California unions are growing again” (CLF 2002:62). As union density continued to fall in the rest of the country, between 1995 and 2010 it held steady in California. While not all California unions experienced revitalization, the limited improvements made California a model for revitalization at the national level (Milkman 2006). The fact that noncitizen workers had been so central to organizing efforts secured their central position in plans for labor's revitalization. This was partially due to the fact that noncitizens dominated key niches within the California labor market. As the CLF (2004) put it, “Without immigrant labor, California's economy would grind to a halt...They are central to our state's economy and the labor movement” (69). But it was more than just the numerical prevalence of noncitizen workers that made them a source of hope for organized labor. It was also the fact that they seemed to be more amenable to organizing. This was made clear by a CLF resolution in 2002:

“Moreover, immigrants are the future of the labor movement. Immigrant workers have been at the forefront of organizing campaigns in recent years...In both surveys and on-the-ground experience, immigrants have proven to be more prouion, more militant, more willing to

strike and generally more pro-labor than native-born workers” (CLF 2002:73).

This statement demonstrates just how far labor had come. If in the mid-1980s unions were focused on how to keep undocumented workers out of the workplace, by the early 2000s they understood organizing those workers to be a key part of their revitalization strategy. Part of this strategy involved the power associated with the broader noncitizen community. By 1998 the CLF was convinced that alliances with noncitizen communities were essential to overcoming the labor-hostile political climate: "Only labor-community cooperation can produce the economic and political leverage necessary to beat those employers who are willing to do anything in their power to remain 'union-free'...A political alliance between California's labor movement and its immigrant and minority communities can provide the base for ending the era of right-wing initiatives and the politicians who have sought to profit by them" (CLF 1998:81, 92).

This alliance was most visible in Los Angeles, where noncitizen labor organizing was most prevalent, and where the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (LACFL) was actively reaching out to the Latino noncitizen community (Frank and Wong 2004). A key moment was the three week SEIU janitor's strike in April 2000. Ten years after the initial JfJ victory in 1990, the janitors were back on strike, this time for a new contract with better wages and conditions. One activist argued that this strike represented a turning point, as it “really opened up the eyes of the labor movement to the power” of building alliances with noncitizen communities:

"I don't think the janitor's would have been able to do that by themselves. They needed that meaningful community alliance to win. They reached out to groups that nobody's ever reached out to. I was at CHIRLA [Coalition of Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles], they reached out to us, and we embraced them right away because you know a lot of day laborers could identify with them, and they were low wage workers trying to – and I think that became the event that began to change the landscape..." (Interview 05.16.2012).

Events such as this demonstrated that building a broader alliance with noncitizens could significantly strengthen labor's power. As Meyerson (2000) noted at the time, the workers managed to do what only a handful of unions had been able to do in the United States in the previous quarter-century: “The janitors won their strike.”

Unions and Immigrant Rights

These dynamics fueled, and to some extent reflected, labor's growing involvement in the emerging immigrant rights movement. With unions increasingly relying on noncitizen workers and communities to rebuild workplace strength, supporting immigrant rights was compatible with labor's broader agenda. It was also a way for unions to regain leverage with respect to the state.

The immigrant rights movement was in an embryonic stage when unions first began to organize noncitizen workers in the early 1990s. Proposition 187 was a crucial catalyst, thrusting pro-immigrant organizations into the political arena to defend against the attack. Organized labor joined the opposition. Some unions, including locals affiliated with SEIU and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU, later UNITE), as well as the AFL-CIO affiliated California Immigrant Workers Association, helped organize the historic October 16th march of 100,000 through downtown Los Angeles. But the labor bureaucracy remained mixed on

immigration policy despite opposition to 187. Both the SEIU and the CLF joined the more conservative Taxpayers United Against 187, which viewed “illegal immigration” as a problem but argued 187 was not the appropriate solution (HoSang 2010:182; Perea 1997:127). The CLF resolved: “Proposition 187 does not address the real problems with immigration. It is a sham solution that offers bogus savings, confuses and divides the public, inflames racial conflict, and promises only to make matters worse” (CLF 1994:63). Similar to other Taxpayers Against 187 affiliates, the CLF continued to support border enforcement to crack down on unauthorized migration.

This dynamic began to shift in the second half of the 1990s as pro-immigrant activists became more active within organized labor. Miguel Contreras, a former UFW organizer who became head of the LACFL in 1995, explained the changes happening around him: “Within a period of a few years, you had new leadership of the AFL-CIO, new leadership of SEIU, new leadership of HERE...In locals in Los Angeles, you had new leadership in a lot of unions too. You had the janitors organizing. You had homecare organizing. And so I think its a natural evolution that's happening, but we've [LACFL] been the convening point of these different operations” (Frank and Wong 2004:158). With the help of SEIU and HERE activists, the LACFL played a key role in building ties between organized labor and noncitizen communities, particularly through grassroots naturalization, voter registration, and voter turnout campaigns. The scare of Proposition 187 had sparked an unprecedented wave of naturalizations, and thus new eligible voters. Labor's outreach efforts resulted in a number of pro-labor and pro-immigrant electoral victories, re-balancing the political landscape in California (Frank and Wong 2004).

As outreach to noncitizen workers was picking up steam, organizers began to highlight the contradiction between labor's official policies on immigration and their emphasis on organizing noncitizen workers. By the late 1990s the employer sanctions law that unions had lobbied for in the 1980s had become a major impediment to organizing efforts. With sanctions rarely enforced, the law was now a tool that employers could use to dismiss workers and crush organizing drives (Hamlin 2008; Brownell 2009). The connection between workers' legal status and employers' union-busting tactics meant that immigrant rights issues were central to union efforts to rebuild workplace power. Beginning in the mid-1990s, unions increasingly supported noncitizens in their right to work, and to organize without retaliation based on their legal status. The CLF came out against employer sanctions in 1994, and in 1998 condemned the involvement of immigration officials in labor-related activities: “During organizing drives, strikes and other periods of union activity, the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] must not intervene to conduct raids, document checks or other acts which make it impossible for workers to exercise their union rights” (CLF 1998:92).

Meanwhile in northern California a group of organizers from various unions formed the Labor Immigrant Organizing Network (LION). As one activist described the effort, “It was focused both on immigrant rights and labor organizing from the beginning...this was, from the get, squarely aimed at immigrant workers” (Interview 07.05.2012). The network initially served as a mutual-aid association, where unions would provide support for picket lines in response to undocumented workers being fired. But LION's lasting legacy was the formulation of a resolution for a new labor policy on immigration, which it circulated to central labor councils across California and the country (Hamlin 2008). The resolution called for abolishing employer

sanctions and legalizing undocumented workers, situating immigrant rights within labor's broader political agenda.

Labor's tipping point was in 1999 and 2000. It began with the national AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles, where the LION resolution sparked a heated debate. The location of the convention in southern California, where the most dynamic union organizing amongst noncitizen workers had taken place, was crucial. One activist explained the power of the newly organized workers:

“When the convention opened up we helped to organize a march with all of the recently organized workers in major campaigns in Los Angeles. So you had hundreds of hundreds of workers from the janitors, from the hotel workers, from the drywall campaign, the home care workers, all marching into the floor. Almost all immigrant workers. Workers of color, women workers. It was such a clear contrast between the old white male leadership of the AFL-CIO that was sitting up on stage versus hundreds of hundreds of workers of color, immigrants, women, that were marching in” (Interview 05.24.2012).

The vote was tabled at the convention, but in February 2000 the national AFL-CIO took its first major step towards promoting immigrant rights by adopting the LION resolution. In doing so the Executive Board came down squarely against employer sanctions and in favor of a new amnesty for undocumented residents. This was a landmark event for both labor and the immigrant rights movement, as one activist noted: “The change by the labor movement made a whole new discussion possible. Now we have a labor movement that's on the side of immigrants, rather than one bent on trying to stop immigration, as we had in 1986” (Bacon 2008:156-157).

Two months later the SEIU janitors strike demonstrated the power of the “new” labor movement: “But it was the janitors strike. And the fact that, it was all timed. There was no strategy it just happened that way. The same year that they had the strike was the same year that the AFL-CIO had the convention in L.A. And so there was a buzz” (Interview 05.16.2012). This momentum continued into the summer. After the major policy reversal the AFL-CIO held public hearings on immigration around the country. The Los Angeles hearing stood out from the rest, illustrating the leading role of California unionists in the struggle for immigrant rights. Showcasing “a new and formidable alliance among unions and religious and community groups” (Cleeland 2000), it turned into a massive rally of 20,000 for immigrant rights. Two-thousand day laborers and domestic workers affiliated with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles joined the rally. The central theme of the event was the demand for legalization of undocumented residents. Labor had merged into the immigrant rights movement.

Not only did the process of developing the pro-immigrant resolution solidify relationships between labor and noncitizen communities, but after it passed unions showed new interest in building community links and supporting immigrant rights (Hamlin 2008:311-313). The LACFL stepped up its community outreach activities, partnering with SEIU and HERE to form the Organization of Los Angeles Workers (OLAW). Working alongside immigrant rights organizations and Spanish-language media, OLAW trained union members and noncitizen activists for grassroots political campaigns, organized citizenship drives, and promoted voter

registration and turnout (Frank and Wong 2004:163-165). The Immigrant Worker Freedom Rides (IWFR) of Spring 2003 – modeled after the Freedom Rides of the civil rights era – spread this alliance around the country. Spearheaded by HERE, SEIU, and the AFL-CIO, the IWFR brought citizen and noncitizen workers to cities across the country to share their stories and promote immigrant rights. Los Angeles and San Francisco were two of the ten launching points nationwide, and had major sendoff rallies. The national AFL-CIO resolution endorsing the IWFR acknowledged that “the AFL-CIO has officially embraced the cause of immigrant workers in the United States,” and confirmed its commitment to active “campaigns for legislation to benefit immigrant workers and their families” (AFL-CIO 2002). Immigrant rights had become worker rights.

This symbiosis became particularly clear when the immigrant rights protests erupted in 2006. The proposed legislation that triggered the protests, HR4437 or the so-called Sensebrenner Bill, created a common enemy for unions and noncitizen communities, including organizations such as worker centers. An AFL-CIO representative explained:

“It was these series of things that were changing around us, bad policy that the government was adopting that really sort of moved movements together in a positive way...when Sensebrenner came it became very clear that our interests were very much aligned. The same piece of legislation that was going to require that NDLON check the status of workers was going to require that union halls check the status of workers, and that was a clear union-busting tool” (Interview 10.24.2012).

The proposed legislation was, therefore, not just a threat to noncitizen communities. It was also a threat to unions, and in particular their ability to organize noncitizen workers. Across the country local unions – particularly those affiliated with SEIU and HERE – played a key role in mobilizing for and coordinating the protests, alongside the Catholic Church, Spanish-language media, and smaller community-based organizations (Bloemraad, Voss, and Lee 2011). In Los Angeles, home to the two largest rallies on March 25 and May 1, unions provided key financial and organizational support, such as water and safety marshals (Moody 2007:211; Engeman 2010). Following the protests the CLF celebrated its merger with the blossoming movement: “The Federation is proud to stand with immigrant workers in support of legalization. We are energized by the powerful show of support in the streets for immigrant rights” (CLF 2008:84).

The connections between unions and the immigrant rights movement continued to build in the wake of the protests. SEIU and HERE joined immigrant rights groups in the We Are America coalition, which formed to lobby for federal immigration reform. The lobbying approach marked a turn towards more elite politics, though the coalition did launch community-based efforts around citizenship and voter registration. In many instances unions also supported and mobilized their constituencies for May Day protests, which became a constant feature of the political landscape after 2006. As an organizer with MIWON in Los Angeles explained: “I think we've done a good job in creating that bridge [between unions and noncitizen communities]. May Day is one of those. There's a couple of labor groups that have been very supportive because, its a base, you know” (Interview 05.14.2012). But unions also began to move beyond the immigrant rights framework to build partnerships with worker centers, with the promise of transforming organizing practices on the ground and incorporating that base into

the labor movement.

Unions and Worker Centers

When the immigrant rights protests erupted in 2006 there were few existing relationships between unions and worker centers. Unions had begun to reach out to noncitizen communities and support immigrant rights more generally, but they had not yet begun to collaborate on workplace organizing. Just a few months after the massive protests the national AFL-CIO took a major step towards changing this dynamic. Recognizing that “workers centers are, in fact, a vibrant and important part of today's labor movement,” the labor federation adopted a statement that encouraged unions to “connect to the worker center communities in a structured and meaningful way and to develop new methods in partnership with these centers in order to expose abuses and improve workplace standards in various industries to the benefit of all workers – whether union or non-union; whether immigrant or US born” (AFL-CIO 2006). As part of this resolution the AFL-CIO established a process whereby worker centers could obtain a Certificate of Affiliation, becoming official partners of local central labor councils or state federations. This was intended to “build ties” between unions and worker centers, on a voluntary basis, and “enable them to work cooperatively on issues of mutual concern” (AFL-CIO 2006).

Leading the way towards union-worker center collaboration, the national AFL-CIO established an official partnership with the National Day Labor Organizing Network (NDLON). For NDLON the partnership marked the recognition of day laborers as an important part of the workforce and the labor movement. As an NDLON representative remarked: “the AFL-CIO is a big voice in the [workers'] movement, and so of course its really important for the day laborer movement to have allies, like the AFL-CIO...because before nobody even knew what a day laborer was” (Interview 05.09.2012). For organized labor the partnership was another landmark event in its growing support for non-unionized, noncitizen workers. Years later a worker center activist reflected on how far unions had come:

“I remember in the late 1990s we couldn't even get meetings with [pro-immigrant labor leaders] to talk about day labor organizing. There was still that lack of understanding, awareness...when we had our first launching of NDLON, our first gathering [in 2001], it got the attention of everybody, even the construction trades, everybody [said] 'what the hell is this about? A day labor movement?'...ten years later Richard Trumka [AFL-CIO President] is giving us the keynote address” (Interview 05.16.2012).

In his keynote address to NDLON at its 10-year anniversary assembly in Los Angeles, Trumka reiterated his support for legalization and opposition to anti-immigrant policies, emphasizing that “immigration policy is work policy.” He noted that the AFL-CIO embraces noncitizen workers because they are “the future of America's labor movement” (AFL-CIO 2012a). The following day he traveled to Sacramento to address the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), the other major coalition of noncitizen worker organizations. The national AFL-CIO had established an official partnership with the NDWA in 2011. Trumka emphatically supported the domestic workers' struggle for a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, exclaiming, “You have the entire labor movement at your back!” He also thanked them: “On behalf of the 12 million members of the AFL-CIO, I want to say thank you because while we are here for you, you are

taking on a fight that will benefit the entire labor movement” (AFL-CIO 2012b). It is notable that both addresses took place in California, where organizing amongst day laborers and domestic workers began in the early 1990s, and where unions first began to embrace the struggles of noncitizen workers.

These examples illustrate a commitment from unions to support the struggles of noncitizen workers outside of unions. But close working partnerships were slow to develop on the ground. Many activists and organizers within the workers centers were unaware of the AFL-CIO affiliation program or how to join it. There were also lingering uncertainties or misgivings about unions, which were often understood as rigid or exclusive structures that are out of touch with the needs of noncitizen workers. As one activist expressed, “it wasn't like the AFL-CIO unanimously embraced immigrants...you still have a lot of deep-rooted anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism, sexism, its still in there” (Interview 05.16.2012). Indeed, worker centers largely emerged to fill a gap that was created by the inability of unions to organize the new workforce.

Worker center activists often understood their approach as significantly different from the approaches typically used by unions. For example, they viewed themselves as pursuing goals around social justice and horizontal decision-making, which were less visible within hierarchical union bureaucracies. They also viewed worker centers as part of a broader movement that extended beyond the domain of work. Perhaps most importantly, worker centers placed less emphasis on building economic leverage by organizing large numbers of workers. As one worker center activist explained, “the union model...its more about the numbers, its more about the statistics, can you get this contract...can we organize this shop. And for us it wasn't about that” (Interview 08.14.2012). For her this traditional union organizing approach contrasted sharply with the worker center model, which placed more emphasis on dynamics beyond the workplace:

“The worker's center I would say has a more holistic approach. So we saw workers as workers, but then they were also mothers, and they had children, and we did yoga and health care, and a lot more things, because we were trying to build something more. Of course the union's important, because you need rights at work, you need to have space to organize, that part of it. But we were looking at it like, building more of a social movement...You could say our vision for it was much bigger than just organizing a group of workers. It was trying to really have a place within the larger immigrant rights movement, the women's movement” (Interview 08.14.2012).

This suggests that in order to develop meaningful partnerships with worker centers, unions must be able to adapt to somewhat different approaches and organizing styles. But these alternative approaches were also what made worker centers attractive to unions, enabling them to reach workers that unions were unable to reach. At the same time, the union model offered a level of organizational stability that worker centers lacked. In contrast to workers centers, which rely on outside funding and typically have few long-term members, unions have substantial long-term membership and generate their own funds through membership dues (Milkman 2010). There was thus a basis for collaboration from both ends.

The shining example of union-worker center collaboration was the Community Labor

Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) Carwash Campaign in Los Angeles, which represented a partnership between traditional labor unions and a variety of worker centers and community organizations. The seeds of the campaign were planted in 1999, when 30 carwash workers approached CHIRLA about dealing with labor violations. Over time the carwash worker struggles developed into a typical worker center campaign, with workers calling on the state to enforce existing labor laws, most importantly by making good on unpaid wages. While these struggles often led to victories, as in many worker center struggles the gains were short-lived and violations re-emerged. Seeking a more durable solution, the workers and supporting community organizations, including worker centers, formed a partnership with the United Steelworkers union.

The result of the partnership was what the organizers called a “hybrid campaign” because it combined elements of both models. Similar to worker centers, the CLEAN Carwash Campaign emphasized leadership development, the use of popular education in organizing, and the alignment of the campaign with the needs and dynamics of the community. One example of this influence was the geographic shift of the campaign from the affluent West Los Angeles to lower incomes areas in South Central Los Angeles, where most of the workers lived. But the ultimate goal of the campaign was to establish collective bargaining agreements at the car washes. By 2012 the workers had successfully unionized three car washes. For one worker center activist the CLEAN campaign utilized the strengths of both sides: “Its a good combination. They [unions] have the resources and we [worker centers] have the experience, at least with the immigrant community. And understand the issues, and can communicate with them [noncitizen workers]” (Interview 05.14.2012). The campaign also marked an important victory for unions because it suggested new possibilities for growth. This was captured by an activist who had helped to launch the campaign in the early 2000s:

“If you look at the carwash campaign, it was a total risk by organized labor. In the context of labor decline, why would they want to invest in a campaign that's never been tested, never been tried? And that campaign has a lot of the remnants of nontraditional organizing. It looks more like a worker center that campaign, but they've invested in it...Its not profitable for them this campaign, because the workers are not going to bring in that much membership fees, but its been good for organized labor because its showing the ability, that if they take the risk, think outside the box, they do get something...They need to do that now broader” (Interview 05.16.2012).

The success of the CLEAN campaign signaled promise of a new direction for unions. From the union perspective, worker centers were attractive because they were both similar and different. On one hand, as work-based struggles to improve wages and working conditions they were easy to understand as components of the labor movement. As one AFL-CIO official remarked about day laborer struggles, “what we are looking at here is a revival of the same concepts that underpin the American labor movement, so we have a lot in common” (Interview 10.24.2012). On the other hand, they represented the promise of transforming unions and extending their reach, potentially securing their survival and revitalization in the contemporary period. As the same official explained, the real hope of labor-worker center partnerships lay in the possibility of a deeper transformation that could lead to another period of union growth: “We are trying to change the way that the employment relationship works, we are trying to change the way that

labor communities function together as a whole. We are looking for the spurt, we are looking for the growth spurt of the 1930s, the 2010s version of that spark" (Interview 10.24.2012). Whether labor's support for noncitizen workers will lead to this fundamental change remains to be seen. But union involvement in immigrant rights struggles, and partnerships with noncitizen-based worker centers, nonetheless represented a significant shift from the inward-looking and anti-immigrant tendencies of the previous era.

Gauteng: Separation From Precarious Politics

Unions in Gauteng had a very different trajectory. During the late 1970s and 1980s, the newly emerging independent black trade unions were increasingly outward-looking. Not only did they incorporate some of the most vulnerable workers, most notably migrant workers from the rural areas and abroad, but they also linked with community struggles around issues such as housing and transportation. Forming as the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985, the black labor movement also became a leading force in the broader struggle against Apartheid. As in California, however, by the early 2000s the political orientation of the black trade unions had shifted dramatically. Rather than joining community struggles, unions were detached from them. To understand this separation of labor and precarious politics, we must begin by examining the transformation of COSATU through the dismantling of Apartheid and the transition to democracy.

Growth, Incorporation, and Reorientation

Democratization significantly reshaped labor's political orientation. Not only did unions grow dramatically, but they also developed close ties with the post-Apartheid state. COSATU's leadership in the national liberation struggle, including a significant role in the negotiations that facilitated the democratic transition (Adler and Webster 1995), laid the foundation for a close partnership with the ruling party, the African National Congress. If declining density was the consistent feature underpinning labor's decisions in California, the parallel feature in Gauteng was COSATU's participation in the Tripartite Alliance – an official partnership with the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). For some observers the partnership was detrimental to unions because it prevented them from being more critical of policies that hurt the working class. But COSATU could nonetheless claim substantial gains, such as progressive labor legislation, access to formal and informal policymaking channels, and successful resistance to more widespread privatization (Pillay 2006:176). Beyond these practical considerations, labor's commitment to the Alliance and the ANC-state also reflected the solidarity built between the partners during the anti-Apartheid movement. To support the ANC-state was to support the national liberation struggle.

Throughout the 2000s COSATU consistently defended the ANC and the state as key sources of working class power. The COSATU National Congress in 2000 declared: "We realize that the ANC is the only political party that can represent the interests of the majority of South Africans" (COSATU 2000a). The following National Congress resolved: "The ANC-led Alliance remains the only political alliance that can create space for the working class to struggle," and therefore "is the only vehicle that can bring meaningful transformation in our

country.” This led to a political program: “To that end COSATU commits: 1) To swell the ranks of the ANC by calling on its members, shop stewards and leaders to join the ANC en masse; 2) To develop a joint programme with the ANC on campaigns, education, and other matters; 3) To continue building programmatic relations with the leagues of the ANC” (COSATU 2003).

This did not mean that COSATU always supported the direction of the ruling party. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the federation became increasingly critical of the ANC-state's capital-friendly stance. Unions were particularly critical of the market-oriented Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) policy adopted in 1996, which COSATU referred to as the “1996 class project” to indicate the capture of the ANC and the state by the interests of capital. At its 2006 National Congress COSATU noted, “the ANC is dominated by the interests of capital instead of the working class.” But the federation still called on constituents to “swell the ranks of the ANC” in order to “reclaim ownership of the ANC so that it becomes a true instrument of people's power” (COSATU 2006a).

COSATU thus preserved its commitment to the ANC despite apparent signs of a pro-capital shift. Rather than abandoning the Alliance, COSATU sought to reshape it by supporting the rise to power of Jacob Zuma, who was viewed as more worker-friendly than previous ANC leader and president Thabo Mbeki. With strong backing from labor, Zuma won the ANC presidency in 2007 and was elected as state president in 2009. COSATU celebrated this victory at its 2009 National Congress, claiming that it had “dislodged the 1996 class project.” This led to renewed confidence in the ANC and the state: “The historic ANC 52nd Conference has restored our hope that the ANC and the Alliance will work together to achieve common goals. The installation of the new government, led by comrade Jacob Zuma provides a new opportunity to redefine and strengthen the state; and to refashion state-society relations.” (COSATU 2009a).

Evidence indicates that COSATU members supported this position. In a 2004 survey roughly two-thirds of COSATU members supported participation in the Alliance, and according to a 2012 survey this support had risen to just over 70 percent (Pillay 2006:178; COSATU 2012:41). Much of this support likely stemmed from the “enduring solidarities” (Buhlungu and Psoulis 1999) created between COSATU and the ANC during the anti-Apartheid struggle. As the party of national liberation, many members believed that the ANC continued to best represent workers' interests. Indeed, two-thirds of COSATU members, and more than 70 percent of black African members, expressed support for the ANC in elections (COSATU 2012:38-39). For more stable union members, support for the ANC was also likely tied to the opportunities that the labor-friendly state created for upward mobility. Not only were shop stewards eligible for recruitment into management positions, but after 1994 many union leaders were able to move into positions within the ANC government as well as business. COSATU openly condemned “careerism” as one of its primary failures: “The syndrome of some leaders to negotiate with their CVs under their arms must be confronted. In this case positions in unions are used to cultivate chances to advance personal careers in government and in the private sector” (COSATU 2006a).

These changing political dynamics overlapped with, and were to some extent reinforced by, changing organizational dynamics. Among the most important organizational shifts was

COSATU's growing distance from the marginalized segments of the working class. This included the growing numbers of workers in “nonstandard” employment as well as the unemployed, who comprised a remarkable 30 to 40 percent of the workforce in the decade following the democratic transition (Altman 2006). As early as 1997 a COSATU report on the “Future of the Unions” acknowledged the need to organize vulnerable and informal sector workers, or else risk “being based in a shrinking section of the working class, as has happened to trade unions in a number of countries” (September Commission 1997). The 2000 COSATU National Congress affirmed the federation's commitment: “We remain committed...to the campaign to organize the unorganized – including workers in the informal sector and other hard-to-reach industries, as well as supporting progressive organizations for the unemployed” (COSATU 2000a). These commitments translated into some concrete efforts by COSATU affiliates, such as initiatives to organize home industrial workers, taxi drivers, and casualized retail workers (Chinguno 2011; von Holdt and Webster 2008; Webster 2006).

Despite these efforts, however, most evidence indicates that COSATU affiliates met with little success in organizing vulnerable workers outside the economic core (Buhlungu 2010; Pillay 2008). Indeed, the 2012 workers survey found that most COSATU members joined their union because their workplace was already organized, with only 8 percent of members having been recruited by an organizer (COSATU 2012:33). The federation acknowledged the lack of recruitment as early as 2006, putting it at the top of a list of challenges:

“1. Failure of the recruitment campaign. Although COSATU has grown in the past three years, we have been unable to reach the two-million membership target set at the last National Congress. Affiliates have not taken the recruitment campaign seriously...2. Failure to organize atypical workers. No significant inroads are being made into organizing farm workers, domestic workers, casuals, contract workers and other vulnerable workers” (COSATU 2006b).

These failures partially reflected a mismatch between traditional trade union approaches and the particular needs and circumstances of vulnerable workers. For example, in the private security industry workers began to turn to legal firms for support rather than unions (Sefalafala 2012). They also likely reflected an ambivalence within trade unions about flexible workers, who deviate from the ideal of full-time, high-paying, unionized employment that lay at the center of the national liberation struggle (Barchiesi 2011; Kenny 2007). Barchiesi (2011:246) argues that “trade unions unwittingly represented casual and fixed-term employment not as material conditions with legitimate claims, desires, and strategies but as threatening others, unorganizable constituencies, and socially pathological by-products of market rationality.” Regardless of the underlying cause, lacking recruitment of vulnerable workers ensured that COSATU membership was increasingly drawn from more stable and skilled segments of the labor force.

The failure of unions in Gauteng to recruit precarious workers did not create the same sense of urgency about organizing and innovation that emerged amongst unions in California. This likely stemmed from several factors. First, COSATU's partnership with the ANC meant that unions were, to a certain extent, less dependent on membership strength for political power. Second, the rapid expansion of black trade unions between the 1970s and the early 1990s meant

that unions had more workplace strength, even if these gains were beginning to erode in the late 1990s and 2000s. Third, the dismantling of Apartheid paved the way for union expansion in the public sector, where employment was more stable and more suitable to unionization.

Membership growth in the public sector – particularly amongst teachers, nurses, and municipal workers – offset membership stagnation in the private sector stemming from flexibilization and declining formal employment. Not only did this enable COSATU to maintain its sizable membership, but it reshaped the composition of the federation. Between 1991 and 2009 the proportion of COSATU members in public sector unions increased from roughly 6 percent to more than 40 percent (Buhlungu 2010:90,172; COSATU 2011:195).

The growth of the public sector membership had important political implications. Of particular importance was the fact that public sector workers were directly involved in providing services to the same communities that were protesting for better service delivery. If on one hand this meant that they were in a unique position to relate to the protestors, on the other hand it meant that they were part of the same state apparatus that communities were critiquing. As we will see, this tension between public sector workers' role as community members on one hand, and as state workers on the other, was thrown into relief when they went on strike. The other major implication was that public sector workers provided COSATU with additional political leverage. Due to the fact that the state was the direct employer, struggles around wages took on broader political significance. This dynamic was exacerbated by the particularities of the post-Apartheid context. The legacy of the national liberation struggle meant that the legitimacy of the ruling party depended on its ability to provide for black citizens in general, and black citizen workers in particular. It follows that not only were public sector workers a growing proportion of the COSATU membership, but they were increasingly the most militant and willing to go on strike.

These changes – political incorporation, organizational growth, and membership restructuring – reconfigured labor's sources of power. During the 1970s and 1980s the power of the black trade unions, and eventually COSATU, rested on the structural leverage of workers in heavy manufacturing, a militancy rooted in strong shop floor democracy, and alliances with community struggles and the broader national liberation movement. By the early 2000s COSATU's power was more firmly rooted in its significantly sized membership – increasingly comprised of permanent, stable, and public sector workers – and its close partnership with the ANC. Combined with COSATU's legacy as a leader in the anti-Apartheid movement, these two factors enabled the federation to view and represent itself as the leader of working class struggle. They also lead to a political strategy that was heavily oriented towards the state, whether this meant the state as an employer or the state as a policymaker.

COSATU's strategic approach in the late 1990s and 2000s approximated what Pillay (2008) refers to as “weak social movement unionism.” In this approach labor aims to “protect workers in collective bargaining (including occasional mass action)” on one hand, and to “promote working-class interests from within [the] Alliance and in public policy processes (including corporatist institutions)” on the other (Pillay 2008:187-188). In addition to pursuing this double agenda through formal bargaining institutions, unions also frequently relied on strike actions. Between 1999 and 2010 there were 356 industrial actions in Gauteng province, an average of 30 actions per year (South Africa Department of Labor 2003-2010). A small proportion of

actions dealt with broader socioeconomic issues. These consisted mostly of one or two day general strikes aimed at government policy, which occurred in six of the nine years between 2000 and 2008. The general strikes opposed privatization, job losses, poverty, and rising prices for food and electricity. More recently the federation pressured the state to ban labor brokers. In March 2012 a COSATU one-day strike, against labor brokers and a proposed highway tolling system, led to one of the largest mass actions of the post-Apartheid period, including a march of 30,000 in Johannesburg.

The vast majority of the actions, however, revolved around workplace issues such as wages and working conditions.⁶ This focus on bread-and-butter issues was consistent with worker attitudes. In the 2012 workers' survey less than 10 percent of COSATU members cited "solidarity and to change society" as the primary reason for joining a union. The overwhelming majority cited more immediate work-related issues such as wages, benefits, and working conditions. The bulk of these actions were directed at private employers, but the largest actions were directed at the state as employer. This reflected the growing significance of the public sector membership, most notably the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the National Education, Health, and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU). For example, the two largest actions of the post-Apartheid era were the public sector strikes in 2007 and 2010. Each strike lasted roughly one month and included more than one million workers nationwide.

Labor and Community Struggles

Democratization, and especially COSATU's partnership with the ANC, created a number of obstacles in terms of unions forging ties with community struggles in Gauteng. In some instances labor's loyalty to the ANC fueled tension with movements that were highly critical of the state, but this was largely isolated to the early 2000s. More generally unions sought to address the needs of poor communities by using their own political leverage. They thus tended to treat community struggles as a problem to be resolved, rather than a source of power. While COSATU was increasingly vocal about improving the conditions of poor communities, the federation remained relatively distant from community struggles. This distance was illuminated by the public sector strikes, which pit COSATU's new powerhouse unions against poor communities.

The tension of the early 2000s was perhaps most visible with respect to the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF). COSATU shared some of the APF's central tenets, most notably opposition to privatization. This was particularly important for the growing public sector unions, who faced potential job losses, reassignments, and declining wages and working conditions. But COSATU and the APF failed to build lasting solidarity. COSATU and two of its public sector affiliates – the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the National Education, Health, and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) – were initially part of the coalition, but later withdrew after the struggle to prevent restructuring had been lost (Buhlungu 2004:3-4; Naidoo and Veriava 2005:21). The distance had grown considerably by 2002, when the APF led a march in

6 Detailed information at the provincial level about the principle cause of disputes is not publicly available. At the national level the Department of Labor reports on the proportion of strike activity due to "socio-economic and political conditions," which is not precisely defined and the form of measurement varies over time. Between 1999 and 2004 an average of 3 percent of industrial actions fit the category, and between 2004 and 2010 the category accounts for just over 2 percent of the total workdays lost.

opposition to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. Rather than join the APF march, COSATU joined its Alliance partners for a smaller counter-march (Hart 2008:681). The same divide resurfaced the following year, first during a contentious anti-war march in January, and second during separate May Day rallies (Naidoo and Veriava 2005:27; Webster 2006:38).

The key conflict was around their divergent relations to the state, as expressed clearly by a COSATU official at the time. While acknowledging that “these new movements have arisen because the ANC has left the MDM [mass democratic movement] – it’s no longer leading, it’s collapsed everything into the state and it’s left a vacuum,” he nonetheless explained that COSATU could not work with organizations that were hyper-critical of the state or ANC:

“However, where COSATU has a problem is with the anti-state and anti-ANC posture of some of the movements. Our principles are that we are not anti-state and not anti-ANC. We have certain problems with government policy, but we certainly don’t clamp down on people if they have a different view and if they have a legitimate constituency and who sometimes we might share the same demands and so on, but it is rather difficult because you must remember that principally we have an alliance with the SACP and ANC. This is not a tactical alliance, but a principled one and until and unless that sunders, you cannot consider forcing alliances with organisations that are anti-ANC and anti-state. Therefore, with the APF, we’ve taken a position that we cannot work with them continuously on a long-term basis, but that around specific issues on which we agree we could consider working together” (Naidoo and Veriava 2005:26-27).

This position was affirmed through resolutions passed at the COSATU National Congress in 2003. The federation acknowledged the growth of the NSMs – including the APF and its key affiliate, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee – and recognized them as “a wakeup call to the Alliance.” But COSATU remained wary, as demonstrated by the two-pronged approach it outlined for relating to non-labor groups. The first prong included a commitment to “further consolidate relationships with traditional MDM organizations,” which essentially included organizations that were closely tied to the state. The second prong included efforts to “initiate talks with a broad range of progressive social movements in an attempt to strengthen the hand of the working class and communities as a whole, provide leadership, and bring them into our fold.” While seemingly oriented towards collaboration, the resolution qualified that COSATU would only work with those organizations whose “agenda...does not aim to liquidate or undermine the Alliance partners.” This stipulation precluded working with organizations, such as the APF, which were highly critical of the state. This second prong also expressed COSATU’s desire to lead working class struggles (“provide leadership, and bring them into our fold”), rather than take cues from other formations (COSATU 2003).

This tension played out within a COSATU affiliate, CEPPWAWU, whose Gauteng leadership had close ties to the APF. An early tension emerged around their attempt to launch the Masibambane Unemployed Peoples (MUP) project in April 2002. The Gauteng leadership suggested that the effort was squashed for two reasons: “The [national CEPPWAWU] leadership is claiming that...the MUP must be closed down whilst national guidelines are being worked out of how to organize the unemployed. They were also claiming that the MUP is a

front of the APF which is anti-ANC” (CEPPWAWU 2003). The tension also included debates around financial mismanagement, but the final straw came in the wake of the 2002 COSATU general strike against privatization. According to the Gauteng leadership, some workers participated to give “a massive vote of no-confidence in the ANC government,” while others did not participate in order “to tell COSATU that privatization cannot be fought decisively because of the Alliance with the ANC” (CEPPWAWU 2003). Meanwhile, COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi reaffirmed COSATU's commitment to the state, and at the same time distanced the union federation from “extreme leftist” positions:

“The strike is not about questioning the bona fides of government. I want to stress that again. This is not about passing a vote of no confidence to our government. This is about registering a disagreement about a specific policy, the policy being privatization, which has resulted in mass job losses, which has resulted in more and more people being pushed deeper and deeper into poverty....This is not a march about counter-revolution or extreme leftists as some people may want to believe” (Naidoo and Veriava 2005:22).

Following the strike the Gauteng leadership called for a workers' referendum on the Alliance and the 2004 national elections. The national CEPPWAWU leadership rejected the call and instead expelled the Gauteng leadership. The APF responded by holding a march and defending the critique of the state within COSATU: “The APF will support and fight alongside the CEPPWAWU workers in their defence of workers control and democracy and in their battles against the anti-worker politics and policies of the ANC government. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!!” (APF 2003). One month later the APF was evicted from the office space they had held in a building owned by COSATU (Naidoo and Veriava 2005:27).

These tensions diminished as social movements such as the APF were replaced by more loosely organized community protests as the primary driver of non-union economic struggles. This was partially because community protests were less antagonistic towards the ANC. But COSATU also became increasingly vocal about addressing the plight of poor communities. In 2006 the federation reinvigorated its Jobs and Poverty campaign, including a general strike in May to declare the crisis of unemployment, poor jobs, and poverty a national emergency. The 2006 COSATU National Congress resolved to make the Jobs and Poverty campaign the “centerpiece” of its program, and as part of this “to actively involve ourselves in community campaigns for the provision of basic social services, including the right to decent housing, education, transport and health” (COSATU 2006a). It also condemned police repression of community protests, and affirmed both the right of people to protest and the right of workers to demonstrate and picket.

The 2006 resolution indicated a desire to join community struggles. But instances of concrete cooperation rarely developed, partially because COSATU tended to treat community protests as a problem to be resolved rather than a source of solidarity. This perspective was enabled by the federation's close ties to the state. Noting the rise in community protests, a 2008 statement by the Central Executive Committee (CEC) explained: “COSATU provinces are identifying areas where there are service delivery challenges and will request government to intervene through relevant ministers. COSATU will also expose the underlying structural causes of poor service delivery to illustrate the need for a developmental state with the capacity and resources to

provide a more effective support to local government” (COSATU 2008a). A CEC statement following the National Congress in 2009 further acknowledged the rise in community protests. This statement suggested that COSATU should respond by working with the state to reduce pressures created by immigration: “We need to ensure that we develop systems to ensure that we do not open floodgates [of immigration] in a manner that simply worsens the squeeze in the townships and rural areas” (COSATU 2009b). Neither statement called on COSATU to join the protests.

The following year COSATU General Secretary Vavi seemed to renew the call for joint action, arguing that community protests were “triggered by the belief that the people’s representatives have deserted the masses. This is why COSATU and its partners have to become more involved in these community campaigns” (Vavi 2010). But an end-of-the-year message once again suggested that COSATU’s response would continue to focus on the state: “We are sitting on a ticking bomb. As we begin to campaign for the 2011 local government elections, we must find ways to address the problems these poor communities face. COSATU has once again pledged its full support for the ANC, which more than ever is the only party capable of tackling these immense problems” (COSATU 2010). These shifting messages underscore the significance of democratization. Under Apartheid, black unions could only support community struggles through workplace action because they were excluded from the state. But in the post-Apartheid period, due to both the democratic climate and labor’s partnership with the ruling party, unions could bypass community struggles and work directly with state policymakers. COSATU’s orientation towards community protests thus reflected an emergent tension between two approaches: joining and leading community struggles on one hand, versus working separately with the state to address the needs of poor communities on the other.

Public sector workers were thrust to the center of this tension. Not only were they an increasingly significant segment of COSATU, due to their numbers and their militancy, but they also had a complex relation to community protests for service delivery. As agents of state delivery they could be targets of the protests, but as subjects of state policy they were also in a position to join them. A 2006 COSATU statement on community protests underscored this duality. While calling on public sector workers to “join the campaign for improved service delivery by civil servants,” the statement also committed to “continue to put pressure on our government to create a better environment that will allow civil servants to provide a quality service to the public” (COSATU 2006c). While more clearly supportive of the protests, a 2009 statement by SAMWU expressed a similar ambiguity:

"We ourselves are all too familiar with the inadequacies of service delivery. Our members on the ground know and experience the frustration of the poor. It is entirely consistent with the ideals of a democratic society for the poor to protest and collectively raise their demands. That is why SAMWU supports those campaigning for an increase in services, and will continue to urge the government to make good on its promises to deliver them" (SAMWU 2009a).

By expressing empathy and support for protests around service delivery, this statement highlighted the potential of public employment for creating solidarity between union members and community struggles. But it also hinted that the union would work with the state to

improve service delivery, rather than join the protests. Indeed, just two months prior SAMWU had joined a state-assembled Ministerial Strategic Team, which was designed to tackle a number of “complex social problems” including “erratic service delivery protest actions” (SAMWU 2009b). These two possibilities were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Unions could stand in solidarity with community struggles *and* work with the state to address their demands. COSATU's public statements on community protests hinted at this double role, reinforcing the federation's broader perception of itself as the leader of working class struggle. But in practice the federation remained distant from the protests.

The distance between unions and community protests was especially apparent during public sector strikes. Running counter to community protests for service delivery, public sector strikes directly hurt poor communities because they cut off services. This was highlighted during the 2010 strike by COSATU's two largest public sector unions, NEHAWU and SADTU. The strike significantly impacted state hospitals and schools, particularly those servicing poor and working class black communities. But the unions had failed to build strong ties with these communities, or incorporate broader community struggles into the strike and its messaging (Bekker and van der Walt 2010:147-149). This drove a wedge between unions and the broader working class, which suffered from the loss of crucial services. As a community leader put it at the time: “The community, they are becoming negative to what is happening. The trade union movement has a job to do to unite with the community” (Field notes 09.04.2010).

The public sector strikes were symptomatic of a larger divide between unions and poor communities. If under Apartheid unions and poor communities were thrust together in opposition to the Apartheid state, the democratic transition had weakened the bond. This was partially because unions now had the option to work with, rather than simply against, the state. But it also reflected organizational changes within COSATU. Assessing labor's relationship to “service delivery protests and social movements,” a COSATU report warned:

“The CEC wanted COSATU to not only champion community struggles but to build a strong relationship between organized workers and mushrooming issue based social movements. This has not happened except in a few isolated cases. The danger of this is that a gulf may start to emerge between organized workers who in the context of the grinding crisis of unemployment, poverty, and inequalities represent a privileged group and the issue based social movements. Too often township/residential based stay away from work is called with COSATU not even aware of the plans. This weakness is not unrelated to the low working class consciousness...demonstrated by our inability to mobilize our members en masse beyond the struggle for wages and better conditions” (COSATU 2011).

This warning highlighted two obstacles to union collaboration with community struggles, both related to the changing character of the union membership. On one hand it noted a dampening of working class solidarity and activism, thus limiting collective action to self-interested struggles around bread-and-butter issues. On the other hand it pointed to a material divide between privileged unionized workers, increasingly drawn from the more stable segments of the workforce, and the poor citizens who were driving community protests. These dynamics were related, as more stable union members were somewhat less likely to face hardships beyond the workplace.

This material divide was important but it should not be overstated. Many union members continued to face precarious living and working conditions, including poor housing and restricted access to public services (Barchiesi 2011). Many also supported the large numbers of unemployed through redistribution at the household level. As one shop steward put it: “You end up not enjoying that you are working because you have to divide this money” (Interview 09.18.2010). There is also evidence that solidarity was beginning to emerge informally on the ground. In the 2012 workers' survey just over one-third of COSATU members reported participation in a community organization, and almost 25 percent indicated that they had participated in a community protest. Their reasons for participating in the protests revealed many of the same grievances that propelled community struggles more generally: lacking or costly electricity and water, lack of housing, and political corruption and poor governance (COSATU 2012:44-45).

Another sign of emerging solidarity was the controversial Civil Society Conference organized by COSATU in 2010. Illustrating the federation's stated commitment to collaborate with non-labor struggles, the conference brought together a variety of organizations, including the APF, in order to “rebuild a strong, mass democratic movement” (Civil Society Conference, 2010). It was controversial because neither the ANC nor state officials were invited, prompting a harsh response from the ANC. Not only did the ruling party condemn COSATU for not allowing it to participate and defend itself, but it accused COSATU of fomenting regime change. The conference thus affirmed the difficulty of building alliances with both the state on one hand, and organizations that are critical of the state on the other. COSATU responded to the ruling party's criticisms by reaffirming its commitment to the ANC and the state:

“As the recent Civil Society Conference showed, the federation has the support of a large periphery of community, church, cultural and special interest groups who share our goals. As we keep emphasizing, our collaboration with these groups is not anti-government or anti-ANC, but aims to work closely with our allies in government to achieve the policies adopted at the ANC 2007 Polokwane Conference and contained in the 2009 election manifesto” (COSATU 2010).

This response was consistent with the position adopted by COSATU at the 2003 National Congress. Not only did it reassert the federation's role as the leader of working class struggle, but it reiterated a commitment to working with both social movements and the ANC. Whether this intended commitment will lead to a closer relationship between unions and community struggles than it did in the 2000s remains to be seen.

Unions and Xenophobia

The distance between unions and poor communities, and the underlying factors that contributed to it, also shaped how unions responded to the growing tide of xenophobia. The issue of migration was close to home for COSATU. During the 1970s and 1980s the militancy and organizing of migrants workers was a key factor in the re-emergence and growth of the black trade union movement. Many of these workers were “internal” migrants from within South Africa's national borders, but they also included migrants from abroad. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the largest COSATU affiliate, was formed around a substantial membership of international migrants (Crush 1989). Despite increasing migration to Gauteng

from the African continent after 1994, however, unions were slow to incorporate workers from abroad into their ranks. This largely reflected the presence of migrant workers in segments of the economy where union membership was weak, such as the informal sector and industries with high rates of casualization. In this sense the limited presence of noncitizens within unions partially reflected larger weaknesses. But there is also some evidence that union staff and members understood citizenship, and particularly legal status, as a prerequisite for union membership (Hlatshwayo 2011:184). A NUMSA shop steward explained: “As much [noncitizen workers] as we are having [in South Africa], they are not much in the [manufacturing] industry. They are in informal jobs...Remember, to join a union you need an ID number” (Interview 09.18.2010).

Unions nonetheless took a strong stance against xenophobia. The COSATU Submission on the White Paper on International Migration, delivered in 2000, defended the constitutional rights of noncitizens and emphasized the need to prevent the emergence of a “two tiered labor market – made of legal South African workers and 'illegal' foreign workers.” It also warned against creating an immigration policy that would “engender paranoia” about noncitizens, most notably by focusing on “illegal” migration and encouraging “unsubstantiated claims” about its negative effects. In an eery foreshadowing of the 2008 attacks, the submission argued that “enforcement of immigration policy and legislation should be left to well-trained officials of the immigration service rather than mobilize the entire society against illegal foreigners” (COSATU 2000b). The following year COSATU took an even more forceful stance in a specific “Statement on Xenophobia,” which called on “the government, civil society formations, and all organs of the state [to] prioritize the fighting of xenophobia” (COSATU 2001b). Condemning xenophobia and the scapegoating of international migrants for crime and unemployment, the statement directed blame towards employers, police, and Department of Home Affairs officials for poor treatment of noncitizens.

COSATU moved quickly to denounce the 2008 xenophobic attacks through a series of public statements. While arguing that they stemmed from deeper structural issues – inequality, unemployment, poverty, poor service delivery – the statements nonetheless strongly condemned the attacks, and reiterated opposition to the scapegoating of noncitizens for social problems. They called instead for working class unity. A statement by the Gauteng division of COSATU, for example, released while the initial attacks in Alexandra were still ongoing, argued that “the poor working-class South African and immigrant people have a common interest in fighting to improve their conditions and fighting each other will only make the problems even worse” (COSATU 2008b). Drawing a connection between xenophobia and service delivery, a statement released later in the month similarly called for united struggles: “To achieve faster delivery of services we need strong, united civic movements. Attacking foreigners will not build new houses, but working together as communities is essential if we want to transform the environment where we live” (COSATU 2008c). A few days later the CEC released a statement noting that it was “disgusted and ashamed” by the attacks, reiterating that “the most potent weapon is our unity – the unity of the working class,” and appealing to the humanity of noncitizen residents: “The bottom line is that they are human beings, even though they may not have obtained proper documentation that allows them to come through our borders. They do not deserve to be harassed and killed” (COSATU 2008d).

Underneath this principled opposition, however, lay fears about the negative impact of international migration on the labor market and working conditions. This fear was expressed clearly by the 1997 report on the “Future of the Unions”:

"Many employers see the opportunity of employing vulnerable illegal workers as a way of reducing their labor costs, and avoiding labor standards or dealing with trade unions... This reality generates conflict and tension between South African workers and immigrants, both legal and illegal, and fuels the xenophobia which is emerging in South Africa. It also undermines trade union rights and labor standards" (September Commission 1997).

One of the federations' key policy recommendations, stressed by both the September Commission report and the Submission on the White Paper, was therefore to penalize employers who hire “illegal” workers. This means that COSATU was promoting employer sanctions in the very same year, 2000, that the AFL-CIO adopted an official policy denouncing them. The federation's concern about the depression of working conditions weakened its opposition to xenophobia. At the 2009 National Congress, for example, COSATU adopted an official resolution condemning xenophobia and calling for all migrants to be covered by labor laws (Hlatshwayo 2011:176). But an analysis of community protests in the CEC follow-up statement argued that noncitizens were “sidelining and regrettably dragging the basic protection of South African workers' rights down.” The analysis affirmed COSATU's “strong stance against xenophobia and the misguided and mistaken belief that our African brothers and sisters...are the source of our crises of unemployment and crime.” But it also noted that migrants arrive “in their thousands from everywhere in the world under the mistaken belief that South Africa is the land of milk and honey,” and in turn called for controls to reduce the influx (COSATU 2009b). While condemning xenophobia, some aspects of COSATU's own analysis thus tended to align with the understanding of noncitizens as a threat.

Perhaps more important than this logical inconsistency, however, was COSATU's distance from poor communities. Largely detached from the community struggles that emerged over the course of the 2000s, unions were ill-positioned to counter Membership Exclusion politics. Had unions been more deeply involved in community struggles, they may have been able to help those struggles develop into a broader movement. Whether such a movement could have prevented the 2008 attacks and other instances of xenophobic antagonism is impossible to know. But COSATU's distance from community struggles nonetheless contributed to their weakness and fragmentation. In this sense labor's politics helped to create the conditions for xenophobia, even if unions were strong advocates against xenophobia.

Labor's inability to forge an anti-xenophobic politics rooted in poor communities was highlighted by the lack of union participation in the Coalition Against Xenophobia (CAX), which coordinated the strongest opposition to the xenophobic attacks in Gauteng. The only union to participate regularly in the coalition was SAMWU, without the broader support of COSATU. When asked why COSATU did not join the CAX activities, International Secretary Bongani Masuku explained:

“I am not sure. I do not remember receiving the invitation. Maybe it was sent to a different department. If I had received it, we would have been part of it. There are many different means of contributions and as COSATU we do participate. I think we must also accept that

there are challenges with regard to the cohesion of the progressive movement” (Hlatshwayo 2010:23).

This reflection points to the persistence of tensions between COSATU and other movements. SAMWU's representative within the CAX affirmed that this was a primary reasons for labor's lacking participation. He traced the divergence to the separate marches by the Alliance partners and the New Social Movements during the WSSD in 2002. He also suggested that SAMWU's participation in CAX represented a desire to move beyond the history of tension:

“When the initial march against xenophobia was organized and calls did go out in a very broad way and it did not get support, I think at that time there was still hesitation for unions to fully commit themselves to that march. Because the organizers were very clearly associated to the social movements on the far left, that time there was still antagonism on the leadership of social movements and COSATU unions...I think SAMWU was unusual to a certain point and clear about the need to have a working relationship with the social movements...we were very upset about the two WSSD marches. It is a really wasted opportunity and antagonism that is out there” (Hlatshwayo 2010:24).

To the extent that poor communities expressed a politics of political exclusion, unions stood in direct opposition. The activities of the CAX pointed to the possibility of an anti-xenophobia politics, rooted in poor communities, that was more consistent with COSATU's position. But this was not the dominant form of citizenship struggles. The central challenge for COSATU, therefore, was to build ties with the proliferating number of community protests. In order to effectively promote an anti-xenophobia politics, they needed to first (re)develop their roots within poor communities.

Conclusion

Unions thus had very different responses to precarious politics in the two places. Whereas in California unions treated precarious politics as an important part of the labor movement, in Gauteng unions treated precarious politics as either a problem to be resolved or an antagonistic force. Each dynamic represented a remarkable shift. Taking the view from 1985, it would have seemed impossible that California unions would be engaged in struggles for immigrant rights, or that black-led unions in Gauteng would be detached from struggles in working class communities. Unions in California did support some form of legalization for undocumented residents in the 1980s, but they were also searching for ways to keep undocumented workers out of the labor market. For their part, unions in Gauteng were not shying away from community struggles aimed at the state, but rather embracing and leading them. These dramatic reversals reflect the dramatic reorganization of the terrain of working class struggle. Not only did unions in both places undergo significant transformations, but both places saw an expansion of the precarious working class and their struggles outside of unions. These shifts created new opportunities and challenges.

Given the large number of differences between the two cases, they do not allow us to build a general theory about how unions will respond to precarious politics. But the contrast reveals a number of factors that appear to be relevant. Four factors stand out. One factor is labor's

relation to the state. The labor-state relation was especially important in Gauteng, where COSATU's partnership with the ANC – imbued with solidarity built during the anti-Apartheid struggle – heavily shaped its decision-making. In some instances the partnership led to direct conflict with precarious politics that were explicitly hostile to the state. But more importantly it meant that COSATU could support the precarious working class by attempting to change state policy, rather than joining their struggles. In California on the other hand, struggles around immigrant rights provided a way for labor to regain leverage with respect to the labor-hostile state.

A second, related factor was union workplace strength. In California, unions understood precarious politics as important for reversing the long decline in union density. Not only would legalizing noncitizen workers increase their capacity to organize, but worker centers held the promise of bringing labor's approach into line with the dynamics of the contemporary workforce. Having recently enjoyed a remarkable period of growth in the 1980s and early 1990s, and with new membership growth in the public sector offsetting stagnation in the private sector, unions in Gauteng did not have the same sense of urgency about union density. Labor's partnership with the state further reduced the concern. Not only did it secure a level of political influence, to some extent decoupling political power from organizational power, but it also increased the leverage of public sector union members. Unions in Gauteng thus had less incentive to incorporate precarious politics than did unions in California, which understood precarious politics as an important source of revitalization.

A third factor was the character of the union membership in relation to the precarious working class. In California the embrace of precarious politics was partially propelled by the emergent struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers *within* unions. Organizing drives such as the Justice for Janitors campaign and the home health care workers began to change the face of labor. Not only did this begin to give low-wage noncitizen workers a voice within unions, but more established union officials and members could begin to see that they were an important part of labor's constituency. Supporting precarious politics was not a far leap from supporting the newest segments of union members. In Gauteng the union membership was heading in the opposite direction. As the union membership became more educated, more rooted in stable employment, and more upwardly mobile, it became increasingly disconnected from the realities of unemployment and precarious livelihood that lay beneath community struggles. This material distance reinforced a political distance between union struggles for wages and community struggles for better services, as illustrated by the tensions around the 2010 public sector strike. The informal participation of union members in community protests, however, suggests that there is a basis for solidarity within a certain layer of COSATU. If this layer becomes more numerous or more vocal, the dynamics between unions and precarious politics could shift.

Fourth, the two cases suggest that the union response will depend on the orientation of precarious politics, and in particular their relation to workplace strength. In California there was a close affinity between precarious politics and traditional labor politics, making them more obviously relevant. Unions could see the direct relevance of legalization to organizing efforts, and worker center struggles resembled the early stages of worker organizing that led to unions in the first place. Precarious politics in Gauteng were farther afield, making them less

obviously relevant. Not only were struggles for public services largely detached from the workplace, but they were largely animated and driven by the unemployed. They were thus less directly associated with building workplace power. The fact that unions could address these issues on their own by working with the state, rather than joining in concrete struggles on the ground, only reinforced the underlying political distance between work-based labor politics and community-based precarious politics.

6. POLITICS IN GLOBAL CAPITALISM

This dissertation is based on an unlikely comparison of two sets of collective struggles: the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers in California, United States; and the struggles of poor citizen communities in Gauteng, South Africa. The comparison is unlikely because they appeared to emerge from such different sociological foundations. Not only did they take place in very different political-economic contexts, but the participants in the struggles were also very different. In terms of the former, California is an affluent economy located within one of the world's leading imperial powers, while Gauteng is a middle-income economy located within one of the last holdouts of colonial rule in the form of Apartheid. In terms of the latter, the struggle participants varied according to both their socioeconomic composition – workers in California versus communities with high rates of unemployment in Gauteng – and their political-legal status – noncitizens in California versus citizens in Gauteng.

Underlying these contrasts, however, was a common insecurity. Propelled forward by processes of marketization, which bolstered capital mobility and profit at the expense of security for the working classes, precarious living and working conditions swept across the globe in the closing decades of the 20th century. A key consequence of this transformation was the global expansion of the precarious working class, characterized by insecure employment, low-income, and detachment from unions. This process was global but it was also uneven. Whereas working class insecurity under advanced capitalism was largely organized around the working poor in low-wage formal sector occupations, under peripheral capitalism the working class was more detached from the formal economy, with workers often stuck in long-term unemployment or relegated to survivalist activity in the informal sector. These uneven patterns of economic development overlapped with divergent changes in the political composition of the working class. Under advanced capitalism the precarious working class was increasingly comprised of international migrants without citizenship status. But under peripheral capitalism the precarious working class was more likely to be comprised of “internal” migrants with formal citizenship, even if international migrants were also present to a lesser extent.

This broader framework brings the unlikely comparison into focus. What appear at first to be two very different groups in two very different places, were in fact diverse manifestations of the same phenomena at opposite ends of the world system: the growth of the precarious working class. Despite their different sociological foundations, their common experience of insecurity underpinned some striking parallels between the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizen communities in Gauteng. These parallels are captured by the concept of *precarious politics*, which emphasizes the central dimension of recognition. It could be argued that recognition is important for all working class struggles, or collective struggles more generally. But recognition was particularly important for low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizens in Gauteng. This was partially because their high level of insecurity deprived them of recognition, pushing simple struggles for a basic level of dignity and respect to the forefront. But it also stemmed from their lack of collective economic

leverage and inability to significantly disrupt production. This compelled both groups to rely on moral or symbolic forms of leverage.

Precarious politics in California and Gauteng thus revolved around demands for recognition, dignity, and respect. In this sense they departed from conventional labor politics. Not only did precarious politics take place outside of unions, but they were not organized around the collective economic leverage of workers, and they did not rely on strikes or collective bargaining. But in other respects they were more similar to conventional labor politics. One similarity was the emphasis on economic struggles. As in traditional labor struggles, low-wage noncitizen workers in California and poor citizen communities in Gauteng both sought to improve their economic condition. Further, just as trade union struggles were entangled with political parties and struggles in the political arena, precarious politics also had both an economic and a political dimension. In both California and Gauteng, economic struggles around issues of livelihood and survival gave way to citizenship struggles around official membership in the political community. These struggles gave concrete expression to the symbolic dimension of recognition. Dignity and respect were not simply moral categories, they also had important material foundations.

Given the apparent differences between the two groups, this commonality is rather striking. But this is not a story about an unexpected convergence. The cases of California and Gauteng instead illustrate how divergent precarious politics may be, taking different forms despite sharing a fundamental similarity. Precarious politics in California were oriented towards participation. As a key source of flexible labor, low-wage noncitizen workers struggled for access to and leverage within the economy and society. Their economic struggles were defined by an Equal Opportunity politics, which were about access to the labor market and basic labor protections, and their citizenship struggles were defined by a Membership Inclusion politics, which were about legal status and freedom from criminalization. Precarious politics in Gauteng were oriented instead towards protection. More detached from the formal economy, poor citizen communities struggled for access to basic livelihood outside of the market. Their economic struggles were defined by a Collective Consumption politics, which were about the state provision of public goods, and their citizenship struggles were defined by a Membership Exclusion politics, which were about the expulsion of national outsiders.

This divergence raises the question of the significance of California and Gauteng for precarious politics more generally. To what extent do these cases represent broader patterns of struggle by members of the precarious working class? In the introduction we drew a link between the orientation of precarious politics and the position of the precarious working class in relation to the global economy. We suggested that participation struggles emerged from a position inside the economy, resembling Marx's proletarian revolution, while protection struggles emerged from a position outside of the economy, resembling Polanyi's countermovement. Throughout the study we have also located the two cases within the context of the broader world system, with California representing the affluent core of advanced capitalism and Gauteng representing a less affluent peripheral capitalism, even if it was among the more developed countries on the periphery. Indeed, the cases were selected to reflect the distinction between Standing's analysis of the "precariat" in affluent countries and Davis' analysis of the "informal proletariat" in less affluent countries. This background thus enables us to pose the question more precisely: to

what extent do the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers in California represent precarious politics under advanced capitalism, and to what extent do the struggles of poor citizen communities in Gauteng represent precarious politics under peripheral capitalism?

I explore this question by examining the two cases through the lens of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Written during the Algerian struggle for national independence and first published in 1961, it is an analysis of anti-colonial struggles and postcolonial transitions. In this respect it is most clearly applicable to the case of Gauteng, which underwent such a transition with the dismantling of Apartheid and the installation of a democratic government in 1994. But Fanon's analysis of decolonization is underpinned by a contrast – sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit – between the capitalism of the colonies and the capitalism of their metropolitan administrators. For him this contrast created different opportunities for struggle and different political orientations. It thus provides a foundation for situating precarious politics in both California and Gauteng in a larger global context.

California and Gauteng Through the Lens of Fanon

Fanon's analysis lays out two possible trajectories for anti-colonial struggles, with each one led by a different class segment of the colonized population. While the anti-colonial struggle aims to expel the colonizers, the outcome of decolonization is contingent upon the balance of forces within the colonized group and which segment is able to establish leadership. One trajectory is led by an urban bloc, including the middle class fractions of the colonized – intellectual elites, technicians, shopkeepers, teachers, civil servants. Supported by the small working class, this bloc seeks to reconstitute capitalism by replacing the colonizers with themselves as the national bourgeoisie. For Fanon this pathway is disastrous, producing widespread poverty and dictatorial rule. His preferred trajectory is led by a rural bloc, including the peasantry and a group of dissident intellectuals who have been expelled from the towns. This bloc seeks to transform the economy and society, redistributing wealth and implementing a radical democracy. Burawoy (2003:246) refers to these different trajectories as the National Bourgeoisie road and the National Liberation road.

For Fanon the lumpenproletariat, comprised of former peasants who roam the urban periphery in search of economic opportunity, are an important swing group that help to determine which bloc will lead the anti-colonial struggle. In contrast to orthodox Marxism, he views the lumpenproletariat as central to the trajectory of history and potentially even revolutionary. But their historical role is undetermined. On one hand he suggests that they may be “individualistic” and easily manipulated by elites (111, 115, 136-137). This portrayal resembles Marx's analysis of the lumpenproletariat as a “dangerous class,” which find echoes in the recent scholarship on the precarious working class (Davis 2007; Standing 2011). But they are also a “fraction which has not yet succeeded in finding a bone to gnaw in the colonial system.” As a result, he argues, the lumpenproletariat “constitutes one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people.” If the peasantry can win them over they provide a crucial link to the urban areas, enabling the spread of revolutionary transformation (Fanon 1963:128-129).

Fanon thus anticipated the study of precarious politics, as exemplified by his analysis of the lumpenproletariat. On one hand he was deeply concerned with the politics of precariousness. He took the lumpenproletariat, a marginalized segment of the urban working class, seriously as an agent of struggle and transformation. On the other hand he was deeply concerned with the precariousness of politics. In Fanon's analysis the lumpenproletariat stood at the crossroads of two different trajectories, one moving towards the reproduction of the existing system and one moving towards transformation. The case studies of California and Gauteng reveal a similar indeterminacy, with politics oriented towards participation in the former and protection in the latter. To make sense of this divergence we must dig deeper into Fanon's analysis.

The Wretched of the Earth draws a contrast between advanced capitalism, or what he calls “capitalist countries” and “the West,” and peripheral capitalism, which he refers to as “colonies” and “underdeveloped countries.” Each has its own class dynamics. At the root of the contrast is the development of capital and thus the strength of the bourgeoisie. In advanced capitalism the bourgeoisie is strong, able to support the working class and civil society more generally. With the ability to provide material concessions, it rules with confidence (38, 166, 175, 180-181). But in peripheral capitalism the bourgeoisie is weak and therefore useless from the perspective of national development. With little ability to generate material concessions, it rules through repression and patronage (164-183). This pessimism about the economic capacities of capital in developing countries underpins Fanon's skepticism about the National Bourgeoisie road to decolonization.

For Fanon this variation in the dynamics of capital shapes the character of resistance from below, most importantly by determining which class is most likely to be a revolutionary force. Though brief, his analysis of advanced capitalism follows close to the Marxist trajectory. Fanon was optimistic about the potential of the working class in affluent countries, which is free of “tradition” (111) and is a potentially revolutionary force. He notes that, “In capitalist countries, the working class has nothing to lose; it is they who in the long run have everything to gain” (108-109). Fanon does not refer to a lumpenproletariat in the affluent countries, perhaps because he assumes they are a relatively small group. But he is quite negative about the potential of the peasantry, who he views as undisciplined, unorganized, individualistic, and reactionary (111). Under advanced capitalism the working class is the agent of transformation, prepared for struggle against the ruling classes.

Fanon's class analysis of peripheral capitalism is almost the mirror opposite. Here he is decidedly pessimistic about the working class. On one hand they are “embryonic” and “individualistic,” but at the same time they are the “most pampered” and “most comfortably off fraction of the people.” Placed within the broader context of peripheral capitalism, he argues, formal workers “constitute also the 'bourgeois' fraction of the colonized people” (108-111, 122). In contrast to their counterparts under advanced capitalism, the working class under peripheral capitalism has “everything to lose” (109), and thus aligns with the national bourgeoisie in an attempt to maintain their privilege. Fanon argues that while “the nationalist trade-union organizations constitute an impressive striking power” prior to independence, they are also “the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties” (109, 121). In the postcolonial period the working class thus becomes “more and more political,” and “in fact, the unions become candidates for governmental power.” While they eventually recognize “the objective

necessity of a social program which will appeal to the nation as a whole,” by this point they are too detached from revolutionary forces, and their approaches are too stale to garner mass support (120-123). For Fanon it is instead the peasantry that are revolutionary under peripheral capitalism. They are disciplined and altruistic, they stand with the community, and they are prepared for political struggle (61, 111-112, 114, 127-128, 131-133, 143). In contrast to the organized working class they are “outside the class system,” and therefore “have nothing to lose and everything to gain” (61).

This analysis resonates strongly with our two case studies of precarious politics. As with Fanon's analysis of the working class under advanced capitalism, precarious politics in California had a somewhat more revolutionary bent. Oriented towards participation, the struggles of low-wage noncitizen workers were outward looking, seeking to promote a more inclusive economy and just society. The organized working class also had a more outward-looking orientation, increasingly joining struggles around immigrant rights and developing partnerships with worker centers. Fanon's analysis of advanced capitalism does not distinguish between the organized and precarious segments of the working class, as in the analysis here of precarious politics. But his brief reflections appear to apply to the struggles of both segments in California. This may also be understood as a reflection of the fact that low-wage noncitizen workers, with a key niche in the labor market, are somewhat closer to the organized working class than their counterparts in Gauteng.

With a stronger industrial base than most of its African counterparts, South Africa seemed poised to be a counterexample to Fanon's pessimistic view elite-led decolonization. But precarious politics in Gauteng were more inward looking and defensive, paralleling his analysis of the National Bourgeoisie road under peripheral capitalism. Fanon's analysis of the organized working class is particularly poignant. Closely tied to the ruling party and concentrated on state policy, unions were largely concerned with protecting their own privileges. With high unemployment and the growing prevalence of flexible labor arrangements, these privileges were often under attack. Their protective stance was thus reinforced by limited development of capital. While increasingly recognizing the importance of joining forces with even more vulnerable segments of the working class, as Fanon predicted unions had difficulty building meaningful ties on the ground.

If labor's distance from precarious politics in Gauteng reflected Fanon's pessimism about the revolutionary potential of the stable working class under peripheral capitalism, what about his optimism regarding the revolutionary peasantry? What happens to the peasantry after decolonization, and in particular what happens to their revolutionary potential? In tracing the trajectory of the peasantry after independence, Fanon once again anticipates the contemporary period. This time he describes a process of mass migration, similar to Davis' (2007) portrayal of urbanization and the growth of slums:

“the mass of the country people with no one to lead them, uneducated and unsupported, turn their backs on the poorly labored fields and flock towards the outer ring of suburbs, thus swelling out of all proportion the ranks of the lumpenproletariat. The moment for a fresh national crisis is not far off” (Fanon 1963:186).

Fanon does not examine the lumpenproletariat in the postcolonial period, leaving the

implications of rural-to-urban migration open to interpretation. One interpretation is that, due to the process of mass migration, the revolutionary potential of the peasantry under colonial rule is passed on to the lumpenproletariat in the postcolonial period. This interpretation is supported by Fanon's optimism about the revolutionary potential of the lumpenproletariat during the anti-colonial struggle, which rested on the conclusion that they were similarly "outside the class system." A parallel argument may be made about the precarious working classes under peripheral capitalism today, which as Davis (2007) argues are often subject to unemployment and forced to create their own jobs in the informal sector. We may suggest, therefore, that Collective Consumption politics in Gauteng represent a glimpse of the revolutionary potential that Fanon envisioned for excluded groups under peripheral capitalism. Yet even here, the struggles of poor citizen communities seemed to mirror the defensive stance taken by unions. These struggles were oriented towards protection, rather than the widespread participation of the poor in the economy and society.

Fanon's warning of an emerging "national crisis," emanating from the peasantry-turned-lumpenproletariat after independence, hints at the potentially destructive effects of this protective orientation. This warning perhaps leans back towards the more pessimistic view of the lumpenproletariat, commonly associated with Marxist renditions. It also resonates with precarious politics in Gauteng. Persistent xenophobic attacks against noncitizens, and in particular the violence of May 2008, may easily be considered a national crisis. Fanon also anticipated this politics of Membership Exclusion. For him, xenophobia is a characteristic feature of the postcolonial period when decolonization follows the National Bourgeois road (155-164). His description of xenophobia bears a chilling resemblance to the 2008 attacks: "From nationalism we have passed to ultra-nationalism, to chauvinism, and finally to racism. The foreigners are called on to leave; their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked" (156).

For Fanon the descent into a politics of national exclusion is led by the upper classes. Referring to the various segments of the working class, from the unemployed to stable workers, he notes, "in all justice let it be said, they only follow in the steps of their bourgeoisie" (156). For the newly independent middle class, he argues, the first priority of the post-colonial period is to "replace the foreigner" (158) in politics and business. In turn, xenophobia mirrors this process of exclusion at the level of the masses: "If the Europeans get in the way of the intellectuals and business bourgeoisie of the young nation, for the mass of the people in the towns competition is represented principally by Africans of another nation... We observe a permanent seesaw between African unity, which fades quicker and quicker into the mists of oblivion, and a heartbreaking return to chauvinism in its most bitter and detestable form" (157).

This analysis highlights the significance of national boundaries, which divide the working class into insiders and outsiders. The process of decolonization makes the division especially clear because it emphasizes the constitution of an independent nation-state. But national boundaries are a central feature of the contemporary world system, and thus the dividing process is not unique to peripheral capitalism. Indeed, mass international migration into affluent countries has similarly highlighted national divisions within advanced capitalism. From this perspective the different orientation of precarious politics in the two case studies may be understood as a reflection of the fact that the precarious working class had a different relation to the nation-state

in each case. This would imply that low-wage noncitizen workers in California supported a more expansive and inclusive politics, oriented towards participation, precisely because they lacked formal citizenship. On the flip side it would imply that poor citizens in Gauteng supported a more restrictive and exclusive politics, oriented towards protection, precisely because they had formal citizenship.

Citizenship status certainly matters for precarious politics. Not only is citizenship an important symbol of recognition and belonging, it is also a concrete marker of privilege and leverage. It follows that citizenship status was crucial to precarious politics in both California and Gauteng, whether as an underlying factor shaping economic struggles, or an object of struggle in its own right. But to read precarious politics through a Fanonian lens requires situating these political relations within the broader context of global economic inequality. In particular it requires attention to the strength of capital, the ability of capital to provide for the residents of the country, and the form of class domination. This brings us back to the different levels of capitalist development. For Fanon, because capital is strong under advanced capitalism, it can safely promote a democratic environment without fear of undermining its own domination:

“When the bourgeoisie is strong, when it can arrange everything and everybody to serve its power, it does not hesitate to affirm positively certain democratic ideas which claim to be universally applicable. There must be very exceptional circumstances if such a bourgeoisie, solidly based economically, is forced into denying its own humanist ideology...The Western bourgeoisie has prepared enough fences and railings to have no real fear of the competition of those whom it exploits and holds in contempt” (163).

His view of peripheral capitalism, however, paints a bleaker picture. Because capital here is much weaker, it abandons democracy, and instead sows divisions within the population and concentrates on securing its own riches:

“The national bourgeoisie, since it is strung up to defend its immediate interests, and sees no further than the end of its nose, reveals itself incapable of simply bringing national unity into being, or of building up the nation on a stable and productive basis...The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defense, based on fear. Essentially it is no different from vulgar tribalism, or the rivalries between septs or confraternities..the bourgeoisie has not the economic means to ensure its domination and to throw a few crumbs to the rest of the country...moreover, it is preoccupied with filling its pockets” (159, 163-164, 165).

For Fanon the inability of peripheral capital to provide material concessions thus lays the foundation for internal conflict around extra-economic divisions. On one hand, economic failure leads to dictatorship, repression, and tribalism, which are necessary for capital to secure domination and its own economic well-being (164-169, 181-183). If advanced capital rules with “economic power,” peripheral capital rules with “moral power,” justifying its domination on the basis of national identity rather than material concessions (166). On the other hand the weak economy leads to growing poverty and disaffection amongst the people (167-169, 172-173, 182-183). Mirroring the defensive stance of capital, their struggle for survival turns into conflict around ethnic, religious, tribal, territorial, and national categories (155-164).

This analysis suggests that advanced capitalism and peripheral capitalism lay the foundation for two different forms of politics. Fanon does not say as much about advanced capitalism, but he suggests that it provides the basis for a politics oriented towards participation. Here the economy is strong and capital is confident, opening up space for democratic participation and more widespread access to material goods. Precarious politics in California were consistent with this analysis. Oriented towards participation, they sought to broaden the political community and increase access to the economy and society. Fanon's in-depth analysis of peripheral capitalism is the opposite, suggesting that it provides the basis for a politics oriented towards protection. Here the economy is weak and capital lacks confidence, thus shutting down space for democratic participation and forcing competition over scarce resources. Precarious politics in Gauteng were consistent with this analysis. Oriented towards protection, they sought to secure a basic livelihood for national insiders. As Fanon predicted, competition over scarce resources such as jobs and housing led to a politics of Membership Exclusion that sought to contract the political community.

Precarious Politics in the World System

Fanon points to two sources of political orientation, citizenship status and the level of capitalist development. This study has emphasized the interaction between the two dimensions. On one hand it showed that the composition of the precarious working class is dependent upon location within the world system: noncitizens are more prevalent amongst the precarious working class under advanced capitalism, while citizens are more prevalent amongst the precarious working class under peripheral capitalism. On the other hand it showed that citizenship status was central to precarious politics, reinforcing the divergence between California and Gauteng. Not only was citizenship status an undercurrent of their divergent economic struggles, but it lay at the center of their even more divergent struggles around citizenship itself.

The precise articulation of citizenship status and capitalist development varies from country to country. For example, each country will have a different mix of citizens and noncitizens on one hand, and employed and unemployed workers on the other. Understanding how these different configurations shape the orientation of collective struggles is perhaps the central task for the sociology of precarious politics. The analysis here focused on a numerically prominent group in each case – noncitizens in California, citizens in Gauteng – but future studies may also consider the politics of minority groups that are less numerically prevalent. Regardless of the precise balance of citizenship statuses within a given context, however, both Fanon and the two case studies highlight the importance of the world system. Citizenship matters, but a country's position in the world system shapes the terrain on which struggles around citizenship play out. While the globe is becoming increasingly integrated into a single capitalist system, the study of precarious politics nonetheless points to the enduring significance of divergent capitalisms within that system.

In the introduction we proposed that different capitalisms may be associated with different politics. The starting point was a contrast between two different orientations – participation and protection – developed through an examination of two established theories of working class struggle. The notion of participation struggles was derived from Marx, who envisioned working

class struggles that developed within the womb of production, expanding worker participation until they seized ownership and installed a communist society. The notion of protection struggles was derived instead from Polanyi, who envisioned working class struggles that developed outside of the market system, protecting society from commodification by securing the basic means of livelihood. Rooted in very different working class experiences, we suggested that the two theories may be especially relevant to working class struggles in different places, depending on their level of capitalist development. The two case studies, particularly when read through the lens of Fanon, support this conclusion: participation struggles were prominent in California's advanced capitalism, while protection struggles were prominent in Gauteng's peripheral capitalism.

Few scholars have approached Marx and Polanyi in this way. Given their different theories of history and struggle, most scholars choose one or the other. A key exception is Silver's (2003) *Forces of Labor*, which as we noted in the introduction distinguishes between Marx-type struggles and Polanyi-type struggles. For her Marx-type struggles move around the globe, chasing capital as it shifts to new locations of cheap labor (the "spatial fix") and new industries (the "product fix"), searching for profit. In contrast, Polanyi-type struggles rise and fall as the pendulum swings back and forth between crises of profitability and legitimacy. Crises of profitability lead to increased commodification, which restores profits at the expense of legitimacy. Commodification, in turn, unleashes Polanyian countermovements for social protection, which restore legitimacy but once again undermine profits, restarting the cycle (178).

Silver's analysis suggests that the presence or absence of Marx-type struggles varies across space, while the presence or absence of Polanyi-type struggles varies across time. But the study of precarious politics in California and Gauteng suggests instead that both types of struggles have a spatial dimension, with each located in a specific space of the unequal world system. Participation struggles, which resemble Silver's Marx-type struggles, are rooted in advanced capitalism. They are thus most likely to be found within North America, Europe, Oceania, and Japan. Protection struggles, which resemble Silver's Polanyi-type struggles, are rooted in peripheral capitalism. They are thus most likely to be found within Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Time and space are, of course, intimately related. As Silver shows, the spatial concentration of Marx-type struggles varies across time. We might similarly argue that the timing of Polanyi-type struggles varies across space. But the argument here is not about the interaction of time and space, or the interaction of different types of struggles. It is about the separation of participation struggles and protection struggles into different domains of the world system.

This different perspective likely reflects the different focus of the two studies. Silver was primarily concerned with labor unrest, which she defines as collective struggles that are "rooted in the proletarian condition; that is, it is composed of the resistances and reactions by human beings to being treated as a commodity" (182). This definition is sufficiently broad to encompass what we have referred to here as precarious politics. Yet Silver's analysis was primarily focused on worker struggles, as indicated by the book's subtitle: "Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870." Taking place on the terrain of recognition, precarious politics may include worker struggles. But they also extend further. Indeed, many of

the struggles captured in the preceding pages – from day laborer protests against police harassment, to immigrant rights protests for legalization, to community protests for housing, to xenophobic attacks against noncitizens – would likely not have shown up in Silver's study, had it extended to the 2000s.

Precarious politics emerge from a somewhat more diverse set of conditions than traditional labor politics. While capital may be organized around different cultural norms and political situations in different places, its spread across the globe creates similar forms of work and in turn similar forms of resistance. This is an underlying premise of Silver's analysis of world labor unrest (see page 32), as well as Chun's study of symbolic leverage. But the precarious working class is defined as much by the absence of capital as it is by the presence of capital. Fueling unemployment and informal economic activity, it is primarily the absence of capital that distinguishes the precarious working class under peripheral capitalism from its counterpart under advanced capitalism. As the application of Fanon to California and Gauteng suggests, it is precisely the relative absence or presence of capital that shapes the orientation of precarious politics.

This suggests that participation struggles and protection struggles are not simply two different dimensions of struggle, which interact with each other as they ebb and flow across space and time. Instead they are opposite manifestations of the same phenomenon – precarious politics – mirroring each other on either side of the world system. One implication of this is that we should be able to find similar struggles, parallel to California and Gauteng, in other countries that are similarly positioned within the world system. More specifically we should be able to find Equal Opportunity politics and Membership Inclusion politics in other instances of advanced capitalism, and we should be able to find Collective Consumption politics and Membership Exclusion politics in other instances of peripheral capitalism.

It should be recognized, however, that California and Gauteng are to some extent exceptional cases. The United States, for example, is one of the most affluent countries in the world, and receives significantly more international migrants than any other country. Within the United States, California is one of the most affluent states, comprising one of the largest economies in the world. It also has both a larger number and a larger proportion of international migrants than any other state. These factors likely account, at least partially, for the vibrancy of noncitizen protests in California, which have far surpassed similar events in other places. One of the most visible parallels is the *sans papiers* movement in France, which is led by international migrants from Africa. Similar to noncitizens in California, they have protested for the right to work and live without fear of deportation. But while their protests have grown, they have not come anywhere near the explosion of immigrant rights protests in the United States in 2006.

For its part, South Africa is one of the wealthier countries within peripheral capitalism, even if it experiences similar pressures such as urban unemployment. This may have encouraged collective struggles by creating at least a limited amount of resources to struggle for. South Africa also has a political history that lends itself to high levels of protest. Not only did the anti-Apartheid movement create a legacy of struggle to draw from, but the success of that movement created high expectations for social change. At least partially due to these factors,

South Africa was one of the protest centers of the world in the first decade of the 21st century. We may perhaps find a recent parallel to these struggles in another exceptional case, the 2011 Egyptian revolution. This was a broad struggle that included elite and middle classes, but it was also underpinned by severe economic conditions such as mass unemployment, informal work, and grinding poverty. Many of the protesters involved lived under “slum” conditions in the urban areas, and just a few years before had launched massive protests over the rising cost of state-subsidized bread. A popular chant of the revolution similarly called for “Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice.” These protection-oriented struggles resembled Collective Consumption politics in Gauteng. The revolutionaries in Egypt also drew on a legacy of struggle. Just as the recent community struggles around state service delivery in Gauteng resembled earlier struggles during the Apartheid period, struggles around state-subsidized bread in Egypt resembled the well-known “bread riots” that erupted three decades earlier.

The Egypt example highlights the possibility that precarious politics may be part of broader struggles, not just by unions but also the middle classes. The analysis here of precarious politics in California and Gauteng emphasized the struggles of low-income groups. These struggles were often supported by middle classes, but they were animated by the demands and participation of the precarious working class. The Egyptian revolution, in contrast, incorporated a broader swath of society. The revolution also contained similarities with precarious politics in California. On one hand, by challenging authoritarian rule, Egyptians were essentially opposing their treatment as noncitizens within their native country. In this sense it was also a struggle for political inclusion, similar to citizenship struggles in California. A further parallel with California was the support of the organized working class in Egypt, which had become increasingly militant in the decade leading up to the revolution.

These variations suggest that precarious politics are unlikely to adhere to strict models that may be easily exported across contexts. The analysis here provides instead a point of departure for making sense of working class struggles in an era defined by marketization and insecurity. Most importantly it acknowledges that members of the precarious working class may be agents of collective struggle with politics of their own, if not necessarily agents of large scale social transformation. These politics will vary across time and space. As with Egypt, in other places we may find a mixture of the four types of politics that were prominent in California and Gauteng: Equal Opportunity politics, Membership Inclusion politics, Collective Consumption politics, and Membership Exclusion politics. They may also have varying relations to other political actors, such as unions and the middle class. Regardless of the particular configuration, however, similar struggles are likely to emerge across the globe. As long as working class insecurity remains widespread, precarious politics will be an enduring feature of society.

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METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

This study aims to identify the political orientation of collective struggles by members of precarious working classes in California and Gauteng during the late 1990s and 2000s. It is important to differentiate this object of analysis from two other potential objects, and thus to define what this study does *not* aim to understand. First, it does not aim to understand the effectiveness or success of the collective struggles, as in traditional studies of social movements. Rather, I aim to simply make sense of the demands that were made. Second, the study does not aim to understand decision-making processes within organizations and groups. While I do attempt to capture the complexity and diversity of the struggles and their various dimensions, I am less concerned here with capturing internal power struggles or measuring the extent to which struggles were more or less internally democratic.

This final point relates to the participation of the middle class, which was evident to some extent in all of the struggles in both California and Gauteng. The goal of the study is to examine collective struggle by members of the precarious working class, which include insecurely employed, low income, and non-unionized groups. The struggles examined in this dissertation were thus primarily organized around the demands and the mobilization of such groups. But this does not preclude the participation of more educated and economically stable individuals, who contributed to these struggles through material support, guidance, and instigation. Precarious politics often involved complicated power dynamics between the precarious working class and the middle class. Such dynamics are extremely important to understand, but they are beyond the scope of this study. My goal instead is to understand the political orientation of collective struggles that were animated and fueled by the precarious working class, even if middle class participants played a non-trivial role by providing resources and making decisions.

The core of the analysis is based on 26 months of fieldwork, including 17 months in California between 2011 and 2013 and 9 months in Gauteng during 2007 and 2010. In each place I participated in organizing meetings, did community outreach and organizing, and joined rallies and marches. In California I was active in collective struggles around noncitizen worker and immigrant rights issues in the San Francisco Bay Area, including planning for the annual May Day march. In Gauteng I was introduced to activists and community leaders through the Democratic Left Front (formerly the Conference of the Democratic Left), which was working in townships and informal settlements around Johannesburg.

Through this participation I recruited activists and community members for formal interviews. I interviewed 26 people in California and 32 in Gauteng, including a total of 58 individuals. This was a convenience sample based on the networks that I had established within activist communities. The interviewees included workers and the unemployed, community leaders and organizers, union members and staff. Many of the interviewees could be considered to be members of the precarious working class, but some were middle class organizers and activists who were somehow involved in precarious politics. The majority of the interviews were one-on-

one, and typically lasted between thirty and ninety minutes. Two of my interviews in Gauteng included two respondents each, and one of them included a focus group of five respondents. The 26 interviews thus captured the perspectives of 32 different individuals.

I supplemented this fieldwork data with a number of sources, including a variety of archival materials. For chapters 3 and 4, I gathered documents pertaining to the relevant organizations and protest events, including website news updates, press releases, campaign announcements, mission statements, reports, petitions, and fliers. For Gauteng I benefited greatly from the Anti-Privatization Forum archive project associated with the South African History Archive, which included more than 30 in-depth interviews with activists as well as original documents produced by the organization and its affiliates. For chapter 5, I drew from the archives of the California Labor Federation – the state-level affiliate of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) – and the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), including conference resolutions and publicly released statements.

Chapters 3 and 4 also draw from an analysis of newspaper articles. This included two different types of analysis. For the first I gathered and read all of the articles on a particular organization relevant to precarious politics in each place. The sources used for this analysis were the *Los Angeles Times* and the Independent Online (IOL) database, which includes the major Gauteng newspaper *The Star*. For California I gathered articles on the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), which was central to both worker and immigrant rights struggles in the 1990s and 2000s. CHIRLA launched some of the first efforts to organize day laborers and domestic workers, helped to form the Garment Worker Center (GWC), contributed to the development of immigrant rights struggles in Los Angeles through the Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON), and has become one of the most prominent immigrant rights organizations in the United States. For Gauteng I gathered articles on the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), which was the most prevalent of the so-called New Social Movements (NSMs) in Gauteng province. The APF was comprised of smaller community-based affiliates, but also had its own organizational structure. During the early 2000s the APF developed into one of the premier left forces outside of the ruling Tripartite Alliance, and was the driving force behind the Social Movements Indaba (SMI), which was a coalition of NSMs. These searches produced 238 articles and 97 articles, respectively, for a total of 335 organization-specific articles.

The second type of newspaper analysis was focused on instances of protest and unrest, leading to the compilation of two original protest databases, one for each case. The California database included instances of protest between 1990 and 2010 that were led by either noncitizens or community organizations representing noncitizens. Drawing from the two most prominent newspapers in California, *The Los Angeles Times* and the *The San Francisco Chronicle*, I gathered articles with “protest” in the subject index and “immigrant” somewhere in the article. The search produced 675 articles, yielding a database of 215 unique protest events. The Gauteng database was designed to supplement secondary sources, and thus only included a sampling of protest events. Drawing from the same IOL database, I gathered articles for the even years between 2000 and 2008 that contained at least one word each from each of two sets: “protest”/“riot”/“unrest” and “township”/“informal settlement.” This search was designed to capture articles on local community protests as well as collective violence against noncitizens. It

produced a total of 317 articles, including 137 articles pertaining to instances of protest and unrest in Gauteng province.