

STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION, AND
COMPREHENSIVE CONTRACT CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS: A CASE
STUDY OF THE CULINARY WORKERS UNION, HERE LOCAL 226'S 2002
COMPREHENSIVE CONTRACT CAMPAIGN

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a case study of the comprehensive contract campaign that the Culinary Union, HERE Local 226 utilized in its 2002 round of negotiations with casino operators in Las Vegas. The focus of this study is on how the comprehensive contract campaign strategy used by the Culinary Union increased the local's bargaining power in the negotiations. This case study links the success of the 2002 comprehensive contract campaign to the local's prior practices, long-term strategies, as well as its organizational structure and culture. This case study also examines how the political, social, and economic context of Las Vegas's casino industry influenced the Culinary Union's comprehensive contract campaign. It describes the interactive relationship between these external contextual factors, the local's strategic choices, and industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's casino industry. This case study describes how the Culinary Union, by using the organizing model of contract administration, created an organizational culture and structure that lead to increases in the quality and quantity of rank-and-file participation in the union, and how this benefited the union in its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. In addition to citing specific examples from the 2002 contract campaign itself, this case study uses the industrial relations literature relating to union commitment and participation, in order to support this argument.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Paul Hayes was born in 1977 in Schenectady, NY, where he also grew up. He graduated from SUNY-Binghamton in 2000, with a B.A. in Political Science. While attending SUNY-Binghamton, Paul helped Prof. David Cingranelli with his research on international labor rights. Upon graduating Paul worked as a research intern with HERE Local 26 in Boston, after which he moved to Venezuela to teach English. When he returned from Venezuela, Paul interned with the New York State AFL-CIO and worked on the American Labor Studies Center. Following that internship, Paul began his graduate studies at Cornell's ILR School. During the summer, between his first and second years at Cornell, Paul interned with the Culinary Union in Las Vegas. It was at this time when most of the fieldwork for this thesis was completed. After finishing his course work at Cornell, Paul began to work as a Researcher for SEIU Local 504 in Pittsburgh.

Dedicated to the men and women of the American Labor Movement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSCME	American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
AFM	American Federation of Musicians
CWA	Communication Workers of America
EBITDA	Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization
EDR	Employee Dining Room
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
GRA	Guest Room Attendant
HERE	Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union
HGR	Hotel, Gaming and Recreation Industry
IATSE	International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
IBT	International Brotherhood of Teamsters
IUOE	International Union of Operation Engineers
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NLRA	National Labor Relations Act
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
NRA	Nevada Resort Association
PACE	Petroleum and Allied Chemical Employees
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
TWU	Transport Workers Union
UAW	United Auto Workers

UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers
ULP	Unfair Labor Practice.
UNITE	Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees
UNITE-HERE	The union that was formed when the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE) merged in 2004.
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
UPIU	United Paperworkers International Union

Chapter I: Introduction

Local 226, of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union is widely regarded as one of the most successful union locals in the United States today. Commonly known as the Culinary Union, Local 226 primarily represents workers in Las Vegas's Casino Industry. Evidence of the success of the Culinary Union can be found in the exceptionally high standard of living its members enjoy, relative to their counterparts in the same industry in other cities. Las Vegas is widely touted as the only city in America where a hotel or casino housekeeper (GRA) can obtain the basic accoutrements of the American middle class lifestyle such as owning a home (Greenhouse, 2004).

Taking the cost of living into account, the wages earned by Las Vegas's hotel and casino workers are higher than those earned by similar workers in any of the other top 20 hospitality markets in the United States (Wial & Rickert, 2002). Furthermore, the median wage of a housekeeper in the United States was \$7.09 hour in 2002, while housekeepers covered by Culinary Contracts earn \$10.45 an hour (Bernhardt, 2003, Alexander, 2002, Mirage Contract, 2002-2007). The Culinary Union is also one of the few locals in the hospitality industry to successfully deal with the issue of subcontracting, having negotiated clauses in its contracts with most casinos, requiring that subcontracted work must stay within the bargaining unit and generally under the same terms as traditionally employed workers (Alexander, 2002).

The Culinary Union is not only successful at maintaining a high standard of living for its current members; it also has had a very successful external organizing program. In the 1990s, the Culinary Union was one of the fastest growing private sector unions in the country increasing its memberships by 250 percent. Its membership grew from around 17,000 in 1987 to more than 45,000 in 2000

(Alexander, 2005). So far this decade it has organized more than 10,000 workers (Kiraly, 2005, Meyerson, 2005).

In its 2002 round of negotiations with most of Las Vegas's casino operators, the Culinary Union continued to build on its past successes, negotiating a contract that that local union leaders consider to be one of its best in recent memory. The union obtained a five year deal that called for annual increases in compensation that were more than twice as large as those negotiated in previous contracts (Smith 1998b, Las Vegas Review Journal, 2002c). It also protected the Culinary Union's healthcare plan, which provides members with premium free family coverage with minimal co-pays (Pappageorge, 2003, Culinary Health Fund, 2005). Furthermore, the contract introduced new rules that reduced housekeeper's workload and protected them from hazardous materials (Pappageorge, 2003, Simpson, 2002b). The ability of the Culinary Union to obtain such a strong contract was made more remarkable by the fact that it was obtained in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, which caused a severe downturn in Las Vegas's casino industry and had tremendous negative repercussions for the local economy as a whole (Pappageorge, 2003).

This thesis is a case study of the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. It will analyze the union's campaign strategy and discuss its links to the external context of Las Vegas's casino industry as well as the internal context of the Culinary Union culture, structure, long-term strategies and prior practices. This study will show that the success of the Culinary Union's comprehensive contract campaign strategy in 2002, was the result not just of the external context the union faced, or the short term strategies the union employed specifically for the negotiations, but also was the product of long-term strategies the union had been pursuing during its revitalization process that had been taking place over the prior 15 years. In other words this study will provide a thorough analysis of the Culinary Union's strategies

during and prior to the 2002 round of contract negotiations as well as external contextual factors that the union has confronted in Las Vegas's casino industry. In so doing it will discuss how the Culinary Union employed a set of strategies in its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign that successfully navigated both external and internal contextual factors confronting it in order to enhance its power at the bargaining table.

In examining the long-term and short-term strategies and tactics utilized by the Culinary Union during and prior to its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, this thesis will borrow the definitions of union strategies and union tactics in Turner (2005). Turner defines union strategies as "more or less coherent overall organizational plans, implemented in pursuit of agreed-upon goals." In the same article Turner defines union tactics as the "particular initiatives designed to further a union's chosen strategy." (Turner, 2005)

Internal and External Context

The Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign was profoundly influenced by the context in which it took place. The strategy pursued by the Culinary Union in its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign was well suited to the external bargaining environment facing the union as well as to the set of internal factors arising out of the organization itself. These contextual factors influenced the Culinary Union's strategic choices as well as the effectiveness of the strategies the Culinary Union ultimately employed. These contextual factors arose both out of the environment in which the Culinary Union operates, and from within the Culinary Union itself. They interacted with each other and with the strategies employed by casino employers to form the context for the 2002 contract negotiations (Bronfenbrenner, 2003, Hickey, 2003). Therefore, when analyzing the strategies that made up the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign strategy it is

important to study how the Culinary Union's perceptions of its bargaining context influenced its strategic choices as well as how contextual factors influenced the effectiveness of the union's strategies themselves.

The foundation of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign was its ability to mobilize its members and threaten casino employers with an effective strike. Rank-and-file mobilization was essential for the Culinary Union because large-scale strikes could still be used effectively in Las Vegas's casino industry. Over the last 15 years the Culinary Union has maintained a long-term strategy designed to increase its ability to mobilize its members for a large scale strike, one primary reasons for this being the local casino industry's continued susceptibility to strikes.

In addition to increasing its rank-and-file member mobilization capacity, the Culinary Union, as part of its revitalization process, has also developed the capacity to employ particularly effective corporate pressure tactics. These tactics were employed successfully in the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign and took advantage of several characteristics of the local casino industry, such as the large amount of debt casino operators had amassed and operators concerns about the public image of the casino industry. In its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, the Culinary Union, used corporate pressure tactics to legitimize its strike threat amongst various stakeholders who influenced the decision making process of casino operators such as their creditors.

Culture, Long-Term Strategies, and Prior Practices

As mentioned previously, the Culinary Union 2002 contract campaign benefited greatly from the prior practices of the union in the 15 years leading up to the campaign. Since 1987, the Culinary Union has implemented a broad range of innovative and ambitious strategic initiatives as part of an overall strategy to revitalize itself after a decade or more of declining power. These initiatives were undertaken

across the entire range of the union's activities including contract bargaining, contract administration, external organizing, and politics. The Culinary Union's revitalization initiatives were comprehensive and blurred the lines separating these traditional categories of union activity, where initiatives in multiple areas were complementary. Figure 1.1 depicts the interrelated nature of the Culinary Union's strategic initiatives prior to the 2002 contract campaign as they relate to the effectiveness of the campaign itself.

There are numerous examples of how the Culinary Union's prior practices and long-term strategies influenced and aided its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. For instance, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy is the foundation of its rank-and-file mobilization efforts. The contract administration strategy employed by the Culinary Union is similar to the one described by Teresa Cornrow (1991). Both contract administration strategies are based upon the principles of the organizing model of trade unionism and one of the primary goals of both strategies is to cultivate a less passive rank-and-file membership. Through its contract administration strategy, the Culinary Union communicates, educates, and trains members, as well as recruits rank-and-file leaders to become shop stewards, internal organizers, external organizers, political/community organizers, and even political candidates for state and local elections. Therefore, the contract administration procedure plays a significant role as a mobilizing agent on the shop floor, thus greatly increased the Culinary Union's capacity to mobilize its members for the 2002 round of negotiations (Cornrow, 1991). Like its contract administration strategy, the Culinary Union's political, external organizing, and previous contract campaign strategies also emphasized rank-and-file participation and therefore similarly helped to mobilize the local's rank-and-file membership.

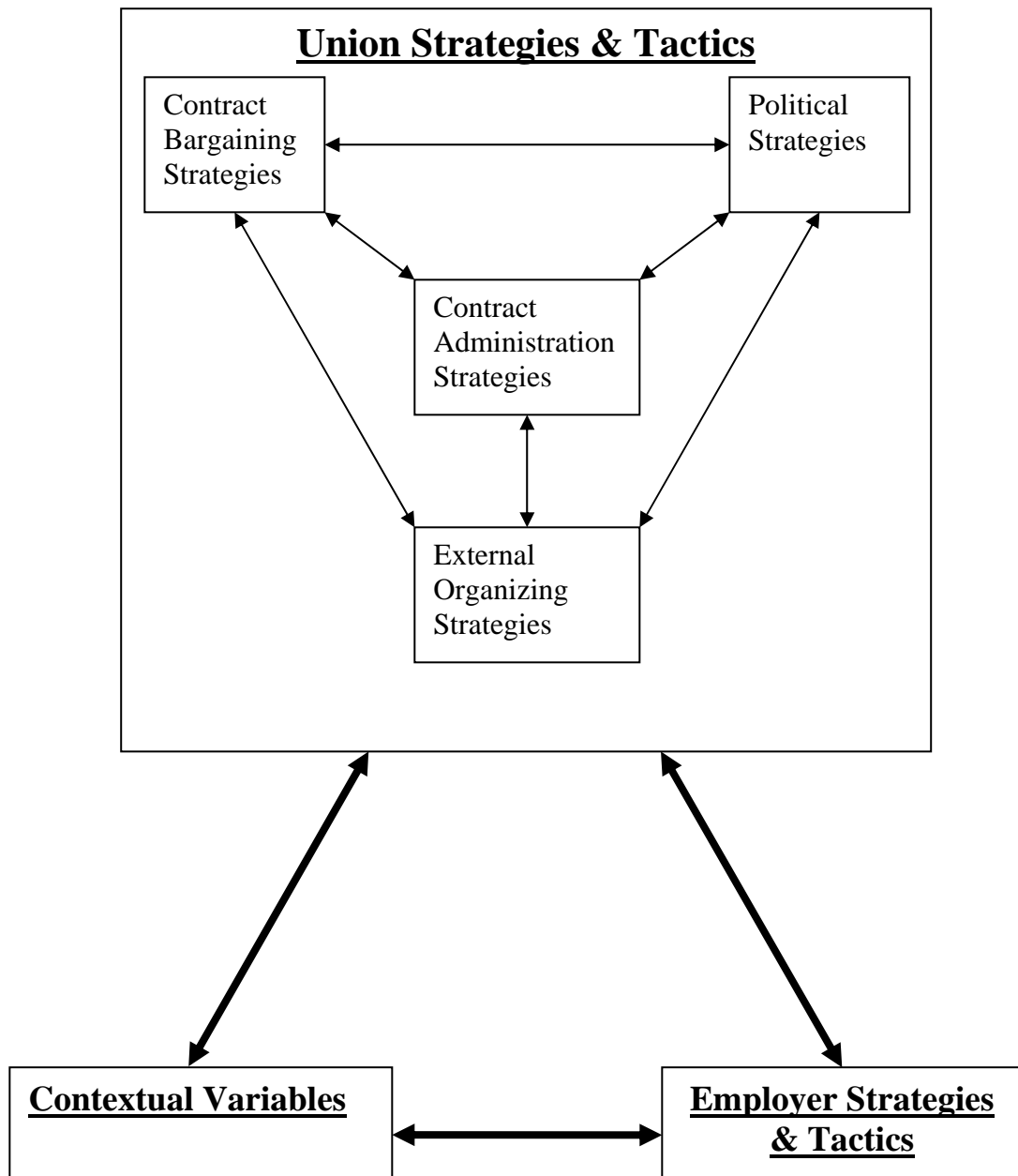


Figure 1.1 Relationship between union strategies in different areas of union activity as well as external environment.

Overall the union's strategies in these four areas contributed to the creation of a culture within the Culinary Union that placed a high value on rank-and-file participation in the union. For example, as Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss point out

(2004), the Culinary Union's external organizing strategies often involved mobilizing rank-and-file members for large-scale protests outside of organizing casinos, which in many cases lead to mass arrests. These activities, increased the level of activism amongst rank-and-file members, and helped generate a general culture of mobilization within the Culinary Union (Fantasia & Voss, 2004). This example also highlights how the Culinary Union's contract bargaining, contract administration, external organizing, and political activities are designed by the union leadership are mutually reinforcing.

Therefore the Culinary Union, because of its general organizational culture, strategies, and practices prior to the 2002 round of negotiations, was already well prepared to run a contract campaign like the one it ran in 2002. Through its contract administration strategy, the Culinary Union had developed strong communication links between its leaders and its rank-and-file membership. The local had also identified rank-and-file leaders and provided them with some of the skills and experiences necessary for the contract campaign. Furthermore, as a result of previous comprehensive contract campaign it had engaged in, the Culinary Union had also previously exposed its rank-and-file membership to many of the tactics that were going to be part of its 2002 contract campaign. Finally, through strategies pursued in all of its areas of activity, the Culinary Union had developed an overall organizational culture that would fully support the rank-and-file mobilization effort necessary to put together and run an effective contract campaign. This mobilization capacity was especially important because casino operators were particularly vulnerable to strikes. Therefore, the Culinary Union's long-term strategies were well attuned to the industrial relations context that it faced.

Revitalization

This thesis study places the strategies employed by the Culinary Union at the center of its analysis, and therefore makes the argument that union strategies do play a significant role in determining industrial outcomes. It therefore builds upon the extant union revitalization literature that has emerged over the past decade. In an article appearing in the journal *Work and Occupations* Lowell Turner argues that the union revitalization literature contains two primary tenets (Turner, 2005). The first of these is that “contemporary circumstances provide openings for, and in some cases are driving, innovative, proactive, and quite promising union strategies for renewal of influence in changing world, national, and local conditions”. According to Turner the second tenet of the union revitalization literature is that union strategies have been and can continue to be instrumental in promoting workplace, social, and political change in addition to engendering a revival in the labor movement itself.

This thesis builds upon these two themes by arguing that in the 2002 contract negotiations, the Culinary Union utilized strategies that took advantage of points of leverage provided by the contextual environment in order to increase its power at the bargaining table. Therefore, as Turner has suggested the contextual environment of Las Vegas held opportunities that the Culinary Union could strategically exploit in order to increase its ability to achieve its goals in the 2002 negotiations. Furthermore, the strategies employed by the Culinary Union did play a significant role in determining the outcome of the negotiations. The Culinary Union would not have been able to accomplish the outcome it did in the 2002 contract negotiations, if it had not utilized a strategy so well suited to the bargaining context that it faced.

It is important to note that although a specific set of contextual opportunities for unions may be unique to Las Vegas, different sets of similar opportunities may be available in other contextual environments as well. In other words different sets of

opportunities will be present in different industrial relations contexts, however there maybe certain similarities shared across such contexts. For example, similar to the gaming industry, healthcare and education have a similarly high level of contact between the employees and customers, creating opportunities for unions to cultivate their collective bargaining power through these relationships. However, management culture and goals in these industries is often very different than that of the gaming industry. This means that there may be some similarities between the kinds of union strategies that will successful in these industries and the gaming industry. However, the effectiveness of these strategies across contexts is also dependent on variables that are internal to the union(s) operating in these different environments.

A number of union revitalization studies have analyzed how unions strategically integrate tactics from a number of different areas of union activity such as collective bargaining and organizing in order to achieve revitalization goals (Katz et al. 2003, Hickey, 2003, Hurd et. al. 2003, Benz, 2004). All of these studies argue that union attempts at revitalization will be more successful when they adopt a comprehensive approach to revitalization that takes into account their collective bargaining, organizing, and political activities. This study takes this argument one step further by adding one often overlooked subcategory of collective bargaining: contract administration. It will make the argument that the Culinary Union approached its 2002 contract negotiations comprehensively, taking into account how its activities in other areas would impact it and in turn be impacted by it. An important corollary of this argument is that in order to understand the reasons for the success of the Culinary Union in the 2002 contract campaign it is necessary to also understand how the union's strategies prior to the 2002 negotiations created a solid foundation for the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign, without which such an ambitious campaign would not have been as successful.

By examining the organizing model as it is applied to contract administration, this study will also build on the branch of the revitalization literature that has dealt with the organizing model of unionism. Although studies of the organizing model predate the emergence of the union revitalization literature, they are now thought of as being part of this literature. Studies examining the organizing model in a contemporary context emerged during the early to mid-eighties and primarily analyzed strategies utilized by unions to mobilize their members to fight back against employers' attempts to obtain concessionary contracts or to bust the union outright (Slaughter, 1983, Balanoff, 1985, Metzgar, 1985). However, the term "organizing model" began to take on a new meaning in the 1990s when the revitalization literature began to focus on attempts by unions to organize non-union workplaces. In these instances, the term "organizing model" was used to refer to unions that spent a larger proportion of their resources on external organizing. However, within this latter category external organizing strategies were still often linked to internal organizing strategies. For example, many of these studies examined union strategies where in order to make more resources available for non-union workers to organize, a union would mobilize its own rank-and-file members to take greater responsibility for contract servicing (Hurd, 2004). Finally, it is important to note that some scholars have examined the organizing model as it is related to still other areas of union activity such as contract administration and first contract negotiations. (Cornrow, 1991, Bronfenbrenner, 1993, Markowitz, 1998).

This thesis draws upon both definitions of what constitutes an organizing model of unionism. It looks at the organizing model as it relates to mobilizing members for an upcoming contract campaign, which fits in with the first definition of the organizing model. However, it also looks at how the Culinary Union's external organizing and internal organizing efforts interact with each other as well as the

local's activities in other areas. Furthermore, in its analysis of the Culinary Union's application of the organizing model to its collective bargaining functions, contract administration and contract bargaining, this study discusses how the union commitment literature supports arguments made by organizing model advocates that unions pursuing strategies based on the model will benefit from increased rank-and-file participation. Therefore, this discussion will give organizing model advocates more empirical evidence to support their arguments' evidence.

This case study also seeks to build on the numerous case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns that have emerged as part of the union revitalization literature in recent years (Rosenblum, 1995, Getman, 1998, O'Malley, 1999, Witt & Rand, 1999, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2001, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2003, Hickey, 2003, Minchin, 2003). However, this thesis differs from the previous studies in a variety of ways. First, all of the preceding examples of comprehensive campaign case studies analyzed campaigns that included a protracted strike or lockout, which occur in only a small fraction of contract negotiations. Although there was a strike at one of the casinos involved in the 2002 contract negotiations in Las Vegas, it was at the smallest casino involved in the negotiations, and therefore, affected less than one half of one percent of the Culinary Union's membership. Furthermore, the strike only lasted a couple of days. Therefore, this case study does not include a major strike or lockout and in this capacity is more representative of typical contract negotiations, than the aforementioned examples of case studies of comprehensive campaigns.

This fact is important to the union revitalization debate because if the kinds of tactics that unions typically employ as part of a comprehensive contract campaign do in fact increase union power at the bargaining table and beyond, unions need to learn to utilize them in instances other than in the most extreme cases of labor-management

discord. Therefore, it is important to begin to analyze the role of these tactics in collective bargaining settings other than complete breakdowns in relations between labor and management. Although relations between the Culinary Union and the casino operators can be described as more contentious than usual in the 2002 round of negotiations, both sides were committed to maintaining the bargaining relationship. This cannot be said for most of the negotiations analyzed by most of the case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns.

Another unique characteristic of this thesis is that it analyzes a union local that is much further along in the revitalization process than almost any other in the United States. Most other case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns have focused on unions that are struggling to adapt to a more hostile bargaining environment and therefore, have not made the kinds of strategic and tactical reforms the Culinary Union had been implementing for more than a decade before the 2002 round of negotiations. (Rosenblum, 1995, Getman, 1998, Witt & Rand, 1999, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2001, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2003, Hickey, 2003, Minchin, 2003).

In addition, other case studies that have looked at unions further along in the revitalization process have not taken a sufficiently comprehensive view of the role of prior union tactics strategies in influencing the unions comprehensive campaign (Erickson et. al. 2002). This case study takes a more comprehensive view of the Culinary Union's strategies prior to its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, examining the union's organizing, collective bargaining, political, and new member orientation strategies and how the local's strategies and tactics in these areas influenced the campaign, both in terms of the local's strategic choices and in terms of the campaign's overall effectiveness.

Organization of Thesis

The remainder of this study will be divided into seven chapters. Chapter two, the literature review, will show how this study fits into and contributes to the existing union revitalization literature. It will focus on the three areas of the union revitalization literature that are most directly related to issues discussed in this paper: the literature dealing with strategic integration of union tactics in different areas of activity, discussions of the organizing model as it is applied to a union's collective bargaining functions and how this is related to other areas of union activity, and preceding case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns. The third chapter will be the methodology section and will look at how data was collected for this case study. Chapter four will describe the external context the Culinary Union faced in the 2002 contract negotiations. It will focus on the social, economic, and political environment faced by the Culinary Union in the negotiations. This chapter will also provide a detailed history of the gaming industry in Las Vegas. The fifth chapter will discuss the historical development of the Culinary Union. This chapter will specifically focus on the Culinary Union's revitalization process through which the Culinary Union developed the organizational capacities it has today. This chapter will also discuss the influence of the Culinary Union's revitalization process on its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, particularly in terms of its strategic decision making and the effectiveness of the strategies that it employed in the campaign. The sixth chapter will be a description of the strategy the Culinary Union used in its 2002 contract campaign. Chapter seven is the case study itself describing the 2002 contract campaign and how the strategy employed the Culinary Union for the campaign actually played out. Chapter eight, the conclusion, analyzes how the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign was influenced by both the union's external environment and the strategies the union employed in the years prior to the campaign.

It also discusses the implications of this case study for the union revitalization literature and suggest ideas for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

This case study puts union strategy at the core of its analysis and therefore builds on the union revitalization literature that has emerged over the past twelve years. The crux of the union revitalization literature is that union strategies play a significant role in determining labor relations outcomes. This is a departure from the previous literature which tended to focus on structural determinants, management strategies, or a combination of the two. Scholars at the progressive margins of the industrial relations field have long examined topics which later became core areas covered by the industrial revitalization literature, such as innovative external organizing tactics, community alliances, and creative grassroots rank-and-file mobilization tactics. However, it was not until the early 1990s, when John Sweeny took over the presidency of the AFL-CIO and industrial relations scholars began to focus their attention on innovative collective bargaining, external organizing, and political strategies utilized by a few unions, such as SEIU, that these types of studies would enter the mainstream (Turner, 2005).

Although scholars have discussed labor movement revitalization for more than a decade, only recently have they begun to come up with a clear definition of the concept. Martin Behrens, Kerstin Hamann, and Richard Hurd (2004) recently defined union revitalization as the degree to which unions, locals, and national movements have regained power among the various dimensions that capture the main orientation or spheres of union activity. The spheres of union activity listed by Behrens et al. cover the collective bargaining, organizing, political functions of unions that were discussed in the first chapter of this study. In addition to these three spheres of union activity, Behrens et al. suggest a fourth institutional dimension, which addresses a union's organizational structures and governance, as well as internal dynamics.

According to Behrens et al. this dimension captures a “union’s capacity to adjust to new contexts, embrace new strategies, and support change in general.” This fourth dimension is captured in this case study through a description of how the Culinary Union has successfully been able to initiate and carry out the institutional changes necessary to adapt to changes in its contextual environment.

Overall the Culinary Union has met most of the criteria set out by Behrens et al. for what constitutes a revitalized union at the local level. The local has increased its membership dramatically and successfully incorporated into the union structure new ethnic groups that have entered the casino workforce. The Culinary Union has also increased its collective bargaining power, thereby increasing the standard of living of its members, while the standard of living for most unskilled service workers in the United States has been declining. Furthermore, it has increased its political power not just at the local but also at the state level, becoming one of the most powerful political forces in the state. Finally, the Culinary Union has undergone the types of internal reforms that have made it possible for it to successfully employ the kinds of innovative tactics and strategies, which have made its revitalization possible (Behrens et al. 2004).

In an article he authored in the journal *Work and Occupations*, Lowell Turner (2005) identifies two core arguments contained in the union revitalization literature. The first argument is that “contemporary circumstances provide openings for, and in some cases are driving innovative, proactive, and quite promising union strategies for the renewal of influence in changing world, national, and local conditions.” The second is that union strategies matter. Turner states that union strategies, “have been and continue to be instrumental in promoting workplace, social and political change, and contain as well the potential for substantial breakthroughs in broader democratic revitalization.” This case study illustrates both of these key points. It looks at how the

Culinary Union's strategy in the 2002 negotiations built upon the contextual variables faced by the local and increased the union's power at the bargaining table. This study also analyzes the interaction between contextual variables, union strategies, and industrial relations outcomes in the years prior to the 2002 negotiations and how this interaction influenced the effectiveness and the Culinary Union's choice of strategies in the 2002 negotiations.

Rob Hickey (2003) argues that the revitalization literature is fundamentally about how unions reconstitute bargaining power in a changing economic environment while also confronting increasing levels of employer hostility. He identifies four indicators of union revitalization: increased political influence, increased bargaining power, increased union density and strategic internal organizational reforms. These four signs of union revitalization correspond to the dimensions of union activity described by Behrens et al. (2004) Hickey also goes on to identify attributes of a fully revitalized union: a vision of political, economic, and social justice; a culture of membership involvement, outreach, and growth; membership education, and leadership development; on-going strategic innovation; and comprehensive, integrated strategies for organizing, political action, and collective bargaining. This study will show how by 2002 the Culinary Union had many of these attributes and how these attributes contributed to the union's choice of bargaining strategy and the effectiveness of this strategy in its 2002 contract campaign. (Hickey 2003).

The union revitalization literature has covered a broad range of union activity from a broad range of viewpoints. However, this case study relates most directly to three common topics addresses by the union revitalization literature: comprehensive contract campaigns, the strategic integration of union tactics across different dimensions of union activity and the organizing model as it relates to contract administration.

Collective Bargaining and Union Revitalization

Other than case studies of comprehensive campaigns, collective bargaining activities of unions have largely been ignored by the union revitalization literature. Likewise, most of the traditional collective bargaining literature has ignored the role of union tactics in influencing industrial relations outcomes. Union revitalization scholars have tended to treat collective bargaining as something that happens after union revitalization, rather than part of the revitalization process itself (Hickey, 2003). Also, many union revitalization scholars treat collective bargaining as something that is necessarily in competition for scarce union resources with other areas of union activity that are vital to revitalization such as external organizing (Fletcher & Hurd, 1998, Voss & Sherman, 2000). These authors create a false dichotomy between these two areas of union activity and do not recognize their interconnectivity nor how tactical initiatives in one of these areas can help the union achieve its goals in another. This study will highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of the Culinary Union's external organizing and collective bargaining strategies, in its description of how the local's prior practices influenced its 2002 contract campaign.

Since collective bargaining has largely been ignored by revitalization scholars it is necessary to examine other industrial relations traditions and how they conceptualized bargaining power and the role union strategies play in influencing it. The classical economic, institutionalist, dependency, and strategic choice strands of the collective bargaining literature each conceptualize bargaining power differently. Furthermore, each tradition holds a different view of the role strategies play in influencing collective bargaining outcomes. However, with the exception of dependency theory, each of these traditions minimizes the influence union strategy and tactics can have over collective bargaining outcomes. These four traditions predate the union revitalization literature, and therefore also provide a good

foundation for a discussion of the union revitalization literature as it relates to collective bargaining.

In order to adequately discuss bargaining power it is important to have a clear definition of the concept. The classical economic tradition frames union power as monopoly power and therefore measures the divergence of union wage rates from the market rate in order to determine bargaining power (Hicks, 1932). However, this tradition fails to take into account bargaining power's influence on non-wage issues, or sources of power outside the degree of product and labor market elasticity. These factors were especially important considering the fact that one of the principal issues in the 2002 contract negotiations, workload, was a non-wage issue.

Compared to the classical economists, institutional economists have a much more inclusive definition of collective bargaining power. For example, Chamberlain and Kuhn (1965) defined bargaining power simply as the "ability to secure an agreement on one's own terms." Similarly, Slichter (1940) defined bargaining power as the cost to party A of imposing a loss on party B. Along comparable lines Kochan (1980) defined bargaining power as the "the ability of one party to achieve its goals when faced with opposition from another party to the bargaining process."

In their summary of the institutionalist approach to bargaining power, Leap and Grigsby (1986) point out that most institutionalist conceptualizations of bargaining power "involve 'costs that are incurred by or imposed upon one side or the other.'" These cost can be the direct costs of concessions, such as wage gains or losses, or secondary costs of concessions, such as the effects of pattern bargaining. According to the institutionalist conceptualization of bargaining power these costs associated with collective bargaining are "based on such factors as elasticity of product demand, business and market cycles, competitive position of a firm, labor intensity, and availability of substitute labor."

Occasionally, institutionalists will refer to some sort of strategic component, but this factor is generally downplayed in the literature (Leap and Grigsby 1986). Likewise, Hickey (2003), in summarizing the institutionalist literature explains, “While the institutionalist tradition has been strong in explaining the role of structural (i.e. environmental) determinants on bargaining power...it has provided fewer insights into the dynamic nature of collective bargaining.” When referring to the “dynamic nature of collective bargaining” Hickey is alluding to the role of strategic choice on the part of either party in determining collective bargaining outcomes.

Therefore, one of the primary weaknesses of the institutionalist approach to collective bargaining power is that it focuses primarily on the structural factors that contribute to bargaining power and downplays the influence of union and employer strategies in creating bargaining power. Institutionalists tend to focus on factors such as the concentration of product market, attributes of the labor market, union density, characteristics of the parties and the industry, and government policies as the primary factors influencing collective bargaining outcomes. For example, Thomas Kochan (1980) argues that the triggering forces affecting bargaining outcomes are structural variables, especially those of an economic nature. Kochan sees structural variables as shaping organizational characteristics of both unions and employers, bargaining structure, the negotiations process, and bargaining power.

By including bargaining tactics and strategies in their model, dependency theorists such as Samuel Bacharach and Ed Lawler correct some of the shortcoming of the institutionalist tradition. In their book, *Bargaining Power, Tactics, and Outcomes* Bacharach and Lawler (1981) argue that the critical factor in collective bargaining is the parties' perceptions of relative power. According to this theory, bargaining power is determined by a bargainer's perception of its dependence on its counterpart and its counterpart's perception of its own dependence on the bargainer. The more dependant

a bargainer perceives itself to be the less bargaining power it will have. Likewise, the more dependant a bargainer's counterpart perceives itself to be, the more bargaining power the bargainer will have at the bargaining table. Union and management strategies play key roles in Bacharach and Lawler's theory because they can be used to influence perceptions of power in the bargaining relationship. Bacharach and Lawler's theory also highlights the interactive relationship between bargainer's perceptions of power in the bargaining relationship and their strategic choices.

However, Bacharach and Lawler's model has two shortcomings. First, they fail to identify specific examples of strategies used by unions or management to influence each other's perceptions of dependence (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Secondly, their theory focuses exclusively on the relationship between employers and unions; thereby it does not sufficiently take into account contextual determinants of bargaining power, as well as the interactive relationship between bargaining context and bargaining strategies (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, Hickey, 2003).

Strategic choice theory is another major strand in the collective bargaining literature that began to analyze the role of strategy in determining collective bargaining outcomes. Perhaps the most well known work in this branch of the literature is *Transformation of American Industrial Relations* by Kochan, Katz, and McKersie (1986). In this book the authors examine the significant changes that took place in the American industrial relations system in the 1980s and found that structural factors alone could not explain the profound transformations that took place during this era. They argue that, in addition to structural factors, business strategies were a mechanism behind this change. According to the strategic choice model they proposed, business strategies adjust to changes in the external environment in ways that are consistent with the values of management and the firms' historical attributes. While this model does acknowledge that union strategies have some degree of

influence over collective bargaining outcomes, it clearly places business strategy at the center of its analysis.

Kochan et al. propose three levels of collective bargaining activity. The top tier is long-term strategic activity such as investment strategies, which is generally a protected realm of management rights. The second-tier of industrial relations activity is the functional tier of collective bargaining, which includes such activities as contract bargaining. This has been the focus of attention for most traditional industrial relations researchers. The third-tier of industrial relations activity in Kochan et al.'s (1986) model is the workplace level tier, where industrial relations policies are played out and affect individuals, supervisors, and union representatives on a day-to-day basis. This third tier corresponds most directly with union contract administration activities.

Although, strategic choice theory downplays the influence of union strategies in determining collective bargaining outcomes, it does provide some insights that are valuable to this case study. First, the model takes into account the dynamic interplay between the structural factors and parties' strategies choices in collective bargaining. Secondly, by integrating the three levels of industrial relations activity, the model acknowledges the interactive relationship among activity at all three levels. As proposed in this case study of the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, contract administration or third-tier activities can have a profound impact on the second-level of activity, where contract negotiations usually take place (Kochan, Katz, & McKersie, 1986).

Leap and Grigsby (1986), developed a hybrid of the strategic choice and dependency models of power. In their study, they develop a comprehensive concept of collective bargaining power that takes into account the origins of power, the factors that enhance or diminish collective bargaining power, and the forms and uses of that

power. Leap and Grigsby's concept begins with potential power, which is the total amount of power available to a party given the contextual factors that party faces. The parties in the collective bargaining relationship employ strategies and tactics that transform this potential power into enacted power. These strategies and tactics have implications for both long and short-term collective bargaining outcomes and can also influence the contextual factors each party faces in the future.

Leap and Grigsby's model provides a good foundation for the model employed in this case study. On a basic level, both the model described in this case study and the model developed by Leap and Grigsby place union and employer strategy at the center of the analysis. Also, both models conceptualize collective bargaining power in a dynamic context, where the parties' bargaining strategies can influence contextual variables and bargaining outcomes over both the long and short term.

However, these two models differ in some important areas. First, Leap and Grigsby's model does not discuss how union external organizing and politics can influence collective bargaining power and bargaining outcomes. In fact Leap and Grigsby's model lists public policy as an uncontrollable variable, while as this study will show, union strategy can influence public policy, which in turn can influence collective bargaining outcomes.

There have been a number of other studies outside the union revitalization literature that have examined the influence of union strategies on collective bargaining outcomes. However, most of these are of limited relevance to this study of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign because these other studies primarily look at the strategies utilized by unions a national level, while this study looks at them at the local level.¹ For example, in their study entitled *Union Structural Choices* Fiorito,

¹ HERE is a decentralized union, with bargaining only taking place on a city by city basis. In fact, the collective bargaining strategies employed by the Culinary Union are not representative of those used by the majority of other HERE locals before 2002.

Gramm, and Hendricks (1991) introduce a model of union behavior based upon strategic choice theory. They focus on the causal relationship between union goals, strategies, structures, and performance, which are all in turn influenced by external environmental factors.

Fiorito et al. focus on a variety of areas of union activity including collective bargaining. In regard to collective bargaining, the authors identify three types of union strategy. The first is the monopoly strategy; in which the union seeks to control the labor market supply, typically through centralized bargaining. Fiorito et al. contend that unions who pursue this strategy tend to be in highly competitive industries, with dispersed production centers, multiplant firms, small local unions, and high union density.

They refer to the second type of union strategy as the efficiency strategy, where unions typically decentralize control over collective bargaining. Unions usually pursue this strategy where external environmental conditions are highly diverse; where workers are professional, semiprofessional, or have quasi-managerial responsibilities; and where firms have demonstrated a high-degree of acceptance of unions and collective bargaining.

Fiorito et al. refer to the third strategy in their model as the information strategy. Unions pursuing this strategy will tend to centralize control over the bargaining process, if its local affiliates are small or if it is negotiating with a large multidivisional company. Although, Fiorito et al.'s model inserts a degree of union strategy into the strategic choice model, the effect of specific strategies on collective bargaining at the local level is not discussed; rather Fiorito et al. focus mainly on how union strategies influence bargaining structures on the national level.

A number of scholars have examined the relationship between globalization and collective bargaining strategies and outcomes (Gordon & Turner, 2000, Nissen,

2002, Cooke, 2003, Cornfield & McCammon, 2003). However, much of this research has focused on industries that are not as geographically fixed as the casino industry in Las Vegas. In other words unlike employers in manufacturing and many service industries, employers in Las Vegas's casino industries cannot move to new locations. Furthermore, Las Vegas casino operators are selling a unique product, meaning that the Las Vegas experience cannot be had anywhere else, even where casino style gambling is legal. This means that casino employees only have very limited competition from their counterparts overseas or in other regions of the United States (Rothman, 2003). This is demonstrated by the fact that while other communities in Nevada have struggled to remain competitive as casino style gaming has proliferated throughout the United States and around the world, Las Vegas, particularly along the strip, has continued to thrive.

Despite its focus on industries where overseas competition plays an important role in determining labor relations outcomes, William Cooke's study *Shifting the Balance of Power: Transnational Collective Bargaining in a Era of Corporate Globalization?* (2003) provides some insights into the nature of power in industrial relations. In his study, Cooke identifies two types of power: 1) the employer's overall ability to pay or the total gain achievable in collective bargaining, and 2) the relative power between the union and the employer which determines the distributive parameters of that total gain. Factors that influence relative power are the external environment as well as employer and union strategies. Cooke's list of union strategies include increasing costs to employers through striking or leveraging employers through their relationships with other stakeholders. Although Cooke recognizes the role of union strategies in determining labor relations outcomes as well as the importance of union leveraging tactics other than traditional strikes, the relevance of his model to this case study is limited by the fact that casino workers in Las Vegas are

not subject to the same kinds of globalization pressures as workers in the industries discussed by Cooke.

Comprehensive Contract Campaigns

Although the union revitalization literature dealing with collective bargaining is relatively thin, there have been a number of important case studies published in this area. However, most of these studies have been case studies of single comprehensive or corporate campaigns. Examples of such studies include Bronfenbrenner and Juravich's book on USWA's campaign against the Ravenswood Aluminum Company (2000) as well as their chapter on USWA's campaign against Bridgestone/Firestone (2003), Getman's book on the United Paperworker's campaign against International Paper (1998), Rosenblum's book on the failed Phelps Dodge strike (1995), Hickey's case study of PACE's contract campaign against Crown Petroleum (2003), Minchin's book on the BASF strike (2002), as well as O'Malley's thesis (1999) and Witt and Wilson's article on the 1997 IBT strike against UPS (1999).

These case studies provide a number of valuable insights into the role union tactics play in influencing collective bargaining outcomes. First, they provide a detailed description of the kinds of innovative tactics and strategies that revitalizing unions are beginning to use to increase their power and win significant gains at the bargaining table. Tactics such as international solidarity efforts, shareholder proxy fights, innovative media campaigns, boycotts, community coalitions, member mobilization, and regulatory pressure efforts are all discussed in the case studies listed in the previous paragraph. These case studies further demonstrate that traditional bargaining strategies such as strikes and picketing are alone insufficient in helping the union achieve its goals at the bargaining table. Likewise, these studies also show that corporate campaign tactics such as boycotts, community coalitions, and regulatory pressure efforts are rendered more effective when they are combined with rank-and-

file member mobilization around the campaign. For example, USWA efforts to gain the support of the unions that represented Bridgestone/Firestone workers in Japan were much more successful when the USWA brought rank-and-file members to Japan to meet with the Japanese unionists and talk about how Bridgestone/Firestone strike has affected them and their families (Juravich & Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

Secondly, these case studies provide a detailed analysis of how these tactics interact with each other as well as the contextual factors within which each comprehensive campaign operates. For example, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich's book on the USWA campaign against the Ravenswood Aluminum Company (2003) demonstrates how individual campaign tactics interacted with one another in order to focus publicity on an employer whose corporate strategy relied on keeping a low profile. No one tactic in particular brought attention to the employer; rather it was a combination of regulatory, international solidarity, political, and rank-and-file mobilization tactics that accomplished this goal. Furthermore, the campaign's rank-and-file mobilization efforts were greatly aided by the close-knit community in which the campaign took place and the long tenure most of the employees had at the plant.

Finally, these case studies provide insight into how a union's past practices influence the types and effectiveness of the strategies and tactics that make up the union's comprehensive campaigns. For example, O'Malley's (1999), writing about the UPS strike, discusses how the reforms implemented by Ron Carey after he became President of the IBT facilitated the implementation of an effective comprehensive campaign when the union struck UPS in 1997. The list of reforms implemented by Carey prior to UPS strike includes the creation of a corporate campaign department, an increase in funding for the member education and communications departments, and launching an aggressive offensive against internal union corruption. Furthermore, in the years between Carey's election and the UPS strike the IBT utilized

comprehensive campaigns against a number of smaller employers such as Ryder Truck System Inc. and Trucking Management, Inc. These campaigns acted as proving grounds for the kinds of tactics that the IBT would use against UPS in 1997. For instance, in these campaigns the IBT sought to transition the union from its traditional top-down approaches to contract negotiations, which minimized rank-and-file mobilization, to a more open negotiation strategy, which sought to involve and mobilize members. Furthermore, in between rounds of negotiations the union sought to develop strong communication networks between the union leadership and its rank-and-file membership, which facilitated rank-and-mobilization as well as leadership development. These earlier efforts proved to have a positive effect for the Teamsters in their strike against UPS. The union was able to mobilize its workers around the country to honor the union's picket lines during the strike, and even more remarkably, utilize an innovative media campaign which garnered the support of the public for the workers.

However, these case studies have a variety of shortcomings that revolve around their limited generalizability. Although all case studies share this problem to a certain extent, it is especially pronounced in regard to the existing case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns. This is because most of the case studies cited deal with particularly dramatic and/or lengthy strikes or lockouts that are the most extreme examples of modern industrial conflict. In fact, in most of these case studies, the employer(s) is engaged in all-out efforts to end the bargaining relationship with the union altogether. In the case studies where employers are not trying to bust the union, they are frequently demanding particularly dramatic concessions, which could result in the union ultimately being decertified. However, these types of conditions do not characterize the vast majority of labor negotiations, and even more importantly, unions are increasingly making comprehensive campaign strategies a common part of their

arsenal and not just something that is rolled out at the last minute when faced with a particularly intransigent employer.

In the case of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign, comprehensive campaign tactics were a routine part of its bargaining strategy, irrespective of whether the union knew it was going to be engaged in a particularly acrimonious round of negotiations with the employer or not. In fact, the Culinary Union, like a growing number of other union locals, sees comprehensive campaign strategies as a means to create an appearance of increased bargaining power and militancy prior to the negotiations in order to encourage employers to settle on terms favorable to the union rather than engage in a protracted battle with the union. Examples of such locals include SEIU Local 1199NY, SEIU Local 1877, UNITE- HERE Local 26, UNITE- HERE Local 2, amongst others. Therefore, an account of a comprehensive contract campaign taking place in a more common less acrimonious bargaining context is missing from the previously cited case study research on the subject.

Another limitation of these case studies is that most of them involve unions that had not or were just beginning to experiment with the kinds of tactics and strategies that are characteristic of the revitalization process. More specifically, with the exception of case studies covering the UPS and Goodyear/Firestone strikes, most of the unions covered in these case studies had had only limited experience with comprehensive campaigns at all (O'Malley, 1999, Juravich & Bronfenbrenner, 2003). With the exception of a few studies, analyses of comprehensive campaigns in unions that have moved beyond the initial transformational phase of revitalization has largely been absent.

However, several local unions, such as the Culinary Union who went through their initial transformational process more than a decade before the 2002 negotiations, are moving beyond this initial transformational phase of the revitalization process and

making comprehensive contract campaigns a regular part of their strategic repertoire. This new context may have several implications for comprehensive campaigns; for example, does experience gained from past comprehensive campaigns increase a union's capacity to wage more effective campaign in the future, or do they tend to burn out staff and rank-and-file activists, and enable employers to develop more effective responses to the campaigns? Furthermore, it is important to gain a better understanding of how the organizing, political and contract administration policies of a union further along in the revitalizing process interact with each other and with the union's comprehensive contract campaign. This case study of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign strategy does this by examining the local's prior collective bargaining, organizing, and political strategies and their influence on the union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign.

In addition to the case studies discussed in this article there are a few studies within the union revitalization literature that take a different methodological approach to studying comprehensive contract campaigns, for example looking at multiple campaigns in a single study. One of the first studies of corporate campaigns was Perry's comparative analysis of ten corporate campaigns. In his book, *Union Corporate Campaigns*, Perry (1987) identifies several dimensions common to most corporate campaigns. The first of these dimensions is that the union attempts to control the public's perception as to what the major issues of the campaign are so as to gain the moral high ground. This aspect of the campaign can be supported by public rallies and protests. The second dimension is the attempt by the union to expand the conflict beyond the immediate workplace. This can be done through coalition building, or by engaging the employer's board of directors, shareholders, and those entities with which the firm has a significant relationship. In corporate campaigns unions also solicit the support of political officials and utilize regulatory agencies to

further gain leverage on the employer. Boycotts and other types of consumer-based pressure tactics make up the final component of corporate campaigns. Although Perry provides a thorough list of the kinds of tactics that make up a corporate campaign, he ignores the rank-and-file mobilization strategies that distinguish corporate campaigns from their more rank-and-file intensive counterparts: comprehensive campaigns. This point is especially important because rank-and-file mobilization was the core element of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign strategy, even tactics that are not necessarily rank-and-file intensive such as the local's efforts to pressure the union through shareholders or the media had significant rank-and-file components.

Jarley and Maranto's (1990) article on union corporate campaigns, although it too by definition overlooked union mobilization tactics that often accompany corporate campaigns, provides some insights of value for a case study of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign. First, Jarley and Maranto argue that individual tactics by themselves generally do not trigger the settlement process; rather it is the cumulative effect of these tactics which pushes the parties towards settlement. This insight is important in light of the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign in that the union strategy was composed of a set of mutually reinforcing tactics. These tactics gave the union significantly more power if they were employed in combination rather than separately. Jarley and Maranto (1990) also point out that firms that rely on good public image are more sensitive to corporate campaigns. This insight is also very relevant to the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign as casino employers rely on maintaining a good image in order to expand into new gaming jurisdictions. Casino employers were especially sensitive to damaging information about their labor policies because the provision of good jobs is one of their major selling points when trying to move into new jurisdictions.

Jarley and Maranto (1990) also note that successful union campaigns lead to more sophisticated resistance on the part of employers, a point that is especially relevant to Las Vegas because the Culinary Union regularly uses corporate campaigns as part of their bargaining and new organizing strategies. This begs the question as to whether the Culinary Union campaigns will retain their effectiveness in the future if employer responses become more effective. Therefore, although Jarley and Moranto exclusively focus on corporate campaign tactics at the expense of looking at rank-and-file intensive tactics that distinguish comprehensive campaigns, their study still provides some insights that are relevant to the Culinary Unions 2002 comprehensive contract campaign in Las Vegas.

Bronfenbrenner (1993) improves upon dependency and strategic choice theories and studies that exclusively examine corporate campaign tactics by identifying rank-and-file intensive strategies and tactics employed by unions and management in first contract campaigns, such as house calls and captive audience meetings, and empirically tests their effect on campaign outcome. She argues that: "Unions have greater success in first contract campaigns when they utilize a multifaceted rank-and-file intensive campaign strategy involving external and internal organizing and pressure tactics." Thus, her analysis goes beyond the corporate campaigns analyzed by Perry and Jarley and Maranto by introducing a rank-and-file element to these campaigns. Corporate campaigns that have this additional rank-and-file component are generally referred to as comprehensive campaigns. Although Bronfenbrenner only described comprehensive campaigns in the context of first contract negotiations, the types of mobilization tactics described by Bronfenbrenner's are similar to the ones used by the Culinary Union in their 2002 round of negotiations.

In the same study, Bronfenbrenner (1993) also analyzes the influence of contextual variables, such as organizer background or bargaining unit size, on the

outcome of first contract campaigns and argues that contextual variables have an interactive relationship with union and management strategies in first contract campaigns. She argues "that contextual factors influence bargaining power, bargaining power influences union and employer choice of tactics, yet tactics influence contextual factors and bargaining power."

This interactive relationship between contextual variables and union tactics is also of particular relevance to this case study. The importance of the relationship between context and tactics is demonstrated by comparing the relevance of traditional labor actions such as strikes and pickets in the Culinary Union 2002 comprehensive contract campaign to those in the case studies previously discussed in this section. For example, the vast majority of the case studies cited above discuss campaigns against employers in the manufacturing sector, where the effectiveness of strikes had been significantly curtailed during the Reagan years. However, in Las Vegas's casino industry, because strikes and pickets can still effectively disrupt the provision of services to consumers, they have retained much of their traditional relevance for the union. Therefore, while traditional tactics such as strikes and picketing played limited roles in most of the comprehensive campaigns in the previously cited studies, the threat of a strike was the core element of the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive campaign (Rosenblum, 1995, Getman, 1998, Juravich & Bronfenbrenner, 1999, Minchin, 2002, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2003, Hickey, 2003).

Although Bronfenbrenner's model deals specifically with first contract campaigns, there have been a number of cases where these tactics have been successfully applied to more mature collective bargaining relationships. For example, in a paper published in the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, co-authors Christopher Erickson, Catherine Fisk, Ruth Milkman, Daniel Mitchell, and Kent Wong (2002) describe how the rank-and-file intensive contract campaign strategies

discussed in Bronfenbrenner (1993) were employed by SEIU Local 1877 over three rounds of negotiations with Los Angeles's building services industry, beginning with the first contract campaign. For instance, SEIU sought to increase their leverage in the negotiations through massive street demonstrations that would garner media attention, win public sympathy, and compel tenants and building owners to in turn pressure building service employers to settle with the union. In order to do this, Local 1877 had to put together an aggressive rank-and-file mobilization campaign that entailed substantial internal organizing, membership participation, and rank-and-file education.

Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich, in a chapter in the book *Rekindling the Movement: labor's quest for relevance in the 21st century* (2001), provide perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of how unions can integrate rank-and-file mobilization tactics, discussed by Bronfenbrenner and Erickson et al., with the corporate campaign tactics discussed by Hickey into mutually reinforcing parts of an overall collective bargaining strategy. In their chapter, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich argue that unions can greatly increase their power in collective bargaining if they employ a strategy that combines rank-and-file mobilization and corporate campaign tactics in a mutually reinforcing and escalating manner, taking environmental factors into careful account. They discuss a number of tactics that can be employed in contract campaign strategies including: end user/consumer campaigns, community coalitions, public relations campaigns, in-plant strategies, traditional picketing, etc.

However, they stress that there is no specific set of tactics with which a union can automatically achieve its objectives; rather, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich argue that a union must carefully select the combination of tactics which is best suited to its bargaining environment and goals. More specifically, a union must do a careful analysis of its opponent and identify ways in which it can pressure it to settle on terms favorable to the union. This means a union must identify ways to make its opponent's

primary decision makers believe that it is in their interest to settle on terms favorable to the union. Therefore, a union's contract campaign strategy must be carefully tailored to each employer and bargaining context. This is essentially the same conclusion reached by Bronfenbrenner in her study of first contract campaigns (Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

Bronfenbrenner and Juravich (2001) also argue that it is important that unions retain the capacity to launch a contract campaign even when not engaged in an all-out struggle with an employer. First, they argue that employers will be more willing to settle on terms favorable to a union when the employer perceives that the union has the capacity to significantly threaten its interests. Secondly, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich explain that the capacity to launch an effective corporate campaign takes at least several months, if not years, to develop, so if a union waits until it is locked in a life or death battle before deciding it wants to begin a corporate campaign it may already be too late (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 2001).

Finally, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich argue that contract campaigns are most effective if they are well integrated into the structure of the local. This not only means that the union has the technical know how and capacity to launch a contract campaign but also that the union has an organizational culture that embraces such strategies. This organizational culture should extend beyond the leadership of the local and into its staff and rank-and-file. This is important because in order to be effective, a contract campaign needs the commitment of all of these elements within a union (Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 2001).

As I show below, the strategy employed by the Culinary Union for its 2002 contract campaign met many of the criteria for an ideal contract campaign as defined by Bronfenbrenner and Juravich's chapter in *Rekindling the Movement*. First, the Culinary Union had developed the capacity and internal culture to launch and to

adequately support a contract campaign. Secondly, the local began to prepare for the campaign more than a year and a half in advance, so they were prepared for employers' resistance to its contract demands. Also, the Culinary and Bartenders unions carefully analyzed the employers involved in the 2002 round of contract negotiations as well as the bargaining context and choose escalating pressure tactics that were carefully tailored to their specific bargaining goals and the context of the Las Vegas gaming industry. Finally, the local prepared a strategy that carefully combined rank-and-file mobilization and corporate campaign tactics so that one reinforced the other. (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 2001).

Strategic Integration

The coordination of union strategies across different spheres of union activity such as contract bargaining, contract administration, external organizing, and politics has been one of the key factors behind the Culinary Union's overall success. For example, the local achieved most of its external organizing victories of the last 15 years by negotiating card-check neutrality language in its collective bargaining agreements with most of Las Vegas's major casino employers. According to the card-check neutrality language contained in these contracts, employers must recognize the union at any newly opened or acquired property once fifty plus one percent of the employees sign union cards. This language not only helped the Culinary Union in its external organizing functions, it also increased the union's leverage at the bargaining table, thereby benefiting the union's ability to service its own members.

Although much of the union revitalization literature has implicitly acknowledged the existence of these kinds of linkages between union strategies in one activity on the industrial relations outcomes in another and has, furthermore, recognized the benefits of coordinating strategies in different areas of union activity, few studies have focused on this subject. Rather, much of the initial union

revitalization literature that dealt with strategic integration has focused on the institutional and budgetary reforms a local needed to make in order to make a successful transition from a strategy focusing exclusively on representational activities to one that also places an emphasis on external organizing (Hurd, 2004). This literature focused on how unions trying to place a greater emphasis on external organizing should balance this new focus with their representational responsibilities (Hurd, 2004; Griffin & Moors, 2004).

However, this branch of the union revitalization literature does not cover strategic coordination of tactics across spheres of union activity beyond this narrow focus, nor does it analyze how such coordination could positively impact a local's ability to mount an effective comprehensive contract campaign. For example, Fletcher and Hurd (2001) argue that in order for a local to make a successful transformation from business unionism² to a model emphasizing external organizing, it must: 1) not compromise its representational effectiveness as a result of expending more resources on external organizing, 2) identify organizational barriers to change such as staff deficiencies and reticence, and 3) "educate and mobilize its members to build the political will and prepare the local for cultural change and ideological reorientation." In other words, Fletcher and Hurd highlight the importance of coordinating external organizing and contract administration activities when a union is shifting its strategic focus.

Among the comprehensive/corporate campaign case studies discussed earlier in this chapter, Matthew O'Malley's (1999) examination of the IBT's strike against UPS provides the most in-depth analysis of how the coordination of strategies across

² Business unionism can be defined as a model of union behavior whereby a union concentrates on its representational functions and provides these services based on the logic of economic exchange, whereby members pay dues in order purchase services from the union. Generally, this model of union behavior is associated with minimal rank-and-file participation in the union. (Bacharach et al. 2001, Turner & Hurd, 2001)

spheres of union activity can influence comprehensive contract campaign effectiveness. O'Malley's thesis describes how the IBT started educating and preparing shop stewards more than a year in advance of the campaign. The union sought to teach stewards how to mobilize and communicate with other union members about the campaign and the upcoming negotiations. The union also sought to develop an effective communication network between its union officials, staff and the rank-and-file; as well as recruit rank-and-file activists for leadership roles in the campaign. By the time the strike against UPS occurred, roughly a year later, the union was able to mobilize its membership to effectively put pressure on the company and force it to settle on terms favorable to the union. O'Malley's thesis shows how the IBT was able to coordinate its contract administration functions with its contract bargaining functions and increase its capacity to mobilize its members for a strike. This accomplishment seems more remarkable given the fact that many IBT members held apathetic or even cynical attitudes towards their union as a result of its tradition of minimal rank-and-file involvement in the bargaining process and chronic corruption.

However, the IBT's campaign against UPS presents only a limited example of strategic integration because it involves coordination between only two collective bargaining functions of a union, contract administration and contract negotiation, and does not involve other areas of union activity such as organizing and politics. Furthermore, these kinds of strategic innovations were not maintained within the IBT. The next round of negotiations between the union and UPS did not feature nearly the same levels of rank-and-file mobilization nor coordination between the union's bargaining and contract administration functions. In comparison, the Culinary Union has maintained this kind of coordination between its representational functions since the late 1980s and coordinates its strategies across its collective bargaining, organizing, and political functions.

A more comprehensive example of a union coordinating its strategies across different spheres of activity is provided by an article published by Harry Katz, Rosemary Batt, and Jeffrey Keefe (2003). In their paper, they examine the CWA's efforts to revitalize itself as changes in its bargaining environment, such technological innovation and divestiture, undermine its traditional membership base and bargaining power. They go on to describe how the CWA's leadership recognized the mutually dependent nature of its collective bargaining, external organizing, and political functions and pursued a revitalization strategy that coordinated the union's strategies in these areas. The article demonstrated that where the CWA was able to link its strategies across the different spheres of union activity, it enjoyed its greatest successes, and where it was unable to do this its success was more limited.

Although PACE's campaign against Crown-Petroleum did not involve extensive coordination of union strategies across spheres of activity, Robert Hickey (2003), in his case study of this campaign, developed a model of strategic integration of union activities and linked this coordination with sustained union revitalization. He criticizes much of the previous union revitalization research for focusing on single indicators of union revitalization, such as increased union membership or greater union political power. He argues that increases in union power in one of these areas are an insufficient indicator of union revitalization. Rather, Hickey argues that in order to achieve sustained revitalization, unions must take a comprehensive approach to their strategic planning and integrate their core activities, as well as undergo the necessary cultural and structural organizational transformations necessary to support their new strategic focus. He argues that without coordinating their strategies in their core areas of activity, unions will be unable to institute the cultural and structural changes necessary to sustain revitalization.

The success of the Culinary Union over the past 15 years provides support for Hickey's analysis. In their analysis of the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization efforts, Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss (2004) argue that the Culinary Union, by involving rank-and-file members in its external organizing efforts, has helped to "radicalize" its rank-and-file membership and thereby increase their capacity to be mobilized for the local's collective bargaining and political efforts. In a similar way, this case study shows how the Culinary Union's contract administration procedure has also contributed to this effect by exposing rank-and-file members to the kinds of mobilization tactics that are common in comprehensive contract campaigns and increasing their awareness of the union as an organization in which they can become involved in order to resolve workplace problems. This radicalization of the Culinary Union's rank-and-file membership has helped transform its internal culture to one that facilitates the rank-and-file mobilization efforts that form the backbone of the local's comprehensive contract campaigns. It has also contributed to the ability of the union to make the internal structural reforms necessary to support these kinds of campaigns.

Dorothee Benz's 2004 article provides an in-depth analysis of how the Culinary Union has been able to successfully coordinate its strategies across its different core activities in order to win significant collective bargaining, external organizing, as well as political gains. Benz also analyzes how the Culinary Union's strategic choices and accomplishments are linked to the economic, political, and social contexts of Las Vegas's casino industry. Her conclusion is that contextual variables in Las Vegas's gaming industry created opportunities that the Culinary Union was able to exploit in order to win remarkable victories in the areas of politics, collective bargaining, and external organizing. The strategic choices made by the Culinary Union play an important role in the Benz's model because by employing the correct set of choices the local was able to take advantage of available contextual

opportunities. However, Benz argues that these contextual opportunities were unique to Las Vegas's casino industry and, therefore, the same set of strategies could not be employed with the same degree of success in other industrial relations environments. Therefore Benz, much like Bronfenbrenner and Juravich (2001), emphasizes the importance of matching suitable union strategies to bargaining contexts, arguing that unions cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach to their campaigns, whether they are in the realm of collective bargaining, organizing, or politics, or in some combination of the three (Benz 2004).

In terms of strategic integration, Benz describes how the Culinary Union has consistently taken a comprehensive approach to its strategic initiatives. This comprehensive approach encompasses the collective bargaining, external organizing, and political spheres of union activity. For example, Benz discusses how the local, taking into account a variety of contextual factors that gave it significant leverage against employers in the sphere of collective bargaining, was able to get card-check neutrality language covering all newly developed and acquired casinos included in its contracts with all of the major casino operators in Las Vegas. The contextual factors that gave the union increased leverage in the sphere of collective bargaining included the vulnerability of the Las Vegas casino industry to strikes, the shortage of qualified workers at the beginning of the 1990s, the large amounts of debt most of the large casino operators had compiled, and the sensitivity of the industry to bad publicity. With this neutrality language in effect, the union was able to organize roughly 30,000 workers with minimal employer resistance.

The union also used political strategies to undermine the efforts of casino operators that did not agree to neutrality, to move into new gaming jurisdictions. As a result of the heavily regulated nature of the gaming industry, especially in jurisdictions outside of Nevada and Atlantic City, the union was able to use its considerable

political influence to prevent certain casinos from obtaining licenses to open new casinos, thus pressuring these operators to settle with the union. This factor played a key role in the decision of MGM-Grand to eventually sign a neutrality agreement with the union. This example also shows how contextual factors are linked to the Culinary Union's coordination of strategies across spheres of activity (Benz 2004).

Benz's analysis is very comprehensive; it takes into account both the importance of coordinating union strategies across spheres of activity as well as the significance of selecting strategies that provide a union with the most leverage in a specific bargaining context. However, Benz, in addition to Hickey (2003) and Katz et al. (2003), does not take into consideration a union's representational functions in between rounds of negotiations. In fact, of the studies discussed in this chapter, only O'Malley (1999) discusses the importance of coordinating a union's contract administration strategies with other union functions.

The fact that Benz did not discuss the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy in her analysis is rendered even more striking by the fact that many of the Culinary Union's leaders and staff that were interviewed for this case study placed contract administration at the core of the local's overall rank-and-file mobilization efforts (Pappageorge, 2003, Dalton, 2003, Hughes, 2003, Zeitz 2003, Alexander, 2005, Henry 2005, Pappageorge, 2005). Furthermore, because rank-and-file mobilization is the foundation of the Culinary Union's political, external organizing, and contract bargaining strategies, the importance of the local's contract administration strategy is especially significant.

This thesis will correct this oversight on the part of Hickey (1993), Katz et al. (2003) and Benz (2005) by providing comprehensive examination of the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy and discussing how it relates to the local's organizing, political, and contract bargaining functions. It will also include a case

study of the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign and show that the union's coordination of strategies across its different spheres of activity greatly contributed to the effectiveness of this campaign. In particular, this thesis will show how the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy greatly contributed to its rank-and-file mobilization efforts, which formed the backbone of its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign.

Contract Administration and the Organizing Model

The center of the Culinary Union's member mobilization efforts is its contract administration strategy. Through this strategy the Culinary Union: communicates and educates its members, identifies, recruits, and trains rank-and-file leaders, promotes rank-and-file participation in the local, and encourages a sense of solidarity and empowerment amongst members in the workplace.

Contract administration involves the establishment and implementation of the rules and regulations that make up a labor contract. Bob Repas (1984) identifies three primary elements of the concept of contract administration: "1) the introduction of the contract after its approval by the negotiations parties, 2) contract alteration and revision during its term....3) the actual operations of the contract, including grievance handling and pressure tactics." Repas's definition of contract administration is distinguished from other definitions of the concept because it recognizes the use of alternative methods of resolving grievances and workplace issues other than formal grievance procedures. The importance of power is also implied in Repas's definition of contract administration. Other definitions of contract administration tend to concentrate on its formal and legalistic characteristics and often overlook the importance of power and non-legalistic alternative means of resolving workplace issues to this concept (Lewin & Peterson, 1988, Duane, 1993, Bremmels & Foley, 1996, Clark 2000). These issues are especially relevant to the case of the Culinary

Union because pressure tactics outside of the traditional grievance process, such as group delegations to management, play a major role in the local's contract administration strategy. In fact, the Culinary Union negotiates specific provisions in its labor contracts, which facilitate the use of these alternative pressure tactics (Caesars Palace Contract 2002-2007, Mirage Contract, 2002-2007).

The contract administration strategy utilized by the Culinary Union in the years prior to the 2002 round of contract negotiations is similar to that described by Teresa Cornrow (1991). In Cornrow's model the union places a priority on rank-and-file membership involvement in the contract administration process. Furthermore, the role of union staff in this model is to facilitate the ability of union members to take advantage of the tools provided by the contract themselves, rather than to have members rely on paid union staff to resolve grievances. In order to do this the union must give rank-and-file leaders increased responsibility and ownership of the grievance process. Unions must also provide rank-and-file leaders with the education and training necessary for them to take advantage of their increased responsibility. Finally, Cornrow argues that a union's contract administration strategy must help rank-and-file members develop a sense of solidarity and empowerment in the workplace by encouraging members to conceptualize their work issues collectively rather than individually.

In her article, Cornrow outlines several tactical recommendations for unions adopting the organizing model of contract administration. Her first recommendation is that unions ought to adopt a strategy that focuses on issues that generate a community of interest among the members and build member solidarity. In other words, the union ought to give priority to those grievances which affect groups of workers and which workers can rally around, rather than those which impact individual workers. Cornrow also recommends that unions ought to be aware of

informal power structures that exist in the workplace and pursue a strategy that builds members' sense of empowerment. In order to do this she recommends that union pursue group grievances, and involve union members in the grievance process as much as possible by utilizing such tactics as delegations to management, break room rallies, solidarity days, and petitions. (Cornrow 1991). These kinds of tactics are a common part of the Culinary Union's tactical arsenal.

A strong two-way communications network between union staff, leadership, and rank-and-file makes up another important element in Cornrow's organizing model of contract administration. This network should include regular face-to-face contact between these different groups and be used to educate the membership about wider union issues. Furthermore, regular face-to-face communication with the membership should help union leaders and staff develop an accurate understanding of the informal power relationships that exist in the workplace and where the union membership is physically, mentally, and ideologically.

The Culinary Union is one of the few union locals utilizing the organizing model of contract administration, and its use of this model is much more ambitious than most other locals pursuing a similar strategy. Although it is common for unions to mobilize members immediately prior to the beginning of negotiations or elections, it is rare for a union to do so in between these cycles (Lopez, 2004). Therefore, it is important to look at the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy and the kinds of impacts it has for other areas of union activity such as contract bargaining.

Outside of the case studies discussed above, contract administration has been largely ignored in the union revitalization literature. When it is addressed, contract administration is often characterized as being in competition with external organizing, or other areas of union activity that are crucial to revitalization for limited union resources. Furthermore, most of the industrial relations research on contract

administration that exists outside of the union revitalization literature does not address the role of union strategies and/or power in the bargaining relationship, and therefore is of limited relevance to this study. In particular, this prior research does not address the influence union contract administration strategy can have on contract bargaining or other areas of union activity. Instead, this literature has focused on issues such as arbitration; the influence of various demographic, economic, and technological factors on grievance rates; the influence of management policies and supervisor behavior on grievance rates, the influence of union policies and union official behavior on grievance rates; the connection between perceptions of industrial relations conflict and high incidence of grievance filing; and the influence of grievance procedures on where and how grievances are resolved (Lewin & Peterson 1988; Bremmels & Foley 1996).

However, there is an extensive amount of organizational behavior literature which has shown that a union's contract administration strategy can have a profound impact on members' union commitment and participation in the union and therefore influence a union's rank-and-file mobilization capabilities. The Culinary Union's extraordinary rank-and-file mobilization capacity formed the backbone of its 2002 contract campaign strategy; therefore, this literature linking contract administration strategy to mobilization provides essential background and support for the arguments made in this thesis.

Numerous studies have shown that grievance procedures are one of the most important functions of a union in the eyes of its members. This may be because it is one of the most visible and regular services a union provides to its members. One survey of approximately 1500 union members found that, among these workers, grievance representation was considered the most important of all union activities (Kochan, 1979). Four other studies have found a strong positive correlation between

rank-and-file union members' subjective evaluations of the grievance procedure and union commitment³ (Gallagher & Clark, 1989, Clark, Gallagher, & Pavlak, 1990, Eaton, Gordon, & Keefe, 1992, Bemmels, 1995a). The connection between union member attitudes towards the grievance process and union commitment is important because a strong positive correlation has been found between union commitment and rank-and-file participation, and thus a union's capacity to mobilize its membership (Fullagar & Barling, 1989, Thacker, Fields, & Barclay, 1990, Bamberger, Kluger, & Suchard, 1999, Sverke & Kuruville, 1995, Sverke & Sjoberg, 1995, Redman & Snape, 2004).

Beyond just finding a strong positive correlation between union commitment and rank-and-file participation, some scholars have found a link between specific contract administration strategies that are common to the organizing model and increased levels of commitment and participation. For example, Patricia Fosh (1993) compared the contract administration strategies and leadership styles of five different unions in unrelated industries in Great Britain and found that unions could increase rank-and-file participation by pursuing contract administration strategies that focused on collective rather than individual concerns of workers and gave members a high degree of responsibility in resolving grievances. Along similar lines, Ed Snape and Tom Redman (2004b), in their study of unionized teachers in Great Britain, found that contract administration strategies that focus on servicing members individually rather than mobilizing workers to resolve problems collectively have a negative impact on overall union participation. In another study focusing on unionized firefighters in

³ The definition of union commitment utilized in these four studies has four primary components:

- 1) A clear awareness of the benefits of belonging to a union for an individual.
- 2) The degree of willingness to fulfill the day-to-day obligations and duties of a member in order to protect the interests of the union.
- 3) The willingness of a member to exert extra effort on behalf of the union above and beyond the generally expected efforts for union members generally.
- 4) ideological belief in the general concept of unionism. (Gordon et al 1980)

Great Britain, Snape and Redman (2004a) found that contract administration strategies that encourage feelings of workplace solidarity and place an emphasis on collective grievances are positively correlated with higher levels of rank-and-file union participation.

Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich (1995) have found a strong correlation between the organizing model of contract administration and a union's ability to fight off raids by other unions and decertification attempts. More specifically, they found that contract administration strategies that are common to the organizing model, such as building and developing rank-and-file leadership, regularly communicating with membership, and developing solidarity between members, were positively correlated with union success in decertification votes and in fending off raiding attempts by rival unions. This relationship was balanced across most of the demographic variables tested by Bronfenbrenner and Juravich. Union success in withstanding decertification votes and raiding attempts provides a reasonable proxy for membership commitment to the union. Given that a strong positive correlation has been established between union commitment and union participation, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich's study provides additional evidence for a link between the organizing model of contract administration and increased rank-and-file participation.

Lois Tetrick (1995) provides a theoretical foundation for the correlation between the organizing model of contract administration and increased rank-and-file union participation. She argues that union commitment is not generated as a result of a simple economic exchange between the union and its members, whereby union members make a rational economic choice to become active in their union because of the financial reward they may receive as a result of their activism. Rather, Tetrick argues that rank-and-file union participation occurs dynamically as result of the formation of mutual obligations between rank-and-file union members as well as

union staff and leadership. The organizing model, Tetrick points out, highlights the mutual obligations union members owe to one another by involving them in the resolution of their collective problems.

Samuel Bacharach, Peter Bamberger, and William Sonnestuhl (2001) flesh out Tetrick's theoretical model. They argue that the more intensely an individual participates within an organization, building life experiences and relationships associated with it, the greater the sense of social obligation a person will feel towards that organization. This sense of social obligation leads to the formation of normative commitment towards the organization. This type of commitment is what is generally associated with increased organizational participation, an example of which is increased rank-and-file union participation. However, in order to generate more intensive rank-and-file involvement, a union must legitimize itself in the eyes of its members. Bacharach et al. argue that unions can use logics of action to legitimize their authority and elicit commitment from their members. The authors define logics of action as "an interdependent set of representations or constraints that influence action in a given domain." In other words, logics of action guide the behavior of individuals and groups as they tackle the practical constraints of their lives. Bacharach et al. argue that in regard to rank-and-file union participation, logics of action form the cognitive frame that guides union-member relations. The authors define labor's "logic of union-member relations as the cognitive framework guiding union strategies for legitimizing the union to its members, securing commitment from its members, and attracting new members." Bacharach et al. argue that there are two logics of union member relations: the servicing logic and the mutual aid logic. The servicing-logic is organized around a utilitarian principle of legitimacy whereby the union provides members with services and benefits in exchange for a fee in the form of union dues. Therefore, according to the servicing logic, members assume a more

passive role in their union. Within this context, members do not expect the union to play a large role in their lives; they feel that their obligations to the union are met by paying dues, attending occasional meetings, and voting on the contract. Union members do not form the kinds of relationships or have the kinds of experiences that lead to them developing a sense of obligation towards the organization, and therefore the union is unable to generate high levels of rank-and-file participation (Bacharach et al., 2001).

The second type of logic of action described in the same analysis is the mutual aid logic. According to the mutual-aid logic, the union is seen as an entity whose members, staff, and leadership have multiple mutual obligations to one another. Members are given more responsibility in union matters and are encouraged to address issues both in and outside of the workplace collectively. In fact, the union is seen as an organization that can help members resolve problems both in and out of the workplace. This logic generates rank-and-file participation in the union because it facilitates rank-and-file participation in and a sense of responsibility for the union. Furthermore, it encourages union members to look at their problems collectively and seek to resolve them with aid of their peers, instead of relying on paid union staff. Problems are seen as issues around which prospective or current members are organized, and workers learn the essence of unionism by participating in and experiencing collective action. Instead of providing services to the members, the role of paid union staff and leadership is to facilitate the ability of members to help themselves by empowering and organizing them so that they are able to resolve their problems collectively. Therefore, the mutual-aid logic increases the capacity of unions to mobilize their rank-and-file members. Bacharach et al. argue that the organizing model, such as that which the Culinary Union employs for its contract administration as well as other activities, is consistent with the mutual aid logic.

Therefore, as this case study of the Culinary Union shows, unions pursuing an organizing model of contract administration should enjoy increased rank-and-file participation and greater capacity to mobilize members for periodic rounds of negotiation.

Chapter III: Methodology

Case studies are an integral part of the union revitalization literature, particularly the branch of the literature dealing with comprehensive contract campaigns. This is because one of the key arguments made by scholars studying union comprehensive contract campaigns is that in order for such campaigns to be successful unions ought to utilize strategies that are matched to their contextual circumstances (Juravich & Bronfenbrenner, 2000). Therefore, studies examining comprehensive campaigns need to take into account the context in which each campaign takes place. Because it facilitates a detailed description of the social, political, and economic context of the subject under analysis, the case study approach is well suited for researching comprehensive contract campaigns.

Case studies are also particularly appropriate for describing the processes through which an outcome occurs. This is because of the rich detail a case study provides. This thesis focuses on how the Culinary Union's strategies, both prior to and during its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, influenced by the external industrial relations context of Las Vegas's gaming industry, increased the Culinary Union's collective bargaining power in its 2002 round of negotiations. Therefore, a case study approach is well suited to this study.

However, case studies have their own particular drawbacks. Most importantly, due to their singular nature, it is difficult to draw definitive generalizable conclusions from case studies. Nevertheless, this case study does provide further evidence supporting the argument that contract administration strategy and strategic integration have significant roles to play in the union revitalization process. This thesis also provides an illustration of how the organizing model can be used to increase rank-and-file union participation and increase the effectiveness of comprehensive campaign strategies. Yet it is important to be cognizant of how contextual factors can influence

both the strategic choices of the Culinary Union and industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's casino industry.

This case study relied on a wide variety of sources of information. Thirty hours of interviews were conducted with union staff and leaders for this case study. Gaming wire reporters, who provided the primary coverage of the negotiations for both the local and national press, were also interviewed. I worked as an intern in the Culinary Union's research department in the summer following the 2002 round of negotiations, which provided me with both observational and experiential data. This internship provided me with a large degree of insight into the internal functioning of the Culinary Union. It also allowed me to have numerous informal conversations with Culinary Union staff and leaders about the 2002 contract campaign, as well as other activities of the union.

I also shadowed several internal organizers as they went about their daily work routine. This entailed following them into the casino and observing them meeting with workers and managers in order to resolve grievances. This allowed me to witness the Culinary Union's contract administration procedure in practice.

Other valuable sources of information for this thesis were the people I shared an apartment with while living in Las Vegas. Both were casino workers; one was a shop steward for the Culinary Union and the other was a non-union subcontracted worker at a unionized casino. Numerous informal conversations with these individuals provided me with a great deal of insight into the everyday internal operations of a Las Vegas casino.

The union also granted me access to some primary materials related to the campaign, such as weekly updates distributed to members, training materials used to prepare the bargaining committee for the campaign, numerous flyers and other publicity related materials, etc. However, I was not given access to the Culinary

Union's bargaining notes. Finally, I made considerable use of secondary materials for this case study. I relied extensively on press accounts from Las Vegas's two primary newspapers: the Las Vegas Review-Journal and the Las Vegas Sun. I also analyzed a variety of academic literature on union revitalization, the organizing model, union participation, and contract bargaining, and Las Vegas's gaming industry. This academic literature provided this thesis with its theoretical underpinnings and allowed for it to be placed within the context of the existing industrial relations research.

Chapter IV: Las Vegas Background

Introduction

A key argument made in this thesis is that unions and employers can strategically manipulate advantages and disadvantages accruing from their bargaining environment in order to increase their power at the bargaining table. This case study provides a detailed explanation of how the Culinary Union did this in the 2002 negotiations. The bargaining environment the Culinary Union faced in the negotiations can be divided into two parts, the first being the social, political, and economic context of Las Vegas's casino industry. The second is the Culinary Union's own internal history, culture, structure, resources, and long-term practices which played an integral role in influencing its decision making and capabilities during the negotiations. This chapter as well as the following chapter will describe the context of the 2002 contract negotiations. This chapter will focus on Las Vegas and its casino industry. The next chapter will focus on the history of the Culinary Union. The second chapter will also analyze the Culinary Union's current structure, culture, and long-term practices and discuss their influence on the local's choices and capabilities in the 2002 negotiations.

The City of Las Vegas

The City of Las Vegas itself covers only a relatively small proportion of the area that is popularly conceived of as "Las Vegas." The Las Vegas Strip, UNLV, the airport, and a large proportion of the residential and commercial development all fall outside the City of Las Vegas's boundaries and lie in unincorporated parts of Clark County. State legislation passed after World War II prevented Nevada cities from annexing unincorporated townships without the county's approval. This has meant that Las Vegas has never been able capture the strip or any of its rapidly growing

suburbs and has only been able to retain its declining core areas. Therefore, when studying Las Vegas it is important to look not at the City of Las Vegas itself but at its wider metropolitan area or the county the city resides in: Clark County. This is highlighted by comparing the population figures of Las Vegas with that of its entire metropolitan area. In 2000 the population of Las Vegas was 483,734, while the population of the Las Vegas metropolitan statistical area was 1,381,086. (U.S. Census Bureau). The chief public body governing these unincorporated areas is the Clark County Commission, which some have argued is the most powerful governmental body in the state. However, it should also be noted that Clark County also covers an area significantly larger than the Las Vegas Metropolitan area, much of which is unpopulated desert (Littlejohn, 1999).

The political economy of Las Vegas and Nevada is very laissez-faire. Nevada has no franchise tax, personal or corporate income tax, or inheritance gift taxes, and has minimal property taxes. It has been a right-to-work state since 1952 and otherwise has generally lax labor protections. The political and social climate in Nevada is very libertarian and therefore tends to favor as little government involvement in economic and social issues as possible (Rothman, 2002a). Traditionally, the City of Las Vegas's political leaders have been very supportive of the local gaming industry; however, they have also been somewhat more progressive on employment issues than their colleagues at the county and state levels (Arnado, 2003).

The Las Vegas Casino Industry

Las Vegas's economy is dominated by the Hotel Gaming and Recreation (HGR) Industry. In 2002 the HGR industry employed 174,226 people in the Las Vegas metropolitan area and accounted for 26.4 percent of all jobs in the area. If jobs that support the HGR industry were counted in this statistic, such as taxi drivers and airport workers, this proportion would be much higher (Wial & Rickert, 2002). Over

the past 20 years the area's economic base has become more diverse as employers have located to Las Vegas to take advantage of its business friendly climate. In this period CitiCorp, Ocean Spray, and the US Postal Service have also become major employers in Las Vegas. Due to the expansion of its airport and its strategic geographic location, Las Vegas has become a major mail distribution center for the southwestern United States.

This increasing economic diversity has diluted the traditionally dominant influence of the gaming industry over state and local government (Rothman, 2002a). Furthermore, the Culinary Union in the 1990s became more aggressive in asserting itself in state and local politics, which has also weakened gaming operators' hold over local politics. In the years between 1990 and 2002 the union successfully elected two of its members to the state legislature and played a leading role in the defeat of several state and local politicians that had sided explicitly with management in a variety of labor disputes that occurred during this period (Arnado, 2003).

The Las Vegas Casino industry is generally subdivided into three categories. The first are casinos located along or near to the Las Vegas Strip. The second category are casinos that are located along or near to the Fremont Street Experience, a covered pedestrian walkway in downtown Las Vegas. These casinos are known as downtown casinos. The third category are neighborhood casinos. Neighborhood casinos are located in neither of the two previously mentioned areas, but are rather scattered throughout the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Neighborhood casinos are a relatively new phenomenon in Las Vegas: prior to the 1990s the location of casinos outside of the strip, downtown, and a few other areas was restricted (Rothman, 2002a)

Strip Casinos are located on or just off Las Vegas Blvd. in the corridor between the McCarran International Airport at the southern end of the Strip and the intersection of Las Vegas Blvd and Sahara Ave at the northern end of the Strip. Strip

Casinos are generally the large gaming mega-resorts, such as the Bellagio or Caesar's Palace, for which Las Vegas is now known. These casinos primarily serve out-of-towners (Rothman, 2003). In 2002 there were four casino companies which operated multiple properties along the strip: MGM-Mirage, The Mandalay Resort Group, Harrah's Entertainment, and the Park Place Entertainment Corp.

The strip has been booming since the Mirage Hotel and Casino was built in 1989, with only a brief interruption caused by 9/11 and the recent recession. In the period between 1990 and 2002 there have been 16 new casinos built either on or just off the strip (Rothman, 2002a). The names of these recently built casinos are: The Mirage, the Excalibur, the Luxor, Treasure Island, MGM Grand, the Hard Rock Hotel, the Stratosphere, Monte Carlo, New York, New York, the Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, the Venetian, Paris, the Aladdin, the Rio, and The Palms. Other casinos such as Caesar's Palace and the Tropicana have undergone major renovations during this period enabling them to compete with the newer and more elegant recently opened properties (Alexander, 2002). Casinos which have not undergone such major renovations, such as the Stardust and the New Frontier, have been forced to compete by focusing on more budget-minded tourists (Rothman, 2002a).

The vast majority of the Culinary Union's members work in casinos along the Strip. Roughly 41,000 of the Culinary Union's 45,000 plus members⁴ work in Strip casinos (Simpson, 2002f, German, 2002l, Berns, 2002m). Union density along the Strip in occupations typically represented by the Culinary Union is more than 90% (Greenhouse, 2004). At the time of the 2002 negotiations, the Culinary Union represented workers at 25 properties along the strip: Bally's, Barbary Coast, the Bellagio, Caesar's Palace, Circus Circus, the Excalibur, the Flamingo, Harrah's, the Las Vegas Hilton, the Luxor, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, the Mirage, the Monte

⁴ This number reflects the Culinary Union's membership at the time of negotiations; in the years following the negotiations the local's membership has grown dramatically.

Carlo, the New Frontier, New York, New York, Paris, Rio, Riviera, Sahara, Slots-a-Fun, the Stardust, the Stratosphere, Treasure Island, and the Tropicana.

The second category of casinos are downtown casinos. These casinos are patronized by a mix of locals and budget-minded tourists. In contrast to the thriving Strip casinos, downtown casinos with a few exceptions⁵ have struggled to remain competitive in Las Vegas's dynamic gaming industry. The vast majority of downtown casinos are unionized. However, due to their comparatively small size, downtown casinos employ only about 4,000 Culinary Union members in total (Simpson, 2002m). The downtown properties with contracts with the Culinary Union are Binion's Horseshoe, El Cortez, Fitzgerald's, the Four Queens, the Fremont, the Golden Gate, the Golden Nugget, the Las Vegas Club, the Plaza, and the Western.

Traditionally, downtown casinos have drawn from two major market niches: budget-minded tourists and locals. However, over the past twenty to thirty years these two markets have been siphoned off by Strip and neighborhood casinos and, as a result, most downtown casinos have been going through a long steady decline (Simpson, 2002a). In addition, downtown casinos have lost customers as a result of the emergence of gaming in other parts of the United States. Several additional factors have contributed to the decline of downtown casinos: first, the overall economic decline of downtown Las Vegas has decreased the attractiveness of downtown casinos for gamblers. Downtown Las Vegas suffers from many of the common problems that downtowns across America face: a lack of parking, increased crime, a population shift to the suburbs, and a declining tax base. Furthermore, downtown casinos are older, smaller, and offer fewer amenities than either Strip casinos or the newer neighborhood casinos. These factors have been compounded by the failure of most downtown casino operators to significantly invest in their establishments (Simpson, 2002a).

⁵ Such exceptions include the Golden Nugget and those owned by Boyd Gaming.

The third sector of Las Vegas's gaming industry are neighborhood casinos. These casinos primarily serve local gamblers and are located throughout the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Although this sector of the Las Vegas casino industry is thriving as a whole, older neighborhood casinos have struggled in recent years, causing several to shut down. The failure of these older properties can be explained to a significant degree by the proliferation of two casino chains that have come to dominate the neighborhood casino sector in Las Vegas: Stations Casinos and Coast Casinos. The new casino chains have redefined the neighborhood gaming market in Las Vegas. The older neighborhood casinos generally offer minimal non-gaming amenities beyond food service. However, the newer Stations and Coast casinos offer an expanded the list of amenities by including such things as movie theaters, live entertainment, nightclubs, bowling, etc. Furthermore, the newer neighborhood casino chains are much better located geographically than their older counterparts. The older neighborhood gaming properties tend to be located in declining areas such as North Las Vegas, while the newer neighborhood casino properties are located near Las Vegas's newer and more middle class areas, making them more convenient for local gamblers with more spending money. Overall, union density amongst neighborhood casinos is very low. The Culinary Union only represents employees at three of these properties: Castaways, El Dorado, and the Jerry Nugget. Furthermore, all of the Stations and Coast neighborhood casinos are non-union⁶ (Rothman, 2002, Rothman, 2003).

Las Vegas Gaming Industry Workforce

There is a high degree of occupational segregation by gender, race, and ethnicity in the gaming industry nationwide. For the most part this pattern of segregation type is present in Las Vegas's casinos as well. African-Americans are

⁶ Coast Casinos owns one union property located on the Strip: the Barbary Coast

over-represented in out-of-sight “back-of-the-house” jobs such as maids and housemen, janitors and cleaners. In comparison, African-Americans are under-represented in front-of-the-house jobs such as front desk clerks, bartenders, and food servers in which there is a higher degree of interaction with casino guests. These same patterns exist for Hispanics as well. (Waddoups & Eade, 2002).

There is also a high degree of occupational segregation by gender in the hospitality industry. Sales counter clerks, maids, and waitstaff are disproportionately female, while women are under-represented in security guard and bartender positions. One of the effects of the occupational segregation in the gaming industry is that women as well as racial and ethnic minorities earn less than their male and Caucasian counterparts, in occupations of equivalent skill level. However, these wage disparities are mitigated in casinos covered by collective bargaining agreements (Waddoups & Eade, 2002). Undocumented workers do not have much of a presence in Las Vegas due to various state, county, and city licensing requirements for casino workers, although some of these regulations have recently become repealed (Pappageorge, 2003).

Patterns of Collective Bargaining in Las Vegas’s Casino Industry

Union density in Las Vegas’s casino industry stands at roughly 65%. However, union density in Clark County's hotel, gaming, and recreation industry is highly variable by occupation. For example, occupations that are generally represented by the Culinary Union, such as housekeepers and cocktail waitresses, have a very high union density, while others such as card dealers and most other occupations directly related to gambling activities are almost entirely unorganized⁷ (Waddoups & Eade, 2002, Benz, 2004, Fantasia & Voss, 2004).

⁷ The only establishment in which these employees are unionized is the New Frontier Hotel and Casino.

Several labor unions in addition to the Culinary Workers' and Bartenders unions represent workers in Las Vegas casinos. However, the Culinary Workers' Union is the dominant local union representing workers in Las Vegas's casinos. Occupations typically covered by the Culinary Workers' Union are: food preparation, kitchen sanitation, dining room staff, bell desk, housekeeping, slot change, cocktail servers, and valet parkers in some casino/hotels. The vast majority of these job categories are unskilled or semi-skilled (Occupational Information Network 2005).

Other unions with a presence in Las Vegas casinos include the Carpenters, IBT, IUOE, IATSE, AFM, UNITE!⁸, and the TWU⁹. For the most part, these unions have not been as successful as the HERE-affiliated locals in organizing newly opened Las Vegas casinos, resulting in much lower union densities in the occupations that they tend to represent. UNITE! has been the one exception in this regard. Before UNITE!'s merger with HERE in 2003, it had successfully organized the laundry workers in a number of casinos as well as several of the major subcontractors who clean casino laundry (Waddoups & Eade, 2002, Bohner, 2004, Berns, 2002s)

There were no reported instances either in the press or in any of my interviews of any of the above labor unions engaging in any solidarity actions on behalf of the Culinary or the Bartenders Unions in the 2002 negotiations. Historically, there have been several instances where unions in Las Vegas's gaming industry have cooperated in contract negotiations, perhaps most significantly in the period between 1968 and 1980 when the Teamsters, Bartenders, and Culinary Unions all agreed to honor each others' picket lines. This agreement was broken by the Culinary Union when they agreed to a no-strike clause in their 1980 contract (Waddoups & Eade, 2002, Rothman, 2002a).

⁸ Most of UNITE!'s members work in subcontracted cleaning services jobs.

⁹ TWU only represents the dealers in the New Frontier Hotel

History of the Casino Industry in Las Vegas

Early History

The area where Las Vegas currently stands was once the site of a spring-fed creek which created an oasis in the middle of the Mojave Desert. It was the only free flowing water and grass for miles around. Prior to the original development of Las Vegas, the springs had been the site of a variety of Native American villages as well as a failed Mormon settlement prior to when Las Vegas got its official start. This spring-fed creek, long ago buried by construction, is ultimately responsible for the city's development. Railroad developers, who wanted to take advantage of the only available source of water for miles around, determined that the Las Vegas Valley would be a prime spot for a water station and repair facility for a line connecting Los Angeles to points east. When construction on the line began in 1904, a tent town comprised of salons, stores, and boarding houses sprung up in the Las Vegas Valley. By 1905, a permanent downtown had been constructed. The population of Las Vegas expanded rapidly over the next 15 years to more than 3,000 residents. Las Vegas's origins as a railroad town were also responsible for its original association with vice. Businesses that catered to travelers' demands for gambling, prostitution, and alcohol flourished in early Las Vegas (Land & Land, 2004).

As a result of the efforts of progressive reformers and Prohibition, gambling became illegal in the Nevada in 1910, and drinking became illegal in 1919. However, these activities still flourished in Las Vegas's underground economy, as they did in many other cities and towns across America. In fact, Prohibition failed to curb gambling and drinking activity in Las Vegas to any extent at all. Most casinos and salons were at best poorly kept secrets and were regularly attended by local business and political leaders (Land & Land, 2004).

The national railway strike of 1922 nearly led to the end of the fledgling community. The city was a hotbed of union activism during the strike. In retaliation, Las Vegas's primary railroad operator at the time, the Union Pacific, moved most of its operations to the town of Caliente, about 125 miles to the east. As a result of the Union Pacific moving its operations, the number of jobs in Las Vegas dwindled and the city's residents began to move away (Land & Land, 2004).

Las Vegas was saved by the construction of the Boulder Dam, now known as the Hoover Dam, about 30 miles from the city. Construction on the dam began in 1931, the same year that gambling became legal again in Nevada, and only two years before the end of Prohibition. The coincidence of these events was especially fortuitous as entrepreneurs in the city began to build gambling halls catering to the estimated 5,000 workers who had migrated to southern Nevada in order to find employment on the dam project. Although most of the workers did not live in Las Vegas, they traveled to the city to take advantage of the town's bustling salons and gambling establishments. They also traveled to Las Vegas because Boulder City, a city closer to the dam project where most of the workers lived, had strictly enforced laws against gambling and alcohol consumption. By becoming the entertainment center for these workers, Las Vegas was once again able to thrive. The effect of the Hoover Dam project on Las Vegas was so significant that the city continued to thrive even in the midst of the Great Depression (Land & Land, 2004).

However, once the Hoover Dam project was completed and the workers moved away, Las Vegas again faced decline. The city tried to sustain itself by advertising itself as the prime place to stay for tourists visiting the Hoover Dam and most of Las Vegas's hotels offered gambling as an additional amenity for tourists visiting the dam. During World War II the military spent nearly \$25 million on military installations around the city, further contributing to the city's economic

livelihood. The military continued to make large investments in the area throughout the cold war, becoming one of the city's primary economic pillars, adding some diversity to the local economy (Land & Land, 2004).

Las Vegas's Golden Era

Development along what is now known as the Las Vegas Strip began in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Development began, because of a shortage of space in Las Vegas's downtown commercial area. Developers also preferred to build along what is now known as "the Strip" because it was located at the end of highway 91¹⁰, the principal thoroughfare between Las Vegas and Southern California. Therefore, visitors from southern California traveling to Las Vegas by car would come to hotels along the Strip first, giving these hotels a competitive advantage. Development along the Strip began in the late 1930s; however, the initial hotel-casinos were similar to Las Vegas's downtown gambling halls, not the casino-resorts which later made the Las Vegas Strip famous. The first resort-style casino in Las Vegas was the El Rancho, which opened in 1941. The El Rancho was developed by Thomas Hull, who wanted his new Las Vegas casino to be similar to high-end hotels he owned in Fresno and elsewhere in California. The El Rancho's lush palm tree-shaded pool area and low bungalows differentiated it from the city's typical gambling halls, which often still had sawdust floors. The El Rancho was very successful, and it was followed a year later by the even fancier Last Frontier Hotel and Casino, which still stands today¹¹ (Land & Land, 2004).

The Flamingo Hotel and Casino, which opened in 1945, was the first truly extravagant casino-resort in Las Vegas. The original visionary behind the project was Billy Wilkerson, the founder of the Hollywood Reporter as well as the owner of three

¹⁰ Highway 91 was later named Las Vegas Blvd.

¹¹ The current name for this casino is the New Frontier.

Sunset Strip night clubs. Wilkerson lacked sufficient financing to complete the hotel, and at that time most legitimate lenders and investors were unwilling to get involved in casino ventures. Therefore, with these avenues of financing unavailable, Wilkerson reached out to contacts he had made in the organized crime world through his nightclub business. Through his relationships with various mob figures, Wilkerson was able to win the backing of the infamously violent mobster Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel. At the time, Siegel as well as many other mob figures already owned shares in Las Vegas gambling halls, so it was not hard for Siegel to convince some of his mafia colleagues to invest in Wilkerson’s hotel (Denton, 2001).

Siegel quickly took control of the development of the Flamingo, pushing Wilkerson to the sidelines. Unfortunately, he did not have much experience as a developer, and the project was plagued by delays and cost overruns. The Flamingo’s opening was a flop, and the casino initially failed to turn a profit. Furthermore, rumors began to emerge about property financial improprieties related to the project. As result of these rumors and the Flamingo’s failure, Siegel’s relationship with his business partners soured. Not long after the opening of the Flamingo, he was found dead in his house, a probable victim of a mob hit, although his case was never solved (Denton, 2001).

Ironically, after Siegel’s death the Flamingo rapidly became the most successful casino in Las Vegas up to that point, and inspired the type of casino resorts that have made Las Vegas famous. When the Flamingo’s tremendous success became apparent, it sparked a mafia-financed building boom along the Strip that continued unabated for the next 20 years. Casinos built during this time include The Thunderbird, The Desert Inn, The Sahara, The Sands, The Riviera, The Dunes, The Moulin Rouge, The Hacienda, The Tropicana, and The Stardust (Land & Land, 2004). Over this same period, the population of the greater Las Vegas Metropolitan area

mushroomed from 8,000 in 1940 to 269,000 in 1967. The rise of Las Vegas as a gambling mecca was aided considerably by the rise of Castro in Cuba. Prior to Castro, Cuba had been the leading gambling destination in the Western Hemisphere.

However, when Castro came to power in Cuba, Americans could no longer travel there to gamble and began to visit Las Vegas instead (Rothman, 2002a).

The Flamingo also provided the model for the predominant method of casino financing in Las Vegas for the next 20 years. Mob figures who wanted to enter the Las Vegas gaming market would team up with less sordid local Las Vegans in order to develop and/or own a casino. The mobsters brought financing into the relationship while the locals provided legitimacy. The locals were the visible partners in the relationship and were the licensed operators, while the mob figures were unnamed partners and were not licensed (Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

A number of factors contributed to the mob's dominance in the Las Vegas gaming market. First, the mafia had already gained a foothold in the gaming industry, because it ran illegal casinos in other parts of the United States, before casino-style gambling became legal again in Las Vegas (Land & Land, 2004). Secondly, despite the fact that gaming was legal in Nevada, mainstream financial institutions would not invest in casino ventures because of the stigma attached to the industry; as a result casino developers had few choices other than the mob as a source of financing. Furthermore, other than military spending there was no source of revenue for southern Nevada at the time, so Las Vegas's residents and political leaders were willing to look the other way when the mob began to invest in Las Vegas casinos. This situation was compounded by the fact that Nevada had retained much of its permissive cultural and legal climate left over from its frontier days. Finally, gaming regulations designed to clean up the industry were either ineffective or had effects opposite to their stated intent (Rothman, 2002a).

As a prime example, after 1955 state regulations required that every stockholder of a gaming establishment be licensed by the state. Although this was designed to prevent unnamed mobbed up investors from becoming involved in the Las Vegas gaming industry, it effectively prevented any large publicly held corporation from investing in the gaming market, because of the vast numbers of shareholders in these corporations. The effect of this law became more pronounced as gambling's stigma began to wear off in the 1960s, and thus legitimate investors became more willing to invest in casino ventures. Therefore, casino developers were forced to rely on the mob as a primary source of financing (Rothman, 2002a).

By the late 1950s developers began to design more lavish casinos with development costs that exceeded the financial means of the mob. Since legitimate investors were blocked by either social mores or state gaming regulations, developers had to find alternative sources of revenue to finance their more lavish casino projects. The mobbed up casino operators began to rely on the Teamsters Pension Fund as an additional source of revenue for their projects (Rothman, 2002a). Mobbed up casino operator Moe Dalitz, who was a longtime friend and associate of Teamsters leader Jimmy Hoffa, is generally credited with the idea of using Teamster pension fund money to finance casino development. Dalitz and Hoffa had become friends decades earlier, when Dalitz owned a number of laundry businesses in the Detroit area whose drivers were represented by the Teamsters Union. The use of Teamsters Pension fund money led to newer and more lavish casino resorts along the strip such as Caesar's Palace, which cost \$16 million to build. By 1966 the Teamsters Pension Fund was the largest source of revenue for casino developers in Las Vegas (Denton, 2001, Rothman, 2002a).

Corporatization of Las Vegas

As the 1960s progressed, more mainstream financial institutions began to take an interest in Las Vegas's gaming industry. This led to what is commonly known as the corporatization of Las Vegas, as hospitality corporations and mainstream financial institutions replaced the mob and the Teamsters as the primary players in Las Vegas's casino industry. Five factors contributed to the decline of the mob and the rise of corporate power in Las Vegas's Gaming Industry. The first was the arrival of Howard Hughes in Las Vegas. Hughes became the first truly legitimate major investor to enter Las Vegas's gaming market when he bought the Desert Inn in 1966. He soon followed this first purchase with a buying spree that included Castaways, the Frontier, the Landmark, the Sands and the Silver Slipper. At one point Hughes controlled one-seventh of Nevada's gaming revenue. The expansion of Hughes's gaming empire was only halted by an anti-trust lawsuit. Hughes's company was able to get around Nevada's gaming regulations concerning shareholders because Hughes was the sole owner of his company. Furthermore, a man of Hughes's stature had little trouble manipulating the state's minimal bureaucracy in his favor. Finally, unlike most previous Las Vegas casino investors, Hughes had no public association with organized crime (Denton, 2001, Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

Hughes undermined mob control of Las Vegas in a number of ways. First, Hughes's public stature helped to reduce the already declining stigma attached to Las Vegas's casino industry and the gaming industry in general. Furthermore, his financial resources greatly exceeded those of the mob or the Teamsters pension fund. This allowed Hughes to create lavish gaming attractions with which the mafia or Teamsters financed casinos simply could not compete (Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

By the time Hughes took an interest in Las Vegas, the casino industry was already gaining acceptance in popular American culture. By the 1960s Las Vegas became the subject of several major movies and TV shows. The public began to associate Las Vegas with popular entertainers like the Rat Pack and fictional characters such as James Bond, rather than unscrupulous mob personalities such as Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky. Hughes helped this process along, and soon other major legitimate interests began to invest heavily in Las Vegas (Denton, 2001, Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

The Hilton Corporation entered the Las Vegas Casino Industry in 1970 with the purchases of the Flamingo and International casinos. Hilton enjoyed enormous success in Las Vegas, and by 1976, 43% of its total gross revenue was coming from its Las Vegas operations. Seeing Hilton's success, the Holiday Inn and Ramada soon also entered Las Vegas's casino industry. This influx of corporate investment was facilitated by the elimination of the state requirement that every shareholder in a gaming venture pass a Gaming Control Board background check. This meant that corporate investors were able to enter the local gaming industry, flooding it with unprecedented amounts of money. The financial resources of mainstream investors were much larger than those of the mob, making it hard for the mafia-controlled casinos to compete with their more lavish corporate-owned counterparts. The mob was largely overwhelmed by the wealth of the corporate investors that were entering the Las Vegas casino industry and lacked the resources to compete. By 1980 Nevada's top five gaming entities, Harrah's, Del Webb, MGM, Hilton, and Caesar's World, were all publicly traded corporations (Denton, 2001, Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

With legitimate sources of funding now available for casino development, Nevada gaming regulators became less likely to look the other way when mob figures

sought to operate in the city. For example, the Nevada Gaming Control Board began to crack down on the mafia's practice of using legitimate front men to mask their involvement in various casino interests. By 1985 mob control of Las Vegas's casino industry was largely a thing of the past. The population of Las Vegas continued to grow dramatically throughout 1960s and 1970s. By 1980 the population of Clark County was 463,087, nearly twice as much as it had been 13 years earlier in 1967. (Smith, 1995, Rothman, 2002a).

Las Vegas Gaming Industry in Decline

The casino industry in Las Vegas began to stagnate in the 1980s. Revenues in the industry actually declined for most of the first half of the decade. There were a number of reasons for this decline. First was the recession that hit the United States in the early 1980s, which dramatically cut into discretionary income. Secondly, many of the new casinos that opened in the late 1970s and 1980s failed to capture the public imagination in the way earlier casino openings had. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s each new casino became the hottest and trendiest gaming property in town—that is, until the next casino along the Strip had its grand opening. The new casinos that opened along the strip in the late 1970s and early 1980s failed to continue this pattern and generally opened to lackluster reviews. Right from their opening these newer casinos were overshadowed by their predecessors like Caesar's Palace.

The legalization of casino-style gambling in Atlantic City also contributed to the failure of newer Las Vegas casinos to capture the popular imagination. Atlantic City was more convenient for gamblers from east coast population centers, and its casino openings stole the spotlight from those in Las Vegas. In many ways Atlantic City began to be seen as the trendy place to gamble, and Las Vegas was considered to be old and passé. A major fire at the MGM casino in 1980 that killed 85 people and injured hundreds, as well as a 60-day city-wide casino strike in 1984, with images of

thousands of striking workers getting tear gassed and arrested along the Strip broadcast all over the country, only served to further sully Las Vegas's image with the public (Hopkins, 2004b).

Mirage Phase Las Vegas

After this period of stagnation in the 1980s, a casino entrepreneur Steve Wynn breathed new life into Las Vegas's casino industry. Starting in 1989, Steve Wynn, followed by other casino operators, began to build new massive gaming resorts along the Strip. These new casinos exceeded all previous establishments in terms of size, extravagance, and amenities offered to the guests. This era, which began in 1989 with the opening of the Mirage Hotel and Casino and continued through 2000, is known as the Mirage phase (Rothman, 2002a). The Mirage casino is a prime example of the kinds of attractions these new casinos offered in addition to gaming activities and traditional Las Vegas shows. The Mirage featured a large volcano that exploded hourly, Siegfried and Roy and their famed white tigers, a large dolphin tank, and the renowned nouvelle circus, Cirque du Soleil (Hopkins, 2004b). Not only did Steve Wynn create innovative casino attractions, he also was a pioneer in casino financing. Realizing that it would be difficult to finance his highly expensive projects through traditional means,¹² Wynn turned to high-yield junk bonds. As a result, in the late 80s and 1990s Drexel Burnham Lambert became the dominant financial force in the industry (Rothman, 2004a).

Soon after work began on the Mirage, other major casino operators in Las Vegas, in order to remain competitive, launched plans to develop Mirage-style casinos of their own and/or substantially renovate their existing properties. These new casinos included Treasure Island, Excalibur, The Venetian, Paris, New York - New York, The

¹² The Mirage cost \$630 million to build, \$500 million more than any other previous casino in Las Vegas.

MGM Grand, The Luxor, Mandalay Bay, and the Stratosphere amongst others. Other casinos such as Caesar's Palace and Circus-Circus went through extensive renovations that added more space for gambling, introduced new types of games, made the casinos more extravagant, and added elaborate non-gaming attractions (Hopkins, 2004b, Land & Land, 2004). Altogether in the ten years after the Mirage opened, 11 major resorts were built along the Las Vegas Strip (Rothman, 2002a). Furthermore, Las Vegas added 84,286 hotel and casino jobs in the period between 1989 and 2000, almost doubling its employment in this sector (Land & Land, 2004).

A significant feature of these new casinos is that they offered a wide array of entertainment options to visitors other than gaming. For example, the Excalibur features live jousting, the Bellagio and the Venetian feature art museums, and several casinos built extensive shopping malls. Another significant feature of the Mirage-phase casinos was their theming. All of the Mirage-phase casinos were built around particular themes such as the Excalibur Casino, which is designed around a medieval theme, and the Paris casino, which recreated many of the sites of the city from which it takes its name. This theming and the developing of non-gaming attractions was part of casino operators' efforts to make Las Vegas more palatable to families and mainstream America (Hopkins, 2004, Land & Land, 2004). Although Las Vegas did become a popular tourist destination with mainstream America to a degree it never had previously, its appeal as family vacation spot remained limited (Littlejohn 1999).

Other Strip casino operators who did not have the financial resources to either open new Mirage-style casinos or substantially renovate their existing properties were began to focus on budget-minded tourists. Most Strip operators were successfully able to make this transition, causing downtown operators to lose a substantial portion of their consumer base. Downtown casino operators also had to deal with the proliferation of neighborhood casinos that happened around this time, which siphoned

off a large amount of the downtown's local consumer base as well. These changes further contributed to Las Vegas's already declining downtown (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

The Mirage-phase casinos caught on with the American public, and by the early 1990s Las Vegas had clearly surpassed Atlantic City as the prime gaming center in the United States. The numbers of visitors to Las Vegas mushroomed, and casino operators had no trouble filling all their new hotel rooms. This growth in the industry was aided significantly by the booming economy of the 1990s (Hopkins, 2004, Land & Land, 2004).

The city's growing casino industry created enormous demand for new workers, causing Las Vegas's population to explode. The population of Clark County increased from an estimated 691,467 in 1989 to 1,375,765 in 2000. In the period between 1986 and 2001, Las Vegas was the fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States. Furthermore, as the stigma attached to gambling receded, so did the stigma attached to Las Vegas. This led to non-gaming employers such as CitiCorp, Ocean Spray Cranberries and Ethel M Chocolates to move in to the area, creating a more diverse economic base for Las Vegas.

Present-Day Las Vegas

Since the 1990s Las Vegas has gone through numerous changes, but the casino industry has continued to thrive. The only time the industry appeared to struggle was right after 9/11. In March of 2000 the MGM staged a surprise, unfriendly takeover of Steve Wynn's Mirage Resorts. This left Steve Wynn with no properties along the Strip, effectively signaling the end of an era in Las Vegas.

William Bennett was another influential Las Vegas casino operator who left the industry during this period. Bennett was forced out of his Circus-Circus Enterprises in 1994. Although he retained one property, the Sahara, which he

controlled until his death in 2002, with the loss of Circus-Circus Enterprises Bennett was no longer a major force in Las Vegas's gaming industry. William Bennett was notable because he pioneered the idea that Las Vegas could be a family destination. As far back as 1968, when he built Circus-Circus, Bennett was trying to build casinos which catered to the needs of families. The absence of both William Bennett and Steve Wynn from the gambling industry is also notable because both placed a high value on establishing a cooperative relationship with the Culinary Workers Union and signed contracts with the union after which the other casino operators loosely patterned their contracts (Rothman, 2002a, Land & Land, 2004).

The marketing strategies of the major casino operators along the Strip were also changing. Instead of focusing on family-orientated entertainment, many of the new casinos along the strip began adopt more of a Disneyland-for-adults theme, perhaps best characterized by the new official motto for Las Vegas: "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas." Newer casinos such as the Palms and the Hard Rock Café focused on attracting young and hip consumers, rather than families (Land & Land, 2004)

Although the casino industry in Las Vegas continued to thrive in spite of the recession in the early part of this decade, it did suffer a dramatic if relatively short-term fallout from the 9/11 attacks. Although hotel occupancy rebounded after only a couple of months, room rates stayed depressed well into 2003. The attacks led to widespread lay-offs in Las Vegas's casino industry, as interest in tourism disappeared almost overnight. At the peak of the crisis about 30,000 casino employees had lost their jobs, and even more had their hours cut back so that they were only working part-time. These layoffs, compounded by the falloff in tourism following September 11th, caused shock waves through Las Vegas's non-gaming economy as well, since it was

heavily dependent on the spending of both tourists and casino workers (Rothman, 2002b).

A year after the 9/11 attacks, however, the casino industry was back in full gear and was clearly in expansionary mode (Rothman, 2002b). Several new casinos are under construction along the Strip. Steve Wynn has reentered Las Vegas's Casino Industry with his new casino, which he named after himself. Several other casinos are undergoing substantial renovations and/or expansion. Furthermore, the primary neighborhood casino chains, Stations and Coast, have continued to thrive. In contrast, the casino industry in downtown Las Vegas is still in decline, with no hope of recovery on the horizon (Pappageorge, 2005)

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief background and history of the Las Vegas gaming industry, and the environment in which the 2002 negotiations took place. As will be discussed in the following chapters this environment had a profound influence on the Culinary Union's strategic choices and their outcomes in the 2002 contract negotiations. However, it is important to take into account the local's internal as well as external environment when discussing the influence of context in the 2002 negotiations. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the Culinary Union's internal environment consists of its history, culture, structure, skills, resources, and long-term practices. These factors all have had a profound impact on the union's choice of strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies in the 2002 negotiations. The next chapter will discuss the history of the Culinary Union, and the union's internal practices and strategies in the years leading up to the negotiations. It will also discuss the bargaining environment's influence on the negotiations themselves.

Chapter V: Culinary Workers Union Local 226 – History and Context

Introduction

This chapter chronicles the history of the Culinary Union from its beginning in the 1930s through the beginning of the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign. It will describe how the Culinary Union developed the internal capacity to launch its ambitious 2002 contract campaign. The union's rank-and-file mobilization capability was the key to its success in the 2002 contract negotiations. In the years prior to the 2002 contract campaign the Culinary Union pursued several long-term practices and strategies that increased its rank-and-file leadership skills, developed strong communication networks between union leaders, staff, and members, cultivated member commitment to the union, and created a culture which encouraged rank-and-file participation in the union. This chapter will describe how current culture, practices, and strategies of the Culinary Union came into being as well as the historical development of the local overall. In so doing this chapter will look at the Culinary Union's contract administration, contract negotiation, external organizing, and political activities, examining how they both complemented and undermined each other throughout the history of the Culinary Union.

Beginning in the late 1980s the Culinary Union went through a comprehensive revitalization process that encompassed its contract administration, contract negotiation, external organizing, and political activities. This revitalization process did not occur in each area of union activity separately; rather revitalization in one sphere of activity helped to reinforce the revitalization process in others. The Culinary Union recognized these relationships and pursued a strategy during this era that took advantage of the mutually reinforcing nature of these linkages. This revitalization process and the strategies pursued by the Culinary Union during this period were

major contributing factors to the effectiveness of the local's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. The final section of this will focus on the relatively recent revitalization of the Culinary Union and its influence on the 2002 round of contract negotiations.

History of the Culinary Union through the 1980s

Early History

The Culinary Union's roots date back to the 1930s when HERE began organizing hotels nationwide as part of the surge in industrial unionism that took place during the New Deal (Cobble & Merrill, 1994, Rothman, 2002). The local was chartered by HERE in 1938 with a membership of between 500 and 1,000 workers (Culinary Union, 2002). The union remained small and only became influential after World War II, when HERE's international office sent Elmer "Al" Bramlet to Las Vegas to help build the local (Rothman, 2002a).

Bramlet was born on a farm near Jonesboro, Arkansas. He came from a poverty-stricken southern farming family. The family's already poor economic situation was made worse by the Great Depression, and as a result Bramlet left home and traveled about the country working menial odd jobs. He served in the Navy during World War II and was discharged from the Navy in Los Angeles, where he found work as a bartender. There he joined an HERE-affiliated bartender's local and soon became a business agent. After working as a business agent for a couple of years in Los Angeles, the international office of HERE sent him to Las Vegas to help build the local; it was then an emerging tourist destination. (Rothman 2002a)

Bramlet built the Culinary Union from the ground up, organizing workers already in Las Vegas and traveling around the country recruiting individuals to work in Las Vegas's casinos. Las Vegas at the time was still a small and isolated city that

was incapable of generating a sufficient workforce for its burgeoning gaming industry. Facing a severe labor shortage, casino operators allowed the Culinary Union into their casinos as long as the local was able to furnish operators with a steady supply of qualified workers. Bramlet would spend months on the road, recruiting workers for Las Vegas's casinos. He would mainly recruit young people in the south on an person-by-person basis. Since he came from a poor southern background himself, he was very successful in convincing these types of people to move to Las Vegas to work in its casinos (Rothman, 2002a).

Casino operators generally hired their workers from the Culinary Union's hiring hall, meaning that in addition to providing the casino operators with a labor force the Culinary Union also screened applicants for casino jobs. This system granted the Culinary Union a great deal of power in Las Vegas's gaming industry. This was one of the primary reasons why casino operators did not oppose Culinary Union organizing at their properties (Benz, 2004, Rothman, 2002).

With the support of all the members he helped bring to Las Vegas, Bramlet was elected to the Culinary Union's most powerful position, secretary-treasurer, in 1954. Bramlet's leadership style was autocratic, and he maintained an iron discipline within the local through a combination of charisma and intimidation (Rothman, 2002a). He played favorites and cultivated a dedicated cadre around him, ensuring their allegiance with money, power, and in some cases a share of the spoils in other businesses he ran on the side¹³ (Rothman, 2002a). Bramlet also cultivated support amongst African-American members by negotiating contractual provisions that were favorable to occupations where they predominated (Rothman, 2002a).

¹³ In addition to serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Culinary Union, Bramlet maintained several business interests that primarily catered to the casinos with which the local had contracts (Hopkins 1999).

Bramlet did not use a negotiating team when negotiating a contract and instead met with casino owners himself. The owners themselves often came from working class backgrounds and enjoyed a good rapport with Bramlet in negotiations. Signed contracts were rarely used in these negotiations, just “understandings sealed with a hand shake” (Rothman, 2002a). So interpersonal relationships played an important role in determining collective bargaining outcomes in Las Vegas’s gaming industry during this period. The terms Bramlet negotiated were considered to be the best in the industry and were often used as models by other HERE locals across the country (Rothman, 2002a).

One of the key provisions in all of Bramlet’s contracts was a guaranteed minimum gratuity for all customers in order to help tipped workers’ problems with highly variable pay (Rothman, 2002a). Another important provision gave Banquet waiters a cut of the highly lucrative banquet profits. (Rothman, 2002a). Also included in the contracts were firm work rules. These were important because the unskilled nature of most casino work made it easy for casino employers to increase the workload of casino employees (Rothman, 2002a). These favorable contract provisions created a strong sense of loyalty among Culinary Union members for Bramlet.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Culinary Union thrived under Bramlet. When Bramlet became secretary-treasurer of the Culinary Union in 1954, its membership was 2,000; by 1963 the union had 8,000 members (Hopkins, 1999), and by 1967 membership was up to 16,000 (Rothman, 2002). In 1963, Jude Wanniski, a columnist for the Las Vegas Review-Journal at the time, estimated that union density in Las Vegas’s casino industry was 98% in occupations traditionally represented by the Culinary Workers Union (Hopkins, 2004a).

Corporatization of Las Vegas

The corporate takeover of the Las Vegas gaming industry signaled a shift in labor management relations. The management philosophy of corporate casino owners was very different from that of the mafia-linked operators, leading to a more acrimonious relationship with the Culinary Union. For example, while mafia owners treated much of the non-gaming functions of their operations as loss leaders, the new corporate owners focused on making each sector of the casino profitable (Rothman, 2002a). Furthermore, the informal and familiar relationship between casino operators and Bramlet was replaced by a much harder-edged and legalistic relationship. No longer were contracts settled with a handshake, and increasingly written formalized contracts became the norm. The new corporate casino operators did not have the kind of paternalistic goodwill towards their workers that their mobbed up predecessors had. This led to a common attitude amongst veteran casino employees and industry observers that the mob bosses treated casino employees much better than the corporate owners that followed them (Benz, 2004).

Therefore, the dawn of the corporate era in Las Vegas was marked by the local gaming industry's first strikes. In 1967, the Culinary Union went out on its first strike, shutting down twelve downtown hotels before a contract was reached. Unable to reach an agreement in the following round of negotiations in 1970, the Culinary Union struck three Strip properties: the Las Vegas Hilton, the Desert Inn, and Caesar's Palace (Hopkins, 1999). These casinos incurred significant losses as a result of the strike. Eventually the union forced the casino operators to settle on their terms, and the four-day strike led to wage and benefit increases amounting to 31.5 percent over three years. The losses the casino operators incurred from the strike dampened the casino operators' appetite for taking on the Culinary Union, and in the next round of negotiations in 1973 the companies signed a three-year contract without conflict.

However, when the next contract expired in 1976 the Culinary Union was unable to reach an agreement with the casino operators, so it struck over wage increases and the terms of the no-strike, no-lockout clause in their contract. In this first city-wide strike in the history of Las Vegas's gaming industry, the Culinary joined the Musicians Union and the Teamsters, striking 15 resorts for 15 days. Eventually, the two sides settled, with management largely conceding to the union's wage and other demands (Rothman, 2002a)

Death of Al Bramlet and decline of the Culinary Union

Al Bramlet was murdered in 1977. The murder was never solved but had all the characteristics of a mob hit. Bramlet's death came as part of a spike in mob violence in Las Vegas resulting from a mafia attempt to maintain its power base in the city in the face of growing corporate dominance in the local gaming industry (Rothman, 2002a). Furthermore, Bramlet had created a sense of resentment in the HERE international office by preserving the independence of the Culinary Union. When Ed Hanley became president of HERE in 1973, one of his major goals was centralizing the union's local health and welfare fund, under control of the international. Hanley was known to have connections to organized crime, especially to the mob in Chicago, which also had a big stake in Las Vegas's casino industry. Bramlet's resistance to efforts to merge the Culinary Union's health and welfare fund with international's created much resentment in Hanley's new administration (Hopkins, 2004). Either or both of these factors are probably responsible for Bramlet's murder. At the time of Bramlet's death, Culinary Union membership was between 20,000 and 30,000 (Rothman, 2002a).

Ben Schmoutey was Bramlet's first successor. Schmoutey came up through the rank-and-file and was a former fry cook. He lacked Bramlet's leadership ability and charisma. Specifically, Schmoutey had little negotiating experience or skill.

Furthermore, he was linked to organized crime and therefore was dogged by legal troubles, which began to tarnish the reputation of the Culinary Union in general (Rothman, 2002a).

Under Schmoutey's leadership the Strip's first non-union casino, the Imperial Palace, opened in 1979. The union put up minimal resistance to this new casino. This created a great deal of consternation amongst the Culinary Union's members. Furthermore, during Schmoutey's tenure the Culinary Union's leadership and staff became increasingly inaccessible to the members, further alienating the rank-and-file. In 1980, the Culinary Union negotiated a contract that included a no strike pledge that violated the agreement the union had with other unions to honor each others' picket lines. This ended any solidarity efforts between the Culinary Union and other unions representing workers in Las Vegas's casinos (Rothman, 2002a).

In 1981, Jeff McColl beat Schmoutey handily in a union election that featured mob goons harassing and intimidating McColl supporters as they went to vote. Although he was not linked to the mafia, McColl proved to be no more of an effective leader than Schmoutey. Support for the union continued to decline during McColl's administration, and it allowed Culinary Union membership to decline to below 20,000, down 20% from when Bramlet was killed (Rothman, 2002a).

1984 Strike

The Culinary Union reached its nadir in 1984 when Las Vegas casino operators provoked a strike in the hope of winning significant concessions from the union or breaking it outright. Taking advantage of the Culinary Union's weakened position and the anti-union atmosphere that prevailed in the country during the 1980s, the Nevada Resort Association (NRA), an association of corporate Las Vegas casino operators, decided to take an aggressive approach in the negotiations. The NRA managed to enlist the support of the smaller non-corporate privately owned casinos in

their fight. However, as tensions rose during the negotiations and a strike seemed imminent, some of these private casino operators decided to settle with the union, rather than follow the casino operators' lead in provoking a fight with the Culinary Union (Rothman, 2002a, Alexander, 2002).

In the negotiations leading up to the strike, The NRA insisted on several concessionary demands that were unacceptable to the union. These demands included rescinding many of the work rules that protected workers from excessive workloads, giving the NRA control over the union's health plan, elimination of the 40-hour workweek, and reduced guaranteed gratuities (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a). Without strong support of the rank-and-file, McColl was in a difficult position. Accepting the NRA's terms would be a complete defeat for the union, significantly lowering its members' standard of living. However, McColl was not sure if he had enough support within the union to pull off a successful strike. Furthermore, in the current anti-union political climate the Culinary Union risked decertification if the strike lasted for more than a year. Forced into a corner, McColl chose to fight, so tensions mounted throughout the negotiations until the union called a strike on April 2nd, 1984 (Rothman, 2002a).

Casino operators got an injunction that placed strict restrictions on the union members' ability to picket. In addition, casino operators hired police officers to stand guard outside their casinos. Tensions between striking workers and the police escalated quickly, and soon violent confrontations broke-out. Roughly nine hundred demonstrators were arrested, and the police used tear gas on the strikers. Images of the police tear-gassing and beating strikers were broadcast across America, creating a public relations disaster for the gaming industry, which was trying to improve its image after several high-profile cases drawing attention to the mob's remaining influence in the local industry. These images caused travelers to avoid Las Vegas, not

wanting a labor conflict to ruin their vacations. The strike lasted 67 days and cost the local gaming industry \$60 million in lost revenue. Business fell off by 9.6 percent on the Strip and 10.3 percent downtown in the first month of the walkout. Furthermore, the bad publicity created by the strike undermined casino operators' lobbying efforts to get casino-style gaming legalized outside of Las Vegas and Atlantic City (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a).

These factors forced casino operators to compromise and settle with the union after two months. This strike demonstrated to corporate casino operators that strikes are still an effective weapon in their industry, even as the effectiveness of the tactic became highly questionable in most other sectors in the United States. The strike with the corporate casino operators was settled in June 1984, and provided for a five-year contract with small increases in wages and contributions to the health insurance fund and an 80% new hire rate for the first year of employment. Although the Culinary Union avoided disaster in the strike, the contract they eventually signed was considered by most to be weak, and a precursor to the local's further decline. (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a, Benz 2004).

However, a few privately owned casinos who had joined the NRA in provoking the strike opted not to settle with the Culinary Union. These private casinos were not as vulnerable to the pressures that led the corporate casinos to settle with the union. Privately-run casinos did not have to answer to the concerns of investors who worried over lost revenue over a relatively short-time period. Secondly, privately owned casinos were not trying to expand into jurisdictions where casino-style gambling was then prohibited (Alexander, 2002). Unaffected by these factors, these private operators, lead by the Boyd Group, decided to continue the fight. Eventually they were able to decertify the union at six locations: Sam's Town, The California, (Both operated by the Boyd Group), the Four Queens, The Marina, The Holiday Inn

South (currently the Boardwalk), and the Holiday Inn International, which later became Main Street Station (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a).

Seeing the success that these casino operators had had breaking the union, several other privately run casinos, who had previously settled with the union, began to renege on their contracts. The most prominent in this group was long-time casino operator Jackie Gaughan, who owned the El Cortez and the Western. The operators of the Union Plaza, the Las Vegas Club, the Golden Gate, and the Showboat followed Gaughan's lead and froze wages and ignored contract-mandated increases in health insurance payments. This issue provoked another long battle with the Culinary Union, which extended over the next couple of years.

Overall, the 1984 strike was costly for the Culinary Union, and many industry experts thought it signaled the beginning of the end for the local. Although Local 226 had withstood most employers' attempts to win significant contract concessions or bust the union outright, the union lost six hotels, and several family operators were openly refusing to live up to the newly signed contract. Many gaming industry experts expected the union to capitulate completely in the next round of negotiations (Alexander, 2002).

Revitalization of the Culinary Union

After the brutal citywide strike of 1984, the Culinary Union took stock of its current situation and embarked upon an ambitious revitalization strategy. The beginnings of the Culinary Union's revitalization efforts date back to 1987, when Jim Arnold was elected secretary-treasurer of the local. Jim Arnold is a native of Las Vegas and spent most of his life in the Culinary Union. He grew up in a union family; his father was a unionized construction worker. Arnold began work in the casino industry as a houseman, picking up and delivering laundry for the Las Vegas Sands. He became a shop steward and then a union rep in 1974. He was generally considered

to be in Bramlet's inner circle (Lampros, 1999). In order to help the Culinary Union's revitalization efforts, in 1987 the international sent a team of highly regarded organizers, several of whom had played a leading role in the 1984 strike. These organizers began to build a rank-and-file organizing committees in each of the casinos. The union tried to make these committees as reflective of the membership as possible, in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, occupation, and shift. Members of these committees participated in the union's decision making process, attended negotiations, kept their co-workers informed about union affairs, and mobilized their co-workers around workplace issues (Alexander, 2002).

Mopping up after the 1984 Strike

In December of 1987, just as the internal organizing process was getting underway, a federal judge ordered the privately owned casino operators who had reneged on their contract with the Culinary Union to begin to honor their contracts and pay millions of dollars in back wages and benefits. The downtown casinos continued to appeal this decision. This ruling jump-started the union's campaign to make these casinos live up to their contracts, starting a battle with downtown casinos that would climax with the 1989 contract negotiations.

In the spring of 1988 union members picketed the privately owned casinos that were not complying with their contracts, delivered petitions to management, and publicized their disputes to tour groups and travel agencies. The union also began to utilize corporate campaign tactics against these casino operators. In one case, the union was almost able to defeat a poison pill measure that prevented a pro-union operator from taking over the Showboat Casino. The Culinary Union also distributed videos telling the story of a federal indictment for racketeering charges against Binion's Horseshoe, making it difficult for the casino to get a license to operate casinos in jurisdictions outside of Las Vegas (Alexander 2002).

The next big flareup in the conflict occurred when the privately owned Binion's Horseshoe illegally fired the bargaining committee after the committee opposed the casino's contract offer. On Jan 19th 1990, after filing numerous ULPs, the union struck the casino. The casino's founder, Benny Binion, had just died and his son had inherited the casino. Benny Binion was a local legend and was very politically connected; in addition, he inspired a strong loyalty from his clientele which was only heightened after his death. Furthermore, the casino was one of downtown's few thriving properties. Nevertheless, after months of picketing consumers began to go elsewhere, especially locals who were drawn away by the emerging neighborhood casinos. Overall it was estimated that the strike cost Binion's Horseshoe \$16 million, and the casino settled with the union in November, 1990.

With the Binion's Horseshoe strike settled, the Culinary Union began to focus on the Boyd Group. In 1985, federal regulators gave control of Stardust and the Fremont Hotel to the Boyd Group after their former owners were found to have connections to organized crime. Both of these properties employed Culinary Union members and therefore the Boyd Group went on the offensive against the union. In response, the union began to build up its rank-and-file committees in those casinos. The union discovered the company was highly leveraged and its profits were decreasing, so it developed a relationship with the company's lenders and through this relationship put pressure on the company. As a result of these pressure tactics the Boyd Group eventually decided to settle with the union.

Furthermore, because the downtown casinos are located so close together, the Boyd Group, concerned that the effects of a strike against one of the other downtown operators would spill over to its own properties, corralled the other remaining downtown casino operators into settling with the union. The settlement with the Boyd Group wrapped up the final loose ends remaining from the 1984 strike, marking the

end of an era for the Culinary Union. This meant that by the beginning of the 1990s the union had successfully warded off the most serious threat to its existence in its history. It also enabled the union to concentrate its efforts on maintaining its density during the rapid growth of the casino industry along the Strip that was about to take place over the next decade.

Obtaining Card-Check Neutrality along the Strip

During the 1990s the membership of the Culinary more than doubled. This was largely the result of the expansion of the casino industry along the Las Vegas Strip during the 1990s, and the card-check-neutrality language that was included in all of the Culinary Union's contracts with most of the major Strip casino operators. The local first negotiated this language in 1989, and it covered any new property opened by most of the major casino operators during the length of the contract. This contract language was rolled over into subsequent contracts the Culinary Union had with the major Strip operators as well as later added to the contracts the Culinary Union held with all the other Las Vegas Casino operators.

There were a number of factors that contributed to the Culinary Union's ability to obtain such favorable terms in its labor contracts. These factors were the result of changes that were taking place in the late 1980s in the gaming industry as well as the revitalization process the Culinary Union was going through at the time. The result of these factors was that going into the 1989 negotiations, the Culinary enjoyed a greater degree of leverage over the casino operators, particularly the major Strip operators.

Recognizing these factors, the Culinary Union and Golden Nugget, Inc., which was owned by Steve Wynn, settled on a contract whereby the Golden Nugget Inc. agreed not to oppose union organization at its future strip properties and to recognize the Culinary Union once 50% plus one of its employees within a bargaining unit had signed union cards. In return the Culinary Union agreed to: not take economic action

against the company for the period of the contract, use its lobbying power on behalf of the gaming industry, reduce the number of job categories in the contract, and forgo some increases in compensation the union would have otherwise have received. This contract set the standard for most of the other major Strip casino operators: Circus-Circus, Caesar's Palace, the Las Vegas and Flamingo Hilton, The Tropicana, and Bally's¹⁴ (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002a, Pappageorge 2003, Greenhouse, 2004).

There were a number of factors that led the major Strip casino operators to pursue a much more conciliatory strategy in the 1989 round of contract negotiations than they had in 1984. First, casino operators faced a very tight labor market at the end of 1980s. Rapid expansion of the casino industry in Las Vegas at the time, particularly at the higher end of the market, meant that there was a dramatic increase in the demand for qualified workers. However, Las Vegas was still too small and isolated to provide a sufficient workforce for these casinos. These factors placed a premium on workers in Las Vegas that were qualified to work in the higher-end casinos. This meant that it would be hard for casinos to recruit a sufficient number of qualified replacement workers if the 1989 negotiations ended in a strike or lockout. Furthermore, as a result of this shortage of labor, casino operators became more reliant on the Culinary Union's traditional role of recruiting and screening potential employees for Las Vegas's casinos, and this gave casino operators another incentive to develop a constructive relationship with the Culinary Union (Rothman, 2002a).

Secondly, even before the expansion, the Culinary Union already represented a large majority of casino workers in Las Vegas, which gave it a significant amount of leverage in the industry. This greatly enhanced the union's ability to engage in collective action against casino operators and made the operators fearful of the effects of poor labor relations on service quality in their casinos. Service quality is very

¹⁴ The one major strip operator not to agree to these terms was MGM.

important in the casino industry; it is often what distinguishes popular from less popular properties. This especially is the case amongst the Strip casinos in Las Vegas, because these casinos are overwhelmingly higher-end facilities, where the importance of service quality is especially acute. The clientele of higher-end casinos are especially sensitive to poor service; therefore service quality can have a dramatic impact on casino operators' bottom line (Rothman, 2002a, Rothman, 2003, Benz, 2004).

Another factor which operated in the union's favor in 1989 is that there is a strong union consciousness amongst workers in Las Vegas, especially in the casino industry. Unlike most other cities in the southwest, Las Vegas has historically had a strong labor movement. Native Las Vegans usually had parents who were union members and, therefore, were favorably disposed towards unions. Furthermore, because Las Vegas is largely a one-industry town, many of their parents were actually members of the Culinary Union. For the same reason it is not uncommon to have multiple people from the same families belonging to the Culinary Union. These factors contributed to a tradition of strong union sentiment and sense of community amongst Las Vegas' casino workforce, which made it easier for the Culinary Union to mobilize its members for the 1989 negotiations (Pappageorge, 2003, Benz, 2004).

Casino operators were also anxious to avoid a strike in the 1989 negotiations because they were carrying a lot of debt from all the new development that was going on at the time. Las Vegas's casino industry experienced a dramatic building boom that began in the late 1980s and continued through the end of the 1990s as each casino operator rushed to develop multiple Mirage-style casinos. These new casinos were primarily financed by high-interest junk bonds, which meant that casino operators at the time were facing expensive debt servicing requirements, and would have a difficult

time affording a disruption in revenue caused by a strike (Rothman 2002a, Benz, 2004).

Not only were gaming companies rapidly expanding in Las Vegas, they were also trying to introduce casino-style gambling to new jurisdictions where it had previously been prohibited. In addition to exacerbating casino operators' debt problems, this expansionary effort made casino operators more public-relations conscious. This was because casino operators relied on public officials and ballot initiatives to rescind prohibitions on casino-style gambling in jurisdictions all across the country. Casino operators did not want a repeat of the public-relations nightmare caused by the mass arrests and tear gas that characterized the 1984 strike, undermining their efforts to convince voters and public officials of the benefits of bringing casino-style gambling to their communities. Furthermore, one of the key arguments that casino operators used in these efforts was that casino-style gambling would bring good-paying jobs to economically depressed areas. It would have been hard for casino operators to make this a convincing argument if they were simultaneously engaged in a labor with the Culinary Workers Union (Rothman, 2003).

The Culinary Union's parent organization, HERE, also had a set of political relationships that it could utilize to increase its power vis-à-vis the gaming industry. The casino industry at the time was not very well connected to politicians and public officials in jurisdictions outside of Nevada. Because unions were a significant force in areas targeted by the gaming industry for expansion, such as Detroit and Chicago, HERE often enjoyed a stronger relationships with public officials in these areas than gaming operators. HERE used these relationships both to prevent anti-union operators from getting gaming licenses, and to help union-friendly operators obtain gaming licenses (Alexander, 2005).

Furthermore, Steve Wynn, who became in the late-1980s the leading casino operator in Las Vegas, had a history of working to establish cooperative relationships with the unions that were represented in his facilities. Steve Wynn was the first to negotiate a card-check neutrality agreement with the Culinary Workers Union in 1989; and this contract became the model upon which all other subsequent contracts between the major operators and Culinary Union were patterned in that round of negotiations (Rothman, 2002a).

The Culinary Union's revitalization effort in the late 1980s was another factor behind its ability to gain card-check neutrality language in its contracts with major strip operators. The Culinary Union painstakingly built representative rank-and-file bargaining committees in each of the casinos and greatly increased its ability to mobilize its members for a contract campaign. Furthermore, the Culinary Union developed the capacity to wage effective corporate campaigns against its opponents. The Culinary Union's ability to effectively mobilize its members and put pressure on employers in a contract fight was demonstrated in its battles with the family-owned casinos who reneged on their contracts after the 1984 strike (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004, Alexander, 2005).

Recognizing their vulnerability to union collective action and the extent to which the Culinary Union had revitalized itself, the major strip casino operators, led by Steve Wynn, approached the 1989 negotiations in a much more conciliatory manner. Corporate casino operators did not want labor strife to jeopardize the success of their newly opened and planned Mirage-phase casinos or their efforts to expand into new jurisdictions across the country and overseas. Therefore, in the 1989 negotiations they were especially interested in avoiding a costly strike like the one that occurred in 1984. Thus the Culinary Union was not only able to dissuade casino operators from completing the union-busting effort they had begun in 1984, but were also able to get

organizing neutrality language included in its contracts with most of the major operators, which formed the basis of its growth in the 1990s (Rothman, 2002a, Rothman, 2003).

Culinary Union during the 1990s

Starting with the 1989 contract, labor-management relations in Las Vegas's gaming industry were much less antagonistic in the 1990s than they had been in the 1980s. Although there were some major labor battles in the industry such as the Frontier Strike and the Culinary Union's efforts to organize the MGM Grand and the Santa Fe, most casino operators had a cordial relationship with the Culinary Union. The decline in antagonism was largely the result of the same combination of factors that led to the 1989 contract settlement, including the recognition by most casino operators that the Culinary Union was a legitimate and powerful player in Las Vegas's casino industry.

This image of the Culinary Union as a reemerged power player in Las Vegas's casino industry was strengthened by series of bruising battles the Culinary Union waged throughout the decade against a number of anti-union casino operators; these conflicts include efforts to organize the MGM Grand and the Santa Fe as well as a campaign to prevent the Frontier from busting the union. It should be noted that although these battles serve as very visible indicators of the power the Culinary Union enjoyed in its bargaining relationships with employers, they do not represent the relationship that the Culinary Union had with most of the casino operators during the 1990s. Although not all of these efforts were successful, they did demonstrate to casino operators that they could expect a protracted and costly struggle if they tried open their casinos non-union or demand concessionary contracts from the Culinary Union (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004).

MGM Organizing Campaign

Arguably, the most important battle the Culinary Union faced in the 1990s was organizing the MGM Grand, the largest casino in Las Vegas. The MGM Grand was scheduled to be opened in 1992, replacing the old MGM casino which had been torn down in the late 1980s. The management of MGM had never accepted the partnership model of labor relations in Las Vegas as practiced by casino operators such as Steve Wynn. MGM owner Kirk Kerkorian hired Robert Maxey to manage the MGM Grand. Robert Maxey had previously been a manager at one of the downtown casinos that had resisted settling with the Culinary Union during the 1984 strike. Maxey was ideologically opposed to unions and collective bargaining and thus waged a highly public and costly campaign to prevent the union from organizing MGM Grand's employees. In order to prevent unionization, the MGM Grand paid above union scale and provided employees with a very generous benefit package. However, as a result of these policies the casino struggled to remain profitable and also suffered from low service ratings (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004).

The MGM campaign was multifaceted and designed in such a way that one part reinforced the other. The union's corporate campaign strategy was to convince lenders and investors that Maxey was spending more to keep the union out than he would if he just operated with the union. The campaign also sought to portray Maxey as generally unfit to lead the casino. The union produced literature showing operating losses at the three previous casinos Maxey had managed. The union warned the investment community of Maxey's poor labor relations record. The union also pointed out to investors that companies that fought unionization in Las Vegas had trouble expanding into new jurisdictions, and thus were unable to take advantage of the relaxation of gaming laws in most states (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004).

The Culinary Union also pursued a variety of political strategies against the MGM Grand. The Local campaigned heavily against local state political candidates that were supported by MGM and contributed to political candidates in areas targeted for expansion by MGM. These candidates either were opposed to the expansion of gaming outright or favored union-friendly casino operators. The Culinary Union also won the support of the district attorney, who gave them the right to protest in front of the MGM, free from restrictions. Therefore, the union did not have to deal with restrictive injunctions as it had during the 1984 strike. This enabled the union to hold several large demonstrations outside of the MGM Grand involving thousands of union members and their supporters. For example, the MGM's opening in December of 1992 was marred by thousands of protesting Culinary Union members and their allies (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004).

The Local also developed a strong grassroots organizing campaign that developed a representative organizing committee in the shop. This committee was to engage in collective actions and communicate with workers that union organizers were unable reach. This organizing committee was built much in the same way that the Culinary Union had built its bargaining committee to fight back employer attempts to win concessionary contracts and bust the union in other Las Vegas casinos (Alexander, 2002, Benz, 2004).

The final leverage point in the MGM campaign was the Culinary Union's political tactics. In 1997, MGM had decided to build a casino in Detroit, the historical center of auto unionism, and a place where gambling had recently been legalized. To build a casino there, MGM needed to win one of the three available gaming licenses, something that HERE in solidarity with other unions was able to prevent if the MGM continued to fight the organizing campaign in Las Vegas. In order to obtain this license MGM agreed to card-check neutrality with HERE in Las Vegas and with the

coalition of unions holding up its license application in Detroit. After obtaining a card-check neutrality agreement for the MGM Grand, the Culinary Union was able to sign up workers at the casino and bargaining negotiate a first contract with the employer (Fantasia and Voss, 2004).

This victory was important to the Culinary Union for a variety of reasons. First, the MGM Grand was one of the most important casino properties in Las Vegas and having it operating non-union significantly endangered the Culinary Union's bargaining leverage vis-à-vis other gaming operators. Furthermore, the Culinary Union's successful campaign demonstrated to other casino operators the external organizing capability of the Culinary Union and the local's ability to impair the business of casino operators who open non-union. Finally, MGM had acted as a leader for other non-union operators in Las Vegas, so organizing the MGM Grand left this group leaderless and undermined their ability to coordinate their efforts against the Culinary Union (Alexander, 2002).

Frontier Strike

The Frontier strike is one of the most well known of all the labor-management battles that took place during the 1990s. This strike was second longest in the history of the United States; altogether, it lasted six years and four months (Benz, 2004). Even more impressively, no union members crossed the picket line for the entire length of the strike. The stage for the strike was set when the Elardi family bought the Frontier and Silver Slipper casinos from Howard Hughes's Summa Corporation in 1988. The Elardis tore down the Silver Slipper to make room for a parking lot and concentrated on turning the Frontier into an establishment that was singularly concentrated on gaming activities, offering budget-minded gamblers very little in other amenities. The Elardis' cost cutting extended to every aspect of the casino operation, including labor costs. Like several other privately owned casino operators

after the 1984 strike they purposefully failed to honor the contracts they had with the Culinary Union. On Sept 21, 1991, while negotiating a new contract for Frontier, the Elardis unilaterally implemented several of its new contract proposals, including “the elimination of pension contributions, wage cuts of up to four dollars an hour, the gutting of the union grievance procedure, and the implementation of new work rules and an inferior health plan that left approximately 100 workers ineligible” (Alexander, 2002). In addition, the management of the Frontier had been retaliating against union activists and committing a number of ULPs. These actions were designed to force the union to strike the facility so the Elardis could eventually decertify the union. Accordingly, the implementation of the Elardis’ new contract proposals prompted all of the Frontier’s Culinary Union members to walk out on strike (Alexander, 2002).

The Elardis’ business strategy was at odds with almost every other casino operator along the strip in the early 1990s. While most casino operators were trying to upgrade their properties and make them more attractive to families, the Elardis stripped their properties of any but the most basic amenities and sought to strictly appeal to hardcore gamblers rather than families. This strategy, in combination with their labor relations problems, isolated them from the rest of the Strip casino operators as well as the southern Nevada political establishment. The Culinary Union reaped several benefits from the Frontier’s isolation. For example, the police department was much more lenient towards picketers than they had been in previous confrontations between casinos and union. Furthermore, the area’s primary newspaper, the very conservative and anti-union Las Vegas Review-Journal, remained neutral throughout the strike. Finally, many of the other casino operators openly sympathized with the Culinary Union. During the early months of the strike the Elardis aggravated their isolation by placing advertisements in the Los Angeles Times with the headline “Culinary Union Strikes the Strip,” infuriating the management of other Strip Casinos,

who had settled their labor contracts in part to avoid this type of publicity. The Elardis initially refused requests by other operators to pull the advertisement. Not until this false advertising was referred to the District Attorney by the Clark County Commission did the Frontier desist.

For its part, the union held huge rallies and marches in front of the Frontier, and almost every time a union convention was held in Las Vegas, the Culinary Union would get the other union's delegates to rally in front of the Frontier. The local would also mobilize their own members to rally in front of the Frontier. In 1991, 12,000 people marched to support the Frontier strikers; a year later 20,000 people marched (Benz, 2004).

Sustaining the Frontier strike would not have been possible without developing a strong rank-and-file militancy. Furthermore, the Frontier Strike itself is said to have cost the union \$26 million. The Culinary Union received financial help from both HERE and the AFL-CIO to help defray the cost of the strike. In addition, Culinary Union members voted overwhelmingly to increase their dues by 40% in order to support the strike (Fantasia & Voss, 2004).

The strike cut into the Frontier's business by 40% in its first year (Fantasia & Voss, 2004). Union pursued an NLRB strategy that eventually led to the agency ruling that the strike was a ULP strike, meaning that the Frontier could not permanently replace the strikers and was liable for the striking workers' lost wages. The total liability was estimated at between 10 and 60 million dollars. As the Elardis' losses continued to mount and the family found itself increasingly isolated from gaming operators and other power centers in Las Vegas, they eventually decided to sell the Frontier. In late 1997, in a deal that was mediated by the Culinary Union, the Elardis sold the Frontier to Phil Ruffin, a hotel owner from Wichita, Kansas. Upon purchasing the casino, Phil Ruffin promptly signed a contract with the union and

ended the strike. The Elardis lost an estimated 40% of their normal revenue during the strike (Fantasia & Voss 2004).

The Frontier strike was also an important victory for the Culinary Union. It demonstrated to other casino operators the extent to which the Culinary Union was willing to go in order to prevent having to accept a concessionary contract or be pushed out of a workplace. Unlike in 1984, when the Culinary Union was decertified at six casinos with relative ease, in the Frontier Strike the local was able to hold on for six years without one member crossing the picket line. This demonstrated the extraordinary ability of the Culinary Union to mobilize its members and keep them mobilized even in cases of extreme hardship. It also served as another example of the Culinary Union's ability to undermine the profitability of casinos operators, if they adopted a combative posture in the labor relations strategy. As a result of the Frontier Strike, the Elardis were forced to sell the Frontier Casino and leave the casino industry altogether, and the Culinary Union was able to preserve working conditions for its members.

Santa Fe Organizing Campaign

The Culinary Union's failed attempt to organize the Santa Fe casino was another important campaign for the local. The campaign lasted for almost ten years, and although the workers voted for union representation in an NLRB election in 1993, the Culinary Union was never able to negotiate a first contract with the casino. Rather than negotiating with the Culinary Union, the casino operators pursued a campaign of intimidation and harassment of union activists. The Culinary Union's campaign to organize the Santa Fe casino demonstrates the difficulties the Culinary Union faced when organizing through the NLRB election procedures rather than card-check neutrality, and was a major contributor to the union's decision to organize exclusively through card-neutrality rather than through the NLRB election process.

Workers at the Santa Fe casino first contacted the Culinary Union about organizing in 1991. At the time, the Santa Fe was operated by the Sahara Gaming Corporation, which also operated the unionized Sahara and Hacienda casinos along the Strip. By the fall of 1992 over 75% of Santa Fe employees had signed union cards demanding recognition by card-check neutrality. Santa Fe's management refused to recognize the union and called for an NLRB election. The next year, in an NLRB election, Santa Fe employees voted 300-241 to join the Culinary Union. However, Santa Fe's management still refused to recognize the union and contested the election results. Santa Fe's case was dismissed by the NLRB, but the company continued to appeal. In the fall of 1996, the U.S. District Court of Appeals denied Santa Fe's appeal and ordered the casino operator to begin bargaining with the union. In the three years following the U.S. District Court of Appeals decision ordering the Sahara Gaming Corp. to bargain with the union, the firm's negotiating team met with the Culinary Union officials more than 20 times. However, Culinary Union officials claimed that Santa Fe's management was bargaining in bad faith and was not serious about reaching an agreement with the union. Eventually, in June 2000 the Sahara Gaming Corp. sold the Santa Fe casino to Station Casinos. However, instead of bargaining with the union, the new owners simply fired most of the casino's workers, thereby relieving itself of its court-imposed requirement to bargain with the Culinary Union (Alexander, 2002, Batt, 2002).

Throughout the organizing campaign the Sahara Gaming Corp. continually harassed and intimidated its pro-union employees. The Sahara Gaming Corp.'s anti-union campaign went to extreme lengths to prevent Santa Fe employees from forming a union. The NLRB charged the Sahara Gaming Corp with 42 ULPs for such violations as illegal terminations, suspensions, threats to fire, refusals to promote, surveillance, and changes in benefits. In one instance workers were beaten by a group of thugs wielding baseball bats

after they left a union meeting. Another pro-union employee was fired after testifying before the state senate's labor committee on the Santa Fe's occupational safety problems. The wife of the owner of the Sahara Gaming Corp. was serving in the Nevada State Senate and was a member of the labor committee (Alexander, 2002 Batt, 2002).

In addition to demonstrating why the Culinary Union now relies on card-check neutrality agreements exclusively for its new organizing campaigns, the Santa Fe campaign also provides another example of how the local had used corporate campaign tactics to put significant amounts of pressure on an employer. For example, the union was successful in preventing the Sahara Gaming Corp. from opening casinos in jurisdictions where casino-style gambling had recently become legal. The union was able to do this by first discovering the high levels of debt the Sahara Gaming Corp. was carrying and then publicizing the casino operators' financial and labor difficulties to elected officials, regulators, community leaders, and voters in jurisdictions where the casino operator was trying to expand (Alexander, 2002).

The Culinary Union also used its knowledge of the Sahara Gaming Corp.'s financial problems to undermine its ability to secure financing for new casino development both in Las Vegas and in other jurisdictions. As a result of these efforts, in July 1995, the Sahara Gaming Corp. had to write off \$25 million spent on failed efforts to build riverboat casinos on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. That same year the union successfully undermined a \$75 million bond offering the Sahara Gaming Corp. was hoping to use to finance the development of a new property in Las Vegas (Alexander, 2002).

The Culinary Union also launched a boycott against the Santa Fe which was publicized through large rallies outside the casino, as well as by contacting casino customers and vendors. The boycott roughly coincided with the opening of two new casinos in the Santa Fe's marketing radius: the Fiesta Hotel and Casino, which opened

in December 1994, and Texas Hotel and Gambling Hall, which followed in July 1995. During the boycott, the Santa Fe's revenues dropped by 40%, and the casino no longer generated enough cash to pay the interest on the debt it borrowed for its failed riverboat projects. These setbacks made it even more difficult for the Santa Fe to raise sufficient revenue to cover its debt payments. Eventually the Sahara Gaming Corp. was forced to begin selling its properties in order to meet its debt requirements. Ultimately, as a result of its financial troubles, the Sahara Gaming Corp. was forced to leave the Las Vegas Gaming market altogether (Alexander, 2002).

The Culinary Union's campaign took on a political dimension when the union mounted a successful campaign to unseat State Senator Sue Lowden, the wife of Sahara Gaming Corp's owner Paul Lowden. The union mobilized hundreds of members for an ambitious neighborhood doorbell ringing campaign in support of Lowden's rival, Valerie Weiner. Volunteers from the Culinary Union visited thousands of houses and apartments on Election Day, and the local busied members and their families to the polls. In the election itself, Valerie Weiner beat Sue Lowden by nine percentage points. Most political analysts considered Weiner's victory to be an upset, in which the Culinary Union played a significant role (Alexander, 2002). The Culinary Union had put together a political action fund to support its campaign against Lowden. This fund was maintained after the campaign and continues to this day, supported by dollar-a-month donations that rank-and-file union members contribute in addition to their dues. This campaign fund has been used to back union-endorsed candidates for political office as well as to fund the campaigns of union staff and rank-and-file leaders who run for political office (Alexander, 2002).

Political Efforts of the Culinary Union during the 1990s

The Culinary Union's battle with the Frontier, MGM Grande, and Santa Fe casinos also demonstrated the increasingly powerful presence the union had in state,

local, and federal politics. In addition to successfully campaigning against candidates that supported its opponents in the gaming industry, the Culinary Union was able to elect two of its own members to the state legislature and to defeat an initiative that would have made it more difficult for the union to raise money for political campaigns. The Culinary Union's political efforts during the 1990s left many of its enemies politically isolated, as casino operators who openly pursued a strategy of union avoidance were pushed to the margins of the Las Vegas gaming industry. Given the heavily regulated nature of the gaming industry, the Culinary Union's rise as a major political power in the state greatly increased its leverage at the bargaining table as well as in new organizing campaigns. This is exemplified by the political barriers faced by anti-union operators such as MGM and the Sahara Gaming Corp. as they tried to expand their operations beyond Nevada and Atlantic City (Alexander, 2002).

The newfound political power of the Culinary Union also made it a valuable ally for casino operators who were able to develop cooperative relationships with the local. In such efforts the Gaming Industry often enlisted the help the Culinary Union or HERE on some political or regulatory issue and in return offered the union concessions on bargaining or organizing issues. These types of strategic alliances between labor and management were much more common in Las Vegas's casino industry during the decade than pitched political battles exemplified by the fights with the MGM Grand, The Frontier, and the Santa Fe (Wilhelm, 2004, Alexander, 2005).

Throughout the 1990s the Culinary Union and its parent HERE cooperated with casino operators on a number of issues, perhaps the most notable being the National Gambling Impact Study. The study was the final product of a commission appointed by the Clinton administration in 1997 to study the social and economic impacts of legalized gambling. The commission consisted of a nine-member panel that consisted of both gaming advocates and opponents. HERE International president

John Wilhelm was appointed to be on the panel as one of the gaming industries' advocates (Weinert, 1999). Prior to becoming the president of HERE, John Wilhelm served as an official for the Culinary Union in a variety of capacities. Another gaming industry advocate who was appointed to the panel was MGM Chairman Terrence Lanni, with whom HERE president John Wilhelm cooperated closely (Wilhelm, 2004). As a panelist, Wilhelm focused on how the gaming industry benefited local economies by creating new jobs that tended to compensate workers better, both in terms of wages and benefits pay, than other low-skilled service sector jobs (Weinert, 1999). The commission's final report was received favorably by the casino industry and included Wilhelm's arguments about the benefits of gaming for job creation. Many in the casino industry voiced gratitude for Wilhelm's involvement in the study (Batt, 1999).

In addition to working with the Gaming Industry on the National Gambling Impact Study, the Culinary Union and its parent HERE cooperated with the casino operators on a variety of other issues. For example, together they successfully lobbied the federal government for infrastructure improvements that would increase the accessibility of Las Vegas for tourists. Such improvements included the expansion of Las Vegas's airport and the widening of I-15, the main thoroughfare used by those living in and around Los Angeles to travel to Las Vegas (Alexander, 2005).

HERE has also cooperated with friendly Casino operators in helping them get gaming licenses in new gaming jurisdictions as well as lobbying with casino interests to prevent local and state lawmakers from raising taxes on casinos. HERE's help in new gaming jurisdictions was especially useful for casino operators because their operations had historically been limited to Nevada and New Jersey, so they had not developed relationships with political leaders in jurisdictions that were considering the legalization of casino-style gaming. Furthermore, many of the areas they were

considering relaxing their gaming laws are areas where HERE already had a significant presence, meaning that the union had precisely the kinds of political relationships with local political leaders that the casino operators desired (Alexander, 2002).

The Culinary Academy

In addition to cooperating in the political sphere, the Culinary Union had cooperated with casino operators in a variety of other areas. Perhaps the most notable example of labor-management cooperation outside of the political sphere is the Culinary Training Academy. The Culinary Academy was established in 1993 by a consortium of gaming employers and the Culinary Union to provide job training for hospitality workers in Las Vegas. The Culinary Academy provides training to individuals looking for their first casino jobs as well as current casino employees hoping to upgrade their skills. In addition to courses aimed specifically at the gaming industry, the Culinary Academy also offers ESL, GED, and variety of soft skills classes (Bernhardt et. al., 2003).

The Culinary Academy graduates an average of 2,500 people each year, and a total of 16,000 people have graduated from the academy since its inception (Bernhardt et. al., 2003; Greenhouse, 2004). The Culinary Academy works with the casino operators to ensure that graduates are first in line for new casino jobs. Seventy percent of Culinary Academy Graduates have found jobs in Las Vegas's gaming industry (Bernhardt et. al., 2003). This placement rate is especially impressive because the Culinary Academy acts as one of Clark County's primary vocational rehabilitation facilities, training some of the county's least employable residents (Pappageorge, 2005).

The academy is funded through a combination of employer contributions and government grants. Each employer's contribution is determined by the collective

bargaining agreements they hold with the Culinary Union. In 2002 employers contributed 3.5 cents per hour worked per employee (Bernhardt et. al., 2003).

The Culinary Academy is of value to casino operators for a variety of reasons. First, it helped to allay the recruitment and retention problems that Las Vegas casino employers faced during the dramatic expansion of the city's gaming industry in the 1990s. The academy helped relieve casino employers' recruitment problems by giving previously unqualified individuals the job skills necessary to enter the casino industry, thereby increasing the pool of workers from which casino employers could hire. Furthermore, the Culinary Academy helped to create job ladders within the gaming industry, thereby addressing casino employers' retention problems, and the turnover rate amongst academy graduates was 50% lower than among of the street hires (Bernhardt et. al., 2003).

Casino operators also valued the Culinary Academy because it successfully addressed structural problems within the local gaming industry that discouraged gaming operators from setting up their own training facilities individually. For example, since casino employees' skills are highly transferable, and there is a high turnover rate in the industry, it is not beneficial for casino operators to invest significant resources in the training of their employees, as it is relatively easy for one gaming operator to poach the trained employees of another operator. This problem is especially acute in Las Vegas because of the high-end nature of the most of Las Vegas's largest casinos and the shortage of qualified workers. The Culinary Union was able to help resolve this problem, making employer contributions to the Culinary Academy part of the collective bargaining agreement it has with each operator, thus preventing one or a number of casino operators from free riding off the training efforts of the other casino operators (Bernhardt et. al., 2003).

The Culinary Academy has also been beneficial to the Culinary Union. For example, because it is primarily administered by the Culinary Union, the Culinary Academy offers potential members a vivid example of the services the local can provide for them. This is especially important because the Culinary Academy is often the first contact these individuals have with the Culinary Union, enabling the local to leave a positive first impression with these potential members free from employer interference. Several studies have shown that this type of initial impression has a strong positive correlation with members' union commitment and participation. This correlation remains significant at least ten years from when an individual initially comes into contact with the union (Clark, 2000). This is also important because Nevada is a right-to-work state, meaning that the Culinary Union must be able to convince the workers it represents that the services it provides are valuable enough for them to pay their union dues.

Contract Negotiations in the 1990s

There were two rounds of negotiations that took place in the 1990s; although both were characterized by a high degree of rank-and-file mobilization and highly public demonstration, they were overall much less antagonistic than any of the previous rounds of negotiations that had occurred over the last 15 years. In fact, the 1994 and 1997 rounds of negotiations were the first consecutive rounds of negotiations to be completed without a work stoppage since the 1960s. The fact that these negotiations could be completed relatively conflict-free during a period of dramatic change in Las Vegas's gaming industry and in the midst of pitched battles between the Culinary Union and the operators of the MGM Grand, The Frontier, and Santa Fe casinos, demonstrates the positive relationship the Culinary Union had with most of Las Vegas's casino operators at the time.

The unresolved disputes between the Culinary Union and the MGM and Frontier Casinos, as well as the issue of subcontracting, were the primary issues in the 1994 round of contract negotiations. Largely as a result of the uncertainty created by the ongoing battle between the Culinary Union and the Frontier and MGM, casino operators wanted a shorter, three-year contract, as opposed to the five-year agreements that had become the norm. The union prepared for the 1994 round of negotiations much in the same way it had prepared for earlier rounds of negotiations. Using the steward structure that was already in place, the union built a large representative bargaining committee that acted as a means through the union could train, communicate with, and mobilize the rank-and-file. The union then mobilized workers to engage in a variety of rank-and-file intensive leverage tactics designed to put pressure on casino owners to settle with the union and signal the local's willingness and ability to strike. Examples of such tactics included holding several rallies involving thousands of workers and mobilizing for mass meetings with upper-level management to discuss specific bargaining issues.

Similar to 1989, Steve Wynn, of Mirage Resorts, was the first casino operator to settle with the Culinary Union, and most other casino operators agreed to contracts patterned after this first one. The new contract language granted casino operators broad leeway in their ability to subcontract; however, it mandated that all new subcontracted work be done by union members under the Culinary Union's collective bargaining agreement. The settlement also provided for 25 cents an hour in raises each year, a continuation of organizing neutrality language for any new properties acquired or opened by the operators, and the preservation of no-cost health insurance for workers and their families.

There were two properties that initially resisted settling with the Culinary Union on terms similar to those agreed by the other gaming operators: the Sheraton-

Desert Inn and the Sahara. The Sahara Casino was owned by the Sahara Gaming Corp., along with the Santa Fe. The Sahara Gaming Corp.'s resistance to the settlement probably was the result of the same strategy to minimize the influence of unions in the company's operations that had led to its concurrent battle with the Culinary Union at the Santa Fe casino. The Sheraton-Inn resisted the 1994 settlement largely because it had hoped to emulate the Frontier and MGM casinos and operate along the Strip non-union.

The Culinary Union eventually forced a settlement based on the pattern agreement with the Sheraton-Desert Inn by delaying the ability of the operators to get permits to develop new casino properties. The Culinary Union was soon able to get a pattern contract at the Sahara as well, as a result of its corporate campaign against the Sahara Gaming Corp. By the time the 1994 round of negotiations were wrapping up the corporate campaign elements of the Culinary Union organizing campaign at the Santa Fe casino were really beginning to take their toll on the Sahara Gaming Corp. As a result of the campaign the gaming operator desperately needed to increase its cash flow to finance its debt burden. Therefore, the casino operator sold the Sahara Casino to union-friendly Bill Bennett of Circus-Circus Enterprises, who promptly agreed to a contract patterned after the Mirage settlement.

The Culinary Union and casino operators entered the 1997 negotiations facing many of the same issues that they had faced in the previous round of negotiations. Key issues in the 1997 negotiations were wages, subcontracting, health and welfare benefits, pensions, and contract length (Caruso, 1997). Casinos wanted an annual 25 cents an hour increase, while the union wanted more. In addition, casino operators wanted union members to begin contributing to their healthcare, which the union steadfastly resisted (Caruso, 1997). The Culinary Union also demanded that strict language limiting subcontracting be added to the contracts. Finally, the Culinary

Union and management disagreed over the length of their contract. Casino operators favored a shorter contract because of the rapidly changing nature of Las Vegas's gaming industry, while union officials wanted a longer contract so they could have more time for external organizing between rounds of negotiations, allowing them to dedicate more resources to this area of activity (Smith, 1997).

The 1997 negotiations were a long, drawn-out process, with some Culinary Union members having to work up to year without a contract. Culinary Union officials did not blame this so much on the intractability of either the union's or management's bargaining positions as much as on the ongoing Frontier Strike and the failure of the Culinary Union to reach a settlement on a first contract covering MGM Grand employees. These factors introduced a significant degree of uncertainty into the bargaining process and therefore casino operators did not want to settle on a new contract until these two disputes were resolved. Culinary Union officials also blamed the delay to reach a settlement on the insistence of each casino operator to bargain separately (Smith, 1997).

The Culinary Union reached agreements with the major Strip operators in March 1998, more than 9 months after their previous contract expired. These agreements set the pattern for the rest of the agreements along the strip (Smith, 1998a). Other Strip operators soon settled, and downtown operators, after some initial grumbling that the decline of gaming in downtown Las Vegas was making it difficult for them afford contracts patterned after Strip agreements, also settled with the Culinary Union within the next couple of months.

The new contracts included strict restrictions on subcontracting; they also maintained the Culinary Union's fully funded family health benefit package. The Culinary union was also able to get the five-year contract that it wanted. However, the

local did have to compromise on the pay issue, agreeing to 25-cent retroactive raises for 1997, 30 cents for 1998 and 1999, and 35 cents in 2000 and 2001 (Smith, 1998).

Changes in Casino Industry Workforce Demographics during the 1990s

Hispanics had become the dominant ethnic group within the Culinary Union's membership by 1990s. In Las Vegas's casino industry they had replaced African-Americans as the most prominent ethnical/racial group in the less-skilled back-of-the-house occupations, such as GRAs and housemen. (Waddoups & Eade, 2002, Pappageorge, 2003) Furthermore, these particular back-of-the-house occupational categories were making up an increasingly significant proportion of the Culinary Union's total membership as larger and larger casino resorts were built during the 1990s. Furthermore, because these job categories were traditionally dominated by women, their disproportionate growth caused the Culinary Union's membership to become increasingly dominated by women.

As a result of these changes the Culinary Union had to adopt an organizational model that was equipped to serve its increasingly diverse membership. Although the Culinary Union has had minorities on staff since the days of Al Bramlett, the local's leadership structure had always been dominated by white males. Beginning in the late 1980s the union began making a concerted effort to hire more minorities on staff and to ensure it had a more diverse leadership structure. By the time of the 2002 contract campaign, the Culinary Union had a white male Secretary-Treasurer, Latina female President, and an African-American female vice-president. Furthermore, the union had a staff that reflected the diversity of its membership, rather than consisting of just a few token minorities.

Besides having a staff and leadership that was reflective of its membership, the Culinary Union pursued a number of other strategies that made its organizational culture more reflective of its diverse membership, along with the staff and leadership

changes. For example, all union materials are written in both English and Spanish, and all speeches at union events are translated into either language depending on the language of the speaker. Furthermore, the union pursued political initiatives that are in tune with its diverse membership, such as campaigning for the reform of immigration laws. On a variety of occasions the union has acted to protect older female front-of-the-house workers, such as cocktail waitresses, when they have faced age discrimination.

The ability of the Culinary Union to adapt to the changing demographics of its membership is a key part of its revitalization process. As Behrens et al. (2004) noted, a key component of revitalization is a labor organization's ability to adjust to new contexts and support new strategies. Therefore, the Culinary Union's ability to adapt to the dramatic influx of Hispanic and female workers into the casino industry workforce in the 1980s and 1990s was a key part of its revitalization process. Without being able to make the organizational changes necessary to appeal to its increasingly diverse membership, the Culinary Union would not be able to draw upon the power it gains from mobilizing such a large proportion of its members (Pappageorge, 2005).

Revitalization of the Culinary Union since in the 1990s and Current Practices

By the end of the 1990s, the Culinary Union had made significant strides in its revitalization process, which created the organizational capabilities necessary for its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign strategy. As Bronfenbrenner and Juravich (2001) argued in their chapter on the USWA's contract campaigns in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a union's capacity to engage in effective comprehensive contract campaigns takes years to develop. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner and Juravich argue that contract campaigns are most effective if they are well integrated into the structure of the local, in terms of both technical expertise and organizational commitment. This commitment and expertise must exist not only amongst the union's leadership and

staff but also amongst its rank-and-file. Correspondingly, as a result of the revitalization process it went through in the late 1980s and 1990s, the Culinary Union developed the organizational capacity to effectively employ ambitious comprehensive campaign strategies as well as retain the organizational commitment necessary to successfully mount such campaigns.

The preceding sections of this chapter also described how the Culinary Union, as part of its revitalization process, successfully adopted the kinds of internal reforms necessary to adapt to changes in Las Vegas's casino industry, such as changes in the kinds of employers that predominated in Las Vegas and demographic changes in the casino industry workforce. This section will describe the status of these reforms as they stood in the years immediately preceding the 2002 contract campaign and their impact on that year's comprehensive contract campaign.

The Culinary Union's revitalization process was comprehensive, encompassing the local's contract administration, contract bargaining, external organization and political functions. Furthermore, revitalization in each one of these areas contributed to the revitalization process in the others as well, thereby increasing the Culinary Union's overall power in the local casino industry. As Hickey (2003), Benz (2005), and Katz et al. (2003) argued, unions can benefit from integrating their strategies in a mutually reinforcing manner, and such integration has a significant positive effect on the union revitalization process. This section will describe the Culinary Union's contract administration, contract bargaining, external organizing, and political strategies in the years leading up to the 2002 negotiations. It will also discuss the complementary impact of these practices and strategies on each other and the overall functioning of the union.

Contract Administration

The Culinary Union's contract administration functions form the foundation of the rest of the local's activities in contract bargaining, external organizing, and politics. Contract administration is most closely linked to contract bargaining because both are part of a union's collective bargaining and representational functions. Therefore, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy prior to 2002 was fundamentally linked to its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. For example, the Culinary Union used its contract administration procedures to recruit rank-and-file activists to lead the campaign as well as to communicate with members about the campaign's progress. Therefore, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategies and practices in the period preceding the 2002 comprehensive contract campaign played an integral role in helping the union develop the capacity to launch such an ambitious campaign. This section will describe the Culinary Union's contract administration strategies and practices and their influence on the 2002 comprehensive contract campaign.

The contract administration strategy developed by the Culinary Union as a result of its revitalization process is similar to the one described by Teresa Cornrow (1991). As described in the literature review, Cornrow's article outlines a contract administration strategy that emphasized rank-and-file membership involvement and responsibility. This model also prioritizes collective rather than individual grievances and methods for resolving workplace issues. It further stresses the importance of developing rank-and-file empowerment in the workplace through collective action.

The role of union staff in this model is to facilitate the ability of stewards and other rank-and-file union members to take more responsibility over the grievance process, rather than resolving workplace issues for members. Union staff should also train members not just in the practical skills of how to resolve workplace issues, but

also how to do so in a collective manner, empowering rank-and-file members in the process (Cornrow, 1991). Finally, Cornrow's model stresses the important role contract administration process plays as a communications conduit between union staff and leaders and the rank-and-file membership.

The following paragraphs provide a detailed description of the Culinary Union contract administration procedures and strategies. They will first describe the local's strategy for handling grievances and its representational structure. Then the impact of the Culinary Union contract administration strategy on its rank-and-file mobilization capabilities in the 2002 contract negotiations will be discussed.

The Culinary Union's grievance procedure emphasizes organizing and collectively dealing with grievances. In order to do this it must first identify grievances around which the union can organize and where it is in the local's strategic interest to do so. The first step in this process is distinguishing between grievances that are individual issues and those that are group issues (Pappageorge, 2005).

The Culinary Union handles individual grievances in a traditional manner through a three-step process. In the first step, the shop steward meets with the frontline supervisor to try work out the grievance informally. The Culinary Union has delegated responsibility for this first step almost entirely to the shop steward. Paid staff only become directly involved in the grievance process at the second level, where grievances are brought before a committee consisting of equal numbers of union and management representatives. If this committee deadlocks then the grievance goes to arbitration (Caesars Palace Contract, 2002 2007, Mirage Contract, 2002 2007).

This shortened grievance process delegates significant amounts of responsibility for handling grievances to shop stewards. Therefore, one of the major duties of internal organizers in this process is to make sure shop stewards have sufficient training necessary to handle grievances at their initial stages competently

and to provide them with help where necessary. It is also important that the union maintain a sufficient ratio of shop stewards to regular members. The union's goal is to have one shop steward for every 20 members; however, at the time of the 2002 contract negotiations the union had about one shop steward for every 25 members (Pappageorge, 2005).

However, when dealing with group grievances, the Culinary Union first makes a determination of whether it will try to mobilize workers around the grievance or not. The union looks to a number of factors in making this determination, such as the type and number of workers affected by the grievance, what kind of leverage the union will gain by mobilizing workers around the grievance, and the intensity of worker feeling regarding the grievance. The union will always pursue a grievance through the traditional channels even if it decides to mobilize workers around it as well.

If the Culinary Union decides to mobilize around a grievance, the shop steward, usually with the help of an internal organizer, will organize the affected workers into a group, which then goes to the immediate supervisor to demand a meeting to work out the grievance. If the supervisor will not sit down with the workers, an internal organizer will try to mobilize as large a group of workers as possible to march down to the supervisor's office in a controlled but militant manner and again demand a meeting. If this does not work the organizer will mobilize workers for other coordinated marches on management officials up the casino's chain of command, until they find someone who will work with them on the issue. Eventually one of the managers higher up in the casino's hierarchy will usually put pressure on one of the supervisors below him/her to resolve the issue. In addition to these delegations to management, the union will use a variety of other tactics when mobilizing around grievances such as EDR rallies, having button or ribbon days, and

other types of solidarity efforts. The union negotiates specific provisions in its contracts with casinos in order to protect its ability to engage in such actions.

One of problems that the Culinary Union has faced in implementing this contract administration policy is that it significantly increases the workload of internal organizers. This is because training shop stewards to handle grievances and mobilizing workers around them is much more time-consuming for internal organizers than just dealing with grievances in a more traditional manner. This problem is compounded by the large amount of resources the Culinary Union dedicates to external organizing, which prevents the local from hiring more paid staff to handle the additional contract administration burdens. Under the current contract administration structure, each internal organizer is responsible for overseeing 75-100 shop stewards and 1500-2000 workers (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

The Culinary Union has created a lead shop steward system in order to remedy this issue and give rank-and-file leaders greater opportunity to hold positions of responsibility in the union. Lead shop stewards are basically regular shop stewards who agree to oversee about 3-5 other shop stewards, who are in turn expected to be responsible for groups of around 25 workers. These oversight responsibilities include shop steward training, regularly communicating with stewards about union business, and being the first person regular stewards go to with their questions. Lead shop stewards also help internal organizers identify and recruit rank-and-file leaders. The union tries to give lead stewards a sense of ownership in the union such as giving them a part in the decision making, direction, and goal setting of the union in their shop. After a number of previous failed attempts, the Culinary Union instituted a lead shop steward program in early 2001 in preparation for the 2002 contract negotiations (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

In order to ensure its shop stewards have the adequate skills necessary to handle their responsibilities competently, the Culinary Union has set up an extensive training program for its shop stewards. This training program mixes regular classes with mentor-style teaching in which trainees work closely with internal organizers and lead shop stewards. This training is mandatory for all shop stewards, and if trainees refuse to complete the training they lose their shop steward responsibilities (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Henry, 2005, Pappageorge, 2005).

Under the Culinary Union's contract administration structure, shop stewards are not elected but rather are recruited by internal organizers and other shop stewards. The Culinary Union's internal organizing director, Ted Pappageorge, said that the local pursued this strategy because it wanted to ensure that all of its shop stewards had workplace leadership capabilities. In other words, the local recruits shop stewards that it has identified as natural or indigenous leaders in the particular worksite or among various other constituencies such as a particular gender, ethnic, occupational, or racial group. Generally, these are people to whom other workers already look to resolve workplace problems. Examples of leadership behaviors include organizing co-workers to come down to the union hall to discuss a work issue, organizing co-workers to meet with management over an issue, organizing co-workers to participate in events, especially of a union or political nature. If individuals exhibiting such overt behaviors are unavailable in a particular worksite, the union will look for people to whom co-workers defer in the resolution of, or in forming an opinion about, workplace issues (Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

In order to identify and recruit workplace leaders the Culinary Union maintains an extensive database of instances where workers have demonstrated workplace leadership qualities. One of the primary activities of shop stewards and internal organizers is to identify these types of workplace leaders. Once a leader has been

identified, an internal organizer, accompanied by a shop steward, will visit the individual at home to assess their attitude toward the union and to recruit for a position as a shop steward or some other active role in the local (Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

By recruiting individuals that have already demonstrated workplace leadership qualities, the Culinary Union is able to tap into and leverage existing relationships, leadership roles, and lines of communication between workers, instead of having to try to create new ones. By doing this the union hopes to take advantage of organic social networks between workers, union activists and non-activists alike. Rank-and-file members tend to take union issues more seriously if they hear about them through existing social networks rather than through communication networks created specifically for dealing with union issues (Clark, 2000). The role of union issues in these networks waxes and wanes, but the networks themselves tend to be relatively stable even where job turnover is a significant factor. The organic aspects of these networks also means that union affairs tend to become intertwined with other aspects of members' daily lives, such as friendships in and out of work. As hypothesized by Bacharach et al. (2001), this process helps to legitimize the union in the eyes of its members and increase membership commitment to and participation in the union.

Unlike leaders of business organizations, shop stewards receive relatively little formal power from their position within a union's organizational structure. Therefore, shop stewards must rely upon on informal sources of power such as the respect and support of their co-workers (Barling et. al, 1992). This is especially true in the case of the Culinary Union, where the local deemphasizes legalistic procedures in the resolution of grievances, and instead organizes around grievances, taking advantage of informal power structures in the workplace.

In addition to building upon existent social networks, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy has a positive effect on the local's rank-and-file mobilization capacity in a variety of other ways. For example, as described in the literature review, organizational behavior scholars have found a strong positive correlation between contract administration procedures that facilitate and promote rank-and-file responsibility in the grievance process and increased union commitment. These scholars have also found strong links between contract administration procedures that emphasize collective means of resolving workplace issues and increased rank-and-file participation and commitment. Furthermore, a similar correlation has been found between procedures that emphasize worker empowerment and union commitment and participation (Fosh, 1993, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 1995, Tetrick, 1995, Bacharach et. al., 2001, Snape & Redman, 2004a, Snape & Redman, 2004b). As described in the preceding paragraphs, the Culinary Union's organizing-model-based contract administration strategy contains all of these correlates of increased union commitment and participation.

In addition, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy increases its rank-and-file mobilization capacity in a variety of other ways as well. For example, it gives rank-and-file leaders experience in organizing their co-workers and in leading the types of rank-and-file mobilization tactics that were commonly used in the 2002 contract campaign, such as delegations to management and break room rallies. Furthermore, regular rank-and-file members got used to participating in these tactics as well as hearing from rank-and-file leaders about union issues. This built members' confidence about using these tactics to exercise their workplace rights (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

Furthermore, this contract administration strategy helped the Culinary Union build an effective communications structure based on face-to-face contact and

personal relationships. This helped union leaders and staff get a better understanding of what issues are important to rank-and-file members, as well as members' attitudes about the union and their employer. It also helped union leaders develop an understanding of the informal power structures that were present in the members' workplace. In addition, such an effective communication network also helped members get a better understanding of what was at stake in the contract negotiations process and why their participation was so important. It also helped the union get its message out to members during the negotiations and undermine the ability of employers to convince members of their position in the negotiations (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

Politics

The Culinary Union's political program also had a positive influence on the local's rank-and-file mobilization capacity for the 2002 contract negotiations. In addition to increasing the mobilization capacity of Culinary Union members, as a result of its political program, the Culinary Union was recognized as an important force in state and local politics, which made it easier for the union to get the support of politicians in the 2002 contract campaign. Finally, the Culinary Union's progressive political agenda helped it win the support of the public in the negotiations, especially in regard to its campaign around workload issues.

The Culinary Union's political program emphasizes member involvement. Instead of making monetary contributions to political candidates, the local focuses more on door-to-door get-out-the-vote tactics. The Culinary Union does not have a separate political action committee; rather it utilizes its shop steward committee for its political program, meaning the many stewards are either involved in the get-out-the-vote drives directly or recruit other rank-and-file volunteers for these efforts. In addition the union has a leave of absence program where rank-and-file members take

time off from work in order to work on political campaigns full time. The Culinary Union even has a few rank-and-file leaders, that it has recruited, serving in the state legislature.

The Culinary Union's political program is relevant to the union rank-and-file mobilization for the 2002 contract campaign because it created yet another way for rank-and-file members to become directly involved in the local's activities in the years prior to the negotiations. This further cultivates a culture within the local where membership participation is encouraged, with all the previously discussed benefits this entails for the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization capacity. Additionally, the local's political program creates another venue through which shop stewards and other rank-and-file leaders can communicate with regular members about union issues, thereby strengthening the Culinary Union's organizational communications network and opening up another avenue for rank-and-file members to talk about union affairs. Furthermore, the local's political program provides rank-and-file leaders with organizing experience that would be valuable in the 2002 contract campaign. Finally, as mentioned earlier, the Culinary Union's political program also includes organizing around specific policy issues that are important to the union's diverse membership such as immigrant rights. This helps build union commitment amongst the local's diverse membership and demonstrates to these members how the union can be relevant to them both in and outside of the workplace.

External Organizing

The Culinary Union's external organizing strategy related to its rank-and-file mobilization efforts for the 2002 contract campaign in many of the same ways as its political program. For example, the Culinary Union also promotes the involvement of rank-and-file leaders in its external organizing campaign. One way this is done is through a leave of absence program that is similar to the one the local runs for its

political program. The Culinary Union's external organizing leave of absence program allows rank-and-file leaders take up to three months from their job at any one time to come onto the local's staff as an organizer. As an external organizer they will either work on organizing non-union casinos in Las Vegas or they will work on campaigns in other parts of the country as part of HERE's "Road Warrior Program." In addition to the leave of absence program, the union recruits rank-and-file leaders to accompany external organizers on house visits. Lastly, the Culinary Union will organize rank-and-file leaders to have lunch together at a non-union casino that is an organizing target of the Culinary Union, so they can talk to workers at the targeted casino about the union (Pappageorge, 2005).

These kinds of tactics benefited the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization capacity for the 2002 contract campaign in a variety of ways. First, it gave rank-and-file leaders experience in leading their fellow workers in the kinds of collectivist confrontation tactics that were commonly used in the 2002 contract campaign, such as mobilizing workers for rallies both in and outside of the workplace. Furthermore, as a result of talking to non-union workers, especially those in areas where the hospitality and/or casino industries are largely non-union and therefore employment conditions are much worse, rank-and-file leaders became much more aware of the benefits that accrue to them as a result of working in a union facility, thereby increasing their commitment to the union. Union representation has been found to be strongly correlated with both higher wages and a higher percentage of employees with health insurance and pensions in both the hotel and gaming industries. The difference in wages and benefits between union and non-union establishments is especially pronounced in areas of low-union density. In areas of high union density in the hotel and/or gaming industries, non-union employers often improve overall compensation so it matches union standards (Waddoups & Eade, 2002). The Culinary

Union's "Road Warriors" program often sends union members to areas of very low union density, such as Indian reservation casinos, that are usually entirely non-union and have abysmal labor conditions.

Contract Bargaining

As discussed in prior sections of this chapter, during the late 1980s and into the 1990s the Culinary Union also experienced a revitalization within in its contract bargaining sphere of activity. Although member mobilization did play a role in the 1984 strike, the local did not really begin to think of it in terms of a wider comprehensive campaign strategy until it began to prepare for its 1989 round of bargaining. It was in its preparations for the 1989 round that the Culinary Union developed a set of corporate pressure tactics that it coordinated with its rank-and-file mobilization tactics. It is also in this campaign where the local made a conscious effort to build rank-and-file bargaining committees in each casino and developed rank-and-file leaders. Throughout the 1990s the Culinary Union continued to develop its capacities in these two areas. This is what enabled the union to successfully carry out its ambitious comprehensive contract campaign strategy in 2002 (Rothman, 2002a, Wilhelm 2004, Benz 2005).

The rank-and-file mobilization component of the union's comprehensive contract campaigns consists of building large representative rank-and-file bargaining committees, rank-and-file leadership identification and recruitment, large rallies and marches, and utilizing innovative inside the workplace mobilization and pressure tactics. Between the 1989 round of negotiations and the 2002 round of negotiations the Culinary Union went through two additional rounds of negotiations. It was through the experiences gained by leaders and the rank-and-file in these prior rounds of negotiations that the Culinary Union developed the capacity to successfully carry out its ambitious 2002 comprehensive campaign. Not only did the local learn how to

better use the rank-and-file mobilization tactics that are now part of its comprehensive contract campaigns, these earlier experiences also allowed the union to develop the organizational structure necessary for the effective use of these tactics. For example, each comprehensive campaign between 1989 and 2002 led to increased levels of rank-and-file participation in the union. More specifically, although rank-and-file participation peaked during each round negotiations, after the negotiations participation stabilized at a level higher than it had been before the negotiations (Pappageorge, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005).

As a result of its revitalization process the Culinary Union also gained expertise in corporate campaign tactics. The union began to experiment with these tactics in the late 1980s as part of its 1989 comprehensive contract campaign as well as to enforce its 1984 contract. The union has regularly used these tactics in its contract administration, external organizing, and political efforts as well as in its comprehensive campaigns. Corporate pressure tactics played an important supporting role in the 2002 contract campaign.

The Culinary Union's efforts in this area would not have been nearly as effective in 2002 if the local had not already begun to develop its capacity in this area in prior years. For example, during the 1990s the Culinary Union learned how to pressure casino operators through their relationships with a variety of stakeholders such as creditors, travel agents, investors, and potential business partners. In this period, the Culinary Union, through its research department, cultivated close relationships with these stakeholders. Therefore, by 2002, it had developed good working relationships with a variety of stakeholders in Las Vegas's casino industry. These relationships helped the Culinary Union get its message out to these stakeholders during the contract campaign. The Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign strategy relied on its ability to effectively relay to the relevant stakeholders

the extent to which it had mobilized its members for the negotiations, and the likelihood of a costly strike if a deal could not be reached. The Culinary Union's goal was to get other stakeholders to put pressure on casino operators to settle on terms that were favorable to the union. Therefore, the ability to effectively carry out the corporate campaign aspects of the 2002 comprehensive contract campaign was integral to the Culinary Union's overall success in these negotiations. The local developed this capacity, in part, through its previous comprehensive contract campaigns, beginning with the 1989 round of negotiations.

Conclusion

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s the Culinary Union underwent a revitalizing process, which ultimately enabled it to successfully pursue an ambitious comprehensive contract campaign strategy such as the one the local used in the 2002 round of contract negotiations. For example, during this period the Culinary Union developed external and internal organizing capabilities that were of significant benefit to the local during the 2002 round of negotiations. The Culinary Union developed representative rank-and-file committees in each of the casino properties that facilitated rank-and-file mobilization, leadership recruitment, and communication between the union and its members. By 2002 the rank-and-file leaders that were developed through these committees formed the bulk of the Culinary Union's staff and leadership. In fact, both of the union members that serve in the state legislature were recruited through these rank-and-file committees. The committees also enabled the union to implement its innovative contract administration strategies, which further developed its ability to mobilize its members.

The union's external organizing campaigns also contributed to the Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign efforts. First, many of the mobilization tactics that the union used in its external organizing campaigns, such as the ones at the MGM

Grand and the Santa Fe, were similar to the ones used in collective bargaining, such as building representative rank-and-file committees, mobilizing workers for large rallies, and using smaller scale rank-and-file pressure tactics such as the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph. By the time of the 2002 negotiations, the union had gained a lot of experience mobilizing members for huge rallies and demonstrations involving thousands of workers, as well as other types of pressure tactics involving small groups of workers, such as delegations to management and break room rallies. Secondly, these organizing efforts enabled the union to maintain density in an industry that was growing dramatically, thereby preventing it from being marginalized and weakened at the bargaining table. At the time of the 2002 contract negotiations, the Culinary Union's membership had swelled to more than 45,000.

Furthermore, the Culinary Union's ability to defeat repeated attempts by casino operators in the 1980s and early 1990s demonstrated to casino operators the risks of provoking a conflict with the Culinary Union. The Frontier and the Sahara Gaming Corp. had lost their gaming businesses in Las Vegas entirely as a result of conflicts with Culinary Union; and the Boyd Group, Binion's Horseshoe, and the MGM had suffered significant losses at the hands of the Culinary Union. During the 2002 contract negotiations the Culinary Union repeatedly invoked the losses incurred in these previous labor battles when encouraging nervous casino investors to put pressure on management to settle with the local.

The union's political efforts during the late 1980s through the 1990s also aided the local in its 2002 contract fight by earning allies amongst public officials, who put pressure on casino operators to settle with the union. In the 15 years leading up to the negotiations the union had put together an increasingly effective electoral machine that was able to lend significant help to allied political officials as well as get its own members and staff elected into public office. The union was also very effective in

punishing the supporters of its opponents, for example, contributing to the upset defeat of Sue Lowden, the wife of the owner of the Sahara Gaming Corp, in her state senate reelection campaign.

The union also developed extensive corporate campaign experience during its battles with casino operators in the 1980s and 1990s. As a result the union had a well trained staff prepared for the 2002 campaign, with extensive experience developing effective strategies to put pressure on casino operators. Furthermore, the union's research staff had developed relationships with the investment community, which increased their ability to convince them to put pressure on gaming operators to settle with the union.

Finally, through its previous fifteen years of experience the union learned how to coordinate activities across its three primary spheres of activity: politics, external organizing and collective bargaining. For example, by bargaining for neutrality with the corporate casino operators the Culinary Union ensured that it could maintain density and, therefore, its leverage at the bargaining table, during a period of rapid growth in the industry. Furthermore, the union's campaign against MGM demonstrated how the union successfully used political strategies to prevent the expansion of MGM to new gaming jurisdictions, eventually forcing it to agree to card-check neutrality with the union. Therefore, the Culinary Union's contract administration, external organizing, contract bargaining, and political strategies all contributed to the union's capacity to successfully pursue its ambitious 2002 comprehensive contract campaign strategy. The revitalization of the local in all four of these core areas of activity was the foundation on which its comprehensive contract campaign was founded. If the transformation of the union capabilities in just one of these areas had been lacking it would have significantly undermined the union's ability to carry out such an ambitious campaign so effectively.

This case study is different from most other case studies of the comprehensive contract campaigns because the Culinary Union had already gone through an extensive revitalization process by the time the 2002 contract negotiations were underway. Without having gone through this revitalization process the Culinary Union's capacity to launch such an ambitious comprehensive campaign in 2002 would have been significantly diminished. As mentioned in the literature review, most other analyses of comprehensive campaigns involve newly revitalized locals that lack the organizational capacities of the Culinary Union or, alternatively, lack a historical analysis of the local under study. Therefore, when analyzing the Culinary Union's 2002 campaign strategy it is important to look at the history of the union as well as the local industry because this history played a very influential role in determining the Culinary Union's strategic choices in the campaign as well as the effectiveness of the tactics employed. It would be impossible to have a proper accounting of the 2002 contract campaign if these historical factors and current practices were ignored.

Chapter VI: Contract Campaign Strategy

Introduction

The strategy pursued by the Culinary Union in its 2002 contract campaign was designed to exert pressure on casino operators on multiple fronts. The strategy's foundation was a rank-and-file mobilization campaign upon which most of the other contract campaign tactics relied for their effectiveness. The union's rank-and-file mobilization campaign was focused around a large bargaining committee made up of rank-and-file leaders drawn from almost every shift in each department in each of the casinos with contracts up for negotiation. The Culinary Union utilized this committee to mobilize rank-and-file members for a number of large rallies and demonstrations as well as smaller rallies inside casino break rooms or EDRs.¹⁵

Another major part of the union's contract campaign strategy was to exert pressure on gaming operators through their relationships with consumers, travel agents, the investment community, government officials, and the greater public. The effectiveness of these corporate campaign tactics relied upon the success of the rank-and-file mobilization campaign. For example, the union sought to demonstrate to gaming investors that settling with the union would be less costly than enduring a strike, in the hope that these investors would put pressure on the management of casino companies to agree to a contract that was more favorable to the union. In order to do this the Culinary Union had to demonstrate to gaming investors that it could sufficiently mobilize members in order to engage in an effective strike. The ability of the union to demonstrate that it could mobilize its workers was especially important because many industry experts thought that casino employees would not strike because they were still recovering from the wave of layoffs that hit the industry following 9/11 (Wilhelm, 2004, Alexander, 2005).

¹⁵ EDR is a commonly used acronym for Employee Dining Room.

The contract campaign's primary challenge was to legitimately threaten casino operators, as well as other stakeholders such as investors and tourists, with an effective work stoppage in the Las Vegas gaming industry. The internal mobilization campaign culminated in a massive membership-wide strike vote and rally, two weeks before the contract expiration. Around 20,000 union members attended this rally and voted almost unanimously to authorize the union's leadership to call a strike. The union's corporate campaign centered on two goals: inform stakeholders of the potential strike and the damage it could inflict on their interests and get these stakeholders to put pressure on casino operators to settle with the union. The success of these strategy tactics hinged not just on the union's contract campaign strategy, but also on several contextual factors which made Las Vegas casino owners particularly susceptible to strikes as well as facilitated the Culinary Union's ability to mobilize its members (Alexander, 2005).

Rank-and-File Mobilization Effort

The key element of the Culinary and Bartenders Unions' rank-and-file mobilization campaign was the union's large and representative bargaining committee. The bargaining committee provided the foundation for the unions' efforts to communicate with, survey, educate, and organize its rank-and-file. As a result of having an active communication and organizing network in the workplace, the union was able to engage in various kinds of internal and external pressure as well as solidarity tactics. The union was also able to mobilize workers to pressure employers in other ways besides in the workplace. For example, on several occasions the union had workers leaflet outside of casinos along the Strip and picket casinos in downtown Las Vegas. Finally, the rank-and-file mobilization campaign also provided a foundation for many of the unions' corporate campaign tactics, since many of these tactics relied on the union being able to create a legitimate strike threat in the eyes of

casino operators, gaming industry investors, and other stakeholders in the negotiations. The creation of such a strike threat relied on the successful mobilization of the rank-and-file.

In addition to the general mobilization campaign the Culinary Union's campaign strategy had elements that were specific to the GRAs. GRAs played an especially important role in the campaign because they had grown to be by far the largest occupational category in the Culinary Union, as a result of the growing size of the casino hotels in Las Vegas. Furthermore, they had been a group of employees that had been traditionally neglected by the local. Although Al Bramlet had courted their support during the 1950s and 1960s, this occupational group had traditionally been treated somewhat like second-class citizens by the Culinary Union. This disparate treatment may have been partially the result of the fact that these employees traditionally had been African-Americans, and the gaming industry in Las Vegas, as well as most of the rest of city, has historically been very segregated¹⁶ (Rothman, 2002a). Furthermore, in recent years GRAs had been experiencing a dramatic increasing in the number and size of hotel rooms they were expected to clean. These factors combined put GRA workload issues at the top of the Culinary Union's list of bargaining priorities in the 2002 round of negotiations (Pappageorge 2003).

However, support for the Culinary Union amongst the GRAs has been low compared to other occupational categories because of their historically neglected status. Furthermore, many housekeepers were immigrants, did not speak English as first language, or came from other disempowered backgrounds. These factors created several hurdles that the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization strategy had to overcome. Therefore, the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization strategy for its

¹⁶ Although historically GRAs in Las Vegas have been predominately African-American, now the occupation is dominated by immigrants from Latin America, especially in newer casinos along the Strip.

2002 comprehensive contract campaign contained several tactics that were specific to the GRAs and their workload concerns.

The primary element of the unions' GRA campaign was a study of their workload. This study was designed to demonstrate to casino operators and the public that the GRAs were suffering from a high number of work related injuries as a result of their excessive workload and to show to the GRAs that the union was serious about addressing important issues that were specific to them. In order to further demonstrate how serious the Culinary Union was about addressing GRA workload issues, lead officials spent a day working as GRAs in the local casinos a couple of months before the negotiations got under way. The union also held a special rally that highlighted the hardships GRAs faced at work, in which all the union's GRAs were invited along with local and state governmental and community leaders. Finally, the union used a variety of efforts to get workers from other departments behind the GRAs such as having these other members work with GRAs on various contract campaign projects and have lunch with them in the EDRs.

Building the Contract Committee and Administering the Contract Survey

The Culinary and Bartenders Unions used a large and representative bargaining committee of about 2000 people in the 2002 contract negotiations. The union's goal was to have one committee person for every 20 people in each shift in each department in each hotel. Similar to shop stewards, every 3-5 committee people were overseen by a lead committee person, who was in turn overseen by an internal organizer. The Culinary Union also took special precaution to ensure that bargaining committee was representative of its diverse membership. (Pappageorge, 2003, Dalton, 2003).

The Culinary and Bartenders unions used a large and representative contract committee for two main reasons. First, a large contract committee improves

communication with the rank-and-file about the progress of the negotiations. This helped to even the playing field between management and the union leadership in terms of their ability to communicate with members. Usually unions are at a disadvantage in this area because management has direct access to members at work. Also using a large bargaining committee creates an effective two-way communication network between the union members and its leadership, which allows the union leadership to get timely feedback from the rank-and-file about bargaining proposals made by the union or management (Wilhelm, 2004).

The responsibilities of each bargaining committee member included keeping the workers they represent informed about the negotiations and collecting feedback from these workers about their feelings on the progress of the negotiations. Committee members were also expected to educate those they represent on their workplace rights and what to do if they are retaliated against for union activity. Furthermore, committee members are responsible for administering contract surveys to their respective groups of workers. Usually these activities were done through informational meetings in the casino

Finally, contract committee members are responsible for mobilizing their group of workers. This means they make sure that these workers participate in inside actions such as wearing a contract button or participating in an EDR rally. It also means that committee members are responsible for turning out members in their group for union wide activities such as the strike authorization vote (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002).

The unions' contract administration procedure greatly eased its efforts to put together the bargaining committees for each hotel operator. They recruited shop stewards for the bargaining committee and lead shop stewards as lead bargaining committee members. Generally, committee members were placed in charge of

mobilizing the same 20 people they represented as shop stewards, and the lead committee members oversaw the same committee members they oversaw as lead shop stewards. This meant that rank-and-file members were already familiar with those who mobilized them for the negotiations (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003).

In order to recruit shop stewards to be on the contract committee the union held a city-wide stewards' meeting on December 13th, 2001, to introduce the upcoming contract negotiations. After the meeting, the union internal organizers house visited each shop steward to ask them if they wanted to be on the bargaining committee and explained to them what their responsibilities would be if they choose to do so. The vast majority of shop stewards agreed to serve on the contract committee. However, there were a significant number of workers who still did not have a representative on the bargaining committee either because their shop steward declined to be on the committee or because they were served by a shop steward who was already representing another group of workers on the bargaining committee. This occurred because in a few areas the Culinary Union had not yet recruited enough shop stewards to meet its goal of one shop steward for every twenty workers (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002).

The union's contract survey administration procedure was set up in such a way that it would mobilize workers around the contract campaign and help the union identify leaders amongst groups of workers who lacked representation on the contract committee, in addition to its traditional role of informing the union's leadership of what bargaining issues were most important to the membership. Contract surveys were generally administered by contract committee members in EDRs when not on work time. A committee person would set up a meeting with a few of the people, from the list of twenty people they are supposed to represent. Each committee member would generally administer the survey out loud so as to get other union members

attention, who were not in their group of twenty. Sometimes, the survey would be administered in a way that was similar to a rally with committee person, for example, yelling "Are you ready to strike?" and those taking the survey would respond with a vociferous "Yes!"¹⁷ (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002).

This helped the unions' effort to mobilize workers around the contract campaign as well as identify leaders from groups of workers that lacked representation on the committee. By administering surveys in such an attention getting manner, committee members were able to draw the attention of others who had not yet filled out a survey. If a person expressed interest in taking the survey, the committee person would briefly explain the contract campaign to him/her. Then the committee person would tell him or her that if they were interested in filling out the survey they would either have to become a committee member by getting 20 people from their shift in their department to sign a form stating they wanted the individual to be their committee member, or the individual should find someone else who could do so. It is important to note that when locating committee people in this way, the union still put a emphasis on leadership identification, this means that the unions screened potential committee people to make sure they were capable of leading their co-workers (Pappageorge, 2003, Dalton, 2003).

GRA Campaign

The Culinary and Bartenders Unions put together a special set of contract campaign tactics to deal specifically with GRAs and the issue of their workload. These tactics were designed to highlight the issue of GRA workload to casino operators and the general public, mobilize the GRAs for the contract campaign, create

¹⁷ It is important to note that the Culinary Union regularly polls its members so it was unlikely the union's leadership was surprised by the survey results

a sense of solidarity between GRAs and other rank-and-file workers, and make GRAs the public face of the contract campaign. Tactics used in the GRA campaign included: having union leaders work as GRAs for a day in one of casinos, sponsoring an outside study of the GRAs workload and its health effects, holding a special rally to highlight the issue of GRA workload, including GRAs at the forefront of most public events, having rank-and-file GRAs eat lunch with rank-and-file workers from other departments, having rank-and-file leaders from other departments work with GRA rank-and-file leaders on union affairs, and educating members in other departments on how the GRA workload issue affects them.

The GRA workload study was perhaps the most involved aspect of the GRA campaign. The Culinary Union hoped to accomplish several goals with the study. First, the local wanted to confirm its suspicions that GRAs' workload had increased significantly over last decade both in terms of the number of rooms they were expected to clean and in terms of the amount of work was required to clean each room. Furthermore, the Culinary Union wanted to confirm concerns that this increase was having a substantial adverse impact on the overall health of GRAs. Secondly, the Culinary Union leadership hoped that in addition to increasing its own awareness of the issue, the study would also legitimize the issue to casino operators, the general public, and union members in other job classifications (Krause, 2002 Lee & Baker, 2002).

Lastly, the Culinary Union hoped that the study would aid its efforts to mobilize the GRAs for the final contract campaign (Krause 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002). This was important for two primary reasons. First, the GRAs were supposed to be the public face of the campaign. Secondly, as mentioned previously support for the Culinary Union has traditionally not been as strong among GRAs as it has been among other job classifications (Pappageorge, 2003).

The Culinary Union hoped that the study would help mobilize its members in four primary ways. First of all, the local's leadership wanted the study to help convince GRAs that the union was seriously interested in addressing issues that were of specific importance to them. Furthermore, the Culinary Union hoped the study would help it identify, recruit, and train rank-and-file leaders from among the GRAs it represented. The local also hoped that the study would give members experience in resolving workplace issues in a collective manner through the union. Overall, Culinary Union leaders hoped that the study would help develop union commitment and participation amongst the GRAs (Krause 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002).

The union brought in a team of researchers from UC-Berkeley who had helped HERE Local 2 in San Francisco conduct a similar study. In San Francisco, the same team of researchers worked for over a year to document the working conditions of GRAs in the local hospitality industry. With the information gained from the study, HERE Local 2 was able to get language included in its next contract with hotel operators that reduced workloads of its GRA members. The Culinary Union hoped that a corresponding study of GRA workload in Las Vegas would help it win similar language for its contracts with casino operators in the local gaming industry (Lee & Baker, 2002).

The UC-Berkeley research team utilized a popular education model for its GRA work load study in order to link it to the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization efforts for the upcoming contract campaign. The popular education model was introduced by Paulo Freire and is most commonly associated with Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Popular education can be defined as a "systematic investigation, with the collaboration of those affected by the issues being studied" (Cornrow & Delp, 1999). Under this model research is "driven by the

questions and goals of the community and is participatory at every level.” (Cornrow & Delp, 1999).

In regards to the GRA study in Las Vegas, the popular education model can be understood as being driven by four primary elements. The first is that education is egalitarian in nature, where the assumption is that everyone has the capacity to teach as well as learn from others. Secondly, the popular education model focuses on participants’ lived experiences and abilities of individuals confronting similar problems to learn from each other. Third, is that learning and action go hand-in-hand, where the educational process is fundamentally linked to the resolution of the issue under study. Generally, the resolution of the issue at hand is pursued through some sort of collective rather than individualistic means. Finally, the popular education model usually has some sort of empowering effect on the participants; not just in regards to the resolutions of the issue at hand but rather regards to their overall socio-economic position. (Cornrow & Delp 1999; Krause 2002; Lee & Baker 2002)

The GRA workload study had four principle parts: eight focus groups sessions where researchers identified issues that were of particular importance to the GRAs, data collection, the analysis of the survey results, and the dissemination of the survey results to rank-and-file members, casino operators, and the general public. The focus group sessions took place over the summer of 2001, and each one was attended by about 27 GRAs that had been identified as rank-and-file leaders by the union and recruited to participate. Each session was about three hours long and took place after the end of the GRA’s shift (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002).

During the focus group sessions, GRAs described and compared their job tasks, daily schedules, characteristics of the hotels they worked in, and work changes over the past five years. Each participant carefully detailed changes in their workload. Participating GRAs also identified a variety of job stressors such as ergonomic

problems, physical strain, musculoskeletal problems, productivity demands, and relationships with supervisors and management. Finally the researchers and participating GRAs collected and analyzed safety information about the chemicals used to clean the hotel rooms (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002).

For methodological reasons the survey had to be conducted in a centralized location, so the union was faced with the difficult task getting a sufficient percentage of GRAs working in union hotels to come down to the union hall to take the survey. In addition to the usual logistical problems that come with mobilizing such large groups of people, the union had to overcome the fact that many GRAs did not have their own transportation, could not speak English, or in some cases were illiterate. The first task confronting the local was to inform GRAs about the survey and why it was important for them to participate. This was largely done through the union steward structure and other work place leaders the union had recruited specifically for this task. The union put together a rank-and-file committee specifically for this task, consisting of about one committee member for about every 12 GRAs. These committee members stressed to their co-workers how a high survey participation rate was integral to ability of the union to win a contract limiting GRA workload in the next round of negotiations. (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002)

The survey was administered at a variety of times at the union hall in order to ensure equal opportunity for GRAs of different shifts to participate. Each GRA who was willing to participate scheduled a time to come down to the union hall to take the survey. Because a large proportion of GRAs did not have their own transportation the union provided bus service to take the GRAs to the union hall. Survey committee leaders met GRAs outside of their work place when they finished their shifts in order to escort them to buses that were scheduled to take them to the union hall. Since some GRAs had poor literacy skills, survey participants were given the choice of taking the

survey either verbally or in written form. After a group of GRAs completed the survey they were given transportation back to their homes. This was essential because Las Vegas has a poor public transportation system and many GRAs lived in neighborhoods that were considered unsafe after dark (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002).

The researchers from UC-Berkeley analyzed the data in small groups, with rank-and-file leaders, and union staff. These groups were structured in a way that encouraged each group bringing their own insights to the data at hand. Role-playing was used to facilitate this process. By working together each type of participant could learn the perspective of the other. Furthermore, GRAs learned how many of their counterparts in other casinos struggled with many of the same issues they did, which helped to develop a sense of solidarity and outrage amongst the participating GRAs. They also learned of methods some of their counterparts had developed to deal with these issues (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002).

The study uncovered several troubling facts regarding GRA workload. First, the study confirmed widely held beliefs that the workload of GRAs had been steadily increasing in almost all of Las Vegas's unionized hotels. This increase resulted both from increases in the number of rooms GRAs were expected to clean and the amount of effort required to clean each room. The study also found that many GRA were coming into work 30-60 minutes early and working off the clock as well as skipping their lunches in order to complete their work assignments (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002, Pappageorge, 2003, Dalton, 2003).

The health effects of the increased GRA workload were perhaps the most troubling. The study revealed that in the past year 62% of participating GRAs had visited the doctor as a result of work related pain and had to take time off in 32% of these cases. Furthermore, 83% of participating GRA reported taking medication in the

past four weeks due to work related pain. Also 40% of participating GRAs suffered from high blood pressure compared to 25% of the overall adult US population. In the focus group sessions, several GRAs reported suffering from employer retaliation as a result of reporting work-related injuries. Finally, the study found that GRAs employed by casinos operators with more contentious relationships with the Culinary Union tended to be in poorer health (Krause, 2002, Lee & Baker, 2002, Pappageorge, 2003, Dalton, 2003).

The findings from the study were first presented in a special joint contract negotiation session between the union and management, representatives from all of the major casino operators were present. Also present were representatives from the union's bargaining committee. The researchers took questions from both the bargaining committee and management representatives about the study (Krause, 2002, Contract Negotiations Information Packet 2002, Dalton, 2003). Later the union held a press conference in which the study was presented to the wider public (Berns, 2002g).

The GRA workload study helped the rank-and-file mobilization campaign in a variety of ways. First, the focus group and data analysis sessions as well as the survey distribution process helped the union identify, recruit, and train rank-and-file leaders from among its GRA membership. This was especially important for the local because GRAs have historically not been very active or supportive of the Culinary Union. Secondly, as result of the study the GRAs learned to think of their workplace problems collectively and use the union as a tool to resolve them. Furthermore, the study helped the local improve its ability to communicate with GRAs about union issues. For many GRAs this was the first time they had discussed union issues with their co-workers. Additionally, the study encouraged GRAs to communicate across ethnic lines, which usually divided this diverse group workers. Also, the survey helped educate non-GRA union members about the problems affecting GRAs.

Altogether these factors helped to develop a sense of solidarity amongst the GRAs as well as increase their union commitment. This is because through the popular education model the GRAs were able to participate in the union and internalize its values of collective problem solving and solidarity. This process helped to legitimize the Culinary Union to the GRAs.

Another major part of the GRA campaign was a special rally the Culinary Union had for the GRAs at the Cashman Center, a large meeting venue in the city of Las Vegas. About 2,000 GRAs attended this event along with union leaders and local and state government leaders, including the mayor of Las Vegas and the Governor of Nevada. At the meeting several housekeepers spoke about the hardships they faced at work. The union also premiered a short film highlighting the problems GRAs faced at work. This rally helped the union mobilize the GRAs for the contract campaign as well as signaled to casino operators, consumers, and investors that the union enjoyed a high degree of support amongst GRAs in the contract campaign. This event was important in signaling to GRAs that the union was serious about addressing issues of specific importance to them. Several Culinary Union organizers reported that this event, as well as the data collection elements of the GRA workload study were critical, for winning the support of the GRAs for the contract campaign. (Dalton, 2003, Hughes, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Zeitz, 2003, Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002). This rally also focused media attention on the GRAs, helping the Culinary Union's efforts to make the GRAs the public face of its contract campaign (Berns, 2002p).

An important part of the Culinary Union's strategy was to make the GRAs the public face of their contract campaign. Their goal was that by doing this the public would perceive the contract negotiations as a contest primarily between GRAs and casino executives. Because GRAs were among the lowest paid workers in the

industry and were overwhelmingly middle-aged minority mothers, they were more likely to get the public's sympathy than other parts of the Culinary Union's membership. The effort to get the public's support was reflected in union rallies, where GRAs usually spoke, and in the union's campaign materials, in which GRAs figured prominently. For example, the union often included graphics of housekeepers on their picket signs, campaign buttons and stickers (Pappageorge, 2003). Furthermore, it was reflected in some of the of the campaign slogans such as: "Follow the housekeepers to justice." (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002).

The union's success in creating the public perception of the contract negotiations as largely contest between the GRAs and management was reflected in casino operators' complaints in the media about this issue. Casino executives complained in a number of articles in both the Las Vegas Review-Journal and in the Las Vegas Sun, that the GRA campaign was creating an unfavorable public image of them and undue sympathy for the Culinary Union in the negotiations (Smith, 2002a, Berns, 2002f, Berns, 2003, Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002).

In order to create a sense of solidarity between GRAs and other union members the Culinary Union used a set of tactics that educated non-GRAs about how curbing the workload of GRAs was also in their interest. The local's efforts to encourage communication between GRAs and other workers were focused on both bargaining committee members as well as the regular rank-and-file. The local facilitated communication between GRA and non-GRA rank-and-file by encouraging them to take breaks and meals together in the EDR on a regular basis. One internal organizer reported that this action in itself greatly alarmed casino managers because it was a clear demonstration of rank-and-file support for the contract campaign and the extent of the solidarity that existed between union members. The union efforts to get GRA and non-GRA bargaining committee members to interact with each other,

largely consisted of getting these groups of members to work together on various contract campaign projects. Union organizers also got GRA bargaining committee members to stand up at rank-and-file meetings and describe what their work was like and what problems they faced (Dalton, 2002).

The union argued that non-GRAs had a community of interest with GRAs on the workload issue because casinos were intensifying work across most job categories and that the GRA campaign was an effort to fight against this, not just for GRAs but for the other occupations as well. In effect non-GRA rank-and-file members were told that the GRA campaign was a campaign to head off workload increases in other departments. A dramatic increase in workloads following 9/11 greatly facilitated the Culinary and Bartenders Unions' efforts in this respect as members in many occupations grew alarmed about their own workloads and there became more supportive of the union and less trustful of employers on this issue overall (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Wilhelm, 2003).

Miscellaneous Rank-and-File Mobilization Tactics

In addition to building a contract committee, administering the contract survey, and the GRA campaign the Culinary Union utilized a variety of other tactics to mobilize its membership. These activities centered around developing other means of communication with the membership, building a sense of solidarity amongst the members, and developing rank-and-file confidence about engaging in collective action in the workplace.

The Culinary and Bartenders' Union utilized a number of other means to communicate with their memberships other than through the bargaining committee. Many of these tactics are relatively common aspects of collective bargaining, such as regular bilingual mailings to the membership detailing the progress of the negotiations and house visiting members. The two locals also put together a one hour twice weekly

bilingual radio show, with union leaders fielding calls from members and the public about the contract negotiations. (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002, Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003)

In addition to the previously mentioned tactics, union members wore contract campaigns buttons and ribbons in a show of solidarity. Often, Culinary Union members in casinos whose contracts did not expire in 2002 wore campaign buttons and ribbons to show their solidarity with their fellow union members at properties that were involved in the negotiations (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002, Arguello-Kline, 2003). In one instance, a number of workers at Harrah's were suspended for wearing their union buttons. In response, the union got all the workers at another casino that was owned by the same company but was not involved in the 2002 negotiations to wear contract campaign buttons in order to express their solidarity with their suspended colleagues. Soon after this demonstration, the management of Harrah's backed down and the workers were reinstated (Arguello-Kline, 2003).

Rank-and-File External and Internal Pressure Tactics

The Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization effort enabled the local to effectively engage in a number of rank-and-file intensive pressure tactics that significantly increased its leverage at the bargaining table. These tactics were utilized both within the workplace and outside of the workplace and often were also part of the local's corporate campaign strategy. Furthermore, these tactics were used to demonstrate to stakeholders that the Culinary Union had successfully mobilized their membership and could legitimately threaten to engage in an effective strike.

The most dramatic of the local's internal tactics were EDR rallies and delegations to management over contract issues and organizable grievances. David

Berns briefly described a typical EDR rally in an article he wrote in the Las Vegas Review-Journal:

On a recent morning, 100 housekeepers, waitresses and others gathered in Treasure Island's employee dining room for a mini-union rally led by State Sen. Maggie Carlton, D-Las Vegas, who herself is a restaurant waitress and shop steward at the Strip mega-resort. The five-minute gathering began with the sort of rhythmic clapping and chanting that dominates much larger Culinary gatherings. 'Union! Union! Union!' Carlton yelled as her predominantly Spanish-speaking audience of uniformed workers joined in. 'Si, se puede! Si, se puede! Si, se puede!' came the Spanish-language response of 'Yes we can!' A collection of seven or eight Treasure Island executives stood along a nearby wall eyeing the scene. (Berns 2002g)

It is important to note that in addition to being pressure tactics, these tactics also served to mobilize the rank-and-file and develop a sense of solidarity in the workplace. These tactics were a regular part of the unions' workplace campaign strategy taking place on numerous occasions in a variety of hotels. In interviews many of the internal organizers expressed the opinion that if the union had not already been pursuing a contract administration strategy based on the organizing model, the ability of the union to use tactics such as EDR rallies and delegations to management as part of its contract campaign strategy would have been significantly diminished (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002, Berns, 2003, Dalton, 2003, Hughes, 2003 Pierce, 2003, Zeitz, 2003, Alexander, 2005, Henry, 2005, Pappageorge, 2005).

In addition to employing rank-and-file intensive strategies inside the workplace, the union also engaged in a number of rank-and-file intensive strategies outside of the workplace. Such strategies included leafleting and picketing outside of casinos as well as holding in several large rallies and demonstrations. Similar to the inside pressure tactics, the success of the union in employing these external pressure tactics is significantly linked to its prior contract administration strategies.

The Culinary Union flyered outside casinos both downtown and along the strip numerous times. In order to avoid violating their current contract, the local flyered outside of nonunion casinos.¹⁸ Perhaps the most imaginative of these actions was the Culinary Union's "Support My Mommy Day" This action took place on May 18th less than two weeks before the contract expired on June 1st. "Support My Mommy Day" was staged on the Strip with a fair-like atmosphere with the union handing out balloons, hotdogs, and lemonade to people walking along the Strip. The main part of the action consisted of the children of the GRAs handing out flyers with headings such as "Please help our moms!" Also included on the flyers were pictures the children had drawn of themselves and their moms with information about the GRAs workload and its health effects and other contract campaign issues.¹⁹ (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002, German, 2002n, Simpson, 2002v).

Union rallies and marches also made up a large part of the Culinary Union campaign strategy. The union held numerous rallies in conjunction with the contract negotiations, the most important of which was the May 16th strike vote that served as the capstone of the union rank-and-file mobilization effort. The unions' ability to successfully organize these rallies and demonstrations exerted a lot of pressure on casinos to settle because they greatly alarmed investors, consumers, and the casino operators themselves about the probability and severity of a strike. The high degree of rank-and-file participation in the rallies and demonstrations sent a message to stakeholders in the negotiations that the Culinary Union had the strong support of its members in the negotiations and that a strike was probable if a settlement could not be reached.

¹⁸ Flyering was still effective because of the geographical proximity of the nonunion properties to the union properties and the heavy pedestrian traffic between the casinos, both along the Las Vegas Strip and downtown.

¹⁹ A copy of one such flyer is included at the end of this paper.

Much like the EDR rallies, the larger rallies and demonstrations that made up the Culinary Union's contract campaign would not have been possible without the extensive shop floor organization the union built up both prior to and in the earlier parts of the contract campaign. By the time it became necessary to turn out members for these rallies and demonstration the unions' rank-and-file were already highly mobilized. Many of the Culinary Union's staff members pointed out that these rallies and demonstrations had a snowballing effect, so that smaller rallies that were held earlier in the campaign acted as mobilizing agents, making it easier for the Culinary Union to turn out workers for similar events later in the campaign (Dalton, 2003, Weiss, 2003, Pappageorge, 2004).

Other than the GRA rally discussed earlier the Culinary Union engaged in three other major rallies and marches in the course of the contract campaign. Furthermore, in addition to these major rallies the two locals held smaller rallies in conjunction with other unions that were holding conventions in Las Vegas. There were three of these rallies: June 8th with about 1,500 marchers from the UAW, June 18 with 1,500 members of the CWA, and June 26th with 2,000 members of AFSCME. (Simpson 2002m; Simpson 2002i)

The May 16th strike vote and rally was the most significant of the 2002 contract negotiations. It was the first time the Culinary Union, in its history, had attempted to mobilize its entire membership for a single rally. As mentioned earlier, the May 16th rally/strike vote was the climax of the Culinary Union's mobilization efforts. More than 20,000 union members showed up to the rally and they voted 18,654 to 877 in favor of authorizing the unions' bargaining committee to call a strike (Berns, 2002b). Attendance at the May 16th rally exceeded the union leaderships' expectations and caused traffic tie-ups that prevented even more rank-and-file union

members from attending (Dalton, 2003, Weiss, 2003). Much of the mobilizing for the May 16th strike vote was done through the union's bargaining committee.

This rally was significant because much of the Culinary and Bartenders' Unions' contract campaign strategy was based upon the ability of the unions' to effectively strike the Las Vegas casino industry, and the May 16th strike vote and rally sent a clear message to casino operators, investors and consumers that the Culinary and Bartenders Unions were prepared to strike in order to obtain their contract demands. According to several union staffers who sat in on the actual negotiations, management became much more willing to seriously consider the Culinary Union's contract demands after the negotiations (Wilhelm, 2003, Pappageorge, 2005, Alexander, 2005). In fact, in the weeks following the strike vote the union settled its first contract with one of the major casino operators, Park Place Entertainment. Soon after this first contract, other casino operators settled with the union, signing contracts patterned after the one with Park Place (Pappageorge, 2004). The Culinary Union accomplished their two most important goals with these contracts: protecting the quality of their healthcare plan and restricting GRA workload (Berns, 2002h, Berns, 2002i, Berns, 2002j, Berns, 2002k).

The second largest rally related to the 2002 contract negotiations took place on June 21st on Fremont Street in front of the downtown casinos with which the union was negotiating. The estimated attendance at this rally was 12,000 consisting of both downtown and Strip employees. Although Strip casino operators had settled by this time, downtown operators were still holding out for a less expensive contract. In order to turn out such large numbers for the rally the Culinary and Bartender's Union had to successfully mobilize Strip workers, from casinos who had already settled with the union. Therefore, the fact that about half of the people at the rally worked at Strip casinos was especially remarkable (Simpson, 2002d, Hughes, 2003).

The 33-hour downtown picket line was another important public rally held to put pressure on downtown casino operators. The rally consisted of informational pickets that were set up in front of downtown casinos 33 hours before the contract extension the union held with the downtown casinos expired. The pickets were set up in front of these casinos at 3 p.m. on June 29th and about 1,000 people manned the picket line (Simpson, 2002e).

Corporate Pressure Tactics

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter the Culinary Union's corporate campaign exploited casino operators' networks of relations with investors, consumers, meeting planners, and travel agents as points of leverage in the contract negotiations. Furthermore, the local closely coordinated its corporate campaign effort with the rank-and-file mobilization campaign, creating a comprehensive campaign strategy that was reliant on the local's ability to mobilize its rank-and-file members.

A key part of the Culinary Unions' corporate campaign was convincing casino investors and consumers as well as travel agents and meeting planners to put pressure on casino operators to settle with the union. In order to do this, the two locals had to convince these parties that their respective stakes within the Las Vegas gaming industry, whether it was an investment, a client's account, or a vacation would be endangered if casino operators did not settle with the union. The way that the unions did this was to convince these parties that the Culinary Union could effectively engage in a strike, if they were unable to reach an acceptable settlement with the major Las Vegas casino operators (Alexander, 2005).

The Culinary Union also sought to convince stakeholders that the prosperity enjoyed by the gaming industry prior to the 9/11 attacks was partially the result of the cooperative relationship that existed between the union and most gaming operators over the previous dozen years. For example, as discussed in the prior chapter, the

Culinary Union's parent union, HERE has cooperated with casino operators in order to enable the gaming industry to expand to new jurisdictions where it had been previously prohibited. Additionally, the two parties have cooperated in order to contain gaming taxes and the healthcare costs of casino employees. The Culinary Union also compared the performances of the generally thriving unionized casinos along the Las Vegas strip to their generally under performing non-union counterparts such as the Venetian and Aladdin, which further strengthened their argument about the importance of positive labor relations for the local industry's prosperity.²⁰ The Culinary Union sought to convince stakeholders that casino operators' were endangering the benefits they reaped from the cooperative labor-management relationship by taking such a hard-line in the negotiations (Alexander, 2005).

In order to recognize the full value of this aspect of the Culinary Union's corporate campaign strategy it is important to appreciate how important a positive public image is to casino operators. The gaming industry is very image conscious because of moral questions about gambling itself, and the industry's links, in the mind of many people, with societal problems such as addiction and organized crime. The gaming industry has become especially aware of its own image problems as it has tried to move into new jurisdictions, where it has been previously prohibited. The gaming industry is especially sensitive to bad publicity revolving around labor issues, because one of the key arguments the industry makes when lobbying against restrictions on gambling is that the industry provides good, living wage jobs. Furthermore, the gaming industry usually cites Las Vegas as a prime example of where the gaming industry has benefited workers. As a result, if it were widely reported that casino operators in Las Vegas were trying undermine the standard of

²⁰ As of 2002, both the Venetian and the Aladdin had consistently lost money since their openings. Furthermore, the MGM-Grand, which operated with significant losses while remaining non-union, was able to turn itself around once its were workers were organized and by 2002 had several profitable years under its belt. (Rothman 2003)

living of their employees in Las Vegas, it would significantly undermine the industry's expansion efforts overall (Alexander, 2005). Therefore, it was especially important for the union to publicize the casino operators antagonistic approach to the negotiations as well as demonstrate to investors how management was endangering the gaming industry's expansionary prospects (Alexander, 2005).

When communicating with investors the Culinary Union used the dramatic fall off in business following 9/11 to its advantage as well. The union explained to investors that the losses casino operators incurred in the last city wide strike in 1984 approximated the recent losses casinos had suffered as a result of 9/11. Local 226's lead researcher felt that this message resonated particularly strongly with investors because they were just recovering from the dramatic financial hit they suffered as result of 9/11 (Alexander, 2005). For example, although room occupancy had returned to pre-9/11 levels by the time of the negotiations, room rates and stock prices were still on the rebound. Gaming investors were nervous that a city-wide strike in Las Vegas would threaten this nascent recovery. Overall, in the case of investors the Culinary Union sought to demonstrate that settling on the union's terms would be less expensive than trying endure a city wide strike and throwing away the mutually beneficial relationship that had developed between most Las Vegas casino operators and the union (Alexander, 2005).

In order to convince consumers, investors and travel agents that the union could effectively strike the Las Vegas Strip the union had to effectively mobilize its membership around the negotiations and advertise this mobilization to the respective parties. The union did this by holding very visible rallies such as the May 16th strike vote or the Cashman Center rally, sending information to investors, travel agents, meeting planners as well as businesses that provide goods and services to Las Vegas casinos about the negotiations, scheduling several conference calls with gaming

investors in order to give the union's perspective in the negotiations, continually flyering outside of casinos, setting up a regularly updated web page dealing with the negotiations, and promoting extensive coverage in the regular as well as business media.

It is important to note that the Culinary Union had already developed relationships with many important stakeholders such as several large institutional investors and business publications that routinely reported on the gaming industry. In fact, because the union had already established a reputation with many in the business community for providing accurate and valuable information and analysis on issues related to the gaming industry, many investors as well as other stakeholders sought out the union's perspective on the contract negotiations. These relationships helped the union to get its message out in the 2002 contract campaign (Alexander, 2005). This was especially important because Las Vegas principal daily newspaper tended to favor management in its coverage of labor issues (Benz, 2004).

The Culinary Union's corporate pressure tactics would have been ineffective if the Culinary union had not successfully mobilized their rank-and-file for a possible strike, because these tactics centered on the ability of the union to effectively convince stakeholders that a strike would be more damaging to their interests than if casino operators simply settled on terms acceptable to the union. The goal of the Culinary Union was to create as much stakeholder concern as possible, so that these stakeholders would put pressure on casino employers to settle with the union.

Influence of Context of Culinary Union Comprehensive Campaign Strategy

The last chapter analyzed how the Culinary Union's own internal practices in the years prior to 2002 influenced the local's strategic decision making and success in mounting its comprehensive contract campaign in the spring of that year. The following section will discuss how the campaign was influenced by external factors

such as the socio-political climate and industrial context. The Culinary Union's 2002 campaign strategy sought to take advantage of leverage points and minimize liabilities created by these factors.

A key advantage the Las Vegas casino industry afforded the Culinary Union in 2002 was the continued effectiveness of the strike as an industrial relations tactic for the local. Unlike other industries where the advent of widespread use of permanent replacements and other unfavorable changes in labor law have significantly undermined the power of a strike, the strike remains a potent weapon for unions in Las Vegas's casino industry, if combined with effective rank-and-file mobilization and corporate pressure campaign. The Culinary Union demonstrated the continued effectiveness of strikes in the local casino industry in previous disputes with Binion's Horseshoe and the Frontier as well as in the 1984 city wide strike. In each of these instances casino operators lost significant amounts of revenue as a result of strikes called by the Culinary Union.

Strikes are still effective in Las Vegas for a variety of reasons. The first reason is that service quality is very important in the casino industry, and a strike can cut to the heart of casino patron's experience in Las Vegas. On the most fundamental level, having several thousand noisy picketers marching up and down the Las Vegas Strip or the Fremont Street Experience can ruin any vacationer's or conferee's trip to Las Vegas. Furthermore the large amount of contact between casino employees and patrons means that low employee morale or unprepared striker replacements can dramatically effect the quality of service patrons receive (Rothman, 2002b, Rothman, 2003). As MGM-Mirage's Chairman Terri Lanni explained in an interview with the New York Times: "When you're in the service business, the contact our guests have is with the guest-room attendants or the food and beverage servers, and if that person is unhappy that comes across to guests very quickly." (Greenhouse, 2004). This factor is

especially important for the higher-end properties that dominate the Las Vegas Strip, who often use higher service quality rating to distinguish themselves from their competitors. The importance of a positive labor relations environment on service quality is highlighted by the poor ratings non-union strip casino such as the Venetian and Aladdin have received (Rothman, 2002b, Rothman, 2003).

The relative isolation of Las Vegas also increases the effectiveness of strikes in the local casino industry. There is not a sufficient employment base in Las Vegas's metropolitan area from which casino operators can recruit replacement workers if the Culinary Union were to engage in a city-wide strike. If such a strike were to occur casino operators would have to recruit strike replacements from other major population centers in the southwest such as Los Angeles or Phoenix (Berns, 2002n). This process is made more difficult by the unappealing nature of GRAs' work, which is the largest job category in Las Vegas's casino industry (Dalton, 2003, Wilhelm, 2004, Henry, 2005).

The effectiveness of a strike in Las Vegas's casino industry is also heightened by fact that three of the four largest casino operators in Las Vegas derive a large proportion of their revenue from their Las Vegas operations. This fact makes it difficult for these operators to use revenue from other localities to wait out a strike in Las Vegas's casino industry as happened in the 2003-2004 UFCW grocery strike. Furthermore, at the time of the negotiations, casino operators were in significant debt, which further increased their vulnerability to a Culinary Union strike. This is because casino operators largely relied on the revenue they earned from their Las Vegas operations to finance their debt payments (Rothman, 2002b, Rothman, 2003, Alexander, 2005).

In developing its comprehensive contract campaign strategy the Culinary Union took these factors into account. The rank-and-file mobilization effort sought to

create very visible signs of the willingness of the Culinary Union's rank-and-file to strike if casino operators did not concede to their contract demands. The union did this by holding very large rallies in the build up to the contract expiration date, culminating with the May 16th strike vote. The local also held a number of smaller events designed for media attention as well as rank-and-file mobilization such as the intermittent EDR rallies and various rallies downtown.

The Culinary Union's research department then ensured that the various stake holders who influenced the casino operators' decision making process were aware of the militancy of the local's rank-and-file workers and the probable effect of a city-wide strike on casino operator's revenues. The local contacted a wide variety of stake holders in this process such as: convention and meeting planners, creditors, investors, investment analysts, and travel agents. All of these had a significant financial stake in the continued profitability of unionized casinos in Las Vegas. In order to present a convincing argument to these parties the union demonstrated how much revenue casino operators had lost in previous strikes such as the 1984 city-wide strike or the more recent Frontier strike. Furthermore, the local sought to show to these groups the benefits of having a positive labor relations environment in Las Vegas, by highlighting the low service ratings of non-union Strip properties. As a result of the Culinary Union's efforts casino operators began to come under pressure from a variety of stakeholders to settle with the union.

Union strategy in negotiations with downtown and neighborhood casino operators

The Culinary Union faced a very different set of circumstances in its negotiations with the downtown and neighborhood casino operators leading it to modify its strategy of negotiations with these properties. This highlights the importance of adapting comprehensive contract campaign strategies to the

environment in which they take place as discussed by Bronfenbrenner and Juravich (2001)

Unlike their Strip counterparts, downtown and unionized neighborhood casinos were not flourishing businesses, rather they were businesses whose continued viability was questionable. Furthermore, the vast majority of downtown and unionized neighborhood casinos were not owned by large gaming and hospitality corporations, rather they were often privately-owned family-run businesses. Additionally, the unionized neighborhood casinos operated in a largely non-union market, which meant that unlike their Strip counterparts, they faced competition from other non-union casinos with less expensive labor costs. Finally, downtown casinos competed with the largely non-union neighborhood casinos for local customers.

These conditions lead the Culinary Union to alter its strategy for its negotiations with the downtown and neighborhood casino operators. First, its public relations campaign could not rely on a David vs. Goliath public perception of the campaign as largely a battle between low-paid GRAs and the large greedy gaming corporations. This is because, given the conditions discussed in the previous paragraph, most of the public in fact thought that the union had the upper hand in the negotiations with downtown and neighborhood casinos (Rothman 2003). Therefore, in order to gain public support the union emphasized issues such as: the importance of maintaining affordable health insurance for the disproportionately older downtown workforce and the long tenure of many downtown employees with the same casino. Furthermore, many downtown and neighborhood operators were closely-held organizations, limiting the number of outside stakeholders the Culinary Union could use to influence their decision on whether to settle with the union. However, because most of these operations were only marginally viable they also were much more wary of taking on the large Culinary Union. (Pappageorge 2003)

Also because the Culinary Union settled with the large Strip operators first, it sought to mobilize its rank-and-file members from these properties to become involved in the on-going negotiations with the downtown and neighborhood casinos. This was done by setting up an adopt-a-hotel program where workers from hotels that had already settled with the Culinary Union were assigned to hotels they had yet to settle. These workers were then expected to engage in various solidarity actions with workers from their "adopted" hotels. These actions included such things as eating meals in groups at the hotels still engaged in negotiations to show their support for union members in these hotels, and showing up to rallies and pickets involving their "adopted" hotels (Contract Negotiations Information Packet, 2002). Again, rank-and-file workers were mobilized for these solidarity actions through their bargaining reps, further demonstrating the importance of the bargaining committee and previous contract administration strategy to the contract campaign. The success of the "adopt-a-hotel" program was demonstrated by the fact 12,000 people participated in the June 21st March in downtown Las Vegas, when only about 5,000-plus union members work in the downtown and neighborhood casinos (German, 2002, Simpson 2002f, Simpson 2002m).

Impact of 9/11 on the 2002 Comprehensive Contract Campaign

The 2002 round of contract negotiations was profoundly influenced by the 9/11 disaster and the fall out in the national tourist industry that it caused. Las Vegas, because its economy is largely based on tourism, was one of the hardest hit cities in the United States from this phenomenon. The local casino industry faced the brunt of the economic downturn. Hotel occupancy and room rates plummeted. Although hotel occupancy had rebounded by the end of 2001, room rates remained depressed long into 2002.

This decline in tourism activity led to massive lay-offs throughout the Las Vegas's casino industry. At the peak of the lay-offs around half of the Culinary Union's total membership had either been laid off or had their hours dramatically reduced. Several months after the 9/11 disaster, former casino workers were still waiting to get called back to their jobs and an even larger number of formerly full-time workers remained on part-time status. Those who were able to hold on to their jobs faced a dramatically increased workload as they had to cover the work of their co-workers who had been laid off or were working reduced hours (Wilhelm, 2004, Smith, 2002b).

Although many laid off workers had been rehired by the time the 2002 contract negotiations were underway, the lay-offs following September 11th became a significant issue in the negotiations. The economic fallout caused by 9/11 in the hospitality and gaming industries caused widespread fear among union members about their job security and overall economic well being. This fear was exasperated by the fact most of the Culinary Union members earned relatively low wages to begin with, and therefore could not easily weather long periods of unemployment (Wilhelm, 2004, Pappageorge, 2003). Furthermore, a proposal by the Culinary Union leaders to cut the hours of more senior employees who were still working, in order to decrease the number of more junior members that had been laid-off created divisions within the local's rank-and-file membership (Rothman, 2002b).

However by early 2002, employee outrage over how casino employers handled the post-9/11 crisis in Las Vegas Gaming industry overcame these earlier fears and divisions. There were a variety of reasons why local casino employees began to aim their antagonism toward employers. First, many employees and union officials thought that casino operators had used the economic fallout following 9/11 as an excuse to increase employee workloads on a more long-term basis. They accused the

casino operators of failing to rehire workers at a rate that was commiserate with the rate that business was rebounding by the end of 2001, and expecting workers to handle an increased workload long after it was necessary (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Wilhelm, 2003).

Furthermore, on April 2nd just as the 2002 contract negotiations were getting underway, it was revealed that executives at MGM-Mirage had received large bonuses in the midst of the post 9/11 fallout. These bonuses undermined the rhetoric of shared sacrifice used by many in the casino industry after 9/11 and were later used by casino operators to justify some of their concessionary contract demands. The bonuses also created a sense of bad feeling towards casino operators within the general local population, since the post-9/11 fallout in the gaming industry had caused tremendous hardship in the rest of the local economy. This helped the Culinary Union obtain the sympathy of the public in the 2002 negotiations. Finally, The Mandalay Resort Group exasperated this sense of bad feeling by going ahead with their project to add a convention center and additional hotel tower to the Mandalay Bay Casino, while arguing they could not afford union demands as a result of 9/11 (Rothman, 2002b, Simpson, 2002a, Smith, 2002b).

According to HERE President John Wilhelm, employee anger towards casino operators was higher than anything he had ever previously experienced in Las Vegas's casino industry. Most of the Culinary Union's internal organizers interviewed for this case study, reported similar feelings among the workers they interacted with. They also said that antagonism created by the actions of casino employers in the aftermath of 9/11 significantly aided their efforts to mobilize rank-and-file union members. Furthermore, before 9/11 the Culinary Union had already decided to focus on GRA workload issues in the 2002 contract campaign, so widespread suspicion that casino operators had used the disaster to increase work loads, facilitated the union's

mobilization efforts in this area, in particular. Several organizers stated that they felt that employer reluctance to reduce workloads as tourism began to pick-up after the 9/11 emergency subsided created much more sympathy for the GRA workload issue amongst union members outside of the housekeeping department. Overall, the 9/11 disaster may have had the effect of highlighting the divisions in the interests of casino employees and management (Dalton, 2002, Hughes, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Wilhelm, 2004).

In the wake of the post-9/11 fall out in the tourism industry many hospitality and gaming industry experts predicted that unions in these industries would have to make significant concessions in upcoming rounds of negotiations, and Las Vegas was no exception. However, HERE's national leadership argued publicly that the effects of 9/11 were only temporary and they did not see them as adequate justification for locking their members into inferior contracts for several years into the future. HERE had its first post-9/11 round of negotiations in Boston in October and November and many labor experts saw these negotiations as setting the precedent for subsequent post-9/11 rounds of negotiations, including Las Vegas. In spite of the fact that hotel occupancy in Boston was down by roughly 60% and at least half the local's membership had been laid off, HERE Local 26 in Boston put together an aggressive comprehensive contract campaign and was able to achieve one of the best contracts in the history of their local. The union was able to obtain a five-year contract granting their members a five percent wage increase and an additional personal day off as well as providing Local 26 with card check neutrality for any new hotels opened in Boston by the hotel chains that signed the agreement.

This successful contract campaign demonstrated that it was possible to negotiate a strong contract in the wake of 9/11. Furthermore, it demonstrated that the 9/11 disaster had left hotels, and thus probably casino employers, in a weakened

position. This was especially true for employers who were deep in debt, like the major employers in Las Vegas. This was because the events of 9/11 had made it more difficult for them to meet their debt service requirements, therefore making them and other creditors nervous about potentially disrupting revenue flow by engaging in a protracted labor struggle. (Berns, 2002g, Wilhelm, 2004, Stoughton, 2001).

Therefore, although on a prima facie level it seemed likely that the 9/11 disaster should have undermine the Culinary Union's bargaining position in the 2002 negotiations, it actually had a more mixed effect. Initially the fallout in the tourism industry following 9/11 divided the Culinary Union's membership and left them concerned about the future of their jobs. However, the actions of casino operators in the aftermath of 9/11, alienated casino employees. This had the ultimate effect of aiding union mobilization efforts for the 2002 contract campaign. For example, the increase in overall employee workloads aided Culinary Union efforts to mobilize members around the GRA workload issue for the 2002 contract campaign. The 9/11 disaster also made casino employers more vulnerable to corporate pressure tactics because they were concerned labor unrest may disrupt ability of casinos to meet their debt service requirements and threaten the post-9/11 recovery of the casino industry that was taking place at the time of the negotiations.

Conclusion

The primary strategy of the Contract Campaign was to credibly threaten to strike the entire Las Vegas casino industry if gaming operators did not concede to the union's contract demands. This strategy consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of mobilizing workers in a very visible way thereby creating the appearance of widespread worker militancy in the industry. The second part of the campaign was to convince stakeholders in the negotiations that the strike threat was real and compel them to pressure casino operators to settle with the union.

This strategy was well adapted to the context of the negotiations both in terms of the Culinary Union's own internal organizational strengths and in terms of the bargaining environment the local faced. Largely as a result of its prior contract administration, contract bargaining, external organizing, and political strategies the Culinary Union had developed the organizational capacity to mobilize its more than 45,000 members for the negotiations. The local's contract administration strategy in the years leading up to the negotiations probably played the largest role in preparing the union's rank-and-file members for the mobilization effort.

The Culinary Union's 2002 contract campaign strategy was also well adapted to its external environment. The Culinary Union had identified the primary weakness of Las Vegas casino operators as their continued vulnerability to strikes, therefore the corporate campaign focused on exposing this vulnerability to a variety of stakeholders who the union thought would influence the decision making process of the operators in the negotiations. These stakeholders were primarily gaming industry investors, investment analysts, creditors, meeting and convention planners, travel agents, and vacationers. In order to gain leverage vis-à-vis casino operators, the Culinary Union educated these stakeholders about the likelihood and probable cost of a city wide strike in Las Vegas's casino industry and used them to pressure casino operators to settle with the union. Therefore, developing a credible strike threat was critical to these efforts, and a highly visible rank-and-file mobilization campaign was the key to this process.

Chapter VII: 2002 Contract Negotiations: Overview of Events

Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the actual 2002 contract negotiations between the Culinary Union and most of the unionized gaming operators in Las Vegas. It will begin with an overview of how gaming operators approached the negotiations and describe how a variety of factors inhibited the casino operators from coordinating their bargaining strategy with each other. This gave the Culinary Union an additional degree of leverage in the negotiations, because it allowed the local to whipsaw casino operators and put additional pressure on operators who were the most resistant to settling on the union's terms. This chapter will also highlight the important role played by rank-and-file mobilization in the negotiations. For example, it is important to note that the first settlements the union reached with Strip and downtown operators respectively occurred right after the union had held massive rallies demonstrating the militancy of its members. This level of mobilization would not have been possible without the great degree preparation of the union went through, as described in previous chapters.

Las Vegas Strip Employers' Strategies and Objectives

In the 2004 contract negotiations, casino operators bargained in several distinct groups, each with its own set of objectives and strategies. The most fundamental subdivision amongst casino operators was between those who primarily operated casinos along the Las Vegas Strip and those who primarily operated casinos located either downtown or other locations off the Strip. The Strip operators can be further subdivided into two groups: large multi-property operators and smaller single property operators. The former group tended to run the Strip's newer, more upscale properties, and have a dominant presence in other major gaming markets such as Atlantic City.

At the time of the 2002 negotiations there were four of these larger Strip operators: the Mandalay Resort Group, Park Place, MGM-Mirage, and Harrah's. The second group of Strip casino operators were the smaller gaming companies who only owned one property along the strip and maybe a few additional properties in other gaming markets. In contrast to the first group, these smaller operators generally ran the Strip's older, less upscale casinos.

The major strip casino operators were the first to enter into negotiations with the Culinary Union in 2002. However, by 2002 this group of employers was no longer led by Steve Wynn. Wynn did not participate in the negotiation process because in 2000 his Mirage Resorts had been acquired by Kirk Kerkorian's MGM in an unfriendly take over. The name of the new entity created by this take over was MGM-Mirage. With Wynn, out of the picture, there was some question at the beginning of 2002 about how local gaming operators would organize themselves for the upcoming negotiations.

By mid-Spring 2002 it became apparent that the major strip operators were going to follow two distinct strategies in the upcoming contract negotiations: The Mandalay Resort Group pushed for the three other major Las Vegas gaming operators to negotiate together and adopt a confrontational strategy in the negotiations. The Mandalay Resort Group's initial demands included shifting more healthcare costs to the union members, the elimination of the guaranteed work week, the ability to assign shorter shifts, and an increase in the use of "steady extras"²¹ (Pappageorge, 2003). The Mandalay Resort Group also strongly resisted the Culinary Union's efforts to reduce GRA workload. The Mandalay Resort Group's tactics and rhetoric in the

²¹ Steady-extras are workers who are part of the bargaining unit, but do not have steady schedules and are instead called in on a per need basis. Therefore, many of these employees do not qualify for the same benefits as full time employees. Many employers call in steady extras through the Culinary Union's hiring hall.

negotiations were much more confrontational than had been usual for Las Vegas. The company's management refused to attach any legitimacy to the GRA workload issue and repeatedly attacked the union in the press. In one incident security guards working for Mandalay Bay beat up a group of workers who were holding an EDR rally at the operator's Circus-Circus casino.

None of the Culinary Union officials that interviewed for this case study could say conclusively why the Mandalay Bay Group chose to pursue such an antagonistic strategy. One theory suggested by several Culinary Union staff and leaders was that the management of the Mandalay Resort Group thought that workers were still traumatized by the post-9/11 layoffs and so would acquiesce when faced with confrontational management tactics and concessionary contract demands (Wilhelm, 2004, Alexander, 2005, Pappageorge, 2005). Another possible explanation is that with Steve Wynn out of the picture, the management team at the Mandalay Resort Group saw an opening to assume his previous leadership role in Las Vegas's casino industry. Additionally, the Mandalay Resort Group had an added incentive to demand a concessionary contract from the Culinary Union, because it earned a larger proportion of its overall EBITDA from its Las Vegas properties than any of the other three major casino operators. This meant that an expensive contract in Las Vegas would be more harmful to the Mandalay Resort Group than it would be to any of its rivals (Rothman, 2003).

However, the Mandalay Bay Resort Group's efforts to convince the major casino operators to follow their lead largely failed, with only MGM-Mirage agreeing to cooperate with them in the 2002 negotiations. MGM-Mirage adopted a confrontational stance in the negotiations for probably largely the same reasons as the Mandalay Bay Group. It most likely saw a chance to take advantage of its traumatized workforce, and its exposure to the Las Vegas Strip in terms of percentage of overall

EBITDA was significantly larger than the other two major casino operators (Bohner, 2003, Wilhelm, 2004, Alexander, 2005). Furthermore, MGM-Mirage owner Kirk Kerkorian historically has had a checkered relationship with the Culinary Union. He was one of the leaders behind casino operators' efforts to force a strike and bust the Culinary Union in 1984 (Benz, 2004). Furthermore, in the early 1990s Kerkorian resisted the spirit of cooperation, which characterized the relationship between the Culinary Union and the major casino operators during that period by opening the MGM Grand non-union (Alexander, 2002, Rothman, 2002). Therefore, MGM-Mirage's more aggressive stance in the negotiations may have just been a reflection of Kerkorian's more combative approach to labor-management relations.

In contrast, Park Place and Harrah's opted to negotiate separately, using a quieter, more conciliatory approach to the negotiations. In other jurisdictions Harrah's has generally taken a strong stand against unionization and adopted a hard line at the bargaining table. However, because it only owns two properties in Las Vegas, it may have decided that it was in its own best interest to pursue a less aggressive role in the 2002 round of negotiations. Therefore, if the Culinary Union obtained a particularly expensive contract, it would give Harrah's a competitive advantage over the other major casino operators, since its exposure to Las Vegas casino industry labor costs is comparatively low (Alexander, 2005).

There are a variety of reasons why Park Place also decided to pursue a more conciliatory strategy. First, in previous years Park Place has enjoyed a cooperative relationship with the Culinary Union in Las Vegas. Secondly, at the time of the negotiations it was carrying a large debt load and its financial condition was further destabilized by the fallout from the 9/11 attacks.

The smaller gaming companies who operated casinos along the Strip waited until the major operators had settled before entering into serious negotiations with

Culinary Union. Traditionally in the Las Vegas casino industry, smaller operators wait until larger operators settle with the union and then agree to contracts patterned after those reached by the major operators. The one exception to this was the Boyd Gaming Group, which owns one Strip property in addition to its multiple downtown properties. Because it operated several downtown properties, the Boyd Gaming Group negotiated with the downtown operators (Berns, 2002m).

Negotiations between the Culinary Union and the downtown and neighborhood casino operators also did not begin until the Culinary Union had settled with the major Strip operators. The Culinary Union hoped that the non-strip operators would sign contracts patterned after those of the major Strip operators as they had in previous years. However, the growing disparity between the fortunes of unionized Strip and non-Strip properties in Las Vegas caused non-Strip operators to intensely resist the Culinary Union's efforts in 2002. In general, non-strip operators wanted contracts that were significantly less expensive than those agreed to by their strip counterparts.

Going into the 2002 negotiations the non-strip operators were divided into roughly three different camps. The first group adopted a very aggressive strategy with the Culinary Union and demanded the following concessions: putting employees on an inferior employer-run healthcare plan, an unlimited right to replace union workers with subcontracted workers, the reduction of workers' shifts to as little as four hours, the right to hire an unlimited numbers of part time workers, and the right to terminate union contracts and workers' jobs if properties are sold. Furthermore, these properties strongly resisted Culinary Union attempts to restrict GRAs workload. The Culinary Union regarded these demands as entirely unreasonable (German, 2002a, German, 2002b, German 2002c, Simpson, 2002g).

There were a number of operators that pursued this strategy. Jackie Gaughan was the only operator in this group who owned more than a single unionized property

in Las Vegas.²² Cooperating with Jackie Gaughan at the beginning of the negotiations were the owners of Binion's Horseshoe, Fitzgerald's, The Four Queens, and Castaways. Not only did these operators demand significant contract concessions, they engaged in heated rhetorical battles with the Culinary Union through the press (German, 2002a, German, 2002b, German, 2002c, Simpson, 2002g, Wilhelm, 2004).

Boyd Gaming, which operated two unionized non-Strip properties, The Fremont and The Main Street Station, adopted a more conciliatory approach to the negotiations. HERE President John Wilhelm, who was the Culinary Union's lead negotiator credits this to the very positive relationship he had with Boyd's management team going into the negotiations (Wilhelm, 2004). However, the less aggressive strategy pursued by the Boyd Gaming Group in the 2002 negotiations may also be the result of the success Boyd Gaming's non-strip properties have enjoyed relative to other unionized casinos located off the strip (Rothman, 2003).

The third camp of non-strip casinos involved in the negotiations were the independently owned Jerry's Nugget and Golden Gate casinos, both of whom pursued a strategy of waiting for the other non-strip properties to settle with the union and then negotiating a contract patterned after those of the other non-strip properties. The final unionized non-strip property, the Golden Nugget, was operated by MGM-Mirage and settled at the same time as the other MGM-Mirage properties.

Therefore, Las Vegas's Casino operators entered the 2002 round of contract negotiations divided by the issues they felt were most compelling and the strategies they thought they should pursue. This was partially caused by the diverse economic circumstances faced by the different operators as well as by each operator's unique management style. These divisions were not new in Las Vegas's casino industry, rather, as indicated in the earlier discussion of the history of the industry's labor-

²² Gaughan also ran The Plaza, El Cortez, The Las Vegas Club, and The Western.

management relations, they have existed for the past 40 years, ever since the first corporate owned casinos opened in the city. However, by failing to come together and bargain as a group, the casino operators undermined their position vis-à-vis the Culinary Union, which was able to whipsaw the casino operators. In the gaming industry, because labor markets are localized and firms are site specific, it is to the advantage of the casino operators within a particular area to coordinate their bargaining in order to prevent from being whipsawed by the union (Cobble & Merrill, 1994). Perhaps, if the casino operators had been able to agree on a single strategy and better coordinate among themselves in the 2002 negotiations they could have better countered the Culinary Union's contract campaign strategy.

Bargaining on the Strip

The initial meetings between the major Strip casino operators²³ and the union took place in the second and third weeks of April (Simpson, 2002c). The union's initial proposal was for a two-year deal where employers would pay an extra 72.5 cents an hour per employee for each year of the contract, increasing by a total amount of \$1.45 by the last year of the contract (Berns, 2002c). Pretty much all of the first year's 72.5 cent increase would go towards paying for members' health insurance, with up to 70 cents of second year's raise also going towards members' health insurance. The remainder of the annual increase not covering health benefits would go towards members' pensions and/or increases in their hourly wages (Berns, 2002d). These would be the largest annual increases in total compensation in the history of the union (Berns, 2002g). Overall under the Culinary Union's proposal employers' contributions to the union health plan would increase to \$2.92 from \$2.22 per hour per employee in the first year of the pact and then increase to \$3.62 in the second year of the pact. The Culinary union also insisted that new contracts include language placing restrictions

²³ Harrah's, The Mandalay Resort Group, MGM-Mirage, as well as Park Place Entertainment

on GRA workload (Berns, 2002e). Such language had been absent from the local's previous contracts (Pappageorge, 2003).

Park Place Entertainment was the first of the big-four Strip operators to offer a counterproposal. Park Place Entertainment's offer consisted of a two and half year proposal that increased employees' hourly compensation by \$1.05. The offer did not propose any new contract language dealing with the workload issue. Officials from the Culinary Union stated to the media that this counter offer was a positive step forward in the negotiations and said they would make a counter proposal in their next meeting with Park Place Entertainment executives (Berns, 2002r).

MGM-Grand and The Mandalay Resort Group responded to the Culinary Union offer with a counterproposal that increased employees' hourly compensation by 47 to 49 cents annually over five years. Mandalay Resort Group's Senior Vice-President argued that the union's proposal was too expensive especially given that Las Vegas's Gaming industry was still recovering from the effects of 9/11 (Berns, 2002g). Although they negotiations negotiated together, MGM-Mirage and the Mandalay Resort Group approached the GRA issue separately. MGM-Mirage said it was open to negotiating about the issue, even though it argued that many of the Culinary Union's claims about the GRA's workload were false.

The Mandalay Resort Group held that the GRA workload issue was a phony issue constructed by Culinary officials for their public relations campaign as well as internal union electoral concerns, and refused to bargain over it. In the negotiations themselves, the Mandalay Resort Group accused the union officials and GRAs of lying about the extent of the GRAs workload and its impact on the GRAs health. The Mandalay Resort Group also took out a full page add in the Las Vegas Review Journal, to counteract the unions claims about GRA workload and its efforts to use the GRA issue to win public sympathy in the negotiations (Berns, 2002r). In an interview

HERE President John Wilhelm said that he thought that both MGM-Mirage and the Mandalay Resort Group were trying to use the temporary impact of 9/11 as an excuse to obtain a substandard contract from the Culinary Union, ensuring lower labor costs long after the effects of 9/11 had worn off (Wilhelm, 2004).

This effort to refute GRAs' and union officials' claims about GRA workload created a lot of tension at the negotiations as the GRAs that were on the bargaining committee became very upset at what many of them perceived as a management effort to brand them as liars. This effort by the Mandalay Resort Group was communicated through the Culinary Union's bargaining committee to the rank-and-file and facilitated their mobilization campaign. This incident provides a good example of how the use of a large and representative bargaining committee was beneficial to the Culinary Union because it allows the local to rapidly and effectively communicate what is going on in the negotiations to the rank-and-file (Berns 2002p, Wilhelm, 2004).

The aggressiveness of MGM-Mirage and The Mandalay Resort Group was also reflected in their responses to the Culinary and Bartenders Unions' mobilization and corporate campaigns. In one incident of employer retaliation, Al Williams, a lead contract committee member at a Mandalay owned property, Circus-Circus, was beat up by casino security guards and suspended along with several GRAs, while participating in an EDR rally during their break. Williams, an African-American pot washer, was leading a group of female GRAs in a chant about their contract demands when they claim they were tackled by a group security guards, in a melee that involved as many as 100 people. Williams suffered a fractured wrist and a dislocated shoulder and five GRAs suffered unspecified injuries in the incident. Three of these GRAs were part of the unions' bargaining committee. Williams and one of the GRAs were hospitalized as a result of the melee. The Mandalay Resort Group claimed that Williams had been asked to stop the rally and had refused and that such a rally was a

violation of the Culinary Union's contract with The Mandalay Resort Group. The operator suspended Al Williams along with two of the GRAs, and charged Williams with trespassing (Berns, 2002d, German, 2002d, Simpson, 2002x, German, 2002o, Simpson, 2002v, Dalton, 2003).

HERE claimed that EDR rallies, such as the one lead by Al Williams, were clearly not in violation of their contact. Furthermore, the union argued that it had organized a previous rally in Circus-Circus's EDR two weeks earlier and had been using them as part of their contract administration procedure previous to that, without any complaints from management. The union put together a campaign in response to the incident to win reinstatement for the suspended workers with full back pay and to get the Mandalay Resort Group to drop their charges against Williams. In addition to filing grievances over the issue, the union had the suspended workers lead their contract committee into the negotiations with the Mandalay Resort Group the next day and had all members of the bargaining committee wear shirts with pictures of the injured workers in the negotiations. The union also filed battery complaints with the police against the security officers.

The incident turned out to be a major mobilizing issue for the Culinary Union, as many members, especially those who worked for The Mandalay Resort Group, became more disenchanted with management. As a result of the Culinary Union's efforts Williams and the two suspended GRAs were reinstated on May 17th. The GRAs were reimbursed for income they lost as a result of their suspensions; however, Al Williams was not reimbursed. Therefore, the union continued to pursue their grievances against the Mandalay Resort Group to obtain back pay for Williams and to have the incident stricken from the employees' record. On May 23rd the Culinary Union brought Reverend Jesse Jackson and a delegation from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists to meet with executive from the Mandalay Resort Group and demand

that Williams as well as the suspended GRAs be made whole (Berns, 2002d, German, 2002d, Simpson, 2002x, German, 2002f, Simpson, 2002v, Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, the management of MGM-Mirage and The Mandalay Resort Group verbally sparred several times with the Culinary Union in the media. Perhaps the most notorious incident was when MGM-Mirage Senior Vice-President Alan Feldman, upset about the union campaign to notify travel agents and meeting planners about the contract dispute, likened the Culinary Union to terrorists. Several Culinary Union staff people reported that these comments were very alienating to the union's members (Dalton, 2003, Hughes, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003, Zeitz, 2003). This part of the union's corporate campaign was also vigorously condemned by The Mandalay Resort Group. In contrast, the responses of the management at Park Place Entertainment and Harrah's were much more muted, with Park Place executives emphasizing the progress they were making in their negotiations with the Culinary Union. (Berns 2002a)

Around the end of April, casino operators began to seriously consider contingency plans in case the Culinary Union did go on strike. Some casino executives such as those from Harrah's and Park Place Entertainment downplayed the chance of a strike, while others such as ones from The Mandalay Bay Resort Group were much less dismissive of the possibility of a strike. However, none of the casino executives nor union leaders thought a strike against one of the major casino operators was likely (Berns, 2002n). According to one casino executive who asked to remain anonymous, management's strike contingency plans consisted of using temporary employment agencies to hire temporary replacement workers from other population centers in the southwest such as Phoenix, Laughlin, and southern California. These workers would be bused in and provided with housing protected by private security

firms. Furthermore, casino operators considered hiring replacement workers from non-union gaming facilities in the area and having managers do union members jobs, including housekeeping (Berns, 2002n). Casino operators also began hiring more workers in the weeks leading up to the contract expiration date in preparation for a potential strike (Dalton, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003).

In response to the different counterproposals and tactics of the major casino operators the union adopted a strategy that tried to divide the more conciliatory major casino operators, (Park Place Entertainment and Harrah's), from the more confrontational ones, (The Mandalay Resort Group and MGM-Mirage), and settle with the former more conciliatory operators first. The Culinary Union believed that once it had obtained a more favorable deal from the more conciliatory casino operators, the more combative operators would be less willing to endure a strike because their competitors would be able to operate with limited disruptions. Therefore after their initial meetings, Culinary Union negotiators refused to meet with representatives from MGM-Mirage and The Mandalay Resort Group until it had settled with Park Place and Harrah's. Mandalay Resort Group Chief Negotiator said in the local evening paper *The Las Vegas Sun* "The union is shopping around to find the best deal it can. When the industry does not bargain together, it unfortunately winds up bargaining against itself." (German 2002q, German, 2002r).

As the May 16th strike vote approached rumors began to be reported in the media that Park Place Entertainment was on the verge of reaching an agreement with the union and that Harrah's was soon to follow. These rumors gained further credibility when Culinary Union lead negotiator and in-coming secretary-treasurer, D. Taylor, commented to the media on May 13 that the union had received "constructive" proposals from both Harrah's and Park Place the week before that could lead to contracts with both operators. Park Place's proposal increased their original offer to an

increase in hourly compensation of 65 cents in the first year and 55 cents in the following 18 months of a two-and-a-half year contract. Details on Harrah's proposal were not disclosed in the media. Around this time the Culinary Union offered a counterproposal: a two year contract that would increase employees compensation by 65 cents in its first year and 75 cents in its second (German, 2002q, German, 2002r, German, 2002s, Berns, 2002r).

During the negotiations with Park Place and Harrah's, The Mandalay Bay Resort Group and MGM-Mirage pursued both a public and behind the scenes strategy that was aimed at encouraging Park Place and Harrah's to pursue a harder line in the negotiations with the Culinary Union and dissuade the local from settling a contract with the more conciliatory casino operators separately. The public aspect of this campaign consisted of first offering a contract extension of one month and a revamped counterproposal to the union that raised employees' hourly compensation by \$2.78 over the course of a five year deal. The operator's previous offer was a five year deal that increased employees' hourly compensation by about 47-49 cents annually over a period of five years. The casino operators also curbed their rhetoric dealing with employee healthcare premiums with the Mandalay Resort Group's chief negotiator Mike Sloan saying that: "We want to make our position on health-care clear. We are not trying to make the employees pay for their family coverage... We are trying to make them understand it is an extraordinarily expensive benefit, which can only be preserved if we work together." This offer was rejected by the Culinary Union. HERE President Wilhelm described the proposal a "media stunt" and a "back door attempt to cut benefits" for union members (German, 2002q, Berns, 2002s).

The Monday following the union's massive strike vote and rally on Thursday May 16th, MGM-Mirage and The Mandalay Resort Group offered a second revamped proposal that increased employees hourly compensation by \$2.92 over the course of a

five year deal. Although, the union publicly welcomed this offer saying to the press that it was a constructive step in the right direction, it refused to negotiate with either MGM-Mirage or the Mandalay Resort Group before its scheduled upcoming negotiations with Park Place and Harrah's on May 23rd. As it turned out the Culinary Union settled with Park Place Entertainment and Harrah's that Thursday, obtaining contracts that increased employee compensation by \$3.23-and-a-half over five years, considerably more than what MGM-Mirage and Mandalay Bay offered. The deals reached with Park Place and Harrah's also included strong language dealing with GRA workload issues (Berns, 2002s, German, 2002q). After the news of the deal reached the remaining gaming operators who had yet to settle, one executive, who asked to remain anonymous exclaimed: "I would venture to say the game's over...I doubt the union could have lasted five days if the major properties had stood together" (Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002a).

Settlement with Major Strip Operators

The union began to reach settlements with the major Las Vegas casino operators in the week following the May 16th strike vote. Although, Harrah's and Park Place may have already been making progress towards an agreement with the Culinary Union, the May 16th rally demonstrated to all casino operators and other stakeholders the high level of militancy that existed amongst union members at their properties, and the high risk of a city-wide strike if the two sides failed to reach an agreement. Without such a high-level of participation in the May 16th strike vote and rally by the Culinary Union's rank-and-file, and their overwhelming vote in favor of giving local union the leaders the right to call a strike; the local would not have been as successful in pressuring operators to reach an agreement with the local before the contract expired on May 31. Several people interviewed for this case study that sat in on the negotiations between Culinary Union and Harrah's and Park Place said that

after the May 16th strike vote and rally, employer representatives in the negotiations became much more focused settling with the Culinary Union and avoiding a strike even if it meant agreeing to the local's contract terms. (Pappageorge 2003, Arguallo-Kline 2003, Dalton 2003, Hughes 2003, Weiss 2003, Wilhelm 2004, Pappageorge 2005)

The first major Strip operator to settle with the Culinary Union was Park Place Entertainment, who settled along with the Aztar Corp.²⁴ on May 22nd. Harrah's settled with the Culinary Union the next day. As mentioned earlier these properties took a generally less confrontational approach to the negotiations than MGM-Mirage and The Mandalay Group. One reason that Harrah's may have settled first was that it derived a smaller proportion of its overall annual EBITDA from the Las Vegas's Gaming Industry than the other major gaming companies along the Strip. Since it is likely that the first contracts in the 2002 round of negotiations would set the pattern for the other Strip contracts, Harrah's had less of an incentive to hold down labor costs for their Las Vegas operations and had an interest in increasing the labor costs of their primary competitors the other large Strip casino operators. (Rothman, 2003). Park Place, for its part, was deep in debt at the time of the negotiations creating an incentive to settle with the Culinary Union and avoid a costly strike that could inhibit its ability to meet its debt service requirements. The Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization effort was key in convincing Park Place that the local was prepared to engage in an effective strike. Within a week of Park Place and Harrah's settlement both The Mandalay Resort Group and MGM-Mirage agreed to substantially the same contracts with the Culinary and Bartenders Unions on May 26th and 27th respectively (Berns, 2002j, Berns, 2002k).

²⁴ Aztar Corp., a mid-sized gaming operator that operates a single property along the strip: The Tropicana, also settled with the Culinary Union immediately after Park Place settled

The contracts called for five year deals that would cost casino operators an additional \$3.23 1/2 per hour per employee by the fifth year of the contract, the greatest increase called for by a single contract in the history of the Culinary Union. The annual breakdown of the increases are depicted in table 7.1:

Table 7.1 Annual Increase in total compensation called for in 2002 contract with major strip operators:

	1st year	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Accumulated Increase	0.68 1/2	\$1.48 1/2	\$2.13 1/2	\$2.68 1/2	\$3.23 1/2

(Source: Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002c)

Under the new contract non-tipped workers only receive about half the raises that tipped employees receive. Furthermore, the contract guaranteed premium-free family healthcare for Culinary Union members without decreasing the quality of the coverage. Officials from the Culinary Union estimated that contributions to the union health care plan will absorb as much as 61.8% of the increased casino compensation, or \$2 of the \$3.23 1/2 payable in the fifth year.

In addition the new contracts contained new language specifically dealing with GRA workload. This language was also added to the contracts for properties owned by Harrah's and MGM-Mirage that were not involved in the 2002 round of contract negotiations. The provisions included a freeze on the number rooms cleaned by each GRA during the life of the deal, a reduction in the number of rooms cleaned by housekeepers on checkout days, the development of a formula for the Rio and the Park Place Entertainment owned hotels that will cut the number of standard rooms cleaned by a housekeeper who also has to clean suites, a reduction in the workload of housekeepers who have to travel between two floors in the course of a day and the creation of special teams to deal with the clean up of potentially hazardous materials (Pappageorge, 2003, Pierce, 2002, Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002c).

On June 6th, members of the Culinary Union voted to ratify the contracts with MGM-Mirage, The Mandalay Resort Group, Park Place Entertainment, Harrah's, and Aztar by a margin of 2,003 to 36. The vote doubled as a solidarity rally for union members who worked in the downtown and neighborhood casinos, which had not settled with the union by that time. This was part of the union's solidarity campaign between rank-and-filers from casinos that had already settled with the union and those that had not. The contract negotiations for the downtown and neighborhood properties will be discussed in greater detail in the next section (Simpson, 2002e).

Settling with the major casino properties was important because, historically, once the union had agreed to contracts with the major casino operators the smaller casino operators in Las Vegas tended to agree to contracts patterned on ones previously settled by the union. In 2002 this pattern held for the independent Strip operators, however, downtown and neighborhood casino operators resisted union efforts to apply the strip settlement to them, citing the growing disparity between the financial well being of the Strip operators and the downtown as well as the unionized neighborhood casinos. The downtown and neighborhood casino operators argued that they could not afford the contracts agreed to by the major Strip operators. This resistance led to an acrimonious round of bargaining between downtown operators and the Culinary Union in 2002. Because the Culinary Union's previous contract with all of the properties involved in the 2002 negotiations expired at the end of May, it had very little time to negotiate with the other casino operators after settling with the last of the major Strip operators. Therefore, it negotiated one month contract extensions covering all the remaining operators who had not settled by the end of May (Smith, 2002f).

Negotiations and Settlement with Downtown and Neighborhood Casinos

After the Culinary Union settled with most of the major Strip operators they initially proposed that the downtown contracts ought to be patterned on the Strip contracts (Simpson, 2002h). In response, downtown operators almost universally argued that the contract with the major strip operators was too expensive and that the Culinary Union, by proposing to extend it to downtown and neighborhood properties was ignoring the growing economic disparity between the Strip properties and the downtown as well as older neighborhood casinos. However, in spite of their unified reaction to the Culinary Union's initial proposal the downtown and neighborhood casinos pursued a variety of different strategies in the rest of the negotiations (Simpson, 2002h)

Several of the properties negotiated together and hired attorney Greg Kamer as their representative in the 2002 round of negotiations. These properties were: The Plaza, El Cortez, The Las Vegas Club, The Western, Binion's Horseshoe, Fitzgerald's and The Four Queens. Castaways was represented by their own lawyer, Sal Gugino, but they also bargained with the properties represented by Greg Kamer. Of these properties The Plaza, El Cortez, The Las Vegas Club, and The Western, were all owned by Jackie Gaughan. The rest of the casinos in the group were owned by casino operators with only a single property under contract with the Culinary Union in Las Vegas. These casino operators initially took a confrontational stance with the Culinary Union, and engaged in heated rhetorical battles with the union in the process (German, 2002a, German, 2002b, German, 2002c, Simpson, 2002g, Wilhelm, 2004).

In contrast, Boyd Gaming adopted a much more conciliatory and less public approach to the negotiations. In statements to the press both sides emphasized the constructive efforts made by each other in the negotiations. Wilhelm in an interview said that the more positive bargaining atmosphere was the result of a wider

cooperative relationship the two parties enjoyed preceding the negotiations (Wilhelm, 2004). During the 2002 negotiations Boyd Gaming owned two downtown casinos, the Main Street Station and The Fremont, it also owned one older Strip property, The Stardust. Boyd Gaming negotiated for all of these properties together.

The remaining downtown and neighborhood properties involved in the negotiations were the independently owned Golden Gate and Jerry's Nugget. These two properties opted to wait for the contract talks with the other downtown and neighborhood casinos to conclude, and then negotiate a contract patterned after those of the other properties (German, 2002a, Simpson, 2002i, Simpson, 2002j, Wilhelm, 2004).

While the contract negotiations between the Culinary Union and Boyd Gaming progressed smoothly, those between the two locals and the casino operators represented by Kamer had bogged down by mid-June to a point where both sides publicly suggested that there was a good chance of a strike. In response to the locals' efforts to extend the Strip contract to the downtown and neighborhood casinos, Kamer put forward a counter proposal that was described by HERE president John Wilhelm's as basically "gutting" the Culinary Union contracts. The counterproposal offered by Kamer included several provisions which guaranteed that it would be unacceptable to the Culinary Union. These provisions included: that employees be put on inferior company healthcare plans, an unlimited right to replace union workers with subcontracted workers, the reduction of workers' shifts to as little as four hours, the right to hire an unlimited numbers of part time workers, and the right to terminate union contracts and workers' jobs if properties are sold. Union officials reacted very strongly against the counterproposal and accused Kamer of trying to provoke a strike (German, 2002a, Norman, 2002, Wilhelm, 2004).

According to reports in both the Las Vegas Review-Journal and the Las Vegas Sun, negotiations between the Culinary Union and the downtown and neighborhood casino operators began to move forward when Fitzgerald's pulled Kamer as their lead negotiator on June 18th and Boyd Gaming agreed to a request by the Culinary Union to help broker a deal between the other downtown and neighborhood casino operators and the two locals. Executives from Fitzgerald's parent company Majestic Investor Holdings said they would negotiate directly with the Culinary Union after becoming alarmed at the escalating rhetoric used by Kamer and the two locals in the negotiations. They were also concerned about their employees' strong negative reaction to Kamer's counterproposal. Kamer argued that Majestic Holdings was able to better afford the Culinary Union's contract demands because it had other gaming properties outside of Nevada while his remaining clients were concentrated in Las Vegas (Simpson, 2002k, German, 2002f).

With a week and a half left before the downtown and neighborhood casino contracts expired on July 1st, both casino operators and union leaders made repeated statements to the press that a strike was very likely. Although both the Culinary Union and Boyd Gaming reported making significant progress in negotiations, reaching agreement on everything except wages and benefits, the local and the properties represented by Kamer still had not come any closer to a settlement. The two sides still had not come to an agreement on issues such as subcontracting, use of part-time workers, and flexibility in the length of workers' shifts. The inability to make any progress with the properties represented by Kamer made it difficult for the unions to reach a deal with the more conciliatory casino operators, (Majestic Holdings and Boyd Gaming), because of these operators' concerns about being undercut if the properties represented by Kamer obtained less expensive contracts from the union. Furthermore, on June 27th the Culinary Union announced it would not consider

granting another contract extension to casino operators that had not reached a settlement with them by the time their contracts expired on July 1st, further increasing the likelihood of a strike (Simpson, 2002l, Norman, 2002, German, 2002h).

Talks downtown began to make progress when Boyd Gaming tentatively agreed to a scaled back version of the Strip contract proposed by the Culinary Union on June 23rd and began to lobby other downtown casino operators to get behind the proposal as well. The June 21st downtown rally, drawing around 12,000 protesting Culinary Union members to the Fremont Street experience, may have been instrumental in convincing Boyd Gaming, not only to agree to a tentative contract, but also pressure other operators to settle with the union. Boyd Gaming was anxious to avoid a strike at the other downtown properties because the close proximity of all the casinos downtown made it likely that a strike at a small number of these properties would significantly cut into the revenues of all the casinos.

The Culinary Union's mobilizing efforts made it clear to Boyd Gaming that a strike was likely if it and the other casino operators did not settle. These efforts began to bear fruit by June 29th when it was reported in the Las Vegas Sun that the El Cortez, the Four Queens, the Plaza, and Fitzgerald's had dropped Kamer as their negotiator and joined with Boyd Gaming and agreed to the offer the union bargaining committee had put forward on June 23rd.²⁵ All of these properties, except for the Plaza, were able to finalize agreements with the union negotiating committee on June 30th in the final hours before their contracts expired. At the last minute Jerry's Nugget agreed to a contract that was substantially the same as the other downtown properties who had settled with the union earlier that night. (Associated Press, 2002a, Associated Press, 2002b).

²⁵ It is interesting to note that the Plaza, El Cortez, The Western, and Las Vegas Club were all owned by the same person, Jackie Gaughan.

The new downtown contracts covering employees at Main Street Station, The Fremont, El Cortez, Four Queens, Fitzgerald's, and Jerry's Nugget were similar to the agreements that the Culinary Union had reached with the Strip Casinos (including the new language related to the housekeepers' workload) except that it allowed the non-Strip properties to delay paying for six months half the annual increase dedicated toward wages, pensions, and job training called for by the Strip contract. For example, according to their new contract, Strip operators agreed to pay an extra 60 cents per hour in the second year of their contracts. If the union health and welfare fund trustees decided 30 cents of the second year increase needed to go toward health care, the remaining 30 cents would go toward wages, pensions and job training. Therefore, according to the tentative agreement, downtown operators would pay an extra 30 cents for health coverage, but would pay only 15 cents for wages, pensions and job training for the first six months of the year. They would pay the full amount the second half of the year (Simpson, 2002m).

Overall, the contract would likely cost casino operators an additional \$2.20 per hour per employee by its fifth and final year (Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002c). Union officials estimated that contributions to the unions' health care plans would absorb as much as 91% of the additional casino payments in the fifth year, or \$2 of the \$2.20 increase (Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002c). The annual increase in total compensation per worker is shown in table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Annual cumulative increase in compensation called for by the 2002-2007 contract for downtown and neighborhood casinos with the exception of the Golden Nugget.

1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year
\$0.68	\$0.98	\$1.28	\$1.72	\$2.20

(Source: Las Vegas Review-Journal, 2002c)

Downtown tipped workers would receive an even smaller increase, with operators only responsible for paying half of the amount they pay for non-tipped workers' wages, pensions and job training. Gregory Kamer, who at this point was only bargaining on behalf of The Las Vegas Club, The Western, and Binion's Horseshoe estimated that the locals' proposal was 30% less expensive than the Strip contracts (Simpson, 2002m).

While the contract talks with the downtown and neighborhood casinos were going down to the wire, the Culinary Union began its 33-hour picket line downtown, counting down the time before the contract extensions with the neighborhood and downtown casinos expired. The 33-hour picket line drew about 1,000 union members, demonstrating to downtown and neighborhood casino operators what a major strike would be like if they did not settle with the union. As each property began to settle, the local would pull their picketers from that property and move them to other properties which had not settled with the union (Pierce, 2003, Simpson, 2002p).

As the downtown and neighborhood contracts expired at 12:01am on July 1st the Culinary Union delayed striking and continued bargaining with the remaining properties without an agreement. However, the Culinary Union would continue their informational picketing outside those properties that had not settled with the union. The marathon bargaining session lasted 17 ½ hours and finally ended at 6:30 in the morning on July 1st, with all but two properties reaching settlements with the union, The Western and The Golden Gate.

The first properties to settle were the El Cortez and the Plaza, who settled on tentative deals that contained the same terms as the those agreed to by The Main Street Station, Fitzgerald's, The Fremont and The Four Queens. The Las Vegas Club settled next, followed by Castaways, and Binion's Horseshoe. It was reported in the Las Vegas Sun that both Boyd Gaming and Michael Gaughan helped the union reach a

settlement with the properties that had been holding out. Overall, the contracts reached by these properties were very similar to the ones already reached by the other downtown casinos. The Plaza reached an agreement substantially the same as the ones agreed to by the other downtown properties. While the Las Vegas Club's contract allows the casino to delay making annual compensation increases by about six months. Castaways and Binion's Horseshoe had the least expensive contracts, allowing the properties to delay their annual increases for 11 months (Simpson, 2002q, Simpson, 2002r, German, 2002i, Las Vegas Review Journal, 2002c).

In the midst of the June 30th -July 1st marathon bargaining session Michael Gaughan announced, that for reasons unrelated to the contract negotiations, that his father Jackie Gaughan had decided to close the Western on September 1st 2002. Michael Gaughan announced that his father was closing the property because it was no longer "economically viable" and no degree of union concessions would keep the property open. However, later that day Michael Gaughan announced that his father was having second thoughts about closing The Western and in cooperation with the Culinary Union was going to explore options for keeping the casino open. This strange turn of events culminated on Tuesday July 2nd when Jackie and Michael Gaughan agreed to a contract substantially the same as the one covering the Las Vegas Club. In an interview, a local gaming industry expert who asked to remain anonymous, attributed this peculiar scenario to Jackie Gaughan's failing health. The Culinary Union members at the Western as well as at all the other downtown and neighborhood properties except for the Golden Gate voted 808-3 on July 3rd to ratify the new contract (Associated Press, 2002c, Associated Press, 2002d, Simpson, 2002r, German 2002j, Las Vegas Review Journal, 2002).

By the afternoon of July 1st only the Golden Gate had failed to settle with the Culinary Union. At 6 pm on July 1st all but two union members walked off the job at

the Golden Gate after the union negotiators decided that the Golden Gate co-owner and lead negotiator, Marc Brandenburg, would not budge from his refusal to continue funding the union members' healthcare plan and the union called a strike at the property (Associated Press, 2002e, Associated Press, 2002c, German, 2002k, Simpson, 2002s).

The key issue in the negotiations with The Golden Gate was the cost of the contract demanded by Culinary Union, which in turn was driven by the cost of the union healthcare plan. Already the Golden Gate had failed to pay their workers a \$.40 raise in December 2001 that was called for by the previous contract. Marc Brandenburg claimed that the Golden Gate could not afford this increase, because of the casino's poor financial condition. In 2001 the casino had a net operating loss of \$300,000. Furthermore, Marc Brandenburg claimed that he and the other Golden Gate owner Craig Ghelfi had forgone any salary, as owners of the Golden Gate, for a "substantial" period because of the property's poor financial performance. The owners offered to open their books to prove their claims (Associated Press, 2002e, Associated Press, 2002c, German, 2002k, Simpson, 2002s).

The strike continued through July 9th and the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that it had a deep impact on the casino's business leaving its gaming area empty. Of the Golden Gate's 380 workers, 188 are union members and all but 2 of these union members honored the picket lines. The Golden Gate remained open during the strike by having managerial staff, non-union workers and temporary replacements fill in for its union workers. However, some of its facilities, such as one of its two restaurants, remained closed throughout the strike (Simpson, 2002r, Simpson, 2002u).

The Golden Gate settled with the Culinary Workers' and Bartenders Unions on July 9th at 7:30 pm. The contract was similar to other non-Strip contracts except that

it called for the Golden Gate to pay an extra \$2.00 per worker per hour by the fifth year of the contract.²⁶ However, if it was determined that either the union pension or health funds need money, the Golden Gate must contribute an additional 20 cents per hour per worker to the funds. Furthermore, the contract called for the Golden Gate to pay a lump sum to workers who had not received the December wage increase that was called for in the previous contract. Finally, if the operators of the Golden Gate did not live up to the contract, the contract allowed the unions to use an accelerated enforcement provision, which let them go to district court to mandate contract compliance. The contract was unanimously approved by HERE members that same day. The vote was 118-0 (Simpson, 2002t).

Conclusion

Although the Culinary Union did not reach all of its major goals in the 2002 round of contract negotiations, it did accomplish its two primary ones: reducing the workload of GRAs and protecting the quality of its healthcare plan without having to introduce premiums. The ability of the Culinary Union to achieve its major goals was the product of its own and casino operators' strategic choices, as well as the bargaining context in which they found themselves. In the negotiations the Culinary Union not only benefited from short strategies designed specifically for the negotiations, but also from long term strategies that have increased its ability to mobilize its members and put together effective corporate pressure campaigns. Therefore, when examining at the 2002 contract negotiations it is important to place it in a wider historical context as well as look at in terms of the Culinary Union's bargaining environment. The conclusion of this case study will examine this idea in greater detail.

²⁶ The other non-Strip contracts call for casino to pay an extra \$2.20 by their fifth year.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion & Analysis

Introduction

The Culinary Union's success in the 2002 round of contract negotiations was the result of both strategic and contextual factors. The local employed a strategy that enabled it to take advantage of contextual variables in order to build power vis-à-vis the Las Vegas casino operators that were its counterparts in the negotiations. This strategy relied on the mobilization of rank-and-file members in order to create a legitimate strike threat and publicizing this threat to the relevant stakeholders in the negotiations. The external and internal contextual factors the Culinary Union faced in the negotiations played an important role in determining this strategy's success.

By linking the interaction between union strategy and context to industrial relations outcome this case study builds upon the union revitalization tradition in the industrial relations literature. One of the definitive precepts of union revitalization research is that within the current industrial relations context there are opportunities that unions can strategically exploit in order to influence industrial relations outcomes. Union revitalization scholars further argue that unions that are particularly adept at adopting the correct set of strategies in a given context will be able to thrive, even in today's inhospitable industrial relations climate. Therefore, because the Culinary Union is one of the few examples of such a union, it is important for industrial relations scholars, trade unionists, as well as anyone else interested in the survival of the American labor movement to develop a solid understanding of the factors which have contributed to its success. Although context has played an integral role in the success of the Culinary Union, there are also elements to the local's story, which could provide useful lessons to other unions that are struggling with their own revitalization efforts.

Industrial Relations Context

This case study recognizes the importance of both context and strategy in determining industrial relations outcomes. It breaks the context of the 2002 negotiations into two linked categories: variables that are largely external to the Culinary Union and those that largely arise from within the local. External context primarily refers to characteristics of the principle players in Las Vegas's Gaming industry other than the Culinary Union, such as employers, consumers, investors, as well as the political, social, and political traits of the Las Vegas metropolitan area and casino industry. Internal context refers to the Culinary Union's organizational structure, practices, long-term strategies in the period leading up to the 2002 negotiations. These internal and external contextual factors had a profound influence on the strategies the Culinary Union employed in its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. For example, external factors such as the aversion on the part of tourists to vacation in Las Vegas during a major strike made casino operators particularly vulnerable to this kind of labor action. This was also amplified by the fact that several major Las Vegas casino operators were significantly in debt, which made them and their creditors particularly concerned about how a strike could disrupt casino revenue.

In terms of internal context, this case study focuses on the revitalization process of the local in the fifteen years prior to the 2002 negotiations and its influence on the Culinary Union's comprehensive campaign capabilities. For example, as a result of specific long-term strategies and practices the local pursued as part of its revitalization process, it enjoyed a highly developed rank-and-file mobilization and corporate campaign capabilities by the time of the 2002 negotiations. If the union had not gone through this revitalization process prior to the negotiations it would not have had the organizational capacity to successfully mount such an ambitious comprehensive contract campaign.

This case study shows how the Culinary Union adopted a set of strategies that were well matched to the industrial relations context it faced in Las Vegas's gaming industry, and how by using this set of strategies the Culinary Union increased its collective bargaining power in the 2002 round of contract negotiations. The effectiveness of the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization and corporate pressure strategies is demonstrated by the fact that in both the Strip and downtown casino markets, casino operators began to settle with the union after it had engaged in large public rallies, such as the May 16th strike and the June 21st Fremont St. rally. Rank-and-file participation in both of these events exceeded the expectations of both union officials and casino operators (Berns, 2003, Pappageorge, 2003). After the May 16th strike vote, Culinary Union officials described a marked change in the tone of negotiations at the bargaining table with negotiators for the casino operators becoming much more willing to accede to the union's demands (Pappageorge, 2004, Wilhelm, 2004).

The effect of the June 21st rally on Fremont St. in downtown Las Vegas was even more dramatic, with one of the leading downtown casino operators, Boyd Gaming, stepping forward and offering to cajole other operators to settle with the union after the rally. It is important to point out that these large rallies were not the only demonstrations of rank-and-file militancy that occurred during the negotiations. There were numerous smaller demonstrations both on the Strip and in downtown Las Vegas. Furthermore, the Culinary Union used a variety of inside tactics to mobilize members and to signal their militancy to casino operators. These tactics included break room rallies, delegations to management, and more typical solidarity actions such as the wearing of union pins in support of workers who had faced reprisals from management for their union activism.

Thus, Culinary Union strategies, both long-term and short term, have had a profound influence on contract bargaining outcomes in Las Vegas's casino industry. Therefore, strategies employed by the Culinary Union do play an important role in determining industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's gaming industry, and the success of the local can not be totally ascribed to favorable external contextual factors. These strategies have an interactive relationship with both the external and internal contexts the union faced in the negotiations.

Union Revitalization

By focusing on the strategies the Culinary Union used in its 2002 contract campaign as well as the influence of long-term union strategies on the negotiations, this case study builds upon ideas introduced by the union revitalization branch of the industrial relations literature. As discussed previously, the union revitalization research focuses on the role union strategies can play in influencing industrial relations outcomes (Hickey, 2003, Behrens et al. 2004, Turner, 2005). This case study relates most directly to three strands of the union revitalization literature: 1) case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns, 2) strategic integration, 3) the organizing model as it relates to collective bargaining.

Case Studies of Comprehensive Contract Campaigns

Most of the union revitalization literature covering union collective bargaining functions have been case studies of union comprehensive campaigns. Numerous examples of case studies were discussed in the literature review of this thesis. Despite the large amount of research in this area, this particular case study still makes several important contributions.

First, this case study shows how an ideal comprehensive contract campaign plays out in the context of Las Vegas casino industry. As was discussed in the

preceding section in this chapter the context of Las Vegas's gaming industry as well as internal characteristics of the Culinary Union itself left an important imprint on the comprehensive contract campaign both in terms of the strategic choices made by the Culinary Union and the effectiveness of the strategy the union employed. It is important to understand the interactive relationship between context and union strategy because of the success of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas. In a period of overall decline in the American labor movement, the Culinary Union stands out as an example of how a private sector union can thrive in an environment otherwise inhospitable to collective bargaining. As casino style gambling is making inroads into almost every state in the United States, it is increasingly important for union leaders in other jurisdictions to learn from the success of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas.

This case study is also relatively unique because most other case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns examine instances of almost complete breakdown in relations between a union and an employer. In fact, the vast majority of case studies examine instances where there is considerable doubt as to whether the union will continue to represent the employees of the particular employer. The only exception to this, to my knowledge, is Matthew O'Malley's study of the 1997 IBT strike against UPS. (O'Malley 1999) In the case of the 2002 contract negotiations between the Culinary Union and Las Vegas casino operators, the continued existence of a collective bargaining relationship between the two parties was never in doubt.

This is important because, as Robert Hickey (1993) correctly points out in his case study of PACE's comprehensive contract campaign against Crown Petroleum, if unions are going to regularly utilize the kinds of tactics and strategies advocated by many revitalization scholars they will have to learn how to use them in situations other than the most extreme examples of industrial conflict. Furthermore, as demonstrated by this thesis, comprehensive campaigns are most effective when preparations for

them begin at least a year in advance. However, union leaders do not often how antagonistic negotiations will be that far ahead of time, and there are plenty of examples within the past twenty years of comprehensive campaigns that failed because preparations began too late in the negotiations for them to be effective. Therefore, in many cases unions need to begin planning for a comprehensive campaign before they know what kind of resistance they can expect from employers in the upcoming negotiations. For example, preparations for the Culinary Union's 2002 comprehensive contract campaign began more than a year before the negotiations actually began.

This study also differs from other case studies of comprehensive contract campaigns because it examines a union local that has made significant progress in its revitalization process, giving it the organizational capacity to successfully carry out strategies and tactics beyond the means of most other locals. In comparison most other previous studies of comprehensive contract campaigns have looked at unions that have not or are just beginning to go through their revitalizing process, usually as part of the comprehensive campaign that is under study.

By examining a revitalized union local, this case study provides answers to several important questions relating to comprehensive contract campaigns. First, this thesis demonstrates that locals can continue to increase their overall rank-and-file mobilization capacity, even after mounting a resource intensive comprehensive campaign in previous rounds of negotiations. This means that such tactics do not necessarily burn out rank-and-file activists and union staff.

Furthermore, it demonstrates that such campaigns do not necessarily cause irreparable damage to long term labor-management relations. In spite of putting together a progressively more ambitious comprehensive campaign for all rounds of negotiations during the 1990s the Culinary Union has been able to maintain several

cooperative efforts with casino operators such as the Culinary Academy and various initiatives to decriminalize casino style gaming in jurisdictions where it had been previously illegal.

This case study also provides insight into how the organizing, political and contract administration policies of a union further along in the revitalizing process interact with each other and with the union's contract bargaining activities. It shows that as a result of previous coordinated initiatives in these areas, the Culinary Union has retained staff and rank-and-file leaders that are well versed in the types of tactics that are common in comprehensive contract campaigns, thereby increasing the union's ability to successfully carry out its ambitious contract campaign strategy.

Furthermore, as a result of previous corporate campaign activities the Culinary Union has a more experienced research department that had already developed relationships with a variety of stakeholders relevant to the negotiations, thereby increasing their credibility with these audiences. It also shows that as a result of previous strikes and other rank-and-file intensive and corporate campaign pressure tactics, the Culinary Union has earned significant credibility with casino operators and other relevant stakeholders regarding their threats to use similar tactics in the 2002 contract negotiations. Finally, this thesis describes how the organizing model of contract administration can increase a union's capacity to mobilize members for upcoming rounds of negotiations.

Strategic Integration

Strategic integration is a relatively new strand of the union revitalization literature. This area of the literature describes how unions coordinate their political, collective bargaining, and external organizing activities, in order to increase their overall strategic effectiveness (Hickey, 2003, Katz et al. 2003). The strategic integration literature also suggests that unions can better sustain their revitalization

efforts, if they approach their efforts comprehensively taking into account all the aforementioned areas of activity (Hickey, 2003)

This case study describes how the Culinary Union benefited from the coordination of its political, external organizing, and collective bargaining strategies both in terms of making its strategic initiatives in these areas more effective and in creating sufficient organizational capacity to sustain its revitalization process. For example, the union was able to successfully organize new casinos by bargaining for neutrality and cooperating with the gaming industries on political initiatives in other jurisdictions outside of Las Vegas. Furthermore, by pursuing a number of comprehensive initiatives focusing on rank-and-file leadership development and participation, the Culinary Union has developed an organizational culture that facilitates member mobilization in its political, external organizing, and collective bargaining efforts. More specifically, the Culinary Union's contract administration, political, and external organizing strategies all created avenues for the members to take positions of responsibility in the local and for union staff and leaders to identify, recruit, and train rank-and-file leaders. As described earlier in this case study, Culinary Union efforts to increase rank-and-file participation in one area of union activity complemented similar efforts in other areas, thereby creating an overall organizational culture that placed a high value on rank-and-file involvement in the union. Because of the comprehensive nature of these efforts to increase rank-and-file participation, this organizational culture was diffused throughout the union, instead of just being isolated in one area of union activity or one level of the local's hierarchy. This created the organizational momentum necessary to make additional organizational reforms further facilitating rank-and-file participation, leadership development, and mobilization. For example, the Culinary Union's contract administration procedure helped to mobilize members to become involved in the

union's external organizing campaigns. In turn, members who became involved in the local's external organizing campaigns were radicalized, as they witnessed employer reprisals against casino workers who were attempting to organize, and therefore became more active participants in the union as a result (Fantasia & Voss, 2004).

In the 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, the strategic integration initiatives across all areas of union activity benefited the Culinary Union in a variety of ways. For example, as mentioned above, as a result of its contract administration procedure the Culinary Union was able to rely on a deep pool of capable to rank-and-file leaders in its efforts to mobilize its members for the 2002 negotiations.

Furthermore, the union contract administration structure also gave union leaders a reliable way through which they could communicate with members. Finally, as a result of previous political efforts, local and state political leaders were sympathetic to the union in the negotiation process.

By describing how the Culinary Union has benefited from the comprehensive coordination of its own strategies this case study provides additional evidence supporting Hickey's (1993) hypothesis that strategic integration is a primary requisite for sustained union revitalization. In his case study of PACE's comprehensive contract campaign he argues that "lasting union vitality requires certain sustaining mechanisms such as organizational transformations and other appropriate strategic innovations: integration of union strategies and other complimentary organizational transformations are examples of these." He argues that in order to achieve sustained revitalization, unions must take a comprehensive approach to their strategic planning and integrate their political, external organizing, and collective bargaining activities, as well as undergo the necessary cultural and structural organizational transformations to support their new strategic focus. He argues that without coordinating these

strategies, unions will be unable to institute the cultural and structural changes necessary to sustain revitalization (Hickey, 2003).

This study contributes to the strategic integration literature in a variety of other ways as well. For example, this study examines contract administration as it is related to strategic integration of union activities. Although contract administration is often treated as a part of a union's collective bargaining activities, it has been ignored by previous strategic integration research. These previous studies have only examined union contract bargaining strategies when discussing their collective bargaining activities. However, contract administration is arguably one of the most important functions of a union. Unlike contract negotiations which occur every few years, contract administration activities are ongoing and thus are a much more integral way in which members form opinions about the union. This is especially true in workforces plagued by a high rate of turnover, like the casino industry. Furthermore, contract administration is one of the most directly visible services a union can perform for its members. A variety of studies have found that union members place a particularly high value on a union's contract administration functions and union members' subjective evaluations of their union's grievance procedures have a strong positive correlation with their overall union commitment and participation (Kochan, 1979, Gallagher & Clark, 1989, Clark, Gallagher, & Pavlak, 1990, Eaton, Gordon, & Keefe, 1992, Bemmels, 1995a).

This case study not only includes contract administration in its analysis, but also argues that the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy forms the foundation of its rank-and-file mobilization efforts for its contract bargaining, external organizing, and political strategies. Culinary Union officials consistently credited the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy as one of, if not the most, important factor influencing the Culinary Union's remarkable rank-and-file mobilization

capacity. The local's contract administration process serves as the primary means through which the union identifies, recruits, and trains rank-and-file leaders to take important roles in union campaigns. Eventually, many of these rank-and-file leaders become part of the union's staff to work as union representatives, organizers, or in a variety of other capacities. Secondly, the union uses its contract administration procedure to communicate with its general membership and encourage them to think of their workplace issues in a collective rather individualistic manner. Finally, the contract administration structure acts as the primary communication conduit between rank-and-file members and the local's staff and leadership.

This case study is also unique among the strategic integration literature because, as discussed above, the Culinary Union is much further along in their revitalization process than any other union locals that have been subjects of previous case studies. Neither PACE nor the IBT, which were subject of Hickey's (2003) and O'Malley's (1999) case studies respectively, have been able to comprehensively integrate their organizing, collective bargaining, and political strategies. The CWA, which is the subject of Katz et. al.'s (2003) study has made more progress in this area than either PACE or the IBT, however, it still has not integrated these strategies in a consistent manner, which is one of the main points made in their article. Furthermore, the case studies by Katz et. al., and O'Malley examine their subjects on a national level, while this case study focuses on a local union organization.

Contract Administration and the Organizing Model

A primary argument of this thesis is that the Culinary Union's representation activities between rounds of negotiations formed a key element of its long-term rank-and-file mobilization strategy. The large part of these non-contract bargaining representational activities fall in to the category of contract administration. In other words, the Culinary Union's contract administration strategies, in conjunction with its

contract bargaining, external organizing, and political strategies, greatly increased the Culinary Union's rank-and-file mobilization capacity. Although it looks at these other areas of union activity in conjunction with contract administration, this case study concentrates on contract administration because of the central role it plays in the Culinary Unions rank-and-file mobilization process.

The Culinary Union follows a strategy based on the organizing model of contract administration. This means that the Culinary Union's contract administration strategy emphasizes rank-and-file member involvement in and responsibility over the contract administration process. It further means that the union emphasizes dealing with grievances on a collective rather than individual basis. This case study describes how the Culinary Union, by using the organizing model of contract administration, created an organizational culture and structure that lead to increases in the quality and quantity of rank-and-file participation in the union and how this benefited the union in its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign. As a result of the Culinary Union's organizing model of contract administration, not only were rank-and-file members more active but they learned to perceive their workplace issues collectively and develop the skills necessary to begin to address them in this way.

As discussed in the literature review, industrial relations scholars have found strong correlations between the organizing model of unionism and increased rank-and-file participation in the union (Fosh, 1993, Bronfenbrenner & Juravich, 1995, Tetrick, 1995, Bacharach et. al. 2001, Snape & Redman, 2004a, Snape & Redman, 2004b). By describing the effect of the Culinary Union's contract administration policy on rank-and-file mobilization for its 2002 comprehensive contract campaign, this case study provides further evidence supporting the conclusions reached by these previous studies. Furthermore, since studies of union participation and commitment tend to be quantitative statistical studies, this case study adds an essential level of detail that is

absent in those other studies. Finally, by focusing on just one union local this case study allows for an in-depth discussion of the dynamic interplay between union contract administration strategies and context that is absent in other previous research in this area.

Areas of Future Research

The Culinary Union is one of the most prominent exceptions to the current decline of the labor movement in the United States. Therefore, more research needs to be done on other contextual factors that may influence industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's casino industry. First, a more detailed study of the early stages of the Culinary Union's revitalization process needs to be conducted. This case study focuses on the organizational characteristics of the Culinary Union after it had already made the organizational transformations that lead to its sustained revitalization and does not provide an in-depth discussion of how and why those transformations began. In order to get a full understanding of organizational reforms and contextual influences behind the Culinary Union's successful revitalization process a detailed case study of the local covering the period beginning in the late 1980s through the early 1990s needs to be conducted.

Further research could also be conducted on the influence of workforce demographic variables on the Culinary Union's revitalization process. This topic was only briefly discussed in this case study, although the growing predominance of Hispanic, Asian, and female workers is a significant change in the composition of the casino industry workforce. Such a study would be especially valuable because similar demographic changes are occurring throughout the American labor force and the labor movement needs to learn how to reach out to diverse groups of workers if it is going to survive. Furthermore, the unions that are driving the American labor movement's

revitalization effort, UNITE-HERE and SEIU, are concentrated in industries dominated by these demographic groups.

Research could also be conducted on how the personalities and relationships of Culinary Union leaders and gaming industry executives have influenced industrial relations in the Las Vegas's gaming industry. As mentioned in chapters four and five, industrial relations strategies of the larger gaming companies operating in Las Vegas have been driven by several key industry leaders such as Steve Wynn, William Bennett, and Kirk Kerkorian. These business leaders largely set the tone for industrial relations strategies pursued by the major gaming operators in Las Vegas during the 1990s and into the 21st century. Likewise, the innovative leaders of the Culinary Union such as Jim Arnold, John Wilhelm, and D. Taylor have also had significant influence on the industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas gaming industry, through the strategic choices made the Culinary Union. A future study could look at how these individuals and their mutual relationships have influenced industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's gaming industry.

The Culinary Union's contract administration strategy provides another potentially rich area of research for scholars interested in the local. This case study discussed the influence of the organizing model of contract administration on union participation and mobilization capacity, however, quantitative statistical research in this area is still lacking. Such a study should find a way to measure both formal and informal varieties of participation, since much of the quantitative research on union participation research to date does not take into account the full range of ways in which a member can participate in his/her union.

Future research could also look at the influence of union orientation strategies and policies on rank-and-file participation and union mobilization capacity. A variety of studies have found a strong and resilient correlation between a rank-and-file

member's opinion of a union's new members orientation policy and their commitment to the union as well as their participation in union affairs (Clark et al. 1993, Clark et al. 2000, Clark et. al. 2004). The Culinary Union has an extensive new member orientation procedure, which some of the union's internal organizers credit with playing an important role in increasing rank-and-file participation in the union (Henry, 2005, Pappageorge, 2005). In addition the Culinary Academy could also act like an informal pre-orientation for new members, and have the effect of increasing rank-and-file commitment to and participation in the union (Pappageorge, 2005, Cole, 2003). A case study examining the relationship between new members' orientation and union participation could also explore the relationship between new member orientation and other areas of union activity such as contract administration or external organizing.

A comparative study of the contract administration strategies of the Culinary Union and HERE's local in Atlantic City could be another potentially interesting avenue of research. HERE's Atlantic City affiliate pursues a contract administration strategy that is closer to the servicing model, and therefore it would be interesting to compare these two contrasting strategies as they are applied in similar contexts. Furthermore, HERE's Atlantic City affiliate, unlike the Culinary Union, has not gone through a significant revitalization process, so a broader comparative study of these two locals could be a valuable contribution to the debate over the degree to which the Culinary Union's success is the result of contextual variables associated with Las Vegas's casino industry. Such a study could also provide additional insight into the specific success of the Culinary Union, and would also be an important addition to wider union revitalization literature. For example, it could help explain why only a few union locals have managed to revitalize themselves. Finally, given the current scarcity of contract administration research in the revitalization literature, further case studies of attempts by unions to apply the organizing model of contract administration

in diverse contexts would be an invaluable way to build on the findings of this case study.

Implications for other Union Locals

The Culinary Union is often offered as an example of how labor unions can thrive in today's inhospitable industrial relations climate. However, examples of other union locals similarly revitalizing themselves are few and far between. Therefore, it has been suggested that the Culinary Union's success is in large part due to its contextual environment. Yet this case study describes how the Culinary Union's strategic decisions have not only contributed to its success, but also changed the context in which it operates. Therefore, it is the dynamic interaction between external contextual variables and the Culinary Union's strategies that are responsible for the local's success.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that other private sector unions such as SEIU Local 1877 which represents workers in California's property services industry, and SEIU 1199NY which represents healthcare employees in New York State, have enjoyed levels of success similar to those of the Culinary Union, in widely varying contexts. As with the Culinary Union, many of the tactics used by SEIU Local 1877 and SEIU 1199NY, such as using workers' relationships with consumers as leverage points to put pressure on employers, rely on rank-and-file mobilization. Therefore, these local unions as well as others whose tactical repertoire depends on rank-and-file mobilization, would benefit from using many of the strategies that Culinary Union uses to increase its rank-and-file mobilization capacity. One such strategy is the Culinary Union's organizing model of contract administration, which this case study shows is one of the primary factors behind the Culinary Union's successful 2002 comprehensive contract campaign.

Therefore, although external context clearly influences industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas's gaming industry, union strategies have a significant role as well. By demonstrating that Culinary Union strategies do influence industrial relations outcomes in Las Vegas, this thesis supports the argument often made by union revitalization researchers, that in today's inhospitable industrial relations climate, unions can still revitalize themselves if they utilize a set of strategies that is well matched to the industrial relations contexts in which they operate. Furthermore, even though context influences both the Culinary Union's strategic choices and effectiveness, there are lessons that can be taken from this case study and applied elsewhere, especially where unions can rely on rank-and-file intensive tactics to place pressure on employers.

Future Prospects of the Culinary Union

Since the 2002 negotiations the Culinary Union has improved its density in the Las Vegas Strip market, signing neutrality agreements with every casino operator along the Strip except for The Las Vegas Sands Corp., which owns the Venetian. This process has been facilitated by a wave of mergers that has consolidated the casino industry in Las Vegas and the re-entry of Steve Wynn into Las Vegas's casino industry. However, the Culinary Union's efforts to organize off the Strip have been stymied. While it has maintained density in the stagnant downtown submarket, it has failed to make any headway organizing neighborhood properties or any major properties located just off the Strip, such as the Palms and Hard Rock Café. Therefore, while it is likely the Culinary Union will continue to enjoy extremely high density along the Strip, there are no clear signs as to whether the Culinary Union will be able to expand its presence off the Strip in the future.

Furthermore, there have been signs that the NLRB may begin to place restrictions on the neutrality agreements the Culinary Union has typically used in its

external organizing campaigns. It is unclear at this time what the specifics of the NLRB's new policy in this area will be, and therefore it is hard to make predictions as to what the impact of a change in policy on the Culinary Union's future organizing prospects will be. However, considering the degree to which such agreements have become routine for most of Las Vegas's major gaming operators and the amount of power the Culinary Union has in the local industry, it would be surprising if the change in the NLRB's policy would have much of an effect on the Culinary Union external organizing ability along the strip, unless the NLRB adopted an extremely draconian policy against neutrality agreements. However, the impact of the NLRB's change in policy off the Strip, where neutrality agreements and the Culinary are not as established, is less clear.

The gaming industry has continued to proliferate throughout the United States and the Culinary Union's parent union, UNITE-HERE, has made some headway in organizing these casinos. For example, UNITE-HERE has won a national neutrality agreement covering a large number of properties that were being developed by Park Place Entertainment, before it was acquired by Harrah's. Furthermore, it has gotten neutrality agreements written into state gaming laws in a few states such as New York, covering most new casino development. It is unclear if UNITE-HERE's organizing efforts will catch up to the pace of the casino industry's expansion and what the overall effect of this expansion on Las Vegas gaming industry will be. However even with the expansion of the gaming industry, Las Vegas's major gaming operators are still relatively concentrated Las Vegas; making it difficult for them to offset any losses they incur in this market as a result of Culinary Union pressure tactics, with revenues from other locations.

APPENDIX A

Job Classifications & 2002 Wages (before tips) of Culinary Union Members at the Mirage Resort and Hotel as called for by the 2002 – 2007 contract.

Classification	Hourly Wage (in Dollars)
Sous Chef	13.884
Master Cook	13.709
Cook	13.353
Butcher	13.353
Sushi Cook	13.709
Teppan Cook	13.353
Baker	13.571
Pantry Worker	12.821
Helper	12.021
Steward	12.390
Stove Cleaner	10.940
Kitchen Worker	10.690
Utility Cleaner	11.840
Linen Chute Room	11.859
General Cleaner	10.721
Guest Room Attendant	10.453
Status Board Operator	11.965
Uniform Attendant	11.859
Server	8.709
Server (6 Hour Shift)	8.907
Server-Showroom	8.709
Server-Showroom (6 Hour Shift)	8.907
Server-Cocktail	8.509
Server-Cocktail (6 Hour Shift)	8.907
Server-Banquet-Hourly	9.440
Server-Banquet-Hourly/Temp	9.440
Host Person	12.115
Host Person (6 Hour Shift)	12.315
Usher	10.825
Usher (6 Hour shift)	11.030
Head Usher	15.200
Head Usher (6 Hour Shift)	15.400
Fountain/Counter	9.684
Fountain/Counter (6 Hour Shift)	9.884
Cashiers-F & B	12.540
Cashiers-F &B (6 Hour Shift)	12.790

Classification	Hourly Wage (in Dollars)
Slot Booth Cashier	12.653
Busperson-Regular	8.921
Busperson-Regular (6 Hour Shift)	9.032
Busperson-Showroom	8.921
Busperson-Showroom (6 Hour Shift)	9.032
Runner	9.165
Bartender, Tipped	13.078
Bartender, Tipped (6 Hour Shift)	13.280
Bartender, Non-Tipped	13.515
Bartender, Non-Tipped (6 Hour Shift)	13.720
Apprentice Bartender	10.646
Apprentice Bartender (6 Hour Shift)	10.850
Beverage Porter	11.240
Beverage Porter (6 Hour Shift)	11.435
Mini-Bar Attendant	10.700
Room Svc Dispatcher	12.590
Front Svc Baggage Handler	10.715
Front Svc Dispatcher Supervisor	10.960
Front Svc Dispatcher	10.700
Front Svc Door Person Supervisor	10.490
Front SVC Door Person	9.240
Front SVC Door Person (6 Hour Shift)	9.440
Front SVC Bell Person	9.001
Front SVC Bell Person (6 Hour Shift)	9.201
Linen Attendant	11.859
Banquet Set-Up Porter	11.240
Lead Banquet Set-Up Porter	12.240

APPENDIX B

Location, Ownership, and Contract Expiration Date of Las Vegas Casinos whose employees are represented by the Culinary Union,

Name of Property	Ownership at time of 2002 Negotiations	Location	Contract Expires in 2002?
Bally's	Park Place Entertainment	Strip	Yes
Barbary Coast	Owned by Coast Resorts	Strip	Yes
Bellagio	MGM-Mirage	Strip	Yes
Binion's Horseshoe	Binion Family	Downtown	Yes
Ceasers Palace	Park Place Entertainment	Strip	Yes
Castaways	VSS Enterprises, LLC	Neighborhood	Yes
Circus Circus	Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
El Cortez	Jackie Gaughan	Downtown	Yes
El Dorado	Boyd Gaming Corp.	Neighborhood	No
Excalibur	Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
Flamingo Las Vegas	Park Place Entertainment	Strip	Yes
Fitzgeralds	Fitzgeralds Gaming Corp	Downtown	Yes
Four Queens	Elsinore Corp.	Downtown	Yes
Fremont	Boyd Gaming Corp.	Downtown	Yes
Golden Gate	Partners, Mark Mark Brandenburg and Craig Ghelfi	Downtown	Yes

Name of Property	Ownership at time of 2002 Negotiations	Location	Contract Expires in 2002?
Golden Nugget	MGM-Mirage	Downtown	Yes
Harrah's Las Vegas	Harrah's Entertainment Inc.	Strip	Yes
Jerry's Nugget	George Stamis and Jerry Lodge	Neighborhood	Yes
Las Vegas Club	Mel Exber and Jackie Gaugha	Downtown	Yes
Las Vegas Hilton	Park Place Entertainment	Strip	Yes
Luxor	Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
Mandalay Bay	Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
MGM Grand	MGM-Mirage	Strip	No
The Mirage	MGM-Mirage	Strip	Yes
Monte Carlo	MGM-Mirage/Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
New Frontier	Phil Ruffin	Strip	No
New York-New York	MGM-Mirage	Strip	Yes
Paris	Park Place Entertainment	Strip	Yes
Plaza	Jackie Gaughan	Downtown	Yes
Rio	Harrah's Entertainment Inc.	Strip	No
Riviera	Riviera Holding Corp.	Strip	Yes
Sahara	Sahara Gaming Corp.-Controlled by Bill Bennet	Strip	Yes
Slots a Fun	Mandalay Resort Group	Strip	Yes
Stardust	Boyd Gaming Corp.	Strip	Yes
Stratosphere	Operated by Carl Icahn	Strip	Yes
Treasure Island	MGM-Mirage	Strip	Yes

Name of Property	Ownership at time of 2002 Negotiations	Location	Contract Expires in 2002?
Tropicana	Aztar Corp.	Strip	Yes
Western Hotel	Jackie Gaughan	Downtown	Yes

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