CLEANERS AND THE MOBILIZATION OF COMMUNITIES:

THE 2006 JUSTICE FOR JANITORS CAMPAIGN

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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ABSTRACT

This thesis narrates the history of the University of Miami Justice for Janitors campaign of 2006 as a local movement disclosing the immanent contradictions of the financial expansion ongoing in the capitalist 'world-system' since the 1980s and manifest in the financial crisis of 2008. Involving janitors, university students, faculty, clergy, union leaders and the local activist community in a nine-week struggle that culminated in a theologically resonant hunger strike and an ultimate union contract for the workers, the campaign introduced a new dynamic of collective resistance into Miami's civil society, including novel institutions and discursive forms.

The thesis views the campaign as an individual lens on—and instance of—the contemporary regime of capitalist accumulation, using event-level history to focus on a set of concrete efforts at resistance that both flowed from and locally modified the advancement of neo-liberal social policies in the city.

The central argument is that the campaign laid potential foundations for a novel historical bloc in Miami by creating a loosely-networked community of actors committed to a social wage, embedded in specific relations of the market society, rooted in deep connections to material life, and capable of exercising political influence vis-à-vis elite actors. Drawing upon Christian symbolism, clerical support, and the initiative of workers in pursuing a three-week hunger strike, the campaign built up a broadly Catholic community of faith to disclose a conflict between the exigencies of material life and the commandments of capitalist instrumentality. Its discourse and practice opened up possibilities not only for better wages, benefits and working conditions for the janitors but also for new shared conceptualizations of the meaning of the campus space as locus for the unfolding possibilities of time.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jason Albright was born in 1977 and grew up along the Monongahela and its tributaries. He is a 1999 graduate of Swarthmore College, a 2004 graduate of the University of Miami School of Law, and a 2005 graduate of Cornell University's masters program in Industrial and Labor Relations. When not in Ithaca, Albright lives with his partner, Roberto Ruiz, in Washington, DC.

This work is dedicated to Barbara and Robert McClain,

who have lovingly dedicated a great deal of their own work to its author.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Campaign

The history of the University of Miami Justice for Janitors campaign of 2006, a local movement building upon the limits of a regional, national and international process of financial expansion ongoing in Miami since the 1980s, offers a significant window on the immanent political contradictions—and ultimate limits—of that process. The Miami janitors' campaign succeeded by building a broadly Catholic community of faith to launch a confrontation between the exigencies of material life and the logic of capitalism that managed to destabilize—if only briefly—the effective centrality of neo-liberal rationality in the city. In the "market" space between the "upper" and "lower" levels of the local society, the campaign's networked constituencies built up an historical bloc that articulated a conflict between productive and property relations, made possible an improbable contractual victory against the campaign's corporate adversary (represented by former United States Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala), and launched a series of subsequent social organizing campaigns that are still rippling through Miami's civil society.

One of my strong research interests is in local social conflicts as instances or expressions of the world-systemic contradictions occasioned by capitalist productive relations. This involves attention to how social movements of diverse origin and objective can be understood to express and bring together the specific problematics of expanded material reproduction, on one hand, and accumulation by dispossession, on another (Harvey 2006: 65) as coeval and contradictory dynamics of larger capitalist processes. This general research orientation also involves attention to how processes of commodification come to impact the conditions of daily material life and the sorts

of resistances that emerge from within its relations (Harvey 2006: 113-14; Braudel 1981: 28, 559).

I focus on the Miami Justice for Janitors campaign in this paper for a variety of reasons. In the first case, I believe it to mark an excellent example of a localized resistance to capitalist productive relations; the campaign includes and expresses the general contradictions inherent in the moments of dispossession, productive expansion and commodification that have characterized historical capitalism as an overall trend. In a second case, the campaign provides a window on the relations of the U.S. regime of accumulation (Arrighi 1994) in the Caribbean Islands, Central America and South America, in whose governance Miami historically has played a leading role. In a third case, the campaign gives insight into more specific strategies of regionalization adopted by the U.S.-based regime of accumulation to cope with the 'signal' crisis of its hegemonic relations beginning roughly in 1970 (Arrighi 1994), a processes that propelled Miami to new status as a significant node in the political economy of the Caribbean Basin beginning in the 1980s (Sassen and Portes 1993; Grosfoguel 1995). Fourth and finally, the campaign offers a window on the emergent relations of Miami's local civil society on the eve of a long economic downturn now playing out as the global financial crisis of 2008. The campaign is, both structurally and historically, I believe, a site of sociopolitical significance and one whose utility as a lens on a larger set of world-historical dynamics may only grow with time.[1]

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[1] There is also an element of biography in my choice of focus: I am a J.D. graduate of the University of Miami, where, "[a]lthough I studied jurisprudence, I pursued it as a subject subordinated to philosophy and history" (Marx 1859). I lived in Miami Beach from August 2001 through May 2004, during which developments and conditions preceding the campaign—including the November 2003 Free Trade Area of the Americas Ministerial Conference and demonstrations in downtown Miami—influenced my understanding of the conditions prevailing in local civil society and their relationship to the regional and global polity. I served as a legal observer for the National Lawyers' Guild during the demonstrations and was present

Born at the end of a process of global financial expansion that heightened the city's significance as a center of international trade and financial services, the Miami Janitors' campaign brought together a diverse constellation of social actors commonly impacted by the rise and consolidation of Miami as a central "place of flows" for global capital, commodities and labor. Property values soared during Miami's period of growth, and real estate developers reaped enormous rewards from newly built luxury housing and office space, but real wages remained relatively flat. The poor did not share in the fruits of autumn. Miami's period of expansion drove processes of financial rationalization, proletarianization and spatial displacement as the city's increasing wealth attracted new immigrants to fill an ample demand for service work but increasingly relegated these workers to live in remote suburbs or urban slums due the same upward pressures on property values that drove "urban renewal." Just as a new rentier class was rising in Miami as a result of the prodigal growth in local property values, a substantial mass of Miami's very poor population was barely subsisting on service-based work. This relatively invisible group's poverty was broadly accepted as a mere "externality" of otherwise reasonable and efficient "market" processes until the community that constituted the Miami janitors' campaign came to actively question those processes' legitimacy.

The campaign—involving janitors, university students, faculty, clergy, union leaders and the local activist community in a nine-week struggle that culminated in a hunger strike and an ultimate union contract for the workers—introduced a significant new dynamic of collective resistance into Miami's civil society that indicated both the limits of the community's flexibility in the face of late neo-liberal restructuring and the emergence of new local social formations protective of workers, prevailing

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on hand for both a parade of labor unionists and activists and the exercise of extreme police repression that characterized those mainly fruitless regional trade discussions.

community values and the city's social spaces. Emanating from the most apparently improbable of sites—a Cuban-American community in South Florida—the campaign thus marks one instance of a signal that productive relations had come into conflict with property relations, broadly defined.

At bottom, the 2006 Miami janitors campaign not only proved to the U.S. labor movement that Miami's traditionally Republican and politically conservative Cuban-American community was fertile ground for new organizing. The campaign was also highly suggestive about the potential of strong Catholic communities of faith contained within predominantly Protestant and secular polities to unsettle the historical alignments that make a neo-liberal hegemony possible. The first achievement mattered because the effects of union-discouraging "right-to-work" laws prevalent in the southern and southwestern states of the U.S., combined with the strong Democratic party affiliations of the U.S. labor movement and the ethnocentric assumptions and prejudices that have historically burdened attempts to organize new cohorts of workers in the U.S. had led conventional wisdom in the labor movement to dismiss the Cuban-American community in Miami as quite possibly the least likely place for a successful organizing campaign (Amernick 2006; Brakken 2006). The second achievement mattered because Marxist literature has often dismissed the attitude of religion generally,[2] and of Catholicism specifically, as essentially distinct from "the attitude of the philosophy of praxis," with Gramsci maintaining that "whereas the former maintains a dynamic contact and tends continually to raise new strata of the population to a higher cultural life, the latter tends to maintain a purely mechanical contact, an external unity based in particular on the liturgy and on a cult visually imposing to the crowd," typically reacting to actual attempts to bring the

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[2] See, e.g., Marx 1843.

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church closer to the people as instances of heresy (1971: 397).[3] The campaign, along with the historical achievements of liberation theology and contemporary signs of increased 'social' attentiveness from the Vatican,[4] suggest that this characterization may need to be adapted to account for the nature of current Catholic attempts to maintain the community of the faithful and for the actual politicization of particular local instances thereof. In short, the campaign helped to unsettle a number of long-held prejudices going back to the "common sense" of the U.S. labor movement, on one hand, and to merely dogmatic understandings of the roots of dialectical materialism, on another.

By building the social movement behind the campaign's work, the labor union that coordinated and funded it behaved as a progressive—though self-interested—vanguard, providing millions of dollars in research, staffing and infrastructure to the campaign but ultimately leaving the engagement of stakeholder groups free to play out according to its organic logic in each instance. This "laissez-faire" approach to social

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[3] Gramsci does not completely close his mind to the revolutionary contributions of Christianity, of course, but he does tend to place them in the past, viewing the church of the early 20th century as essentially conservative of the status quo. In one acknowledgement of the church's progressive capacity in the past, for instance, Gramsci observes that "both the religions which affirm the quality of man as the sons of God and the philosophies which affirm the equality of man as participants in the faculty of reason have been expressions of complex revolutionary movements (respectively the transformation of the classical world and the transformation of the medieval world) which laid the most powerful links in the chain of historical development" (1971: 356).

[4] See, e.g., Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, issued in 2009. Among other things, the encyclical offers a deeply conservative critique of the socially corrosive influence of unbridled capitalism. I bring up the encyclical not somehow to equate it with more localized or 'grassroots' responses to the impacts of neoliberal capitalism from within the Church but to underscore the extent to which a deep skepticism of capitalist rationality may be understood to pervade this broad community of faith, in continuity with early Catholic doctrine, on one hand, and in response to an emerging global awareness of the social and environmental externalities of enterprises driven by the pursuit of profits at all costs.

organizing ultimately yielded to a more theological movement than is usual among first contract campaigns in the U.S. labor movement in the early 21st century. What emerged—including a three-week hunger strike that referenced the Passion of Christ—was hardly a paragon of U.S.-style secular restraint. But the campaign's theological style should not be dismissed as a sign of a reactionary disposition or a weak interest in "progress." Long gone are those mist-enveloped days when "progress" was the exclusive domain of the godless. On the contrary, what was precisely salient about the campaign's logic and history was the way the campaign managed to articulate specific materialist with specific spiritualist and to seek the organic resolution of both through actual social struggle.

Methodological Discussion

My sociological method is primarily historical.[5] I use the campaign I depict, my unit of analysis, as an individual lens on—and instance of— a larger phenomenon of the uneven and combined development of the capitalist world-system,[6] of which it is simultaneously derivative and constitutive. That larger phenomenon, my domain of inquiry, is the project of "neo-liberal" capitalism,[7] which sought increasing freedom

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[5] I say 'historical' with full awareness that I am writing event-level history of a very recent vintage. There is always some danger in such an enterprise, but the choice of 'history' here is methodological, not thematic.

[6] See Trotsky 1930. See also Wallerstein 1991.

[7] I speak in the past tense because the buck would appear to have stopped at some point in the late fall of 2008. Neo-liberal arrangements seem unthinkable when governments throughout the world— not least in the U.S.—are nationalizing banks, limiting executive compensation and launching unprecedented waves of domestic welfare spending. My case thus appears to speak to the world-historical conditions of an era that has come to a kind of closure. Karl Polanyi's experience in failing to predict the eventual supersession and dismantlement of the great wave of early-20th century social and economic regulation that he narrated in *The Great Transformation* (1944), however, would tend to counsel against giving these moments of closure too much analytic weight. Indeed, we may find ourselves in a situation much more akin to Henri Pirenne's depiction of a sort of pendular oscillation—with "lifts"—between

for capital through the progressive dismantling of the post-war welfare state, of social limitations on contractual arrangements, and of other obligations associated with collectively borne costs and public goods. In an attempt at a better understanding of the phenomenon of neo-liberal capitalism, as both reality and discourse, I use the event-level history of the campaign I depict to focus on a set of concrete efforts at resistance that both flowed from and locally modified the advancement of neo-liberal social policies.

My method thus comports with the "singular form" of what Philip McMichael has termed "incorporated comparison,"[8] an alternative to the use of fixed units of analysis for social scientific inquiry that aims instead at "grounding the analytical units of comparison in the world-historical process under investigation" (1990: 385).[9] This methodological approach is "alternative" because it "views comparable social phenomena as differentiated *outcomes* or *moments* of an historically integrated process, whereas conventional comparison treats such outcomes as parallel *cases*" (McMichael 1990: 392). I employ this approach not only to avoid reifying the

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laissez faire and regulated forms of capitalism (1953: 515-16), and not at all one characterized by any continuous trajectory of linear progression.

[8] The late Giovanni Arrighi, who adopted McMichael's method of "incorporating comparison" as the methodological basis for his historically comparative treatment of systemic cycles of capitalist accumulation and expansion, observed that "the comparison is *incorporated* into the very definition of the research problem: it constitutes the substance rather than the framework of the inquiry." In Arrighi's case in *The Long Twentieth Century*, the systemic cycles of accumulation he examines "are neither subordinated parts of a preconceived whole, nor independent instances of a condition; they are interconnected instances of a *single* historical process of capitalist expansion which they themselves constitute and modify" (23).

[9] McMichael's method is particularly compatible with Heidegger's concluding observation in an essay entitled "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" (1966) that, in light of the nature of truth as *alētheia*, or unconcealment (i.e. contextualized by an ever-emergent relationality of phenomena to what does not even presence as such), "[t]he task of thinking would then be the surrender of previous thinking to the determination of the matter for thinking" (Heidegger 1977, 392), notably to an attempt at a substantive understanding of phenomenal emergence.

(instance of the) phenomenon I analyze but also to capture its implication in a process of historical unveiling that is cumulative, relational and subject to progressive modification.[10] By examining the campaign as a localized instance of (resistance to) neoliberal policy, I seek a better understanding of the real limits of the latter and a glimpse of those "new superior relations of production," whose material preconditions may be emerging—here and in multiple other social constellations—"within the framework[11] of the old society" (Marx 1859).

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[10] Methodologically, I also wish to underscore the organic and not merely formally comparative associations that necessarily inhere within and between the cases that the social sciences might seek to examine. As Gramsci puts it in his prison notes on "The Study of Philosophy," "it is not enough to know the *ensemble* of relations as they exist at any given time as a given system. They must be known genetically in the moment of their formation." Or, as otherwise put, "if man is conceived as the *ensemble* of social relations, it then appears that every comparison between men, over time, is impossible, because one is dealing with different, if not heterogeneous, objects" (1971: 359). As Gramsci explains, "The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition, but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex" (Id. 352). "Each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations, but of the history of these relations. He is a précis of all the past" (Id. 353). I am not, in other words, interested in identifying or contributing to the construction of a transcendent logic across cases. Such an ahistorical knowledge would be unreasonably abstract, immobile and shallow. What is much more interesting and fruitful, for my purposes, is attention to the immanent logic of specific complex processes that mutually condition and inform the historical development of civil society as a whole.

[11] Reflection on the 'framework' provides a useful way to demonstrate how the Heideggerian (rejection of) ontology might be provisionally reconciled with Marxist materialism and therefore deployed methodologically in conjunction with a provisional Marxian epistemology. Here it is worthwhile to observe that the word Marx uses to describe the relations of the old society is "framework," or the German *Gestell*. As Heidegger points out in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology," this word, which names in German both what we call in English a bookrack and a skelton, also names the essence of modern technology: specifically, the attribute of "enframing," or a specific logic of knowledge production that Heidegger believes to approach nature by way of "challenging" and appropriation to what Heidegger calls the "standing reserve" (1977: 296-300). According to Heidegger, however, the verb *stellen*—to set upon—from which *Gestell* is formed, "should preserve the suggestion of another *Stellen* from which it stems, namely that of

In the discussion that follows, I will round out this first chapter with a basic narrative of the campaign and a brief discussion of the theoretical perspectives I will deploy in its analysis. In Chapter 2, I will analyze the campaign with a view to capital strategy, depicting elite (including national labor union) involvement at a level of the social structure Braudel described as a "shadowy zone, hovering above the sunlit world of the market economy and constituting its upper limit, so to speak" (Braudel 1981: 24). In Chapter 3, I will "descend" again to an analysis of the campaign at the level of daily material life. Here I will examine the campaign's formation from—and its implications for—the structures and rhythms of the several local communities in which it established itself and took root. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the campaign's explicit "politicization" of—and ultimate resolution within—the relations of Miami's market economy as articulated with those of a complex network of regional trade and influence. In my last chapter, I will return to a brief reflection on what an understanding of the campaign may contribute to extant theoretical perspectives in political economy and critical theory.

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producing and presenting [*Her- und Dar-stellen*], which, in the sense of *poesis*, lets what presences come forth into unconcealment" (1977: 302).

The difference between Marx and Heidegger on this score is thus, in some sense, a matter of attitude toward the possibility of structural exhaustion, with Marx ultimately seeing enframing as an all-encompassing requisite of the historical 'progress' that his theory envisions and Heidegger seeing it as a kind of revealing that holds out the promise of a more original kind of revealing only insofar as it fundamentally demeans Dasien's experience of Being-in-the-world. Viewing the 'seeds of destruction' in a non-Marxian sense, for Heidegger, is a matter of phenomenological seeing, in which possibilities for more 'authentic' Being are snatched from the jaws of the process that threatens but can never fully bring about the systematic rationalization of everything that is. Instead of the 'sciences,' these possibilities reveal themselves for Heidegger in the 'arts,' and especially in poetry. Both thinkers thus, in a sense, accept the process of enframing, Marx with the practical expectation that the proletariat will transcend industrialization and Heidegger with the understanding that, in spite of the enormity of its impacts, enframing can never definitively foreclose 'aletheia,' the revelation of truth.

Event-Level History[12]

The organizing and first contract campaign at the University of Miami (UM) did not begin until 2005, but conflict at UM over the janitors' low wages and lack of benefits began four years earlier under faculty leadership in October 2001, when the UM Faculty Senate began passing resolutions, directed to newly-inaugurated UM President Donna Shalala, recommending the university's compliance with the Miami-Dade County Living Wage Ordinance. In resolutions passed on October 24 and December 12, 2001, the Faculty Senate recommended that Shalala raise hourly wages and provide health benefits for the university's full-time and part-time employees and contract workers (Faculty Senate 2001). Law Professor Michael Fischl, a labor lawyer who would later emerge as an active faculty supporter of the union organizing campaign, drafted the Faculty Senate resolutions after an August 2001 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article reported that UM ranked 194th out of 195 in a survey of janitorial pay among U.S. universities (Fischl 2007; Fischl 2006; Van der Werf 2001).

The *Chronicle* article had generated widespread concern among the faculty which the new Shalala administration, in turn, summarily ignored. Even after an explicit discussion of the Faculty Senate's recommendations with Fischl and other faculty leaders, Shalala declined to make any changes in janitor compensation or working conditions, which were perceived to be out-of-step with Shalala's management objectives at the time (Fischl 2006). Indeed, janitors at UM were earning as little as the Florida minimum wage of $6.40 an hour, with no meaningful health benefits, as late as March 2006 during the heat of the organizing campaign (Boodhoo

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[12] The better part of this narrative of the campaign was first published in the *Labor Studies Journal* in 2008 in an article by the present author entitled "Contending Rationality, Leadership, and Collective Struggle: The 2006 Justice for Janitors Campaign at the University of Miami," © 2008 United Association for Labor Education.

2006f). Although the faculty's protestations fell flat in the fall of 2001, the faculty resolutions would become useful rhetorical ammunition for student activists facing Shalala four years later (Amernick 2006).

SEIU began organizing janitors at Miami Beach condominiums and at UM in February 2005 (BNA 2005) as part of a larger strategy to organize workers in 17 southern and southwestern states via the Justice for Janitors campaign model (BNA 2006s). At an early stage in its South Florida organizing drive, SEIU enlisted the support of South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice (SFIWJ), a coalition of clergy and other members of the local faith community committed to activism on behalf of low-wage workers and affiliated with the national Interfaith Worker Justice organization based in Chicago (Hawking 2007). SFIWJ became involved in SEIU's attempt to organize workers at Miami Beach condominiums employed by Continental Group, including a march, involving 30 clergy activists, to the firm's headquarters in June 2005 (Hawking 2007). Continental Group's significant resistance to SEIU's organizing attempts resulted mainly in protracted struggle before the NLRB and stalemate, however (Boodhoo 2006e).

Beginning in the fall of 2005, SEIU began efforts to reach out to students at UM in preparation for an impending campaign there. Students Toward a New Democracy (STAND), a group formed by undergraduates to "create an activist culture in a historically apathetic student body" at the university (Butler Volunteer Services Center 2007), became an obvious potential ally. STAND was headed by student leader Jacob Coker-Dukowitz, whose mother is a law professor at UM (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). The relatively new group, which was already beginning to pursue anti-sweatshop and "fair trade" activism, came to work with the union as a result of the outreach efforts of SEIU organizer Eric Brakken (Coker-Dukowitz 2006; Brakken 2007). Himself an anti-sweatshop activist for United Students Against Sweatshops

(USAS) during his days as a student at the University of Wisconsin, Brakken had worked as an organizer for SEIU since 2001 and had been involved in the Boston janitors' strike in 2002 (Brakken 2007).

With Brakken's help, STAND became closely allied with USAS, and SEIU paid for STAND's members to attend training in direct action at the fall 2005 USAS conference in San Francisco (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). SEIU arranged trips to UM by students from Harvard who had been involved in the successful 3-week sit-in to raise the wages of UNICCO janitors working there in 2001 (Boodhoo 2006g),[13] and SEIU sent student activists from Georgetown to UM in November 2005 to school the members of STAND in organizational tactics (Bierman 2005).[14] Already, in the fall of 2005, STAND had built an email list of over 300 students, gathered 800 signatures from the undergraduate population calling for better worker pay, set up a website and provided other visible evidence of a new kind of student activism on campus (Bierman 2005).

The campaign at UM did not begin to heat up until the following spring. By then, Kim Bobo of the national Interfaith Worker Justice organization had dispatched Reverend C.J. Hawking, an affiliate based in Bloomington, Indiana who had played a leading role in the prolonged lock-out campaign against the A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company in Decatur, Illinois from 1994 through 1995, to work on the Miami campaign full-time (Hawking 2007). Hawking had arrived in Miami in late summer of 2005 to supplement SFIWJ's existing Miami leadership by devoting her

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[13] Not coincidentally, the Harvard janitors' campaign had also been the impetus for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article that led to the faculty resolution at UM in 2001 (Bierman 2005).
[14] The Georgetown connection came in handy later when, in the course of the campaign, Shalala delivered a speech at Georgetown, which was interrupted by shouts from STAND's new allies, bearing the signs of UM's hunger-striking janitors (Coker-Dukowitz 2006).

40-hour weeks exclusively to the janitors' drive at UM (Hawking 2007). The union's earliest action at UM was a gathering of about 25 workers, organized by SEIU staff, on October 6, 2005, to protest their low wages and lack of healthcare benefits (Athavaley 2005), but the event had little immediate impact.

On February 1, 2006, the NLRB issued a complaint against UM's cleaning contractor, UNICCO, for surveillance by supervisors of a union meeting, interrogations, threats of reprisal, and requirements of written disavowals of union support (Graves-Goodman 2006). Following the complaint,[15] a strike vote was set for Sunday, February 26. In an early show of support for the janitors' cause, 40 UM faculty members held a sendoff luncheon for the janitors on the university's central patio the prior Friday (Boodhoo & Bierman 2006).

On February 26, the janitors voted overwhelmingly to authorize a ULP strike against UNICCO (BNA 2006a), and the nine-week partial strike began on February 28, the evening before Ash Wednesday. The following day, at a noontime Mass at St. Augustine's Catholic Church and Student Center adjacent to the UM campus, hundreds of striking janitors wearing purple t-shirts received ashes from Father Rich Mullen, an Augustinian priest (Hawking 2007). Far from a random conjuncture, SEIU organizers and Hawking had carefully orchestrated the workers' walkout to underscore the symbolism of Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lenten renunciation (Hawking 2007). On March 5, the first Sunday of Lent, the striking

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[15] The ULP strike followed issuance of a complaint against UNICCO by NLRB Region 12 in Miami after SEIU filed charges alleging that UNICCO suspended or fired janitors who support the union and spied on, threatened and attempted to coerce the workers (BNA 2006a). The alleged retaliatory firing actually involved a janitor who spoke to the *Orlando Sentinel* about union organizing efforts at UM (Coyne 2006). SEIU also filed NLRB charged against UM itself, alleging that the university deployed a discriminatory access policy to prevent union organizing (BNA 2006a).

workers attended a Mass at which they received blessings from the Bishop of Miami, Felipe Estévez (Hawking 2007).

With the beginning of the walkout, the faculty stepped up their support. At the time of the janitors' strike vote, about 70 members of the faculty had signed a pledge to support the strike in a manner consistent with their obligations as teachers; in practice, this meant preparation to avoid crossing the workers' picket lines by holding classes off campus (BNA 2006a). A small core of 8 committed faculty members, which came to be known, tongue-in-cheek, as "the comitato," emerged as the faculty's nerve center (Pompele 2007). During the strike, "the comitato" met once a week, was in touch by telephone several times daily, and kept the rest of the faculty informed through an all-faculty listserv (Pompele 2007). This inner core included two lawyers (one of them Michael Fischl), a faculty administrator, a faculty senator, two sociologists, an internet blogger and a number of fluent speakers of Spanish (Pompele 2007).

In sympathy with the striking janitors, UM faculty began holding classes off campus on March 2 to avoid crossing picket lines (Spangler 2006). Giovanna Pompele, a lecturer in UM's English department, worked with SFIWJ to coordinate alternative classroom sites off campus (Pompele 2007; Hawking 2007), using venues as diverse as "churches, temples, houses and the little park off Grenada Boulevard and U.S. 1" (Spangler 2006). In all, more than 100 faculty members honored the workers' picket line by holding more than 300 classes at alternative locations (Pompele 2007). Using a "slow" dial-up internet connection and delegating her husband as a "stay-at-home coordinator," Pompele also posted documents, petitions, and messages relevant to the unfolding progress of the campaign on her campus listservs and internet blog

(Pompele 2007).[16]   By providing virtual fora for strike coordination and publicity, faculty bloggers such as Pompele and law professor Michael Froomkin (Coker-Dukowitz 2006) helped open new spaces within and through which the campaign's collaborative efforts would unfold.

On March 16, mid-campaign, Shalala announced a new compensation policy for UM's contract employees; raising wages by at least 25 percent, Shalala increased minimum wages for cleaners a full third, from $6.40 an hour to $8.55 (Boodhoo 2006f). Far from deterred by this attempt to derail the organizing campaign,[17] SEIU cheered the janitors' raise, and labor, clergy, faculty and student activists prepared for further escalation through a day of coordinated action (Hawking 2006).

On March 28, clergy and students carried out a two-tiered nonviolent civil disobedience action that drew significant local media attention (Hawking 2007). Coordinated jointly by C.J. Hawking and Jacob Coker-Dukowitz, the event involved the blocking of traffic on U.S. Route 1 outside the UM campus, followed by a student occupation of the UM admissions office (Hawking 2007).   Just as 17 activists, including 8 union members, 6 clergy, 2 community leaders and SEIU local 11 President Rob Schuler, were arrested by local police for forming a human chain across this major north-south highway, STAND member Alana Lopez announced to a crowd of reporters and onlookers that student activists and the campus chaplain had occupied the UM admissions office (Hawking 2006; Hawking 2007). Initially supported by a

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[16] Pompele's website, "Picketline: Social Justice and Democracy in Miami," is still a significant source of news and information about organizing for the city's burgeoning labor and social justice community, available at http://picketline.blogspot.com/.

[17] Labor law professor Michael Fischl observed how interesting it was that, despite the fact that Shalala's mid-campaign pay raise may well have constituted a clear unfair labor practice (ULP) under Section 8(a)(1) of the National Labor Relations Act, the union "went everywhere and said, 'look what we've done for these workers,'" instead of pressing a ULP charge before the NLRB. "The proof," he said, "is in the pudding. It worked" (Fischl 2006).

candlelight vigil of 100 students, faculty and others, 17 students and Father Frank Corbishley were holed up in the UM admissions office for 13 hours (Hawking 2006). Though Corbishley was exiled to a hallway when Shalala arrived to negotiate, the students debated with Shalala for 4 hours before finally agreeing to go home at 1:40 a.m. in exchange for Shalala's promise to attend a meeting with the workers, students and union representatives to discuss the situation (Coker-Dukowitz 2006; Hawking 2006; Hawking 2007).

The final stage of the campaign's escalation consisted of a hunger strike and series of fasts, lasting from April 5 until May 1 (Boodhoo 2006d). This was the campaign's most pronounced moment of worker agency. Begun during the period of the Christian Lenten fast and reinforced by clergy through the enactment of liturgical rites, the hunger strike linked the workers' struggle to both a generalized set of social conditions prevailing among Miami's working poor and a powerful substantive tradition of spiritual transcendence. The idea of the hunger strike originated among the workers themselves, a few of whom had been involved in hunger strikes before coming to Miami from Cuba (Brakken 2007). At first perceived by union leaders as dangerous and somewhat bizarre, the strategy was initially resisted by SEIU due to the significant health risks involved (Corbishley 2006). Indeed, even as SEIU began to facilitate the hunger strike by stationing a nurse at the workers' encampment outside the UM campus to monitor their health (Hawking 2006), workers took the lead in staging the affair, reminding the organizers, "You don't know how to do a hunger strike" (Brakken 2007). Beginning among 8 workers, 6 students and the son of one of the participating workers (BNA 2006e), the hunger strike was an extreme tactic that nonetheless became a decisive way for the campaign to induce a sense of crisis at UM that would push management toward settlement (Brakken 2007). As the hunger strike's leading participants slowly ceased their fasts due to hospitalization, organizers

orchestrated a "transfer of the fast" beginning on April 21, when SEIU President Andy Stern and Executive Vice President Eliseo Medina visited Miami to join the workers' movement (BNA 2006d). As individual hunger strikers, including workers, clergy, faculty, students and others now volunteered to fast for specific shifts of time, Stern joined the hunger strike for 72 hours, and Medina undertook an indefinite fast, culminating in a trip to the hospital (Ehrenreich 2006).

Overlapping with the period of the hunger strike was a final wave of publicity and celebrity visitations. On April 12, Charles Steele, Jr., President and CEO of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, came to campus, where he joined student demonstrators who refused to leave a spot they were occupying outside the Ashe Administrative Building (Rabin 2006). On April 25, John Edwards, James Hoffa, Jr., and journalist Barbara Ehrenreich made appearances at the janitors' tent encampment under the metro line just off the UM campus, a highly visible symbol and staging ground for the campaign that had come to be known as "Freedom City" (Reinhard 2006). Ehrenreich, reporting on her visit, remarked in her blog that the workers encamped at Freedom City appeared engaged in "democracy in action," debating one another actively and planning their next strategic actions (Ehrenreich 2006).

Under a building sense of public crisis and the prospect that the campaign might disrupt UM's spring commencement ceremonies, at which former Secretary of State Madeline Albright was scheduled to speak, Shalala began to give in (Amernick 2006; Fischl 2006; Ocampo 2006). UNICCO agreed to a card-check vote with 60 percent majority on May 1 (BNA 2006c), and SEIU obtained more than a 70 percent majority in its favor in the subsequent card check election, held in Father Frank Corbishley's "strike sanctuary" (Boodhoo 2006a). On June 15, the American Arbitration Association certified the election, setting the stage for first contract negotiations (Boodhoo 2006a).

Buoyed by the momentum of its successful organizing campaign and UM's time pressure to resolve the labor dispute before the beginning of the following academic year, the union was positioned well to obtain favorable new terms for the workers; however, Shalala's mid-campaign pay raise diminished what could be achieved in the first contract. SEIU local 11's first contract ultimately enshrined and moderately increased Shalala's mid-campaign wage increase, in addition to providing health benefits and a more generous holiday plan. Ratified by the workers at Corbishley's "strike sanctuary" on August 23 (Boodhoo 2006h), and running from September 1, 2006 through August 31, 2010, the contract retained minimum pay for housekeepers—80 percent of the approximately 400 employees—at $8.55 an hour; minimum pay for landscapers at $9.30 an hour; and minimum pay for food service workers at $8 an hour (Boodhoo 2006f; Boodhoo 2006h). The contract also increased hourly wages in each year of the agreement: $0.25 the first year; $0.40 the second year; $0.50 the third and fourth years (BNA 2006b). In addition to the wage increases, the contract introduced a low cost health care plan, to which the employer will pay more than $250 per month per employee, with worker contributions of only $13 per month (Boodhoo 2006b). Finally, the first contract provided at least one week of paid vacation, three paid personal days, and the three additional paid holidays of Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and the day after Thanksgiving each year (Boodhoo 2006h).

In the wake of the workers' victory at UM, the fruits of SEIU's countywide organizing approach began to fall. Just a day after the ratification of the first contract at UM, Florida International University (FIU) announced that it would attempt to provide healthcare coverage to its adjunct faculty, temporary workers and the contract employees whom SEIU was then in the process of organizing (Boodhoo 2006b). FIU, which is a state institution, ultimately brought its 133 janitorial workers back in-house as state employees, agreed to their representation by AFSCME, and announced pay

increases of nearly 50 percent as well as new healthcare access (Boodhoo 2006c). FIU's decision was widely believed to be an attempt to avoid a costly and potentially damaging battle with SEIU in light of the recent events at UM (Boodhoo 2006c). Commenting to *The Miami Herald* on the developments at FIU, Bob Bruno of the University of Illinois observed, "You've now had another increase in labor market representation of union janitors. SEIU knows very well that as the percentage goes up, eventually you have a high enough threshold so that it will really start lifting wages and benefits for everyone" (Boodhoo 2006c). On October 4, 2006, the more than 300 janitorial workers at Nova Southeastern University voted to form a union with SEIU; however, the status of the Nova janitors remains uncertain because the university decided to rebid its facilities management contract in response to the successful organizing drive (Asher 2006c). At Nova, a commuter school whose only tenured faculty are law professors, faculty and student mobilization is comparatively blocked (Smiley 2006). Finally, SEIU recently undertook a campaign to secure union representation for janitors, landscapers and food service employees working on the wealthy enclave of Fisher Island, south of Miami Beach (Brakken 2007; Porter 2007). Part of an emerging pattern of service-sector organizing in and around Miami, such an ambitious drive would have been unthinkable in South Florida in the absence of the organizational capacity building and successful experimentation that the UM campaign pioneered.

Theoretical Perspectives

In my final chapter, I will return to a more detailed discussion of the contribution that my analysis of the campaign may bring to bear on relevant theoretical approaches, but I should say a few words at the outset about which such approaches I will be engaging in particular. To put it rather briefly, I will be applying

a Braudelian approach to structuration supplemented by a Gramscian approach to historical agency and a Heideggerian approach to language. This is an ambitious theoretical combination but one well-suited to an understanding of how new historical blocs might form within the structural conditions of an existing social order and yet exhibit symbolic formations not fully determinable in advance by the extant relations of production.

As earlier discussion has suggested, I structure my argument around Braudel's conception of historical economic relations as characterized by three strata: material civilization, the market economy, and the "anti-market" domain of privileged capitalist actors (1981: 23-24). Duly wary of any merely mechanical application of this tripartite scheme, I use Braudel's layers to demarcate rough levels of interaction and bases for the specific dialectical confrontation that emerges.

My appeal to Gramsci is for a dialectical materialist logic of contestation that can come to terms with the relative inertia implicit in the Braudelian model and get at a better understanding of the role of various forms of agency in the process Braudel calls "destructuration" (1984: 85). With the Gramscian conceptions of the "historical bloc" and (contested) hegemony (1971: 365-66), it becomes possible to imagine not only in what sense different historical eras overlap in their periods of emergence and decline but also in what manner new sets of historical relations are actively *built* within structures they may later supersede.

Finally, I turn to Heidegger for an understanding of the status of emergent symbolic structures vis-à-vis these new phenomena. Heidegger helps here because he advances an historicizing conception of truth as the unconcealment of Being (1977: 173-74) and a non-reductional understanding of the activity of thought as the "bringing to language" of "the unspoken word of Being" (1977: 239). This approach is more helpful than a conception of the relation of truth as mere correspondence or

propositional correctness because it reminds us that the mutual conditioning between the emergence of phenomena and the symbolic formations they come to inhabit opens the production of knowledge to the complementary possibilities of continuous revelation and open symbolic play. As Heidegger puts it, "[e]very sort of thought… is always only the execution and consequence of a mode of historical Dasein, of the fundamental position taken toward Being and toward the way in which beings are manifest as such, i.e., toward truth" (1977: 271). Novel symbolic formations and relationships emerge continuously, and they are not simply distortions, fetishisms or the residues of aberrant historical consciousnesses, as some Marxists might have it; they are phenomena of the first order and telling, in their own terms, about the relations within which humanity faces—and understands—the proposition of its own historical existence.

My choice of theoretical resources is thus a choice to give both historical structural relations and language their due, to analyze what, following Aristotle's outline in the *Metaphysics*, we might provisionally understand as the 'material causes' of historical productive relations and to connect this analysis with an understanding of the 'formal causes' (Aristotle 1958: 113-16) involved in the production and relative autonomy of emergent discursive formations. Marxian literature helps mightily in the former analysis, the Heideggerian perspective in the latter. As a practical political construct, the campaign is thus understood to unfold on a horizon bounded by 'determinism,' on one hand, and 'free will' on another; between the closure implied by the totality of historically embedded structural relations and the dis-closure made possible through the mobilization of signification.

CHAPTER 2

CAPITAL STRATEGY AND THE 'ELITE' PERSPECTIVE

Overview

The University of Miami Justice for Janitors campaign, far from an act of pure spontaneity, was conditioned by strategies pursued by local and national financial and political elites to shape and govern the city as a major outpost of U.S. banking, trade and territorial hegemony in the Caribbean Basin, Central America and South America. The elite actors in question—representing both capital and labor interests—pursued various and often conflicting aims but shared a common concern with the growth of the capacity of this increasingly "global city" to produce the "top-level management and coordination functions and the specialized services needed to run spatially dispersed economic operations" (Sassen and Portes 1993: 471) based in the Caribbean region but involved in worldwide relations of exchange. Operating above both 'material life' and the 'market economy,' these actors occupied what Braudel described as "the zone of the anti-market, where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates" (1982: 230). Here, of course, it is useful to keep in mind that predation can imply only a relative kind of autonomy.

Elite actors aimed to create in Miami a highly rationalized space from which command functions associated with the financial expansion of U.S. capital on an increasingly global basis could be exercised regionally. As Braudel explains it, "[a]t this level one enters a shadowy zone, a twilight area of activities by the initiated which I believe to lie at the very root of what is encompassed by the term capitalism: the latter being an accumulation of power (one that bases exchange on the balance of strength, as much as, or more than on the reciprocity of needs)" (1981: 22). Elite interest in Miami was, thus, directed toward procuring a "clean space" for financial

and other governance operations: toward securing an opening to shelter its local operatives and to advance the influence of its particular calculative and speculative activities, not exclusively locally but over a widely dispersed domain of potential economic and territorial influence.

As we will explore in greater detail in Chapter 3, however, elite demand for new, clean administrative and housing space in the greater Miami-Dade region led to the growth and increasing concentration of a heavily exploited urban service class, largely drawn from first-generation immigrant populations. Exploitation and dispossession of these workers went hand-in-hand with the expansion of neoliberal market relations on a broader and deeper basis. The growth of a new international corporate sector in Miami was accompanied by a decline in Miami's limited manufacturing sector and of local relations within the city's older business sector, including interests controlled by some of the city's Cuban-American bourgeoisie. Poorer residents and newly arrived immigrants to the city were increasingly called upon to offer their services in cleaning and maintaining newly built international office, hotel and condominium spaces just as they themselves were being pushed by the new construction and renovation projects toward habitation in distant exurbs, urban slums and squatter settlements.

This chapter will detail the role of elite actors in conditioning and otherwise preparing the way for the campaign. After describing Miami's history as an increasingly global city immersed in the hegemonic dynamics of trade, finance, governance and defense, I will attempt to explain the relative neutrality of the Cuban-American expatriate bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the campaign, elaborate the opportunities attracting major U.S. labor organizing investment to Miami, and explain the failure of a public servant and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in defending a neo-liberal wage regime there.

The Prehistory[18]

The place that is now Miami has been part of the United States' territorial logic in the Caribbean basin and Latin America only since the middle of the 19th century. Prior to the U.S. capture of Florida from Spain in 1819 following a protracted proxy battle with the Seminole which would erupt again in 1835 and not be concluded until the categorical defeat and exile of the latter by 1842, South Florida had been a part of the Spanish Empire in the Americas. For Imperial Spain, South Florida was "an important military outpost; it was used as part of the strategy to defend the Spanish fleets that carried gold and silver from Mexico to Europe" (Grosfoguel 1995: 158). The remains of the walled city and fortification at St Augustine, about 300 miles north of Miami, provides enduring testimony to Spain's territorial establishment along the Florida coast as early as the beginning of the 16th century (Id.). By the middle of the 19th century, when South Florida came under formal U.S. control, the region was "largely an unpopulated territory with several military outposts, including Fort Meyers, Fort Lauderdale, and Fort Dallas (now Miami)," with an interior in which a few Native American groups that had survived the Second Seminole War, as prosecuted from Fort Dallas, still dwelt (Id.).

The territorial significance of Fort Dallas/Miami persisted well after the formal foundation of the City of Miami in 1896, by which time the place could be reached by Henry Flagler's rail, drained of residual swamp water, and opened up as "a tourist resort for wealthy families from the north-east" (Grosfoguel 1995: 159). "Camp

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[18] I begin with 'prehistory' to situate the campaign in the overall world-historical dynamic that made it possible for anything like a Justice for Janitors campaign to arise at anything like the University of Miami at all. The discussion that follows is, in many ways, a vast 'zoom' into the relations that will concern us most in the paper. As a 'setting of the stage,' its significance is less specifically analytic than environing and contextualizing.

Miami" would provide a base for U.S. operations during the Spanish-American war in 1898 (Id.), and military operations based in Miami would be involved in several subsequent invasions or occupations of Caribbean states until the advent of Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" in 1933, renouncing U.S. aspirations to the direct military domination of Latin America (Keylor 2003). With specific interest for our purposes, the U.S. would occupy Cuba from 1898 through 1902 and from 1906 through 1909, with subsequent invasions in 1912 and 1917; Nicaragua from 1912 through 1924 and from 1927 through 1933; and Honduras from 1912 through 1919 and 1924 through 1925 (Keylor 2003: 270). Miami would also play a role in the Army air and Naval defense of the U.S. during World War II, with the Army Air Corps basing itself in (the tourist hotels of) Miami Beach beginning in 1942 and the Navy using the port as a base of surveillance for German U-boats in the Caribbean (Grosfoguel 1995: 159).

With the conclusion of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, Miami "continued to play a central role in the operations of intelligence agencies in the Southern Hemisphere" (Grosfoguel 1995: 159). Following the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the counter-revolutionary activities of Cuban-American exiles who had fled to Miami and the intelligence activities of the United States vis-à-vis the southern portion of the Western Hemisphere began to converge there. During the early 1960s, as Grosfoguel points out, the University of Miami housed "the largest CIA station in the world," second only to the headquarters in Langley (Id. 159). During this period, through an alliance established between the CIA, the displaced Cuban Mafia, and other Cuban expatriates, numerous Cuban-owned businesses came to serve as fronts for CIA operations in the region; the result was a Federal subsidy of millions of dollars to Cuban-American business owners, the city's debut as "the undisputed 'drug capital' of the world," and the consolidation of this strategic outpost as "the centre for the

control and co-ordination of CIA operations in Central America and the Caribbean during the 1970s and 1980s" (Id. 159). In the early 1960s, the CIA was one of the largest employers in the State of Florida, with around 12,000 Cuban-Americans employed in Miami (Id.). Altogether, by Grosfoguel's estimate, the CIA's Cold War-era expenditures among Miami's Cuban-American community totaled $250 million (Id. 161).

The United States' strategic investment in territorialist activities based in Miami continued through the major portion of the 1980s. Much as CIA investment in the Cuban-American community had impacted local economic and social relations in the city during the prior two decades, the United States' interventions in the Nicaraguan Contra war and the civil war in El Salvador "pumped Miami with millions of dollars once again" (Grosfoguel 1995: 159), this time to the advantage of a smaller cohort of certain militant expatriates of the socialist Sandinista regime that had come to power in Nicaragua in 1979. The Nicaraguan "Contras," the U.S.-supported resistance to the Sandinista regime, "not only received millions of dollars a year from the U.S. government but also raised a fortune through drug smuggling, which was laundered through a dozen or so companies in Miami" (Id. 159), with little more than a wink from the United States at the time. Much like the broader cohort of Cuban-Americans who had benefited from Federal spending during the 60s and 70s, a handful of Nicaraguan expatriates enjoyed Federal subsidies and favoritism within a loosely governed system of corrupt relations conducive to intelligence gathering, the strengthening of regional hegemony, and drug trafficking. To get at some measure of the magnitude of the latter by this point, Grosfoguel reports a Federal estimate from the early 1980s that "around 28 billion dollars' worth of illegal drugs" entered the United States through Miami every year (Id. 159). "Violence in Miami," observes Ann Louise Bardach, "reached peak levels during the Reagan-Bush years, 1981-1989,

when the Contra war in Nicaragua was being waged," leading the FBI to denominate Miami the "murder capital of America" in 1985, due in rather equal measure to drug trafficking and exile violence (2002: 116).

In addition to serving the military and intelligence interests of the United States during the Cold War, the special status accorded to expatriate groups in Miami such as the Cubans and Nicaraguans provided the U.S. with symbolic and discursive power in its protracted struggle with the Soviet Union. Grosfoguel describes this move as the production of a kind of "symbolic capital" that can be "exercised vis-à-vis the development model of another core state or of a challenging peripheral state, for example, by the 'showcasing' or presentation of a city or an ethnic group within a city as 'successful stories' to ideologically 'conquer the minds' of other people within a peripheral region" (1995: 157). As Grosfoguel elaborates, following the Cuban revolution, the U.S. sought "a 'successful capitalist model' to gain symbolic capital vis-à-vis the Soviet model exemplified by Cuba" (1995: 160). The tens of thousands of Cuban political and economic elites who fled to Miami from revolutionary Cuba, as "refugees escaping communism," became powerful ideological symbols in the play of the Cold War (Id. 160). "In order to have an effect on the Cubans that remained on the island as well as on the entire Caribbean region," observes Grosfoguel, "the US state developed specific policies to make [the Cuban-Americans] a 'success story,'" including the creation of a Cuban refugee program "to facilitate the successful incorporation of the Cuban elites into the receiving society" (Id. 160). Altogether during the 1960s and early 1970s, the U.S. invested approximately $1 billion directly in education, bilingual programs, food and health care subsidies and employment programs targeting a population of less than 600,000 Cuban-Americans residing in the Miami metropolitan region at the time (Id.). In addition, Cuban-American businesses in Miami received about 46.9 percent of all loans issued by the Small Business

Administration (SBA) in Miami from 1968 through 1979, totaling $47.6 million (Id. 160-61). In play as signifiers of the promise of U.S.-led capitalism in Latin America since the early 1960s, the symbolic status of groups such as the Cubans and Nicaraguans would thus arise in 2006 in the obverse, in evidence that the assumed 'symbolic capital' of the 'success story' was, indeed, a two-sided coin.

The territorialist and symbolic logics informing Miami's historical development throughout the 20th century are thus indispensible to an explanation of its emergence as a 'global city' with significant economic power by the early 21st. As Grosfoguel summarizes the dynamic, "[i]t is the US core state's symbolic and military strategies during the first Cold War challenge of US domination in the Caribbean that provides the historical background for the emergence of Miami as a world city in the late 1970s and early 1980s" (Id. 161). This is so because "strategic cities provide better political, social and infrastructural conditions for the control and management of global capital" (Id. 161). In the words of Braudel, "[t]he great cities created, let us repeat, the modern state, as much as they were created by it. National markets expanded under their impetus as did the nations themselves and they lay at the heart of capitalism and modern civilization… For the historian they are primarily an excellent yardstick of development in Europe and the other continents. Interpreted properly, their study leads to a general and unusually comprehensive view of the whole history of material life" (1981: 556). A striking example in the case of Miami is the use, after 1975, of infrastructure built to serve the military and intelligence interests of the United States to advance the profit-making objectives of individual corporations and banks relocating to the area. The CIA invested millions of dollars in Miami after 1959 in the state-making objective of "improving infrastructural communications and the social networks of Miami with the Caribbean Basin" (Grosfoguel 1995: 167), but beyond the immediate interest in promoting U.S. territorial hegemony during the Cold

War standoff with soviet Cuba, this State spending had the ultimate effect of opening and facilitating a new regional market for U.S. capital in the Caribbean. "The transnational headquarters and international banking that proliferated in Miami after 1975 took advantage of these facilities for their own operations," in a sense appropriating "a whole infrastructure built originally for purposes different to those for which they are currently used" (Id. 167).

The (Profuse) Global City

There is a growing consensus in academic literature that Miami has acceded to the status of a 'global city' with highly concentrated financial, managerial, trade, service and media sectors (Sassen and Portes 1993; Grosfoguel 1995; Nissen and Russo 2007). Sassen and Portes explain that "Miami now has the fourth largest concentration of foreign bank offices in the United States, right behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago" (1993: 471). Nissen and Russo observe that Miami is known as the "gateway to Latin America," whose "banking investment and trade ties with Latin America and the Caribbean are the strongest of any U.S. city" (2007: 147). Grosfoguel, for his part, notes that Miami's trade with Latin America and the Caribbean "is of such a magnitude that in 1992 the US Custom Service moved the Andean/Caribbean help desk from Washington DC to Miami" (1995: 163-64). By 1982, the Port of Miami enjoyed the largest Caribbean and Latin American market share among all ports in the U.S., far outstripping the Port of New Orleans, which had historically dominated U.S. trade in the Caribbean Basin (Id.). As Sassen and Portes endeavor to explain this massive phenomenal pattern, "[t]he development of global city functions in Miami seems to derive from the recent sharp growth in the absolute levels of international investment in Latin America, the growing complexity of the

transactions involved, and the trend for firms all over the world to operate globally" (1993: 476).

And yet, more is at play historically and contextually in the rise of Miami's prominence than a merely synchronic tendency toward the concentration of capital. World-historical consideration of the phenomenon over a longer temporal horizon would tend to suggest that diachronic processes also part of the picture. To get at the world-historical meaning of Miami's apparently meteoric rise to 'global city' status after the early 1970s, some reflection on the conjuncture thus seems appropriate. It is necessary to situate the concept of the 'global city' in a frame of reference that considers the larger processes of world-systemic structuration and destructuration of which it is a part. Sassen posited the growth in demand for the 'functions' performed by 'global cities'—as concentration points for economic command activities, finance and specialized services, innovative production, and consumption activities—to flow from generalized processes of "spatial dispersal and global integration" ongoing at the beginning of the century (2001: 3). Such processes, however, were part of a specific—and limited—historical dynamic, not a generalized tendency toward regional aggregation. In the 'ground rules' for his typology of world economies, Braudel observed that "[t]here is no such thing as a world-economy without its own area." On the contrary, a world-economy is spatially limited and "invariably has a centre, with a city and an already-dominant type of capitalism, whatever form this takes." "A profusion of such centres," Braudel went on to say, "represents either immaturity or on the contrary some kind of decline or mutation. In the face of pressures both internal and external, there may be shifts of the centre of gravity: cities with international destinies—world cities—are in perpetual rivalry with one another and may take each other's place" (1984: 25-26).

Braudel's observation that a profusion of world city centers signals systemic immaturity and/or decline may be useful in understanding how Miami's rise to regional predominance relates to the financial expansion of U.S.-based capitalism from 1973 through 2008 (cf. Arrighi 1994) and the current moment of significant word-historical indeterminacy. As Grosfoguel suggests, the emergence and unprecedented growth, after 1973, of new global cities such as Miami can be explained as a consequence of the global capitalist restructuring necessitated by the (signal) crisis of profitability of the post-war regime of accumulation led by the United States (Grosfoguel 1995; Arrighi 1994). From this perspective, the oil crisis of 1973, the end of the gold standard, the massive inflation of the early 1970s and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreements were part of a larger crisis of profitability in the core economies of the postwar West. Surplus capital in search of sustained profitable investment opportunities began to exit these core economies, in which marginal revenue product was declining, to avail itself of the lower factor costs available in peripheral and semi-peripheral regions (Grosfoguel 1995). Likewise, financial institutions in more peripheral and regional areas began to experience higher rates of return on assets than banks in major urban centers (Id.). In a strategic move to cope with these conditions, both transnational producers and international banks began pursuing a kind of decentralization, "paying more attention to regional and peripheral processes," and opening "regional headquarters in strategic cities around the world" (Id. 162). As increasingly internationally mobile finance capital intensified its investments in more profitable regions such as the Caribbean Basin and Central America, where labor and raw material costs were relatively low, there arose commensurate surveillance needs for "closer and more direct supervision" over such new investments in productive capital (Id. 162).

Thus, in and through its own financial expansion, the post-war U.S. regime of accumulation—indisputably centered in New York— began a process of regional devolution or diffusion (cf. Allen and Brickman 1977; 1979). "New York, where many multinational global headquarters concentrate, became a weaker location for close management of Caribbean investments" than regional cities such as Miami and San Juan (Grosfoguel 1995: 162). As Grosfoguel explains, "[t]he transformations in Miami form part of a single process of capital restructuring in the entire Caribbean city system that transformed the regional division of labour." By this account of the center-periphery dynamics of the long twentieth century, "[b]efore 1973, most of the Caribbean islands were agrarian or mining enclaves exporting primary products to the core economies" (Id. 162). Following the capitalist restructuring after 1973, the shift in the international division of labor precipitated a state of affairs in which "Caribbean countries are now exporters of manufactured consumer goods" (Id. 162). Miami is "an example of a recently formed world city" constituted to cope with these changing conditions of international political economy on a regional basis. Now arguably worthy of the title 'capital of the Caribbean,' Miami effectively exercises "functions of control and management of global capital for the entire Caribbean Basin" (Id. 162). Concrete evidence of such control and management might be observed in the institutional formation of the Miami Free Trade Zone (FTZ), physically located near the Miami International Airport (Id.). Now the largest FTZ in the United States, the Miami FTZ hosts several hundred export/import companies that enjoy custom tariff exemptions from their storage, manufacture, assembly or re-export of goods from abroad (Id.). As Grosfoguel explains, the FTZ "has provided international banking and transnational headquarters with an attractive institutional environment for trade and capital investment in the Caribbean Basin" (Id. 167).

The consequences of the 'global city' phenomenon in Miami of greatest interest for our purposes are the increasing demand for office space in the metropolitan area since the 1980s and a related growing "geography of inequality" (Sassen and Portes 1993: 475) impacting the region and its people. As Sassen and Portes explain, the sectors key to the emergence of Miami as a 'global city' were producer service industries (including banking, business services, engineering, accounting and legal services), on one hand, and the industrial and transportation services provided by Miami's busy ports and airports, on another (1993: 474-75). Growth in (demand for space by) the producer and transportation service sectors throughout the 1980s meant that, by the end of the decade, *Markettrends* could report that "Miami was in the top fifteen U.S. metropolitan areas in the supply of prime rental office space," with a breathtaking 44 million square feet of such space (Sassen and Portes 1993: 475). Not necessarily confined to the old business district of the City of Miami, growth of 'global city' functions in greater Miami was "physically embodied in a new financial district (south of the old central business district) housing the international offices of a number of U.S. and foreign banks and in the Latin American headquarters of many national and foreign corporations that are in Coral Gables" (Id. 475), where the campus of the University of Miami is located. Here, in any case, was an explosion of new office space, and a commensurate explosion in demand for its cleaning and maintenance.

The same conditions that facilitated the growth of the new and increasingly international corporate sector in Miami also worked to the disadvantage of much of the city's older business community, led to a weakening of lower-income communities, and strengthened existing patterns of inequality in employment (Sassen and Portes 1993). The older business sector in Miami, "largely dominated by commercial banks, savings and loan associations, and certain branches of the real

estate and insurance industries" experienced a decline during this period, as did manufacturing for the domestic market, outstripped by competition from the new growth sectors and a new export-oriented manufacturing sector, respectively (Id. 475). Meanwhile, "high-income residential and commercial gentrification" precipitated decay in lower-income communities as a rise of the cost of living in the metropolitan region as a whole was not sufficiently offset by rising wages (Id. 475). After the recession in the U.S. following the terrorist attacks of 2001, this pattern of gentrification and mounting inequality proceeded well into the middle of the current decade. In the two-year period between 2004 and 2006, for instance, approaching the pinnacle of the fateful U.S. "housing bubble," the average cost per square foot for new condominium space in Miami-Dade County as a whole increased fully 35 percent— from $100 to $135— while average unit square footage *decreased* nearly 18 percent— from 2,529 feet to 2,075 feet (IADC 2007). In the same period, Miami-Dade County saw a rise in median household income of only 11 percent, from $37,025 to $41,237 per year (U.S. Census Bureau). In the labor market itself, the significant occupational inequality that had long characterized the "rather clear cut racial and ethnic order" of the city was only exacerbated by the influx of new national and foreign firms that simply reconstituted the city's 'white' elite (Sassen and Portes 1993: 476). Non-Hispanic whites continue to dominate the leading industries and to populate the top of the occupational structure, with Latino/a and African-American workers largely constituting Miami's unskilled service workforce (Id.).

The Cuban-American Elite

A decisive strategic and conditioning factor of the campaign was the strength and disposition of Miami's powerful Cuban-American community, which dominates the politics of the city and continues to play a major role in local market relations.

Because Cuban-American support—or at least tolerance—for the campaign was a decisive precondition for its even limited survival in the political arena of Miami, the campaign's strategic and tactical repertoires walked a kind of tightrope between the predominantly politically conservative Cuban-American community's approach to economic and discursive articulation in the city and an aspiration toward a vocal politics of worker democracy.

The Cuban-American community,[19] massively influential in the rise of Miami as a 'global city' and destination for international finance capital in the Caribbean Basin, enjoys a leading role in the political and economic life of the city. "Cubans," as Sassen and Portes explain, "were Miami's comparative advantage in the interurban competition for international business" (1993: 476) that led to the city's rise in significance. As Grosfoguel elaborates, "what has transformed Miami" into a world city is "not just the presence of the Spanish-speaking community," but the specific presence, facilitated and assisted by the United States, of "an economically successful Cuban community" (1995: 165). This is because, to overstate the situation only slightly, "the Cuban revolution uprooted and transplanted to Miami an entire national bourgeoisie" (Id. 165).[20] Cuban-American émigrés represented a "large pool of

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[19] By 'Cuban-American community,' I do not mean to suggest a social monolith. Miami's large population of Cuban-Americans is far from homogeneous, possessing indefinite boundaries and containing significant elements of difference and dissent. What I am suggesting is that the politically conservative climate known to prevail among Miami's Cuban-American elite circles was a significant factor informing the strategic play of the campaign.

[20] This is not, of course, to suggest that *all* Cuban-Americans in Miami today are affluent. Cuban émigrés to Miami since the Mariel Boatlift in 1980 have typically been significantly less advantaged financially than those who first fled to the city immediately after the revolution in 1959. The larger socio-cultural point, however, is that, above and beyond the relatively wealthy families from Cuba who first fled to Miami during the Revolution, Miami has become the home of an émigré population that was actively shaped—'negatively' by the experience of the Cuban Revolution and 'positively' by the interventions of the United States—as an exile 'bourgeoisie.'

educated and fluent bilingual labor" that proved especially attractive to international corporations doing business in Latin America (Sassen and Portes 1993: 472). In addition, the Cuban-American migration "not only relocated some of Cuba's established networks with the Caribbean and Latin America, but also created new ones," specifically among the import/export businesses (the number of which tripled in Miami to over 300 between 1970 and 1980), in the sale of consumer goods, and in regional banking (Grosfoguel 1995: 165). Largely converging and remaining in the Miami metropolitan area rather than dispersing nationally, moreover, Cuban-Americans—numbering 767,349 or about 32 percent of the Miami-Dade County population in 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau)—have used their "economic power and geographical concentration to gain control of local politics," holding a preponderance of local mayoralties and state, local and federal representative positions in the region as early as the early 1990s (Sassen and Portes 1993).

Miami's Cuban-American bourgeoisie, an established business elite, experienced the rise of new forms of international economic activity in Miami as a mixed blessing, however. As Sassen and Portes explain, "the particular forms of economic globalization over the last decade have encouraged growth in Miami that is distinct from that in the [Cuban] enclave, though benefiting from it" (1993: 476). Cubans émigrés who arrived in Miami in the 1960s and 1970s are typically quite well off and "make up the bulk of Hispanic entrepreneurs as well as politicians," but the economic shift toward international trade and finance in the city "brought with it a corporate elite of firms that operate on vast, worldwide scale," representing "a concentration of power that no local elite can compete with" (Id. 476). Cuban-American elites continue to be disadvantaged, moreover, by a residual ethnocentric hierarchy in Miami still controlled by an Anglo-Saxon elite. "There is clear evidence of a 'glass ceiling' for Cubans in the non-Cuban corporate sector" in the Miami, a

sector whose importance has increased considerably in the past three decades. Indeed, "[t]he influx of new national and foreign firms has reconstituted the 'white' elite and thereby probably reinforced the glass ceiling" weighing on Cuban-American ascendance (Id. 476). "The remaining whites" in Miami, as Sassen and Portes explain, "enjoy the highest average occupational and income levels and continue to vie with Cuban-Americans for political control" in the city (Id. 476), despite their minority status.

Thus aspiring to (the maintenance of) political hegemony in the city, Miami's Cuban-American elites have increasingly relied upon the consent of a broad cross-section of the city's population, including poorer recent immigrants from Cuba and other Latin American countries whose livelihood in the city was tied to Miami's large unskilled service sector. Poorer individuals from Cuba have, of course, been emigrating to Miami since before the Cuban revolution in 1959, but in the overall historical pattern, it was the fugitive Cuban elite that settled massively in Miami first, followed by 'political refugees' of the Castro regime and then by 'economic refugees' seeking work and better life conditions in Miami (Bardach 2002). The most significant single such latter migration occurred in 1980 when 125,000 poorer Cuban refugees—about 10 percent of whom had been released for the occasion from prisons or insane asylums—came ashore in Miami in the course of the Mariel Boat Lift (Bardach 2002). Betweeen the *batistianos*—partisans of the deposed Fulgencio Batista who began arriving in Miami in the beginning of January 1959—and the *marielitos*—refugees from Cuba who made it to Miami on the Mariel Boat Lift in 1980—was a wide gulf of socioeconomic and life-experiential difference. More encompassing leadership strategies were required to bridge this gulf, and so, by the time of the janitors' campaign in Miami in the spring of 2006, for instance, Miami-Dade County's politically-conservative Cuban-led government had *already* passed a

"living wage" ordinance applying to all employees of the County and its contractors (Albright 2008). Immediately following the success of the janitors' campaign at UM, moreover, the City of Miami passed its own such ordinance along with a resolution supporting the Federal "Employee Free Choice Act," which would make it easier for labor unions to organize workers through card-check recognition campaigns (Brakken 2007). Far from reflecting a domineering business elitism, the approach of Miami's Cuban-American governing elite was tending in a distinctly moderate and hegemonic direction.

Despite the overall ambivalence of Cuban-American elites toward the general proposition of union organizing in Miami by 2006, Cuban-American politics certainly channeled and constrained the tenor of the campaign. Thus, for instance, the janitors' campaign sought out support from the Cuban-American community by orchestrating ads on Radio Mambí (Brakken 2007), the number one partisan radio station in Miami among Cuban-American exiles and the brainchild of Armando Pérez-Roura, who worked for Battista in the 1950s as Cuba's official radio announcer and then switched sides to work for the Castro regime until 1968, when he fled to Miami and switched sides again (Bardach 2002). The campaign used its Radio Mambí spots ostensibly to request the support of Republican political candidates for local office (Brakken 2007). The campaign also studiously avoided the impropriety of appearing "Democratic," in the sense of the Democratic Party of the United States. Cuban-American relations with the latter have been strained roughly since the Kennedy Administration's refusal of air support in the Cuban exile community's botched Bay of Pigs invasion that sought to overthrow the Castro regime in 1961 (Bardach 2002). Even today, among the roughly 800,000 Cuban-Americans living in Miami, about 85 percent are registered Republicans, with only about 5 percent registered as Democrats (Id. 308). It is in this partisan context alone that it is possible to understand how meaning

emerged in the political discourse of the campaign. As Feliciano Hernandez, a Cuban-American maintenance worker, veteran organizer and now union 'shop steward,' cleverly explained the content of the struggle he had pursued and still led: "No es Democrata. Es Democracia [It's not Democratic. It's Democracy]" (Hernandez 2007). 'Democratic' was not merely a less exalted state than 'Democracy' itself; it was also still a very inconvenient thing to be in Miami in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

A second set of elite interests involved in intentionally structuring, sustaining and setting the campaign in motion was represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which presently claims 2 million members throughout the United States, working in the property services, public service and healthcare sectors. While the treatment of a U.S. labor union as an 'elite' actor may seem paradoxical or even ideologically right-wing to some seminarians and partisans, it does reflect a reasonable assessment of the levels of organizing investment and intelligent manipulation of which SEIU had necessarily become capable by the time of the Justice for Janitors campaign at the University of Miami. Attention to the union *qua* elite actor, moreover, helps us—dialectically—distinguish the labor union from the community of workers it successfully organized and the union's strategic planning from the real unfolding of the campaign. Explicitly registering the elite nature of the union's influence, in other words, enables a more complete understanding of the logic of its "vanguard" role. As we shall see, SEIU's coordinated campaign relied upon high levels of geographic, market and social intelligence to produce well-planned strategic campaign effects.

The University of Miami Justice for Janitors campaign fit into SEIU's overall geographic and market strategy of rebuilding the ranks of the waning U.S. labor movement by organizing workers outside the traditional core of U.S. industrial capitalism in the growing regional cities of the U.S. South and Southwest. Building upon its first massive victories organizing Latino/a janitors in Los Angeles beginning in the 1990s (Milkman 2006) and its success in 2005 in organizing thousands of janitors cleaning new office space in Houston, SEIU redoubled its efforts to organize workers in such southern and southwestern cities as Miami and San Antonio (Cunningham 2006). In this sense, SEIU's overall strategic logic was not distinctly different from that which gave rise to the movement of labor and capital to these emergent cities in the first instance (as narrated in the discussion of Miami's rise as a 'global city' location, *supra*). As SEIU organizer Erik Brakken explained the basis of SEIU's interest in Miami: "[SEIU President] Andy Stern has been talking about South Florida for some time… Miami is an international city and a major player in the FIRE [finance, insurance and real estate] sector, connecting the U.S. and Latin America" (Brakken 2007). SEIU was 'following the money,' pursuing opportunities for expansion by actively leveraging resources amassed from prior productive engagement. The dues—and even pension funds—of established local unions in the Northeast and upper Midwest that had fairly saturated or exhausted their own regional markets[21] were being invested and deployed strategically in campaigns, coordinated

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[21] One of these established locals that contributed a great deal to the Miami campaign was SEIU Local 32BJ, which is based in southern Manhattan and represents more than 100,000 janitors, mainly in and about the New York metropolitan area. As Reverend C.J. Hawking, of the Interfaith Worker Justice organization that collaborates closely with SEIU, explained, "Local 32BJ was the parent financing the campaign. I was really taken with the fact that a union in New York, rather than sitting on its treasury, sends workers out to organize workers in another city. It's very powerful when this happens… 32BJ provided a lot of really incredible people. This is one of the brightest groups of people I've ever worked with" (Hawking 2007).

by the international union in Washington (Savage 2006), toward the aggressive pursuit of attractive new organizing targets in the emerging urban regions. To orchestrate such broad strategic maneuvers, SEIU relied upon detailed market intelligence provided by a large staff of professional in-house researchers (Albright 2008), who provided geographically-specific data describing, on one hand, the broad urban markets for office space, and on another, the specific relationships between building owners, managers and maintenance vendors that might be exploited in campaigns aiming for market capture.

The campaign, moreover, was guided by a well-informed social organizing logic. SEIU's huge deployment of research and bargaining staff led to the realization of what its press releases announced as a "growing coalition of community leaders" supporting its organizing efforts at UM (Asher 2006b). It has been remarked that the Justice for Janitors campaign model, beginning with its earliest successes in Los Angeles in the early 1990s, "exposes the importance of unions building coalitions— with politicians, religious and community organizations, and with other unions—as well as the value of careful analysis of legal, industrial and political conditions on the part of union organizers" (Erickson et al. 2002: 544). The janitors' campaign at UM was, indeed attuned to the importance of "appealing to the wider public for support" (Id. 544), from building up powerful student and faculty allies to mobilizing the support of local clergy and cultivating public opinion through media spots. As Stephen Lerner, director of SEIU's building services division and the innovator of the Justice for Janitors model, described the organizing approach when SEIU began its work in south Florida among condo workers in February 2005: "We are building on our experience that there are multiple things that you have to do simultaneously to win" (BNA 2005). This was an organizing logic with a specific aim of political power-building.

Thus, SEIU invested enormous resources in the Miami campaign's mobilization effort, which was centrally coordinated from SEIU international headquarters on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, with information provided by researchers and organizers on the ground in Miami (Amernick 2006).[22] This was an extraordinarily sophisticated and well-funded operation. In all, SEIU Local 11, which had no membership until the fall of 2006, spent more than $5.85 million in subsidies and strike funds provided by the international union during 2005 and 2006 (U.S. Department of Labor 2005, 2006). As Richard Ocampo (2006), a colleague who was an organizer for Local 11 throughout the campaign, recalls, "Half of the 'local' staff when I was there was from the international." This was a peculiar, albeit highly instrumental, way to pursue a "grassroots" organizing campaign (Cf. Savage 2006). In addition to representing part of SEIU's larger strategy of organizing in the South and Southwest, moreover, the campaign in Miami also conveniently overlapped with a period of national agreement negotiations with UM's cleaning contractor UNICCO, which provides cleaning services throughout the U.S. As the campaign at UM became more intense, it ultimately offered SEIU a significant lever in these national negotiations with the corporation (Amernick 2006).

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[22] During the height of the campaign in March and April of 2006, I overheard a variety of conversations about the University of Miami janitors' campaign while working as a researcher for SEIU local 1199—a large healthcare workers' local union based on the west side of Manhattan—on the research floor of SEIU International Headquarters in Washington, where my office was housed. None of my work involved the janitors' campaign at UM or even janitors, but ignoring news from the campaign would have been impossible. Significant portions of the international research staff, an entire large office floor of young analysts, were conducting research and sharing "real-time" information—as they were fond of thinking about it—concerning the progress of the campaign. On a number of occasions I overheard the name of my former law professor Michael Fischl, in addition to the names of Feliciano and Clara, two of the striking janitors I would later come to recognize as key leaders of the workers' struggle.

University of Miami President Donna Shalala

A final specific elite actor who influenced the emergence and outcome of the janitors' campaign at the University of Miami was Donna Shalala, President of the University of Miami since 2001 and the former Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during the eight years of the Clinton Administration. Shalala, who had been a strong "public advocate of universal healthcare coverage" during her tenure at HHS (Bierman 2005), was initially identified by SEIU as a potential ally in the organizing campaign (Amernick 2006). "Given who the president of the university is," observed SEIU Executive Vice President Eliseo Medina, "we actually expected this to go rather smoothly" (Meyerson 2006). SEIU expected that Shalala, a lifelong Democrat who presided over a university that had recently raised $1 billion in a single annual capital campaign and where tuition was $29,000 a year, would likely see the good sense in allowing UM's lowest-paid workers to form a labor union (Bierman 2005). That expectation would be disappointed.

Instead, Shalala consistently opposed the campaign while maintaining an official position of 'neutrality' (Bierman 2005), insisting—in neoliberal fashion—that the janitors were already enjoying 'market-based pay' (Fischl 2007: 534), supporting an opposition campaign led by the University's cleaning contractor, UNICCO (Boodhoo and Bierman 2006), and—probably illegally—orchestrating a pay raise for the workers in the middle of their union recognition drive (Albright 2008). Throughout the campaign, Shalala coupled her "market-based pay" message—which, describing the average UM janitor's wage of $7.53 an hour (Bierman 2005), was technically, if sadly, accurate in Miami—with an insistence upon patience. "We have to let this union process run its course," Shalala would say (Bierman 2005), while the specific dynamic of that 'course' would be marked by the university's obstruction and

refusal to deal with the union (Meyerson 2006). Market rational to the core, Shalala's was a position of *laissez faire* but not of *laissez aller*.

The full course of Shalala's actions throughout the campaign, however, was ultimately characterized by a comic show of tragic hubris that usefully illustrates the historical salience of elite mistakes. For on February 12, 2006, Shalala and her dog Sweetie appeared fatefully in a glossy photographic edition of *The New York Times Magazine* alongside a questionnaire piece entitled "An Academic Retreat" (Lewine). The piece, describing Shalala's 9,000 square foot presidential residence off the campus of the University of Miami in Coral Gables, her Lexis hybrid SUV, Sweetie's four beds, her 29-foot motorboat, her fondness for vacationing in the kingdom of Bhutan, her "1790 French country cabinet from the estate of the late *Washington Post* columnist Meg Greenfield," and a number of other 'lifestyle' details (Id.), was intended for a fairly limited readership in New York, Washington and a few other places in the U.S. where blue wrappers can be found on doorsteps in the morning. Perhaps Shalala had underestimated her adversary in SEIU, but in the context of the escalating organizing campaign, she had made available a few too many sharp details.

The effect of the piece on the campaign, as will be revealed in more depth through Chapter 3, was to furnish concrete detail for discursive deployment in demonstration of the conflict's underlying dialectical tension. As Democracy Now! would sum up the piece's ultimate impact with dependable tact, "Shalala is now being criticized for living a life of luxury while the school's janitorial staff is living on about $50 a day" (2006). Probably the most politically incendiary of the interview's revelations, in any case, was Shalala's answer to a question about the household chore about which she is least fastidious: "Making my bed. Fortunately, someone comes around and makes it for me" (Lewine 2006). As journalist and blogger Barbara Ehrenreich, who visited workers on hunger strike near the end of the campaign, would

later ask in provocative response, "*Someone*, Donna?" Through Shalala's misguided efforts to communicate her standing to other elites, she had inadvertently poured fuel on the fire of the public relations campaign against her own neoliberal managerial agenda. It was as if someone had answered a Voltairean prayer by the workers to "make my enemies ridiculous" (Arouet 1767).

CHAPTER 3

MATERIAL LIFE REIMAGINED

Overview

In antithetical contradiction to the pursuit of clean and homogeneous space for regional operations and habitation in Miami by international capitalist interests was the reality of life in Miami's neighborhoods. Here, removed from the chilly abstraction of the offices, hotels and condominiums of Downtown Miami, Coral Way and Coral Gables was material life, with its humbly reiterated regularities, visceral exposure to 'natural' determinants and inevitable specificities. If the logic of Chapter 2 was about the ruling abstractions of elite actors, this chapter addresses the descriptive and explanatory inadequacy of such abstractions at the level of the concrete particularities of everyday life, as the campaign came to reconstitute them discursively. Here, assumptions of abstract identity gave way to the irreducible specificities of concrete phenomena, the elite reification of the 'market wage' to a demand for the recognition of 'worker dignity' and the privilege of historical experience.

Braudel, who maintained a rather more static view of material life in his narrative of capitalist development from the 15th through the 18th centuries,[23]

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[23] Braudel's overall tendency is to depict material life as relatively inert, at least in the period from the 15th through the 18th centuries with which his economic history of capitalist civilization chiefly concerns itself. As Braudel explains it, "[t]he event is, or is taken to be, unique; the everyday happening is repeated, and the more often it is repeated the more likely it is to become a generality or rather a structure. It pervades society at all levels and is characteristic of ways of being and behaving which are perpetuated through the endless ages" (1981: 29). This is, at least, what Braudel tells us explicitly. By showing, however, through his own construction of economic history, how these primary and most material economic relationships are carefully constituted and enshrined discursively in the first instance at levels of extreme specificity, Braudel's work on material life implies not only a strong

described this layer of social activity as an "infra-economy, the informal other half of economic activity, the world of self-sufficiency and barter of goods and services within a very small radius" (1981: 24). This zone—as both a narrowly 'physical' place and a sphere of social relations—was not, of course, walled off from the market economy or entirely autonomous of the influences of capitalism; it could hardly be in dialectical relationship with 'capitalism' if it were. Rather, the specificity and indeterminacy of the relations of material life made capitalist access and market rationalization elusive and typically not very profitable. Material life had to be inhabited and dwelt in for productive use, with careful attention to historical regularities, relationships and temporalities too particularized for final comprehension by a universal discourse of supply and demand oriented toward the maximization of profits. Both living in and imagining material life required, in other words, a great deal of work.

The relative autonomy and specific identity of material life in Miami, however, entailed a productive relational role as an actual or potential place for the absorption of capitalism's externalities, as, for instance, via the overt dumping of physical wastes, the amassing of reserve pools of unemployed deskilled workers, or the subsidization of prevailing local wages by uncompensated domestic labor. Even here, however, capitalism's limited presence in material life was characterized by a kind of constitutive absence or indefinite deferral. For if the logic of capitalism were really to

(synchronic) inertia over the *longue durée* at this level, but also a weak (diachronic) possibility of sudden transformation or rupture. Thus, for instance, Braudel gives the stiking example of "a drawing which shows Maximilian of Austria at table, in about 1513: he is putting his hand into a dish. Two centuries or so later, the Princess Palatine tells how Louis XIV, when he allowed his children to sit up to table for the first time, forbade them to eat differently from him, and in particular to eat with a fork as an overzealous tutor had taught them" (Id.). Braudel's point is to emphasize the weight of these enduring continuities, but in counterpoint, he nonetheless provocatively asks: "So when did Europe invent table manners?" (Id.).

come to inhabit—rather than merely subsist from—these indissolubly specific relations, its own essential identity would ultimately be compromised by burdens of care. Material life in Miami was, in this way, removed from the capitalist logic and process of relentless accumulation while simultaneously "drawn into its operations" (Braudel 1981: 562) relationally and impacted by capitalism on an ever-increasing basis.

We will approach a discussion of the contribution of material life to the play of the campaign through an examination of a number of the lived 'structures' within and around which the campaign laid the concrete groundwork for its success, building up its challenge to the university's neoliberal managerial agenda through a superior basis within—and capacity to inhabit—a strategic ground of irreducible specificity. The point here is to show, in contradistinction to the more static overall picture of early material life that Braudel gives in *Civilization and Capitalism*,[24] how contemporary material life may have been progressively volatilized through increasing encroachment by and exposure to externalities from contemporary capitalism, which disembeds the organic relations of the former and unveils new possibilities for language.[25] Aiming to

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[24] I am, thus, making the self-conscious choice to relax Braudel's high structuralist approach to the economic relations of material life in *early* capitalism in order to register how the campaign exemplifies increasing opportunities in the *contemporary* capitalist environment for political contestation (the Gramscian contribution) and for possibilities rendered open through emergent discursive formations (the Heideggerian contribution). This choice of structural relaxation is all the more compelling, by the terms of Braudel's own position, if the present conjuncture is, in fact, understood as a moment of systemic turbulence or 'destructuration' (1984: 85).

[25] Karl Polanyi makes something like this point in *The Great Transformation* (1944) when he explains that "[t]raditionally, land and labor are not separated; labor forms part of life, land remains part of nature, life and nature form an articulate whole. Land is thus tied up with the organization of kinship, neighborhood, craft, and creed—with tribe and temple, village, guild, and church. One Big Market, on the other hand, is an arrangement of economic life which includes markets for the factors of production." It is the product of a utopian and ultimately unsustainable fiction

understand the campaign's creative re-appropriation of the 'lived space' of the university, we will examine how the campaign emerged in and through neighborhoods and homes, the church, the bodies of individual campaigners, specific contractual and administrative relations, didactic settings and the streets/roads of Coral Gables. Precisely through an emphasis on these concrete relations, as we shall see, the campaign introduced a more abstract political discussion about the nature of the underlying relations constituting the university.

The Home, Neighborhood and Place of Dwelling

One of the key places of emergence for the Miami janitors' campaign was in the home, neighborhood or place of dwelling. Much of the momentum of the campaign depended, in short, on the creation of a dialectical tension between the specific realities of life on the ground in Miami's neighborhoods and the 'clean space' of classrooms and offices in Coral Gables somehow assumed to be unrelated to those realities. By emphasizing the workers' constitutive role as producers of and inhabitants of these physical and social spaces, the campaign made the workers visible as members of the community, legitimately at home in the university and recognized as its neighbors rather than naturalized or erased.

Originally, as we saw in Chapter 1, of course, SEIU's campaign in South Florida got its start as an organizing drive aimed at the cleaners of condominiums on Miami Beach. "Initially," reflected Reverend C.J. Hawking, "this was just a condos campaign; UM just popped up" (2007). Even after switching operations definitively to the more promising venue of the campus of the University of Miami, however, the organizing campaign remained as much about the essence and practice of home as it

projected onto the more variegated complexities of humanity's actual material conditions (187).

was about the workplace or occupational conditions. On one hand, the dual home/workplace theme bespoke anxiety related to increasing gentrification and space shortage in Miami during a period of unprecedented growth and real estate speculation. As discussed in Chapter 2, rapidly rising housing costs in Miami-Dade County were far outstripping rises in wages during the period immediately prior to the campaign. On another hand, the home/workplace duality addressed the collective and individual experiences of uprooting or social dislocation broadly characteristic of a metropolitan area in which more than 50 percent of the population—specifically more than 1.2 million individuals—were immigrants born abroad as of 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau). "Home" and "workplace" were intimately dialectically related, as we shall see, not only in the nature of the janitors' alienated labor as cleaners of the real property of others but also in the specific history of their campaign activities aiming to change the nature of these relations.

A primary way the campaign brought its message 'home,' as it were, was through the workers' prolonged encampment at the "Freedom City" tent village, just off the University of Miami campus, where more than a dozen workers and several students literally took up residence for the better part of two months. Occupying a space under the Miami Metro line, in a long isthmus of public land across Ponce de Leon Boulevard from the University of Miami campus, the janitors and their supports used the tent village as a base of operations and a symbol of their movement against the university. The campaign resorted to this tenuous outpost—bounded on the other side by the heavily congested U.S. Route 1—mainly because the university had prohibited striking workers from "trespassing" at their campus jobsite (Corbishley 2006), and this location was the closest possible alternative to UM property.[26] The

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[26] To foreshadow the theoretical analysis a bit, in the words of Heidegger, "A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely, within a boundary, the Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which

spot also offered a high level of visibility to passing traffic, including most traffic entering the UM campus, and was convenient to a campus church that, as we shall see, provided another important shelter for the workers throughout the campaign. Barbara Ehrenreich, who visited "Freedom City" at the end of the hunger strike, described it in rather eloquent detail: "Freedom City looks more like a hamlet when we get there— three large tents, one filled with cots for the campers, a few pup tents erected by student supporters, and about a dozen strikers sitting in a circle of folding chairs and talking in Spanish. It's an odd patch of real estate, this thin strip of dust and grass under the elevated metro track, where trains rushing overhead periodically cancel all conversation" (2006). According to Ehrenreich, Freedom City served as a vital aggregation spot for the workers, a site for their animated political debate and strategy discussions (2006). Apart from representing a literal base of occupation and strategic operations, however, the tent village reflected an established trope in the symbolic vocabulary of the U.S. labor movement, echoing such memorable prior encampments as Caesar Chavez's 1968 United Farm Workers' tent city in Delano, California (United Farm Workers 2009) and the United Mine Workers' "Camp Solidarity" that housed union partisans in the course of the 1989-90 Pittston Coal campaign (Beckwith 2000). The Freedom City tent encampment was the campaign's real and symbolic home at the campus, its outpost, strategic front and *pied-à-terre*.

A more literal residence from which the campaign unfolded, through direct worker leadership, was that of Feliciano Hernandez, a former secretary general of a communication workers' syndicate in Cuba and now a shop steward at UM for Local 11. Hernandez, who thinks of his union leadership role in Miami as fundamentally the same as it was in Cuba some 30 years ago, describes his objective as acting "to defend

something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its essential unfolding*. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary" (1977: 332-33).

the right of the worker," which he believes is endangered in both settings (2007). One of the most senior and best-compensated of the workers at UM, Hernandez made his humble but comparatively spacious Miami residence, located near a public park just north of Coral Gables, available for convening meetings during the weeks leading up to the strike. Hernandez's home served as the site where his co-workers and SEIU organizers gathered to draft an initial demand letter to UNICCO concerning Hernandez's brief retaliatory suspension from the UM jobsite in February 2006, and it also housed a decisive gathering of workers to debate whether and how to pursue the plans for their partial strike action (Hernandez 2007).

Underscoring the dialectical tension it identified between material life and the realm of elite actors, the campaign also juxtaposed the domestic conditions of low-paid service workers trying to make ends meet in Miami with the more-than-comfortable home life that Donna Shalala managed to publicize for it through her interview piece in the *New York Times Magazine* (See Chapter 2). Miami in the middle of the decade, as we have seen, was a city in which the poor were increasingly being priced out of their homes and neighborhoods by an explosive demand for new housing and office space and by a disastrous trend of real estate speculation that would leave enduring marks on a number of the major cities of the world. Barbara Ehrenreich's blog report from Miami on May 2, 2006 is a document of one way the campaign brought the dialectical tension inherent in this moment to the forefront. After describing her rushed research trip to Miami, the scene at Freedom City and the state of the organizing campaign as it was drawing toward a victory that would not become an accomplished fact until June 15, Ehrenreich's blog entry narrates a visit she paid to the home of one of the striking janitors, a Nicaraguan-American woman named Leonor who, about 40 years old, lives in a dilapidated home in Liberty City, Miami's poorest neighborhood, with her husband and two children. Leonor, who

fasted for 17 days during the hunger strike, had been earning a $6.75 hourly wage—
with no meaningful benefits—for her work cleaning classrooms prior to Shalala's
mid-campaign pay raise. Ehrenrich describes her visit to Leonor's home as follows:

> I'm trying to absorb all the complexities when we pull
> up to Maria Leonor Ramirez's tiny house. Her husband
> shows us into the living room and chairs are rearranged
> in a rough triangle. I can't help noticing that the floor is
> missing several boards, leaving foot-long two-inch-deep
> canyons to trip the unwary, and that the armchair I'm
> offered is battered beyond the help of duct tape. There
> is no TV or any other electronic device in sight, and
> only a family photo and a couple of public school
> diplomas on the wall, but the place is spotlessly clean.
> Obviously the work of a professional.
> While Leonor offers everyone juice, my mind drifts to
> an account of Donna Shalala's digs in a recent New
> York Times profile…
> (Ehrenreich 2006)

By revealing the domicile of a worker such as Leonor to a journalist such as
Ehrenreich, positioned as the latter was to recognize and publicize its inflammatory
political dimensions, the campaign had become both highly sensitive to and quite
articulate about its basis in Miami's homes and neighborhoods. Leonor's home,
'obviously the work of a professional,' had been passed into the hands of another.

The campaign, moreover, fostered the workers' sense of empowerment over
the campus space and within the neighborhood and community of the university by
establishing them in the specific location of "Freedom City," where they could be "at
home" to receive guests, visitors and allies. The workers' tent encampment became a
kind of festival space, to which, as Professor Giovanna Pompele put it, "people would
bring out their entire families, nieces, nephews, etc. Everyone would come out. It
was not mournful but cheery" (2006). Feliciano Hernandez reflected that several of

the women involved in the campaign would leave their homes at 6 a.m. and not return until midnight, bringing their children to the tent city. One such child, according to Hernandez, was especially beloved among the janitors, a young man named Christian who regularly accompanied his grandmother to the picket site and began to channel the Justice for Janitors standard of "Sí, se puede [Yes it can be accomplished]" (Hernandez 2007), as adopted from the repertoire of Caesar Chavez's UFW.

Starting with the faith community and reaching out to activists among students and faculty, the campaign's festive coalition of visitors and supporters crossed lines of race, ethnicity, economic status, class, gender, educational background, and religion. Pompele describes witnessing during the campaign a "palpable sense of solidarity across language and class that may be enduring" at UM (2006). A particularly memorable realization of this sense of community occurred one Friday afternoon when a group of workers, who were gathered in a "raucous salsa line" at their encampment under the elevated metro track on U.S. Route 1, were joined by a march of more than three hundred faculty and students that had "wound serpentine through the campus" (Fischl 2007: 520) toward Freedom City in a show of support. Reverend C. J. Hawking, who also witnessed the convergence of the groups, with faculty and students embracing the workers who clean their offices and classrooms, described the moment as "such a breakdown of class and race," possibly even an intimation of "what the kingdom of God is supposed to be like" (Hawking 2007).

Finally, the campaign articulated the workers' concerns about 'home' with a broader set of movements in Miami's civil society increasingly concerned with the quality of neighborhood life and the empowerment of the poor. At the level of concrete social formations, the UM campaign contributed to the strengthening of several such specific organizations and constituencies in Miami. Bruce Nissen, director of research at the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida

International University (FIU) and convener of FIU's Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy (RISEP), has suggested that in the absence of a strong preexisting activist community in Miami, SEIU had been in the process of actively building up a "social justice infrastructure" to support its pioneering organizing campaigns in health care and building services in the city (Nissen and Russo 2007: 153). In the case of the campaign at UM, in addition to the student and faculty groups the union helped organize, the greatest such beneficiary was South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice (SFIWJ), which had been a small and relatively ineffective local outpost of the national Interfaith Worker Justice committee (IWJ) prior to the janitors' campaign. The expansion of SFIWJ resulted from the union's direct solicitation of help from IWJ, which frequently collaborates with SEIU and other unions, in the mutually interesting project of significant new community organizing in Miami. According to Brakken, IWJ offered SEIU's Miami campaign the assistance of Reverend C.J. Hawking, who "agreed to come down and help build the Interfaith Committee in south Florida" based on significant prior experience organizing clergy in the context of labor struggles in the upper midwest (Brakken 2007). In addition to precipitating a leadership change at SFIWJ and new hiring at the organization, the campaign at UM positioned SFIWJ for grant funding it has received recently from several national foundations impressed with the organization's work as a local social catalyst (Hawking 2007).

Beyond SFIWJ, a number of other local groups were drawn into the campaign or shared its broad interest in the homes and neighborhoods of Miami's poor. These included the Miami Workers' Center—which deals with concerns around gentrification and housing, the Quaker Peace Center, the Florida Peace and Justice Network, and South Florida Jobs with Justice, all of which provided support during the campaign (Coker-Dukowitz 2006; Brakken 2006). A related impact of the UM

campaign, moreover, involves South Florida Jobs with Justice, whose leaders were inspired by SEIU's successful efforts at community organizing among working-class Cuban-Americans. In light of the campaign at UM, Jobs with Justice became convinced that Miami's working-class Latino/Latina communities were, in fact, excellent organizing environments and undertook an organizing project of its own in Miami's Little Havana. Known as Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United), the project is now a significant part of Miami's incrementally growing social justice community (Brakken 2007). Finally, although it was not involved in the campaign directly, another resonant group in Miami was Take Back the Land, a movement of homeless squatters and shanty dwellers that built up the Umoja Village encampment, with which Coker-Dukowitz and other STAND activists became involved following their work on the campaign at UM (Arthur 2007). Professor Giovanna Pompele believes that the students' involvement in UMOJA village may have "followed from the optimism" characteristic of their success at the university (2006). After Umoja Village's destruction by fire in April 2007, Take Back the Land has been increasingly vocally engaged in the ongoing debate about housing in South Florida and recently received national attention for a campaign involving homeless squatters in appropriating homes abandoned to foreclosure in and around Miami (Leland 2009).

The Church

The church was a second—perhaps paradoxically 'material' and quotidian—site for the emergence of the campaign. Christian symbolism of a distinctly dialectical sort was literally ubiquitous throughout the campaign and perhaps best exemplified by the exhibition of "three large crosses made of brooms—the broom being the ancient and traditional janitorial tool" outside the janitors' tents at Freedom City (Ehrenreich 2006). Beyond overt symbolism, however, the campaign made highly instrumental

material use of church property, as in the case of Father Frank Corbishley's "strike sanctuary." Like "Freedom City," the "strike sanctuary," as Corbishley explains, housed in the St. Bede Episcopal Chapel on the UM campus, emerged as a result of the strikers' exclusion from UM property (2006). The chapel, located on land owned by the Episcopal Diocese of South Florida, as deeded to the Diocese by UM in 1951, was, incidentally, built with funds donated by Jean Flagler Matthews, granddaughter of railroad tycoon Henry Flagler (St. Bede Episcopal Chapel 2009), who first made Miami accessible to the northeastern United States by rail (See Chapter 2, supra). The church property, according to Corbishley, became "like a mini-embassy" during the course of the campaign, welcoming the workers, who converged there every morning and used the church as a meeting space, place of instruction and point of departure for their many strike activities throughout the greater Miami area and elsewhere, including the attempt to spread their campaign to workers at Nova Southeastern university, the day of solidarity at the Miami International Airport, and visits to the homes of individual workers (2006).

Throughout the campaign, the clergy acted as the "glue" that held the community supporting the campaign together (Fischl 2006), providing support that ran the gamut from special sermons and letters of spiritual concern to acts of civil disobedience, the anointing of hunger striking workers, and the provision of alternative classroom venues for professors and students respecting the workers' picket lines (Alter 2006). The first act the striking workers took, having begun leaving their jobsites on the evening of Tuesday, February 28, the day before Ash Wednesday, was to attend a noontime Mass at the Saint Augustine Catholic Church across the street from the University of Miami School of Law, where they received ashes from Father Richard Mullen, a Catholic priest who would hold several Masses for the workers during the campaign and pay them visits at their picket line (Hawking 2006).

The Ash Wednesday Mass had been carefully orchestrated by Reverend Hawking, who also arranged a Sunday Mass for the workers on March 5, the first Sunday of Lent, led by Felipe Estévez, the Bishop of Miami (Hawking 2006). Estévez, himself a refugee from Cuba who had first come to Miami on a Pedro Pan flight in the 1960s, used the occasion to relate deep personal stories from his own experience in Revolutionary Cuba to the struggle the workers had recently initiated (Hawking 2006). Here was a remarkably seamless convergence of clerical and social justice interests, of the residual politics of the Cold War and the emergent politics of an increasingly self-aware cohort of post-industrial service workers. As Feliciano Hernandez, a UM janitor and devout Catholic originally from Cuba, interpreted his interaction with the religious leaders who supported the strike, "If I didn't have faith, I couldn't be in this fight. The church is the same. We are for the same cause" (Alter 2006).

A number of the clergy, finally, were quite self-conscious about their roles as intermediaries vis-à-vis material life, on one hand, and the privileged domain of capitalist actors, on another. As Reverend Hawking, who came to Miami to organize church leaders, explained, "[t]he clergy recognized the connection between the [decline of the] labor movement and their homeless kitchens" (2006). But this understanding was more profound than an insight about the connection between market power and distributive inequality. The clergy, by positing affirmative values that supervened market fundamentalism, gave the lie to the notion that "there is no alternative." In the words of Plantation United Methodist Pastor Tim Smiley, a clergyman in neighboring Broward County who was involved tangentially in the UM campaign and became a strong supporter of the unsuccessful attempt to organize workers at Nova Southeastern University that grew out of the UM campaign, "[t]he Prophets of the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament spoke to people in institutions of power. God's message of social justice, *shalom*, includes justice being

lived out. People who are in a position of power have an affirmative obligation to the poor, the widow, the orphan, the alien or migrant" (2006). Father Frank Corbishley echoed similarly 'radical' Christian sentiments in connection with his own view of the campaign, observing, "I believe that my faith calls me to this… I believe it is immoral for us to finance our prosperity on the backs of the poor" (2006).

The Body

The campaign, thirdly, emerged in and through the individual bodies of workers, students, clergy, professors and others who participated in its enactment. This corporeal quality of the campaign, lived as it was out of doors in tents, under springtime tropical weather conditions, was a very real part of the campaign's everyday experience as relayed in most narratives and memories of the events, and not only from the point of view of endurance and suffering, either. Coker-Dukowitz, for instance, recounts camping outside the UM admissions office in the course of one of the student protest actions when the university turned on its sprinkler system. The students adjusted to the irrigation of their campsite by staging an aquatic event they called "slip-and-slide for justice" that drew even more attention to the righteousness of their cause (2006).

It was through the hunger strike, however, that the campaign most completely engaged the bodies of participants. Originating as a strategic idea of the workers themselves and beginning among a core group of 15 participants on April 5, the hunger strike spanned the better part of a month, transforming into a broader movement of serial fasts by April 21 and definitively concluding on May Day, with wide public attention and celebrity participation (See Chapter 1). As Feliciano Hernandez, one of the workers who pressed for the hunger strike explained, "[t]he leadership of the union always opposed itself to the hunger strike, but when they

began seeing… that there wasn't a light at the end of the tunnel, they decided… that they had no choice but to go [deeper] into the tunnel" (Hernandez 2007) in deference to the intuition of the workers. Despite the union's initial resistance to the potential health, legal and publicity risks involved, the workers went ahead with the action, SEIU sending in a nurse to monitor participants' wellbeing (Hawking 2006).

As Professor Giovanna Pompele described the hunger strike, "[t]hese workers are a force of nature. They would easily have let themselves die. The union reigned them in. It had to… The union was mostly telling them how to chill out" (2006). The final step in the campaign's creative strategy of escalation, the hunger strike endowed the workers' cause with complex symbolic power and stark materiality. Begun during the period of the Christian Lenten fast, the hunger strike linked the workers' struggle to a powerful substantive tradition of spiritual transcendence connected to the Christian mystery of the corporeal embodiment of the living God among men. In addition to amplifying the social degradation and exploitation to which the workers believed they had been exposed at UM, the hunger strike offered specific evidence of the overabundant reserve of spiritual and emotional energy that the workers involved could bring to bear in their collective struggle. In Pompele's words, these workers were "enduring, incredibly politicized, incredibly motivated, and as strong as mountains" (2006). The event was by no means merely a weapon of the weak.

By dramatizing hunger, a tangible reality for the families of workers earning $6.40 an hour, the workers attached their wage demands to the moral authority of their needs, situating their individual lives, as revealed throughout the campaign to broader constituencies via extensive local and national media attention (e.g. Boodhoo 2006a-h; Rabin 2006; Democracy Now! 2006; Ehrenreich 2006; Meyerson 2006), within Miami's larger social patterns of extremely concentrated wealth, ethnic balkanization, and acute urban poverty. The idea of 'need' assumed a metaphysical significance in

the hunger strike that was not exclusively theological but glaringly material and revealed in its connection with an essential 'dignity' that could not be rationalized away. It was, indeed, a pervasive social reality of Miami that had hitherto remained suppressed. As Reverend C. J. Hawking underscores, paraphrasing the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "When an injustice is being ignored, you have to foster a creative tension so that it can be no longer ignored" (Hawking 2007). By most accounts, in the wake of the campaign at UM, the "creative tension" in Miami is growing.

The Wage Relation

Fourth, to the extent that it impacted their qualitative transformation, the campaign emerged in material instances of the janitors' wage relation. Reflecting on his overall experience of employment in the United States—including time spent in California as well as South Florida— in addition to his specific experience as a janitor at UM, Feliciano Hernandez observed that there is no essential difference between labor relations in the contemporary U.S. and slavery, "just different forms of living and experiencing it; we continue to be slaves… Now we work for a low wage and spend it all consuming" (2007). The matter of the living wage was certainly one thing the campaign had in mind when it referred to 'worker dignity.' "People who are working full time in any endeavor deserve to be making a living wage. They deserve to be able to support themselves" (Smiley 2006), at very least. There was also the matter of psychologically abusive and physically dangerous workplace practices. Father Corbishley, for instance, observed that, at a health fair hosted by the Chapel in December 2005, he learned of numerous occupational injuries at UM stemming from the inhalation of dangerous chemicals in cleaning agents (2006). Attesting to the derision with which the workers at UM were regularly treated prior to the campaign,

he additionally recalled the story of an aged female janitor who related to him that her UNICCO supervisor regularly referred to her as "una mierda vieha [an old shit]" (2006). Endeavoring to explain the ineffectiveness of Shalala's mid-campaign pay raise in halting the momentum of the campaign, Barbara Ehrenreich observed, "the big sticking point is that the workers don't want to be 'given' anything. They want a union contract. All day, the word 'dignity' keeps popping up in one language or another" (2006). The question of 'dignity' in the campaign was not just about the life conditions of the workers or their desire for recognition as people—although these were very important matters—nor merely a cynical euphemism for the union's obvious interest in walking away with a definitive collective agreement. The matter of 'dignity,' went to the very question of the agency of this group of workers, to their specific and deeply world-historical experience as shapers of material reality and its disclosure.

The Administrative Space

Fifth, the campaign emerged in the material relations of administrative space on the campus. The occupation of the University of Miami admissions office (See Chapter 1) by a group of undergraduate students led by Coker-Dukowitz and his colleagues from Students Toward a New Democracy (STAND), aided only by Campus Chaplain Frank Corbishley, who was forced to stand in the office vestibule surrounded by police during crucial negotiations between the students and Shalala (Corbishley 2006; Fischl 2006), exemplifies the material realities and stakes of the campaign's escalatory process in administrative spaces. It was one key way the campaign made office space, as it were, understood in its concrete materiality as a contested domain. The University called in the police to surround the office, turned off air conditioning to make it uncomfortable for the students inside, and denied the

students access to restroom facilities or water (Coker-Dukowitz 2006; Corbishley 2006). As Corbishley describes it, the administration fostered a "climate of fear that was pervasive on campus" (2006). In the case of the student occupation, from the perspective of a savvy group of students trained by United Students Against Sweatshops in direct action tactics and "mostly composed of powerful women," the University was "able to create a pressure cooker within the admissions office; they created the sense that the police were surrounding us outside, with a paddy wagon out back. They amped it up in a visual sense… All our nerves were shot" (Coker-Dukowitz 2006).

Nonetheless, the students held their ground in the admissions office, in part with the encouragement of a group of workers and other campaign supporters who held a vigil for them outside. When Shalala eventually came to negotiate, the students ended up involving her in a protracted late-night undergraduate debate (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). The way the students managed the power imbalance vis-à-vis the president of their university was to appoint a student facilitator of the talks and to establish the simple rule of engagement that everyone, including Shalala, raise her hand and be recognized before speaking (Id.). Shalala's strategy in the talks, as Coker-Dukowitz assesses it, "was to talk us to death" (Id.). The conversation lasted four hours. Nonetheless, the students did go home with a set of concessions, thirteen hours after the beginning of their ordeal, at 1:40 the following morning (Coker-Dukowitz 2006; Hawking 2006). Shalala agreed to make a statement renouncing intimidation or harassment of supporters of the campaign on campus, and she agreed to hold a meeting to address the concerns of three estates: the students, the university administration and the representatives of the workers (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). In Corbishley's opinion, this was a decisive moment in the campaign: "for the first time, the workers got a seat at the table" (2006). It was moreover, quite a material

accomplishment for the seventeen students involved. "These students... I was so impressed with them," observed Father Corbishley. "Here are a bunch of twenty-year-olds going head-to-head with a former cabinet secretary" (Id.).

The Classroom

In a sixth instance, the campaign emerged in the classroom through professors and students who were forced 'outside'—either literally or, at least in one critical case, conceptually—into (a recognition of) the material realities of their campus. Altogether, beginning as early as March 2 and lasting through the Spring Break— during which Shalala raised the janitors' wages on March 16—more than 100 faculty at UM held between 200 and 400 classes off campus, "under the palm trees," in the evocative words of Hawking, as well as in a variety of other spaces provided by the clergy (Fischl 2007; Hawking 2006; Pompele 2006). One common outdoor venue was the green space at the corner of Granada Boulevard and U.S. Route 1, which *Miami Herald* columnist Nicholas Spangler described as "an unlovely patch of grass with a few unshading trees. Last fall it became a mulching ground for the summer's hurricane debris" (2006). Spangler elaborated in significant detail the improvised classroom of one UM sociology professor, Elizabeth Aranda, who was using the park: "[i]t was very hot, there were bugs crawling around her nonclassroom and she was sunburned. She'd had a long day and she was tired" (Id.). In Spangler's narrative of Aranda's class, Aranda, who is wearing a strike t-shirt fashioned by her 7-year-old daughter, is literally approached by a man riding by the park on a bicycle who interrupts her to ask Aranda what a "living wage" means "anyway." Aranda ventures a thoughtful response, which includes an encompassing relational explanation, and then the man on the bike responds with a flirtation before riding off again. Aranda's response to the encounter is an apt sigh (Id.). The story, in addition to whatever else it

demonstrates, attests to the manner in which the campaign introduced unusual new articulations of academic and broader communities around the campus through departures from the habitual. The grove of academe, in short, was qualitatively transformed as it became a real 'outside' space; it became, as it were, more 'original.'[27] Other, perhaps more controlled, examples of such transformation of instructional space included a teach-in held by the faculty and students in support of the strike, a film festival organized by Professor John Lennon of UM's American Studies department, and the separate showing of a documentary on Wal-Mart (Pompele 2006).

A no less significant specific way the campaign emerged in the classroom at UM was through a substantive enrichment of the curriculum. Michael Fischl, in a law review article entitled "The Other Side of the Picket Line: Contract, Democracy and Power in a Law School Classroom"—published in connection with a conference at Harvard Law School on "Teaching from the Left"— provides specific detail of such curricular enrichment in nothing short of the material of a first-year course in *contract* law. Fischl, despite his extremely instrumental role in the faculty support for the campaign, judiciously declined arbitrarily to take his first-year contract course off campus without a democratic poll of his students' preferences conducted via an anonymous online forum by the student government representatives of the class

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[27] I mean 'original' here in the double sense of 'generative' and 'authentic.' The original image of "academia" in the tradition of the West—for what it's worth— an image which first comes to us from Plato, is indeed, I would argue, significantly less controlled than most institutionalized academic spaces of the present era, notwithstanding Athenian society's many exclusions based on gender and status as freeman or slave. Socrates' chance encounter and walk into the countryside with Phaedrus in that dialogue and the robust comic dramaturgy of the Symposium provide two classic cases in point. Inquiry, in the early and middle dialogues of Plato, advances principally through Socrates' rigorously skeptical but essentially open comportment toward the individuals and thoughts he encounters.

(2007)[28]. When those preferences came in, the 80 voters out of a class of 106 narrowly favored remaining on the law school campus, with 35 favoring off-campus classes, 40 favoring on on-campus classes, and 5 "other" votes proving indecisive (2007: 525). Fischl and his contract class "stayed put," but the campaign refused to let them off the hook (Id.). When Fischl explicitly opened discussion of the polling results with his class and reviewed the rationales students gave in a "comment" option, the students desiring to remain on campus, he said, typically ventured relatively traditional 'contractual duty' arguments substantively anchored in the assertion that "this isn't what I paid for" (i.e. that asking the law students to attend classes off campus introduced a novel inconvenience to which no student consented when he enrolled for classes and paid his tuition) (Id. 526). Fischl likened this response to an anonymous email comment that he received from an "angry dad" of one of the students who alleged a "complete disregard of [my] duty to [my] students, contractual and otherwise" (Id. 526-30). So much for the 'obligations' arguments of the 'right.'

What surprised and initially troubled Fischl, however, was that his students who *supported* the striking janitors did not venture the perfectly valid—and brilliantly combative—counter-argument by which the "this isn't what I paid for" line could be "flipped" and redeployed (Fischl 2007: 529). Students desiring to respect the janitors' picket line, after all, could have gone toe-to-toe with the exponents of 'contractual duty' by insisting that they didn't "pay for" the prospect of crossing a picket line to get

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[28] As Fischl describes his philosophical ambivalence about taking classes off campus, "[t]here was, of course, nothing 'pure' about teaching classes off campus as a means of honoring the picket line, since we were still *teaching* and thereby enabling the University to continue its operations without substantial interruption." The issue came up again later in the campaign in specific reference to a faculty debate—among the "comitato" of faculty convened to develop strategy in support of the janitors (See Chapter 1)—about whether to resume on-campus teaching after Spring Break, in light of Shalala's mid-campaign wage concession. The comitato ultimately decided to go back to campus at that point, urging the faculty to "seek other ways to express solidarity with the janitors" (2007: 120).

to class at a university whose cleaning contractor was in the process of an on-site anti-union campaign (Id. 530). Instead, Fischl's 'left-wing' students resorted to arguments that were significantly weaker in law but appealed to 'higher' norms involving the democratic governance of the workplace, which contract knows not (Id. 530). Fischl was puzzled for some time until remembering, in the words of one of his students—applied to the concrete cases of workplace and classroom settings—that "there are some things that are just too important for contract" (Id. 530, 535). Accordingly, as is usually the case in law as elsewhere, "context matters, and it must be recalled that these students were embracing [the ideal of 'democracy'] for settings in which it isn't ordinarily welcome—i.e. in the workplace and the classroom, realms in which market discipline is increasingly understood as the best and most legitimate source of governance" (Id. 534). Fischl concludes that "the reluctance of the janitors' student supporters to join the 'this isn't what I paid for' refrain may thus have reflected a healthy skepticism about the role of market values in higher education, whether workplace or classroom governance is at stake" (Id. 534-35). By working through these matters with his students and colleagues in concretely material practices of teaching and writing, Fischl's openness to the campaign had made possible a first-rate "teachable moment" (Id. 526) and contributed, moreover, to a blistering critique of neoliberal contract theory from within.

The Road

In a seventh and final instance, the campaign emerged in the articulate public space of the roadway. As we have seen—in ways that should be unsurprising to anyone familiar with the automotive culture of South Florida—roads and highways were very important spaces for the concrete emergence of the campaign. Nearly anyone attempting to visit the campus, including riders of the Miami Metro line and

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drivers from the north or south along U.S. Route 1, would necessarily pass by Freedom City, with all its symbolic tropes and its signs entreating motorists to "Honk for Justice" (Ehrenreich 2006). Nor was the campaign's articulation with the roadway merely positional and auditory. The campaign's major activities, including the action that blocked traffic on U.S. Route 1 and its numerous marches on and around the campus—whether to Freedom City, Corbishley's Strike Sanctuary or the legendary home of the president—involved taking to the streets or the road, pounding the pavement in the old manner (See Chapter 1). This physical presence of bodies in Miami's streets and roadways was a fundamental fact of the campaign and a mark of its radical departure from the norm of a city in which automobiles enjoy a kind of first priority and human bodies rarely mingle in public except in air conditioned malls, wind-swept beaches and velvet-roped nightclubs. As we have seen, the departure led to the arrest and jailing of a number of clergy (See Chapter 1) and was by no means welcomed by a police force that brought with it practical knowledge about successful crowd repression from the experience of containing demonstrations against the November 2003 Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) ministerial conference in Miami's downtown business district (See Chapter 1).

There was something about the road, however, that went to the very heart of what the campaign accomplished in Miami's material life, to the nature of its essential emergence, means of transmission and lasting effects beyond formal conclusion in contract. This, I argue, involved what Mikhail Bakhtin, in the context of the novelistic discourse, described as "chronotopic values," spatiotemporal domains that refuse the segmentation of time and space as separate entities apart from the emotions and values that attach to them (1981: 243).[29] Bakhtin's "chronotope of the road," which he

[29]Although Bakhtin is concerned principally with novelistic discourse, and thus with a kind of 'fine art,' his reflections are particularly helpful in getting at dimensions of the novel political imagination of the campaign, as mediated by its discourse and

figures as one kind of temporality that emerges in the diverse 'heteroglot' and 'dialogic' unfolding of (novelistic and other) discourse (Id. 269-75), is associated with the chance encounter. "On the road," explains Bakhtin, "the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people—representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages—intersect at one spatial and temporal point. People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another. On the road the spatial and temporal series defining human fates and lives combine with one another in distinctive ways, even as they become more complex and more concrete by the collapse of *social distances*" (Id. 243). Bakhtin explains that the chronotope of the road is "both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement. Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road)" (Id. 244). "Varied and multi-leveled," says Bakhtin, "are the ways in which road is turned into metaphor, but its fundamental pivot is the flow of time" (Id. 244). The campaign's key achievement—exceeding even the 'ultimate' moment in which the union's well-earned bargaining power was leveraged in exchange for wage and benefit concessions vis-à-vis a market for alienated labor power—was to place itself in such a flow of time, to take to the road and affirm the fragile dignity of everyday material experience in the city. As a simple but sophisticated discursive articulation in concrete social space, the campaign thrived in a chronotope of the road. Unprecedented in Miami, this was a far greater achievement than the labor contract and may well long survive it.

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enacted as a practical political matter. Aesthetics, in a sense, are never fully separable from the social conditions of their arising and continued relevance, namely a deeply historical ritual relevance based in communal enactment (Benjamin 1968: 224). When we posit that art is so separable, we risk ceding art as a domain of contestation to a violently appropriative tendency in capitalism to seek the hypostasis of aesthetic forms and the aesthetic stage-management of society (Id.).

In short, the campaign unfolded from the relations of material life because its key constituencies were—at least in part—'there,' reliant on the irreducible specificities of this 'zone' even as some of their projects took place in more formal 'market' relations. Turning this only apparent positional disadvantage around, the campaign sought to undermine the university's superior basis in market relations through a more subtle discourse with greater fidelity to the concrete and to deploy the symbolism of material life in politicized contrast with the university's elitism.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICIZATION OF AND RESOLUTION WITHIN

THE MARKET ECONOMY

Standing in dialectical relationship to capitalism, on one side, and material life, on the other—and providing at least one kind of mediate domain engaging both—was the market economy. In the last chapter we described the campaign's implication in the "chronotope of the road" at the level of material life. Here we shall have to show whose interests that road connected and where it led. Not only did the campaign ultimately settle—as a union organizing drive is wont to do—in the relations of the market economy, but the campaign also built up a novel historical bloc within these relations, a widely-dispersed, networked community of interest that, like its discursive remnants, survived the bargaining moment.

The market economy offered one kind of mediate domain in which the fundamental dialectical tension between capitalism and material life could play out and reach settlement. It was only one such mediate domain, however, because, as we have seen, the tension also played out in political contestation, religious practice[30] and discourses originating in theology (See Chapter 3). There is some tendency to treat the market settlement of social conflicts under capitalism as evidence of their political cooptation into the hegemonic relations of contract and market dependence, rendering the settlement susceptible to capitalist control. Ignoring the secondary effects of the

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[30] Vis-à-vis commerce and the aforementioned "chronotope of the road," there is perhaps no better example of the campaign's confrontation between the 'religious' and 'economic' than the March 28, 2006 arrest of 6 clergy and 11 other activists for blocking traffic by forming a 'human chain' across U.S. Route 1 (See Chapter 1). The arrested clergy were held for several hours in jail for the action (Hawking 2006).

conflict, this is a reasonable criticism, but it also emphasizes the tendency of contract toward 'closure' to the neglect of what it opens. What this criticism misses in the case of a union organizing drive such as the campaign at UM is that contract and market dependence are already facts of life for the workers involved before a campaign begins. The closure of the labor contract has already been achieved under terms that are, at least in the U.S., by no means optimal. These terms typically involve at-will employment (i.e. workers can be fired for good reasons, bad reasons or no reasons at all) and lack of any independent collective representation. The trajectory of a union organizing campaign is thus not primarily *toward* contract but first away from it. The campaign makes a substantive intervention vis-à-vis the relations of the market, building and drawing upon support from civil society, and when it has built sufficient power, it returns to the market for a first settlement with the intention of qualitatively and quantitatively modifying the terms of the bare wage relation. Thus, while a campaign such as that at UM is finally conservative of the wage relation—its currency—the campaign also opens up the internal terms of the labor contract and, in an effort to build political power for bargaining, frequently also opens an ultimately unpredictable pattern of broader social contestation.

In the first instance, there was a significant dialectical play of difference between the capitalist realm of elite actors, and the market economy, worlds Braudel never tires of reminding us are quire "distinct" (1984: 620). This conflict manifested in a variety of instances throughout the campaign, as we shall see, but three particular relationships provide initial illustration. We have already discussed the play of tension between the emerging international capitalist elite in Miami and the city's older Cuban-American business elite (Chapter 2) that manifested in a number of key instances in which otherwise 'right-leaning' Cuban-American political leaders and clergy came to the aid of the campaign in opposition to neoliberal market relations

(Chapters 2, 3). This was an important underlying conflict between capitalist and local market relations that helped open the path of the campaign's emergence. A second such dialectical tension characterized SEIU's very initiation and prosecution of an elaborate strategic pressure campaign—planned and coordinated from Washington with millions of dollars in investment and national labor contract objectives in mind— aiming at specific resolution in Miami's local market relations (Chapter 2). There would be no reason to assume that SEIU's overall national objectives and the objectives of local organizers and janitors in the Miami market should be identical or even roughly similar, as was demonstrated particularly well by the initial resistance of SEIU's national leadership to the janitors' local choice to launch the hunger strike and the janitors' insistence on going ahead with it nonetheless (Chapter 1). It was indeed a remarkable dynamic of the campaign that such 'inter partes' conflicts were kept to a minimum on the 'labor' side. A third such dialectical tension involved actual or potential conflicts of interests between Shalala and UNICCO, which remained relatively quiescent throughout the campaign—in large part due to Shalala's virtually perfect adherence to neoliberal ideological commitments. To the extent that this very wealthy University might have been expected to defend its reputational and property interests and had the ability to pay for higher janitorial wages just as UNICCO was attempting to keep its own local and national labor costs as low as possible in a relatively competitive market for janitorial services, there was a potentially significant conflict of interest that SEIU had hoped to exploit. Ultimately, SEIU had to force the emergence of this particular conflict by radically increasing the potential of the campaign to cause reputational harm to UM, leading Shalala to pressure UNICCO to agree to the card-check election.

On the other side of the mediation of the market economy, an increasingly profound historical conflict between productive and property relations manifested in

the dialectical relationship between the market economy and material life. The dialectical relationship between the (neoliberal) market economy and material life is well exemplified by the contradiction at the heart of the Justice for Janitors drive at UM, namely between the cost of reproducing the university as a clean space for valuable educational activity among economic elites benefitting from the recent financial expansion (See Chapter 2) and the cost of reproducing the janitors at a basic subsistence level, without health care and in substandard living conditions. The janitors, of course, in the 'market wage' bargain, bore both of these costs, but their valuable productivity was divergent with the janitors' 'invisibility' (Fischl 2006), their mistreatment and endangerment at their campus worksites (Corbishley 2006), and their extremely low levels of compensation. The productive relationship highlighted much of what was at stake in SEIU's 'property services' campaign in Miami (SEIU 2009). The increasing valuation of constant capital coincident with the financial expansion and real estate bubble in Miami and much of the U.S. in 2006 did not, of course, involve a correlative valuation of the workers' variable capital as inputs in ongoing production. Working at a university that charged $29,000 a year in tuition and had recently raised $1 billion in a single capital campaign, these janitors were contributing to the care and maintenance of a wealthy propertied interest in one of the wealthiest enclaves of the United States, but they were driven to find their own living arrangements in Miami's poorest neighborhoods.

Finally, there is the matter of the overall mediation of the market economy qua meditative domain, which involves the fundamental conflict between capitalism and material life, as well as the possibility and salience of resistances arising in the latter. As Braudel puts it, "[t]he economy begins at the fateful threshold of 'exchange value'" (Braudel 1982: 21), on the other side of which lies a whole world of relations in tension with capitalism that 'the economy' frequently is called upon to attempt to

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incorporate, albeit in a relatively uneven fashion. As Braudel elaborates later, the continued existence of a fairly sizeable '*economia pura*' or 'bargain basement' at the level of material life throughout the world, comprising 30 to 40 percent of economic activity in *industrialized* countries, "is enough to make one think again before assuming that our societies are organized from top to bottom in a 'capitalist system.' On the contrary, putting it briefly, *there is a dialectic still very much alive* between capitalism on the one hand, and its antithesis, the 'non-capitalism' of the lower level on the other" (1984: 630, my italics). This circumstance, as Braudel points out, complicates the assumption of any stable relationship between the 'nodal points' of the market economy and the 'non-economy' (1982: 21). The mediation of the market, always specific and highly particularistic, is never under the pure domination of capitalism. In spite of all his high structuralist pessimism about the likelihood of epochal change, Braudel thus ultimately admits the possibility of resistances entering market relations from origins in 'material life' as well as ongoing patterns of fundamental dialectical tension seeking mediation by both market and state (1984: 630-31).

In the course of its challenge to Shalala and the University, the campaign actively built up a novel historical bloc, primarily within the relations of the market economy, that contested the hegemony of the neoliberal market bloc.[31] The latter, the

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[31] The bloc contesting the hegemony of the neoliberal market bloc, in keeping with Gramsci, in a sense defined itself through the emergent recognition of its difference, as a community apart. Gramsci describes this process it in his notes on "The Study of Philosophy" as follows: "Critical understanding of self takes place… through a struggle of political 'hegemonies' and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage toward a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. Thus the unity of theory and practice is not just a matter of mechanical fact, but a part of the historical process, whose elementary and primitive phase is to be

neoliberal status quo in Miami, could briefly be described as an Anglo-American secular Protestant[32] cohort guided by instrumental rationality, valuing individualism but validating collective conformity in individuation, seeking knowledge at the level of the population, and committed to the classic wage relation. Discursively and substantively, the position is well-represented by an early—and entirely prescient—statement to *The Miami Herald* from UM vice president of human resources Roosevelt Thomas about the janitors working to organize a union at UM: "They are contract employees, not University of Miami employees. The university is going to remain neutral throughout the process" (Athavaley 2005). Thomas, in communicating an early version of UM's official position of putative 'neutrality' vis-à-vis the organizing drive was, in the same breath, effectively advocating *laissez-faire* in the labor market. The university relied upon its contractual relationship with UNICCO to distance itself from the matter of how much its janitors were paid, as if the intermediation of the subcontractor somehow absolved the university of responsibility for reasonably compensating the janitors who maintained the campus. This was a formalist position indeed. The emergent historical bloc that produced the campaign, however, could be

found in the sense of being 'different' and 'apart,' in an instinctive feeling of independence, and which progresses to the level of real possession of a single and coherent conception of the world" (1971: 333). My—necessarily schematic—presentment of the blocs that emerged in the course of the campaign is, indeed, very much a part of the constructive process in which my analysis is engaged. This presentation is, in its own turn, inherently open to the possibility of contestation and progressive modification.

[32] My description of these historical blocs is not, it must be emphasized, an essentialist description at the level of particular individual actors but a provisional structural description of the leading social milieu involved in each case. Donna Shalala, who is Roman Catholic, and Roosevelt Thomas, who is African-American, are seen to 'belong' in the Anglo-American Protestant historical bloc in Miami because of 'where they are' structurally and culturally. Likewise, Father Frank Corbishley, an Anglican, and Reverend Tim Smiley, a Methodist, are seen as part of the broadly Catholic bloc that constitutes the campaign. What is at issue is not some kind of 'demographic' essence but the historically-specific allegiances and politico-economic orientations of the group of actors in question at the conjuncture narrated.

described as a broadly Catholic cohort guided by a substantive valuation of the community of the faithful, valuing collectivism but validating differentiated individuation, seeking knowledge at the level of the community, and committed to a social wage. A fitting representation of the position emerges in the same early piece from janitor Maritza Paz, who made $6.70 per hour at the start of the campaign in October 2005. As Paz observes, "[w]e need health insurance. We need to be treated as human beings" (Athavaley 2005). Paz's explanation of the drive makes a basic criticism of the heavily exploitative terms of her labor contract, whatever the market may bear and whoever the ultimate payer may be. These were indignities that called out for immediate concern and aid by all parties present, not a distant attitude of 'neutrality.'

These typological sketches are not meant to suggest a static ideal-typical relation but to stake out and open up the rough field of play within which the historical conflict of the campaign—qua ordeal—emerged with social significance in the market. As provisional typologies, these descriptions are intended to help illuminate how the phenomenon of the campaign took shape through a discursive economy with concrete market relevance, how specific discourse was active in assembling the alternative historical bloc and displacing the ruling one. Thus, in its movement from conceptions of 'clean space' to conceptions of 'sacred space,' from understandings of UM's cleaners as 'laborers' to their acceptance as 'neighbors,' from emphases on the efficiency of the 'market wage' to insistence upon the need for a 'living wage,' and from the formal enforcement of the 'wage relation' to the substantive recognition of 'worker dignity,' the campaign mobilized signification *within the market* toward an active politicization of market action.[33]

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[33] This signification within the market, it should be noted, involved discursive forms, as we saw in Chapter 3, that arose precisely from relations of 'material life' that the momentum of the campaign uncovered. A discourse of 'dignity' does not refer to

The building of a novel historical bloc within market relations, however, required more than the positing of conceptual and discursive alternatives to neoliberal market rationality; it meant that particular (groups of) market actors availed themselves to carry and disseminate such alternatives across broader market domains in ways that could become materially meaningful. Each such constituency of the campaign, in effect, built up an alternative network from within its preexisting market relations in an effort to challenge the legitimacy of the University's market fundamentalism. In the specific market actions of the janitors, law professors, students, and SEIU itself, the market economy revealed its promise as a channel for socially progressive transformation just as market fundamentalism revealed the stultifying danger of normative exclusivity.

Professors at the University of Miami, in the first instance, initiated the market articulation of the campaign through early discussions around the grim news about UM disclosed in the August 2001 *Chronicle of Higher Education* report on UM's status in a national market for janitorial pay, and they helped extend the campaign's reach through extensive internet blogging and press communications. As we saw in Chapter 1, the early concerns about janitorial pay and working conditions of professors such as Michael Fischl and his colleagues on the UM Faculty Senate anticipated the arrival of organizers from SEIU in Miami by some three-and-a-half years. Fischl and his colleagues began petitioning Shalala concerning janitorial pay shortly after her arrival at UM as the new president of the University in the summer of 2001 (Fischl 2006). Their concerns, as discussed above, stemmed from the *Chronicle* report on national janitorial pay revealing that UM ranked 194th out of 195

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market rationality, for which it can be cognized as pure nonsense at best or propaganda at worst. The concept of 'dignity' inevitably entails something more than market value, namely a positive experience of responsible engagement with the world in its specificity.

universities in the U.S. national market (See Chapter 1). The *Chronicle* report had, in turn, been inspired by the living wage campaign and student sit-ins at Harvard during the spring of 2001, a drive that succeeded in obtaining a union contract raising the wages of janitors employed there—also, n.b., in a subcontracting relationship with the cleaning contractor UNICCO (Boodhoo 2006g). A market pattern had been established. As Fischl put it, the faculty response to the *Chronicle* revelation about the university's ranking was "mortification," especially in light of the fact that UM was also "one of a dozen schools where janitorial staff actually received less than the federal poverty wage" (2007: 101, citing Van der Werf 2001: A27). Alerted to and motivated around the national market relevance of the question of janitorial pay at UM in the fall of 2001, professors at UM began collecting information on their janitors' benefits and working conditions that they would use in their unsuccessful early attempts to influence Shalala from the 'inside' (Fischl 2006; Fischl 2007).

In the course of the campaign itself, the professors' primary contribution to market articulation was through internet organizing. As Pompele, who was involved in the daily maintenance of the campaign's blogs and listservs attests, the "comitato" of professors coordinating faculty campaign support was involved in a great deal of large-scale communication, including its "Picketline" blogspot, its initiation of a nation-wide online petition in support of the workers, and its updates to the University of Miami's Wikipedia entries to describe the strike and "the conditions that prompted it" (Pompele 2006). In addition to posting their own stories and ongoing commentary about the campaign's developments online (See Chapter 1), the faculty maintained frequent correspondence with editors and reporters in the print media (Pompele 2006), and Fischl's retrospective piece on the campaign ultimately placed the UM faculty action in the perspective of an emerging discourse on "Teaching from the Left," as pursued through Fischl's participation in a conference series at Harvard Law School

and the publication of his piece in the *New York University Review of Law and Social Change* (Fischl 2007).

The activities of the janitors in the course of their nine-week partial strike were enormously responsible for the communication of the campaign at UM across a broad network of workers throughout the greater Miami metropolitan area. One of these forms of communication, overtly connected to the "chronotope of the road" described in Chapter 3, involved the high visibility of the symbolic embodiments of the campaign to a wide diversity of individuals engaged in commercial activity in Miami. The workers' Freedom City, as we have seen, lay on U.S. Route 1, which runs south to Key West and north as far as Fort Kent, Maine. The encampment's signs, soliciting drivers to "Honk for Justice" (Ehrenreich 2006), literally articulated the campaign with daily commuters passing by the prominent spot by car and with the numerous Teamsters and other drivers carrying intermodal containers and other cargo along this important route connecting to Miami's busy port and airport, both to the north. Above Freedom City in altitude, moreover, was the Miami metro line, which transported commuters to and from downtown Miami, Coral Gables and South Miami. As a matter of sheer position, it placed the workers' movement in the middle of Miami's commercial life.

Strategically, the janitors' campaign also remained connected to the market economy through its 'partial strike' approach. Only about 150 of the 400 janitors ultimately covered by the final agreement between UNICCO and SEIU were directly involved in the strike (Fischl 2007; BNA 2006b). The other janitors in the would-be bargaining unit remained at their jobsites at UM but were by no means quiescent during the campaign. As Michael Fischl illuminates, the janitors at UM were a "very savvy group of workers" whose seemingly "invisible" presence on campus was deceptive. In Fischl's metaphoric summary of the situation, one advantage of "life on

the bottom of the boot" for these workers, was that "you tend to get to know the boot better" (Fischl 2006). By incompletely withdrawing their services from the marketplace, the workers as a group held UM in a position of relative dependence while making their own market power felt and keeping open their key source of access to bargaining intelligence and the machinations of UNICCO's anti-union campaign. Lastly, the striking janitors communicated their campaign throughout the market society in Miami by being practically omnipresent in janitorial workplaces outside the UM campus. Not satisfied merely to organize UM and officially exiled from the campus during the partial strike, the janitors, as we have seen (Chapter 1), took their campaign to Florida International University, Nova Southeastern University, and the Miami International Airport in conjunction with the Teamsters. This offsite organizing work was incessant. As Hawking recalls, even the memorable festive gathering of the campaign's main constituencies under the metro tracks (See Chapter 3), though providing a needed break and dose of pathos for all involved, was followed by a trip the same afternoon to the Sunset Place shopping center south of campus, where UM's janitors had launched yet another attempt to expand their nascent union's potential influence in the local labor market (Hawking 2006).

The planning, investment and organizing activities of SEIU and its student supporters at UM injected the UM campaign into both the broader pattern of SEIU national contract negotiations with UNICCO and a powerful network of solidarity involving workers and students at Harvard, student demonstrators at Georgetown, and labor unionists in Haiti. We have already seen that the UM campaign coincided with SEIU's larger strategy of bargaining a national market contract with UNICCO set for renewal in the spring of 2006 (Chapter 1; Amernick 2006), but SEIU and the students also connected the campaign somewhat seamlessly with a number of other ongoing movements in national and international market spaces. The first of these, of course,

was SEIU's ongoing efforts on the campus of Harvard University, whose 2001 organizing drive was, in part, a model for the UM campaign, having raised janitorial wages to $13.50 at Harvard by the end of March 2006 (Boodhoo 2006g). In an attempt to spread the Harvard spirit, SEIU flew Harvard students to Miami, including a student organizer involved in the 2001 sit-ins in Cambridge, to engage with the student leaders of STAND (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). The second national movement with which SEIU articulated the campaign was student anti-sweatshop activism based at Georgetown University. As we have seen (Chapter 1), in addition to building STAND's credentials in the anti-sweatshop community, SEIU arranged a trip by student activists from Georgetown to UM in November 2005 to school the members of STAND in organizational tactics (Bierman 2005). STAND members also developed a relationship with Jack Mahoney, an activist based in Georgetown at the Living Wage Action Coalition, which is affiliated with United Students Against Sweatshops (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). Mahoney visited STAND at UM and provided student organizing assistance during the latter part of the campaign (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). The Georgetown connection became especially relevant at one moment toward the end of SEIU's pressure campaign against Shalala when the union and students determined that Shalala would be at Georgetown delivering a public address. In an attempt at further escalation, STAND and its Georgetown allies arranged for an interruption of Shalala's event with shouts from undergraduates at Georgetown who bore the "signs of the hunger strikers" at UM (Coker-Dukowitz 2006). But the Georgetown event wasn't the only such occasion. The phenomenon followed Shalala offshore to the Caribbean. On March 15, 2006, Shalala was greeted at an address in Haiti—concerned with Haiti's "health care programs and problems" and given in conjunction with Dr. Laurie Garrett, who is a Senior Fellow for Global Health at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington—by a petition from protestors affiliated with Batay

Ouvriye, an independent Haitian workers' movement acting in solidarity with SEIU and the UM janitors (Batay Ouvriye 2006). In the words of Coker-Dukowitz, "[s]he couldn't go anywhere" (2006). One imagines, in any case, that neither event escaped the attention of Shalala's friend and former colleague Madeline Albright, who is a distinguished professor of diplomacy at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, a director of the Council on Foreign Relations and was to be Shalala's commencement speaker at UM's graduation in May 2006 (See Chapter 1).

The campaign having built up such power within the market economy, the union did ultimately settle there. As described in Chapter 1, the four-year first contract ratified by the janitors on August 23, 2006 enshrined a wage increase of as much as 51 percent, made available a low-cost employer-sponsored health care plan to the workers, and increased paid vacation time (Asher 2006a). Wages did not rise to the "extraordinary" levels of the Harvard janitors, but this was not a meaningless wage increase by local market standards (n.b. that median household income was only $46,637 in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach metropolitan statistical area in 2006 compared to $64,144 in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy metropolitan statistical area (U.S. Census Bureau)). More importantly, the deal set the stage for national pattern bargaining between SEIU and UNICCO as well as increasing SEIU's potential leverage vis-à-vis UNICCO's main competitors in the cleaning and facilities management industry such as ABM Industries, Aramark and Ecolab (Hoovers 2006). UNICCO had experienced sales of approximately $700 million in the 2005 fiscal year, employing a staff of approximately 20,000, with sales growth of 257.3 percent the same year. This was a rapidly growing privately-held company in a labor-intensive industry, and its labor and capital costs certainly came nowhere near $35,000 per year per (full-time and part-time) employee in 2006. Fee increases for clients and profit redistribution for UNICCO would not be overly burdensome. The circumstantially

significant but ultimately small portion of capital at stake in the campaign, moreover, was indeed entirely disproportionate to its political and social effects. As Brakken endeavored to rationalize the situation, with specific reference to the extreme dramaturgy of the hunger strike, "[a]t the end of the day, janitors don't have a lot of structural power in the economy. They have to do other things to win" (2006).

Regardless of the campaign's relatively paltry conclusion by market standards, what the campaign did do was create a strong precedent, and the discursive power of the campaign survived in this precedent as a narrative and form of knowledge borne by the open-ended network of institutionally-embedded actors it had engaged and inspired. The campaign laid the foundation of a novel historical bloc in Miami by creating a loosely-networked community of actors embedded in specific relations of the market society, rooted in deep connections to material life, capable of exercising political influence vis-à-vis elite actors, and committed to a social wage. The message of "worker dignity" and the demand by the workers to be recognized "as people" did not conclude in a market bargain that made them "invisible" once again but spread— and continue to spread—in manifold practical and discursive articulations of the campaign's key actors within a fluid, 'dialogic,' 'heteroglot' and far from definitively rationalized 'marketplace of ideas' now opened to the workers' subjectivity and their belongingness within Miami's civil society (Bakhtin 1981; Holmes 1919; Gramsci 1971). As testified, moreover, by the strategies, tactics and tropes the union, workers and clergy adopted from the history of prior labor struggles (e.g. the tent city, the hunger strike, and the deployment of liberation theology), self-consciously echoing organizing work as diverse as Caesar Chavez's 1968 United Farmworkers Campaign, Martin Luther King's fateful 1968 intervention in the Memphis janitors' strike, and indeed, nothing short of the messianic traditions of the Torah and New Testament (Hawking 2006; Corbishley 2006; Smiley 2006), the campaign emerged in moments

of lucid awareness of its potential historical consequence, as if its key actors were tailoring their work's chronology and narratives for understanding and redeployment in a broader discourse of social contestation.[34] That continuously emergent discourse, with which the present work is articulated, accomplishes the transmission of the historical experience of specific social struggles for future work in the democratic re-appropriation of presence.

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[34] In the words of Heidegger, "the temporality of authentic historicality, as the moment of vision of anticipatory repetition, *deprives* the 'today' of its character *as present*, and weans one from the conventionalities of the 'they'… [W]hen historicality is authentic, it understands history as the 'recurrence' of the possible, and knows that a possibility will recur only if existence is open for it fatefully, in a moment of vision, in resolute repetition" (1962: 443-44).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As promised in the first chapter, I return here to a discussion of the contribution that my analysis of the campaign may bring to bear on relevant theoretical approaches in the traditions of political-economy and critical theory. As mentioned at the outset, I have used this event-level history of the 2006 Justice for Janitors campaign at the University of Miami to focus on a set of concrete efforts at resistance that both flowed from and locally modified the advancement of neo-liberal social policies in greater Miami on the eve of the financial crisis of 2008. By examining the campaign as one localized instance of (resistance to) neoliberal policy, I have attempted both to understand the real limits of the latter and to ponder the alternatives that may be emerging within its relations.

My analysis of the campaign has been organized around a Braudelian approach to historical structuration, a Gramscian approach to agency, and a Heideggerian approach to language. These perspectives have, in a sense, been chosen to provide windows on three 'dimensions' of the campaign's historically-specific emergence, dimensions that take their place—like any strike or other social movement through which they might ramify—in an ultimately open and by no means homogeneous fourth dimension that is time (Bergson 1910; Heidegger 1962; Benjamin 1968).

At each Braudelian layer of analysis—capitalism, the market economy and material life—I have described how the campaign built up and articulated a dialectical confrontation between the 'economic' and the 'material' (Braudel 1981: 28), rooting itself in relations of material life, constituting a politicized network within the market economy, and deploying its resources to influence elite actors. At the latter level, I

discussed how the campaign was conditioned by strategies pursued by local and national financial and political elites, representing both 'capital' and 'labor,' to shape and govern Miami as an emerging 'global city' in the Caribbean Basin. Next I discussed how, in dialectical confrontation with these actors and operating at the level of material life, the campaign mobilized a response to such elite processes from a basis in the concrete realities of Miami's neighborhoods. Finally, at the level of the market economy, I described how the campaign simultaneously settled within and contributed to the further politicization of Miami's market relations and civil society as a whole.

Each of these layers of analysis has also been narrated with a view to the active processes of immanent contestation pursued by the community of interests constituting the campaign. As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, each of the campaign's constituencies built up an alternative network from within its preexisting market relations in an effort to challenge the legitimacy of the University's market fundamentalism. My aim has been to demonstrate how the campaign's participants built up foundations for potential new 'historical blocs' in greater Miami's civil society *within* the relations that were being superseded in historical processes of 'destructuration' (Braudel 1984: 85), not somehow outside or 'beyond' them (Gramsci 1971: 459). Gramsci describes the building of the novel 'historical bloc' as a unified, all-absorbing and 'totalitarian' organic process that requires the development of new ideational forms in the concrete relations of existing material praxis (1971: 366). Structures and superstructures develop *together* in the new 'historical bloc,' which is ultimately a "complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the social relations of production" (Id. 366), owing to the concrete historicity of its emergence.

I have also narrated each layer of my analysis with a view to the role of discourse and signification in 'producing' the political and economic outcomes achieved. By 'production' here I have had in mind not a process of active causation

but of *conditioning* through which what is produced "comes, lighting itself, to language" (Heidegger 1977: 239). Production in this sense is thought *precisely not* as a strictly causal action but as a granting of the possibility of a particular kind of phenomenal presentment, an opening on the horizon of the real or a letting-be (Id. 193). Here, I have aimed to show that the new discourse the campaign introduced—rooted in a conception of a 'community of faith,' committed to a 'living wage' for the workers and demanding a recognition of 'worker dignity'—was active in building the power of the campaign and disarming that of its adversaries.

In the end, the campaign suggests that worker-based movements, especially when pursued during periods of systemic 'destructuration,' offer significant potential to check and even challenge the elite exercise of power if conceived and realized as moments of simultaneous economic, political and cultural contestation. It also raises a number of theoretical and practical questions. These concern the extent of the activation or radicalization of relations at the level of contemporary material life; the openness of contemporary market relations as a domain of historical change or phenomenal emergence; the continued salience of traditions of the past—especially those of historical 'religious' practice—as carriers and facilitators of social 'progress'; and the full potential for discourse to be activated and 'mobilized' across instances of demand for social justice, whether contemporaneous or historical.

Beyond these problems raised, as I concluded in 2008,[35] 'practical' lessons from the Miami campaign can be drawn only in light of the experimentation, flexibility, and relentless adaptation that made the campaign possible. It is unlikely, for instance, that, barring the coincidence of a similarly experienced and resourceful

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[35] The large part of this final paragraph was first published in the *Labor Studies Journal* in "Contending Rationality, Leadership, and Collective Struggle: The 2006 Justice for Janitors Campaign at the University of Miami," © 2008 United Association for Labor Education.

community of actors and supporters, a hunger strike in the precise manner of the Miami campaign could be so effective as to outweigh its risks. The success of the hunger strike in Miami was largely specific to the cultural and material circumstances of the time and place in which it was enacted, including a community of workers who brought direct practical experience in realizing the full symbolic potential of the repertoire from relatively recent worker resistances in post-revolutionary Cuba. While it ultimately worked remarkably well under the circumstances, it presented an enormous peril to the lives and well-being of the hunger strikers that can by no means recommend itself for broad replication. The 'lesson' of the Miami campaign is thus much less about what specific tactical repertoires work in a narrow sense than about what quality of worker empowerment and creative participation may be necessary to generate the broad commitment, community collaboration, and public attention requisite for victory. Practical patterns of constant escalation, diverse tactics, the pursuit of influential community alignments, work toward normative coalescence, tight coordination, and flexible strategic experimentation are necessary but insufficient premises of success. What will work in any specific strategic campaign still remains to be discovered in every emergent instance. In this indeterminacy resides the challenge—and, indeed, the good fortune—of social organizing in general.

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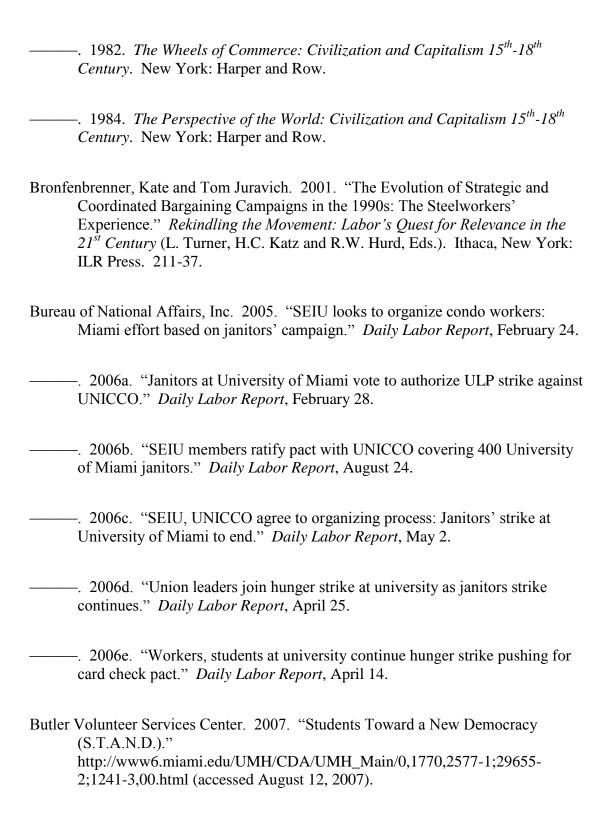
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