Varieties of Power in Transnational Union Campaigns

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Three Types of Power

- Structural Power
- Institutional Power
- Coalitional Power

Success in transnational union campaigns requires the exercise of a context-appropriate power type.
Structural Power

• physically disrupt employer’s activities

• comes from workers’ embeddedness in economic system

• shipping, stevedoring, JIT manufacturing, courier services, high quality fruit export
Institutional Power

- relocate conflict to “borrow” advantages of more favorable laws, regulations, procedures

- comes from workers’ embeddedness in industrial relations institutions & legal systems

- T-Mobile, H&M, G4S
Coalitional Power

• leverage influence of actors beyond the labor movement

• comes from workers’ embeddedness in society, communities, networks

• garment industry, restaurants, hotels
Hypothesis

• Each power type is only effective in certain contexts.

• Exercising any of the three power types requires both intra-union & inter-union coordination.

• A successful transnational campaign thus requires the exercise of a context-appropriate power type AND intra- & inter-union coordination.

• Research project: 6 case studies (3 matched pairs)