

Reciprocity: The Ins and Outs of Unionism

Global Labour University Conference, Berlin, 15-17 May 2014:
“Inequality within and among Nations: Causes, Effects, and Responses”

Reciprocity: The Ins and Outs of Unionism

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Abstract:

The traditional union model is based on the notion of reciprocal obligation. Who one's obligations extend to, and conversely, who is obligated towards oneself, is demarcated by the mutual recognition of who has legitimate claim to these benefits and obligations. Typically, the scope of the union is demarcated by locality. The clarity of this model, with its unambiguous demarcation of who's in, and who's out, renders the traditional union ill-equipped to contend with labour rights issues that arise in the context of global capital. Unable to address themselves to issues that extend beyond their limited scope, unions are locked into a system of ineffectuality, as they can only ever *react* to the local form that such issues take. The traditional union model produces a static union, which in turn leads to their becoming less relevant.

Possible solutions to the problems that arise from a static model of reciprocity are not to be found however, in the dissolution of boundaries altogether. Such dissolution would undermine the very solidarity that accrues from the model of reciprocity that is proper to unionism. This reciprocal solidarity remains the foundation of a workable and sustainable unionism and stands opposed to the logic of individualism that underpins capitalism. If in the transformation of the scope of unionism the connections between those involved are weakened, so too is the legitimacy of the claims that each member has to each other.

An emerging approach to the problem of demarcation can be found in the notion of practice-dependence. This field, found in the work of Andrea Sangiovanni, Miriam Ronzoni and Kate MacDonald, amongst others, explores the possibility of determining boundaries to obligation via ongoing interactions or exchanges,

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such as supply chains. Because of this, who one is obligated to, or where such a reciprocal relationship can extend, is not limited to pre-existing models of exclusion. This approach is more fluid than the traditional location dependent model, and yet, at the same time, resists making obligations universal. Rather, what becomes important is how obligations are determined and maintained. What is opened up with such a model is the inflexibility that puts the union model at risk of becoming irrelevant.

Applying this practice dependent theory in a union context can aid the development of a union model in which the strength of traditional unionism is retained. This opens up the possibility of transforming these boundaries such that the issues confronting labour rights in a transnational context are no longer excluded, which in turn creates a new transnational model of unionism that is both effective and relevant.

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Introduction

Since the 1970s the pervasiveness of neoliberal policy has undercut hard-won working conditions and labour rights globally. At the same time the power of organized labour has diminished. Trade unions are fighting to keep the few members they do have, whilst at the same time confronting issues at the local level that are global in cause. What has emerged therefore is an incongruity between the union model and the space in which they operate. The dominant logic of individualism, reinforced at every turn by the pervasiveness of capitalism, makes concepts such as collectivity and solidarity sound either provincial or from a past that is no longer present. On the one hand such concepts have become nothing but sloganeering, and on the other they express a hope for a future that has yet to arrive. Yet it is the potential power of collective action, underpinned by reciprocity, which makes organized labour a potential counter to the excesses of global capital. If the experience of work however, is to move away from one of exploitation, this potential needs to be realized and the regress of organized labour in some way alleviated.

This research paper seeks to further understand what is limiting the effectuality of the current trade union model and offer insights into what would be required to move beyond such limitations. Starting from the proposition that what determines union power is the strength of reciprocity within the organization, the paper will initially concentrate on elaborating what is entailed in the concept. By understanding what reciprocity is, and why mutual acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the claims made underpins its effectiveness, it becomes clear that there is a limit to how far reciprocity can extend. The exclusivity from a defined scope acts as a signpost to those inside and outside of the relationship. It marks out how far reciprocity is extended, reinforcing the mutual acknowledgement of the legitimacy of claims made upon one another.

However, the dominant union model is one of exclusivity, having a defined membership, and an associated limited affect. Because this model depends upon geography for the determining of its boundaries to obligation, its scope is pre-determined. By pre-determining scope based on locality many of the issues facing workers that stem from global capital fall outside of this scope, rendering this traditional model ineffective. Being both static and unable to respond to what falls outside of the traditional boundaries, union response is reactive rather than proactive. Pre-determining scope according to location must be re-thought if unionism is to counter global capital.

Because of this, organized labour must look beyond location as the grounds for determining scope. Further, the spotlight, so it will be argued, must be refocused upon reciprocity. Reciprocity is a relational term; it entails exchange between subjects, as opposed to economic forms of exchange. Moreover, reciprocity relies upon mutual acknowledgement and is strengthened through each reiteration. Contained in the notion of reciprocity, and the associated relations and exchanges to which it is bound, is the possibility of determining the boundaries of scope in ways not subject to the limitations of the pre-determined.

Put another way, it could be argued that such a move, in which reciprocity becomes the focus, allows relations between subjects to determine scope, and scope to reflect reciprocity. The idea of a relational practice-dependent scope is thus explored through drawing on the work of the emerging practice-dependent position within social justice theory. Further, the example of Fair Trade will be used to outline the way in which organizations may move beyond locality and determine scope relationally. How a practice-dependent model may work and what needs to be thought through becomes more apparent via approaching the example of Fair Trade.

This paper draws extensively therefore on social justice literature to detail why reciprocity is critical to union power and must remain central to any transformation of the union model. Initially, what the traditional model looks like will be outlined, and the concept of reciprocity and how it relates to location explored. Subsequently, why this static model is ineffectual and the changes that have brought this about will be addressed. Drawing on these problems within the traditional union model, a possible practice-dependent way forward that moves beyond location will then be sketched. The insights offered by this embryonic practice-dependent position are then applied to Fair Trade, as an example of an organization attempting to determine scope beyond the limitations of the pre-determined. The practice-dependent model and the lessons of Fair Trade can then be transferred to unionism, setting the foundations for the development of a practice-dependent union model. For organized labour to regain its footing, it must move away from the traditional static union model. The determinants of scope must be re-thought without unhinging the sense of collectivity that is derived from a defined scope. A possible way forward can be found in the practice-dependent position and its relationship to reciprocity.

1. Union Power

1.1 Organized labour: a brief overview

Organized labour and the trade union model developed in concurrence with the industrial age. Extending from the trade associations that regulated admission into respective trades, as well as offering support and training to members, the modern union developed throughout the 1800s in response to rapid changes taking place with the ascendancy of an industrial model of capitalism. It cemented its' relevance and power at the turn of the century with powerful organized labour representing workers in negotiations with employers, forging political parties to cede to worker demands and being embedded in local community life (Stewart et al, 2009). With the rise of neoliberal forms of social formation and the associated individuation of the subject that has followed, as well as the pursuing of anti-union labour policies by many governments from the late 1970s onwards, union membership has declined, and, it could be argued, faces something of a crisis. As a brief sketch of how unionism has developed and the different models employed to counter the unequal wage-labour relationship, examples from developed countries such as Canada, the UK and Australia are drawn from. This should not be seen as a comprehensive overview, but rather

briefly illustrative so as to draw out some of the key shifts and facets of the union model.

Prior to WWI the labour movement was closely connected to radical politics. Such a politics called for international solidarity and the establishment of a powerful international union movement that aimed at the restructuring of the global labour-wage system and, ultimately, capitalism (Peterson et al, 2012). Yet, although this was the global message and goal of many in the labour movement, the day-to-day union was highly localized. As Stephenson and Wray assert (2009: 29) in their analysis of mining communities in county Durham, employment was connected to location, and towns developed around centers of employment, such as manufacturing plants, mining or agriculture¹. Unions growing from these centers of employment were thus deeply embedded in the community in which they were located. The union model that developed in parallel to these industries was described, 'as a mini welfare state', filling the gaps created by a lack of social welfare policy (Stephenson and Wray, 2009: 29). With most men working in the mines, for example, or other industry, and most workers being a member of the local union, almost all members of the community were connected and affected by both the employer and union presence.² The union was both shaped and helped shape the community it was attached to. Being embedded in and drawing from the community, a place of already existing bonds and shared identity, allowed the union to draw on and encourage a common identity (Stewart et al, 2009: 8-10). In this sense, unions at this time both had a global vision, and yet were cemented to and defined by location and the existing community that they emerged from.

With the rise of neoliberalism³ and globalization⁴ in the 1970s onwards, the importance of geographical location in industry and employment decreased. This period also saw many unions becoming increasingly bureaucratic, reflecting the "new" industries and developments in the labour markets they now represented, including a rise in the service industries across the developed world. As Peterson et al (2012: 621) outline, this was a post-war trend of moving away from an international workers movement towards a model defined by and limited to location. This bureaucratic unionism often prioritized servicing existing local members, bargaining collective agreements and protecting wages and already existing conditions at the expense of the broader goal of an international solidarity or transformation of capitalism (Fairbrother, 2008: 214). In much industry individualized contracts and ideas of "flexible" working conditions became the norm. A shift occurred therefore in which employment became less

¹ However this is still a form found in many places in Germany.

² The union provided community meeting places, welfare services, as well as keeping the employer in check. (Stephenson and Wray, 2009: 29)

³ Briefly described, neoliberalism is a economic and political position that promotes the rule of the market, cutting public expenditure, deregulation, privatization and eliminating the concept of the public good or community in favour of the individual

⁴ Understood as the growing speed and power of the spread of information and capital and interconnectedness on a global scale.

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connected to location and community and a rising bureaucracy of union models in some ways distancing members from the goings-on within the union, promoting servicing in preference to a transformation of the wage-labour relationship. Incongruously, whilst work was becoming less localized, unions were in turn becoming more location dependent, with their terms of reference being reduced to what, in effect, was right in front of their eyes. By lowering their eyes, unions lost sight not only of the more radical grounds upon which they were built, but also of the changes taking place in labour markets across the globe. The effect of this incongruity was therefore doubled, each step in the wrong direction doubling the distance with which unions found themselves from their constituents.

Since the 1980s a form of organizing called community or social movement unionism developed in response to the bureaucratic servicing model, which seeks to combat the growing ineffectiveness of the traditional model. Characteristic to this model is that it is embedded in the local community, engages with issues that affect all working people, promotes an active rather than passive membership and promotes collective actions and broader transformative visions, aiming, in a sense, to be proactive rather than reactive (Lévesque, Hennebert, & Fairbrother, 2013: 214-5). Although still primarily determined by location, such models draw a lot from the pre-war labour movement that built upon and shaped existing communities. The problem however, is that they act in a space where employment is less localized and more individualized.

Debate between the servicing and organizing model is being carried out within most unions. However what has become common when painting the modern union in a broad brush-stroke is that it is almost always institutionalized, regulated, and spatially bound (Greenwood & McBride 2009). This is coupled with constant debate over where the scope of membership should fall, as well as the issues that should be engaged with. The central question is whether unions should focus on local workplace concerns or the broader experience of work within global capital? (Peterson et al, 2012: 622). However, as the effects of global capital are causing so many of these local workplace concerns a model that fails to engage with this broader experience will be locked into a cycle of ineffectuality.

| 1.2 *The power of reciprocity*

The power of a union is determined by its ability to set and carry out its purpose (Fairbrother, Hennebert, & Lévesque 2013: 41). What sets unionism apart from the dominant neoliberal logic of today is that it promotes a collective consciousness and draws on the power that comes from working collectively and supporting each other; responsibility is not born by the individual alone. Through working collectively, the 'whole is stronger than the sum of its parts' (Stewart et al, 2009: 10). It is recognized that within the workplace it is the employer who holds the power, yet through collective action and organization employees can rectify this power imbalance. As unions are the members they represent, and conversely members are the union, the more those members can

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lay claim and rely upon one another the stronger the union will be. A reliable and viable group is one where union members are willing to give up some of their personal benefits, such as going on strike or paying fees, for the benefits of other members, and assume that the same will be done on their behalf (Thompson, 1998: 185). The strength of these bonds and sense of obligation to one another dictates how far the union can fight and for how long that support will be there.

Collective action is thus underpinned by reciprocity. The strength of reciprocity within the group will determine the union's power, as it is this internal reciprocity, or solidarity, that is the glue holding the group together determining whether members will stand and support one another when needed. It is a relationship involving mutual exchange and support (Collins English Dictionary, 2014). Unionism thus depends on a 'consciousness of the importance of solidarity' (Bezuidenhout, 2000: 28). As such reciprocity is the concept under which union power can be thought.

Reciprocity however, does not just appear. Rather, it is an extension of a common identity or collective consciousness that is derived from participation in a particular group. As Lévesque and Murray claim, (2002: 52) 'to achieve its agenda, a local union must rely on the collective identity and cohesion of its members.' In previous union models this collective identity already existed from the connection workers had to existing communities (Stewart et al, 2009: 10), and from which unions could draw upon when collective action occurred and reciprocity thus required. This need for a collective identity and existing bonds for establishing reciprocal relationships of worth is situated within the communitarian position within social justice literature.

Drawing on the communitarian theoretical position, reciprocity and the obligational claims that come with it emerge because of the already existing commonalities and social bonds that are particular to that relationship (Walzer, 2008; Carens, 2008; Miller: 2008). How far reciprocity extends reflects how far these existing bonds and shared identity reach. This builds on the idea that individuals come laden with social baggage that they cannot extricate themselves from, and it is these commonalities and relations that form the basis of the group (Miller, 2008: 236-251). The idea that individuals are part of particular social groups, sharing commonalities and unable to extricate themselves from such relations is a counter argument to the neo-liberal doctrine of individual responsibility, which cannot account for the powerlessness of the individual in any given context. Rather, what is acknowledged within unionism is the power of the collective and the bonds and commonalities that strengthen this underlying reciprocity. This identity is a collective one, formed through and underpinning the exchanges of the group. A collective identity and experience builds connections and it is these connections that the notion of reciprocity encapsulates.

Although a collective identity is vital to reciprocity, members must mutually acknowledge this reciprocity and its claims for it to have power. By definition, reciprocity must go both ways. Those within the union must mutually recognize the legitimacy of the claims made upon one another and acknowledge each

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other's right to membership. For unions, including a membership fee acts as a clear demarcation of who is in and who is out. Fees, and members only meetings, for example, are signposts to other members that they have legitimate claims upon one another, which in turn establishes a mutually recognized form of reciprocity. This is the same way that language, music, or a shared history acts as social signposts, demarcating the boundaries of particular cultural groups and allowing for mutual recognition of membership within them (Canovan, 2000). Reciprocity cannot therefore, be a matter of having unions impose a sense of solidarity upon its members. Rather, this solidarity must be something that is cultivated, and lived out, by the members themselves. In the notion of reciprocity is the idea that belonging to a collective is not something to which one must yield, but is, in a sense, freely chosen.

Mutual recognition between members is in many ways the signifier of legitimacy. Although ambiguous, legitimacy means the mutual recognition of the validity of members' belonging to that reciprocal relationship. For the division between those included and those excluded to be legitimate, there must be mutual acknowledgement of the validity of those positions (Walzer, 2008: 162; Miller, 2008: 244). Each member and non-member needs to recognize both their own and others' position within or outside of the group. If the scope is not defined, the claims of reciprocity are not mutually acknowledged and become less clear. This ambiguity creates tensions over who has access to that relationship, which in turn threatens its stability and legitimacy. Thus, a defined scope and exclusivity adds legitimacy to the relationship. It is reciprocity that determines union power, yet reciprocity requires level of exclusivity so that there is mutual recognition of who is in and who is out of that relationship. Yet it is not the centrality of reciprocity within the union model that is limiting its effectuality but rather the way the model has determined scope. Limiting scope by locality has somewhat separated scope from the reciprocity it is meant to serve.

The strength of reciprocity is however, subject to dissolution. There is only so far that reciprocity can be extended before it weakens as the more people who have claim over you, the less that claim means. It is the exclusivity of the relationship that gives it meaning and value, the extension of which undermines both. Membership becomes the 'primary good' as it allows access to the included benefits and obligations (Walzer, 1981). The scope of reciprocity, or to put it differently, how far reciprocity is extended, must be defined, such that those inside and outside of the relationship mutually acknowledge their position. When the division between insiders – those who are claimants to those obligations and entitlements – and outsiders – those who fall outside of obligations and entitlements – is not clearly defined, reciprocity is weakened, as those positions are no longer mutually acknowledged. Thus, reciprocity is comparable, some must remain outside of the scope for the relationship to be particular and have meaning (Walzer 2008; Carens, 2008; Miller, 2008). If reciprocity was to be universal, and each individual had equal claim on each other, that claim would lose meaning, as it no longer signifies something particular. When scope clearly demarcates access to particular entitlements and obligations, members will be motivated to maintain these boundaries because of what they demarcate. Thus, an exclusive and defined scope is critical in

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maintaining reciprocity, in the same way that a collective identity is important when establishing it.

In the case of labour unions, a defined or exclusive scope is employed to reinforce the particularity of the relationship, creating an inward and exclusive group. As Richard Hyman states (2001: 170), 'the boundaries of union inclusion are also frontiers of exclusion.' In other words, the defining of the boundaries to obligation necessarily entails exclusion. This exclusory nature is required to constantly reiterate the legitimacy of the relationship, and in practical terms, to warrant the fees, and guarantee the benefits of remaining a member. Weakening that exclusivity by broadening the scope undermines the legitimacy of the relationship. If membership no longer determines the scope of reciprocity and thus who has access to those benefits and obligations previously determined by the relationship, the rationale for remaining a part of that relationship is weakened. Exclusivity helps establish legitimate boundaries to reciprocity, and the legitimacy in turn reiterates the defined scope of the relationship. Scope is critical, yet if the current scope is limiting union capacity, the answer is not to do away with a defined scope altogether but rather reconceive how that scope is determined. So, that although scope is what determines reciprocity, such reciprocity doesn't have to be limited to a scope inscribed by location.

1.3 The maintenance of scope

It is not enough that scope be merely defined in the first instance. To avoid dissolving, the defining of the scope upon which unionism depends must be maintained. Education and activity become, in this sense, critical tools in maintaining exclusivity and strengthening reciprocity. As reciprocity both comes from and maintains a collective identity, education around what this collective identity involves aids its continuation. The stronger the internal cohesion, which is made possible via education, the more likely the claims upon one another will be acknowledged (Lévesque, Hennebert & Fairbrother, 2013: 218) (Lévesque, 2010: 316). Moreover, education also plays a central role in keeping the group accountable. Accountability requires the free flow of information between members of which education is a part. Accountability mechanisms allow for members to hold those who wield power to account when the agreed standards have not been met (Koenig-Archibugi, 2010: 1144). Accountability acts to enhance legitimacy for those who have delegated power and those affected by decisions made, as it creates avenues for redress if those within that relationship exceed their position (Koenig-Archibugi, 2010: 1146). Accountability is directly related therefore to the up-keep of a defined scope, which in turn, enables union members to determine the boundaries to obligation.

Most union models employ some version of a direct accountability relationship; the union is the members, and the members are the union. To maintain this direct accountability there must be an active participation in decision-making processes, as well as the free flow of information to allow those decisions to be made (Koenig-Archibugi & Macdonald: 500). This active participation of members establishes a level of accountability and buy-in to the decisions made. This also increases activity between members, growing the number of exchanges

that occur and potentially the bonds and acknowledgement of the relationship (Lévesque & Murray, 2002: 52). The strength of reciprocity is dependent upon ongoing exchanges and is relational rather than static and pre-determined. Therefore, the more activity, free-flow of information and accountability mechanisms employed within the group the more exchanges and connections that will occur. The more exchanges and connections that develop within the group, the stronger the collective identity and mutual acknowledgement of membership. All of this acts to reinforce reciprocity.

1.4 Location and exclusion

Within the traditional union model, location is the determinant of scope. Historically, geographical space signified the boundary of a community, and of a homogenous social group (Benhabib, 2006). These existing bonds meant that location reflected how far the reciprocity of the group could be extended, and thus, who entered into a reciprocal relationship with whom. The union's scope drew from and reinforced the collective identity and reciprocity of the community (Stewart et al, 2009; Stephenson and Wray: 2009).⁵ For the traditional union, the locational model is generally determined by industry and narrowed down further by geography, such as the worksite or regional area. The scope of reciprocity is thus limited to location and demarcated by a fee-paying membership.

Traditionally, limiting union membership to the worksite or local industry would be a logical step. The workplace and local community was where the employer was, bargaining agreements negotiated and workplace issues emerged, as well as the site of pre-existing commonalities required for reciprocity. Union power was thus derived from location. However, as Stevens et al (2009: 5) describe in their analysis of communities and geographical space, when the determinant of a group is solely geographical, the space becomes a limiting container. It is pre-determined and ignores the fact that geographic communities are dynamic organisms that change over time. Location cannot, consequently, be reduced to a pure physicality. The sense in which location exceeds its physical constraints is apparent in the changes that have taken place in the global labour market, the voracity of global capital, and way in which seemingly separated sites have become interconnected with the rise of globalization. Now, the workplace is not necessarily where the causes of workplace injustices emerge and community connections have become less pronounced. The context has changed and as the importance of locality has diminished for both employment and community, determining the scope of the union model in this way no longer makes sense. Because the historical, and for that matter, current scope of the traditional union model is largely determined by locality, yet the many challenges facing working people stem from global capital and the global labour markets, the causes of issues that unions grapple with fall outside of this scope. In turn, union action is rendered ineffective. The pervasiveness of global capital requires unions to engage beyond the local if they are to remain relevant.

⁵ For a detailed analysis of geography and class, with reference to organized labour, see David Harvey.

2. Limitations of the Traditional Model

2.1 *The limitations of locality in the face of global capital.*

Although how 'new' globalization is remains debatable, it has inarguably issued in an era of speed. The flow of information and capital, along with a certain interconnectedness, now far exceed anything seen before. At the same time, union membership has been steadily falling and precarious employment on the rise. Labour rights gained by the labour movement, such as the 8 hour day, and weekend and penalty rates, are becoming increasingly foreign in developed countries and perhaps never gained ground in developing ones⁶. The impact of globalization has had damaging effects on labour rights due to increased international competition, the re-locative capacity of production and new governing rules based upon supra-national agreements and institutions beyond the state⁷ (Lévesque and Murray, 2002: 41). Labour markets are now affected by decisions made outside of the state and state control, which also means beyond the auspices of a determined location.

A quick sketch of the Australian car manufacturing industry illustrates this perfectly. Australia, like many developed countries, was once a large car manufacturing country. In recent years the industry has witnessed a steady decline, with car manufacturers such as Ford, Holden (once an Australian icon) and now Toyota quitting the Australian market (Toyota Shutdown, 2014). This has spelled the end of the Australian Automotive Industry with some claiming that over 50,000 jobs could be lost nationally (Borrello and Uhlmann, 2013). The general reasoning given is that local production costs were making Australian-based production no longer profitable⁸. These claims were tied to the existence of relatively high local wages, a high Australian dollar and, primarily, the ease of multi-national companies to move production to sites where labour is cheaper, labour laws less rigid and the workforce less unionized. This has meant that Australian workers were not only in negotiation with their employer, but in competition with other employees from across the globe who could offer their services at a lower rate.⁹ This competition between employees, often from different branches of the same global company, divides the labour market and

⁶ The Australian Business Council is carrying out a fresh attack on penalty rates in Australia (Ryan, 2014)

⁷ It could also be argued that these rules and regulations have at times tried to protect labour rights, especially for those in developing countries through International Labour Organization agreements, yet the enforceability of these are limited in comparison to World Trade Organisation or International Monetary Fund loans and agreements.

⁸ Toyota Australia chief executive officer Max Yasuda blamed the 'unfavourable Australian dollar' and increased competitiveness making 'it unviable to build cars in Australia.' (Toyota Shutdown, 2014)

⁹ Interestingly Holden CEO of Australia Mr Devereux, has been promoted to a position with parent company General Motors in China after announcing the exit of Holden from the Australian landscape (Borrello and Uhlmann, 2013)

the possible collective identity of the global workforce, who are subject to the same global conditions.¹⁰ Whilst this increasing exodus of the Australian manufacturing industry was occurring the Australian Labor government¹¹ pumped up car manufacturers with tax incentives and bailouts in attempts to render the Australian market more viable.¹²¹³ Within the unions who represented these industries, pressure was put on government to do more, local media was brought on side, and local communities called on companies to rethink their decisions (Employment Outlook Bleak, 2013). Yet, underlying all of this was a realization that unions and for that matter, government, could do little to reverse the decision to move production offshore. However, in the face of such crisis the collective identity of the unions involved was reinforced. They were prepared to stand and fight together, which reflected the strong reciprocity that existed, and they had support from large sectors the community. And yet, both unions and the employee's affect were not able to halt the continued decline of their industry. They were able to put forward an agenda, but unable to carry it out. Something, it would seem, was amiss.

This inability was, it is argued, a result of the limitations imposed by the pre-determined scope of the union. Unions, in being limited to location, are excluded from the forums where decisions are being made. They were reacting to local forms of global causes. As Fairbrother, Hennebert & Lévesque assert (2013: 39), the certainties that unions once relied upon have diminished since the 1970s where deregulation, flexible patterns of employment and the re-organization of employment sectors have reshaped the global labour market. Increased global competition and restrictions on government intervention further limit the effectuality of an organization limited to a pre-determined location. With the labour landscape transformed but union models remaining tied to archaic form, employers now have the option more than ever of choosing whether to engage unions in partnership or sideline them (Fairbrother, Hennebert & Lévesque, 2013: 40). The case of the Australian car manufacturing industry and my own experience in dealing with government outsourcing of contracts in the Australian Public Service reasserts this contention. The union's job became one of making sure the redundancy clauses were followed, rather than aiming to stop redundancies in the first place, as the unions were not party to such decisions. The structure of the union will affect capacity (Lévesque, Hennebert, & Fairbrother, 2013: 217) and if this structure excludes the causes of workers' exploitation then unions will remain on the back foot, constantly reacting to local effects rather than tackling the cause. What has opened up is an incongruity

¹⁰ This phenomenon has also been documented in Lévesque and Murray's (2010) analysis of the connections made between Mexican, and North American manufacturing employees and their unions.

¹¹ Ford announced its end date during the labour government and both Holden and now Toyota announced their end date during the early months of the coalition government (Toyota shutdown, 2014)

¹² Notably the coalition government refused to continue these programs (Toyota shutdown, 2014)

¹³ Since 2003 Ford and Holden have 'shared in more than \$12billion in taxpayer funded industry assistance' (Borrello and Uhlmann, 2013)

between union scope and the issues that affect union members. Because of this incongruity, unions can no longer address themselves to the issues to which their members are at mercy.

2.2 The changing context

The context from which the traditional union model emerged has changed. The importance of locality in employment is not as strong as it once was. Whereas the workplace was once cemented to its geography and the community built around it, workplaces are now becoming more transient and less tied to location. Workers are less likely to live in the immediate vicinity of their workplace and the speed of information sharing has reduced the importance of physical distance, which renders locality less significant for both employment and community (Held, 2008). The fragmented workplaces, with less of a guarantee of permanence, are less embedded in the community. Further, within many communities populations have become more transient, meaning that territorial borders are rarely synonymous with homogenous social groups as they once may have been (Benhabib, 2006). Instead, individuals are creating other linkages and loyalties, making their own community through shared interests, or perhaps online, rather than defined by location. The context from which the location based union model made sense has changed.

Globalization and the spread of neoliberalism have also impacted upon the capability of forming a collective working identity. The collective message of unionism underpinned by reciprocity is at odds with the dominant discourse of neoliberalism where competition and the primacy of the individual has become the ideological yardstick. Voices that do not conform to these ideals are harder to transmit, limiting the ability to form a collective class-consciousness (Upchurch and Mathers, 2011: 268). As Fairbrother, Hennebert & Lévesque claim (2012:167) neoliberalism has brought in a workplace organized around the individual '...underwriting the worker as an individual, rather than as a member of the collective labour process.' Workers' solidarity has largely given way to an individualized worker's identity. Within global supply chains, workers and workplaces are pushed into competition with one another, limiting the potential of establishing a collective consciousness and reciprocity (Lévesque and Murray, 2002: 42). Further, the sheer amount of information workers must contend with means that workers are more discerning with their consumption of ideas, which requires unions to work harder to get the collective message across (Lévesque and Murray, 2002: 42). This voracity of information in some sense disables peoples' ability to consume it and to see a convincing alternative; workers become paralyzed by the sheer amount of ideas available to them.

The working experience is constantly evolving yet the union model remains static. The post-war trend of limiting unionism to location no longer reflects the context from which it developed. A static model cannot adequately engage with a constantly evolving landscape as it becomes further disjointed from the reality of work. Union capacity is determined by mutually recognized reciprocity, yet by limiting scope to location, unions become ineffectual. The current union model is, owing to its limited scope, unable to respond to what falls outside of the

traditional boundaries. Yet, doing away with limitations and establishing a universal scope would weaken reciprocity, as reciprocity requires boundaries and an exclusive relationship. To reverse the decline in union power the model must remain exclusive but move beyond location and its static pre-determinism.

3. A practice-dependent way forward?

3.1 Exclusive but not static

Reciprocity is relational; it draws upon existing exchanges and commonalities and requires ongoing activity and interaction for it to be maintained. As it is relational it is dynamic and an ongoing process, rather than static. Each exchange between members employs reciprocity and also strengthens it through increasing mutual recognition of the legitimacy of those claims entailed. In this way it is ongoing, it is reiterated and strengthened through continued interactions between members and relies upon those exchanges to create a common identity. Yet the reciprocal relationship is also particular, being both exclusive and relying upon that exclusivity for mutual acknowledgement of the claims being made. However, as reciprocity is an ongoing relational process demarcating boundaries based upon a static scope limited to location expresses a logic that runs counter to the notion of reciprocity.

The emerging practice-dependent position within social justice theory recognizes that obligational relationships need boundaries. Yet, at the same time, it also makes the claim that those boundaries need to be somewhat fluid, washing the baby without throwing out the bathwater so to speak. This position, although still embryonic, highlights how legitimate and workable obligations, or a mutually acknowledged reciprocity, emerge from existing relationships, rather than universal assumptions. Practice-dependency attempts to reformulate the communitarian approach of determining scope based on relational grounds by moving beyond often static and state-based communitarian conclusions (Sangiovanni, 2008). This approach recognizes that the statist position of communitarianism limits its applicability in a world where the causes of many injustices are beyond the state. There is both acknowledgement of the crucial role that boundaries play in legitimizing obligations and the recognition of the need to move beyond territorially defined boundaries. The relationship remains exclusive, but the scope is determined and reiterated by ongoing exchanges. As Ronzoni argues (2009: 233), people are obligated to one another by ‘...virtue of the relationships they stand respect to one another in specific social practices...’ The practice dependent school focuses on the importance of pre-existing relationships and interactions in establishing legitimate boundaries. It seeks to explore whether these relations and practices can inform the scope of the relationship, so that membership is determined on the basis of these ongoing exchanges. What a practice-dependent model initiates is a move away from pre-determined boundaries.

These exchanges or practices may evolve through issue areas such as supply chains, social movements, industry or political loyalties. They cut across domestic and international governance levels but still remain exclusive. It is in

this sense that they differ from the potential universalism that could emerge with the dissolution of pre-determined boundaries (MacDonald, 2011; Ronzoni, 2009).¹⁴ Practices could be as large and regulated as global trade, or, in turn, less specific, such as political loyalties or the connections made between the global Occupy Movement. Thus, practices can be based on pre-existing commonalities, a shared goal or ideology, or evolve out of highly regulated exchanges. Yet, what connects these practices is that they have determined rules, norms, and acknowledged expectations contained within them. As Wollner (2010: 284) suggests, a practice is a continually reiterated exchange, coordinated through sets of norms, rules and 'established patterns of mutual expectation.' This means that the boundaries of reciprocity are not limited to the pre-existent and could in fact respond to emerging relations. As practices evolve so does scope in order to reflect the arena in which practices are based. Because of this, determining scope becomes an ongoing process rather than a static snap-shot of reality (Ayelet and Ronzoni, 2011: 56).

3.2 Fair Trade as a practice-dependent model?

Fair Trade draws on this practice-dependent model to establish a transnational social justice institution. It utilizes the existing relations within the global supply chain as the grounds for determining scope. Scope is determined then according to issue areas rather than territorially defined borders.¹⁵ Yet Fair Trade has relied upon a static snapshot of those exchanges rather than recognizing that scope is continually reiterated through practices and is an ongoing process. Membership still remains exclusive and defined, but policies carried out are creating new relations and exchanges rather than reiterating and maintaining those initial determinants of scope. Critically, as a gap develops between the exchanges that determined the initial scope and those that are the current lived experience, the boundaries of Fair Trade have become contested, exclusivity weakened and members less likely to mutually acknowledge each other's claim upon one another. As such, Fair Trade, as a case study, provides a unique means to explore practice-dependency, including what it could offer and the potential problems that can arise.

3.3 A brief overview of Fair Trade

Fair Trade is a transnational social justice institution with clearly defined principles, regulations and membership policies, emerging in response to the perceived multi-leveled and entrenched injustices within the global trading system (Fair Trade Association Australia and New Zealand (FTAANZ), n.d, a). Because of this, membership is controlled, and the scope exclusive and inward looking. Officially institutionalized as the Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) in 1997, Fair Trade is an institutional framework of member producer organizations that agree to a range of "fair" principles and social redistribution

¹⁴ For more articles that elucidate this practice-dependent position see Andrea Sangiovanni, Miriam Ronzoni, Saladin Meckled-Garcia and Aaron James.

¹⁵ For other theories that explore this idea of issue areas as ways of defining scope see (Pogge, 2008; Waldron, 2006; Thompson, 1998).

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mechanisms. These range from higher wages, environmental protection, and unionization in exchange for higher prices paid for their product (FLO, 2010). The definition of Fair Trade as stated in their charter of Principles (2009) defines Fair Trade as:

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.

The producers are recognized by consumers as adhering to these social justice principles by the presence of the Fair Trade logo. It aims to educate consumers to allow the making of informed consumer choices, whilst empowering member producers to escape the poverty cycle (Neil and Throsby, 2009).

Fair Trade encompasses a mix of formal members, such as certified producers, exporters, National Initiatives (NIs) and importers, and non-member beneficiaries or participants, such as consumers, as well as the wider co-operative community (FLO, 2010). Theoretically, membership designates who has the right to participate in decision-making processes, as well as who has access to the benefits and obligations of the relationship. Certification forms the basis of membership, and as well as incurring the costs of certification, included participants must also pay a membership fee. Certification is the formalized setting of the standards that govern interactions within the Fair Trade supply chain (FLO, 2010: 11). As Cameron Neil, former FTAANZ Operations Manager suggests, membership guidelines delineate who will and will not be allowed into the system, the guidelines that govern behavior, price setting, production techniques and the nature of the relationship between stakeholders (Neil and Throsby, 2009).

The main policies employed by Fair Trade to counter some of the power inequities within global trade are the social premium and the floor price, which are underpinned by democratic principles. The premium is an additional cost to the importer – usually carried through to the consumer – that is transferred to the producer worked out at a per pound price. This premium must be spent on social, environmental, or sustainability projects within the producer cooperative and/or wider community (FLO, 2009a, 3-4). In comparison, the floor price is a mechanism that guarantees producers a certain price at a stable and higher than market value for their product. This price is a “fair” price stipulated by the FLO for each product category and decided by the Standards Committee in which all stakeholders have representation.¹⁶ Access to the floor price also guarantees access to pre-financing, technological assistance and long-term trade relationships, providing some stability and assurance in an often-volatile market.

¹⁶ This price is determined through the following equation: cost of production + cost of living + cost of complying with FT standards (Nichols and Opal, 2004: 41).

The collective identity of those involved with Fair Trade is strengthened through the promotion of democratic principles and accountability mechanism within the organization. Democratic principles underpin the Fair Trade system, forming a main standard in certification and dictating interaction between members (FLO, 2009b: 7). These exchanges aim to promote horizontal power relationships, where each participant is an equal partner and beneficiary, rather than through the traditional verticality of aid dependency relationships (FLO, 2011).

Democratic decision-making is promoted in each level of exchange to reinforce the equal position that each stakeholder holds in the social justice institution. For example, the FLO board of directors is made up of four NI representatives, four producer representatives (each representing a different geographical or product space), and three independent board members. These representatives are each elected by their constituents into this position (FLO, 2011: 9). As an aim within Fair Trade is 'to seek greater equity' and be a 'partnership', such accountability mechanisms are established to counter possible power inequities that may exist in the group. Further, by seeking to encourage an active participation of member groups in decision-making processes the legitimacy of those decisions is strengthened, as is the internal group cohesion.

3.4 When a relational scope is not maintained

Fair Trade has determined its scope relationally, yet as the organization expands some problems have arisen. These problems will be outlined to gain better understanding of what issues can arise when a practice-dependent model is employed and the possible lessons for such a union model. These problems are largely connected to the scope, membership, no longer reflecting the groups and individuals participating and making claims, and as such the mutual recognition of membership and the reciprocity underpinning those claims has been weakened. The scope of Fair Trade was initially determined relationally but not as an ongoing process. As such there are competing conceptions of what Fair Trade is and whom it is for. Membership is exclusive and determined by those initial exchanges yet current policies are creating new relations and networks rather than maintaining those already existing. As such the scope or membership is not reflective of those who are participating and have power in the organization. Tensions arise over who has valid claim because the scope was initially determined relationally, but new relations do not now entitle you to membership. There has been little maintenance of those initial relations and the collective identity that it produced. Rather, the ongoing practices within the organization have sought to engage new participants and looked outside of its organizational boundaries, which has created a gap between a scope determined relationally and the actual relations occurring. Thus, exclusivity has been weakened as members no longer recognize the validity of each other's claims nor what those claims entail.

The scope of Fair Trade is primarily determined by the existing supply-chain relationship. It is those exchanges that occur within the supply-chain that form a practice, from which an obligational relationship develops (Neil & Strawn, 2008). Through buying a particular product one has established a relationship with those involved in the supply chain and the scope of the organization is then

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defined by that exchange. Fair Trade has thus attempted to determine scope according to a practice-dependent position, creating an inward looking model of exclusivity. However, although this is an exclusive model, there is a broader transformative goal and policies that impact on those beyond the direct membership base. As the FLO itself claims (FLO, 2011; 5):

The Fair Trade movement shares a vision of a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full human potential¹⁷

This broader position of being a part of a larger global justice network and creating 'a more outward-looking culture...' (FLO, 2010: 26), creates new relations and exchanges rather than maintaining the initial determinants of scope.

In 2004 a membership fee was introduced and the reasoning behind doing so encapsulates the contested membership of the organization. Producer representatives voted unanimously in favour of the fee because it was seen to raise the value of membership. It allowed for better certification procedures, increased marketing and increased commitment from members to Fair Trade (Nichols and Opal, 2004: 136). The existing relations between members would thus be strengthened, the collective identity reinforced, and the fee required provide a clear marker aiding mutual acknowledgement of membership. Conversely, consumers and importer/exporters involved saw the benefit of the fee lying in the ability to expand membership through more certification capacity and broader marketing strategies – to expand the scope of Fair Trade rather than strengthen the existing system (Nichols and Opal, 2004:136).

The rapid growth that has come with Fair Trade's success has further exacerbated the confusion over who has valid claim to membership and what that should entail. With expansion, non-members such as broader producer communities, consumer groups and Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) are making claims to the entitlements associated with membership, without taking on the costs of certification. The relations that underpin membership are weakened as the ongoing exchanges are aimed at expansion rather than maintenance. Examples drawn from of the advocacy work of Fair Trade, the role of the consumer, the social premium and policy of mainstreaming illustrate these problems.

The advocacy work that Fair Trade carries out is on behalf of all southern producers, irrespective of their involvement with Fair Trade. For example, Fair Trade describes its advocacy position at the World Trade Organization as providing the, 'leadership, tools and services to inspire and empower more people to achieve Fairtrade's vision and mission.' (FLO, 2011b: 3). This goal reflects the original motivation of challenging the injustices that developed from

¹⁷ Further the mission statement reads: 'Fairtrade vision – a world in which all producers can enjoy secure, sustainable livelihoods, fulfill their potential and decide on their future.' (FLO, 2011b: 3)

the global trading system. However, this outward looking policy prioritizes the transformative message rather than the particular relationship that determines the scope of the organization. The marketing strategies directed at consumers also support this outward looking agenda. Strategies such as Fair Trade Fortnight focus largely on the role of local northern communities (such as church groups, schools or towns) in sharing information on fairer trade relationships in order to situate these local communities as part of a wider global community (Fairtrade Foundation, n.d.). This aims to establish a new consciousness of the connections between the consumer and producer communities, which in turn establishes new bonds and consciousness of the exchanges that occur.

Connected to this, consumers, as non-certified members, appear to have a large amount of influence over FLO policy, relative to certified full-member producers. Consumers are not full members of the institution, but instead enter into a relationship with Fair Trade, and its certified members, by buying certified products. As FTAANZ claims, when a product carries a Fair Trade label it is, 'providing an easy way for consumers to recognize and choose products that meet agreed environmental, labor and developmental standards.' (FTAANZ, n.d c). They are the last actor in the supply chain, but have invested little in that exchange beyond choosing a product produced according to Fair Trade standards. Yet, the purchase of a product, even at a higher price, does not entail the same transactional costs as certification at the producer level. There is not the same investment nor ongoing relations that could signify to existing members that the consumer has a valid claim to membership or the benefits and obligations entailed. Nevertheless, the consumer plays an increasingly powerful role in these interactions, with their demands and consumption habits shaping much of the marketing strategy of the FLO. This has meant that consumer influence is being felt in more broader policy areas. The consumer is not a member yet marketing is largely educative about the consumer's position within the supply chain, encouraging consumer consciousness beyond the mere consumption of a product (FLO, 2010: 23). The policies that surround consumer engagement have lessened the distinction between full beneficiary members and a possible larger group of stakeholders¹⁸, which impacts on the exclusivity of the organization.

Further, within producer communities debate has developed over who should have access to the social premium; should it be for the sole benefit of the producers or rather, the wider producing community? The social premium is a prime motivator for producers to remain a part of the system. It is usually set at \$US150 a metric tonne above the price floor, although this varies between products, increasing if they are organic. It is stipulated that the premium must be invested in, 'social, economic and environmental projects decided upon by producers democratically' (FLO, n.d b). Fair Trade claims that the premium, 'can assist the economic development of entire rural communities.' (FLO, n.d b). It has been used to build school halls and a football pitch for farming communities in South Africa, for low interest loan schemes for cooperative members, and town wells and infrastructure development (The Fairtrade Foundation, 2008:

¹⁸ Such as consumers, importers, exporters, and MNCs.

36-45). These various projects highlight the diversity of beneficiaries and underscore the competing conceptions of whom the social premium should benefit. The above project examples demonstrate the diversity of the boundaries to obligation found within Fair Trade, from the purely member orientated projects, such as the loan scheme, to those more broadly community orientated, such as infrastructure development benefiting those beyond the cooperative. By extending benefits beyond membership the rationale for taking on the costs of membership diminishes and the practices underpinning that scope become uncertain. Instead, new beneficiaries are established alongside new exchanges and practices.

Fair Trade has concentrated on establishing new exchanges and practices at the expense of maintaining the already existing, yet has not altered membership to include those new relations. What is problematic is that scope was initially defined relationally, but membership has remained static. As a relational scope is an ongoing process and able to be redefined to reflect existing practices, that the scope has remained static but relations have expanded has created a disjuncture between the two. What becomes clear is that within a practice-dependent scope effort needs to be put into maintaining those initial relations, or, the scope needs to be able to evolve to reflect the new context. In the case of Fair Trade neither has adequately occurred, this is perhaps best exemplified by the policy of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming has been a clear policy decision within FLO, wherein corporate engagement strategies have been encouraged (FLO, 2011b: 20-22). This has paved the way for MNCs such as Tesco and Cadbury to gain FLO certification for particular product lines, such as Dairy Milk rather than the whole of Cadbury production. Consequently, Fair Trade market share has increased dramatically and much of the recent growth can be attributed to these stakeholders (Neil and Throsby, 2009).¹⁹ However, these MNCs do not have the ethical investment in Fair Trade that other stakeholders have made. They are not as integrated in the organization nor do they engage with all the practices that underpin Fair Trade. MNCs are, as some Alternative Trading Organisations (ATOs)²⁰ suggest, *reacting* to consumer demands, rather than subscribing to the underlying principles of Fair Trade. Extensively, Fair Trade is reduced to a mere marketing tool that enables the selling of particular brands to consumers to who would have otherwise taken their custom elsewhere. The MNCs, it is argued, will be motivated more by capital concerns than social justice principles, potentially undercutting market access for dedicated ATOs who take a more proactive position and have been pushing for Fair Trade before it became “mainstreamed” (Nichols and Opal, 2004: 85). As such, they do not have the buy-in or share the collective identity and motivations that other members have in common.

¹⁹ For example, despite 2009 being one of the most difficult economic years on record, retail sales of Fair-trade Labeled products in Australia and New Zealand increased by 58%. In 2010 Fair-trade Certified sales increased by almost 200% to almost AU\$150 million. (FTAANZ, n.d (d).

²⁰ ATOs refer to those organisations that subscribe to Fair Trade principles within their whole supply chain. They can be certified and carry the costs that go along with having a fully certified supply chain.

In addition, by broadening the membership base to include potentially “less dedicated” members the legitimacy of the certification claims made by Fair Trade may be watered down, weakening the legitimacy of the organization. The preference for existing supply chains employed by many MNCs could limit direct trade potential and long-term trading relationships. As such, many consumer groups, importers and exporters, have been skeptical of their engagement with FLO (Nichols and Opal, 2004: 85). The pre-existing social bonds and the direct trade relationship has been a means of establishing a recognizable and hence, legitimate, scope (Miller, 2008: 236-251). By expanding beyond these direct trade relationships these social bonds and connections are diminished, potentially weakening the system itself. The scope has been expanded without adequate maintenance to the practices that underpinned the scope initially. Usually, Fair Trade products only form a small section of the MNC product line. Rather than implementing the Fair Trade principles throughout the whole supply chain, the principles are adhered to when it is in the MNCs’ monetary interests to do so (Nichols and Opal, 2004: 98 –102). For example, Cadbury has made their Dairy Milk bar Fair Trade certified, yet none of its other products have gained certification. This has increased the Fair Trade market share, which is beneficial to producers who can now sell more of their product at the higher Fair Trade price. However, ATOs and consumer groups see this as problematic, as Cadbury’s whole supply chain, unlike most other Fair Trade exchanges, does not adhere to Fair Trade principles, potentially watering down the strict certification standards associated with the Fair Trade logo.

The goal of transforming the inequities of the global trading system has also been contested with the push towards mainstreaming, as engagement with MNCs further embeds Fair Trade into the existing trade regime. As Barrientos, Conroy and Jones (2007: 54) assert, this could potentially reinforce current trade practices rather than working to transform them. This potentially undermines the underlying goal of Fair Trade and the bonds that first motivated NIs, ATOs, consumer groups and producers to come together. There has been expansion without adequate maintenance to those bonds. The mixed agendas put forward matter because institutional legitimacy will diminish, as members may be unclear of what they are members of and potential members may see no reason to seek membership of an organization that’s mandate lacks clarity. If policy moves and the initial goals of Fair Trade are no longer pursued, this will only exacerbate the uncertainty and instability that arises when the relations and exchanges that determined the scope of membership are not maintained. For Fair Trade, these relations were taken as a given rather than an ongoing process constantly evolving and needing maintenance.

4. A practice-dependent union model.

4.1 What would this model look like?

Through drawing on existing relations as the determinant of scope a practice-dependent union model could be transnational. The organization could reflect issues, rather than location, cutting across state boundaries. The transnational space is not universal but also not limited by location. Rather, it forms a fluid

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middle ground; reliant upon some level of exclusion for the benefits of legitimacy and workability that come from this, but also not limited to pre-determined geographical scope. It could come to reflect systems such as global trade or supply chains, which interact with all levels of governance. Arguably a transnational union model is less defined and the fluidity makes the position less concrete. However, by reflecting the issues that affect its members the union takes a more proactive position; pre-determinism is pushed aside in favour of effectuality.

This transnational character is able to draw upon the ever-increasing transnational connections and exchanges being made through the effects of globalization. The union is defined by these exchanges and connections, as its scope is determined relationally. Drawing on existing practices as the ground for scope the model is more fluid. The scope can be redefined and each exchange reiterates the boundaries to obligation. Further, as the power of reciprocity is determined by the ongoing exchanges, collective identity and recognition that underpin it, a practice-dependent model that determines scope based upon these exchanges strengthens them through doing so. Thus, the model defines scope according to the core principles of unionism and what sets it apart from dominant ideology: reciprocity and collective consciousness. A practice-dependent scope thus relies upon and reinforces reciprocity through ongoing exchanges.

4.2 Lessons of Fair Trade: the importance of activity and education for this model

Yet, partly as this model is somewhat fluid, it requires maintenance or allowance for the scope to be redefined to better reflect the ongoing practices. The Fair Trade experience makes clear that a practice-dependent scope is an ongoing process rather than a static model. By initially drawing on existing practices as the determinant of organizational scope Fair Trade shows that it is possible to determine scope beyond geography. However, if the scope is relational it is ongoing, as such if policies and practices are developed that look beyond the membership, the scope should also be expanded to reflect this. On the other hand, policies and practices can be established that reinforce the initial determinants of scope. If it is recognized that scope is reiterated through each exchange, scope can therefore be maintained through these practices. Instead, Fair Trade has done neither; policies have been outward looking increasing exchanges beyond the membership at the expense of maintaining the existing scope, yet, membership has not been expanded to reflect those new exchanges. Now, there is a disjuncture between the scope of Fair Trade and those who are making claims and receiving benefits from the organization. This undermines the value of membership, threatening the exclusivity of the organization and thus its legitimacy. What becomes important is understanding that a practice-dependent model is an ongoing process, meaning that it needs maintenance or will be redefined.

However the maintenance of the scope is closely entwined with the strength of reciprocity and draws on activity and education that is already occurring. Much of the work that unions currently do centers on creating a sense of community

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and a common identity from which reciprocity is based. By highlighting commonalities and bonds that were not immediately apparent the union strengthens reciprocity but also the practices that determine scope. Thus the more activity within the practice-dependent union model, between members, the more interactions will occur. For example, the more opportunities for members to be involved in decision-making processes, the more exchanges occur strengthening these ongoing practices as well as creating a more accountable organization. The process of agenda forming, through active participation and ongoing activity, strengthens the reciprocity of the relationship and reiterates the scope. Active participation also signifies to others who is a part of that group, as such, being involved in internal activities assists in mutual recognition of membership. As well, acting together and supporting each other in the face of external opposition, reinforces the collective identity and boundaries between who is in and who is out.

As education is also critical in building a common identity and agenda, education must play a central role in this new model. As reciprocity is determined by the mutual recognition of the validity of each other's claims upon one another, members must be educated about what they are a part of and they must agree to and understand what is being asked of them. Members must be informed through a free flow of information. As List and Koenig-Archibugi (2008: 103) describe for a group to have internal cohesion 'discussion, debate, civil education and political socialization...' must be employed. Therefore union policy, activity and education need to be geared towards maintaining those initial practices that determined scope, whilst allowing for scope to be redefined if new issues arise demanding it.

So a Practice-dependent union model would be transnational. It is based on ongoing exchanges and a collective identity allowing for scope to be redefined giving the organization a somewhat fluid character. This fluidity gives the union more ability to counter the causes of issues facing working people and to develop proactive strategies, allowing for union renewal rather than protection of the status quo. However, to stop this fluidity from falling into some sort of universalism, maintenance of the underlying identity and relations is critical. Thus the union is underpinned by ongoing activity between members and education about what membership is and the collective experience of work. For the scope to be maintained, there must be opportunities for all members to be included in decision-making processes, and be able to build networks with other members, increasing mutual recognition of the validity of membership and strengthening reciprocity and scope. Broadly speaking the practice dependent model would be transnational, it would be dependent upon an active and engaged membership and its scope would be somewhat fluid and based upon ongoing relations. As the practice-dependent position is still embryonic this is only a broad sketch of what a practice-dependent union model would look like aiming to provoke further discussion of how organized labour can move beyond the largely ineffectual location based model.

Conclusions:

Reciprocity is at the heart of union power. The strength of reciprocity is determined by the mutual recognition of the validity of each other's claim upon one another. It develops from a common identity and once established needs to be maintained through ongoing exchanges. The relationship is particular, as some must remain outside of the reciprocal relationship for it to have meaning. This exclusivity reinforces reciprocity, aiding mutual acknowledgement and the legitimacy and value of the relationship.

The need for exclusivity has made limiting the current union model by location a logical argument in the past. However, these geographical limitations are restricting unions' ability to deal with the causes of many problems facing working people. The scope of the traditional model means that unions are playing catch up as the causes of the problems facing working people fall outside of union reach. The causes fall outside of their limited scope, locking unions into a system of ineffectuality. As the scope becomes less reflective of the reality of work, the collective identity and connections that underpin reciprocity are weakened. There is a gap between the static scope defined by geography and the lived experience. Although reciprocity requires some level of exclusivity, pre-determining the scope of reciprocity according to location is not working.

The emerging practice-dependent theory has opened the possibility of embracing a model that instead draws on the exchanges and collective practices that underpin reciprocity to define scope. Within this practice-dependent position boundaries remain exclusive yet are more fluid than the traditional model allowing for the union to combat new injustices. Boundaries are determined relationally and it is an ongoing process. As such the continued practices within the organization both reinforce the scope as well as strengthen reciprocity. Practice-dependency retains the strengths of unionism but reconfigures the scope.

Fair Trade shows that it is possible to determine organizational scope according to practices rather than location. However, the example also highlights that this is an ongoing process and if the initial scope is to remain it needs to be maintained. The interactions, activity and policy directions must be geared towards maintaining those bonds and practices from which the scope was determined, or, the organization needs to be prepared for the scope to be redefined to better reflect the new practices emerging.

This practice-dependent model is still somewhat theoretical. How and on what grounds such a model should be established still need to be thought through. Yet what is clear is that the traditional union model is constricted by its reliance upon locality as the static determinant of scope. The current model is not working. The practice-dependent position both addresses the problems that come from a static scope, and centralizes the importance of reciprocity. Thus a practice-dependent model better reflects the workings of reciprocity and union

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power. Through thinking beyond the traditional model and returning to what sets unionism apart from the dominant ideology and gives it power, reciprocity, an effective union model can develop.

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