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LABOR AGENCY BEYOND THE UNION: THE COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS AND FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

by

MICHAEL HUSEBO

Under the Direction of Dr. Katherine Hankins

ABSTRACT

Labor geographers have identified multiple strategies through which workers assert their demands in an era of global production networks. In this thesis I examine the strategic organizational actions of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a community-based organization representing immigrant farm-workers in southwestern Florida. Central to the successes of the CIW is its strategy to organize and embed its agency in civil society. Social actors have proved to be of vital importance as they enabled the CIW to position itself strategically in important locations of the production network to contest capitalist geographies more effectively. Using qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with representatives of churches, religious-community organizations, and interfaith non-profits working with the CIW, I argue that the CIW's strategies theoretically expands our understanding of labor agency and how spatiality, and specifically place, shapes the potential for workers' agency.

INDEX WORDS: Labor agency, Community unionism, Global production networks, Scale

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by

MICHAEL HUSEBO

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hegemonic capital maintains its assault, increasingly augmented by the state, on organized labor. Rights and, more broadly, the potential for labor to exert its spatial fix are being taken away at an increasing speed. Through a rapid and immense reconfiguration of economic production the dominance of capital is articulated politically as well as economically (Harvey 2005). In particular, during the neoliberal age, the formalized collective expression of working-class people–the labor union–is continuously scrutinized and challenged, often with the purpose to destroy it (Wills 2008; Rutherford 2009). In the face of these challenges, working-class politics is developing strategic modes of organization in alternate spaces. While capital through neoliberal policies is granted greater power over the sphere of production, labor groups are developing strategies of shifting organizational efforts into the sphere of social reproduction. Workers, recognizing this dominance of capital actors are increasingly re-embedding their agency by establishing relations with actors of civil society, and to a lesser extent through relations with the state (Castree 2007; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

Geographers studying contemporary capitalist production are examining new forms of labor agency beyond the union. It is a development underscored in the literature by expanding the range of what exactly labor as an actor entails (Tufts 1998; Moon and Brown 2001; Wills and Simms 2004; Jepson 2005; Tattersall and Reynolds 2007). Two important objectives are propelling this expanded focus. Geographers critical of the limited scope offered thus far are calling for an inclusion of labor from low-paid work and from the non-manufacturing sector to be included analytically in the field. Following from the first development, the agency of labor, the capacity to produce geographies, is theoretically developed as the concept of labor itself is

expanded. Labor, it is argued, needs to be conceptualized as a spatial actor beyond that articulated through the formal union related to the place of production (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). Labor agency should be understood as the potential to exert spatial fixes of labor as a class or identity rather than organizational efforts by the unions. Ultimately then, I argue, this new focus of labor geography is proposing an evolved analytical understanding of exactly who the working class is. This thesis presents a case study of a community-based workers' organization, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), representing exploited migrant farm-workers in southwestern Florida. Through a case-study of how these workers are embedding their agency in civil society, an analysis can be made of what potential working-class praxis has now become in the neoliberal age.

In my research workers have forged alliances within civil society after realizing the futility of dialogue with capital actors and localized state actors. Empirically the research examines a group of migrant farm-workers: the CIW. The group is contesting its working conditions by challenging several multi-national corporations through alternate relations within their production network (CIW 2003a; CIW 2003b). Shrewdly, the workers have identified other actors who are part of this production network, notably social and state actors. In particular, social actors, represented by student activists and the faith-based community, have enabled the workers to reconfigure spatially the production network and as a result effectively improve their living and working conditions locally in Florida (Higgins 1998; Laughlin 2007).

In a wide sense this thesis seeks to examine labor agency expressed outside the traditional form established through unions. My research suggests the CIW, a community-based farm-workers organization, provides a case-study of labor agency expressed beyond the labor union.

By doing so the research fills a so far omitted aspect of labor agency. How can contemporary labor, as a class-, social- and political actor, manifest its 'spatial fix' on the capitalist landscape?

Chapter two situates this research within the literature through a discussion on the current standing and recent developments of the literature on labor geography. In particular the discussion in chapter two and the remainder of the thesis focus on how we can understand the *agency* of labor. Chapter three provides a methodological account of the completed research and data production. The thesis's analytical sections start with chapter four, providing an examination of the conditions of production which the CIW is contesting. More specifically, I argue that the realities of production are denying the farm-workers of Immokalee the potential to organize. Simultaneously, these conditions of work are reproducing themselves as structures in the sphere of social reproduction. These produced structures afford the farm-workers a possibility to organize in alternate spaces in place of a *union* (which by definition will be rooted in the place of production). Chapter five examines how the CIW as a community-based organization *realizes* its limitations based on its position within the economic landscape. The chapter then highlights the strategic choice of alliances in augmenting the CIW's agency, specifically with the faith-based community. The sixth and final analytical chapter examines the spatiality of these strategies. The realization of these strategies carried out by the Immokalee workers proves pivotal in their successful campaigns contesting multi-national corporations. The concluding chapter provides remarks and a brief discussion of how the praxis of the CIW might point to future directions for analytical research on conceptualization of labor agency.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LABOR AND GEOGRAPHY

Geographical approaches to labor over the past decade and half have increasingly developed labor as an actor capable of imposing its own purpose on the spatiality of capitalist production (Mitchell 1996; Peck 1996; Herod 1998; Savage 1998). Labor, in its theoretical conceptualization, has gone through several shifts in the field of geography leading up to this understanding. The arrival of labor geography establishes labor ontologically as an actor with similar capacities to that of capital to produce space (Herod 1998). In a plain understanding of this narrative, through collective action or choices on an individual level, workers are producing capitalist geographies. Through the initial development of labor geography, as a sub-discipline of economic geography, the traditional strategic collective forms taken by workers, i.e. the labor union, have extensively been mapped out.

Following this single-focused approach of the labor geography narrative, labor as an actor has been identified primarily by an organizational approach manifested through the labor unions. In this understanding the formal union is seen as representing the agency of labor as a collective within the capital-labor relation. A critique raised by labor geographers points to the restrictions, and perhaps omissions, of which populations of labor are given attention in this literature and ultimately what labor as an identity entails. Particularly as we approach a fifth decade of neoliberalism, a steadily growing segment of labor will be left out of this particular discussion, given its focus on organized unions. Contestation of the production of capitalist landscapes is found outside the frameworks of the traditional relations of formal labor unions, as the restructuring, in particular embodied by spatial relocation, of the manufacturing sector continues (Castree 2007; Lier 2007; Wills 2008; Bergene, Endresen, and Knutsen 2010). Responding to this criticism in the field, recent developments within labor geography suggest

that not only a wider definition of *labor* is necessary, but the concept of labor agency - the act of labor expressing its objectives on capitalist geographies - needs to be seen in dialectic relation to actors beyond those of capital (Castree 2007; Lier 2007; Wills 2008; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

Two beneficial intentions are underscored in this emerging course of labor geography. Savage and Tufts (2009) suggest it is politically imperative for workers and progressive politics to develop this praxis further. This concern arises as a reflection of the dismantling of manufacturing jobs and the as a result the political voice of labor manifested in the unions, while the increasingly common practice of non-unionized service-sector employment is in need of developing its own political praxis. Other labor geographers (Castree 2007; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010), though certainly not dismissing the need for continued development of a working-class praxis, see this development taking place beyond the worker-capital relations an important theoretical improvement. In particular the theoretical development is seen as to provide a better understanding of a central component in the field, namely *labor agency*. To understand how this recent change of direction impacts labor geography, and what this emerging political praxis means for workers contesting the geographies of contemporary economic production, it is beneficial to expand on what is understood by both labor and labor agency within the field of geography and how it has developed over time.

2.1 Labor and Marxist Geography

The sub-field of labor geography departs from a critique aimed at the field of radical geography. Within Marxist geography labor remained a passive actor in a landscape largely determined by forces, or the agency, of capitalism (see Lefebvre 1974; Harvey 1982; Smith 1984). Labor as a concept then in radical geography initially evolves from Marx's development

of the labor theory of value in *Das Kapital* in which the value of commodities produced relate to the workers in production (Herod 2001). In this reading labor is seen and identified as a fundamental category of capitalist production. Capitalism is a mode of production essentially based on two forms of commodities; that of the means of production and that of labor power. Workers are seen as the exclusive producers of value, while capitalists benefit from the value produced. Labor is a fundamental part of allowing for capitalist production. Within this process, if we analyze the labor theory of value as a political or ethical concern, rather than as an ontological critique aimed at capitalist production, capitalists have a strong influence–and to a certain extent control—over the means of production. Labor needs to sell its labor power in order for capitalist production to take place. The relationship between employee and employer can often be characterized by conflicting views, which again results in struggle—class struggle—between the actors in control of the means of production, and the population selling its labor to work the means of production. Ultimately then this means labor contests the production of capitalist geographies itself.

An obvious, but nevertheless insightful, observation made by Marx is that capitalism necessitates the production of a capitalist society. The conditions of power in economic production are reproduced in what is defined as the social sphere of society, or specifically understood in this discussion as the sphere of social reproduction (Harvey 1982). As Massey (1984) argues, the geography of a society makes a difference to how that society works. In the narrative developed in geography in the 1970s space is incorporated as a central part of the explanation of how capitalism as a system operates. Yet, as Herod (2001a) suggests, radical geographers only provided a limited insight into how a geography of capitalism is shaped. In an important omission the role of laborers, despite their exclusive role as producers of value in

forging capitalist geographies, was ignored. Focus remained primarily upon the activities of capital actors in order to explain the geography of capitalism. Workers were considered to be inactive consequences in the process of making landscapes (Herod 2001a). The contestation of capitalist production, struggles which take place not only in the workplace, but also beyond, in what has been referred to by labor geographers as the place of social reproduction (Peck 1996), remained outside of any analytical geographic work. The ontological shift of labor in geography from a passive actor to an actor with agency provides us with a study of how workers seek to shape the geography of society. Labor in this narrative is no longer simply a necessary partner to the means of production, but rather a sentient actor with the capacity to shape the landscape of capitalism through the *agency* of labor.

2.2 Labor Agency

Labor agency, often identified as a signature feature of labor geography, remains conceptually a central issue of theoretical conversations in the field (Castree 2007; Wills 2009; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). In the following discussion I will briefly highlight how conceptualizations of *labor agency* correlate with the development of labor, as a theoretical concept, within the wider discipline of economic geography. A discussion of agency, I believe, provides the thesis with an apt narrative then of how the development of labor within geography leads to the establishment of labor geography and simultaneously provides us with a useful point of departure to situate the theoretical ramifications of this recent ascension to a *fourth stage* of labor agency.

Labor, as shown in the discussion of labor and Marxist geography in 1970s, has gone through different periods of appreciation in geographic theory. Herod (1995), in his influential call for a *labor geography*, argued important pieces of how we understand the production of

geographies are omitted in radical geography by not fully appreciating what labor agency is. Perhaps paradoxically, as Herod (2001) points out himself, it is a critique aimed at both neo-classical economists as well as Marxist geographers. If labor in geography can be seen as having evolved through two very different narratives of economic geography, namely classical economic interpretations and a Marxist approach, the call for the study of *labor geography* allowed for a third stage (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). Literature emerged which demonstrated the ability of workers to create organizations to hamper and reject the demands of capital. During this phase labor geography literature gave much emphasis to a relatively privileged but now rapidly diminishing workforce in the manufacturing sector. Related to this focus on a specific and delimited actor of labor represented by unions, the agency of workers as a class or an identity remained under-theorized (Castree 2008).

In reaction to a restricted definition of labor agency, recent developments undertaken by geographers argue a fourth stage is developing on how the discipline of geography understands working-class politics. The development of this fourth phase can be recognized by an evolving or perhaps expanding understanding of labor agency. New sectors of production and geographic places of contemporary capitalism are given attention in this emerging approach (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). It is an expansion of labor geography literature that is important for the development of agency theoretically. In order to better highlight this development I briefly mention the different strands of work within this fourth stage which has emerged so far. We can start by accounting for the evolvement of economic sectors now included in labor geography, research developing in this approach has been produced on low-paid service work and public-sector work (see Walsh 2000; Wills 2005; Herod and Aguiar 2006; Savage 2006), new arenas of action such as consumption-based campaigns (see Hartwick 2000; Johns and Vural 2000; Silvey

2006) (particularly important for this thesis discussion), new modes of organization, in this research highlighted by community-unionism, (see Tufts 1998; Wills 2001; Lier and Stokke 2006) as well as new geographical domains (see Lambert and Webster 2001; Hale 2005).

To return to the question on the theory of agency in labor geography one can ask what has been gained through this development of a fourth stage. The expansion of agency within labor geography opens up two important aspects highlighted throughout this discussion. Agency recognized beyond the union provide a wider analytical definition of what labor as a class or identity entails. Labor agency recognized beyond organizational efforts at the place of production, i.e. a capital-labor relation, provides a more sophisticated approach to understanding the potential of working-class politics. Particularly, it is a development which so far has sought to include actors in civil society and the state, which are engaged by labor (see Tufts 1998; Castree 2007; Lier 2007; Wills 2008; Tufts and Savage 2009; Wills 2009; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). This engagement means that labor agency is manifested and carried out in the sphere of social reproduction as well as that of the sphere of production. These developments open up numerous new avenues of analytical approaches in labor geography. One notable approach which has been given much attention by labor geographers is the concept of community unionism, where the role of actors in civil society is given increased focus. In what follows I offer an introduction to community unionism in geography and elaborate on how I situate my case-study within this literature.

2.3 Community Unionism

After having discussed ongoing debates of the concept of agency within labor geography it is hopefully clear important questions emerges. More specifically perhaps for this discussion, how is labor agency manifested in this so-called fourth stage if not, as earlier has been the case,

in relation capital, and how it can be approached theoretically? Herod (2003) at an early stage suggested it is of pivotal importance to develop an understanding of how labor agency is embedded in the workers' wider geography; this should unsurprisingly include both the sphere of production and social reproduction. Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) make a similar claim in their recent article, asking how, and where, is the agency of labor embedded in place of these geographies? This development of recognizing agency of workers taking place beyond a restricted labor-capital relation and trying to understand it in places beyond production has particularly been underscored in academic work associated with the concept of community-based unionism (see Tufts 1998; Moon and Brown 2001; Wills 2001; Tattersall and Reynolds 2007; Moody 2009). As a number of labor geographers have suggested (see Savage 2006; Castree 2007; Lier 2007; Wills 2008; McBride and Greenwood 2009; Tufts and Savage 2009; Bergene et al. 2010; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010) through an examination of the wider realities of labor, beyond a restricted understanding of working-class politics in relation to only capital, a deeper understanding of how workers might impact the geographies of capitalism is afforded.

An important and useful distinction to return to is the difference between the *place of production* and the *place of social reproduction* (Peck 1996). This analytical separation of the lives of workers offers a distinction between where capitalist production takes place, such as the picking and processing of tomatoes in the wider production networks of buyers and consumers, versus the place where labor lives and works, such as the town of Immokalee, Florida. Organizing in the place of production then reflects labor agency highlighted in the literature of what Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) referred to as a third stage of labor in geography. While labor agency being embedded in the sphere of social reproduction refers to this fourth stage of labor geography.

These two spheres, of production and social reproduction, are not separate categories but actually closely intertwined. The purpose to separate them here is purely analytical to provide a better understanding of the agency through highlighting the qualities and roles of different actors in the production of capitalist space. Labor and capital influence both these spheres. Part of the argument made here is that community-unionism provides labor with a strategic option to increasingly organize in this sphere of social reproduction. Analytically I propose they do so by establishing relations to actors located within this sphere, namely the faith-based community. When I refer to the space in which actors, such as the faith-based community or the student population, I apply the term civil society; actors within this space, of civil society, are designated as social actors. I do not intend to use these terms synonymously for the sphere of social reproduction. Rather they are the components of the global production network (GPN)[1] which are rooted in the sphere of social reproduction, but not in the sphere of production. Labor and capital as actors, meanwhile, are rooted in both the separate, at least for analytical purposes, spheres. Community-based organizations, though most of the time referring to actors of civil society, will not have that exclusive understanding in this discussion. The CIW, I believe, provides an example of a community-based organization which to some extent is spanning both these different spheres. Furthermore, as hopefully will be clear following the end of the argument of this thesis, community-based unionism very much embodies a strategic link of labor between the two spheres. It is a strategy workers undertake to shift the reality of the GPN of which they are a part. Again it is important to underscore the analytical reasoning for imposing these separations. Civil society and social actors remain relationally connected to the sphere of

[1] See sub-section 2.4 Global Production Networks and the Geographies of Contemporary Capitalism for an in-depth discussion of this concept.

production, but in this discussion I apply analytical categorizations to better highlight the processes of labor embedding its agency in the sphere of social reproduction.

Community-unionism, to return to the discussion of it as a concept, is a strategy that opens up opportunities for workers undertaking organizational tactics that are rooted in the place(s) of social reproduction rather than in the place(s) of production (Tufts 1998; Moon and Brown 2001; Wills 2001; Fine 2005; Tattersall and Reynolds 2007). Labor geographers have focused on how community-oriented unionism can be seen as a response to the work-place related and socio-spatial obstacles of economic restructuring, which is reflected in capital's increased dominance over the process of production and the increased fragmentation of workers in recent decades (Savage 1998; Tufts 1998; Walsh 2000; Waterman and Wills 2001; Lier and Stokke 2006). Fragmentation refers to the dispersing of around whom, how and where work is organized (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). This dynamic increasingly characterizes much of the contemporary labor force, but for the migrant farmworkers examined in this thesis, fragmentation has been an obstacle for some time. Naturally the relation between capital and labor is dominant in the place of production, while that of reproduction is marked by workers' relations to the community and to the state. To once again repeat Marx's axiom, capitalist production necessitates a capitalist space. Labor, then, reflecting new geographies of work and ever more coercive capital, is increasingly embedding its agency into civil society to contest the prevailing conditions in places of work.

Yet, the scope of this strategy remains wide. In an anthology of community-based unionism McBride and Greenwood (2010) highlight labor geographers' categorization of the different available strategies. The categorization provides a useful and elucidating point of departure for this discussion. Community-unionism situated in labor geography in this approach

refers to three distinct categories or strategies, which include (1) a coalition between community organizations and labor unions; (2) community-based workplace organizing, which can refer to either a community organization or a union seeking to organize workers based on interests and issues rather than around the workplace (Tattersall 2010); and (3) the strategies by unions which are place-based, such as AFL-CIO's Union Cities program (Tattersall 2007). Strategies in this narrative have typically been defined in relation to labor unions extending their agency into civil society. The unions, or the labor agency, in these cases remain rooted in the place of production as they seek to embed its agency within places of the sphere of social reproduction. The discussion in this thesis, on the other hand, examines an example where the workers are wholly organized beyond the labor union and outside the sphere of production.

These strategies, as opposed to a labor-capital response to shifting economic realities, provide a socio-spatial answer to restructuring processes of economic production (Jessop, Brenner and Smith 2008; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). The stretch into the sphere of social reproduction is exemplified by new sites of recruitment (Savage 1998), where laborers are no longer necessarily recruited or organized in the place of production. Similarly, *targets* of labor contestation need not be located at the place of production of the workers any longer, meaning workers can target alternate sites of production within their GPN which need not be their own work-place or employer (Routledge and Cumbers 2006; Savage 2006; Rutherford 2009; Tufts and Savage 2009; Tattersall 2010). Community-unionism literature shows how these alternate strategies are carried out by seeking out new partners in civil society and incorporating their claims and capacity into workers' struggles.

Paradoxically, then, the capitalist exclusion of unionized labor has forced the voice of working-class politics to be articulated and organized into new spheres. It is a development

which potentially can renew workers' strength and political visions, evolving into a more forceful and efficient praxis for working-class politics. Building on these paths of strategic options for workers, then, it is important to situate the discussion of these optional strategies vis-à-vis the concept of agency, and specifically what labor agency means to community unionism. In what follows I provide a discussion of the dialectic relation of embedded agency in the situation of labor and social actors. In this relation labor actors create alliances with civil society to further leverage their own agency (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

To embed its agency in the sphere of social reproduction workers formulate their demands in terms of objectives that overlap with their communities' needs and that of labors' objectives (Lier 2007). This dynamic is well documented in the case study-based literature on community-oriented unionism, which provides telling illustrations of how labor agency is embedded in the community (Savage 1998; Tufts 1998; Walsh 2000; Pastor 2001; Wills 2001). Yet, most of this strategy has been discussed in case studies in which a labor union has organized within a community. What this discussion adds is an example of labor outside of the union organizing in the sphere of social reproduction. Chapter five highlights this strategy of the CIW; the argument I make in the chapter is that a community-based organization of workers are capable of replicating similar strategies to that of the traditional union when they embed their agency within the sphere of social reproduction.

To shortly summarize then, community-unionism describes a set of strategies in the toolbox of working-class politics. It is a developing field, which further expands and improves our understanding of labor and its agency. This evolving theorization affords labor geography not only a richer understanding of labor, but also, I believe, a more precise one. Particularly what it provides is a more inclusive definition of labor, and a more defined description of how

and where agency is embedded in the geographies, or GPNs, of capitalist production. For this particular research, then, community unionism describes how a set of workers are organizing beyond and outside of *their* place of production in order to alter the conditions in this very place of production.

The reader, after this discussion of labor, capital-, and social actors, might find the omission of the state as an actor within this discussion surprising particularly given that immigration remains such an important variable of the economic production highlighted in this case-study. However, in this paper, I explicitly frame my research around the relation of labor actors and social actors. Nonetheless, as the state is purposely excluded for analytical reasons, it is important to briefly discuss what role the state holds in relation to this contestation of conditions within production. The state as a political entity provides mediating activities in determining the freedom of capital to control its labor-force within its territorial limits (Harvey 2000). The state then becomes an important actor to which labor embeds its agency when contesting the conditions of production, a fact which is only further reinforced in conditions of migratory labor (a population very much impacted by shifting policies of the state). I do not propose to diminish the role of the state within the production of capitalist geographies; however, I believe it is analytically beneficial to examine specific relations of the process of producing these spaces. In this case then, to further theorize the capacity of labor agency, I seek to explicitly discuss the particular relations of social- and labor actors.

2.4 Global Production Networks and the Geographies of Contemporary Capitalism

Capital, as discussed in this thesis, has gained an increasingly strong grip over production. At the same time capital's command of spatial production has changed. In much of liberal ideologist thought capital is even presented as being detached from space (Friedman

2005). In the same processes which have granted capital more control over the place of production, capital has also gained increased influence over space. Though the idea in which free-market capitalism is floating along on a global scale certainly is hyperbolic, capital has, in fact, increased its command over space. While capital has an increased capacity to produce space, the particularities of place are becoming increasingly important (Walker 1999). For geographic analysis this means we need an increased attention to place to understand contemporary capitalist production (Henderson 2002; Coe, Hess, Yeung, Dicken and Henderson 2004). Typically this spatiality of capitalism, depending on one's position, is celebrated as an achievement of detaching humanity from place, or it is approached with concern, as 'placeless' capitalism allows for further and faster (supra-state) exploitation. However, an important aspect of labor geography is the capacity of workers to understand and exploit this perceived 'placelessness' or the invisible spatiality of production in capitalism (Herod 2001a). It remains clear, then, that even capital with strong command of space has a spatiality that actors can recognize, examine, and strategize against in order to contest the production of geographies. Ultimately what is argued is that within these spaces of capitalist production, or GPNs, different scales and places offer very different possibilities of latent agency.

What the Global Production Network (GPN) approach affords us, as Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) discuss in their recent article, is an analytical tool to better discern the spatiality of strategies carried out by different actors of economic production. Spaces of capitalist production viewed through this concept of GPN, it is argued, is not simply a chain of production or the commodity, nor is it a network of companies partaking in production. Rather it is a network characterized by a diverse set of types of actors beyond the simplistic capital-labor relation. The concept of GPN informs the discussion in this analysis as a tool to situate labor agency in

relation to other actors. GPNs are inherently dynamic and are always in flux in response to internal and external circumstances (Cumbers, Nativel and Routledge 2008) The relations between the different actors needed for production, labor, capital, state and social can in this approach be understood as a network, where it becomes clearer of how and why certain scales are being produced.

To illustrate the benefits of the conceptual advantage of GPN in analyzing the spatiality of capitalist production, one can reflect on the labor geography literature produced so far. Much of the debate around strategy within labor geography has focused on spatial questions of local versus global scales for workers. In this work the relation of capital and labor has been a focus in which production has been analyzed without the 'wider' actors of the state and civil society, which certainly are also responsible for facilitating economic production in any society (Cox 1998; Castree 2000; Herod 2001b; Gough 2004; Castree 2007; Lier 2007). In order to better appreciate the extent of labor agency in dialectic relation to capitalism, it is vital to understand how workers relate to the important actors of the state and civil society as well. As might be clear following the discussion so far, the places where workers in contemporary capitalism increasingly are organizing are found in the sphere of social reproduction. Though capital certainly remains an important actor within this sphere as well, it provides labor with a wider range of strategies.

Critical geographers attempting to come to terms with the dynamics of the global economy have advanced the concept of the GPN as a way of understanding the multifaceted spatiality of power relations between diverse actors that ultimately form global systems of economic production (Coe and Townsend 2002; Henderson 2002; Dicken 2005; Cumbers et al. 2008). Earlier theoretical perspectives, particularly the GCC approach of (Gereffi and

Korzeniewicz 1994) and others, tended to identify multinational corporations as key actors in hierarchical systems of production. The GPN approach is useful in providing the more fluid networks of power that exist between different actors. The approach focuses on the relations established between various actors, beyond firms and the state, in processes of value creation. The need for labor control in this process is highlighted in GPNs both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of social reproduction (Cumbers et. al 2008). GPNs are ultimately, as all systems of capitalist production, dependent on labor. Following from this labor agency is embedded within GPNs, allowing for an analysis of spatial labor agency through this network (Coe and Townsend 2002); Cumbers et al. 2008; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

Approaching labor agency through dialectic relations within a GPN provides a number of advantages both in a sense of theory and praxis, answering calls from labor geographers who seek firmer theory and enhanced praxis. Examining economic production in this sense reveals weak spots for potential action carried out by workers, such as has been highlighted in the work of Herod (2000) on the GM "chokepoints," where potential lines of solidarity between groups of workers were identified. This second point is ever more important as capitalist production becomes increasingly fragmented. As the vast qualitative differences of working-class people become more apparent, this approach unveils deleterious impacts on intra-class populations (Castree 2004). Lastly and importantly, this GPN approach unmasks the relations discussed by David Harvey when he writes about justice (Harvey 1996) and the ways in which various relations in capitalist society are interconnected.

Analysis through a GPN approach furthermore serves to reveal the differentiated landscapes that exhibit potential for labor agency across different sectors (Bergene et al. 2010). While some workers occupy privileged positions within the broader system, associated, for

example, with high levels of value-adding activity and low levels of potential substitutability, others find themselves in far more marginal, transitory and competitive working environments. The key point here is that there are significantly different levels of potential agency within functionally-integrated economic networks. Ultimately, theoretically then this approach allows us to examine where labor agency is embedded in a network of production, and more specifically in relation to what actors are potential agency efficient (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

2.5 Scalar Strategies

The theoretical framework, so far, provides tools to examine a group of workers organizing in the sphere of social reproduction, specifically in relation to social actors, who connect, in various ways, to the GPN. To make the case they are indeed exerting labor agency, I also examine one of the specific campaigns that the group of migrant farm-workers in Immokalee waged against the transnational corporation Yum Brands. In a later chapter, I propose much of the success in this campaign is due to the spatial, specifically scalar, strategies undertaken by the Immokalee workers. In the chapter's discussion, scale production relates to the *spatiality* of the relations the CIW establishes in the sphere of civil society. To better appreciate the connection between the spatiality of the relations and its scalar configurations, it is appropriate to end this chapter with a discussion about how scale is understood as a spatial strategy.

Contemporary capitalism is driving a great restructuring of economic production, in which the spatial fix carried out has created 'place-less' capital (Harvey 2005). Capital now operates on what, according to popular media at least, is referred to a global scale (Friedman 2006). What is meant by this is that actors of capital are establishing relations beyond the 'reach' of other actors, specifically labor and the state (Marston 2000; Marston and Woodward

2005). A state, an example of a political institution with rigid scales of relations, can seek to enforce particular restrictions on economic production within its space. The corporation–an actor with fluid limitations to its scale–within the space of that state has the capacity to relocate all of, or more typically part of, its production by producing new scales by embedding itself in places beyond the reach of the state. The corporation has then effectively produced new scales of the spatial reality if its production. The argument geographers are making, then, is that capital through producing scales according to its spatial fix are outmaneuvering actors of other spheres. Much of the narrative in radical geography, as well as in labor geography, debates how labor actors are outdone by capital actors operating in space with such ease by producing scales seemingly at will (Herod 2001a).

Similar to the critique discussed earlier in this thesis aimed at radical geography in a broad sense, labor geographers propose scalar production is not a strategic option held exclusively in the hands of capitalists (Castree 2000; Walsh 2000; Gough 2004; Lier 2007; Tufts and Savage 2009). Labor, in pursuit of its own spatial fix, is also capable of producing scales. Earlier developments of scale as a theoretical concept described the capacity of capitalist actors to produce scale. It seems a natural development of labor geography to point out that actors of working-class politics hold the same capacity (Herod 2001a). More recently, then, as labor geography enters this fourth stage (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010), scalar strategies need to include the scales labor can produce by embedding its agency in civil society, as opposed to in relation to other labor-actors. Labor in this emerging understanding is capable of producing scales vis-à-vis social- and state-actors.

To summarize briefly the theoretical framework of this thesis, certain themes of research emerge. Broadly, the thesis will provide an examination of how labor contests the conditions of

production, more specifically how certain actors of capitalist production relate to one another in the construction or contestation of these economic geographies. In what follows I will discuss the analytical framework and methods applied to produce the necessary data for this discussion.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Case studies and generalizability

In this thesis I will just relate to a single organization and one specific strategy. Respectively the paper focuses on the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), and its embedded agency in the faith-based community. Single case studies like these hold limited impact on the total understanding of labor geography, the spatiality of global capital production, or Marxist theory as such. This does not, however, make my case study insignificant. The emphasis of case studies through qualitative research is to underscore the relation between the particular and the whole, to explore the connection between practice and theory (Andersen 1997). Case studies therefore are important in developing the larger theories. In this thesis the case study aims to explore whether the theories used are valuable in more general circumstances, and to further expand an understanding of these theories. I would argue, as will be shown in later chapters, that the examination of CIW and its relations can tell us something about labor as an agent in the geographies of capital production. If we are to appreciate fully the concept of labor agency, we need to examine working-class politics as taking place within geographic landscapes beyond the capital-labor relation, for this thesis that means in relation to actors of civil society. My findings might be read as examples and explorations of an existing tendency and how this tendency is concrete in (a) particular place(s) and moment(s).

3.2 Research question

The research in this thesis aims to answer the comprehensive, yet specific, question: How do contemporary working-class politics express labor agency *beyond* the traditional form of the labor union? To answer this question within the framework this research allows for I divide the question into a set of sub-themes. First the research provides a case-study that explores how the Immokalee workers are excluded from the possibility of organizing in the place of work, but still are able to organize as workers beyond, not only the formal expression of the union, but also outside the place of production, i.e. the place of their work. Following this, in a second sub-theme, I seek to explain how an organization with limited potential of impacting the landscape of economic production articulates its labor agency by embedding it in specific places in the sphere of social reproduction. Lastly I provide an empirical study of a specific campaign by the CIW. In this third sub-theme I unfold the argument of how the workers are indeed contesting and changing their geographies through spatial strategies by utilizing agency embedded in civil society.

Outcomes that I hope the analysis of these themes will achieve are both theoretical and empirical. The research on the alliance(s) in this thesis created between the CIW and community-based religious organizations develops our understanding of linkages between organizing labor in relation to, and not necessarily within, the sphere of production, and organizing politically through community-based organizations in the sphere of social reproduction. This means working-class politics are brought into the broader field of politics, and workers as contesting political actors are inserted in a wider field of geographic politics (Lier 2007). Furthermore, and more specifically, I believe this discussion also provides new analytical insights into the spatial dynamics of labor-capital relations. Specifically, (1) the positionality of

the CIW in relation to the GPN within which it is located provides insights into the spatial positionality of marginalized workers, specifically workers outside the manufacturing sector, within capitalist production; (2) through the analysis of the agency embedded in community-based unionism, the CIW provides a case-study of the spatial positionality of social actors in relation to workers and capital; the two proceeding insights allows for (3) an expanded, and perhaps spatially more precise, understanding of scalar politics. By embedding labor agency – i.e. scalar agency, in relation to capital (GNP) and community-based organizations in the social landscape, the CIW-study provides insight to spatial positionalities and alternate optional scalar strategies for workers. Secondarily, these methods will produce data on labor-geography literature on topics so far receiving little attention in the field: namely the less privileged workers of global capitalism, be that workers of migrant identity or labor in the so-called global south.

3.3 Case study: CIW

Immokalee, an inland town in southwestern Florida, was largely created to hold migrant farm-labor in order to facilitate agriculture production. Agricultural laborers who work in Immokalee are primarily migrant workers from Mexico, Guatemala, and Haiti (Navarro 1998; Bowe 2003; CIW 2003a). Immokalee's permanent population is about 14,000 and increases to around 30,000 during the harvest season (roughly from October through May) (Bowe 2003). The migrant population composes a diverse group. Migrant laborers to Immokalee are increasingly from indigenous (mainly Mayan) communities in southern Mexico and Guatemala, for whom Spanish is a second language (Lydersen 2005). Adding the Haitian migrant populations, the place of Immokalee provides a cosmopolitan mix of not only spoken languages but histories and backgrounds.

‘Growers’ – large agricultural fruit- and vegetable production companies - compose the employers of these farm-workers. Within Florida agriculture, an economic sector dominated by fruit-production, the growers remain a powerful voice. Due to the economic importance of the agricultural sector, the growers also hold political influence in the state of Florida. Though this group is diverse, both in size and in nature of production, the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) provides a unified voice on behalf of the more dominant growers. In particular then, larger companies in the group, such as Pacific and Six L are influential actors in shaping the geographies of Florida agriculture (Bowe 2003; CIW 2003a). However, these companies yet again are part of a larger GPN with relations or scales of production reaching well beyond the borders of Florida to large multi-national corporations represented by amongst others Yum Brands, McDonald’s and Wal-Mart (Rural Migration News 1998; CIW 2005). So as the workers in place of Immokalee hold relations to extra-local places, so do their employees. The geographies of agricultural production in Florida then is ultimately very much shaped and reproduced by relations or scales connecting the place of Immokalee to extra-local places in a very ‘broad’ GPN.

The CIW, a community-based migrant farm-worker organization, represents the migratory agricultural labor in Immokalee and their interests within this GPN. Its simple objectives are to improve farmworker living- and working conditions. The CIW is doing this by working to increase the workers’ pay to a fair and sufficient wage, to enforce the workers’ right to organize, and to eliminate indentured servitude in the fields (CIW 2001; CIW 2003a). As a workers’ organization the CIW gained widespread recognition when it achieved its first, of what was to become several, successful organized campaigns against one of these multinational corporations on March 8th in 2005 (CIW 2005). Yum Brands, the largest restaurant corporation

in the world, gave in to the demands of the CIW, and agreed to pay "a penny more per pound" for tomatoes picked by farm-workers in Immokalee, Florida. Not only had a multi-national fast-food chain acknowledged the harsh conditions of farm-workers, but Yum Brands, through this precedent setting agreement, also recognized a responsibility for these very conditions of laborers through the relation of the commodity (Presbyterian Voices for Justice 2005; Lydersen 2005; Nieves 2005; Walsh 2005; Sellers 2009). Effectively, the CIW altered the capitalist landscape of production, influencing s corporation to *realize* farm-workers as part of the Yum Brands production network, and making Yum Brands a third-party monitor of farm-workers' employers; the growers (Drainville 2008).

To appreciate the agency of labor taking place in Immokalee it is important to understand the context in which these workers found themselves leading up to their contentious campaign against Taco Bell, a subsidiary of Yum Brands. A typical day of the farm-workers starts at a public space in the city, a parking lot operates as the meeting places for establishing the daily relation between employers and the farm-workers. After being driven to the fields, a ride which can last as longs as two hours (Bowe 2003; Oxfam 2004), the worker goes through a further unspecified period of waiting for the tomato plants to dry before starting to pick. Though the workers are effectively under the control over the growers throughout this time, they are not compensated. For the next 8-12 hours, the daily wage of each worker depends on how many buckets of tomatoes are harvested from the field (Bowe 2003; CIW 2003a). The work is excruciating. Workers collect tomatoes by hunkering over plants, carrying a bucket weighing up to 32 pounds, running back and forth between trucks and rows of plants, continuously filling and emptying the buckets by hand. All while under a scorching sun with constant exposure to an unknown number of pesticides. Perhaps not surprisingly, the growers offer no protecting gear to

alleviate these harsh conditions (CIW 2003a). Following sunset the workers are driven back to Immokalee and once again is back at the central parking lot; if it has been a 'good' day the worker has made $40 to $60.[2] In cases of rain or if the tomatoes are not as readily available to be picked, the workers will simply not receive pay for that day (Sales 2005).

Agricultural production in Florida, an anti-union "Right to Work" state, is historically dependent on this exploitation of agricultural workers (Interview with FL). In this particular GPN, Immokalee functions as a place providing low-cost labor ready for exploitation, and capitalist growers such as Six L's and Gargiulo are in charge of the production. These corporations and others such are not commonly known company and do not hold the same influence over capitalist geographies when compared to multi-national corporations. Yet, these companies hold political power within the framework of the state of Florida, and are large enough to wield their power economically in the agricultural sector along certain scales. For example, Pacific Land Co. owns 17,200 acres of farmland in Florida, with annual sales of $100 million; and Six L's accounts for 13,600 acres and $64 million (Rural Migration News 2005). As one of the maps in the appendix illustrates,[3] these growers are not family-operated businesses, but rather capital actors forging the geographies of agricultural production. The Immokalee area accounts for the vast majority of many fruits and vegetables consumed throughout the country during the winter-season (Williams 2005), including over 90% of winter tomatoes, as well as three-fourths of the year-round citrus stock (Schneider 2005).

The town of Immokalee then, providing and controlling a specific labor force does so through certain characteristics. Eighty percent of homes in Immokalee are mobile homes, of various conditions (Interview with JL). Workers tend to live in overcrowded and expensive

[2] Wages are prior to the implementation of a 'penny more for a pound' agreement which will lead to a 40 % pay-increase.
[3] See Appendix E.

housing "that routinely violate federal regulations" (Oxfam 2004). Rent for one of these dilapidated trailers or shacks is around $200 to $400 a week, prices which the rent of suburban middle-class homes surrounding Miami compare favorably to (Baker 1998; Bowe 2003; Walsh 2005). Eight to 12 farmworkers often crowd into a single trailer to come up with the costly rent payment (CIW 2003a). The housing market, as with production of agriculture, is dominated by a few land-holding owners who control the pricing in this monopolistic fashion. Workers' lack of vehicle ownership and mobility impedes the workers' ability to commute from areas beyond the tightly controlled real estate space of Immokalee and allows local landlords and merchants to engage in this type of price-gouging[4] (see map highlighting transportation in Florida[5]).

To summarize then, the migrant labor population in Immokalee endures very difficult conditions in the sphere of production. Reflecting on the workers' living conditions it seems clear these conditions restructure themselves in the sphere of social reproduction. The CIW, which was first launched in 1995 by a small group of workers (Lydersen 2005), have recognized two important aspects of this production network. Growers hold strong control over the place of production. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the CIW realized the important actors within this network were not the growers but large multinational corporations. In the campaigns it developed throughout the early 2000s the CIW created sophisticated strategies to challenge these larger corporations and effectively have the companies recognize their responsibility for the plight of workers in southwestern Florida. These three themes will respectively be discussed in the thesis's three analytical chapters. Before continuing on to the analytical sections, I first need to describe in detail the methods used to complete the data production for this thesis.

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[4] In reaction to similar price-practices on groceries and other types of necessary merchandise the CIW have opened a worker-run co-op in Immokalee.
[5] See Appendix map on transportation.

3.4 Methods

The methods I employed in this research answer to a dialectical methodology approach. To be able to examine the relations between actors, e.g. labor-capital, labor-civil society etc., I use a qualitative approach, which allows me to describe the relations. Describing these relations in this thesis will include an understanding of how the agency of the CIW is manifested, how it might be embedded in relation to social actors, and what relations social actors have to capital actors in this same system. These aspects of the research may remain unseen through quantitative approaches. Methods used to understand these dimensions include interviews with a variety of actors, (participant) observation, and archival texts. To describe a contentious issue such as working-class politics it is important to collect different types of data from different positions to further validate the findings (Hay 2000).

3.4.1 Data

Reflecting on the research questions and the analytical framework of this case study, it becomes clear I am examining certain aspects of the relations between actors producing capitalist geographies. Specifically I explore the alliance between labor and civil society, and how this embedded agency can contest capital in the production of space. The method will need to allow for data collection that reveals how this alliance came about, what the motivations are for individual and collective agency, and how the faith-based actors relate to capital. As such, the methods I employed include interviews, participant observation, and archival analysis.

The qualitative ethnographic and archival approach allows me to reveal relations which might remain obscured with less in-depth or less inclusive methods of data gathering. To examine these relations, several analytical themes needs to be explored: the agency and praxis of

farm-workers, how this agency is embedded in the community sphere, the role of CIW as a non-union, community-based organization, and the relation of CIW participants to the wider landscape of economic production.

Research on the alliance(s) created between the CIW and community-based religious organizations develops our understanding of linkages between organizing labor in the sphere of production and organizing politically through community-organizations in the sphere of social reproduction. This means working-class politics is brought into the broader field of politics, and workers are inserted in a wider field of optional politics (Lier 2007). Furthermore and more specially I believe the research also provides new analytical insights into the spatial dynamics of labor-capital relations. Specifically, (1) the positionality of the CIW in relation to the GPN within which it is located provides insights into the spatial positionality of marginalized workers, specifically workers outside the manufacturing sector, within capitalist production; (2) through the analysis of the agency embedded in community-based unionism, the CIW provides a case-study of the spatial positionality of social actors in relation to workers and capital; the two proceeding insights allows for (3) an expanded, and perhaps spatially more precise, understanding of scalar politics. By embedding labor agency – i.e. scalar agency, in relation to capital (GNP) and community-based organizations in the social landscape, the CIW-study provides insight to spatial positionalities and alternate optional scalar strategies for workers. Secondarily, these methods will produce data on labor-geography literature on topics so far receiving little attention in the field: namely the less privileged workers of global capitalism, be that workers of migrant identity or labor in the so-called global south.

3.4.2 Methods

3.4.2.1 Interviews

I start this sub-section with exploring the reasons behind the dominance of faith-based participants in the interviews. The very limited participation of CIW representatives and actual farm-workers through participant interviews is an obvious omission of this research. Due to limitations and possibilities of carrying out this research, mostly representatives of the faith-based community have been interviewed. Yet, I believe the validity of this research holds. The focus of the thesis explicitly examines the embedded agency of labor in the faith-based community. Secondarily, the CIW, through its activities spanning almost two decades have produced an extensive literature, and collected an even larger body of archival material produced by external sources; both academic and in the media. Reflecting on the scope of the research in this paper, and with the support of two further methods, the research presents and objective account of the campaigns and development of the faith-based embedded agency of the CIW.

The interviews have different functions in my methodology. Primarily the interviews were used to explore the informants' views on issues pertinent for understanding the relations between the different actors of this research. Though I had done extensive archival research prior to completing interviews, talking with various actors involved in the CIW helped me find bearings in the subject matter. Participants covered 'gaps' in my knowledge by making me aware of misunderstandings and clearing up confusions I had. Interviews provided a test of my own notions of how things were connected and functioned, and lastly and importantly, they were sources for information that was not articulated anywhere else (Dunn 2008).

Nonetheless, the main priority of interviews was to produce data from the participants' views and opinions on specific relations between capital, labor and civil society; and secondarily

any surrounding information which might aid in my understanding of the relation. Considering the production of capitalist geographies is contentious, it is necessary to recognize it is an undeniably political relation, among other aspects. To better understand these politics I believe it was vital to speak to a number of participants from different positions.

I had little information prior to the research on which participants to contact; furthermore I did not expect the population to be of a size necessitating a random sample. The most appropriate method of recruitments seemed to contact key-participants for initial interviews. Based on information, and to certain extent assistance, provided by these contacts, further recruitment was completed by the so-called snowball method, in which participants were recruited based on recommendations and relations of the initial participants.

The population interviewed was dominated by activists or members from the faith-based community, and to a lesser extent representative of the CIW.[6] A total of 17 participants were interviewed. Ten of these were members of a church, meaning the participant acted in the alliance on behalf of the congregation or church to which they belonged. The church itself had an official, active role in the alliance. Three ministers working in the alliances were interviewed; one remains active in the work on behalf of the CIW. Four participants worked in various capacities for the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) on behalf of the CIW, and one participant was from Interfaith Action. Additionally two participants from the CIW completed interviews.[7] All interviews were completed in the period from early July 2010 to December of the same year. Due to the spatial nature of the alliance, a number of the interviews were completed in various cities, as part of the research was completed during the CIW 'Modern Day

[6] See appendix A. A list of interview-participants has been included, which provides a short description and location of participant interviews. I believe it provides a reflection of the spatial characteristics of the alliance the CIW forged with the faith-based community and aids in the understanding of the geographic strategies undertaken by the CIW

[7] Some of the participants had overlapping roles in more than one of these organizations.

Slavery Museum Tour' of the Northeast United States during late August and September of 2010. Interviews on this tour were completed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Princeton, New Jersey. Additionally I travelled to cities where the CIW had established alliances with the faith-based community. Seven interviews were completed in Chicago, Illinois, one interview in Lakeland, Florida, two interviews took place in Atlanta, Georgia, and two interviews with participants from Florida and Wisconsin were completed over the telephone. Participants represented the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, the interdenominational organizations of Interfaith Action and NFWM, and, lastly, the CIW.

Interviews with representatives of the community-based alliance were planned through contact by both phone and e-mail. I intended to follow a pattern of meeting participants in their homes, local churches, or other social establishments in their community; however conditions of the research led to an unpredicted pattern of interview locations. The period of research proved to be an active period for several of the participants. Over the summer months of 2010 I interviewed participants in their homes, local restaurants, during actual stops along the Slavery Museum Tour, in offices of non-profits represented by the faith-based community, and lastly by telephone. The last method of interview does prove challenges; however the obstacles are outweighed by the benefits gained by interviewing key-informants.

Leading up to the interviews, typically depending on the participant, I had gone through a conversation over e-mail or telephone with the participants so they would know topics and themes of my research. Several of the participants also expressed concerns for time constraints and actively sought information prior to the interviews in an effort to be prepared for the interviews. My intentions for this were to avoid having go through the preconceived narrative of

how the CIW alliance had developed, allowing for the conversation to depart into themes appropriate to address the research questions.

The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews. These interviews were broadly structured but had a degree of flexibility so I could pursue topics that might emerge which seem valuable for the research (see Dunn 2008). Prior to the interviews I had completed research to understand the narrative of the establishment of the CIW in civil society and to a certain extent the specifics campaign waged against Taco Bell. The structure of the interviews followed the major themes or events in these two processes. Through the semi-structured approach participants could better explain what lay behind these narratives. Typically I would give the participant the main topics I wanted to cover, and I would start the interview with having the participant explain their own position within in this process and ask about their interpretation of specific events in the narrative.

3.4.2.2 Observation

In addition to interviews I also completed ethnographic data collection through observations. The collection of data through observation might include both passive to proactive engagements with relevant events (Dowler 2001 ; Allsop 2010). For this research I completed both passive and proactive strategies as a result of how the research was carried out. In some cases this meant actively participating in the activities of the day with some participants, such as during one day of the research where I assisted in setting up the exhibition of the 'Modern Day Slavery Museum Tour' in Princeton, New Jersey, as a result of rescheduling and delays. My main aim with the observations might be conceptualized as providing complementary material, "…to gather additional descriptive information before, during, or after other more structured forms of data collection" (Kearns 2000:105). Though the method of producing data is described

as 'supportive' it still provides valuable information of how this alliance is in fact carried out during the CIW campaigns. Bernard (2002) describes participant observation as a method which places the researcher in a location where the object of research is taking place. This includes a method in which the researcher becomes part of what is being studied and in this sense at a later point is able to extract himself to gain a new perspective. The researcher aims to become part of the situation, so that what is being observed would have taken place regardless of the presence of the researcher. In the sense the participants are following a path of action which would have gone through without the researcher.

The main events of participant observations were various stops on campaigns carried out by the CIW. Most of these stops were part of the Modern Slavery Museum tour along the east-coast in July and August of 2010, including stops in Charlottesville, Virginia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Princeton, New Jersey, and New York, New York. Additionally I have attended similar events by the CIW carried out in Atlanta, Georgia.[8]

In the case of the Modern Slavery Museum tour, I witnessed firsthand the ways in which the CIW embedded its work in places (and through relations) well beyond the borders of Immokalee, Florida. A smaller additional form of observation to these events is reflected by observations of the places where interviews took place, in which being exposed to the places where participants of the faith-based are living and organizing their own structures are reflective of their relation to the GPN and, of course ultimately, capital accumulation.

3.4.2.3 Textual Analysis

Winchester (2000) proposes textual analyses can be divided into three categories; documentary sources, creative texts and landscape sources. The production of data for this thesis

[8] See Appendix B for full list of participant observation.

relates primarily to the first one, i.e. documentary source and to a lesser extent the secondary source. For my research I have used documentary sources produced by the CIW itself, a number of faith-based organizations associated with the CIW, media outlets writing on the CIW and specifically the alliance between workers and the faith-based community. Documents include e-mail letter listings for the CIW [daily newsletters], Interfaith Action (IA), National Farmworker Ministry (NFWM), and Presbyterian Voices for Justice (PVJ). Furthermore the CIW [daily newsletters], Interfaith Action (IA), National Farmworker Ministry (NFWM), Presbyterian Voices for Justice (PVJ) and Presbyterian Church (USA) Fair Food provide web-sites with documents covering these events. Additionally these web-sites provide a 'resources' section which proved instrumental in comprehending the full narrative behind the history of the CIW and the particular events of establishing the faith-based alliance. The CIW has broad coverage extending as early as 2000, with more limited coverage extending to 1998. Online webpages from NFWM and PVJ have been used for auxiliary information. Lastly I have to a lesser extent used interpretations of artifacts produced for specific campaigns, such as the many symbolic effects used to target specific corporations or political targets as well as various religious pamphlets produced by churches and faith-based organizations given to me by interview participants . Beyond texts produced by workers and religious community organizations, parts of the data production have rested on media outlets, particularly newspapers. I have included sources from national newspapers such as the *New York Times*, other national media outlets such as National Public Radio. Furthermore, as the CIW has only recently gained increasing visibility particularly following the victory of the 'Boot the Bell' campaign, I have also relied heavily on local media in Florida, including *Naples Daily News*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *St. Petersburg Times*.

3.5 Analytical Framework and Coding of the Data

As already discussed, the research questions for this thesis necessitates an analysis of the dialectic relations of actors. Even if the themes of research have been narrowed down, the qualitative methodology approach produces vast amounts of data. Most of it is useful in different capacities; the difficult part is to narrow down what is useful for the specific themes identified for the specific research goals. Coding the data organizes and 'reduces' the data into comprehensible categories or themes. More importantly than aiding the discussion as an organizational tool, coding is part of the analytical processes identifying important themes which answers the research themes (Cope 2008). In particular for this research coding helps to uncover particular narratives or discourses of expressed labor agency. Secondarily, the process of coding, as I will return to, also reveals narratives of the 'identity' of workers as a class and social entity. The workers then, both individually and collectively, can be described as political sentient beings beyond a labor union. Thirdly, coding the data uncovers how scale is strategically produced by the workers. It is not enough just to highlight or point to these themes and 'codes' in documents or narratives provided by participants. It also must be set into a methodological analysis. In this case that means to interpret these themes in relation to actors and the systems of which these actors are a part (Jackson 2001; Cope 2008; Geertz 2008).

A first aspect or even problem of analyzing the data will be identifying and understanding messages within the text or transcript. This process in its most basic sense allow me to examine the data I have produced, and through understanding the different levels of the messages given, both in interviews and texts, I am sure to include both openly expressed ideas and meanings as well as latent and discursive messages. In the process of coding, then, I examined both latent

and manifested messages. Examples of a manifest includes such as OR explaining his positionality as a consumer in relation to the farm-workers through the GPN: "I have never thought of this before, I would eat at Taco Bell all the time. Yet, here are these…migrants telling me about what happens in Immokalee…" The message here then is clear and what Cope (2008) refers to a manifest message. The information of the message is open and clear, even with limited contextualization. On the other hand, as this following transcript-passage from a participant less critical of Yum Brands shows opinions or statements can be latent and dependent on discourse to be understood: "…I think that in the case of Yum Brands, the guy who was the CEO or the decision maker also was a church man. And I don't, you know [...] there are several levels, and so I am not sure the corporate level really was aware of what was going on..." (Source TR). I want to highlight the aspect of the characterization of the CEO as a "church man". To understand the meaning of this passage it is important to contextualize the positionality of this participant. As an ethnographer I have to understand the participant's relation to the faith-based community, to capitalist actors, and to the laborers, and simultaneously I have to take into account my own pre-conception of what it means to be a "church man" in relation to capital actors. This initial step of analysis ensures I keep as much of the useful data as possible. Yet, the coding needs to further process the data. The data should highlight how the tendencies of theory are taking place in the empirical example of this case-study. Specifically to do this I divided the data into different set of themes or 'codes'.

Interviews and data collected from textual sources as well as participant observation, speak directly to research themes in this thesis. Though categories might almost seem descriptive, the coding categories are analytical and their eventual conceptualization is rooted in labor geography- and community-based unionism theory. I did not set out with pre-determined

categories, the themes explored changed based on the process of producing- and analyzing data. To more clearly demonstrate this analytical process I develop this subsection by describing the larger themes and sub-sets of themes I have identified during the coding in this research. The structural organization of these themes builds on Anselm Strauss's system of grounded theories, where four different types of themes are identified: conditions, interactions among actors, strategies and tactics and consequences (Cope 2008). Coding in this analysis does not follow any particular hierarchy or sequence of orders; rather the different types of themes are dialectically related. **Capital actors** is one theme I used to distill data pertinent to identify the actors of this economic landscape; more specifically then each category is divided into sub-themes of multinational corporations, regional companies etc. Similarly **organizations** are the major theme representing collective actors of labor and civil society. This category holds sub-themes as well, such as churches, community-based organizations, interfaith-organizations, labor unions (though this is typically used as a 'descriptive' tool to highlight the characteristics of the CIW). **Individuals** present a third major coding theme, where the sub-theme is coded based on an individual's *relation* to the production taking place in Immokalee. Importantly in this third category, most participants and other individuals will have overlapping relations to different sets of collective actors (capital actors or organizations), meaning each individual is not typically defined by relation to one single actor. The **state**, though not an explicit topic of discussion in this thesis, has been included in my analytical stage as well as much of the rest of the research, as it is difficult to understand politics of labor organizations if it is completely left out. Returning to Strauss's types, these codes represent the 'interaction among actors'-themes.

'Strategy and tactics' as a theme of coding in this context is to be found in the production of relations or scales between the actors. Analytically this category of Strauss in this research is

coded as the geographic concept of **place.** It might appear as a wide category, but I believe the sub-themes of the place-category have the geographic concept of *place* as a commonality. Furthermore the sub-themes remain too abstract without a continued consideration of place in relation to them. Sub-themes to this large category includes **embedding agency** in place, **scale** produced between places and actors**,** and lastly, a descriptive code, **events** or **campaigns** both occurring within places.

The last sets of themes I included are **objectives** and **motivations** for actors both on individual and collective levels. These include **materialist** purposes, such as demands for wages or other benefits, and on the other hand a wide category I have defined as discussions of **justice**. Thematically these categories respond to the 'conditions' of workers. Simultaneously thematically 'consequences' remain intertwined with 'conditions' as the outcome of the process is to change the 'conditions' of the workers.

In the following three chapters I present the analytical discussion of these relations between the various actors, and how these constitute space--namely the economic landscape of a GPN. The conversation builds on the analytical framework discussed here, chapter four will focus on the labor-capital relation, while chapter five and six expands the discussion to include social actors as well.

4. CIW: A CASE-STUDY OF COMMUNITY UNIONISM

Geographic realities of economic production shape how labor agency manifests itself. In the sense that labor seeks its own spatial fix in contention to capital, much of the economic landscape in which workers find themselves positioned in will impact how labor agency will be

expressed. As discussed earlier in this thesis, agency within the narrative of labor geography has normally been analyzed through the traditional labor union, a mode of organizing rooted in place of production. Yet, in contemporary capitalism, as neoliberalism continues its restructuring process of economic production, the ability of traditional unions to not only impact capitalist landscapes, but even to organize as unions, are constantly challenged (Walsh 2000; Cumbers et al. 2008). The discussion in this chapter will not focus on the diminishing role of unions; rather it provides an analytical case study of how workers already are organizing and pursuing their objectives through alternate modes of expressing labor agency (beyond the option of a traditional union). Moreover, the chapter discuss how the specific geographies of the workers are both forcing and enabling them to create these very alternate organizational structures.

Beyond appreciating this as a theoretical discussion of labor agency articulated beyond the union, this section builds a foundation for the later analysis in this thesis. In the later chapters, the discussion evolves to focus on how the agency by workers might be embedded in *coalitions* of labor and civil society actors. The final chapter concludes with a discussion of how community-based labor agency, and in particular its interpretation of place, is articulated by producing new scales to reinterpret the CIWs notion of place. To understand the analysis in these later chapters, it is necessary to discuss the characteristics of CIW as an organization. More specifically how the process of embedding their agency is situated within the labor geography literature.

In this chapter, then, I highlight the realities of the Immokalee workers, and their strategy of establishing the CIW as a community-based organization. This group of workers, the CIW, represents a specific example of collective form of labor agency and community-based unionism: the worker centers, a type of organization, which has received limited attention in labor

geography so far. In the analyses afforded to these groups it has been argued these specific types of organization offers limited potential to carry out agency contesting capital (Moody 2009). The workers of Immokalee provide a case study of labor which will add to the geographic understanding of these organizations, and provide examples where so-called worker centers in fact do carry out similar strategic efforts to that of labor unions or labor unions in coalitions with external community-based organizations. To do so, an examination of the geographies of production and how it relates to the organizational mode of farm-workers in southwestern Florida is needed, but we also need to examine the sphere of social reproduction; the place of the community.

A useful distinction to return to here is the difference between place of production and place of social reproduction (Peck 1996). Where production takes place, in this case the actual manufacturing of tomatoes in the wider GPN, is part of a geography which is manifested by relations far beyond the 'place' of Immokalee. If we refer to the 'wider GPN' we can include 'higher ups' in the chain of accumulation through purchases of commodities produced by labor from farm-workers in Immokalee, and not only their direct employees. The place of social reproduction, on the other hand, is the social sphere of the workers. This is where society (reflective of the mode of production (Massey 1984)), ensures the production, or reproduction, of labor suitable for capitalism. The sphere of social reproduction takes different forms depending on the demands of economic production. In some cases it might be the social space of a city reproducing labor at an expected cost to capitalists, facilitating transportation and urban space allowing for the workforce to travel between work and home on a daily basis. Immokalee's distinguishing feature as a space of supplying labor, on the other hand, is that it does so through migrant workers. The main objective for creating the space in this particular way is to maintain

low-cost labor for employers. In the case of Immokalee farmworkers, the city of Immokalee operates as a space to hold and distribute labor rather than producing it. As a place supplying low-cost labor it is dependent on a number of wider relations to come into being (Walter 2011). This chapter, though keeping the two concepts of social and production separate for analytical reasons, will show how the two spheres very much are intertwined and the choice of the farm-workers to pursue an organizational strategy in the sphere of social reproduction rather than place of work is very much an expected and logical outcome of the specific geography of tomato production in southwestern Florida. On a last note, before proceeding with the analysis, it might appear as an omission to not include issues such as the harsh conditions and abuse in the fields and very low wages as to why the CIW was formed - it is a conscious omission - as I do not hope to say why the CIW was formed as an organization to alleviate the difficult work conditions, rather I hope to explore why the workers sought to organize in the community instead of the work-place. Furthermore, the varying legal status of migrants provides challenges for unionizing laborers already exposed in relation to their employees, a second omission of this analysis (Waldinger and Der-Martirosian 2000; CIW 2003a). Admittedly this constitutes an important aspect of the decision to pursue an organization in the sphere of civil society. However, the research themes for this thesis seek to examine relations between capital-, labor-, and social actors. Discussing migration as a pivotal aspect of this production entails including state actors in the analysis. The state remains in important actor in relation to these other actors in determining the legality of migrants and as a natural extension for our understanding of labor geographies. In what follows, then, I will first highlight the spatial realities of production and social reproduction before summarizing and describing how the workers' organization of the

CIW effectively galvanizes its labor agency through strategies of moving their organizational efforts into the latter sphere, by embedding its agency in the community.

4.1 Realities of Production

In the case of farm-workers in Immokalee the spatial realities of production prevented the possibility of the workers creating a union in the traditional sense. In its place the workers carried out their agency in the civil sphere and formed a community union instead. The farm-workers in Immokalee faced with very limited strategic options, reached for space outside of production to open for development of alternate paths to articulate their labor agency. Specifically these alternate options include development of strategies which are appropriate for ‘‘hard to organize’’ groups of workers, and hard to reach “targets” of contestation (Herod 1998; Sadler 2004; Tufts 1998; Wills 2001; Lier 2007; Lier and Coe 2010). Community unionism exemplifies the coming together of workers in organizational form where actors of capital has 'squeezed' out the path of organizing along the traditional form, that of labor unions. The most effective way capital achieves this is by exerting its already dominant control over production.

The first question in this section then becomes how has the organizational form of labor organizing been excluded as an option? To benefit the analytical discussion I will examine these conditions and their spatiality partially through the aid of a framework of a GPN. The first answer to this question is an examination of the obstacles to organize manifested in the nature of work in Immokalee, and secondarily I believe the answer will need a discussion of the *distance* between influential actors and labor in the geography of production. Distance in this discussion will both refer to a physical length of travel and of separation and exclusion by other means in the spatiality of production.

Traditionally, labor activism would mimic the hierarchy of production when organizing in the place of production (Herod 1997), and workers would 'use' the spatiality and, to a lesser extent the hierarchy, of production to challenge and contest capital. Several aspects of the spatiality in production of Immokalee farm-workers challenge the potential of laborers to unionize. A central problem involves the practice of hiring workers. The relation between grower and farm-worker is re-established daily, meaning the coming together of labor and capital then is re-established each day. Workers gather in the public spaces of Immokalee, notably a parking lot in central Immokalee adjacent to the CIW center and are hired on a day-to-day basis by crew leaders working on behalf of the growers (Van Marter 2002; Sellers 2009). Little to no knowledge is to be had of where a job might be the following day, which again means the workers have little chance of establishing continuous relations to one specific farm or employer. Rather the workers are shifted, to a certain extent randomly, to different sites of production from day to day.

In this process the crew leader operates as the connection between grower and laborer. In a wider understanding of the GNP, the crew leader becomes the first link between the grower and the large fast food chains, such as Taco Bell, which eventually serves the tomatoes picked by the Immokalee workers to the consumer. Ultimately the crew leader becomes the initial link between the laborer and the consumers in the relation of the produced commodity. In a simplistic interpretation for analytical benefit there are two sets of workers in the field. The crew leaders operate the process and are in charge of the workers, yet the crew-leaders see little interest in a common identity with the farm-workers (Interview with DA). Again, as traditionally labor have mimicked the spatiality of capital to challenge it, in those instances worker activists could depend on senior workers rooted in the place of production over time to consolidate

organizational efforts. As a result of this schism between the work-leaders and workers in the place of production coupled with the unstable work conditions, it becomes very difficult to establish any form of identity much less so an organization rooted in the place of production.

The commute to and from the workplace, an imperative aspect of any spatial analysis of workers' geographies (Peck 1996), is in Immokalee, due to the nature of hiring policies and to the state of public transit, effectively in the hands of the employers. Workers then are dependent on their employers to travel back and forth to their jobs. This very important relation defining the space of workers is now, to a certain extent, out of the control of labor. Not surprisingly public transit is not an option for workers in these non-urban areas of Florida, effectively excluding the possibility of workers determining when and how to travel to and from the workplace. Furthermore, intercity or a regional public transport system on a state-level remains very sparse[9], in particular for the regions dominated by migrant labor populations (Highlands Today 2008). Nonetheless the farm-workers are offered transport routes to other major transportation hubs beyond the spatial configuration of a work-to-home commute. For example, bus routes will travel as far as Mexico and countries beyond to Central America. This shows how capital may be facilitating transportation it finds beneficial for production in terms of importing a low-cost work-force. Yet, to return to the concerns transportation has for the control of the daily commute, the very identity and existence as a farm-worker is dependent on the transportation links offered by employer. It is not an option to refuse this option of transportation, as there are no other means of travelling to the place of work. If the workers are not able to organize during the time spent in the fields, the work-day, the lack of controlling transportation to and from the place of production will make it challenging to meet or organize outside the field at the end of a work-day. These temporal and spatial obstacles of employment-

[9] See map in appendix F.

and work practices then present two major obstacles for workers organizing in a traditional sense of a union.

In the rest of this sub-section I highlight the *distance* between workers and influential actors of the GPN as third major obstacle for organizing in the traditional sense of a labor union. If the CIW were able to form an organization rooted in the fields of a grower as opposed to in the community, it would still prove very challenging to reach actors who are capable of altering their state of work-conditions in the field. When discussing distance in the preceding paragraphs, in reference to the commute of workers, I highlighted a physical distance of travel time and access to transportation. An important aspect of the ability to organize in the work place is also realized through distance between actors in the GPN. Workers hired by crew leaders are still not capable of contesting their conditions in any form as they cannot interact, or even see or encounter in many cases, their employers, much less so the major actors which determine much of the conditions within this GPN. Crew leaders, though certainly of a more privileged position in the chain of accumulation, remains labor hired by the growers. Contesting working conditions to these 'representatives' of the growers will likely not yield much result. Both do to the fact they are not capital actors which hire the workers, nor are they workers that share the same interests, identity, or a sense of place with the migrant farm-workers. As two separate groups, in geographical terms, they have very a different 'spatial fix' to pursue.

Still, even if this distance which is very real both physically and in terms of controlling and impacting production, the major obstacles for farm-workers as the CIW is the vast distance to the influential actors of this GPN and not the distance to the growers. If growers were to accept the demands of workers, the larger actors in the GPN might decide to simply shift their production to other locations. It is this capability which typically is referred to as placeless, or in

particularly in mainstream media and to a certain extent academia, globalized capital. Through this ability provided to capital by neoliberalism, depending on the geography of the GPN, these corporations can decide to potentially move their demand of produce to new places; this might be abroad in other economies completely, or to other regions of the United States where growers keep stronger control of the cost of production.

The production network of tomato production in Florida and an analysis of the relations of actors within it become readily comprehensible if we divide the different actors into scales of the GPN for analytical purposes. Farm-workers naturally provide the labor; they remain localized depending on acceptable commute distance. The growers employ the farm-workers to produce tomatoes and other vegetables, while the growers sell the produce on a market, which increasingly has become dominated by fewer and fewer actors. These actors are represented by multi-national corporations. Produced tomatoes from growers in Florida going to grocery retailers have declined, while the amount of produce delegated to the 'foodservice' sector, a sector dominated by fast food- and super-market chains, has increased. Through this shift of production, the spatiality of production has changed as capitalist actors have reproduced the geographies of the GPN (Oxfam 2004). Yum Brands, as one example, operates its own purchasing cooperative, the United Foodservice Purchasing Co-op (UFPC), to manage the supply chains for all of its brands. The UFPC, in turn, obtains produce, specifically tomatoes in the case of Immokalee workers, through a single broker which establishes purchasing contracts from five or six different growers (Oxfam 2004). The objective of altering the GPN in this way, to centralize their purchasing power through co-operatives, is to consolidate market power in fewer hands. More specifically, one of the benefits to multinational corporations manifested throughout this case study is a downward pressure on labor-costs. This process is often expressed

as a question or issue over income and expenditure, yet this downward pressure should be considered as a political act, particularly when the monetary benefits from this pressure are compared to the political gains[10]. It is possible for companies such as Yum Brands to shift its tomato purchases to a different region if cost is not low enough. Growers are pressured to keep control over the labor force, ensuring the workers become squeezed by these 'less privileged' capitalists in the production chain. The major buyers of their produce, fast food- and supermarket chains, for example, extend the cost and risk to the growers, the smaller actors, while abolishing their own responsibility from the network of production (CIW 2005d). Taco Bell[11] purchased approximately 10 million pounds of Florida tomatoes in 2004); its parent company Yum Brans, which operated 6,500 restaurants in the U.S. at the apex of the "Boot the Bell" boycott aimed at Taco Bell in 2005, grossed over $9 billion in profits the same year (Lantigua 2005). By examining these values of capital accumulation it is quite easy to discern where in the production network the privileged positions vis-à-vis capital accumulation are located. The separation between laborers and the influential actors of the GPN is vast in distance, accessibility, and value gained from the sale of commodities.

What becomes obvious by analyzing the realities of these facts and numbers is a vast spatial distance in the production between influential decision makers and labor within the same GPN. There are two important aspects of production this discussion underscores which force the farm-workers of Immokalee to seek agency beyond the union. These conditions are exasperated by their position in the production network where they remain less visible due to a non-

[10] When the McDonald's corporation, after stalling for several years, eventually agreed to an identical deal as the one Yum Brands had accepted with the CIW, a spokesperson for McDonald's assured customers and media they would not have to pay for this sacrifice by increased prices at outlets. It is estimated the agreement would cost the McDonald's corporation, a company reporting revenue of 27.7 billion USD the same year (Lantigua 2007), roughly 55,000 USD (Interview with FL).

[11] The campaign against Taco Bell served as a solidifying process of the CIW, and I believe as an empirical case it serves well to highlight the expression of labor agency.

privileged position in the production network vis-à-vis influential actors of capital. 'Invisibility' of farm-workers remains true on account of non-capital actors as well. These actors, as discussed in the theoretical framework also play into the conditions of labor control in a GPN. This is a theme which will be discussed in both chapters five and six, where the workers of Immokalee overcome this invisibility by spatially creating alliances in privileged places vis-à-vis important actors in the GPN.

4.2 Realities in the sphere of social reproduction

The organizational challenges and efforts in the sphere of production, or obstacles to carry out 'union'-activities, of the CIW then hopefully have become clearer and more tangible. How then are conditions in the sphere of social reproduction affecting the potential to organize these workers? Conditions present in the social life of farm-workers in Immokalee are to a far extent a result of the structures found in production. Following from this, the workers in Immokalee use the sphere of the community to organize workers who were denied the opportunity to organize in the place of production. Workers in this town, as is common elsewhere, share a shared identity primarily based on their relation and position in production (Wills 2008). A union seems a natural representational body; however the implications of production are hindering the establishment of such an organization. In place of a union the farm-workers created a community-based organization around a shared identity of Immokalee. An identity not necessarily dependent on the place of Immokalee as a stage, but rooted in the reality of Immokalee-workers' position within a GPN. The relations to capitalist production reach far beyond Immokalee as a town, and it is these ties that define the community that farm-workers organize around (Walter 2011). I argue the nature of production in Immokalee very much shapes the sphere of social reproduction in that place, of course this is an axiom often stated by

radical geographers (Massey 2005), and that this in turn shapes what organizational efforts can take place there. Though these qualities of production might manifest obstacles in the sphere of production, they can, at the same time, afford specific characteristics in the community which allows for relations ready for organizing in the sphere of social reproduction.

Before I can answer the question of what in the social reproduction sphere, or for the specifics of this discussion, the community, allows for organizing the CIW, a definition of community in relation to the farm-workers is apt. In the CIW a community cannot, and it would be senseless to attempt, simply be defined by geographic place as a container or stage for its inhabitants. The 'community' of the CIW is very much defined by the relations to economic agricultural production of which the community's groups and individuals are a part of. Immokalee is a town produced to facilitate low-cost vegetable production, and the spatiality of the city is created in certain ways to afford low cost tomato production for large corporations (Walter 2011). If we then see the town of Immokalee as a space dependent on, and as an outcome of, agricultural production, two obvious communities will emerge; the farm-workers on one side, and the landholding growers or landowning landlords on the other. These groups share a geographic place known as the town of Immokalee which might in a simplistic non-spatial interpretation be seen as one community. However, the inhabitants' relation to the place of Immokalee depends on their relations to the production taking place in the town. Geographic communities are dynamic and depend on relations which change over time (Massey 2005). They might change due to economic restructuring or socio-economic reasons. As such the spatiality of Immokalee has changed as the wider conditions of capitalism has evolved (Walters 2011).

To better understand the root of the CIW as a workers center, I examine the realities of the spheres of social reproduction and how this sphere of the social life of workers allows for

organizational work on behalf of the Immokalee workers. The population represented by the CIW is bound together by a community which very much revolves around a worker-based identity and thus provides an example of a non-union organizational expression of labor agency. As the disadvantages of the sphere of production have been summarized, I also point to the geography of social reproduction and how it affords beneficial conditions for worker organizations.

The work-force if agricultural production is widely recognized as a group who experience economic hardships. The U.S. Department of Labor has identified the workers in this production as a labor force in "significant distress" (2000). The report highlighted the harsh conditions and exploitative nature of farm work, particularly so in the state of Florida. The common interests of this community are reflected in the demands of the CIW throughout its campaigns; the boycott of Taco Bell, which has been successfully replicated in campaigns targeting other multinational corporations, is one such example.

These relations that I refer to then should be separated by class, that of the workers and that of capital actors. The manifestation of an identity or community based on class embodies an axiom discussed from Marx to Massey (1984) that a society reflects the mode of production taking place at a given time and space. In Immokalee, then, the workers become a class of exploited workers, and the exploitation is what propels the creation of an organization like the CIW. Farm-workers might not be able to unify or organize as a class in the sphere of production; nonetheless their identities as workers are carried on into the sphere of social reproduction. In a place such as Immokalee, which is spatially produced to facilitate agricultural production, the expression of class identity becomes apparent and readily tangible for any organizational efforts. Of course there are a number of variables beyond the conditions of the

work-place that help cement class identity. In this case I do not intend to provide an exhaustive discussion of how the realities of the social life of workers consolidate a class of workers, rather I point to how some issues have, in fact, consolidated the workers in Immokalee enough for them to organize and collectively express their labor agency.

Housing for the migrant workers in Immokalee is very much a reflection of the city being a space made to facilitate agricultural production. Homeownership is not surprisingly non-existent as the workers are migrants, and often they are migrants of varying degrees of legal status. This means the farm-workers have very little control over the housing situation in Immokalee. The real estate market is controlled by few actors. Property owners exploit their almost monopolistic conditions and extract very high rent from the already underpaid workers. According to participants I interviewed and secondary sources (Bowe 2003; Nieves 2005) the rent of a mobile-home, typically in very poor condition, is rented for similar prices to middle-class family housing in suburban Miami. As the workers have little say in the situation, and because they are completely dependent on housing in Immokalee during the season, the situation persists. The lack of control over the housing is related to the lack of control over transportation. Transportation or the commute between the sphere of social reproduction and the place of production is a very determinant factor of the built landscape in capitalism (Peck 1996). Housing for workers will be built according to a distance which makes it profitable and possible to maintain production. This condition, such an important part of any individual's life, equally so for working-class people, only further consolidates the farmworkers as a class, identity, and community in the sphere of social reproduction, further enhancing the CIW as an organization.

Transportation to and from the work-place is in the hands of the employer. As already discussed this has a major impact on where the workers can live, and naturally where they can

work. Immokalee and rural Southwestern Florida does not provide sufficient public transit for its population (Highlands Today 2008) which is certainly not enough for a farm worker to depend on for the commute to and from work. To be able to control one's own transportation, a private vehicle is necessary; whereas obtaining one is quite difficult for migrant workers. Again, there is a fixture of the sphere of social reproduction which only further consolidates the entire group represented by the CIW as the working-class population of Immokalee. The organizational structure of workers is thus further strengthened in the sphere of reproduction. Similarly to how transportation shapes the lives of workers in the sphere of production, it has an impact in the social sphere in terms of where and how they live.

Lastly, I want to discuss how produced scales manifest realizations of place by the workers in Immokalee. The last chapter is very much dedicated to the spatial interpretation of the workers and how scalar strategies of their own definition enable them to challenge the responsibility larger corporations have for the workers within a GPN. The short discussion here addresses a more basic question: what is the interpretation of place? I argue that the workers interpret and define Immokalee, though not the necessarily the home of the workers, as a place to organize around. The interpretation of community then depends, I believe, on the Immokalee workers' particular positionality in the GPN. These networks of productions are composed of scales. One scale might be defined by the commodity of the tomato creating a chain or scale between the worker and consumer. The form of production is dependent on low-cost labor, which is afforded in this case by migrant laborers. Scales here are produced to establish relations between Immokalee and spaces producing low-cost labor. So as Walter (2011) points out in this article on place and the CIW, the relations of the workers and certainly the relations of capital

actors from Taco Bell to Six-L, very much create a sense of place which workers re-define and organize around.

If we recognize farm-workers as one community in place in Immokalee, then, it should be clear there is more than one community present. It also becomes apparent why there are contentious relations between the different communities in place, as they are defined by relations to capitalist production. As Cumbers et al. (2008) points out, actors beyond the place of production provide control for a stable supply of labor; localized social institutions are ensuring the reproduction of laborers (Peck 1996). In Immokalee this involves a process of ensuring a steady flow of cheap migrant labor, a population with a number of obstacles to contest its work-conditions. The relations of this group, then, define its identity as a community through relations to capitalism and to a migrant background.

Significant levels of capitalist control over production in Immokalee hinder the workers' potential of organizing in the place of production. Yet these structural realities of production are re-established in the sphere of social production. This process, reflective of Massey's axiom that a society depends on its production, opens for alternate spaces of organizing. And though capitalist actors certainly hold influence over civil society as well, they do not to the same extent as they do over the place of production. While working-class politics might not be carried out through a union, the Immokalee workers are instead expressing their agency through a community-based organization. However, as any 'traditional' labor union experiences, positionality within the spatiality of a GPN defines the potential of an organization representing labor. This, not surprisingly, is also true for the CIW. In the following chapter I examine how the Immokalee farm-workers realize their limitations, and recognize strategic partners within the GPN to add leverage to their own agency.

5. EMBEDDED AGENCY: THE CIW AND THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

The scope of research in this thesis delimits its analysis to expressed agency rooted in the sphere of social reproduction; more specifically for the discussion in this chapter I present an analysis of how agency might be embedded between labor and social-actors within this sphere - that of the bridge created between the CIW and the faith-based community. To better analyze this phenomena of labor embedding its agency in the geography of which it is a part (Herod 2003), Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) propose a simple, but yet useful analytical approach to discuss this agency theoretically. The embedded agency in space should be seen in separate categories of relations to actors to answer 'where' the agency is embedded. Answering *how* and *where* agency potential is established, they propose, gives an enhanced theorization of the concept so central to labor geography. Of course the former chapter has already highlighted how laborers can root their own agency in the sphere of social reproduction. Yet that community-organization, the worker-center, consists of laborers. That is an organization rooted both in place of production and the sphere of social reproduction. Furthermore, as Moody (2009) has argued, this specific mode of operation, that is the worker center, does have its limitations. Yet, I would add, this study of the CIW shows how this understanding of the worker-center should be expanded. In this chapter I seek to explain how the CIW, as a community-based organization made by and for workers, ultimately enabled labor agency to impact the capitalist landscape through a strategy of embedding its agency in the civil sphere of society. This 'further' embedding of labor agency is a result of the CIW realizing the agency of its organizing efforts is very much conditioned by its position in the GPN – a network which spans both place of production and the sphere of social reproduction. And the objective, which may be clear already, is to add leverage to labor agency rooted in a disadvantaged place of the GPN.

What I hope to gain through this chapter is a further development of labor agency in a theoretical sense, and at the same time to highlight important categories of different strategies available to working-class politics in the community unionism-'tool-box'. Two strategies which have been highlighted here will then be the 'worker-center' (Fine 2005; Fine 2006), featured in the previous chapter, and in what follows community-based 'coalitions' (Tattersall 2010). Specifically this discussion will add to our understanding of labor agency embedded in civil society and ultimately wider geographies of society.

A strategy of embedding agency in the sphere of social reproduction remains a broad topic, as does even the more specific strategies of CIW by foraging into the sphere of civil society. And although the student-based alliance has been of pivotal importance in the many campaigns carried out by the CIW, this thesis emphasizes the relationship established with faith-based organizations rooted in civil society. It might not seem as an important analytical distinction to make at a first instance. But, spatially the two different alliances offer very different spatial strategic possibilities, and, of course, challenges, for the workers in Florida. Specifically and empirically speaking, then, I discuss the alliance of embedding labor agency in a relation of labor and faith-based community organizations.

The analysis will highlight the *process* of establishing this alliance between labor and religion. Yet, though the discussion focuses on social- and labor actors, it must be kept in mind that labor agency is carried out in contestation of capitalist geographies. Capital and labor remains intimately intertwined (Harvey 1996), and although this discussion highlights the relation of the former 'set' of actors, it will be useful to keep all three sets of actors in mind throughout the chapter. For analytical purposes, particularly to understand the spatiality of these processes, it is beneficial to again introduce the discussion through an inquiry of GPN. By

continuously situating the laborers in Florida in their position within this network, it becomes that much easier to understand the advantages of entering into these alliances with faith-based actors in the sphere of social reproduction. Actors of capital in the landscape of this GPN will be represented by growers and the larger multinational corporations--in this specific case-study, and particularly in chapter 6, explicitly represented by Yum Brands. Yet I will in the discussion throughout this thesis refer to other important multi-national corporations of this GPN.

The preceding chapter shows how labor, unable to unionize or contest their conditions in place of production, shifts its place of organizing. In his chapter I show how, as in the words of Herod (2003), workers are embedding their agency in a geography. To heed the call from labor geographers (Castree 2007; Wills 2008; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010) for an increased focus on what exactly labor agency entails by theoretically and empirically examining how this agency becomes embedded.

Little data can be found to use from secondary sources to describe this process of embedding agency, as it is not highlighted in documents by the organizations, or other data-sources from media. As such, the analysis demonstrating how labor-agency might be embedded in external civil society organizations is dependent on the participants of this research, and to a lesser extent the archival materials produced by the organizations themselves during these very campaigns and political events. Participants have provided very insightful aspects of how the political questions, and ultimately the agency of the CIW, are embedded amongst the faith-based members. I highlight the themes which have allowed the questions to be voiced in the faith-based community.

5.1 The realization of the geographies and temporalities of the CIW

Labor geographers such as Wills (2009) have shown, when mapping the politics of the working class, for example through a GPN or the workers' positionality in relation to the production of surplus value, an uneven political landscape emerges (Nagar, McDowell and Hanson 2002; McDowell, Batnitzky and Dyer 2009). Even when examining the relatively privileged labor fortunate to find itself in organized unions, as often is a theme of analysis in labor geography, union positionalities in the economic landscape will to a great extent determine the agency-potential of workers. This is also true for the case of the CIW, where the workers are not in a union (Baker 1998; Van Marter 2002; Bowe 2003). Yet, the CIW as a community organization has the same obstacles as other laborers and labor unions; however, community organizations may also encounter further obstacles. For example, variables presenting difficulties to carry out working-class politics in the sphere of social reproduction might include issues of identity (in contemporary capitalism this issue is often problematized through nationalism); the character of production; and labor's ability act out resistance in place (Cumbers, Routledge et al. 2008; Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). The CIW was not able to establish itself as a union in the place of production but did establish an organization in the sphere of social reproduction. Yet, this community organization made by and for farm-workers is still surrounded by spatial challenges, both of a purely economic and social nature, to effectively challenge its capitalist landscape.

What problems are to be solved by the Immokalee workers in order to overcome these obstacles of unevenness, so common in contemporary capitalism? Questions of identity, often expressed in narratives of nationalism or xenophobia, present one obstacle. As migrant farm-workers the CIW are put in a position of disadvantage if they are to seek political allies in the

sector of the state. Current political climates in the U.S. do not favor this population. Furthermore, the nature of production itself disfavors the workers. Yum Brands, or any other multi-national corporation, purchasing produce from Florida operate within a scale characterized by command of vast space and great privilege in sense of capital- as well as political power when compared to that of the migrant workers in Immokalee. Lastly, as will also be discussed extensively in the next chapter, there is limited potential for resistance in place for these workers. Yet again I would like to highlight the separation of these obstacles are made here for analytical purposes; it must be stressed that all these obstacles are very much closely entangled in the lived experience of migrant workers.

What the CIW realizes then is that the laborers in Florida, through an examination of their geography, need to recognize spatially its own limitations as an organization. The workers, to overcome these obstacles, seek to *further* enhance their agency in the sphere of social reproduction by engaging actors of civil society through subsequent campaigns targeting growers, and eventually the larger corporations in the GPN. Of course as should be clear by now, this extension into civil society is embodied through alliances with student populations and through their second major civil society based alliance--the faith-based community. Similarly to what labor unions have done earlier (Herod 2001a; Castree 2007; Lier 2007), the workers of Immokalee are embedding their agency in civil society, and specifically in this discussion the religious sphere through a *coalition* (Van Marter 2002; Bowe 2003; CIW 2003b). To answer questions surrounding this process, namely how agency is embedded in these relations, we need to examine what issues the CIW uses to establish itself in these alliances. Moreover, what does this mean for place, or the realization of place through the production of scales, around which the organization can organize itself? The latter point will be further discussed in an in depth analysis

of the scalar strategies of the CIW in the last chapter of this thesis, and at the end of this chapter, a short examination of place will lead the discussion onto scale and the CIW.

5.2 'Embedding' CIW-agency in the geography of the faith-based community

Religious groups have been important supporters of the CIW since the organization's initial formation in the mid-90s (Walsh 2005; Laughlin 2007). Yet, temporally speaking, I highlight political events towards the end of that decade as vital moments in establishing an alliance between the workers and the faith-based community. Effectively these developments embedded the agency of farmworkers in the geography of civil society, and specifically in the faith-based community. The two events I want to point to were often brought up by interview participants as important moments for their own involvement with the Immokalee-workers. The first was a hunger-strike started by workers from Immokalee at the end of 1997, and the second is a truth-tour carried out by the CIW and its partners. The truth-tour would take the workers on a demonstration on a route to the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Florida (FVGL) headquarters in 1997 and is seen as a pivotal moment in the consolidation of the alliance. Activists from the religious community, who participated in interviews for this research, would point out this moment in the development of the CIW as decisive in the sense that the contestation of capital by laborers was reframed in a way that appealed to the members of the faith-based community. The nature of the truth-tour resonates as an articulation of what political actions can entail for social organizations such as the church. Lier (2007) and other labor geographers (Gough 2004; Wills 2008; Tufts and Savage 2009), make the argument that this is how agency can be embedded in the civil sphere.

The question to be answered is what are the issues the CIW, a community-organization manifested as worker-center, is establishing as a common objective with another community

organization represented by groups rooted in the faith-based community? In its most basic terms the demands put forth by the CIW against Taco Bell campaigns, and subsequently corporations such as McDonald's, Whole Foods, and several other corporations are questions of worker welfare, and at the center of their demands is a question of workers' wages. As this analysis will expand on, interview participants pointed to the difficulties of convincing their fellow congregation members, and in some cases convince themselves, to partake in the work of this alliance. In the analysis I do not believe I can exhaust the potential political "hot button issues". That is the political formulations which consolidates this process or creates an overlap between working-class politics and a desire to participate in social justice causes by the individuals in the faith-based community. Though I do believe the research for this paper can point to examples that develop the, as of now, limited discussion of how labor agency materializes (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010).

To embed its agency in the 'community' the CIW formulates demands or objectives so it can also appeal to potential partner organizations. Lier (2007: 827) expresses this method of embedding agency as: "[a] range of ways workers and unions mobilize politically in concert with other civil society actors on the basis of social disempowerment and overlapping political interests". In the case of the CIW, a workers center or a community-based organization, the organizers' strategy is to seek out alternate 'allies' to embed and augment their agency. The strategy has been explored by a number of labor geographers in research scopes of unions overlapping goals with community organizations (Wright 1999; Wills 2001; Jepson 2005).

Not surprisingly the majority of members of a church, or at least members of a church with resources and time available to seek out political activity as a community-based organization, and other faith-based organizations, are not directly concerned about minimum

wage, rights to unionize, or even exploitative work conditions. That is, the typical person affiliated with a faith-based group is not necessarily worried about the same demands the CIW put forth on behalf of the workers. DP from Chicago explains how he got involved and how these issues were never on his mind: "I would eat at Taco Bell all the time, and never think of these issues." The issues to which he is referring include the exploitative nature of fast-food both in a sense of the environment and the economic exploitation, issues that in some cases might even be seen as contentious and disagreeable by members of a church. Though this was not a common sentiment expressed by interview participants, a number of participants referred to how difficult it is for a group of migrant workers, in the present economic recession and political climate, to engage community-based groups. Participants did report on members leaving over the issue of whether the church should support an organization that ultimately represents workers contesting capitalist actors. As one of the participants, BP, pointed out to me, while paraphrasing some of the congregation-members she has worked with,: "Down in the South we don't cotton to those unions…the churches don't have any business messing with the politics of unions and that kind of stuff". However, if the activists, both the religious and labor activists, focus on other related questions, they are more accepting. B.P. reflects in the same discussion: "When we talk about [other political objectives] they loosen up a little bit. They can understand that. But still this whole empowerment thing…" The participant describes how a number of the faith-based community population is apprehensive to organize labor politically. Paraphrasing members: '…we don't cotton…' meaning explicitly the church members do not appreciate or welcome labor unions. The sentiment is framed by a Southern and perhaps old-fashioned expression to illustrate a conservative or ingrained traditionalist rejection of organized labor she has experienced during her work with the faith-based community. Sentiments such as these

might be stronger in a religious community than compared to a population of students or other similar community organizations. Specific causes, such as a hunger-strikes or explicit cases of abuse aimed at workers, can, however, convince the congregation to organize. As an organization the CIW has to overcome or balance among these differences of political perceptions, of identity, and of motivations for the alliance to develop into an embodiment of the agency the CIW needs. To achieve this, it has to emphasize issues which resonate with the faith-based community both on the individual and collective level. During the initial truth-tour in itself, and through subsequent campaigns (such as with the hunger-strike) the CIW framed the issues in a way that very much resonated with these specific members of the sphere of social reproduction. In its simplest form this process should be seen as a reframing of the working-class politics formulated by the CIW. It is worth noting this discussion does not propose these issues are exhaustive of the issues which are applied in the process of embedding CIW-agency in the faith-based community. Moreover the issues discussed are indeed continuously developed as the alliance grows older and evolves. I simply seek to show how workers are able to identify *some* common political objectives with other social actors in order to contest actors in the production sphere, namely growers and multinational corporations such as Taco Bell. In what follows I discuss how framing their struggle in specific campaigns, around particularly egregious issues and with particular narratives, embeds their agency in the sphere of the faith-based community. The discussion in the rest of this chapter focuses on the temporal space between the hunger strike of 1997 and the events leading up to the campaigns which evolved into the successful boycott of Taco Bell which launched in April 2001 (CIW 2001). In the following and last analytical chapter the discussion focuses on scalar strategies proceeding from the moment when the alliance contesting Taco Bell was consolidated between the different actors. I first

discuss how the process unfolded, followed by reflections based on participant interviews and documents produced by the CIW, religious partners, and the media as to how the political objectives of the Immokalee farmworkers are framed. Following the analysis of the organizational structures and the impact they had, I also illustrate how this process of embedding agency is illustrated in participants' own experiences. Some of the participants are very active politically, while other participants are more passive participants in the campaigns.

5.3 Framing objectives in campaigns: the Truth tour and the hunger strike

"When the workers were fasting, it was pretty easy to support them" one of the participants explains (interview with FL 2010). FL, an inter-faith organizer for the NFWM, explains how the fast can be an object around which to organize churches and individuals. As expressed earlier, it is difficult to activate this population with a very different positionality vis-à-vis processes of production and ultimately capital accumulation. Not only do the two populations, that of the faith-based community and Immokalee workers, have very different political objectives, but in some cases the faith-based community might reject any notion of working-class politics. Yet, if these same political goals are framed in a setting of a hunger strike, it opens a different conversation which resonates with the political potential of the church. Though the CIW is constituted by workers organizing to improve conditions in the place of production, they are framing the contestation in a way which allows for the faith-based community to organize and mobilize its wider membership. During these hunger-strikes, religious organizations, both interfaith and specific churches became active on behalf of the CIW. A minister from the United Church of Christ in Ft. Myers, Florida, along with a Presbyterian minister and other religious community activists, were soon followed by Bishop Nevins of the Catholic Church, who decided to form a support group of the workers striking

(Interview with FL). The group is called Religious Leaders Concerned (RLC) [12]. Following the events of the hunger strike, the alliance between farm-workers and the religious community was formally established in early 1998. Though the group of workers had gained support from various religious groups earlier, this moment allowed for a formal manifestation of the alliance (Interview with JL).

During the thirty day strike initiated by CIW members in 1997 the faith-based community became engaged in the campaigns by the CIW (Baker 1998). The hunger strike was initiated in December 1997, following an impasse with growers (Higgins 1998; Bowe 2003; Melissa 2005). Indeed this provides a strong framing of the demands by the CIW for any population and as FL refers to, it became easy to support the workers during this campaign.

Though the discussion at hand will not explore this theme to the extent that it warrants, many participants alluded to why this reframing was important. Members of churches, they argued, are a population that requires fulfillment of a purpose reflective of the messages and narratives explored weekly in the sermons. FL makes a simple but convincing argument by stating: "tons of people in the churches are just waiting for something to do". Yet, combined with the apprehension the same population has for working-class politics calls to action need to be framed in a narrative attractive to the population. A hunger strike, as a number of participants argue, resonates with the sense of justice which is articulated in churches across denominations weekly. Of course the season of the year, Christmas, as an important holiday for Christians which put forth values of generosity, only augmented the framing of workers' demands in the hunger strike. The nature of demands put forth by workers before the hunger strike, or specifically the demands placed on growers by the CIW, did not compel the general population

[12] The RLC changed its name to Interfaith Action (IA) in 2001. It remains a vital organization and works out of Immokalee to organize the faith-based community activism on behalf of the CIW.

or the faith-based community. However, engaging in a hunger-strike created an opening for activists and organizers in the faith-based community to enter this relation of contestation. These organizations did not lack activists who might not need a re-framing of the debate, but to effectively enter the alliance they also needed to include the wider populations of the churches. A former minister from Florida explained to me how member bases of churches, the congregations; seek to fulfill their identity as Christian beyond just attending the church each Sunday (Interview with JL). BP simply explains that: "bunches of people are just waiting to fulfill the message [of sermons given each week]". This is what the participants interviewed highlighted as an opening for faith-based activists to bring the workers' struggle into the churches. By early January 1998, accompanied by the Archbishop of Baltimore, Cardinal William Keeler, local Roman Catholic Bishop John Nevins visited the workers (Laughlin 1997). The third week into the hunger strike, Bishop Nevins celebrated a Mass with five diocesan priests at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Naples in support of the striking farm-workers (Laughlin 2007). Local clergy and congregation-members voiced their support for the workers, and they unified under the interfaith organization RLC, which had first convened in March 1998, led by an ordained Baptist minister and attended by thirteen interfaith activists. In support of the CIW, RLC's main focus was to address the workers' wages. The faith-based activists embarked on a public education and communications campaign to increase political pressure on the growers. The RLC sponsored a Weekend of Prayer in the churches of Southwest Florida, May 15-17 1998, and inaugurated a "Pilgrimage to Immokalee," attended by clergy, area labor leaders, pastoral ministers, and state legislators. Several participants I spoke with had travelled in a similar fashion during later campaigns, arriving from as far away as California and Chicago. The 'pilgrimage', which became an important organizational activity of the RLC, included various

religious activities, articulations of the demands and concerns of farm-workers as expressed by the CIW, and interactions with farmworkers. The RLC attracted faith-based individuals and groups to Immokalee, and by framing the tours in a pilgrimage narrative, the workers' demands became accepted and supported by the religious community. Though the hunger-strike would not lead to a resolution of the demands put forth by the farm-workers, their demands and ultimately their agency became, to a certain extent, embedded in a community-based religious organization, which provided very different strategic options for the workers of Immokalee. The RLC in fact provided the workers with a formalized expression of this embedded agency.

Yet, following the hunger strike, which concluded at the end of January 1998, some of the faith-based support diminished. The leaders of faith organizations realized the politics of farm-workers is a contentious issue, and that taking a particular position vis-à-vis a labor dispute may not be to their advantage, as FL explains: "[These concerns] are understandable; churches do have self-interest". The statements of FL show how embedding agency in relation to other actors is a continuous process. Though it might have seemed the alliance was established following the hunger-strike, the faith-based community still had contentions within it whether to support the workers or not. Though the RLC had now been established, the group also realized there would not be any quick fixes to the stalemate between the growers and farm-workers (Interview OS). The first 'truth tour,' I argue, is the next pivotal moment in establishing this alliance. It does not only frame the issues of laborers in a setting appealing to the faith-based community, it also affords a platform on which the CIW would evolve much of its successful campaigns and boycotts against Taco Bell and other multi-national corporations.

The initial truth-tour of CIW in February 2000, following yet another fruitless strike aimed at the growers in Florida, embodies a second foundational moment for this alliance and

the embedding of labor agency within the civil sphere. The CIW arranged the truth-tour "March for Dignity, Dialogue and a Fair Wage" targeting the FFVA headquarters in Orlando, Florida. By framing working-class politics in slogans for 'dignity' and 'demand', the workers effectively framed their objectives to overlap with concerns of other community-based organizations. Though some congregation members might have been skeptical about labor unions and working-class politics in general, it is much easier to support claims for 'dignity and demand'.

"I talk to a lot of people in churches. That's our job, to get them from the charity to the justice to support the workers…you know, empowerment of workers. It's fascinating to see congregations change that mindset" (Interview with FL. 2010). What FL, an interfaith organizer, describes is how groups and individuals in the interfaith community at the outset do not have a common set of political goals with the farmworkers when pursuing objectives. During the consolidation of the alliance, the CIW recognized the RLC as fundamental in furthering the claims of the workers. Through educational and religious forums, pilgrimages, political advocacy, and media work, the RLC helped to not only broaden the contestation of the farm-workers both in a sense of narrative and, of course, geography. While these coalition efforts did not resolve into negotiations with growers, the faith-based communities' activities did raise the visibility of the campaign for higher wages and increased the political leverage of the CIW. Importantly, through their partnership with the CIW on the march aimed at Orlando, the RLC helped develop the model for the "Taco Bell Truth Tours"—the cross-country processions—that became the CIW's signature organizing tool during the boycott. It was a method of framing their working-class politics in a vehicle which would allow both the student- and faith-based communities to support the cause in large numbers. Framing, or as labor geographers states to overlap political objectives (Fine 2006; McBride and Greenwood 2009; Moody 2009), then, is

not only the articulation of political objectives, but also involves situating objectives in different settings, such as truth-tours, hunger-strikes, meetings in congregations, and other similar acts. As I will return to in the next chapter, the work of the RLC and their broader religious networks provided a platform on which the Orlando March and later Truth Tours were built upon. The march to Orlando emerged from the CIW representing workers; it was their vision, which was propelled by the political agency of workers. Yet the path to Orlando was not fruitful, and it is by labor agency further into the civil sphere during these campaigns that the alliance would prove the missing pieces for enabling the workers of Immokalee to truly challenge their capitalist geographies.

To summarize the analytical findings, then, I want to highlight three aspects. The CIW and its community-rooted labor agency, which, it has been argued, is an organizational mode of limited capability, show how as a group it can replicate strategies of unions. Secondly, the organization realized its position in GPN, and further extended its organizational ties in the sphere of civil society by embedding its agency in relations with community-based actors. This enabled the workers to contest their conditions from a more privileged point of departure. The analysis provides an example where a community-based worker center undertook union strategies of establishing coalitions with other community-based actors. Lastly, I believe the discussion has provided increased scrutiny to the concept of labor agency, and illuminated how agency might be embedded in, in this case, geographies of civil society.

6. COALITION UNIONISM AND SCALAR STRATEGIES

In the preceding two chapters I have made the case that labor agency can in fact be embedded beyond the labor union in the sphere of civil society. Lastly, then, in this thesis I

examine a specific case study of how this labor agency is used to contest the capitalist landscapes in which laborers might find themselves. In the summer of 2005 the organized voice of labor in the U.S. appeared to fall apart. Decades of political success for the neoliberal project (Harvey 2005) and continued corporate consolidations left a grim depiction of the left, and in particular, the voice of workers seemed to be outmaneuvered by perceived placeless capital. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) experienced the defection of five major unions over the summer (Masters, Gibney and Zagenczyk 2006). During the same time of these setbacks in organized labor, the CIW achieved its first, in what was to become a series of several successful organized campaigns against multinational corporations. On March 8 2005, Yum! Brands, Inc. (Yum Brands), the largest restaurant corporation in the world, agreed to pay "a penny more per pound" for tomatoes picked by farm-workers in Immokalee, Florida.

The initial agreement with Yum Brands included important precedent-setting elements for the future stake of farm-workers in southwest Florida initially, and ultimately opened potential strategies for workers beyond this region. Not only did a multi-national fast-food chain acknowledge the presence of harsh conditions for farm-workers, Yum Brands also recognized a responsibility for these conditions. Effectively, the CIW altered the capitalist landscape of production, influencing this corporation to recognize farm-workers as part of the Yum Brands production network and making it a third-party monitor of farm-workers' employers (Drainville 2008)

To achieve its goals, the CIW produced new scales of engagement through alliances with a wide cross-section of civil society. In particular, the CIW created alliances with religious-based community organizations and various student organizations, both of which proved to be of

pivotal importance for the eventual success of the organization. As I demonstrated in previous chapters, the CIW contested the production of space not only through a labor-capital relation, but also by embedding its agency in relation to actors in civil society. In this chapter, I argue that what the alliance of the religious community provided—and continues to provide—the CIW is an ability to position itself in strategic *locations* to carry out more effectively its campaigns against Yum Brands and other multinational corporations. In particular, the CIW accessed resources through an alliance with the religious community that include national endorsements, access to important organizational networks, the ability to mobilize economic and symbolic resources, and to provide locations for participants to stay throughout the national campaigns. And importantly religious organizations helped the CIW reframe the workers' rights debate, which added to the legitimacy of its campaigns. In what follows, I explore in more detail the CIW's campaign against Taco Bell to show how the group's important alliances with religious organizations shaped the geographies of its activism and the eventual outcomes of its campaigns.

This analysis provides us with two important developments of how we understand labor geography. In one aspect it presents a case study of workers' agency taking place beyond the labor union, and in a second sense, certainly discussed more in depth in this thesis, it provides an examination of scalar strategies, so far not discussed in labor geography literature, available to workers. The discussion give us an example where the workers, through organization in a labor-civil society relation based in the sphere of social reproduction as opposed to an exclusive capital-labor relation based in place of production, intensified their local scale, and simultaneously produced scales through *community-based coalition relations* (Tattersall 2010) in order to more effectively carry out their campaigns by positioning themselves in more visible moments and spaces in the production network.

After reaching this impasse following a truth-tour, "March for Dignity, Dialogue and a Fair Wage", from Fort Myers, Florida, to the headquarters of the FFVA in Orlando in March of 2000, the CIW identified the larger retailers of produce as a potentially appropriate target for their demands. These multinational corporations hold tremendous influence over the produce-market, the growers, and ultimately the conditions of farm-workers in Florida (Drainville 2008). By examining the GPN in which they were situated, the CIW was able to identify the primary actors controlling the geography of the production. It was during the progress of the campaign against Taco Bell the CIW developed its strategy of jumping scale through its alliance with community-based organizations to position itself in privileged locations in relation to the GPN.

The creation of community-based alliances both with students and religious communities had already started taking form during the initial attempts at campaigns aimed at dialogue with the growers, the actors on the initial scale of contestation, in Florida. Though the strategies and target of Immokalee workers has evolved, the three core demands still reflects the grievances articulated by the workers from the early start of the organization. Contestation is still aimed the same place of production; the tomato fields surrounding Immokalee. The workers have simply recognized what actors have the capacity to impact and alter these conditions. In particular the wages became a dominant slogan of the campaigns, referred to during demonstrations and in CIW-produced literature as "a penny more per pound". Having realized the limitations of contesting conditions in their prevailing situation, the CIW sought to change the spatiality of the GPN of which they were a part and enter into dialogue with corporations 'above' their employers.

To achieve their goals of a dialogue, they recognize they needed to establish relations through scalar strategies, with these larger actors. The progress of these CIW strategies was very

much dependent on the CIW's ability to embed worker-agency in community-based alliances. In fact, I suggest that the tipping point at which the CIW became capable of effectively contesting the hegemony of the production network on a new scale occurred when the organization received national endorsement from several religious denominations. Revealingly, Taco Bell ignored all initial attempts of communication from the CIW. After the Presbyterian Church announced its support of the boycott in 2001, Taco Bell immediately notified several of the leaders of the General Assembly of the church that they had made "a mistake" by supporting this boycott (Van Marter 2002)

Taco Bell became a symbolic target for the CIW and its objectives for improving conditions for farm-workers in southwestern Florida. As one of the activists explained, there were several reasons for choosing Taco Bell, including the cultural significance of the workers' background and the potential effectiveness of a campaign aimed at the branded image of Taco Bell. Though the reason most participants I interviewed pointed to, and which is highlighted in documents produced by the CIW itself, was a long-term contractual relationship between Taco Bell and the tomato grower Six L's Packing Company, one of Taco Bell's Immokalee-based suppliers (Laughlin 2007; Drainville 2008; Sellers 2009). Laborers in Immokalee identified an established indirect link of commodities from the workers via Six L to one of the dominant actors of the GPN; the fast-food chain Taco Bell. By examining the spatiality of the GPN farm-workers in Immokalee realized a new potential, in many senses extra-local, scale of contesting their conditions of production in Immokalee by engaging social actors in extra-local places.

The CIW completed five 'Truth-tours' during the Taco Bell boycott (Drainville 2008). I believe these actions manifest clear and tangible examples of the specific geographic characteristics of 'jumping scale' by the CIW, and the strategic decisions they made to

concentrate efforts geographically in specific places. The first of these tours took place at the same time the CIW received its first national endorsement from different denominations, starting with the United Church of Christ in June 2001 (Laughlin 2007). As interview participants pointed out, these truth-tours had several objectives. They were important vehicles for recruiting further allies, consolidating the alliances gained through national endorsements, educating consumers and allies of the conditions of farm-workers, and organizing their community-based allies in their campaigns. During these tours the CIW emphasized organizing their allies in cities central to Yum Brands: the Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine, California, and Yum Brands headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, were both places of fervent activity and continuous contestation. The CIW was able to contest conditions of its place of work, through scalar politics during these 'Truth-Tours,' effectively enabling workers to carry the contestation to extra-local places.

Several of the volunteer activists with congregations I interviewed stressed the importance of the resources represented by receiving the farm-workers in the communities of churches and its members, such as during the initial 'Truth tours' to California, where lodging for between 50 and a 100 farm-workers were provided by local congregations (Interview with NP). The CIW relied heavily on these types of local resources to be able to stage extensive demonstrations including hunger-strikes and picketing in front of the Taco Bell headquarters.

Beyond the resources enabling the CIW logistically to carry out the campaigns, it is important to understand the decisive role of allies localized in the cities of these corporations. As an activist with an interfaith group states: “Obviously the voice of all consumers and people are important, but the company can hear that voice best closest to it” (interview with FW). During the ‘Truth-tour' ending in Louisville of March 2005 the CIW and its allies recognized the

geographic advantage of their own networks. A Reverend working for the Presbyterian Church describes how they prepared for the campaign to come to Louisville: "We spent two-and-a-half months in 2004 [sic] specifically going into every church we could find"[13]. One of the goals of the action was to reach Yum Brand employees through their social circles, i.e. churches. As the Reverend further points out, the congregation members are the people who know employees of these corporations: "You always want to work with the local people, it is absolutely critical" (interview with NP). Through these two-and-a-half months of organizing with and for the CIW, the churches effectively became important locations for the contestation of farm-workers' rights well before the CIW arrived in full force in Louisville to confront Yum Brands.

The demonstration in Louisville was anticipated as the culmination of the fifth 'Truth Tour'. After being reluctant even entering into a dialogue with the CIW during the previous 'Truth Tours', Yum Brands agreed to meet all the CIW's demands before any organized demonstrations could take place at the Yum Brands headquarters in Louisville. On March 8th, at a joint press conference, Yum Brands Senior Vice President Jonathan Blum signed an agreement meeting the demands of the CIW (Drainville 2008) just four days before a major protest rally was scheduled to take place outside of the corporation's headquarters.

After attempting to engage in dialogue with growers over several years, the CIW recognized it was not in a strategically important position in the GPN solely based on its identity as representatives of migrant farm-workers. The workers of Immokalee successfully completed their campaign as migrant farm-workers with limited organizational structures to benefit their struggle. By embedding their agency in community-based alliances, the workers were able to contest their conditions on a scale where multi-national corporations were identified as the

[13] The campaign took place in 2005.

dominant producer and were ultimately responsible for the farm-workers as part of the production network.

Through insightful spatial analysis of their GPN, the CIW was able to target corporations beyond the place of production and embed its limited agency in relation with social actors. The geographic nature of the religious-based alliance proved crucial to both the feasibility of the campaigns and was one of the important reasons for its success. The alliance with the religious community not only provided resources and legitimacy to the CIW's campaign, but through the re-framing of the debate, a cross-section of society usually not accessible for worker-activists became active in discussions and participated in the campaigns, ensuring that the expression of workers' demands came closer to the corporations.

7. CONCLUSION

The triumphant Boot the Bell campaign, as do sub-sequent CIW-campaigns which have not explicitly been discussed here, certainly makes a strong argument that labor agency can indeed operate beyond the labor union. While organized labor seemingly is purged from the private as well public spheres of economic production, the CIW's continued contestation of working conditions of migrant farm-workers offers inspiring developments for working-class praxis. Theoretically this case study highlights the importance of emphasizing the wider geography of labor. The field of labor geography benefit analytically from expanding the theoretical concept of labor. Specifically this case study shows how important the sphere of reproduction is to labor both theoretically and in praxis. Furthermore the agency of labor is expanded, the discussion here foes so by providing an examination of how actors of civil society – fully rooted in the sphere of social reproduction – enables workers to reproduce their GPN.

Over the preceding three chapters, by examining the spatiality of labor agency within capitalist economic production, I have sought to make the case that the workers of Immokalee, and potentially workers in a more general sense, particularly those in disadvantaged positions of production, are capable of organizing beyond the labor union. The Immokalee workers' inability to contest their conditions through a traditional union or work-place based form of organization, found it a natural solution to organize around a community-based structure rooted in the place of social reproduction. By understanding society, work-places as well as civil society, as a produced space reflective of the conditions of economic production it becomes clear how this alternate strategy is open to workers. In the case of the CIW a number of structures related to capitalist production are manifested in their social lives in the sphere of social reproduction. Perhaps paradoxically, the control the growers, and ultimately the larger corporations, exert over the sphere of production affords the workers space in civil society to organize. Eventually this space of organization in civil society enables workers to contest conditions found in the sphere of production. By establishing a community-based organization these migrant workers are replacing the dominant notion that collective agency of labor as a class is carried out through a vehicle of the trade union. Though the CIW does build on structures of society rooted in production, it is an organization wholly rooted in civil society that builds its agency on relations to social actors as much as the contentious relation of capital and labor.

After establishing the community-based CIW, the workers of Immokalee expresses organized labor beyond the union. Yet, as a labor union might do in a similar situation, the workers having collectively established an organization to carry out working-class politics also recognized their positionality in the landscape of economic production. Similarly to a trade union, the CIW's agency is dependent on its position in these geographies. The CIW, as a labor

union might, realized its disadvantaged position vis-à-vis capital. Where labor geography with a focus on the community unionism has described how labor unions are extending their agency into the civil sphere, the CIW – a community organization – shows how organized labor beyond the trade union can undertake very similar strategies. Realizing their positionality vis-à-vis capital, and to a certain extent the state, which has not been explicitly discussed in this research, the workers seek to further enhance their agency and strategic potential by embedding their agency in relation to other community-based organizations.

As labor geographers have explored thoroughly, strategies of labor unions are inherently spatial. The CIW embedding its agency into the civil sphere also needs to be examined spatially to understand its potential. In chapter six I showed how the CIW evolved it spatial strategies by continuously producing new scales in relation to its embedded agency in the civil sphere. The narrative of main stream economics and the main-stream media will have us believe Yum Brands outmaneuvered the workers of Immokalee by operating on a 'higher' scale. Yet the farm workers demonstrated how engaging in spatial strategies of producing scales in relations embedded in privileged positions of the GPN enables labor to contest, and to 'outmaneuver', actors of capital.

Theoretically the research exemplifies the agency of working-class politics outside that of the labor union. The implications for the field of geography are continuing the expansion of labor geography both in terms of the sector of economics that are studied, and by increasing the theorization of the field of labor geography. In particular this means the central concept of agency, which so forth has received limited theorization is further developed (Castree 2007). It has typically been described to the effect it has on the economic landscape, and that it is carried out by workers. Yet the central question of how labor agency is rooted in the structures or

relations of geography has remained vaguely described (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010). Though the capital-labor relation remains a dominant structure in determining the realities of economies, workers do live in a social geography as well – which certainly follows the shape of capitalist production but still holds room for the agency of social actors. In the development of the main thematic argument in this research–labor organized beyond the union–the CIW shows how the geographies of agency very much determines it impacts or potential. By, to use the words of Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010), re-embedding the agency of labor in the sphere of the civil society, it is possible to examine the spatiality of labor agency and to show how place shapes the potential of agency.

In 2011 the CIW continues its contestation of work conditions in southwestern Florida. The potential to restructure GPNs by non-unions has been clearly established by these workers. Currently the organization is engaged in campaigns aimed at a number of super-market chains, notably Trader Joe's and Publix, which to date have proven unyielding on the demands that have been accepted by amongst others McDonald's, Yum Brands and Whole Foods. In the face of these obstacles the CIW is continuously recognizing the spatial realities of its contestation and is developing its campaigns accordingly. The struggle waged against Publix and Trader Joe's proves an intriguing example of continued evolving labor agency outside the union. Both of these corporations have very different qualities, and their appeal to their customer is unlike the earlier corporations contested by the CIW. Publix on one side holds a strong alliance in the faith-based community, particularly the Methodist Church, locally in Florida (Interview with JL), whilst Trader Joe's has created an identity, not necessarily reflected in actual company-policies, which is presented as an 'alternative' socially responsible company (Lewis 2005). The workers of Immokalee, to contest these actors, have to continue evolving their praxis. The qualities of

these corporations, or *their* ability to 'embed' themselves in the social sphere either by relations to faith-based communities or the appearance of being a social actor, do not make them as obvious a target for contestation as McDonald's or Taco Bell did; in effect, the CIW strategy of embedding labor agency in particular places of civil society needs to be advanced. The sustained struggles of the CIW are a topic that is well worth continued examination to appreciate the workers' emerging labor agency praxis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

All interviews where completed between July 4th 2010 and December 10th of the same year. The label activist vs. congregation member is reflective of the self-describe characteristics of each participant.

A. Chicago, IL: July 4th – 7th,

1. Activist, member of local church working with CIW in Chicago , member of NFWM5
2. Activist, member of local church working with CIW in Chicago , member of NFWM
3. Congregation member of local church working with CIW
4. Congregation member of local church working with CIW
5. Congregation member of local church working with CIW
6. Congregation member of local church working with CIW
7. Activist, member of local church working with CIW in Chicago, worked with the NFWM

B. Philadelphia, PA: July 28th – 29th

8. Activist from of Interfaith Action
9. Volunteer with the CIW

C. Princeton, NJ: July 30th

10. Minister of Presbyterian Church
11. Local volunteers of the Presbyterian church
12. Volunteer with the CIW

D. Lakeland, FL: August 8th

13. Activist of interfaith networks, work with the NFWM

E. Phone interviews completed in Atlanta, GA: Nov. 5th and December 10th

14. Former Minister of United Church of Christ in Naples, FL

15. Former Minister of United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL

F. Atlanta, GA: July 26th:

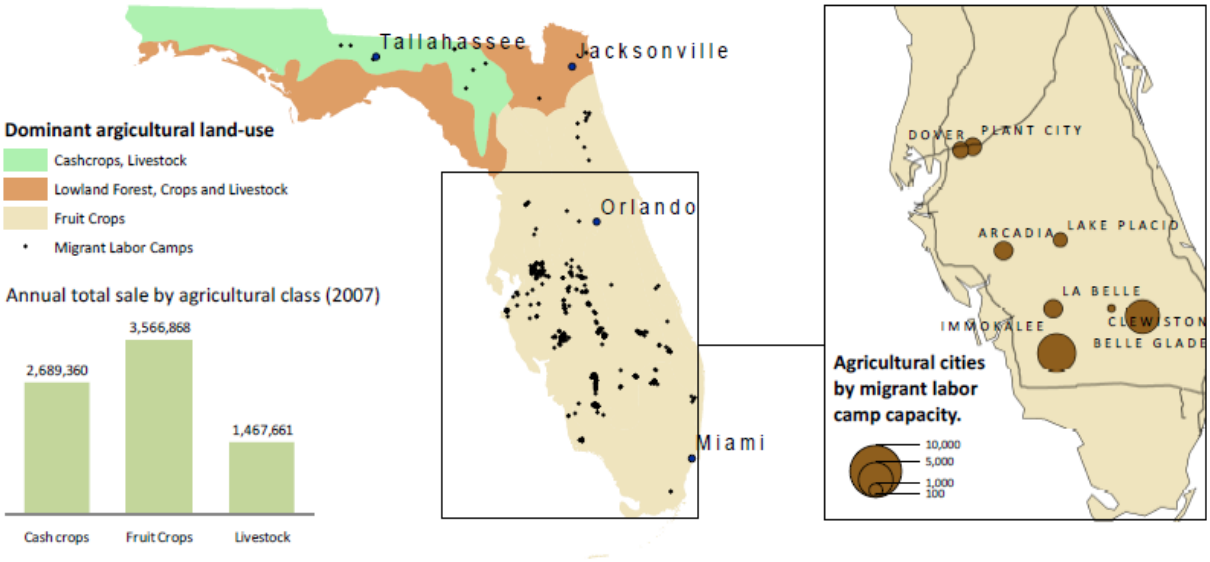
16. Activist from Presbyterian Church in Atlanta

17. Member of interfaith groups, congregation member from Presbyterian Church in Atlanta

Appendix B: List of Participant-Observations

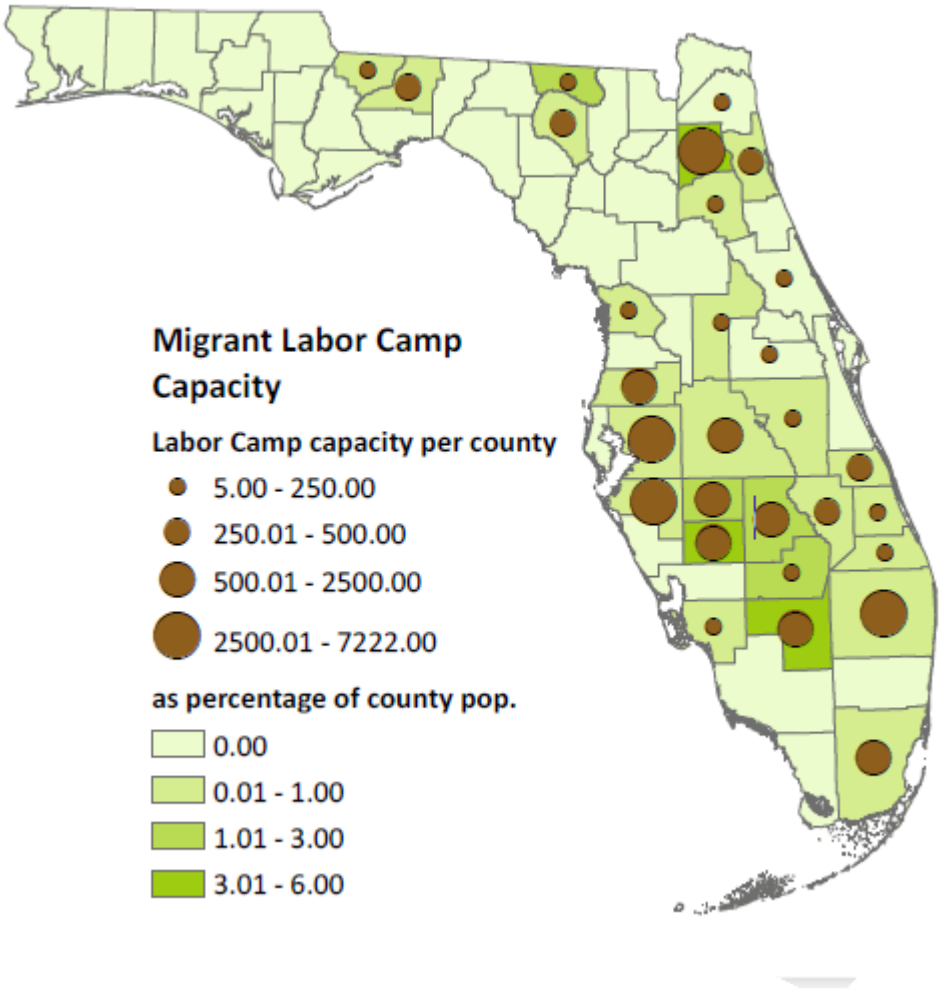
1. Florida Modern-Day Slavery Museum: Summer Tour 2010:
    a. Downtown-Mall , Charlottesville, VA: 07/25/2010
    b. Independence Mall, Philadelphia, PA: 07/28/2010
    c. Independence Mall, Philadelphia, PA: 07/29/2010
    d. Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, NJ: 07/30/2010
    e. Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY: 08/02/2010
2. Do the Right Thing Tour 2011
    a. Community Picket at Publix Supermarket, Atlanta, GA: 03/02/2010

Appendix C: Map of dominant agricultural use in Florida



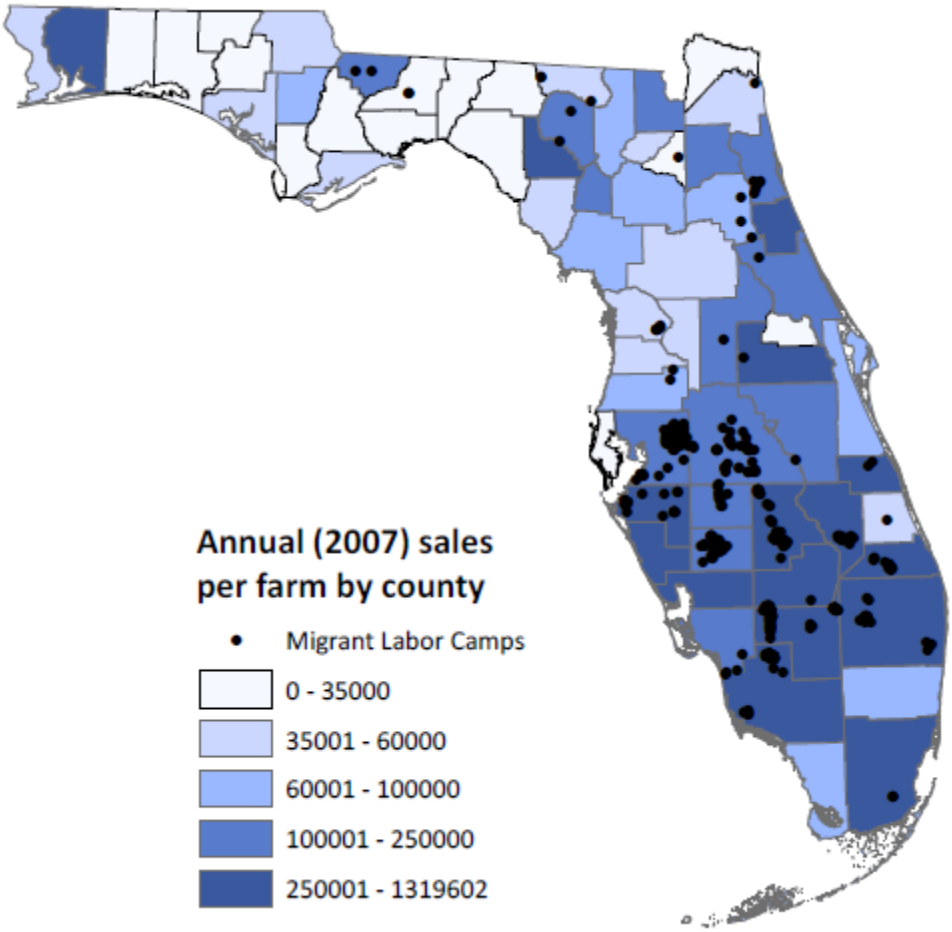
Source: Author.

Appendix D: Map of Agricultural Labor Camp Capacity in Florida



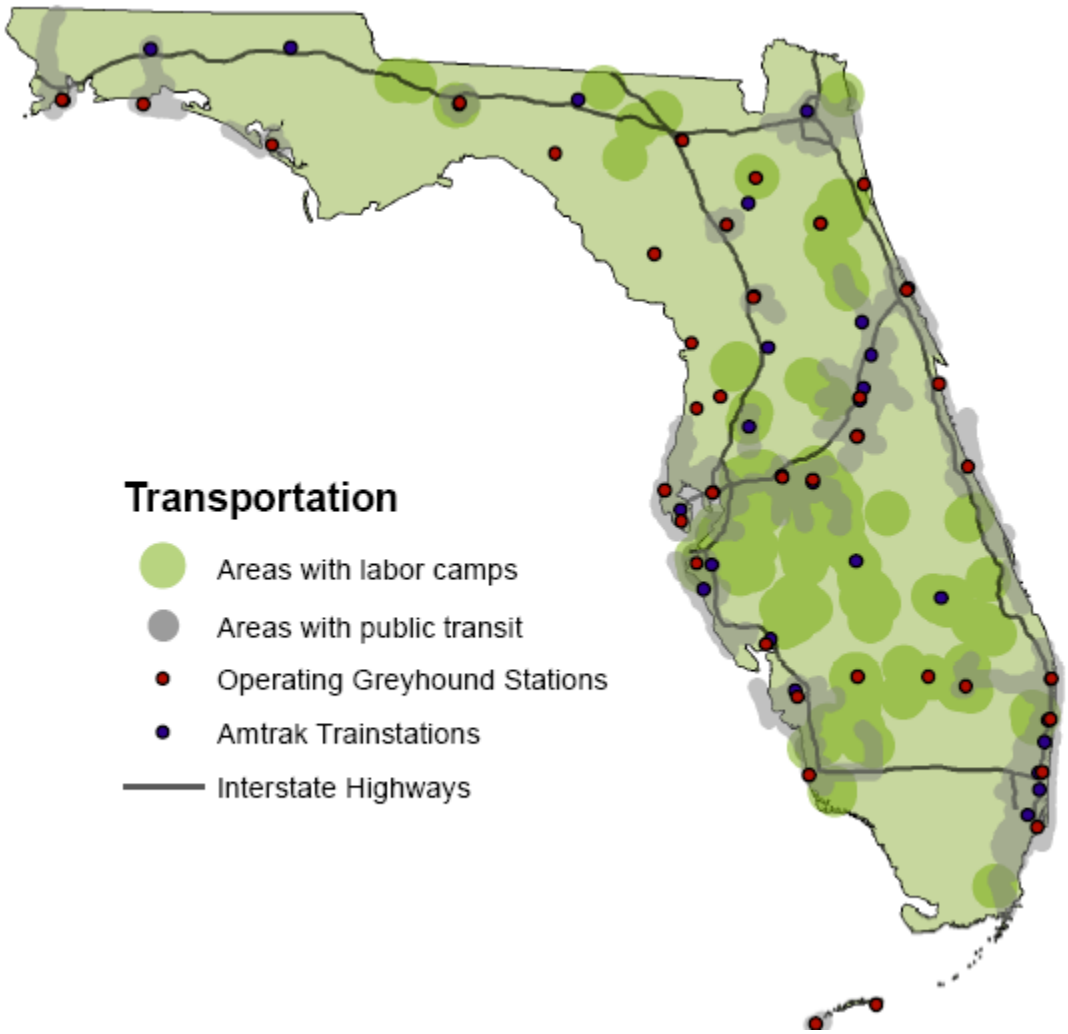
Source: Author.

Appendix E: Map of annual sales per farm in Florida



Source: Author.

Appendix F: Map illustrating public transit in Florida.



Source: Author.