Des «Villes de classe mondiale pour tous»: les vendeurs ambulants en tant qu'agents de revitalisation syndicale en Afrique du Sud contemporaine

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Résumé

Pour participer aux récents débats scientifiques sur les défis que pose la revitalisation du mouvement syndical dans les hémisphères Nord et Sud, cet article examine le potentiel des regroupements de vendeurs ambulants à devenir des agents de réhabilitation pour ce mouvement, particulièrement en Afrique du Sud. L'auteur étudie la mobilisation des vendeurs de rues à Durban/eThekwini, leur alliance grandissante avec les autres groupes marginalisés (particulièrement le regroupement d'habitants de bidonvilles Abahlali baseMjondolo et les syndicats traditionnels) et la campagne Villes de classe mondiale pour tous. Celle-ci, front commun de vendeurs ambulants, groupes communautaires et syndicats, remettait en question les politiques antipauvreté associées aux préparations pour la Coupe du monde de la FIFA en 2012. Les vendeurs ambulants représentent le secteur ouvrier à la fois le plus pauvre et le plus vulnérable. Souvent logés dans des bidonvilles, menacés d'être expulsés de leurs trottoirs (lieu de travail) et de leurs taudis (communauté), ils jouent un rôle rassembleur crucial pour une variété de luttes et de mouvements. Ils peuvent jouer, et l'ont prouvé, un rôle de premier plan en réactivant l'aspect transformation sociale des syndicats traditionnels et en les reconnectant aux autres mouvements sociaux. Leur lutte pourrait ainsi potentiellement devenir agente de revitalisation pour un nouveau syndicalisme de transformation sociale (SMU) en Afrique du Sud contemporaine. L'auteur étudie finalement les caractéristiques de fond de ce mouvement émergent des vendeurs ambulants (qu'il nomme le « regroupement de la main d'œuvre marginalisée ») et cherche à intégrer les vendeurs ambulants et leurs syndicats à l'approche de type SMU.

'World Class Cities for All': Street traders as agents of union revitalization in contemporary South Africa

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Abstract

 Engaging with recent scholarly debates on the challenges of labour movement revitalization in both the global North and South, this paper examines the street traders' movement as an agency to re-empower the labour movement, with specific reference to the South African case. The paper explores the mobilization of street traders in Durban/eThekwini, their growing alliance with other marginalized groups – particularly the shack dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo and mainstream unions, and the World Class Cities for All Campaign. This was a joint front by the street traders, community movements and trade unions, which challenged the anti-poor policies associated with preparations for the FIFA 2010 World Cup. It demonstrates how street traders – being both the poorest as well as the most vulnerable fraction of workers, often based in shack communities, facing evictions from the streets (the workplace) and from the shacks (the community) – play a key role in bringing together a range of struggles and movements. It argues that they can and have played a momentous role in reactivating the 'movement' character of mainstream unions, and in reconnecting them with other social movements. Accordingly, their struggle can be a promising agency in revitalising a new 'social movement unionism' SMU in contemporary South Africa. Finally, the article examines core characteristics of the emergent street traders' movement, which he calls "the movement of the marginalized labour force", and seeks to integrate street traders and their unions into the SMU approach.

Introduction

 In recent years labour scholars and activists discussed the need to revitalize the labour movement in both the global North and global South. At the heart of these debates is the question of whether it is possible to move from traditional forms of unionism to a new 'social movement unionism' (SMU) that is able to deal with the

challenges of the contemporary era more effectively (Turner, Katz and Hurd, 2001; Voss and Sherman, 2000; Waterman, 1993; Webster and Buhlungu, 2004). This is strongly connected to a growing stress on the need to revive unions' role as "sword of justice" (Hyman, 1999). Given that unions almost universally emerged as social movements (Hyman, 2001), the notion that unions should return to their 'movement' roots has been a key part of these debates (von Holdt, 2002; Fairbrother, 2008).

The South African labour movement of the late twentieth century was a key inspiration for the development of the SMU idea. "At its inception in 1985 [the] Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) exemplified SMU, where democratically organized workers engaged in both 'production politics' at the workplace and the 'politics of state power'" which "involved explicit alliances with movements and organizations outside the workplace, but under strict conditions of union independence based on shop floor accountability" (Pillay, 2011: 2). COSATU's subsequent activities helped inspire activists elsewhere to promote SMU-style activism. Yet in contemporary South Africa, many have argued that COSATU's SMU roots have been weakened partly due to new divisions in the working class with the transition from apartheid to parliamentary democracy, and concomitant processes of elite-formation and workplace restructuring (von Holdt, 2002).

While "[n]ew forms of poverty appeared during the 'Mandela Decade' [1990-2000]", the priorities of the 'new poor' were often not effectively represented by existing trade unions or community ('civic') organizations, and so gave rise instead to either new forms of patronage politics or urban social movements (Sitas, 2010). Given these challenges, union revitalization must mean more than simply strengthening existing union organizations. Present-day SMU is not merely a matter of revitalizing an old repertoire, but rather one of creating new links and engagements with other parts of civil society (Lier and Stokke, 2006). Rather, a return to SMU must mean exploring imaginative and new forms of engagement with the unemployed, the 'new working poor' and with the new urban social movements (Webster and Buhlungu, 2004). This recognizes that the decline of SMU in South Africa derives partly from local SMU's unresolved and long-standing problems in organizing and incorporating "the marginalized labour force" into contemporary unions (Çelik, 2010). This suggests that it is the marginalized

labour force itself that must play a key role in forging the new engagements.

In line with these concerns, this paper focuses on the "World Class Cities for All" campaign (WCCA), which started in South Africa in 2006 and centred on Durban, in the eThekwini Municipality (or Unicity), in the province of KwaZulu Natal. This campaign was an important example of union revitalization – that is, it exemplified a new style of unionism, by and for marginalized workers, and outside of but in alliance with the mainstream unions (i.e. those amongst formal sector workers), by the Durban street traders' organizations and initiatives. This paper conceptualizes the street traders' movement as a *trade union* 'movement of the marginalised labour force'. It demonstrates how through this new union movement, the street traders' were able to link the mainstream COSATU unions, new community social movements and marginalized workers into a unified campaign. This reactivated the social movement dimension of unionism, and provided an example of SMU revival in contemporary South Africa.

The WCCA was launched in 2006 by StreetNet, an international alliance of street traders' organizations founded in Durban in 2002 with 37 affiliates and around 350,000 members worldwide. The explicit goal of the WCCA was to formalize an alliance between the unions, community social movements, and all other organizations concerned with the anti-poor policies associated with South Africa's preparations for the FIFA 2010 World Cup. The WCCA succeeded in drawing together COSATU, the COSATU affiliate South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), the shack dwellers' movement *Abahlali baseMjondolo* (AbM), and the Sisonke Traders Association (STA), as partner organizations.

The WCCA campaign arose from preparations for the World Cup and related inconsistencies of the informal economy management since the adoption of Durban's Informal Economy Policy (DIEP) by Durban Unicity in 2001. The DIEP was presented as being in line with international best practices in informal sector management. It recognized informal traders as important actors in the urban economy, and aimed to integrate them into the city's development projects and into policy formulation (Çelik, 2010).

However, in practice the core principles of the DIEP – an integrated information system, a new set of bylaws sympathetic to the traders, and support for capacity-building in street traders'

organisations –were not implemented (Skinner, 2008). Instead, the Municipality's Business Support Unit (BSU), which was responsible for street trader management, rolled out the DIEP through a model of 'street trader committees', membership of which was compulsory for traders with trading permits. The system was based on 'street trader committees' in particular areas, which had to form executive committees that were then affiliated to the Municipality's Informal Trade Management Board (ITMB).

The BSU/ ITMB system excluded the majority of street traders, who operated without legal permission, and violated the Constitutional right of freedom of association. In the eyes of many street traders the system was also very corrupt. The ITMB controlled the issue of trading permits, and traders were commonly forced to pay bribes. As the result of widespread official xenophobia, foreign traders were especially affected (Bikombo, 2007). The ITMB controlled the issue of trading permits, another area viewed as corrupt. Moreover, given the *de facto* control of the eThekwini Municipality Informal Economy Forum (EMIEF), which was set up as a platform to discuss street traders issues (Tolsi, 2007). This closed, exclusive and corrupt system effectively acted to carry out the municipality's instructions, rather than give the street traders a real say in policy.

In 2004, there were sudden citywide 'clean-up operations' in which the Metro Police (the municipal police) confiscated tons of goods from street traders, on the basis that the vast majority of street traders were 'illegal'. In the run-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the Unicity moved to simply clear the streets of traders, the DIEP principles of inclusivity and partnership notwithstanding (van der Post, 2007). Hosting a "mega-event" in competition with other cities, the Unicity held a picture-perfect image of Durban as more important than the livelihoods of large numbers of inhabitants (Skinner, 2009).

As elsewhere, 'mega-events' were associated with slum clearances, evictions and other crackdowns on the poor. Shack settlements were demolished, and informal traders were forcibly relocated to other sites because of the construction of stadiums and shopping malls (Çelik, 2011). This was part of an official campaign for creating "World Class Cities" that could attract foreign investment and visitors, have modern infrastructure, and efface all visible traces of poverty. The WCCA was a response to this marginalization of

poorer citizens, and aimed to force the authorities to include the poor populations and their needs, and not to utilise exclusionary notions and methods.

The section that follows examines the SMU literature, and makes the case for integrating movements of the marginalized labour force (like street traders' associations) into this approach. The second section examines the characteristics of Durban street traders, including data from a 2007 survey by the author. The third section examines the rise of street traders' associations in Durban, and their growing alliance with other marginalized groups, leading into the fourth section on the WCCA and its role in facilitating alliances and promoting an alternative, pro-poor, approach to urban policy. The paper pays close attention to how AbM incorporated street traders with their struggle, and the links between street traders' and the unions.

The 'Social Movement Unionism' (SMU) Approach

The SMU concept was originally developed by progressive scholars who studied the militant, powerful labour movements in newly industrializing countries like Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa and South Korea, where these movements worked alongside a wide range of social movements for social justice in the 1980s (Lambert and Webster, 1988; Munck, 1988; Scipes, 1992; Seidman, 1994; Waterman, 1988; Webster, 1988). For Robert Lambert and Edward Webster (1988) and Webster (1988), South African SMU entailed labour forging links with the anti-apartheid community movements and political parties, and engaging in social and political issues well beyond the wage and the workplace. It was marked by a strong emphasis on democracy and workers' control (also see Pillay, 2011). They understood SMU as a strategy specific to peripheral-capitalist societies where large working classes emerged under authoritarian regimes.

Regarding the Philippines, Kim Scipes (1992) suggested a similar analysis, stressing alliances, and struggles around political rights and internal union democracy. G.W Seidman (1994) compared militant labour in Brazil and South Africa, and suggested that SMU arose in conditions of late industrialization under authoritarian regimes, in which struggles over wages and working conditions overlapped with struggles over conditions in working-class areas as well as over political rights and democracy.

Likewise for Ronaldo Munck (1988), SMU was defined by its linkages with social movements outside the formal proletariat. Subsequently, several writers have argued that SMU also existed in the parliamentary democracies of the North, through organizing campaigns that included coalitions between unions and community groups (Clawson, 2003; Lopez, 2004; Voss and Sherman, 2000).

While the SMU concept was originally descriptive, it evolved into a prescription, a model of unions to be applied in both the industrial North (e.g. Moody, 1997) and in the struggle against capitalist globalization through "global solidarity" (Waterman, 1999). For Peter Waterman (1988), who was credited with coining the concept of SMU, it was not just a different union model, but a different understanding of the role of the working class, in which it allied with newly emerging social movements like feminism, indigenous struggles, human rights advocacy, and ecology (also Waterman, 1999:52). Thus, Kim Moody (1997) argued that Northern unions should learn from their Southern counterparts, adopting SMU as a strategic orientation in which unions harmonize the demands of the union with the broader needs of the working-class.

However, as Karl von Holdt (2002, 2003) has argued in more recent work on South Africa, the term SMU has developed a high degree of ambiguity as a result of its multiple, at times inconsistent, applications to a wide range of contexts. Nor was it always an accurate label. For example, while earlier writers argued that South African SMU was evidence of a strong class-consciousness, it was in fact deeply shaped by non-class collective identities like race (2002: 286, 287). Waterman (1993, 1999, 2003) concluded that the problems with the SMU concept were such that he would instead call himself an advocate of a "new social unionism", which "is intended to relate to and be appropriate for our contemporary world" (1999:247). Another critique addressing a final point here comes from Mi Park on the trade union movement in South Korea. She claims that SMU theory "romanticizes so-called social movement type unions (the COSATU in South Africa, the CUT in Brazil, and the KCTU in South Korea) and falls short of prescriptive measures for social transformation and a clear vision of a future society" (2007: 311).

Given these issues, there are important questions to be addressed and issues that remain unresolved in the SMU literature. For example, where do the movements of marginalized workers

fit in? Is a street traders' movement a union, or a 'new' social movement? The SMU literature focuses on the role of standard trade unions in linking up with community struggles, and sees the revival (or the adoption) of SMU as something essentially emanating *from* these existing unions: is it possible that the movements outside the mainstream unions – including new unions by marginalized workers, such as street traders – can *themselves* directly contribute to union revitalization, and so to the rebirth of SMU more generally? The following parts of the paper will provide some answers to these questions, by examining the WCCA campaign and the role of the marginalized labour force in that campaign, arguing that the street traders' associations *themselves* represent a new form of unionism, which helped unite mainstream unions, new social movements and marginal workers along the lines of SMU.

Some Characteristics of Street Traders in Durban

According to the Labour Force Survey September 2006, there are 2,379,000 people working in the informal economy in South Africa (Statistics SA, 2007). Since 2000, on average one in every two South Africans who reported working in the informal sector works in the retail sector, which mainly refers to street trading (Statistics SA 2009, cited in Skinner 2009). Caroline Skinner (in van der Post, 2007) estimates that, on the basis of a very rough calculation, there are between 60,000 and 70,000 street trades in both Johannesburg and Durban, and 35,000 in Cape Town.

In order to develop a clearer picture of the street traders, I conducted a detailed study of street traders in six areas of Durban in 2007, using a quantitative questionnaire that examined traders' characteristics and perceptions. 105 street traders were surveyed. The sample size was calculated by an electronic sample size calculator. There was no reliable data set from which a representative sample could be drawn. Therefore, the sampling strategy was designed by clustering the areas where the density of street traders was highest. Accordingly, the research was conducted in the Workshop Market, West Street, Warwick Avenue, Beach Front, Pinetown Taxi Rank, and the Phoenix Plaza Area. This was supplemented by twenty semi-structured interviews[2].

The majority of street traders studied were self-employed (77 per cent), and women made up 59 per cent of street traders at all six locations. The majority of street traders had between 6 and

11 years of schooling. The largest proportion of street traders were between the ages of 36 and 45, although most workers employed at their stall were under 26 years old. Around 34 per cent were members of a street traders' organization. Most lived in poverty: 71 per cent earned less than R2001 a month, and 39 per cent, less than R1000 (Çelik, 2010). (This is consistent with the eThekwini Municipality's "Quality of Life" Survey (2005), which found that 43 per cent of the metropolitan population was poverty stricken insofar as they survive on less than R1500).

Recent studies indicate that growing poverty has a serious impact on the household (Von Holdt and Webster, 2005: 23), which is a major site for sharing economic resources (Mosoetsa, 2003: 6). My findings show that street traders were the main breadwinners (91 per cent) in their households, and in 68.6 per cent of cases, the sole breadwinners. These are not households in which there is an amalgamation of different sources of incomes. This is unusual, as South African data indicates that wage employment often makes up the highest percentage of overall household income, up to 40 per cent of the income of poor households, with self-employment only 5 per cent (May et al, 1998: 36).

The findings of this research also challenge the 'staging area hypothesis', which argues that the urban informal sector is only a transient temporary category which will disappear with economic development, as its people integrate into the formal economy (see Fields 1990). Like that of G.S Fields, my data challenges this view, since it clearly shows many street traders have been in the sector for many years. Around 60 per cent of street traders had been active in street trading for more than five years, and a larger proportion of street traders had been trading for more than ten years. This is also supported by the finding that 81 per cent of the street traders are not looking for a formal job (Çelik, 2010).

How did traders see their class position in society? From 68 to 82 per cent of the street traders saw themselves as 'workers', among which 46 to 49 per cent defined themselves as marginal or poor workers, and 21 to 33 per cent as average workers (Apart from those, around 5 per cent defined themselves as unemployed). Only a small minority of street traders defined themselves as 'small' (10 to 18 per cent) or 'very small' entrepreneurs (7 to 11 per cent). This raises questions for the tendency of trade unions to view street traders (and other informal workers) as beyond the purview of organized

labour (Çelik, 2010).

Where do the street traders live? It was discovered that the majority of street traders interviewed (62 per cent) lived in townships and most of them had lived in rural areas before. In terms of 'type of housing', the highest proportion of street traders (36 per cent) lived in shacks, and most of them had lived in houses before. It seems that moving from rural to urban areas also means a worsening of housing conditions for these people. It was confirmed by 74 per cent of the respondents that living in a shack dwellers community was related to the large size of street traders in that community. In addition, the problems faced by street traders on the streets common to shacklands like crime, poor infrastructure, public services, transportation and housing, and especially evictions, became a basis for constructing linkages between workplace and community. Evictions were not simply from the shacks, but also, from their workplaces – the streets, which means for street traders losing both their homes and their livelihoods.

Reorganizing Street Traders in Durban

The Phoenix Plaza Street Traders Association (PPSTA), the Siyagunda Association and Eye Traders Association, all representing street traders, individually sought representation in the municipality's informal economy management system. However, they were aware that the majority of the street traders in Durban did not have trading permits and thus, were excluded from the scope of this system. Without representation, it was difficult to participate in negotiations with the Municipality.

Consequently, the PPSTA, the Siyagunda Association and Eye Traders Association sought to create an alternative structure to organize and represent the majority of street traders. With organizational support from StreetNet and the local South African Communist Party (SACP), the associations (as argued earlier, a new type of union) began to act together in May 2006. The WCCA was formed with a platform of demands. On the 21 November that year, the street traders' associations held a joint march on City Hall, where they demanded a moratorium on police crackdowns against street traders. They also challenged the eThekwini Municipality to commit itself to StreetNet's WCCA platform, so that street traders would not be continually faced with police harassment or unilaterally evicted in the run up to the FIFA World Cup.

There were a number of marches in 2007 where traders demanded legalization (the issue of trading permits) and a moratorium on evictions. The three associations repeatedly demanded that the eThekwini municipality consult representative street trader associations about issues affecting their day-to-day efforts to earn an honest living, with real negotiation and dialogue.

In effect, the organized street traders (and the WCCA) had two core strategic aims, which were firmly linked to each other. The first aim was forming a strong democratic, mandated, alternative to the ITMB/ BSU structures, and, secondly, securing a democratic forum of negotiation and dialogue in which they could participate.

One municipal response to the independent street traders' increasing criticisms of the ITMB/ BSU structures was to invite the allied PPSTA, the Siyagunda Association and Eye Traders Association to participate in the EMIEF in 2007. Participation proved frustrating, as the associations found themselves in a situation where they were given no room to place their demands and proposals on the forum's agenda. In fact, they were not allowed to take part in decision making.

In May 2007, the PPSTA, the Siyagunda Association and Eye Traders Association joined a boycott against increases in the rent that street traders paid for their sites to the Municipality. This was associated with three weeks of chaos and street clashes in Durban. The division between ITMB and the allied street traders' associations was clearly revealed. The ITMB's position as supposed street traders was greatly weakened by both the Municipality (which imposed the rent increases in the face of traders' objections) and the majority of the street traders (who clashed directly with the Municipality). Second, the three independent traders' associations showed their strength and capacity to mobilize their members through a mandated leadership. This confidence led the three street traders' associations to launch the Sisonke Traders' Alliance (STA) in November 2008 in Durban. This was an alliance of street traders' organizations and other interested informal workers organizations in the Province of KwaZulu Natal. It was envisaged as a new sort of trade union, but had "not only a union perspective, but also a developmental one" that aimed at engaging in other social movements of the marginalized, such as community social movements like AbM in Durban, the Cape-based Anti-Eviction Campaign, and the Landless People's Movement (Author interview, Chairperson of Siyagunda,

Gaby Bikombo, 09.05.2007). Also, the STA aimed to work with the mainstream trade unions.

My survey indicates broad support for such aims. For example, 80 per cent of respondents supported the mainstream trade unions' participation in campaigns alongside the street traders, such as the WCCA. Street traders were generally in support of trade unions, as weapons for the workers and poor – with the mainstream unions seen as very much the same as their own street traders' associations (Çelik, 2010).

Street traders were also very positive about the involvement of people from their own poor communities in the WCCA. Thus, 87 per cent of respondents confirmed that many people from these communities were street traders, so what affected traders on the street would affect their families in the communities. Moreover, 77 per cent of street traders supported the participation of community social movements and civic organizations in their struggle. It must also be emphasized that the AbM was the best known (33 per cent) community movement among street traders, no doubt because AbM organized in many of their neighbourhoods. Finally, 83 per cent of traders surveyed believed that the WCCA, within which street traders' organizations play a central role, was the appropriate means for linking mainstream unions, marginalized workers and community movements (Çelik, 2010).

The drive to organize street traders along union lines was continuously supported by StreetNet, which promoted the formation and the organizing activities of the STA. Its coordinator Pat Horn, herself a former trade unionist, had founded the first informal workers' organization, Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in 1994, and played a key role in strategizing around means to articulate the voice and demands of street traders' associations. StreetNet had long been bringing street trader's issues to labour organizations internationally and nationally, participated in International Labour Organization (ILO) discussions about promoting decent work in the informal economy, and cooperated with Global Union Federations (GUFs) like the Public Services International (PSI) to promote the organization of workers in the informal economy. One result was that StreetNet had strong links to municipal workers' unions affiliated to the PSI, notably SAMWU in South Africa. The StreetNet link to SAMWU played an important role in SAMWU committing itself to the WCCA in February 2007.

In March 2007, StreetNet held a groundbreaking international meeting in Senegal on "Collective Bargaining in the Informal Economy and Law and Litigation Strategies in the Street Vending Sector"[3]. The main goals of this meeting were the identification of specific demands, negotiation partners, potential allies, and levels of negotiation for informal and self-employed workers. With regards to legal and litigation strategies, it was agreed to proactively institute well-selected test cases to establish favourable legal precedents that could help to promote the rights of other traders.

One result of this litigation strategy was that StreetNet supported litigation by the PPSTA against the eThekwini Municipality, and a High Court action in 2005 challenging the constitutionality of municipal by-laws allowing the impounding of street traders' goods. The three founding associations of the STA also took the eThekwini Municipality to court for allegedly creating an unlawful unit dedicated to policing hawkers.

The World Class Cities for All Campaign (WCCA)

With the introduction of the FIFA World Cup preparations by the eThekwini Municipality, StreetNet and the STA carried their struggle into the WCCA, a formation in which street traders' organizations, mainstream unions and community movements joined forces to challenge anti-poor urban policies.

As previously noted, it seemed likely that the preparations would marginalize urban poor in South Africa, as this had happened during the similar 'mega-events' elsewhere. As passive recipients of welfare funds the urban poor were not central to the formulation or direction of government policies; they were not seen as part of the host population that would benefit from hosting a high-profile international event (WCCA, 2006). The drive of the South African state was instead to create, in StreetNet's view,

> ... *'World Class Cities' of a particular type, which attracts foreign investments, has modern up-to-date infrastructure, has no signs of urban decay, has smooth traffic flow, decent public transportation, and has no visible poor people or social problems. The creation of a typical 'World Class City' often results in prior development plans for the poor being abandoned or shelved ...*

(StreetNet International, 2006).

'Unsightly scenes' such as slums and street traders were to be eliminated or hidden (Olds, 1998:39). Many of the newly-created homeless were part of the informal economy, and so would lose both their homes and their livelihoods.

The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's attempt to redevelop the central business district (CBD) ahead the World Cup included a drive to remove all traders from the streets (van der Post, 2007). The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) also estimated that up to 26,000 'squatters' suffered human rights violations as a result of this drive. It is true that many buildings targeted for eviction were unhealthy, and potentially served as criminals bases, but the majority of 'squatters' in these buildings were ordinary poor people, trying to earn a living on the streets (COHRE, in Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2007).

Examples can be multiplied with many instances in other South African host cities and KwaZulu Natal province was set on such an approach. In November 2006, Provincial Housing Minister Mike Mabuyakhalu said that his department aimed to eradicate all squatter camps in the province by 2010 (Mbanjwa, 2006). In October 2007, the eThekwini Municipality forced 1200 traders to leave a major Durban flea market, apparently because a structure for the World Cup was being constructed. According to Mayor Obed Mlaba, the World Cup was a wonderful opportunity to clean up areas that have become "unsavoury" (Mthembu, 2007).

However, these measures were challenged by the WCCA campaign from 2006, which centred on promoting an inclusive approach to making "World Class Cities". In place of the anti-poor model, StreetNet promoted "World Class Cities for All", and fostered a working class alliance including street traders and other groups of the (urban) poor. The WCCA campaign challenged municipalities to formally adopt a WCCA approach, to engage in participatory consultative processes and social dialogue with any persons or interest groups who may be affected by any aspect of initiatives for the creation of "World Class Cities", and to ensure that street traders would not be unduly disadvantaged by any urban improvement or renewal initiatives for the FIFA World Cup (WCCA, 2006).

In March 2007, StreetNet organized a national strategy meeting to develop a programme for the newly launched WCCA. This was attended by organizations of street traders, shack dwellers, the landless, sex workers, and other urban poor constituencies,

as well as mainstream unions like COSATU, SAMWU, and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (IMATU, linked to the Federation of Democratic Unions of South Africa, or FEDUSA). A national organizing committee was established, as was a three-year programme of action.

In the course of the campaign activities, there was the development of important relationships between mainstream unions and other movements, in which the StreetNet and street traders' associations (or new unions) were actively involved. For instance, South African Rail Hawkers' Association (SARHA) members on stations started cooperating with the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU, a COSATU affiliate), whose members included security workers that encountered the eviction of hawkers daily.

Similarly, SARHA members at the FNB Stadium cooperated with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM): NUM is a COSATU affiliate which organizes construction workers as well as miners, and was active amongst the workers employed to extend and renovate the stadium for the World Cup. SARHA members worked with NUM members against efforts to forcibly remove the hawkers from the stadium where they sold cooked food to the construction workers. The WCCA in turn supported the "National Campaign for Decent Work Towards and Beyond 2010" launched by construction sector unions like NUM in 2007. Moreover, an alliance was built with the NUM during a two-week strike by construction workers at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban in November 2007.

Mainstream unions also engaged in protests around housing and evictions. For example, the residents of Joe Slovo Settlement in Cape Town faced forced removal to make way for a housing project financed by the First National Bank, with an eviction order issued by the Cape High Court on the 20 September 2007. COSATU held a mass meeting with the residents to pledge support against the provincial government's eviction attempts.

That same month various organizations representing shack dwellers in eThekwini marched on the Mayor's office to present their concerns regarding various housing and land issues, including forced evictions – they were attacked by the police. In October 2007, AbM organized a large march opposing the hosting of the FIFA World Cup, and demanded an eviction free World Cup (WCCA, 2007). In February 2008, AbM brought an application to the Durban High

Court challenging Section 16 of the KwaZulu Natal Slums Act, which "empowered municipalities to evict illegal occupants from state land and derelict buildings, and to force private landowners to do likewise or face fines or imprisonment –all at the behest of the provincial housing minister" (Tolsi, 2009), and his commitment to eradicating squatter camps by 2010. In October 2009, AbM celebrated a major victory when the Constitutional Court declared KwaZulu Natal Slums Act unconstitutional. AbM was part of the WCCA, and the whole WCCA congratulated it on its successful legal challenge: this was described as an important part of the struggle for inclusive urban planning during preparations for the World Cup.

The relationship between mainstream unions and other movements developed further in the course of tabling campaign demands on two fronts: first, negotiations with the municipalities, and second, the development of the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) 2010 Framework Agreement for negotiations with the FIFA Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the World Cup. (NEDLAC is a national corporatist dialogue forum, which includes the state, business and unions, as well as community groups).

In terms of the negotiations with the municipalities, SAMWU (and IMATU in Johannesburg) expressed their concerns about their members (which include Metro Police) being used to remove street traders from the streets, thereby denying their livelihoods, as well as removing shack dwellers. Instead, the unions proposed that they would prefer to play a mediating role. In line with this, SAMWU and StreetNet co-wrote a proposal for a "Stakeholders' Forum", presented by a WCCA delegation to the state as a basis for systematic consultation.

In the NEDLAC process, street traders' organizations were represented through the WCCA and worked closely with mainstream unions to reach an agreement that would benefit the broad working class. The WCCA had demanded the right to participate as a party in the development of the 2010 Framework Agreement, and in October 2007, NEDLAC agreed on a draft Framework Agreement that contained key WCCA demands.

In a review of NEDLAC, Edward Webster and D. Sikwebu (2006: 43, 45) asked "to what extent the NEDLAC constituencies are able to effectively represent vulnerable workers", and questioned "whether the community constituency is the equivalent social

dialogue institution to that of labour and business that are structured to engage in a dialogue process". However, the street traders' and WCCA's involvement in the Framework Agreement showed that it was possible for informal workers and poor communities to make use of NEDLAC, and to do so in alliance with the mainstream unions. The WCCA in short renewed optimism that the NEDLAC community constituency component could play an active part in social dialogue.

While the FIFA LOC never ultimately signed the 2010 Framework Agreement, the active participation of mainstream unions and the WCCA in this process played an important role in harmonizing mainstream union demands with the demands of informal workers and community movements. Furthermore, StreetNet and the WCCA's support in NEDLAC for mainstream unions (which participate in NEDLAC's organized labour section) helped push the balance of power in NEDLAC in favour of the entire working class.

The WCCA also proved to be an inspiring example of cooperation by various working class organizations and movements in developing a united voice for a common goal, and meetings and campaigns were free of infighting. The platform created by the WCCA initiated and enabled constructive dialogue between unions and social movements, and the WCCA proved effective in bridging gaps between the various working class forces.

Incorporating Street Traders with AbM and Building Collective Struggles

AbM is a mass movement of shack dwellers, which emerged in Durban and has since spread to other areas, most notably Cape Town. The AbM has attracted widespread attention for its campaigns around housing and land, and was one of the largest community-based social movements in post-apartheid South Africa in the late 2000s.

The AbM movement began with a road blockade organized from the Kennedy Road Shack Settlement in Durban in 2005. By the time of writing, it included more than 20,000 members from 30 shack settlements. The proportion of the greater Durban population living in shacks has been estimated at 33 per cent of the total metropolitan population and approximately half of the total metropolitan African population: this translates to 920,000 people (Marx and Charlton,

2003:6). In 2001 the United Nations Habitat chose Durban as the pilot city to launch the inception phase of its "Cities without Slums" sub-regional programme for Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Durban authorities and the eThekwini Municipality started their slum clearance project that same year. This entailed the privatization of the city's rental housing, built for the Indian, coloured and white poor under apartheid, and the upgrading the informal settlements. Then in 2005 the eThekwini Municipality announced a slum clearance project, with R2.9 billion to be spent over a period of ten years, to build 250,000 houses by 2010 (Mbanjwa, 2006).

At the heart of the Municipality's policy was the removal of shack dwellers to small (shack-sized) houses on the rural periphery of the city. This has two concrete and objectionable consequences. First, this arguably reproduced the apartheid spatial pattern, with the (black) poor relegated to townships far away from the main city. Naturally this imposed a range of costs, such as difficulty accessing work, amenities, and affordable transport. Therefore, secondly, relocations tended to disconnect people from their livelihoods: shack settlements often develop close to economic opportunities (mostly informal, such as street trading) at the city centre and increase incomes by reducing transport costs.

AbM built itself upon these arguments, creating a movement that aimed at independent and democratic governance in shack settlements, and at ending evictions and relocations. The movement has suffered hundreds of arrests, police assaults and vigilante threats since its foundation. The AbM leadership views the movement as a broad working class struggle that fights for the rights of the unemployed, contract workers, and street traders etc., and is not simply about housing issues. The leadership claims that 30 per cent of AbM members are in fact formally employed, with many members of mainstream unions. Since a further 40 per cent are believed to be involved in informal work, such as street trading, organizing street traders has become part of the AbM movement (Author Interview, AbM Chairperson, S'bu Zikode, 14.05.2007).

For example, in Pinetown, street traders had tried to organize themselves, but experienced difficulty in securing trading permits. Since these street traders were also shack dwellers, they started to organize through AbM in 2006, establishing a street traders committee. The AbM encouraged this step, as part of the project of building working class unity. The AbM street traders joined WCCA

meetings in 2007 and actively publicized the WCCA campaign and they joined marches by other street traders' associations. A notable march was on the 23 May 2007, which had the participation of more than 3000 street traders, and demonstrated the growing cooperation between street traders' associations and shack dwellers' movements.

The WCCA was seen by AbM as a very good opportunity to build collective struggles. The AbM's Chairperson argued that:

> *You will find that 50 % of my demands are within the sphere of trade unions. If I am not employed, it is a duty of the working class to ask the question 'why?' If I was not employed, then street traders would welcome me…*
>
> (Author Interview, ibid)

This approach was reciprocated by other structures. For example, Horn of StreetNet argued that:

> *… marginalized people are evicted from the streets and from their homes. They are hit on both sides. This leads to a broad working class unity. The campaign will be a learning ground and it is a deliberate effort …*
>
> (Author Interview, 10.05.2007)

Likewise, mainstream union organizers who took part in the WCCA campaign activities strongly maintained that:

> *… the campaign forms a bridge between unions and many social movements. It opens up communication, and gets everybody collectively to take South Africa forward …*
>
> (Author Interview, SAMWU organiser, 16.05.2007)

Likewise the NUMSA regional educator agreed that it was necessary to link informal workers, unions and social movements:

> *If we do not bridge them and see them as isolated pockets, each one engaged in some form of resistance but its own forms and structures and agenda, it doesn't really make for collective struggles. Collective struggles have to bring in all wide range of institutions, organisations and movements…*
>
> (Author Interview, 18.04.2007)

Conclusion

In this paper, I have suggested a rethinking of street traders and their role in remaking the working class movement, including mainstream unions, in contemporary South Africa. I have argued that being the poorest as well as the most vulnerable fraction of workers, the street traders play a key role in bringing together a range of struggles and movements. They can and have played a momentous role in reactivating the 'movement' character of mainstream unions, and in reconnecting them with other social movements. Accordingly, their struggle can be a promising agency in revitalizing SMU in contemporary South Africa. I have also discussed the SMU literature, and sought to integrate street traders and their unions into this approach.

The centrality of mainstream unions in the SMU approach is central to the literature on the subject, with many authors – especially Seidman (1994) and Moody (1997) – apparently assuming a unidirectional relationship: these unions represent "class consciousness" and solidarity, and bring it to other movements. But what if "class consciousness" and solidarity *already* exists *outside* the mainstream unions, and what if it is brought *to* these unions by other working class formations? What if new forms of unionism based amongst informal workers emerge from these workers themselves?

This paper describes precisely such a scenario, and suggests that it requires us to rethink how SMU can be constructed. The author has demonstrated that the majority of street traders see themselves as working class, and see their associations as part of the working class movement – and indeed, as types of union. Likewise, the shack dwellers movement overlaps with both the street traders' associations (or unions) and with the mainstream unions, also advocate a broad working class unity persistently.

The activities of both the street traders' associations, and of the AbM, in many ways correspond to the basic SMU idea of a union style that is democratic, broad, and that refuses to confine itself to wage issues or to workplace struggles. In many ways these formations were arguably closer to this approach than the mainstream unions represented by COSATU, in which the SMU approach has been eroded, and which has generally struggled to work with the 'new poor' of the post-apartheid era.

Thus, Moody's tendency to see mainstream unions as the strongest mobilizing force and the rest as less able to mobilize

themselves underestimates the self-reliance and mobilizing capacity of the "marginalized labour force" (Çelik, 2010). In the Durban case, a leading role was played by the independent street traders' movement, and the AbM, in drawing mainstream unions into a broad campaign (the WCCA), and in so doing, pushing the mainstream unions back towards SMU. On many occasions these groups exceeded the mobilizing activities of the mainstream unions, and challenged the attitudes of these unions.

Indeed, the WCCA was primarily a mobilizing force of **street traders unions** that managed to bring street traders associations, mainstream unions and community social movements. This was (to draw on the terms of von Holdt, 2003) an interpenetration of working class movements in a 'popular alliance', in which street traders, shack dwellers, landless people, street kids, sex workers, railway commuters, trade unions, political parties, etc. could take part.

Thus, it was from outside the mainstream unions that the initiative was taken that drew the mainstream unions into a 'popular alliance' akin to SMU – an alliance that revitalizes the 'movement' character of mainstream unions. How these unions will respond to such initiatives, and whether these unions will again play a central role in (re)building an inclusive working class politics, will be decisive to the future of SMU in South Africa. Reflecting on Webster and Buhlungu (2004) and Lier and Stokke (2006), union revitalization through SMU in contemporary South Africa, therefore, requires imaginative and determined ways of engagement with other working class sectors, among others, street traders.

In the SMU literature, street traders and their organisations have generally been ignored, both as unions and as social movements. This paper suggests that they are already both, and should be seen as a "movement of the marginalized labour force" excluded from the mainstream unions (Çelik, 2010). Their characteristics include: a struggle for recognition of their way of making a living; a struggle for equitable inclusion into the economic, social and political spheres; an ability to build a collective identity and organisations, locally and internationally; an exclusion from the mainstream unions, yet still an identification of their struggle with union movements, and with forging working class unity; a vulnerable status that bringing their demands close to those of other movements of the marginalized working class; and a potential therefore to bridge gap between

mainstream unions and the movements of the marginalized working class.

This ability to play a bridging role also arises from several additional factors: the street traders' self-identification with the working class (while belonging to its most depressed fraction), and declared intention to link their organisations with the mainstream unions; the cross-organising and overlap between street traders and shack-dwellers; and the street traders' ability to initiate a "popular alliance" that mobilises street traders' associations, trade unions and other social movements.

Endnotes

1. Institute of Sociology, University of Freiburg, Germany. E-mail: Ercuement.Celik@soziologie.uni-freiburg.de.
2. The quantitative questionnaire, consisting of four sections and having a total of seventy five questions, covered the general characteristics of street traders in Durban, their perspectives on their livelihood struggles at their workplace and their homes, their class position, and their approach to WCCA. Semi-structured interviews covered specific, focussed issues for different groups of interviewees. The purposive sample consisted of three leaders from Phoenix Plaza Street Traders Association, Siyagunda Association, and the Eye Traders Association; three members of AbM, one representative from both StreetNet and the South African Communist Party, three academics, and nine trade unionists.
3. For more information see: http://www.streetnet.org.za/docs/reports/2007/en/senegalreport.pdf

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