

1. Summary of Research Project: Title: Grounding the Organizing of Building Cleaners Worldwide: The Role of the Justice for Janitors Model in Place.

This research seeks to answer the following question: Is the Justice for Janitors (JfJ) approach a new model of unionism for the world in the 21st century? The JfJ is a union organizing model being exported worldwide by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to unionize building cleaners who work for globalized cleaning firms, and are simultaneously unprotected by governments and marginalized by a changing industry. Labour movements everywhere are searching for ways to recover losses in membership and social position and are therefore experimenting with various models of organizing to capture new workers in the expanding service sectors of the new economy. The JfJ is attractive because of its impressive successes in organizing building cleaners in the United States; these workers are largely visible minorities, immigrants and women – the new working class of the global service economy. How gender dynamics mobilize workers for the purpose of supporting the JfJ model of organizing in different locations is key to this project. Situating mobilization in women cleaners' double reality of economic pressures in their homes (e.g., intensification of their domestic labour), and their places of work (e.g., pressures to produce more, faster), are closely examined. The JfJ model has radicalized organizing in the US by foregoing workplace-by-workplace organizing and developing instead city-wide campaigns to unionize cleaners by geography rather than enterprise. This makes it a unique strategy to organize workers at a time of declining union memberships and growing jobs in economically insecure sectors of the post-industrial economy.

The JfJ is in the Asia-Pacific Region, and Eastern and Western Europe. I propose to study two locations within these regions – France and Australia. I choose these two because the JfJ campaign is already in place in Australia and getting traction in France. The Australia Labour Movement has a long association with its American counterpart and Australia offers a chance to study how a model is reinterpreted within place, and evaluate the prominence of the local. The JfJ is just being introduced in France. Here skepticism of American models – labour or otherwise – remains due to a history of American Labour personnel interfering in French labour politics via their work with the CIA. France also has a distinct statist tradition and an industrial relations regime whereby five trade union confederations bargain for sectoral collective agreements with little workplace participation. The different stages of the development of the JfJ, unique histories of labour organizing, and industrial relations allow for more insightful analyses of the negotiation and implementation processes of the model with partner unions. My goal is to understand when and how the JfJ was exported, what role the SEIU plays in the various implementation stages, what negotiations are taking place to expand and revise the model according to national labour traditions. This research contributes to the global union literature and cross-border solidarity campaigns by providing insight into the challenges and opportunities for organizing cleaners and other workers globally. It also builds on my ongoing research into Canadian cleaners' responses to economic restructuring.

Findings from this research will be presented at both academic and non-academic conferences and workshops in the next four years. A series of articles will be published in refereed journals and in the popular press. A manuscript will also be composed and submitted to an academic press for publication. Reports on the different campaigns will be distributed to unions involved in coordinating the organizing of building cleaners via the JfJ model. Finally, a website on the project will be created and regularly updated to keep interested parties informed on the development of this research project.