

may actually complement, rather than contradict, a structural account of movements. For a subfield that values theoretical coherence as much as social movement theory does, this is an important sense-making exercise.

Union Voices: Tactics and Tensions in U.K. Organizing. By Melanie Simms, Jane Holgate, and Edmund Heery. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013. Pp. x+189. \$69.95 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

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What can unions in the United States learn from the experiences of unions in Britain, given their differing industrial and political union traditions, as well as significant variation in the institutional setups unions have to operate within? Do common threads exist over and above any differences and that put unions in a subordinate position? Or have a series of factors like Britain's movement toward the liberal-market type of capitalism pioneered by the United States and the influence of the organizing approach of the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU) on the biggest union in Britain (namely, Unite) meant that the "distance" across the "big pond" is lessening?

This perspective would presumably be the most obvious that readers of this journal would bring to a study of attempts by unions in Britain to renew and revitalize themselves through the application of the approach and tactics of "union organizing." By any definition, union organizing (U.O.) is quintessentially about the members becoming more involved in the agenda setting of their workplace union and pursuit of that agenda by various collective means. Such organizing should, thus, be about more than membership recruitment or even retention because it is concerned with increasing union effectiveness and union democracy.

Union Voices, the result of a 13-year research project undertaken by Melanie Simms, Jane Holgate, and Edmund Heery, seeks to evaluate how unions have fared in interpreting and implementing U.O. The undertaking found considerable weaknesses in the intention, process, and outcomes of U.O.—meaning that its promise was not realized. Indeed, *Union Voices* does demonstrate that unions prioritized recruitment above other goals, that the goal of almost self-sustaining workplace unionism was seldom achieved, and that various tensions existed, inter alia, between "generalist" union officers and specialist "organizing" officers and between the latter and more senior union officers.

The training for the union organizers was based upon practical skills outside of a motivational framework-cum-worldview of something like social democracy. The questions should then become whether this was a

result of flaws in U.O., the versions implemented, the way they were implemented, or something different altogether. Here the book is on much weaker ground, for the attempt to create a revolution “from above” at the grassroots level, and more often than not from the classroom, comes with a series of innate dynamics and characteristics, especially in nominally democratic, participative activist-based organizations such as unions. As it was, the authors rely upon the influence of labor markets to explain inter-union variation in outcomes without considering influences of path dependency from internal union political cultures or available resources.

Part of the limitation may stem from the empirical base of focusing upon the Trades Union Conference (TUC) initiative of the “Organizing Academy” to answer these questions. This initiative was a particular type, from a peak body of over 50 affiliated unions, in which a least-controversial line of operation was taken. Yet although the Organizing Academy is a substantial initiative, with 240 graduates since 1998, it is not synonymous with U.O., for not all unions participated in it and, for those that did, not in equal measure. Therefore, the yardstick is partial and so are some of the criteria adopted for evaluation. The tone of the text is very much with the “young Turks” against the “old guard,” without due consideration that the former have sectional and vested interests as much as the latter. The variable of measuring and analyzing the degree of leadership and institutional influence was rather absent.

However, the source of the book’s limitations is, more critically, found elsewhere. The work contains far more assertion and comment than hard-headed and deep-seated analysis. As in previous journal articles by the two lead authors (e.g., “Organizing for What? Where Is the Debate on the Politics of Organizing?”, *Work, Employment, and Society* 24 [2010]: 127–44), a lack of depth exists. For example, there has been a multitude of previous studies examining unions as *organizations*, as well as their internal processes. Equally, there has been a multitude of previous studies examining unions as organizations of collective mobilization. Yet none of the fruits of these previous endeavors are brought to bear upon understanding the internal support and resistance encountered by U.O. in Britain or the varying degrees of external leverage created. Certainly, the politics of “union organizing” receive sparse treatment despite the professed intention. Elsewhere, union effectiveness is not examined, much less with the aid of previous literatures. A keen sense of the limitations of what was and is possible with U.O. in its historical, temporal, and spatial terms is absent.

The authors do themselves no favors by getting some basic but key facts wrong. Thus, Unite’s membership has never been “around 1.2 [million]” (p. 62), and the current statutory union recognition procedure was not introduced in 1999 (p. 125) but midway through 2000. Using the same

source the authors used—namely, certification officer reports—Unite’s membership fell from 1.9 million in 2007, when the union was created, to 1.6 million (2008) and then to 1.5 million (2009), and just under 1.5 million (2010 and 2011). The only figure bearing resemblance to 1.2 million is the number of members contributing to the political fund (in 2010), which is mainly used to support the Labor Party. Not only does this cast doubt on other membership figures cited, but membership figures themselves are a critical benchmark by which to judge one of the key outcomes of U.O.

So to return to the question posed earlier of what usefully emerges for the predominant readership of the *AJS*, there is the confirmation of a well-known and rather disappointing outcome for U.O. in Britain—which, of course, is not dissimilar to that which has occurred in the United States. Beyond the scope of *Union Voices*, it would be worthwhile to speculate about whether the chances of U.O. would be any greater if implemented in coordinated market economies or in different periods of history. That different direction would make a useful subject for a different book and maybe highlight that it is not just the means and methods of union organizing that are problematic but also the contexts and conjunctures in which it is practiced.

Paid to Party: Working Time and Emotion in Direct Home Sales. By Jamie L. Mullaney and Janet Hinson Shope. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2011. Pp. xii+193. \$72.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

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Paid to Party analyzes how gendered, cultural understandings of “flexibility” and “work-family balance” are deployed, embraced, and manipulated in the direct home sales (DHS) industry. Jamie L. Mullaney and Janet Hinson Shope focus on the side of the industry that is female-dominated and organized around a multilevel compensation plan, in which “up-line” saleswomen get a cut of the commissions of other saleswomen whom they have recruited to the company. Saleswomen host parties in homes, for which they invite friends and acquaintances and push products (e.g., Tupperware, lipstick, or sex toys, depending on the company) in a carefully managed “fun” atmosphere. The book argues that DHS is useful as a case that highlights the dynamics of feminized emotional labor in a service industry promising flexibility, freedom, and fulfillment.

The authors spent two years in participant observation, attended dozens of parties where products were demonstrated and sold, and joined industry gatherings designed to galvanize the faithful and recruit new consultants into the hierarchical compensation structure. They also inter-