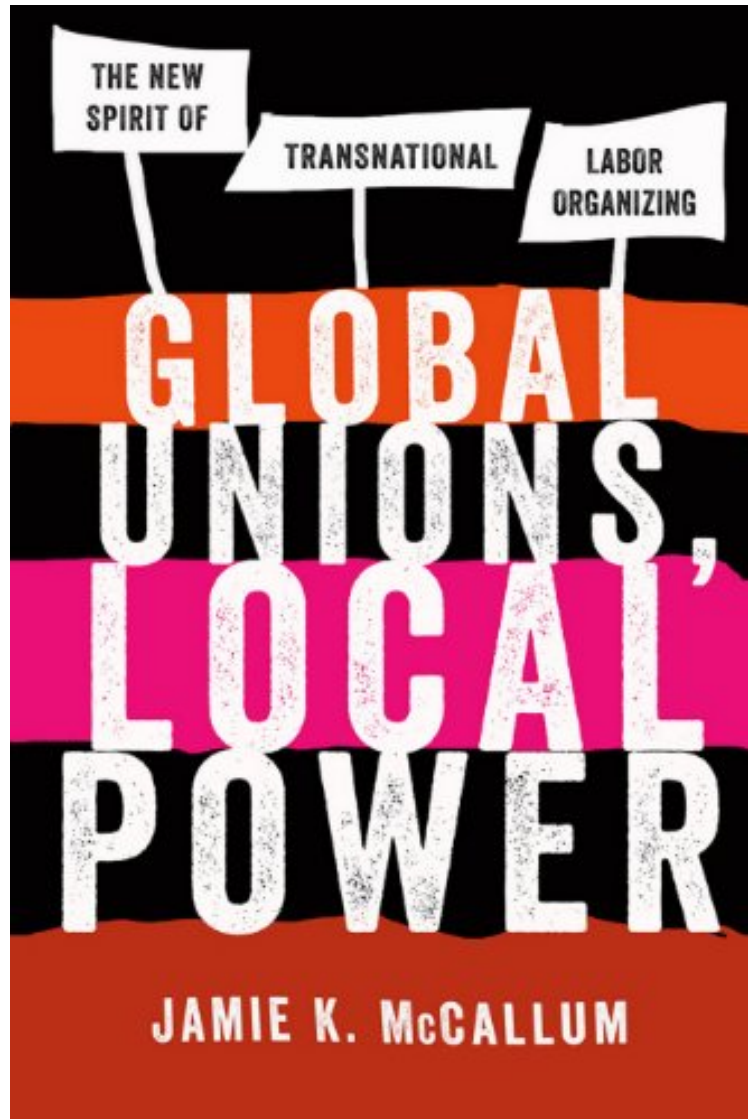


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Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing

Jamie K. McCallum

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Jamie K. McCallum : Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. lucid, accessible, and theoretical rich By Ashok Kumar Global Unions Local Power is lucid, accessible, and theoretically rich. It deftly weaves disparate local struggles into a single cohesive narrative. McCallum crisscrosses theoretical and geographic boundaries, from demystifying governance

regimes, to exploring the intricacies of strategic organising, to in-depth histories of the South African and Indian nation-state and labor movements while retaining a tangible commitment to radical trade unionism. McCallum critiques both big union global strategies and shop floor militant struggles with equal precision. He does this while unearthing the interconnectedness between the local and the global in the ever-changing contours of an international economy. However, unionising private security is replete with its own tensions and contradictions, and a treatment of the fundamental debate regarding the role of organised security workers in repressing worker struggles around the world would have added to the book's analysis. Nonetheless, his exhaustive documentation of one of the largest labor campaigns of the last decade represents an exciting contribution to the emergent literature on labor transnationalism. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. brilliant analysis, fascinating cases, great read

By Jerome Moshindog
This is one of the best books yet on global union campaigns and labor transnationalism. Not only does the author dig into the story of the SEIU's high-profile G4S campaign; he follows up in depth on how the campaign's outcome -- upheld by so many as a spectacular success for workers and unions around the world -- actually played out when it came to implementing the framework agreement in different countries. We learn that there is much more to a campaign than a quick win, and once the dust settles, the hard work is getting employers to abide by the new rules of the game. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But even when it doesn't, it's a fascinating story about politics, institutions, interests, and agency. McCallum's extensive fieldwork in India, South Africa, and other countries is impressive. Anyone interested in labor, globalization, the politics of work and employment in developing countries, corporate campaigns, theories of governance, or transnational activism will get a lot out of this book. We need more books like *Global Unions, Local Power*.

News about labor unions is usually pessimistic, focusing on declining membership and failed campaigns. But there are encouraging signs that the labor movement is evolving its strategies to benefit workers in rapidly changing global economic conditions. *Global Unions, Local Power* tells the story of the most successful and aggressive campaign ever waged by workers across national borders. It begins in the United States in 2007 as SEIU struggled to organize private security guards at G4S, a global security services company that is the second largest employer in the world. Failing in its bid, SEIU changed course and sought allies in other countries in which G4S operated. Its efforts resulted in wage gains, benefits increases, new union formations, and an end to management reprisals in many countries throughout the Global South, though close attention is focused on developments in South Africa and India. In this book, Jamie K. McCallum looks beyond these achievements to probe the meaning of some of the less visible aspects of the campaign. Based on more than two years of fieldwork in nine countries and historical research into labor movement trends since the late 1960s, McCallum's findings reveal several paradoxes. Although global unionism is typically concerned with creating parity and universal standards across borders, local context can both undermine and empower the intentions of global actors, creating varied and uneven results. At the same time, despite being generally regarded as weaker than their European counterparts, U.S. unions are in the process of remaking the global labor movement in their own image. McCallum suggests that changes in political economy have encouraged unions to develop new ways to organize workers. He calls these "governance struggles"; strategies that seek not to win worker rights but to make new rules of engagement with capital in order to establish a different terrain on which to organize.

"*Global Unions, Local Power* offers a rare note of hope, suggesting that at least in this case, the GFA provided a platform on which relative weak unions could construct a stronger voice for labor." -- Gay W. Seidman, *ILR* (April 2014)

In *Global Unions, Local Power*, Jamie McCallum draws a very detailed account of the international union campaign launched against G4S, the largest security services company and second largest private employer in the world. Relying on extensive fieldwork and numerous interviews, the book documents a major development in the field of labour internationalism. . . . *Global Unions, Local Power* is an important contribution to the growing field of global labour studies. Contrary to what its title suggests, the book goes beyond the commonly used slogan 'Think globally, act locally' and offers an in-depth analysis of one of the most extensive international campaigns conducted so far." -- Thomas Collombat, *Labour/Le Travail* (Spring 2015)

"With a sweeping brush through the history of labor's internationalism and a deep dive into the local impacts of one global labor campaign, McCallum offers a unique and useful insight into labor's potential pathway to power. Anyone interested in the future of labor should read this book." -- Rina Agarwala, *American Journal of Sociology* (July 2015)

"*Global Unions, Local Power* is marked by its theoretical engagement and solid foundation on the empirical record. Jamie K. McCallum's background as both an academic and a union organizer allows him to fully appreciate what is conveyed to him and to present it both sympathetically and realistically. During times when union decline is the cause of justified concern, research like this provides us with an insightful account of the challenges and promise of transnational labor strategies. More specifically, I hope that it encourages closer attention on the potential and limits of global framework agreements as both regulatory instruments and as vehicles for transnational union collaboration." -- Dimitris Stevis, Colorado State University

"*Global Unions, Local Power* is a trailblazing book. Its subject -- the G4S campaign -- is an iconic example of the new labor transnationalism. Jamie K. McCallum's dedication to careful ethnographic fieldwork in Europe, Asia,

and Africa created the foundational grounding for a path-breaking analysis. Clearheaded critiques and skepticism are balanced by real appreciation of what global labor organizers are achieving. McCallum's challenges to existing theoretical claims on the structure and evolution of the global labor movement make the book as engaging theoretically as it is empirically. Organizers and academics alike will need to take McCallum's work into account as they try to understand the dynamics of global labor struggles. *Global Unions, Local Power* can rightfully claim a place as one of the most important studies of labor transnationalism in the twenty-first century's second decade." Peter Evans, Professor of Sociology (Emeritus) University of California, Berkeley, and Senior Research Fellow, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, author of *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*

About the Author Jamie K. McCallum is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Middlebury College.