

'Illegalized' Migrant Workers and the Struggle for a Living Wage

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addition, workers who lack full legal status are unable to easily pursue legal action against employer violations of their rights. Illegalized workers have become a necessary component of the contemporary labour market required by neoliberal capitalism. Hence, illegalized workers are an expected, necessary but under-acknowledged contributor to neoliberalism's economic "success".

APPROACH

We examine the contemporary living wage campaign with particular reference to illegalized p

cleaning, and domestic services subject to long hours of dangerous, demanding, demeaning, and dirty work in permanent fear of dismissal and, potentially, deportation. These workers are exceedingly vulnerable and many basic labour, citizenship, and human rights simply do not apply to them. It is a precarious workforce present globally; segmented and discriminated against through ascription of race and ethnicity and also gender through insertion into specific sections of the local and national labour markets."

While all low-wage workers including non-migrant and "lega

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develop a tool for union organizing actions; and to raise the public issue of the need for a living wage, the problem may.

2003; Schoenberger, 2000), living-wage ordinances have also been found to reduce employment by 3.2% to 17% depending on the type of ordinance that was passed (Fairris, 2005; Neumark and Adams, 2003; Yelowitz, 2005). In contrast, Reich et al. (2005) found employment increased by 15.6% after the San Francisco Airport's living wage policy was passed. Similarly, Lester (2011) concluded that the implementation of living wage policies in 19 California cities did not adversely impact employment growth. Employers in London were also found to have benefited from living wage ordinances, with reports of higher work productivity associated with paying living wages (Wills et al., 2009a). Similarly, living wage firms were found to have lower rates of rle f

LIVING WAGE ADVOCACY EFFORTS AND ILLEGALIZED MIGRANTS IN THE US, UK, AND CANADA

Campaigners have applied a variety of strategies and tactics to counter resistance from living wage opponents including: taking advantage of political opportunity structures, helping to frame public policy debate, multi-racial coalition building, union organizing, grassroots actions, engaging in research, evaluation and evidence collection, educating workers about their rights, campaigning around regularization of illegalized migrant workers, and other forms of activism (de Graauw, 2015; Lopes and Hall, 2015; Luce, 2005; Pastor, 2001; Reynolds, 2001; Wills, 2008, Wills et al., 2009b). As a result of these strategies, many cities and employers have adopted voluntary or mandatory living wage policies. While these responses have benefited many low-wage workers, some employers have retaliated against illegalized migrant workers. Such incidents in the US and the UK can provide important lessons for Toronto's living wage campaign.

A growing number of workers in the US are earning sub-poverty level wages due to the growth of the informal economy. Profit-maximizing, subcontracting and sweatshop work have resulted in greater earnings and occupation dispersions, weak unions and a growing share of casualized low-wage jobs along with a narrower layer of high-income jobs in cities across the US (NELP, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2001; Pollin and Luce, 1998; Sassen, 2006). While many low-wage workers have been affected, illegalized migrants have been disproportionately pushed into poverty. They often experience violations of basic employment standards rights, and retaliation by employers after attempts to defend themselves (Bernhardt et al., 2009; Sassen, 1998; Smith and Cho, 2013). In response to the rise of low wage work over 100 US municipalities had passed living wage ordinances by the early 2000s (Freeman, 2005).

Leading up to the first living wage ordinance in the US, the first living wage campaign was initiated in the early 1990s by a group of pastors in Baltimore who became concerned about the increase in workers using their soup kitchen. As members of the Industrial Areas Foundation (AIF), the pastors joined the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), a coalition of worker centres, to form the local living-wage campaign to pressure the Mayor for a resolution to the increasing number of impoverished workers (Devinatz, 2013; Pollin and Luce, 1998; Reynolds, 2001). After facing strong opposition from the business community, the City passed the country's first municipal living wage ordinance in 1994 (Pollin and Luce, 1998). Soon thereafter, religious

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temporary, or agency work, rather than full-time permanent work (McDowell et al., 2009; Sassen, 2006; Thornley et al., 2010; Wills, 2009c; Wills et al., 2009d). Also similar to the US, workers who earn sub-poverty level wages in the UK are more likely to be immigrants and illegalized migrants than native-born residents. As “invisible” workers immigrant and illegalized migrant workers often remain hidden from public view when they clean banks, hospitals, or universities while the city sleeps, or when they cook meals in the kitchens of countless restaurants (Hearn and Bergos, 2011; 2009; Rienzo, 2011). Studies have found that UK employers prefer to hire exploitable immigrants (with or without legal documents) to gain competitive advantage (Hearn and Bergos, 2011; Tapia and Turner, 2007).

The East London Communities Organization (TELCO) launched London’s first living wage campaign in 2001 (Holgate, 2009). The Unison trade union and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) provided funds and the human resources to support workers to organize. After securing increases in pay, holidays, pensions and sick pay for cleaners in the early 2000s, TGWU and Unison’s union membership grew and the living wage campaign expanded. Additional lobbying efforts secured the living wage for all people working on the 2004 Olympic projects, and resulted in the establishment of a Living Wage Unit in the Greater London Authority. Supported by the Justice for Janitors Campaign in the US, the TGWU began a sector-wide campaign to unionize cleaners in the City and Canary Wharf and worked with London Citizens (Formerly TELCO) to demand a living wage for all. Within months, the campaign expanded to higher education, focusing on low-paid contracted cleaners at multiple universities across London. The living wage campaign has employed a variety of strategies to achieve pay increases for low-paid, mainly migrant workers. However, as in the US, the campaigns have not been without opposition (Hearn and Bergos, 2011; Holgate, 2009; Lopes and Hall, 2015).

Throughout the living wage campaigns, TELCO, workers, and unions employed a variety of tactics to persuade employers and the City to adopt the living wage. During the beginning of the campaign, public protests (marches, demonstrations, public assemblies) and lobbying of politicians and employers

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Researchers have therefore argued that most important functions served by the illegal population is political, and resides in illegalized workers' vulnerability to employers, who can control them easily due to their lack of formal legal status (Grasmuck 1984, Rivera-Batiz 1999, Champlin and Hake 2006). Furthermore, employers prefer illegalized workers during phases of rapid industrial transformation because their lack of legal protection prevents them from unionizing and protesting wage erosion (Morales 1983-1984). "The category 'illegal alien' is [therefore] a profoundly useful and profitable one that effectively serves to create and sustain a legally vulnerable – and hence, relatively tractable and thus 'cheap' – reserve of labor" (De Genova 2002, 440). The lack of status prevents migrants from competing for employment with native-born and legal immigrants on the same terms and conditions. Instead, they are bonded to employers, forced into accepting greatly inequitable remuneration for their work and kept in low-paying occupations that legal residents would not accept (Donato et al., 1992; Gentsch and Massey, 2012; Gomberg-Munoz and B3ScZ'I(\SI2-03888/ScZ'a(\21//1/ScZ'd(\SI0/i

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(City of Toronto, 2011; Vosko et al., 2013). Citing concerns of the ILO, the United Way, and the Toronto Community Foundation about the disproportionate impact of precarious employment on immigrants, Bailão demanded that the study focus “on the social impact of hundreds of

healthcare, education, income support programs, employment protection, affordable housing, settlement services, social assistance and legal services (Cities of Migration, 2013). Despite becoming a Sanctuary City evaluations have shown that illegalized migrants continue to face barriers to accessing these benefits (Sidhu, 2013; So

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illegalized migrant work is driven from the demand side. Vulnerable and exploitable workers facilitate capital accumulation and labour market segmentation (Bauder 2006). Illegalized work is built into the very DNA of modern neoliberal capitalism.

Addressing the situation of illegalized migrant workers is a way to confront the uncontrolled power of capital in

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