

**Assessing the Impacts of Corporate Self-Regulation on
Labor Rights and Union Organizing around the Pacific Rim**

Research Proposal
Submitted to the
UC Pacific Rim Research Program
2003-2004 Call for Proposals

by

Ronnie D. Lipschutz
Professor of Politics

260 Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA 95064
Phone: 831-459-3275/Fax: 831-459-3334
e-mail: rlipsch@cats.ucsc.edu

Annette Clear

Assistant Professor of Politics

282 Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA 95064
Phone: 831-459-2766/Fax: 831-459-3334
email: amclear@cats.ucsc.edu

**Assessing the Impacts of Corporate Self-Regulation on
Labor Rights and Union Organizing around the Pacific Rim**

Project Summary

Over the past three years, Lipschutz has been investigating the impacts of social externalities linked to globalization and the extension of commodity chains in the apparel industry of the Pacific Basin. Within the apparel industry, such externalities affect wages, working conditions, forced overtime, child labor, and lack of the right to free association (union organizing). Because of general resistance at the international level, as well as within governments, there has been only limited progress in addressing these externalities through legal mechanisms. In response, codes of conduct and corporate social responsibility have been utilized as a means of improving working conditions and protecting labor rights in the plants linked to Northern transnational apparel companies. Our research to date suggests that these market-based approaches have had only limited impacts outside of specific factories.

The objective of this project is to bring together Asian and American scholars and activists to examine the impacts of activist campaigns and “corporate responsibility” programs intended to foster social regulation within apparel industry factories in developing countries. An assessment of such “self-regulatory” efforts is of critical importance to labor organizing and rights in Pacific Rim countries, including the United States, in order to avoid a “race to the bottom.” This phase of the project is to build on prior and current research by the co-Principals, to collaborate with Asian labor scholars in publishing an edited volume, and to disseminate the research findings to labor scholars and activists in around the world.

Abbreviated budget

Salaries

| | |
|---|---------|
| GSR II, non-resident, 1 qtr, including fees & fringes | \$9,524 |
| Conference administrative assistance | 2,000 |

Travel

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Conference participant travel | 10,800 |
|-------------------------------|--------|

Conference Accommodations (18 participants)

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Hotel | 5,400 |
| Meals | 4,050 |

Miscellaneous costs

| | |
|---|-------|
| Publications | 800 |
| Research (copying, fax, phone) | 325 |
| Conference costs (copying, fax, phone, planning meetings) | 1,000 |

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| TOTAL | 33,899 |
|--------------|---------------|

Assessing the Impacts of Corporate Self-Regulation on Labor Rights and Union Organizing around the Pacific Rim

Ronnie D. Lipschutz and Annette Clear

I. Primary objectives & significance

A critical set of issues arising from contemporary processes of globalization involves social externalities unaddressed by either international or domestic systems of regulatory rules and laws (Braithwaite & Drahos, 2000; Lipschutz 2002a, 2002b). Within the apparel industry, such externalities affect wages, working conditions, forced overtime, child labor, and lack of the right to free association (union organizing). California is not immune from such concerns: the reappearance of sweatshops in the United States has brought the externality problem close to home (Bonacich & Appelbaum, 2000).

Over the past three years, Lipschutz has been examining the impacts of activist campaigns and “corporate responsibility” programs intended to foster social regulation within apparel industry factories in developing countries. An assessment of such “self-regulatory” efforts is of critical importance to labor organizing and rights around the Pacific Rim. If these programs are successful in host countries, they may help to avoid a “race to the bottom” and this may limit the further spread of unregulated sweatshops in the United States. If they are ineffective, there will be no pressure on regulators in consuming countries to monitor and enforce those regulations on the books. The research and conference proposed here builds on prior and current research by the Principal Investigators on the apparel industry and the activities of social movements and non-governmental organizations in Southeast Asia.

We are requesting \$33,899 in GSR support and conference costs to bring together Asian and American labor scholars and activists for a meeting in Spring, 2004. This conference will utilize project findings, the work of other scholars, and activists’ experience in addressing the issue of social regulation and labor rights in the apparel industry.

II. Background & literature

Generally speaking, one would expect social regulation to be addressed by the states within which apparel production facilities are located. Yet, it has become evident that many governments have neither the interest in nor the capacity to address either working conditions or labor issues. While some countries do have laws on the books that address such issues, practice does not often live up to this ideal (Hadiz, 1997; ICFTU 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Lipschutz, 2002a). While many states have ratified appropriate ILO conventions, there are no international mechanisms to conduct monitoring or enforce the conventions. And, while the WTO does have a relatively strong dispute resolution system that might be adapted to such purposes, there is a strong disinclination to regulate internationally in this way (Bhagwati, 2002).

In the apparel sector, the regulatory issue is further complicated by commodity production chains and the international division of labor (Lipschutz, 2002b). Many U.S.- and European-based clothing companies neither own nor operate their factories, instead

subcontracting with companies based in Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan whose factories are located in countries with lower labor costs (Deyo, 1987; Haggard, 1990; Rodan, 1993; Rowen, 1998). Northern-based manufacturers have claimed, at times, that the problem is largely out of their hands, although a growing number have come to recognize that their arms'-length relationship with subcontractors is no guarantee of immunity from bad publicity. Moreover, the international division of labor is coupled with a gendered division of labor. Since many factory workers in the apparel industry are women, host governments and societies are less likely to address problems associated with working conditions and labor issues (Wolf, 1992; Sen and Stivens, 1998; Edwards and Roces, 2000).

It is in this gap that "self-regulation" projects have emerged. With organizations and campaigns in both the United States and Europe, the anti-sweatshop movement has gained growing visibility and broadened support in its efforts to shame, cajole, or bully apparel manufacturers into paying more attention to the conditions in their subcontractors' factories. Organizations such as Sweatshop Watch in the United States, Clean Clothes in Europe, national unions (AFL-CIO), and international union associations (ICFTU) are using consumer pressure and education to force companies to adopt codes of conduct and improve working conditions in the plants. Unions are also, in a number of instances, working with counterparts in host countries. And some international organizations, such as the ILO, have also gotten involved in these efforts.

Manufacturers, responding to activist pressure and alarmed by the implications of consumer activism, have responded with "Corporate Social Responsibility." They have established organizations such as the Fair Labor Association, originally organized through the Clinton White House, the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities, sponsored by Nike, Mattel, the World Bank, the MacArthur Foundation, and the International Youth Foundation. The International Organization for Standardization provides guidelines for producers to follow in operating their facilities. The UN has promulgated the "Global Compact," described as a charter for corporate "good citizenship" that companies commit to observe. Both activists and corporations have developed inspection and certification programs, whereby companies and factories are inspected and their products given clean bills of health. Logos associated with the certification process can then be affixed to products which, it is believed, will induce socially-aware consumers to buy them (Sabel, O'Rourke & Fung, 2000).

What has been the impact of these campaigns? Some conditions have improved in some plants in some countries, but society-wide effects are less obvious. According to reports by campaigners, researchers, and unions (see, e.g., UNITE 2000; O'Rourke, 2000; Quan, 2001), major problems continue in many, if not most, apparel factories. Moreover, available evidence suggests that the institution of codes of conduct and even improvements in working conditions and wages have had little, if any, impact on the attitudes and policies of governments and factory owners where the right of free association is concerned (ICFTU, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). Finally, where local non-governmental organizations do exist, they are able only to appeal to international organizations and activist networks rather than having any actual impact on their own government's policies (Krisnawaty, 1996; Rodan, 1996; Ghai, 1999).

The improvement in labor conditions and rights is critical to the future of labor around the Pacific Rim, both within and without the apparel industry (such as is left here). While it is unreasonable to expect that producers will raise wages in developing countries to levels comparable to those in the United States and Europe, labor conditions in developing country industries are putting downward pressure on labor rights in industrialized ones. While these

labor issues are best addressed within national contexts, the problem as a whole is a global one, inasmuch as economies are not insulated from one another.

III. Methods, data, and deliverables

How effective in improving both conditions and the exercise of labor rights are the activist campaigns and corporate responses? What has been their impact in the host countries, in both the apparel sector and labor more generally? Can reliance on markets and consumer behavior work, in the medium-term, to address these social externalities? While there is a growing body of research into these regulatory projects (see, e.g., Braithwaite and Drahos, 2000; Meidinger, 1999-2000; Schoenberger, 2000), no one, so far as we know, has tried to examine their broader effects. These are empirical questions that require investigation, which has been the goal of the project on which this proposal is based (Lipschutz, 2002a, 2002b).

For the purposes of our research, we have called the general sector- and countrywide upgrading of labor conditions and rights, as a result of these self-regulatory programs, “spillover.” If spillover is taking place, it should become increasingly visible as a result of reforms instituted in specific factories, increased respect for workers, and growing public and private support for their rights as expressed in relevant ILO conventions and domestic law. We hypothesized three possible outcomes:

- 1. Effective spillover:** Self-regulation results not only in the formal recognition of workers’ rights to organize but also in actual improvement of labor’s status in the country as a whole, evidenced by the formation and recognition of national, sector-wide, and factory-based unions and the enforcement of rules by appropriate state authorities.
- 2. Partial spillover:** States attempt to oppose powerful domestic and foreign interests in the effort to assert their authority to legislate and enforce social regulations, and to establish capacity for some degree of control over the political conditions governing labor and other social rights.
- 3. No spillover or active resistance:** There is no detectable spillover to sector and labor, even though workers in some factories labor in improved conditions and have been able to organize factory unions. There is evident corporate and state resistance to self-regulation projects.

In order to focus this research and to build on prior work (Lipschutz, 2000, 2002a, 2002b), Lipschutz and a UCSC GSRA (David Newstone) conducted fieldwork during summer 2001 in Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines—in order to assess whether any spillover had occurred, and what might be required to effect spillover. Our research strongly suggested that there has been little “spillover” into the broader labor sector (see attached summary). While there are broadly-based unions and alliances in all four of the countries, and the union movements are quite powerful in some sectors, the East Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s has not only obstructed progress but created the possibility for future labor reforms (Jackson, 1999; Pempel, 1999). On the one hand, Asian governments that were initially indifferent to labor conditions in apparel factories became economically strapped. With the fall of their currencies and the staggering dollar-based and yen-based external debts, they argued that they no longer had the capacity or economic means to bring about any change, justifying their ongoing inaction in enforcing new labor regulations. On the other hand, the regional financial

crisis erupted into political crises for many of the incumbent regimes. Their economic collapse challenged the developmental state model (Woo-Cummings, 1999), causing many societies to demand greater participation in politics and the policymaking processes.

We propose to organize a conference during May, 2004 that will bring together activists, union officials, and scholars from both Asia and California. Asian activists and scholars will present papers examining whether spillover is evident in their respective country settings. Discussants will include scholars, possibly non-Asia scholars, who can bring a comparative perspective to ensure that the findings of this research speak to a larger audience of scholars and activists. Additional labor scholars and activists based in California will be invited to attend the conference and encouraged to participate more informally, possibly in breakout sessions. By bringing together scholars and activists from both sides of the Pacific, we hope to highlight the interactive and transnational nature of labor working conditions in all Pacific Rim countries. Labor reform, or the lack thereof, has repercussions for labor elsewhere.

The papers presented at the conference will be revised to incorporate feedback received at the conference. Ultimately, this volume will fill a glaring gap in the literature. Many of the available books on issues of labor in Asia have a country-by-country focus and do not consider the regional repercussions (Levine, 1997; Chan, 1999; Hutchinson, 2001). Those that do incorporate transnational impacts, however, fail to include the effect on the US economy, particularly California (Campbell, 1997; Rowley 2000). By bringing together Asians and Americans, this book will examine these issues. We anticipate publication of the book during 2004.

IV. Prior and ongoing work

This project builds on research by Lipschutz on global social regulation. He has written and presented several papers on this project, some of which will be published as book chapters and others as journal articles (Lipschutz, 2000, 2002a, 2004; Lipschutz & Fogel, 2003). The results of his work will be published as a book. Clear's research interests focus on the impact of transnational factors on state-society interaction, and her professional experience in Asia give this project access to a network of labor and human rights activists in Asia and California (please refer to list of potential conference participants appended below). Clear's academic work, professional contacts, and language skills (Indonesian) will also be utilized in the second round of interviews and in inviting participants to the conference.

Parts of this project have been supported by Pacific Basin Research Center of Soka University-America, the Non-Profit Sector Research Fund of the Aspen Institute, the UC Institute for Labor and Employment, the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, and the Social Science Division and Academic Senate Committees on Research of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Potential Non-UC Conference Participants¹

Junya (Lek) Yimprasert, Thai Labour Campaign
Monina Wong, Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee
Surichai Wun' Gaeo, Chulalonghorn University (Bangkok)
Bama Athreya, International Labor Rights Fund (Cambodia)
Teri L. Caraway, Northwestern University (Indonesia)
Frederic C. Deyo, Professor of Sociology, SUNY Binghamton
Lora Jo Foo, Sweatshop Watch
Michele T. Ford , University of Wollongong, Australia (Malaysia)
Vedi R. Hadiz, Professor of Sociology, Singapore National University
Chris Manning, Research Fellow, The Australian National University
Steven McKay, University of Wisconsin, Madison (The Philippines)
Jill Tucker, Human Rights Director, Reebok, Hong Kong

Potential Non-UC Counterpart Organizations in California

Asian Law Caucus, San Francisco CA
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Alameda, Los Angeles, San Francisco CA
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Los Angeles CA
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Los Angeles CA
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Los Angeles CA
Employment Law Center - Legal Aid Society of San Francisco, San Francisco CA
Global Exchange, San Francisco CA
Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, Los Angeles CA
Mobilization for the Human Family, Claremont CA
Peace Resource Center, Bellingham WA
Project No Sweat!, Binghamton NY
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE!), Western Region USA
Women of Color Resource Center, Berkeley CA

¹ We have not yet approached any of these potential participants. The participants with * are ones that we would like to contribute to the final published volume.

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- Lipschutz, Ronnie D. forthcoming 2004.
- 2002a. "Doing Well by Doing Good? Transnational Regulatory Campaigns, Social Activism, and Impacts on State Sovereignty," pp. 291-320, in: John Montgomery and Nathan Glazer, eds., *Challenges to Sovereignty: How Governments Respond* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, forthcoming).
- 2002b. "Regulation for the Rest of Us? Global Social Activism, Corporate Citizenship, and the Disappearance of the Political," at: <http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk/press/211lipschutz.htm>
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RONNIE D. LIPSCHUTZ
curriculum vitae

EDUCATION

DOCTORATE in Energy and Resources, University of California, Berkeley, 1987.
MASTER of SCIENCE in Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1978.
BACHELOR of SCIENCE in Physics, BACHELOR of ARTS in Liberal Arts, University of Texas-Austin, 1975.

PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Assistant/Associate Professor, Department of Politics, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1990-present.
Associate Director, Center for Global, International & Regional Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1996-present.
President & Senior Associate, Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, & Security, Berkeley, 1987-1993.
Staff Scientist, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory Energy Performance of Buildings Group, Berkeley, California, 1981-82.
Research Scientist, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Mass., 1980.
Scientific Staff, Union of Concerned Scientists, Cambridge, Mass. 1978-1980.

EXTRAMURAL HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

Co-PI (with Paul Lubeck), Carnegie Corporation of New York, "Globalization, State Capacity, and Self-Determination: Comparative Muslim States, Movements, Networks and Strategies," 2001-2002 (\$269,129).
PI. UC Institute for Labor and Employment.
PI. Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, Aspen Institute, "Regulation for the Rest of Us": Global Civil Society and Global Social Regulation," 2001-2002 (\$40,000).
PI. Pacific Basin Research Center, Harvard University/Soka University-America, "Global Civil Society and Emerging Patterns of Social Regulation in the Pacific Basin," 2000-2001 (\$20,000).
Co-PI (with Caroline Pomeroy). National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration Grant, for project on "California Fishery, Farm and Environmentally Vulnerable Community Responses to the 1997-98 ENSO Event, 1999-2001" (\$135,000).
PI. MacArthur Foundation Research & Writing Grant, for project on "Minds at Peace? The Construction of U.S. Security Policy at Century's End," 1998-99 (\$35,000).

Recent & forthcoming books

Ronnie D. Lipschutz, Cold War Fantasies—Film, Fiction and Foreign Policy (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001)
-----, After Authority: War, Peace and Global Politics in the 21st Century (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).
Beverly Crawford & ----- (eds.), The myth of "ethnic conflict": politics, economics, and "cultural" violence (Berkeley: UC Berkeley International and Area Studies Press, 1998).

Recent journal articles

-----, "'Environmental History, Political Economy and Policy: Re-discovering Lost Frontiers in Environmental Research," Global Environmental Politics 1, #3 (Fall 2001).

- , "Why Is There No International Forestry Law? An Examination of International Forestry Regulation, both Public and Private," UCLA Journal of Environmental Law & Policy 19, #1:155-82.
- , "Because People Matter: Theorizing Global Political Economy," International Studies Perspectives 2 (2001):321-39.
- , "Ohmage to Resistance," Global Environmental Politics 1, #1 (2001):18-22.
- , "Crossing Borders: Global Civil Society and the Reconfiguration of Transnational Political Space," Geojournal 52 (2000):17-23. (Published in 2001)

Recent and forthcoming book chapters

- , "Aliens, Alien Nations, and Alienation in American Political Economy and Popular Culture," in: Jutta Weldes, ed., To Seek Out New Worlds (London: Palgrave, forthcoming).
- , "Civil Society, Globalization, and the Environment," in: Kate Crowley (ed.), Globalization and the Environment (New York: Nova Sciences, forthcoming).
- & Cathleen Fogel, "Regulation for the Rest of Us? Global Civil Society & the Privatization of Transnational Regulation," in: Thomas J. Biersteker and Rodney Bruce Hall (eds.), The Emergence of Private Authority: Forms of Private Authority and Their Implications for Global Governance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
- & Cathleen Fogel, "Global Civil Society and Global Environmental Protection: Private Initiatives and Public Goods," in: Michael Hatch (ed.), Evaluating Alternative Policy Instruments for Environmental Protection (forthcoming).
- , "Doing Well by Doing Good? Transnational Regulatory Campaigns, Social Activism, and Impacts on State Sovereignty," pp. 291-320, in: John Montgomery and Nathan Glazer, eds., Challenges to Sovereignty: How Governments Respond (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, forthcoming 2002).
- , "Theorizing Global Political Economy *Because People Matter*," in: Mary Ann Tetreault and Robin Teske, eds., Feminist Approaches to Social Movements, Community and Power (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, forthcoming 2002).
- , "Globalized Networks of Knowledge and Practice: Civil Society & Environmental Governance," in: Ho-Won Jeong, ed., Global Environmental Policies: Institutions and Procedures (London: MacMillan, 2001).
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- , "The State as Moral Authority in an Evolving Global Political Economy," Jose V. Ciprut, ed., The Art of the Feud: Reconceptualizing International Relations (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2000).

ANNETTE CLEAR
curriculum vitae

EDUCATION

DOCTORATE in Political Science, Columbia University, 2002.
MASTER of PHILOSOPHY, Columbia University, 1997.
MASTER of ARTS in Political Science, Columbia University, 1996.
BACHELOR of ARTS in East Asian Studies, Yale University, 1988.

PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor, Department of Politics, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2001-present.
Consultant, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta, Phnom Penh and San Francisco, 1995-2001.
Longterm Observer, The Carter Center for Human Rights, East Timor, July-September 1999.
International Observer, Indonesian Election Watch, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, June 1999.
Senior Program Officer, The Asia Foundation, Tokyo, Japan, 1992-1994.
Program Associate, United States-Japan Foundation, Tokyo, Japan, 1990-1992.

EXTRAMURAL HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

Dissertation: "Democracy and Donors in Indonesia."

Nominated for American Political Science Association's Gabriel A. Almond Award.

Nominated for Columbia University's Bancroft Award.

Awards include:

Columbia University East Asian Institute Weatherhead Fellow 2000-2001
Columbia University President Fellow 1999-2000
Columbia University Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship 1998-1999
Columbia University East Asian Institute Pacific Basin Studies Fellowship Spring 1998
Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development Research Fellowship Fall 1997
Columbia University President Fellow 1997-1998
Carnegie Corporation "Evaluating NGO Strategies in the Post-Communist States" Fellowship
Spring 1997
Columbia University Weatherhead Fellow 1996 - 1997
Columbia University East Asian Institute Sasakawa Peace Foundation Fellowship 1996
United States-Indonesia Society Summer Travel Grant 1996
COTI Department of Education Grant 1996
Committee for Economic Development Research Associateship 1995
Columbia University East Asian Institute Sasakawa Peace Foundation Fellowship 1995
Ford Foundation Research and Research Method in the Developing World Summer Grant 1995

PUBLICATIONS

"International Donors and Indonesian Democracy," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Spring 2002.

- “INFID as Transnational Advocacy Network,” in R. William Liddle, ed., *Consolidating Indonesian Democracy: Comparative and International Perspectives*, forthcoming.
- “Endurance and Evolution in Indonesian Politics,” in John Bresnan and Ann Marie Murphy, eds., *The Futures of Indonesia*, forthcoming.
- Review article of Eddy Lee’s *The Asian Financial Crisis: The challenge for social policy* in *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 14 (2000) Number 1, pp. 136-38.
- Review article of Edward Aspinall, Herb Feith and Gerry van Klinken’s *The last days of President Suharto* in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 31, Number 1 (March 2000), pp. 190-91.
- Review article of Constancio Pinto and Matthew Jardine’s *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the Timorese Resistance - A Testimony in Mobilization: An International Journal*, Volume 4 (1999) Number 2, pp 269-70.

Conference budget

Travel

| | |
|---|-------|
| 6 participants from Asia @ \$1,500 | 9,000 |
| 12 participants from California @ \$150 | 1,800 |

Accommodations & meals

| | |
|--|-------|
| 18 participants for 3 days @ \$100/night | 5,400 |
| 18 participants for 3 days @ \$75/day | 4,050 |

Other costs

| | |
|---|-------|
| Administrative assistance | 4,000 |
| Phone, copying, refreshments, organizing meetings | 5,000 |

Total conference costs **\$29,250**