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# Beyond Child Labour in Pakistan's Soccer Ball Industry:

# Hard Times in Imperial Space

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August 2004

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# ABSTRACT

Developing countries and the poor within them (i.e., the other) receive scant attention in management and organization studies (MOS). The field, thus, suffers from both ethnocentric and class biases. This research effort seeks to reduce these biases, particularly in the conversation on power taking place between MOS' critical management studies and interorganizational collaboration research streams.

Articulating a case study of the Sialkot soccer ball child labour project in Pakistan (1995-2003), the thesis explores the communication constraints that are faced by weak actors in interorganizational domains (a social problem and a set of organizations having a stake or interest in that problem) located in the developing world. Relying on both written documents (private and public) and field interviews, especially with women soccer ball stitchers at the village level, a typology of communication constraints is developed. These constraints are examined from the perspectives of those at the bottom of the international supply chain and the injuries these groups suffer from them are documented in the thesis. It is found that the ability of weak actors to use communication to influence a domain is highly contingent on how space and time are configured in a domain. Domains have temporal rhythms and spatial configurations. The thesis identifies two types of temporal rhythms (technocratic and subsistence clocks) and a spatial configuration (imperial space) that severely militate against weak actors exercising agency in a domain through communication. Strategies (e.g., emergent collective struggle) that can prevent weak actors from becoming subalternalized (voiceless) in a domain are also discussed. The case study permits an investigation of contemporary transnational activism that often sires interorganizational collaboration projects in developing countries. The thesis identifies two types of transnational activism (thick and thin), delineates the various elements constituting them, and shows how thin activism can lead to interorganizational projects hurting weak and powerless groups that are intended to be assisted.

# RÉSUMÉ

Les pays en développement et les populations pauvres qui y vivent reçoivent peu d'attention dans les recherches en gestion. Le champ d'études souffre ainsi de biais ethocentriques et de classe. Cette recherche vise à réduire ces biais, en particulier dans le cadre de la conversation sur le pouvoir qui se déroule entre les études critiques en gestion et les recherches sur la collaboration entre organisations.

En articulant une étude de cas sur le Projet du travail des enfants (dans la production de ballons de soccer) de Sialkot au Pakistan (1995-2003), cette thèse explore les contraintes de communication auxquelles sont soumises les acteurs les plus faibles dans un champ interorganisationnel (un problème social et un ensemble d'organisations ayant un intérêt dans ce problème) situé dans un pays en développement. Dans cette thèse, nous examinons ces contraintes depuis les perspectives de ceux situés au bas de la chaîne de fournisseurs internationaux et à partir des blessures dont ces groupes sont victimes. Nous mettons en évidence que la capacité des acteurs faibles d'utiliser la communication pour influencer un domaine est liée étroitement à la façon dont le temps et l'espace sont configurés dans un domaine. Les domaines ont des rythmes temporels et des configurations spatiales. Cette thèse identifie deux types de rythmes temporels (technocratique et horloge de survie/ subsistence clock) et une configuration spatiale (temps impérial) qui militent sévérement contre les acteurs faibles et leur capacité d'exercer leur pouvoir à travers la communication. Nous discutons les stratégies (par exmple, la lutte collective émergente) qui peut empêcher les acteurs faibes de devenir subalternes (subalternalized) ou sans-voix dans un domaine. Cette étude de cas permet une recherche sur l'activisme transnational contemporain qui influence subrepticement les projets de collaboration interorganisationnelle dans les pays en développement. La thèse identifie deux types d'activisme transnational (épais /thick et superficiel/thin), délimite lesdifférents éléments qui les constituent et démontre comment l'activisme superficiel peut mener des projets interorganisationnels à faire mal à des groupes faibles et sans pouvoir auquel ces projets étaient destines.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The medieval Muslim theologian Al-Ghazali describes metaphysical blindness through a parable. A man pardoned by a judge leaps to the air and heaps kisses on the pen that signed his verdict thinking that it was the pen that rescued him. After all, so the man reckons, it was the pen that inked the pardon and, therefore, thanks should go to it. I fear I may well be acting here with a similar bout of metaphysical blindness failing to acknowledge all those that made this dissertation possible. For all such great personalities that I may err to acknowledge here, I offer you my apologies and my thanks. Apologies are also offered for the length of this section. Given that the thesis took almost four years to complete, involved four universities and almost twenty organizations, located in three cities spread out over two continents, brevity will still make for some length here.

Like Machiavelli before me, I begin by thanking my Medicis. Without the doctoral scholarship provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and research funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), my doctoral studies and this dissertation would not have been possible. Special thanks to Colette Chomski, Janet Graham, and Sylvain St-Amand on the sixth floor for administering my scholarship over the years of my doctoral study. How they managed to procure funding extensions for me I will leave for sages yet unborn to discern. In the meanwhile, I give them my profound thanks.

The help of sages I do not need for thanking the sages of my doctoral dissertation committee. I thank Nelson Phillips for exposing me to the promise of organization theory and for helping to facilitate funding for my research. I also would like to thank Omar Aktouf for his unflinching and reliable support over the years. I was honoured to have him as my teacher and benefited much from his humour, warmth, and learning. I wish him the best in his future electoral campaigns, and if I were a Canadian citizen, I certainly would vote for him. After

all, he speaks at least five languages and represents well the rich diversity of Canada.

Omar and Nelson are spatially quite removed from McGill with one being separated by a mountain and the other by an ocean. Nearer to McGill is Frederick Bird, perched in his office at Concordia University. Fred I thank for the generosity of his time and erudition. I thank him, furthermore, for exemplifying a commitment to students as if they mattered. With Fred, it seems that you are the only person in his entire universe such is the quality of feedback, constant access, and rapt attention he provides to you. Also, in him I found a kindred spirit given our shared passion for Karl Polanyi and history, and I shall miss our discussions in his office that would range seamlessly from Rumi to Chomsky.

Coming to McGill, I begin with Henry Mintzberg. Here, I find myself at a loss of words. This is quite an achievement given the length of this dissertation. But such is Henry who even here does not fail to produce unconventionality in the best sense understood: a constant desire to challenge orthodoxy and not be satisfied till it is overturned or a justification is reached. It was wonderful to observe at close quarters this public intellectual tirelessly working to check the abuses of power he discerns. His love for people and ideas, that transcends tribal boundaries (disciplinary or otherwise), is a trait that I shall do my best to emulate. Henry pushed me in this thesis and helped me experience what Dickens said about us not knowing how tall we are until we stand up to rise. I hope I have risen to his great expectations. And if not, the fault lies entirely with me.

Who could not be faulted in this entire doctoral process, however, is my supervisor, Jan Jörgensen. All that I have written above is applicable to him and more. And I say this in justice to him and not as a compliment. He was available by phone, fax, email, and in person, whether in vacation or at home during my years in the Ph.D. program. This, of course, does not include his office hours or the two hours every Wednesday he blocked for me from October 2003 to this date in August 2004 for thesis discussion where he would provide me with exhaustive and incisive feedback. Truly his time is blessed, or as the great Sufi mystics put it, has *baraka* for I do not understand how with all his commitments and his

students, he was able to see me at all, let alone give me quality time in such copious quantities. I shall cherish his keen sensitivity at not muscling in on my voice but rather helping me express it with authenticity and rigor. Jan provided me with balance where I strayed into recklessness and courage where I retreated into timidity. I pushed the radical edge of this thesis as far as I thought it would go only to see Jan, with his encyclopaedic knowledge, showing me the way to push it even further. For all this, I can ask no more. I am now saddled with a burden of being gifted quality supervision and a premonition that I may not be able pass on this gift to others.

The scholars named above will appear on some university form or another. There are others who will not appear but who also provided sustenance to this dissertation through their encouraging and supportive advice and comments. Prominent among these are David Boje, Cynthia Hardy, Richard Marsden, and Charles Perrow. Special thanks to Cynthia, whom I now have had the pleasure of knowing for the last eleven years. Much of this thesis is in conversation with her research. I thank her for producing critical scholarship that creates spaces where dissertations like mine can be articulated and heard.

Many colleagues, friends and family will also not appear on the university forms. Thus, to set the historical record straight, I start with the Montreal contingent. I thank Hector Cantor, Pierre Cambron, Louis Chauvin, Santa Rodrigues, Stella Scalia, and Lorraine Vezina for their humour, warmth, and assistance that made the many years from home bearable and the thesis producible. I thank Jason Quenneville for his wise counsels and for passing the arduous test of great friendship: proof-reading a friend's dissertation. Thanks also to Aeyaz Keyani for helping me with seeing the merits of philosophy of science and analytical philosophy for evaluating arguments. Ditto to Khaled Al-Yahya for our long and wonderful conversations about the presence of selective blindness in recalling history. I would like to thank Isam Faik, Mahmood Elahi, Mufeez Uddin, and Sadat Zaman for allowing me use of their living space during the writing stage of the thesis in Montreal. I offer a profound sense of gratitude to my Ph.D. colleagues, those who have departed from the program (particularly Kamal

Munir, Emmanuel Raufflet, especially for translating the abstract into French, and Nidhi Srinivas) and those waiting to depart. In the latter category, I owe thanks to Abhijit Ghoush and Alper Murat for the 2 a.m. hallway conversations. Special thanks to my office-mate, Cheng-Hua Tzeng, for tolerating my jabs at the relevance of contemporary scholarship, and to Warren O. Nilsson (Rennie) for always being game to run a few blocks downtown in the middle of the day to catch the latest inane movie released by Hollywood. Rennie constantly reminded me through his example that being a scholar is a vocation and not a profession. He also never allowed me to sacrifice artistic authenticity for pragmatic necessities. My thanks to him extends, much to the regret of my family in Pakistan, to three hundred pages of this thesis.

Moving to Pakistan, I would like to thank Nasir Afghan, Ehsan ul Haque, Zahoor Hassan, Zafar Iqbal Qureshi (ZIQ), and Shehla Romana at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). All were of immense help in making accessible the research site, Sialkot (Pakistan). Special thanks to ZIQ who saved my hide on more than one occasion at LUMS and to Ehsan for telling me not to come back until the thesis is written. Great advice and hats-off to all those who are able to finish their dissertations while working full-time. Nasir and Shehla assisted me with NGO contacts and Zahoor lined up Pakistan's Military Intelligence who provided me with vehicles and guides during most of my stay in the field.

In Sialkot, I would like to thank all those who were interviewed in this thesis, particularly the women soccer ball stitchers who gave precious time for me, time that could spell the difference between their families sleeping with a full or half-empty stomach. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Quality Links and Leather Field in arranging accommodations for me. Thanks also to their executives (particularly Amir Masood), with whom I shared accommodations, for initiating me over long dinner conversations into the Sialkot business culture. Thanks also to Ghayyoor Abbas, Nasir Dogar, and Anita Khawaja. These are truly inspiring individuals and as long as Pakistan has people like them, there is hope. The rest, due to confidentiality reasons, I cannot name

but I can certainly state that this dissertation would have been a highly impoverished one were it not for the richness of information they provided. I hope I have been able to do justice to the fine material they supplied to me.

This now leaves my own personal family. I offer this thesis to my mother for enduring almost eight years of separation while I walked the doctoral path. Her compassion for the poor and her deep resentment against the 'insolence of high office' is what helped me gravitate towards critical scholarship. I thank my elder brother, Feroz Khan, for staying in Pakistan with my mother so that I did not need to worry about her and could focus my energies on my research. Lastly, I turn to my wife, Qudsia Ali, and my nearly three year old son, Zakariya Khan. Being away from them during the writing stage of this dissertation, made me get up every day, soldier through the snowy Montreal paths, and write this dissertation non-stop to completion, frequent movie binging notwithstanding, so that I could leave Canada and be with them. I missed most of the second year of my child growing up, including his second birthday. Such is the human tax on scholarship. This, however, pales into insignificance compared to the sacrifices made by my late father and all other courageous human beings, past and present, of all colours and tribes, who speak a word of truth to unjust authority. To them, I dedicate this thesis.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMNS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ABES | Adult Basic Education Society | CRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank | CSDO | Child and Social Development Organization |
| ANCE | Association of Network for Community Empowerment | CSDP | Child Social Development Programme |
| AKI | Anwar Khawaja Industries | CT | critical theory |
| APFOL | All Pakistan Federation of Labour | DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| APFTU | All Pakistan Free Trade Union | FEC | Family Education Committee |
| BGMEA | Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association | FIFA | Fédération Internationale de Football Association |
| BLCC | Bunyad Literacy Community Council | GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| BLLF | Bonded Labour Liberation Front | HRCP | Human Rights Commission of Pakistan |
| CDC | Community Development Concern | ICFTU | International Confederation of Free Trade Unions |
| CEFT | Committee on Ethics and Fair Trade | ILO | International Labour Organization |
| CMS | critical management studies | ILO-IPEC | International Labour Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour |
| CO | community organization | ILRF | International Labor Rights Fund |

## LIST OF ACRONYMNS (continued)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| IMAC | International Monitoring Association for Child Labour | Rs | Pakistani Rupees |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund | RSS | Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh |
| ITGLWF | International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation | SAHE | Society for the Advancement of Education |
| LUMS | Lahore University of Management Sciences | SAHEP | Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme |
| MOS | management and organization studies | SCCI | Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry |
| NFE | Non-Formal Education Centre | SCF | Save the Children also known as Save the Children Fund (UK) |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization | SICA | Soccer Industry Council of America |
| NRSP | National Rural Support Programme | SIT | Sialkot Implementation Team |
| PBM | Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal | SO | social organizer |
| PCC | Project Coordination Committe | UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| PCSW&HR | Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights | USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| PCYO | Pakistan Crescent Youth Organization | VEC | Village Education Committee |
| PRSP | Punjab Rural Support Programme | WFSGI | World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry |
| RDC | Raasta Development Corporation | WSC | workshop stitching centre |
| REAP | Reebok Educational Assistance to Pakistan | | |

*But all who are not fish are soon tired of water*

**— Jalaluddin Rumi**

# CHAPTER 1: THESIS INSPIRATION & OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION: THE TIGRIS TURNS BLACK

When Ibn Kathir, the great medieval Muslim historian and exegete (1279-1352 CE), in his monumental 14 volume work on Muslim history, *Al Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* [The Beginning and the End], described the blows to Islamic civilization brought about by the sacking of Baghdad by the Tartars in 1258, he used rather interesting imagery for it. He said the river Tigris turned black with ink. He was, of course, referring to the vast treasures of learning in the form of books that were thrown into the Tigris by the Mongol hordes. There was much blood shed in that sacking of Baghdad. However, Ibn Kathir used the river sullied with ink imagery to signify the immense calamity that befell civilization that day. Such was the genius of the man and the cosmology that animated him that he could perceive the intimate connection between scholarship and civilization. After all, the first words of the Quranic Revelation began with 'Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth, Createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not.'(Chapter *Al-Alaq* [The Clot], verses 1-5). This traditional Islamic teaching that knowledge and scholarship are essential to the venture of civilization, though having now become oblivious to quite a few contemporary Muslims who have regrettably taken up the sword rather than the pen, was not lost on Ibn Kathir. He impeccably personified this teaching in his character and his works.

Given this intimate connection between civilization and scholarship, what holds for one may well hold for the other. Thus, what Toynbee, the encyclopaedist world historian, wrote about civilization can be applied to scholarship: '[It] is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbour.' (1958: 50). This is how I view this scholarship of mine called a thesis. It is indeed a voyage, actually given the years spent, perhaps an avoidable odyssey. Voyages may not have an ending but they usually all have a beginning. This thesis, this

voyage, this journey, was largely inspired by and pushed to the high seas of discovery by the encouraging gales of Edward Said's works and his person.

## SAIDIAN CONCERN

As I glance back to the distant shores of when I started this journey of a Ph.D., I can still see towering over there the figure of Said. The first book I read to acquaint myself for the vocation of academia was Said's (1994) *Representations of the Intellectual*. The book was a collection of his Reith lectures, the name of a prestigious annual lecture series produced by BBC where the intellectual greats of the time are called to speak. For example, Jean-Paul Sartre, Virginia Woolfe, Malcolm X, and Noam Chomsky are some of those luminaries who have graced the Reith lectures. To this distinguished list was added the name of Edward Said in 1993. Said's *Representations of the Intellectual* made for a riveting read. Said stated that the role of the intellectual is a public one. An intellectual has to be a moral agent and not a servant of unjustified power and privilege. He has to speak truth to power and not cower before or be seduced by its trappings. All of these involve conscious choices and, after reading this work of Said, I knew which path *ought* to be taken.

As I continued in my Ph.D., I would often return to Said, particularly to *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). And why not. For Said was a generous spirit, and he wrote generous texts. Generous in that no matter how many times before I had taken from his works a charity of ideas, I would find his texts still ready to give more each time I would go there empty-handed. His texts were, thus, generous patrons dispensing a currency of fresh insights stamped with a common concern. The concern revolved around the fate of the developing countries and their indigenous inhabitants (i.e., *the other*), particularly how they are demonized and marginalized, subordinated and subjugated, and what one can do to create space for them so that those peripheral voices from the developing world, not reflected in our scholarship, are given a chance to be heard and acknowledged.

It is this Saidian concern for the other that animates this thesis. On September 25, 2003, Said fell victim to leukaemia. One can bemoan the darkness that befalls when a great light like Said passes away. Without that light, truth about the other may well find itself stumbling in the public square. Alternatively, one can spark a light and with others carry on the struggle to keep it alight and aright. I choose to do the latter. I hope that my thesis can be read as an effort, inspired by Said, to create spaces for the other in scholarship, in my particular case, in the field of management and organization studies (MOS).

## CREATING SPACE FOR THE OTHER

Most of the research in (MOS), with few exceptions (e.g., Whiteman and Mamen, 2002), has little to do with the other. MOS tends to focus on Western countries and large manufacturing concerns (Lampel and Mintzberg, 1996). It tends to be functionalist in nature concerned with, for example, how to improve profits and other such managerial issues (Aktouf, 1992; Brief, 2000). In fact, according to a survey of leading organization theory and sociology journals done by Perrow (2000: 475), only 5% of the articles deal with the poor and the powerless. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the other is not present in our scholarship given that the bulk of research efforts are geared towards producing scholarship that would be serviceable to elite interests (e.g., top management). What is somewhat surprising is the absence of the other in the radical branch of MOS: critical management studies (CMS).

CMS research highlights the complicity of management knowledge and practice in the production of exploitation, manipulation, structural inequalities, and other such issues related to power and domination (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Hampson and Morgan, 1999). This is indeed a valuable function. Here one should find the other. Reality belies this expectation. CMS, though performing this valuable function of producing emancipatory research, does so mostly in the confines of the economically advanced countries. It speaks silence when it comes to the other and the

developing world, as a review of the articles published under its aegis would readily demonstrate. This is quite perplexing as it is in the developing world that the abuse of power of late industrial capitalism often expresses itself most nakedly, intensely, and routinely (e.g., frequent factory fire incidents claiming untold human lives in export oriented factories in China and Far East Asia) (Greider, 1997). Almost without exception, the victims belong to the other.

This ignorance gap about the developing world reveals more than just the problem of MOS, and particularly CMS, being ethnocentric and parochial, a criticism that has been levelled at MOS for at least two decades (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991; Calas and Smircich, 1999; Kiggundu, Jorgensen, and Hafsi, 1983). It also shows a lack of relevance to the great international public debate that is being fought in the world's major cities as well as in obscure villages in the developing world with regards to what some perceive as corporate-driven globalization and its deleterious consequences on the other in the developing world. If MOS through CMS wishes to describe, explain, evaluate, and articulate the experience of domination and subordination in our contemporary times, then it perforce needs to engage in research dealing with the other, which means doing research in, about, and for the developing world where the other is located.

## CONVERSATION IN A SOCIAL ISSUE SHADE: THESIS OUTLINE

In this thesis, I wish to contribute to filling the void about the other and the developing countries in MOS. I wish to do so by taking a social issue involving organizations and the other (e.g., child labour) in the developing world. There are several reasons for this. While there is perhaps a trickle of works about developing countries in MOS, when we move to social issues involving organizations and the other, we are in the presence of a veritable drought. Here is a lacuna that needs to be addressed. Moreover, a social issue by its nature is rich when it comes to doing research with a critical edge for it is in social issues that one can find the great human drama of power and domination, resistance and struggle, that is present in Said's writings and in the radical side of MOS (i.e.,

CMS). These are the themes that interest me and so I choose the terrain of a social issue for my thesis as it is in such a rich terrain that I am likely to see them abundantly.

Social issues have been explored in MOS largely in the context of a developed world from a wide spectrum of perspectives ranging from business ethics (e.g., Bird, 2001) to poststructuralism (e.g., Hardy and Phillips, 1999). There are, thus, many research streams which can be brought into conversation with the social issue problematic involving the other in the developing world. Given that a social issue often involves interactions between different organizations (e.g., collaborations between private business and non-governmental organizations serving to address this problem), it, thus, follows that the interorganizational collaboration stream of MOS would be an appropriate knowledge domain by which to fruitfully explore the connections between the critical side of MOS (i.e., CMS) and a social issue in the developing world involving the other.

This thesis, then, is a conversation between the interorganizational collaboration and CMS knowledge domains concerning the other, with the conversation taking place in the context or shade of a social issue (in this case child labour). I have presented this conversation in my thesis by organizing it as follows: Chapter 2 provides a brief review of the CMS and interorganizational collaboration literatures, identifies the gaps in the conversation taking place between them, and poses the research questions that the thesis addresses. Chapter 3 documents the research methodology of the thesis. The next chapter presents a detailed qualitative case study about the efforts being undertaken to phase out child labour from the soccer ball industry located in Sialkot, Pakistan. The thesis explores in chapter 5 the interorganizational dynamics at work in the case study site. Chapter 6 addresses the research questions of the thesis. The next and final chapter provides a summary of the contributions of the thesis, points out its limitations, identifies possible future research directions and ends with a discussion on lessons for practice posed by this study.

# CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES & INTERORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

## INTRODUCTION: SOCRATES' PLEA

Socrates concluded his defence in the trial that sentenced him to death with the following words:

> Perhaps someone may say, "But surely, Socrates, after you have left us you can spend the rest of your life quietly minding your own business." This is the hardest thing of all to make some of you understand. If I say . . . I cannot "mind my own business," you will not believe that I am serious. If on the other hand I tell you that to let no day pass without discussing goodness and all the other subjects about which you hear me talking and that examining both myself and others is really the very best thing a man can do and that life without this sort of examination is not worth living, you will be even less inclined to believe me. Nevertheless, gentlemen, that is how it is . . . But I suggest gentlemen, that the difficulty is not so much to escape death; the real difficulty is to escape from doing wrong [which] is much more fleet of foot. (cited in Saul, 1995: 71 and 106).

As the above passage indicates, Socrates called for the practice of discussing 'goodness' by examining oneself and others. In management and organization studies (MOS) (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992), research based on this practice goes under the name of critical management studies (CMS), and what is being examined is the role of management knowledge and production in creating and sustaining relations of power and domination that perpetrate social injustices and cause harm to human beings and the environment(ibid).

Given this understanding of CMS, there is tremendous debate on demarcating the boundaries of this discipline. Any article that is critical of management (i.e., pointing out its abuses) could easily be claimed by CMS. Thus,

at the present, there seems to be a rather ecumenical view regarding CMS as articulated recently by one its adherents:

> Rather we [theorists of CMS] include proponents of all the various theoretical traditions that can help us understand the oppressive character of the current management and business system. To use some of the labels ready at hand, these traditions, include, but are not restricted to: Marxist, post-marxist, post-modernist, feminist, ecological, irreductionist, critical-realist, post-colonial. (Adler, 2002: 387-388).

While CMS may presently encompass the diverse theoretical traditions listed above, my reading of the CMS literature tends to suggest that two of the most important knowledge domains that have contributed to CMS have been critical theory (CT) and postmodernism. A brief overview of these two knowledge domains will, thus, be provided here. Given the vast tracts of research that fall under the CT and postmodernism knowledge domains, I will only concentrate on what I have found to be their key insights. An identification and discussion of these key insights will help illuminate to the reader one of CMS' central concerns: power's dark side (i.e., its harmful consequences). This concern has made contact with other streams in MOS, including interorganizational collaboration. It is to this specific conversation between CMS and interorganizational collaboration that I would like the thesis to situate itself in and contribute towards. The central focus for this thesis, then, is that CMS – interorganizational collaboration conversation and not the wider research conversations on CT and postmodernism in CMS. The latter have been reviewed here to provide the reader with the necessary context to place and understand the central research conversation (i.e., CMS – interorganizational collaboration conversation) that I would like to engage in through this thesis and from which emerge its research questions.

## CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES LITERATURE REVIEW

*A Brief History of Critical Theory (CT)*

CT holds that the primary function of theory is to *critique* (Pollock and Cox, 1991). By critique is meant the reappropriation of discourse (i.e., a set of ideas and practices that condition our ways of relating to, and acting upon, particular phenomena) (Knights and Morgan, 1991) for emancipation i.e., 'the process through which individuals and groups become freed from repressive social and ideological conditions, in particular those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon the development and articulation of human consciousness.' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a: 432; Pollock and Cox, 1991). Thus, any theory that is in service of self-reflection with the resulting greater consciousness being used to attain greater degrees of emancipation or freedom from domination would be classified as CT (Shrivastava, 1986). Defined in this way, CT can be said to exist in Western civilization at least from the time of Socrates, if not before, given that dissent and self-examination one can argue have been a consistent feature of human existence (Pollock and Cox, 1991).

Though CT in MOS can arguably be traced back to Socrates and perhaps before, CT researchers in MOS trace more immediate origins to their field. They argue that CT in present day MOS is an offspring of research that began in Frankfurt in the 1920s (Alvesson and Deetz, 1995). This research was conducted under the auspices of the Institute for Social Research which was established in 1923 (Strinati, 1995). This Institute came to be called the 'Frankfurt school' (Pollock and Cox, 1991). Its researchers, including such prominent social thinkers as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin, were predominately left-wing German Jewish intellectuals. As the Nazis seized power in early 1930s the Frankfurt school was disbanded and many of its researchers fled to Western Europe and North America to escape the persecution of Jews and left-wing thinkers that was taking place in Germany at that time (Strinati, 1995).

The Frankfurt school was basically concerned with trying to understand why the demise of capitalism had not taken place as had been predicted by Marxist thought (ibid). Their basic answer was that capitalism had created considerable wealth, leading to a general improvement in living standards of all classes including the working class. This made the latter feel financially secure, giving it the effective means to buy most things its members desired or as some might say were manipulated into desiring (e.g., through advertising). With this contentment, the working class, according to the Frankfurt school, no longer had any conscious reasons to overthrow capitalism and establish a different socio-economic political collectivity where they would be able to exert meaningful autonomous control in the work place rather than follow prerogatives or orders of management and private capital (ibid). In other words, capitalism had created 'false' needs of consumerism in workers which it super-imposed, according to CT, on their 'true' needs of being emancipated individuals in charge of their own destinies. Capitalism, then, goes on to satisfy these 'false' needs, thus creating in workers the feeling that they have what they want which, according to CT, is a 'false consciousness', as their true needs of being autonomous individuals controlling rather than being controlled are not satisfied (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Research in CT has been directed towards rending this veil of false consciousness. In the process of doing so, CT developed profoundly rich theoretical concepts that started to be taken up by CMS researchers in the late 1970s (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996).

*CT in CMS*

Researchers who brought CT into CMS and work with CT concepts are primarily those who feel that the practice and prescriptions of the MOS discipline inadequately deal with issues of injustice in human society, primarily in the workplace (Frost, 1980). These researchers feel that the interests of the working class and the majority of the population are not being addressed in MOS literature (Alvesson, 1985). For them, organization is a major source of alienation and unhappiness for individuals in society as people in organizational areas may be

and are damaged, compromised and even destroyed by what they experience there (Aktouf, 1992; Frost, 1980). CT researchers are interested in finding out the harmful effects of our present corporate-capitalism system as well as explaining how such a system, riddled with contradictions, is reproduced (Deetz, 1985). These concerns have led them to interesting insights concerning organizations and management, particularly in relation to notions on control and ideology (Alvesson and Deetz, 1995).

The Notion of Control

CT researchers in CMS, borrowing from the works of the German critical theorist Jurgen Habermas, are of the opinion that knowledge is produced out of a need to satisfy three human interests. They are: 1) interest in control and manipulation of physical world (which leads to the production of knowledge called natural science); 2) interest in communicating with and understanding other people (which leads to knowledge called cultural science e.g., hermeneutics); and finally 3) interest in developing and freeing ourselves from false ideas (which leads to knowledge called critical sciences e.g., critical theory) (Mingers, 1992). These interests are respectively called technical, practical and emancipatory (ibid).

CT researchers view management knowledge currently produced as being one that is satisfying the technical interest of human beings. This is because it is about instrumentally manipulating the environment and human beings in a manner to extract resources out of them for the end of profit maximization. This view of management as being one dealing with control is further corroborated if one examines the linguistic roots of the word:

> The verb to *manage*, from *manus*, the Latin for hand, originally meant to train a horse in his paces, to cause him to do the exercises of the *manege*. As capitalism creates a society in which no one is presumed to consult anything but self-interest, and as the employment contract between parties sharing nothing but the inability to avoid each other

> becomes prevalent, management becomes a more perfected and subtle instrument. Tradition, sentiment and pride in workmanship play an even and more erratic role, and are regarded on both sides as manifestations of a better nature which it would be folly to accommodate. Like a rider who uses reins, bridle, spurs, carrot and whip, and training from birth to impose his will, the capitalist strives, through management, to *control* [original emphasis]. And control is indeed the central concept of all management systems, as has been recognized implicitly or explicitly by all theoreticians of management. (Braverman, 1975: 67-68).

Though CT researchers would view Braverman as being somewhat simplistic in viewing management as a tool of capitalists (Knights and Willmott, 1989), they nevertheless do agree with him that he is correct in pointing out that management is about *control* (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). That being so, they are led to conclude that management intrinsically is a *colonizing* discipline since its *primary* function is to produce knowledge aimed at controlling phenomena (the essence of a colonial enterprise) for managerial purposes and not about producing knowledge that either would serve the practical interest of improving communication between people or which would cater to emancipatory interest of furthering freedom and justice (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). Given its colonizing nature, CT researchers call for production of knowledge in MOS that would cater to practical and emancipatory interests. They fear that MOS based solely on technical considerations (efficiency and productivity), without incorporating emancipatory and practical interest concerns, would produce practice and prescriptions that could have a detrimental effect on society (e.g., environmental degradation).

The Notion of Ideology

Another fundamental insight that MOS researchers have gained from the CT strand in CMS is to view management as ideology. Ideology is an elusive concept and is used in a variety of ways (Mumby, 1988). Nevertheless, there is some consensus among CT researchers that a system of ideas or thought is

considered to be ideological if it does not portray things as they are and serves certain sectional interests through this misrepresentation (Shrivastava, 1986). Given this understanding of ideology, CT researchers have found MOS to be ideological (Shrivastava, 1986). This is because, according to them, MOS misrepresents social reality. Before we see how it does this, we should recognize that ideology may not necessarily involve a misrepresentation of reality or what is called 'false consciousness'. The term has been used in ways that do not imply the presence of false consciousness. For example, Geertz (1973) uses ideology to refer to a cultural system. However, in CMS, ideology has often been used in the narrow sense of 'false consciousness'. This is why in this discussion we restrict our use of the term ideology to that particular meaning of it (i.e., false consciousness) and show some of the main ways CMS theorists demonstrate the complicity of MOS in reality misrepresentation.

MOS misrepresents reality by naturalizing the corporate system as being, rational and self-evident rather than as being a socially constructed historically situated public order (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). For example, by representing the limited liability corporation as the most natural and logical form of organizing economic activity when it is actually a human construction only a couple of hundred years old (Estes, 1996), individuals are discouraged from thinking of alternative ways of structuring economic activity (where, for example, all would have equal say) for to do so would be then considered 'unnatural' and therefore undesirable. In this way, a human construction is presented as a reified reality (Shrivastava, 1986). This is a misrepresentation serving those in managerial positions whose privileges are not threatened because the reification has prevented individuals from thinking of alternative economic arrangements where the managerial elite may not enjoy the same benefits that they currently enjoy in the present set up.

Another way by which MOS misrepresents reality is by universalizing managerial interests. For example, by propagating 'truths' like what is good for General Motors is good for the country (ibid). One can make a plausible argument that there are many instances where there might be a conflict of interest between

the country and General Motors. For example, use of inferior material may be good for car manufacturers in terms of cost savings but may not be good for the country in terms of road safety. However, by presenting sectional interests as universal, managers are able to win public support for policies that are in their interests but that might be fundamentally opposed to the public. Where this happens, MOS can be claimed to have complicity in giving false representations for the sake of top management interests and, thus, to be functioning ideologically.

Finally, MOS can be said to function ideologically to the extent that it presents a picture of social order being one based on consensus (i.e., corporations working in harmony with community) while there are actually conflicts and contradictions in it (e.g., corporate damage to the environment) (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). Such a portrayal actually serves the dominant managerial interests as by concealment, conflict is moved out of the domain of discussion, thus, protecting management from having to face the need for changes in power relations (Shrivastava, 1986). Thus, for example, by not emphasizing the many crimes committed by corporations (e.g., General Electric illegally polluting the Hudson River; Grieder, 1996), MOS projects an image of corporations being benign entities that neither harm nor engage in actions contradicting the public interest, thus, preventing calls of accountability and, therefore, preserving the status of dominant managerial interests. Since this preservation of managerial prerogative occurs through suppression of contradictions and conflicts in a way that favours the managerial group as opposed to other stakeholders, MOS, as CT researchers would argue, is functioning ideologically, given that ideology is a system of ideas that misrepresents reality in order to benefit a certain dominant group in a social space (Shrivastava, 1986).

*Postmodernism*

Postmodernism is the other knowledge tradition that has greatly shaped CMS. The first written evidence of the word postmodernism dates back to around 1870 (Appignanesi and Garrat, 1995). It was used by the British artist J.W.

Chapman to describe painting which was considered to be more modern and avant-garde than French impressionist painting (Best and Kellner, 1991). Though postmodernism was first used in 1870 in the field of art, the popularization of the term took place a hundred years later (Appignanesi and Garrat, 1995). Postmodernism was popularized in the early 1970s by the field of architecture (Parker, 1992) which used it as a term to denote highly ornate, elaborately designed, contextualized and brightly coloured buildings whose physical structure was a manifestation of a mixture of styles drawn, in an almost random and eclectic fashion, from different historical periods (e.g., Philip Johnson's Grandfather Clock shaped building for AT&T in New York) (Strinati, 1995). From architecture, the term and its variants (e.g., postmodern) soon came to be quite prominently used in a variety of disciplines, especially in the fields of art, literary criticism and philosophy (Alvarado, 1996). In the late 1980s, postmodernism began to appear in the organization theory literature (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996).

Postmodernism as a Periodizing Concept

Since the late 1980s, quite a relatively significant amount of literature has been published on postmodernism in MOS (Calas and Smircich, 1999). Postmodernism as a periodizing concept is one of the two main ways in which it has been represented in that field (Parker, 1992). Theorists such as Jameson, according to Alvesson (1995), have used postmodernism to describe the recent decades (i.e., post World War II onwards) in the West as being substantively different from the roughly three hundred and fifty years preceding them which have been labelled as 'modernity' (Cooper and Burrell, 1988). Man, organization and society, according to these theorists, have been transformed in the recent decades in new ways from what they were in modernity. Let us explore some of the radical changes that are claimed to have taken place in the above three, leading some to argue that we are now in the midst of postmodernism or living in a postmodern period.

*The Individual Reflecting a Postmodern Period.* According to postmodernists, individual identity is socially produced out of a set of shifting and changing discourses (i.e., bodies of knowledge) and their associated practices that are available at a given point in time (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). This argument is in line with the perspectives of several classical sociologists (e.g., Weber, Simmel, Durkheim, and Marx). Like them, postmodern theorists argue an individual is like a void at birth. As these discourses come into contact with him, they fill that void by providing him with concepts and ideas that structure and give meaning to experience including that of his identity. For example, in an environment based solely on market-friendly discourses, a person would see himself as an economic agent whose meaning in life is to accumulate money and consume. This is quite different from someone only exposed and, thus, inscribed with marxist discourses who would perceive reality as consisting of class conflicts. In both cases, the two individuals have been inscribed or programmed by their respective discourses into viewing their experience and themselves in a particular way.

What separates postmodernism from classical sociology is that it takes this understanding of reality (including identity) being socially constructed to the level of epistemology and ontology. Unlike the classical theorists who argued that there is a truth and their theoretical representations and categories correspond to reality and, hence, are true, the postmodernists hold that there is no way to determine truth (Clegg, 1995). If all our thoughts are infused or circuited with concepts, categories, distinctions and unities stemming from discourses, then so are our theories and perceptions which are then just another form of discourse. Since we are born into discourses which permeate every pore of our presence and shape our perceptions, we cannot see the 'true' form of experience available only to an a-discourse view and, therefore, we cannot discern which interpretation of our experience is correct. Hence, truth, according to postmodernists, cannot be ascertained. This does not mean that they deny the existence of truth but only the ability to pin it down or know it with certainty (Storhmayer and Hannah, 1992).

Since identities are socially produced within and by discourses, it is asserted that identities will be relatively stable in homogenous and stable societies which have only a few dominant discourses (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). Theorists of postmodernism argue that such was the case with modernity (Alvesson, 1995). However, in recent decades, which have seen the emergence of heterogeneous, global, teleconnected societies, the available discourses have expanded greatly and have begun to change rapidly (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996). The individual has come to be spoken by so many discourses trucking competing identities that the individual's coherent identity has begun to fragment. This notion of fragmented identity is a qualitatively distinct and new phenomenon not seen, according to postmodernists, in modernity. Since it is not seen there, postmodernists argue that the phenomenon of fragmented identity must imply that we have moved into a new epoch which they label as a postmodern period or alternatively postmodernity.

*The Organization Reflecting a Postmodern Period.* At a collective level above the individual, we have the concept of organizations. Postmodernists (e.g., Clegg, 1990) argue that organizations, like the individuals, have undergone transformations in recent decades where they do not resemble in any significant way what they were prior to the recent decades. Since organizations, according to them, are showing forms not seen in modernity, it must mean that we have moved beyond modernity into a new era which they label as the postmodern period. The new organizational form is one where there is TQM, outsourcing, production is customer-driven and the language in the organization is one of democracy (Alvesson, 1995). Postmodern theorists argue that the bureaucratic methods of structuring are being replaced by the postmodern corporation whose structure is numerically and functionally flexible, with no clear centre of power or spatial location (ibid). Such an organization is 'de-differentiated' (the term as used in this context means work structure that is opposite of the division of labour) (Chia, 1995), flexible, niche marketed and has a multi-skilled workforce held together by information technology networks and subcontracting (Parker, 1992). All these

features, according to these theorists of new organizational forms, were not present in modernity. Surely, they reason, these new features must belong to a new era which they label as the postmodern period.

*Society as a Reflection of a Postmodern Period.* Apart from changes at the individual and organization levels, society as well has undergone transformations distinct from these two levels. These transformations have produced a society exhibiting features not present in modernity, leading some to argue that a new time has arrived after modernity which should be called postmodern. The aforementioned societal transformations are quite nicely summarized in the following quote of Frederic Jameson:

> a general feeling of that at some point following World War II a new kind of society began to emerge (variously described as postindustrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society and so forth). New types of consumption, planned obsolesence; an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; the replacement of the old tension between city and country, center and province, by the suburb and by universal standardization; the growth of the great networks of superhighways, and the arrival of the automobile culture — these are some of the features which would seem to mark a radical break with that older prewar society (cited in Alvesson, 1995: 1052-1053).

Postmodernism as a Style of Thought

Postmodernism has been also used in the organization theory literature to refer to a style of thought that seeks to problematize knowledge claims or what we understand to be 'truths' (Chia, 1995). Postmodernism asks the question, how can we know the world (Parker, 1992). It answers by saying that we can know it only through particular forms of discourses that our languages create (ibid). The world 'out there', as we perceive it, is constructed for us by discourses and these

conceptions are collectively sustained and continuously renegotiated in the process of making sense (ibid). Since discourses are contextually and historically situated in addition to constantly being contested and negotiated, they will vary over different time periods and contexts, and with them our understandings. This means that our knowledge of the world is, at best, tentative and always changing. We can, thus, never claim at any given instance that we have the truth. What we have are interpretations of it. Some go even further to argue that why bother discussing interpretations of 'truth' as the latter being a concept is by definition itself a creature of discourses as all concepts arise from them and, therefore, is simply another figment of our ordering imagination. What is called 'truth', then, is, as articulated by Rorty, no more than a name for a historically located practice of justification created by our discourses (Parker, 1995). There is, thus, no truth as commonly understood. There are only interpretations, period.

Once it is recognized that there is no 'truth', then all aspects of our social world that we consider to be privileged as being 'true' and 'real' should be brought into question. Postmodernism's research agenda is to do just that (Chia, 1995). It seeks to take what we consider to be 'real' or 'true' and show them to be social fabrications or constructions, which being historically and contextually situated, are actually tentative and indeterminant in nature and not absolute and correct as they are made out to be. This process of stripping the revered attributes of real and true from aspects of social reality can be called deprivileging. Postmodernism has deprivileged quite a few sacred aspects of social reality. In what follows three such acts of deprivileging which the author personally found to have given him valuable insights into social reality, will be briefly discussed.

*Deprivileging Knowledge*. Modernity viewed the world (both nature and people) as being 'out there'. The world would be mastered through the scientific application of 'true' knowledge claims produced by reason which would be used by human beings to perfect themselves (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996; Burrell and Cooper, 1988). Knowledge was, thus, considered an unalloyed good. It was simply a harmless representation of what was 'out there' providing human beings

with a means of improving themselves. It should be pointed out while this was the dominant view with the onset of the Enlightenment in Western Europe, it was not without dissent. From Kant (2003 [1781]) onwards a few pointed out the limits of human reason.

Postmodernism has continued and built upon the dissent on human rationality that, to paraphrase Polanyi's (1957) vivid prose, man through reason alone can attain his secular salvation. However, there is a disjuncture between those cautionary perspectives on knowledge espoused for example by Kant and postmodernism. Postmodernism has brought all knowledge claims into question by arguing that there is no way to ascertain truth. The dissent on knowledge prior to postmodernism still maintained that there was truth and it could be knowable. For postmodernism, this understanding of truth is without basis. In the world view of postmodernism, knowledge does not represent the world but rather our ordering of it. The real world is, according to postmodernism, a 'dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless, merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly." (Whitehead cited in Chia, 1995: 590). Knowledge inscribes distinctions, unities and divisions to this nothingness (i.e., what exists outside of us: 'the other') and with these orders our experiences and organizes our understanding of it. Such unsolicited inscription, ordering and organizing are acts of power. The nature of knowledge production can be seen to be such that as soon as it comes into being it exerts power shaping us and giving us absolutely no time to step away from its structuring effects. For example, 19$^{th}$ century medical knowledge on madness structured or ordered both the medical practitioner and the one afflicted with 'madness' whereby the former was given the power to intervene over the latter who had to receive the intervention passively often in physically confined spaces (i.e., asylums) separated from society (Foucault, 1988). This was a radical departure from the times of the Renaissance during which those considered mad were not subject to interventions by medical science and were allowed to remain in society. In such an understanding of knowledge and its powerful ordering effects, both the knowledge producer (e.g., physicians) and that which the knowledge is about (e.g., human beings labelled as 'mad'),

have violence done to them. Both are largely structured by knowledge without either having a significant say in whether they would like to be formed in that particular way. Thus, far from knowledge being virtuous, a power leading to freedom, postmodernism deprivileges this notion by arguing the point made by Foucault (1980) that knowledge is power. More knowledge will not set us free, according to postmodernists subscribing to Foucault's views on knowledge, but simply exert another form of violent re-ordering of us where some will be privileged over others with no way to determine whether it was truly for the 'better' as the event is theoretically open to multiple conflicting interpretations with no interpretation, having given up on the idea of absolute truth, able to claim a privileged position over another.

*Deprivileging Objectified Subjectivity.* In the discourse of modernity, there is a tendency of seeing social objects or categories of subjectivities (e.g., the individual, the organization and the society) as already completed self-contained 'naturally' existing entities which are the loci of action (Chia, 1995). Postmodernism takes strong exception to this perspective. It deprivileges such objects by arguing that they are historically situated social constructions. They are, thus, effects and outcomes and not instigators (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996).

The implications of this deprivileging act are quite profound. It brings death to organizations, individuals, society and similar conventional categorization of subjectivities as complete, autonomous and action instigating entities (ibid). On the other hand, it gives birth to them as socially constructed effects. All these deaths and births cause a radical change in research focus. What once explained (i.e., categories) is now in search for its own explanation. The research question, thus, becomes: how are these effects (i.e., categories) produced (Chia, 1995).

According to postmodernism, effects such as individuals, organizations and society are a result of complex processes (ibid). These processes are always combining bits and pieces (i.e., materials) from the social, the technical, the conceptual and the textual to generate an effect such as an individual (ibid).

Effects, then, are infused or powered with dynamic processes constantly networking heterogeneous materials to sustain them. They, however, appear to us as stable 'solid social entities' because we tend to overlook these dynamic processes as not overlooking them would introduce too many complexities into our lived experience, making it extremely difficult for us to order it. We overlook such complex processes and view their effects as stable and solid in the same way as we perceive a television set and overlook the complexities that constitute it. A television set that appears to us as being fixed and stable is, on closer inspection, actually an effect produced by a network of electronic components and human interventions (ibid). To truly understand and account for a television set we would have to become familiar with the local assemblages of its parts whose collective networked interactions produce the effect of television. In a similar vein, to understand and account for an effect, one must adopt a micro-level of analysis studying in detail its various heterogeneous parts and materials and how they combine together given that it is their networked interactions that produce effects in the first place. Only by doing so, according to postmodernism, can we account for the effect in a meaningful way. In the case of the effect of organizations, this would mean studying organizational micro-practices (e.g., routines, space arrangements) whose collective interactions generate or power the stable social entity 'organization' (ibid).

William Blake (1997 [1865]) wrote in his poem 'Auguries of Innocence' about seeing heaven in a grain of sand. Postmodernism wishes to see the heaven of organization in the grain of micro-practices. Being able to do so as a result of the act of deprivileging objectified subjectivity, postmodernism has brought organizational micro-practices, hitherto neglected, to the fore, thus pushing research into new directions.

*Deprivileging Meta-Narratives.* Meta-narratives, examples of which include religion, science, art, Marxism, and modernism, make absolute, universal and all-embracing claims to truth and knowledge (Strinati, 1995). They also provide a sense of history as a continuous linear 'narrative' or a clear sequence of events

(ibid). Postmodernism, as has already been discussed above, rejects all truth claims. A consequence of this position is to deprivilege meta-narratives.

A rejection of meta-narratives combined with the understanding that meaning is uncontrollable in the sense that something in the world can be constructed, expressed and interpreted in many different ways limited only by human creativity (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996), brings the whole enterprise of representation into question. If we cannot truly represent what is 'out there' and (due to the uncontrollability of meaning) cannot guarantee that we will be understood by others as they will evaluate our positions based on their interpretive schemas which being most likely not identical to ours will make them incapable of fully understanding our perspective, is there then any point in writing?

The rejection of the concept of master narratives and language as representation means that the activity of illuminating great chunks of social reality is a flawed one and, thus, is now passé (Alvesson, 1995). At best we can use writings for small local bits of social reality experienced by us. Writing, thus, is reduced to an exercise by which we can describe, at most if even that, our own experiences what Lyotard called 'petit recus' or local narratives (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996; Parker 1995). Though such a deprivileging of meta-narratives seriously limits the area of social reality covered by writing, it does, however, allow the possibility of experimenting with new styles of writing (Alvesson, 1995). This is because we longer have to write in the way of disinterested scientific observers representing the reality 'out there' in a linear narrative form since there is no 'truth' that we can discover. If there is no truth to represent, and we are writing just our interpretations, then we can choose any writing style to express them as they are our thoughts that we have a right to express in a way of our liking. We can, for example, present the results of our inquiry in the form of conversations rather than in the traditional 'realist' linear narrative style. Postmodernism, by deprivileging meta-narratives, thus, both constrains us by not really allowing us to express experiences greater than the local, but within this constrained realm also gives us greater freedom than we had before with regards to how we may express ourselves.

*Postmodernism in CMS: Critical Discourse Analysis*

Like CT, postmodernism has found its way in CMS. Of the two ways in which postmodernism has been understood, CMS scholars have largely used the insights offered by postmodernism as a thought style to understand management and organizations. One of the clearest expressions of research deploying a postmodern thought style in CMS is a stream of works that is known as critical discourse analysis.

The word 'discourse', in its linguistic sense, refers to language and communication (Ebrahim, 2001). Conversation, talk, a connected series of utterances, a text, are some of the words used to describe 'discourse' in dictionary definitions (ibid). If we take this understanding of discourse, as some scholars evidently have (e.g., Oswick, Keenoy, and Grant, 2000), then discourse analysis comprises works in MOS that study the spoken and written use of language and its role in the construction of organizational reality. A wide variety of research in MOS would then be classified as discourse analysis including works that have looked at metaphor (e.g., Morgan, 1980), language games (e.g., Mauws and Phillips, 1995), rituals and myths (e.g., Rosen, 1984), stories (e.g., Boje, 1995), and conversations (e.g., Forester, 1992).

The above is one way to understand what is meant by discourse analysis. However, there are, as mentioned earlier, many other meanings of discourse analysis. In fact, in this field, the only consensus seems to be that there is no consensus on what is discourse and discourse analysis. For example, Alvesson and Karreman point out in a recent review of discourse analysis in MOS that

> The word discourse has, as indicated above, no agreed-upon definition, and confusingly many uses. As Potter and Wetherell remark, discourse and discourse analysis 'is a field in which it is perfectly possible to have two books [on the matter] with no overlap in content at all' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:6). Discourse may mean almost everything (Grant et al., 1998; Keenoy et al., 1997). (2000: 1127).

Definitions of discourse range widely as can be seen from the following list containing representative examples of some of the main ways in which the term discourse has been used:

- Actual practices of talking and writing (Woodilla, 1998, cited in Phillips and Hardy, 2002: 3).

- A connected set of statements, concepts, terms and expressions which constitutes a way of talking and writing about a particular issue (Watson, 1994: 113).

- Discourse is a system of texts that constitutes a set of concepts and objects . . . But the term discourse refers to simply more than a collection of texts; it also includes the practices that underlie texts and that allow for their production, transmission, and reception (Lawrence, Phillips, and Hardy, 1999: 486).

- [discourses are] ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them (Weedon, 1996: 105).

- discourse contains both ideological and material dimensions. The ideological dimension incorporates theoretical, practical, and normative elements, whereas the material dimension refers to the sites in which the discourse is produced, disseminated, and practiced. (Jones, 1996: 24).

The above list is useful in two senses. By perusing it, the reader would visualise the various ways in which it has been used and, thus, begin to get an intuitive sense of what discourse means as we often get to an understanding of the semantic core of a word by seeing the different ways in which it is used (Geertz,

1973). It is also useful in that it throws into sharp relief the current debates occurring in the field with regards to understanding discourse and its analysis.

One of the major debates in the field is basically about what to include in the term discourse with some suggesting that it includes talking, writing, individual cognition, and action (e.g., Clegg, 1989). Viewed in this way, a discourse on a particular phenomenon (e.g., economic development) refers to a powerful complex or system of knowledge which provides a set of concepts and ideas that regulate what can be said, thought, imagined, and practiced with regards to that phenomenon (Luke, 1997). In such an understanding, discourse precedes and incorporates meaning (Alvesson and Karremann, 2000). It is a socializing force that constitutes through the concepts it possesses, the meaning of the phenomenon in question and the appropriate social responses or practices related to it. Discourse then is all encompassing, 'a way of knowledge, a background of assumptions and agreements about how reality is to be interpreted and expressed, supported by paradigmatic metaphors, techniques, and technologies and potentially embedded in social institutions' (Edwards, 1996: 34).

Alvesson and Karremann (2000) call the above perspective a 'muscular view' on discourse. They, along with others (e.g., Hardy, Palmer, and Phillips, 2000), argue for a more measured understanding of discourse along the lines of the definitions of Phillips and Hardy (2002) and Watson (1994) found in the above mentioned list of discourse definitions. Scholars who argue for a measured view of discourse state that the muscular version leaves little space for theorizing agency, the capacity of human beings to act independently of social constraints (Johnson, 1995), a criticism that is often levelled at discourse analysis studies using the muscular perspective (for such criticism see Newton, 1994, 1998; Reed, 2000). Some measured view scholars (e.g., Knights and Vurdubakis, 1994; Sahay and Walsham, 1997) hold that a discourse (e.g., on progress through capital intensive technology) is constrained in its constitutive effects because there are other discourses (e.g., progress as voluntary simplicity) that compete and contest with it, reducing the persuasive totalising power of a discourse. Moreover, the presence of competing alternative discourses creates a space for choice and,

hence, for agency. Other theorists make a different but complementary case for agency by viewing discourse as a resource, a cultural tool-kit so to speak, that actors can use strategically, albeit in a constrained manner, to bring about certain outcomes valued by them (Hardy et al., 2000; Jackson, 2000; Phillips and Hardy, 1997).

From the above, it appears that there are, at a first order of classification, two styles of discourse analysis (i.e., muscular and measured). Research that uses these two styles to examine the role of discourses in the production of power asymmetries, exploitation, manipulation, structural inequalities, and other such issues related to power and domination is known as critical discourse analysis (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). Critical discourse analysis is a large body of research that has studied a vast array of empirical phenomena from Human Resource Management techniques (e.g., Townley, 1993) to racist attitudes (e.g., Kleiner, 1998). The critical discourse analysis imperium in CMS is indeed vast. What connects this vast and diverse research body is a focus on language and its power consequences (i.e., who ends up being privileged and who is marginalized).

Though the imperium of critical discourse analysis is vast, it is not without problems (Smucker, 1999). Philosophically, I find the bulk of discourse analysis studies quite unsatisfying and problematic because it holds to postmodern understandings of knowledge, truth, and reality mentioned earlier. Critical discourse analysis theorists would agree with Rorty that what is called 'truth' is no more than a name for a historically located practice of justification created by our discourses (Parker, 1995). There is, thus, no truth or essence as commonly understood. Such metaphysical assumptions, in my opinion, result in discourse analysis and postmodernism as a style of thought research being self-referentially incoherent. There is no truth except for this statement. All knowledge is socially constructed and is spatially and temporally contingent, except, of course, for this statement. Language can be interpreted in multiple ways, except for this statement. And so on. If truth is indeed not knowable, then how do we know this?

Such philosophical incoherence leaves really no basis for making claims of any kind including the claim for social construction that can be just another social construction, except here the social construction argument may well be valid. All that we are left with are 'stories' of researchers with no basis to judge which story should be brought to the light of publication, having dispensed with factual validity, the production of credible warrants and other such tyrannical ideas by which to arbitrate knowledge claims. Moreover, the only claims, if any, which can be sustained are involved treatises on how one reached a particular interpretation or constructed a particular text for if all knowledge claims are a social construction then any research piece would be a social construction, thus, requiring the question of how this piece was socially constructed that a conscientious social constructivist would feel the need to address. As a result, the great knowledge enterprise would be reduced to writers writing about writing to other writers. A possible sign of this sorry state of affairs may well be the current interest in reflexivity in MOS (e.g., Hardy, Phillips, and Clegg, 2001; Holland, 1999) which has more to do with such self-absorbed involuted concerns of the writing process than with issues along the lines of responsibilities of intellectuals towards the public, particularly the weak, and the social impact of research — topics that have occupied the greats from Gramsci to Said when they have been reflexive or reflective about their own class, the intellectuals, and the state of scholarship produced by them.

Based on the above, an argument can be made to cut loose the plant of discourse analysis from the barren and corrosive philosophical soils of postmodernism and replant it in the fertile lands of realism where researchers can advance their claims about language and its role in impacting reality as adequate, accurate descriptions and explanations of what really happened. In fact, many of the most prescient analyses on the role of language in the constitution of social reality have flowed from the axiom that researchers can get at truth and can access and depict reality. Orwell's (2000 [1946]) masterful essay on 'Politics and the English Language', C. Wright Mills' (1940) classic work on vocabulary of motives, the works of James March and colleagues (e.g., March and Simon, 1958)

on organizational language and how it shapes perceptions in turn influencing actions, and Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) work on Holocaust and the bureaucratic language that facilitated it by dehumanising and objectifying human beings, are but a few examples of the brilliant scholarship on language and reality constitution that has flowed from researchers operating within the realist paradigm. This paradigm holds that knowledge can indeed describe reality and gain access to truth. Thus, we need to reappropriate the concept discourse and its analysis to more conventional understandings on knowledge claims as marxist-inspired theorists such as Edward Said have done to great effect in such majestic works as *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994). A few studies in MOS (e.g., Jones, 1996) have attempted such a reappropriation but more work is needed.

## CMS & INTERORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

In spite of limits in both its postmodernism and CT research streams, CMS has made contact with several disciplines in MOS (e.g., strategy). Recently, it has forged a contact with the field of interorganizational collaboration. It is from examining that nexus that the research questions for this thesis emerge.

### *Interorganizational Collaboration Definition*

Interorganizational collaboration, like many other social science concepts, is courted by and flirts with many definitions. Following C. Wright Mills' (1959) dictum that knowledge often develops when we begin to argue with terms rather than over them, I use the following definition from the management literature: 'a co-operative relationship among organizations that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control but is instead negotiated in an ongoing communicative process.' (Lawrence et al., 1999: 481). Consortia, alliances, joint ventures, roundtables, networks, and associations, are examples of what I would term interorganizational collaboration.

*Brief Literature Overview*

Having understood what we mean by interorganizational collaboration, we can now proceed to a brief overview of the academic literature in MOS on this topic. Looking at the literature, and the major reviews on it (e.g., Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2000; Smith, Carroll, and Ashford, 1995; Wood and Gray, 1991), there appear to be two ways in which the research has been classified. One approach is to classify the various works constituting the literature according to whether they address one or more of the following three central questions that guide scholarly inquiry on interorganizational collaboration:

(a) What are the antecedents of interorganizational collaboration?
(b) What are the dynamics of interorganizational collaboration?
(c) What are the outcomes of interorganizational collaboration?

Research that addresses the first question deals with identifying the resources and conditions that facilitate collaborative interorganizational behaviour. Trust, for example, has been argued to be a critical condition for collaboration to occur (McAllister, 1995). Scholarship that examines the second question is concerned with the nature of collaboration as a process and has identified process-related issues such as the politics of collaboration (Hardy and Phillips, 1998), the stages of collaboration (Gray, 1989), and the emotional aspects of collaboration (Hardy and Phillips, 1998). Finally, the third question concerns the results of collaborations ranging from positive outcomes (Westley and Vrendenburg, 1997) such as satisfaction of the participants to negative ones such as exclusion of marginal members (Gray and Hay, 1986), though the negative outcomes, according to scholars, have not been given sufficient attention by researchers and, consequently, continue to remain understudied.

Alternatively, research in the field can also be conceptualised on the basis of the theoretical approach taken to explore interorganizational collaboration. Phillips et al. (2000) identify four different approaches which they classify as strategic, economic, government/business, and interorganizational domains. The

strategic approach refers to works that look at how forms of interorganizational collaboration can improve strategic performance of businesses by, for example, helping to spread risks as in a joint-venture co-operative arrangement (Amara, 1990). The economic approach, though also interested in examining the positive impacts of collaborative relationships on the efficiency and competitive advantage of firms, differs from the strategic approach in that it delves into examining the reasons for the emergence of collaborative arrangements whether they be strategic alliances (Kogut 1988, 1991) or some other form. Emergence is predominately explained using a transaction costs perspective where the collaborative forms (e.g., joint-ventures) are viewed as alternative governance structures to coordinate economic activity to the more traditional coordination structures of markets and hierarchies (Hill, 1990). The third approach, called here business/government approach, consists of studies that look at initiatives, especially in the European economic policy making arena, which bring together governments, businesses, and civil society organizations (e.g., Herrigel, 1993). Research under this approach has looked at, among other things, government efforts to establish technology incubators, areas where incentives are provided for firms to locate which have related technologies, competencies and markets, in the hope that their clustering together would better enable information sharing and other beneficial collaborations to take place between them leading to new technological innovations and, hence, higher economic growth (Bianchi, 1993).

The fourth approach, interorganizational domain, describes research that looks predominately at interorganizational collaboration as a tool to solve complex social problems (e.g., child labour) which are beyond the ability of any single organization to successfully address by itself. This orientation to social problems is what crucially separates this approach from the other three and leads to a research program that is quite distinct from them. It is to this interorganizational domain research program that I would like to contribute, as my case involves interorganizational collaborations around a social problem, child labour. I will, therefore, describe this approach in greater length, pointing out the caveats in this literature, and how my thesis would aim towards addressing them.

*Interorganizational Domain Approach*

The interorganizational domain approach to interorganizational collaboration traces its origins to Emiry and Trist's seminal article 'The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments', published in 1965. In that article, the authors argued that the environments in which organizations functioned were changing. According to them, organizations were increasing in size to the point that their decisions would have massive ramifications, triggering actions of the same magnitude by other organizations and that these streams of actions and their consequences would interact in ways that no single organization could control. Organizations, it seems, were becoming interdependent and this new state of interdependence meant, according to Emiry and Trist (1965), that they would have to coordinate their actions lest they initiate a series of actions that would hinder the achievement of their objectives. The message was that organizations needed to pay attention to their environments and co-operate or collaborate together to manage the latter (Baum, 1999). These environments came to be called 'interorganizational domains' and the new conditions were labelled as 'turbulence' (ibid).

In the 1980s, scholars began applying the key insights of Emery and Trist, namely turbulent environments and collaboration as a tool to manage them, to complex social problems. Researchers (e.g., Gray, 1989) argued that collaboration across different sectors of society can bring together government, business, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to combat important social and environmental issues. These problems were seen as too complex or too many sided to be solved by a single organization and, thus, it came to be viewed that through collaboration, entailing the pooling of resources and expertise, these hitherto unwieldy problems could be successfully addressed. Around this time, the term 'interorganizational domain' became more refined than its earlier formulation, referring to 'a set of organizations with a common interest in a problem' (Gray and Hay, 1986: 96). Thus a domain consists of a problem or an issue and a set of organizations that have a stake or interest in that problem.

Defined in this way, a problem domain is said to also have 'stakeholders' or actors who are 'organizations or individuals with a legitimate interest in the problem under consideration.' (ibid).

Since the 1980s, much has been published under the aegis of the interorganizational domain approach to collaborations. Researchers have studied interorganizational collaboration dynamics in various problem domains ranging from bio-diversity (Westley and Vredenburg, 1997) to school desegregation (Janssens and Seynaeve, 2000). However, domains based on collaborative activites that take place under the aegis of corporate social responsibility initiatives (e.g., implementing corporate codes of conduct in partnership with local civil society organizations) have been neglected in the domain research. There is, thus, a conversation gap between the interorganizational domain research and the literature that discusses codes of conduct (i.e., corporate social performance) (Wood, 1991). Though this conversation gap is outside the scope of this thesis, the thesis, as we shall see later in our discussion on its implications, will have content relevant to it.

Regarding the research that has been occurring in the interorganizational collaboration domain approach, we see that most of it has adopted a functionalist perspective in that collaborations are viewed as tools to solve problems in a way agreeable to all stakeholders. With such a functional orientation, research has tried to ascertain factors that lead to collaborations succeeding and has identified several prerequisites required for success such as emphasizing the importance of involving all 'legitimate' stakeholders in the collaboration process (Gray, 1985). Moreover, recognising that collaboration is a negotiated process where various stakeholders with differing values, interests, and agenda, engage and converse with each other to forge consensus on various matters ranging from the nature of the problem to the solutions to be deployed to resolve it, scholars have tried to identify means by which such conflicting views can be bridged. For example, research has identified the important role of a convenor of a collaboration in developing shared understandings among various stakeholders of a problem

domain that are able to bring coherence to the different values and interests (Brown, 1993).

Though research in the functionalist frame has contributed significantly to understanding dynamics of collaborations in interorganizational problem domains, it is not without its critics (e.g., Hardy and Phillips, 1998). These critics, viewing interorganizational collaboration from a CMS perspective, point out that the functional scholarship has failed to adequately deal with a crucial factor that plays an important constitutive role in both the shaping of the problem domain and the dynamics of the collaborations that unfold within it. That factor is power. These CMS theorists note that interorganizational collaboration is not only a tool to solve problems but can also be a tool to protect and advance certain organizational interests at the expense of other stakeholders. For example, powerful stakeholders may force collaboration on weaker players to dominate them; or they may co-operate in defining the domain in such a way that serves their interests (e.g., private business defining the problem of poverty as a technical matter of a lack of education rather than as a political one of an absence of worker rights and unions that may lead to successful pressing of higher wage claims detrimental to the interests of the business owners).

## LITERATURE GAPS & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The contact of CMS concerns, especially the ones centred around power and its consequences, with the interorganizational collaboration literature has been a productive one. The introduction of power as a central concept in understanding the dynamics of problem domain and interorganizational collaborations has opened up a new research agenda. Scholars can now begin to initiate conversations about interorganizational collaborations in relation to issues such as exploitation, repression, unfairness, and asymmetrical power relations that the mainstream literature had hitherto neglected (Hardy and Phillips, 1998). Though the CMS literature on interorganizational collaboration has helped identify and fill partially the gaps in knowledge of the mainstream literature, it

still is in its infancy, and, thus, too suffers from limitations. One such limitation is an under-theorization of the constraints faced by marginalized domain stakeholders when trying to influence the problem domain through the management of meaning, communication and impression.

CMS theorists have recognized that weak or powerless stakeholders have neither the power bases of formal authority nor the critical resources which they can use as bargaining chips to bring about outcomes favourable to or avert outcomes injurious to them in the problem domain. How then can such weak groups influence the problem domain? One answer given is through the force of persuasion (Hardy and Phillips, 1998; Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Weak stakeholders, it is argued, may acquire power through persuasion and the use of symbolic language to alter perceptions and shared understandings in the domain in a way that advances their interests. The example is given of Greenpeace and other environmental groups that can press their claims by gathering public support for their initiatives through the use of communication processes such as the mass media (Hardy and Phillips, 1998).

Power by communication may be a valid strategy for weak stakeholders where domains are located in advanced industrialized democratic countries with a literate population whose basic rights of free speech and assembly are protected. But is it a valid strategy in contexts, such as the developing world, where individuals are often chronically poor, illiterate, and disorganized, where the mere articulation of any claim in public space that threatens the prerogative of privilege can be met with swift punitive reprisal from either private or state power? There are severe constraints for weak stakeholders in shaping the domain by communication in developing countries and these have to be articulated and theorized. Thus:

**Research Question 1: What are the constraints faced by weak stakeholders in using communication processes to influence their problem domain located in developing countries?**

**Research Question 1a: How do these constraints impact the shaping of the problem domain?**

**Research Question 1b: How can the constraints identified be conceptualised to produce a typology of constraints, in the form of Weberian ideal types (Gerth and Mills, 1946), facing weak stakeholders in problem domains located in developing countries?**

In fact, the above questions seem to me to be initial thrusts at explaining what I, for now, would call the subalternalization paradox. The word subaltern, though coined by Gramsci, was popularized by a group of Indian historians in the 1980s (Prasad, 2003). This group came to be known as the Subaltern Studies collective with Ranajit Guha being perhaps its most notable member (Chakrabarty, 2002). Subalterns, to these Indian historians, meant all those weak and marginalized elements (i.e., the poor masses) ignored in the mainstream narrative of history that focuses on elites and their motives and actions to explain historical events. The collective sought to rewrite Indian history from the perspective of these groups, to write a people's history of India, showing how history was experienced by them. The research that ensued contested several claims of mainstream Indian history. In contrast to the then prevailing view of Indians being united in a common cause against the British, the Subaltern Studies research pointed out that there were severe class-based conflicts between the leadership elements of Indian nationalism and their grassroots who often had a different vision of India than their leaders (e.g., one that preserves their local, rural culture as opposed to a high-modern industrialized vision of India held by such Indian nationalist leaders as Nehru; Chakrabarty, 2002, Roy, 1999; for a concise history on the Subaltern Studies collective, see Chakrabarty, 2002; and Ludden, 2001; for an outstanding example of subaltern research looking at workplace and organizational dynamics, see Chakrabarty, 1983).

In the 1990s the term subaltern came to take on a more specific meaning as it came to be appropriated by postcolonial studies (Prasad, 2003). From being used as a term to refer to the subordinated masses in general, it began to be used to depict specifically those classes or individuals within them who are spoken about but never heard (Ludden, 2001, 2001a; Prasad, 2003) in contrast to other subordinated groups (e.g., tribals in India) that do not even make it to the realm of public discussion (Roy, 1999). An example of a subaltern, as understood in this specific sense, can be gleaned from the great debate that whirled around *sati* (i.e., the controversial and much contested practice whereby an Indian Hindu woman, through her consent or by coercion, was burned with her deceased husband as part of the funeral rites) at the time of British rule (Ghandi, 1998). One heard opinions from various stakeholders of this problem domain, primarily the Indian male nationalists and their British masters, about the correctness or barbarity of the practice (ibid). But one never heard the opinion held by the Indian woman herself who was at the centre of the controversy (ibid). She had been subalternalized.

This subalternalization process also occurs in problem domains. As with the case of the Hindu woman and *sati*, when problem domains emerge in the developing world, the people whose problem is the basis for the domain construction and the collaborative activities that ensue to solve it, often on their behalf, are seldom heard even though one would think that they would be the most active agent in the domain. They become subalterns or peripheral-centres of the problem domain: They are central to the problem domain but in terms of having their voice heard and their interests fairly represented and realized, they become ignored. This is what I refer to as the subalternalization paradox. Thus, my question is:

**Research Question 2: When does a domain located in the developing countries produce the subalternalization paradox (i.e., what are the elements that bring about this paradox )?**

**Research Question 2a: Are these subalternalization processes resisted? If so, how? And if not, why?**

**Research Question 2b: What is the relationship, if any, between the subalternalization processes and the outcomes of collaborations?**

As a passing comment, I would like the reader to note that both she and the author should not fall in the danger of viewing the subaltern class or other descriptive terms for the marginalized and excluded as a monolithic whole. The subaltern class is a heterogeneous mix of peoples with often conflicting interests and views on the lines of, for example, gender, race, or religion. A poor man may show more solidarity towards his rich male superior on the issue of say race relations than say with racially different others who are from the poor man's own economic class. Furthermore, one should also not romanticise the subaltern. Just being weak does not make them always right and their perspective always the correct one to be favoured over opposing understandings coming from the masters who dominate them. To think otherwise would be to commit a serious logical fallacy.

Having said this, subaltern and the other broad classificatory terms like it (e.g., powerless and the weak) still have much theoretical mileage as demonstrated by the fact that they are consistently and incisively being used in the social sciences and are generating deeper understanding about society (e.g., the highly insightful growing literature on resistance of the 'weak'; Sanabria, 2000). In my 17 years in Pakistan, I have often heard from people eking out an existence, '*hum kia kerain, hum gharib logh hain*', [what can *we* do, *we* are poor people]. The operative emphasis on 'we' is crucial. It is an indication of belonging to a wider loosely defined body of people, a group, who have some experience (e.g., discrimination on the basis of one's skin colour) *shared* between its members that enables them to think of themselves as being in the same boat. To the extent that these people, in spite of their heterogeneity and differences, group themselves as

being together on some boat, or part of some dimension (e.g., the boat of being black to continue with our metaphor), I think it is then appropriate to use terms like the subaltern to group together otherwise varied people into a single classification and refer to them in the collective not to homogenize them, but to isolate their shared experience (e.g., racial discrimination) so that it and the actions that flow from it can be examined and understood well.

There may be many types of shared experiences of the subaltern class but for me when I use the term subaltern or other terms like it (e.g., the marginalized and the excluded), I am referring to a loosely defined group of people that, nevertheless, have a shared experience on two particular dimensions that allows them and outsiders to perceive them as belonging to a particular boat or a distinct group existing in society. The particular dimensions are crippling poverty (e.g., inability to secure basic needs such as health, nutrition, etc.) and the almost complete alienation from, or lack of power, both formally and substantively, over the critical institutions in society (e.g., the law).

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION: AL-GHAZALI'S TALE ON A JIM MORRISON SOUNDTRACK

I could tell you the precise longitudinal and latitudinal location of where I was (i.e., roughly slightly north west of 32'30" North and 74'40" East). But I could not tell you where my feet were. Going in different directions, my feet seemed to be possessed by two opposing minds united, though, by a common concern. They were trying to desperately cling to the foot-handles of a Honda CD100 motorcycle as it galloped across the thin metalled road connecting the remote village of Dhanewali (situated near the India Pakistan-Punjab Kashmir border) to Sialkot city centre. I was sitting at the back trying to avoid squeezing too hard my guide, who was literally in the driver's seat. It was around 11:45 at night and I had just finished my last round of field interviews. In my back-pack were all my interview notes for my thesis.

It was a gorgeous night. The moon was almost full and the radiance of its silvery smile could be seen faintly glittering on the surface of the mighty Chenab that flowed quietly on our right. On our left, you could imagine the rustle of the lush rice fields, telling all who cared to give an ear, that they were ready for harvest. I, too, listened but with the disrespect of distracted attention. I was too busy trying to keep myself on the motorcycle. Though the moon's light revealed the Chenab, it was too weak to assist me in this my most immediate task. Chenab had turned out to be a jealous lover, demanding all the moon's attention. There was little of her admirer's light I could steal from her and so I tried hanging on as I sped helmetless on a frightfully dark lampless road with the only available light being our buckling mechanical steed's fading head-light bouncing off the trees lining the road and casting off shimmering ghostly shadows in our midst.

I wonder if you can call the surface I was on a road. It certainly did not feel like one. It is like most village-to-city roads in rural Pakistan, a thin miserly stretch of asphalt made uneven and wavy by a generous provision of crevices,

bumps, and pot-holes. I wonder if a land-locked mariner had been the contractor for this stretch of road, laying it in a way that travelling over it would give him and, regrettably, others the sensation of a schooner ploughing through rough seas and, thus, remind him of the sea-faring life he once lived. If that be the case, how does one explain the shoulders of this road, made of sedimented dirt, mimicking the rocky surface of mars, craters and all? Perhaps, our sailor-contractor had made plenty of visits to France and had contracted from there postmodern eclecticism.

This was my last night in the field. I was drinking in this atmosphere as well as swallowing the dust that blew in our faces. My guide must have noticed my revelry and its accompanying silence that often announces it, for he spoke: 'This is a bandit-infested road. There are many hold-ups here.' He must have felt my grip tighten on him for he said with a half-hearted chuckle, 'Oh, should have told you this after we reached home safely.' Too late. Just then, up ahead in the distance, appeared two large amorphous shapes stoically sitting in the dark. As the distance closed, I began to discern that they were two large trucks respectively on the left and right side of the road, each one noticeably tilted with one half on the shoulder and the other half on the road. Could this be our bandits or *dakoos* as they are called in this part of the world? At this point, if I had to choose the soundtrack for this moment, the choice would have been Jim Morrison's song 'The End'. To paraphrase Morrison, Was this my end, beautiful friend?

My answer to the question was 'I hope not.' I was hoping this episode, if involving bandits, would mirror an episode in the life of Al-Ghazali the 11$^{th}$ century Muslim theologian, jurist, and logician par excellence.[1] Al-Ghazali, once while returning to his home city of Tus (Iran), after studying with sages in a faraway city, was accosted by robbers. He pleaded with them to not take his notes which contained three years of lectures that he had painstakingly written down. The chief bandit returned the notes to him but with a refrain that Al-Ghazali felt was divinely inspired: 'How can you claim that you obtained their knowledge when we took it away from you and left you devoid of knowledge!' In other words, knowledge that is vulnerable to theft and confined in a few pages is no

[1] Al-Ghazali's episode narrated here is taken from Al-Subkiyy (1968 [1353], vol 6: 196).

knowledge at all, for you can be deprived of it at a moment's notice. True knowledge is one that is assimilated and embodied in one's own person and, thus, cannot be taken away so easily. This was the counsel that the Highway Robber gave to Al-Ghazali, who as history would show, heeded it exquisitely well.

Thus, I hoped for Al-Ghazali's fate. I had all my interview notes with me. Basically, the most important part of my entire thesis research. There would be no way I could reproduce what was in those notes by memory and I no longer had the time or money to go back to the field. As it turned out, the trucks were loading horses. We speculated that perhaps they were horse smugglers because why in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of the night would you be transporting horses. We did not, however, stop to inquire. Regardless, they left us alone. As I reached home, I was somewhat bemused that as I was approaching what could have been bandits, and perhaps my end, I was thinking only about two questions. Will the bandits let me keep my data? And, how did I end up here?

## ORIGINS OF THE THESIS: THE PILOT STUDY

Most human actions typically spring from a mixed bag of motives. This thesis is no exception to this rule. A union of principled ideals and material gain sired it. It began in early September 2000 with a conversation with Fred Bird in his office at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada). Fred was undertaking a research project called 'The Justice and Practices of International Business in Developing Countries'. He had read a story in *The Economist* (2000) that had mentioned briefly in passing that efforts to phase out child labour in the Pakistani soccer ball industry, though successful, had some deleterious consequences on the children and their families (e.g., drop in house-hold income). Fred wanted me to go to my own country, Pakistan, where I had lived for a good 17 years, investigate that soccer ball child labour story, and write a case about it for his project. The project would provide me with travel, a stipend as a research assistant, as well as two weeks' worth of daily allowance to cover lodging, food, and transport expenses associated with my fieldwork.

I jumped at this opportunity. I had recently been married and could do with an additional source of income. Also, the project would provide me with the opportunity to do work that I found appealing. That is, to do research which follows the Saidian prescription of writing about and for the other. I felt I could be faithful to this ideal as I was being asked by Fred to examine the consequences of the efforts to phase out child labour from Pakistan's soccer ball industry from the perspective of those right at the bottom of the supply chain. In this case, the poor children and their families involved in stitching soccer balls for a global multi-billion US dollar sporting goods industry whose sales from soccer balls alone are worth over a billion US dollars (Toor, 2001: 216).

I graciously accepted Fred's offer. Two months later (i.e., November 2000) I was in Lahore, Pakistan. My residence is in Lahore, about 144 kilometres southwest of Sialkot (for map, see Appendix A). Sialkot is the city where the Pakistani soccer ball industry is located and which was to become the thesis field site. At that time, I had an inkling, reinforced by a hint from Fred, that my research for this project could well develop into my thesis. So I viewed this first research trip to Pakistan as a pilot study for a possible thesis.

A pilot study in qualitative case study research, according to Yin (1989), is not a data collection dress rehearsal where the efficacies of various research instruments are tested. Rather, it is an exploratory journey to a research site where the data gathered are used inductively and more formatively to generate relevant lines of questions that will later be explored more systematically (ibid). My pilot study fits quite adequately this description. It was also an example of pure grounded theory as originally articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), a research strategy where the researcher goes to the field with as little theoretical preconceptions as possible to ensure that he does not impose his own prejudices on the data to allow the data to tell its own tales and, thus, allow the theoretical insights to authentically emerge from it.

Purists in grounded theory would have found me quite endearing. I went to the site (i.e., Sialkot) as blindly as is conceivable. I had not even read the article that had piqued Fred's interest in Sialkot. The only documentation I had was a

series of protocols, prepared by Fred, for obtaining informed consent of people who were to be my research subjects. I did not have a set of research questions, except for a fuzzy one which was to learn about the history of the project set up to eliminate child labour from Sialkot's soccer ball industry. My entire interview list consisted of one name that had been given to me by the Lahore representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (an international organization belonging to the UN family, having a tripartite governance structure comprising business, government, and labour, that works to develop and review compliance with international labour standards (Business Wire, 1998)). I was going to that source unannounced, with no business cards. I had no idea whether I would actually get in touch with that source and, even if I did, whether he would prove to be helpful in terms of providing me with information about the project and introducing me to other relevant sources. In terms of logistics, I did not even have a map of the city. Moreover, I did not know anything about lodgings and transportation available there. Finally, I had yet to decide whether to spend some time in Sialkot or commute between Sialkot and Lahore conducting my research in the former during the day.

It had taken me all of November 2000 to spur myself to action. For all of November, I had courted with the idea of doing my case study instead on the child labour issue in the carpet industry. This courtship was largely encouraged by issues of convenience. I already had a close family friend who was a major player in the carpet industry and, thus, would be able to provide me with insider knowledge and help me with access. Also, the carpet industry was located in Lahore which meant I would not have to bother with long commutes or staying in a strange location. I, too, like Hamlet suffered from 'the dread of the undiscovered country' preferring familiarity to strangeness. Nevertheless, I had promised Fred to study the soccer ball child labour issue and, though he would understand if I decided to switch, I was not comfortable with doing the bait and switch. So I struggled till guilt triumphed. I asked a friend of mine to drive me to Sialkot. He graciously agreed, and so right at the crack of dawn on December 4, 2000 we set out for Sialkot.

We travelled in my friend's car on the Grand Trunk (GT) Road that went all the way to Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province. Of course, we would be going just to Sialkot. We chose early morning so that we would arrive in about two and a half hours time when the offices were just about to open. Morning was also a good time as there was less traffic on the GT Road. It was a smooth drive, by Pakistani standards (i.e., there were not too many cracks and potholes). You savoured life on that drive by reflecting on death. Reminders of the latter were strewn in the sides of the roads usually carcasses of dogs that had failed to cross the road. On that day, I also saw a wreckage of a bus, a groaning heap of twisted metal of monstrous proportions.

But then there was life as well. We were flanked on both sides with wide open green farm fields as far as we could see, dotted now and then with a tiny cluster of small mud and brick houses. Their lantern lights were waning as the sun was rising. On the sides of the GT road one came across mosques and canteens. The former were almost always permanent structures. The latter were almost always make-shift arrangements resembling rectangular wooden kiosks with tin roofs. The architecture reflected what appeared to be permanent and transient in this land. Perhaps, here one could find Thomas More's Utopia for there was food for the soul and food for the body. There was also food for thought. Usually, in front of the canteen, you would find a small group of men, constantly wrapping themselves in their *chadars* [long blankets/shawls], energetically blowing and rubbing their two hands close to their mouths while jumping up and down to stay warm. A person would be seen among them, reading the morning newspaper to them, and their heads would periodically nod vertically or shake laterally to express their evaluation on the news being read to them. The village dog would listen in as well but then, becoming bored, would languidly saunter to the side of the road and lazily watch the mobile oddities passing by on the GT road.

It seems we were approaching Sialkot for giant billboards began announcing 'Sialkot: Child Labour-Free City'. The signs were, of course, in English in an area where the overwhelming majority could neither read nor write their own native language (i.e., Urdu and Punjabi) much less the Queen's tongue.

Whatever the audience of the sign, it certainly was not the children and their families associated with stitching soccer balls.

Soon we arrived at the office of our contact. Fortunately, he was present. He was the ILO's project manager for the project working to remove children from Sialkot's soccer ball industry. The project's official name was the 'Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Pakistan' (Save the Children [SCF], 1997: 64). The project was, however, referred to by other names as well in official publications by project organizations. For example, ILO often called the project 'The Sialkot Soccer Ball Project' (International Labour Organization, 1997) while Save the Children (SCF) (a UK-based international charity organization concerned primarily with child health and welfare) would often refer to it as the 'Sialkot Child Labour Project' (SCF, 2000). While the project had many names, the project manager thankfully had only one. His name was Nasir Dogar. He would prove to be of immense help for my research, extremely forthright, and willing to provide me with honest answers regarding the project even if they be critical in nature. Though I had come unannounced, he made the time to brief me on the history of the project, answered my questions patiently, and helped set up an interview that very day with one of the biggest exporters of soccer balls who had played a leading role from the business community's side with regards to the inception and implementation of this project.

After the interview with Nasir, the rest of the pilot study interviews followed a snow-ball sampling methodology where each contact would introduce me to another. Including the December 4, 2000 trip, I made 4 other trips to Sialkot as part of my pilot study. The last was on January 11, 2001 and I stayed overnight there for I had interviews the next day as well. A total of 15 interviews were held. The shortest interview was about 10 minutes long. The longest was about 3 hours. Average length of interviews was about one hour. I interviewed factory owners and workers as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) executives and workers. Heads of ILO, SCF, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (the only UN organization dedicated exclusively to improving child welfare

world-wide) in Sialkot were interviewed along with prominent industrialists. It is indeed well that I did interview SCF and UNICEF, for by the time I returned to the field (i.e., Sialkot) in March 2003, they had packed up and left the project. I was able to grasp a richer sense of the project's early history as well as the perspectives of the key ground players of these large international NGOs which I would have missed had I not interviewed them. Their lower staff remained in Sialkot, moving on to other local NGOs involved with this project, and in my main study I was able to interview them as well to obtain from them the history of these international NGOs' roles in the soccer ball child labour project.

As for workers, I had two interviews with lower managerial staff of a large exporting company. I also saw all the stages of production involved in soccer ball manufacture and had minor chats with the factory hands. I do not count these chats as interviews, though they were useful to me in establishing first contact, no matter how brief, with the working classes of Sialkot and getting a taste of the precious toil they routinely expend for quite a modest recompense.

Moving from organizations to villages, on my last day (i.e., January 12, 2001), I visited a village about thirty minutes by car from Sialkot city centre. I was accompanied by a staff member of SCF who was taking me to interview a stitcher family there. It was a rocky ride over rough dirt roads where our Suzuki car had to slide precariously down the steep sloping embankments to make way for village residents that demanded first right of passage. I mean, of course, the water buffaloes and the cattle. In that village, I was able to interview a soccer ball stitching family, consisting of a father, mother, and one of their children, their son who had been a former child soccer ball stitcher and had been prominently featured in SCF's video documentary 'Extra Time' describing the soccer ball child labour elimination project (SCF, 1999). A poster boy, so to speak, for SCF's own publicity campaign about its role in the Sialkot soccer ball project.

Yin (1989) is quite right when he states that a pilot study can contain lessons for both research design and field procedures. I learnt many lessons from it. Firstly, I would have to use important contacts when I would return to the field for my main study. Nasir had been quite warm and helpful. The same for the

stitcher family and the two lower managerial staff of an exporting company. The rest had been interested in my research but not enthusiastically engaged. They gave me their time but I could sense they were not taking me as seriously as I had wished. Also, I realized that daily commuting from Lahore to the field site (i.e., Sialkot) would not work. I would have to stay in Sialkot for extended periods of time and had to arrange for my own personal private accommodations. Hotels were frightfully expensive on my student budget (roughly US$30 a night) not including food. I also had to arrange for transportation because public transportation was non-existent and the mass private transportation appeared quite unsafe and would not take me to the doors of the villages where I would be going. Also, I needed to quickly finish my Ph.D. rather than learn the quite complex routes of buses and Suzuki vans that ply their craft on the village roads, each village having a novel configuration involving walking, cycling, and busing. As for research design, the pilot study proved immensely useful in arriving at identifying the knowledge domains that I would explore in this thesis as well as formulating the questions that I would address in each of these domains. In conclusion, the pilot study did provide me, in accordance with Yin (1989), information about relevant field questions and about the logistics of field inquiry.

## MAIN STUDY

### *Research Design*

#### The Questioning Years

Though the pilot study helped me in identifying my thesis' relevant knowledge domains and research questions, reaching that destination took what I felt was an immense expense of time that would have perhaps exhausted the patience of even Voltaire's Candide. For the following two years, I struggled with the data collected for my pilot study. What appeared initially to be the most pertinent literature (e.g., labour issues, particularly child labour, in the developing countries) was daunting in size and growing, the latter feature continuing even to

this day (for some exemplary recent studies, see French, 2002; O'Neill, 2004; and White, 2002). When examined in 2001, the labour issues literature appeared to leave no angle untouched in covering child labour. I, thus, moved away from that literature to explore other fields. I read extensively and intensively from the NGOs in developing countries literature to peasant studies. Again, I met with little success. Whatever question I could think of in the light of my soccer ball case, I felt had already been posed and quite masterfully addressed by far better minds than mine. If I felt I should talk about unintended consequences of human actions, then Montesquieu, Weber, Smith, and a host of other legionary social theorists, had beaten me to the punch. What could I possibly add to this conversation of the greats. If I thought about highlighting the importance of pace of change in social interventions, then Karl Polanyi's masterpiece *The Great Transformation* (1957) had already articulated it. If I felt I should do something dealing with the agency of destitute classes, then, after reading Scott's two seminal works *Weapons of the Weak* (1985) and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), I felt I could not even add a footnote to these outstanding pieces of scholarship on power and resistance.

I experienced time strangely in those two years. The minutes crawled by slowly. But the hours just flew. The choice was either to stick with the case in Pakistan or move on to to another topic. Regarding that choice, a faculty member, seeing me tilting at the windmills, had said I should do research in Canada. That would have meant abandoning this case. But I could not just walk away from my field experiences for they were rich, full of potential. For example, I had asked, in a remote village, sitting on top of a *charpai* (i.e., a bed with wooden legs with tightly criss-crossed ropes serving for a mattress) SCF's poster boy what changes had happened in his life after being featured so prominently in a documentary broadcast both internationally and in Pakistan. He wistfully looked at the uneven broken shelf attached to a cracked wall of his sandy brick and mud hut, and then matter-of-factly said, 'Well apart from being in the movie, nothing.' That struck a jarring note with me, one worthy of exploration.

How would I carry out this exploration? Where was my epiphany, my *kashf*, what the Sufi mystics yearned for and often attained, when the eye of intuition opens up, the veils are lifted, and you see your problem dissipating into clarity. When it came, I remembered an interview with the former 60s rock-star, Cat Stevens, reflecting on his journey to Islam. While about to drown off Malibu, he prayed to God that if He would save him, he would work in His way. Just then, as he recalled, a small wave, not a tidal wave, came from the opposite direction that, nevertheless, carried him to shore. Such was the case with my epiphanies. Not seminal in size able to open entire new fields of study, but large enough to point out some interesting gaps in interorganizational collaboration and critical management studies (CMS) literatures that could be fruitfully explored with my case study. These gaps led to my research questions. Thus, I finally felt I had a map of a possible thesis that would add to the conversations going on in MOS. Not only that, but I now had the first part of a thesis research design which is to identify relevant literatures and pose the questions that would extend them.

Case Selection

Finding the appropriate questions was the most arduous part of my research design. The rest (i.e., choice of case methodology and choice of the Sialkot case), in comparison, was relatively straight-forward.

I chose the case study research method for my thesis for several reasons. Firstly, case study methodology is most appropriate for asking how and why questions in somewhat new topic areas like the ones being proposed here (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989). Secondly, a case study approach permits the researcher to draw upon several theoretical perspectives which is required in this research for the questions that I propose draw upon different knowledge domains or literatures (e.g., Marxist-inspired political economy and interorganizational collaboration) (Zyglidopoulos, 1999). Finally, a case study approach is appropriate when one is asking and exploring open research questions (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989) like the ones being articulated here. For example,

what are the communication constraints facing subalterns in a problem domain located in the developing world?

The case selected for this research (i.e., 'Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Pakistan'), apart from my own personal Saidian concerns, was based on both theoretical and practical grounds. My thesis deals with topics involving interorganizational collaborations on a social issue to be situated in a developing world context. The above Sialkot case is quite suitable for studying these topics. The case is located in a developing country. Moreover, it is rich in interorganizational collaborations taking place on a social issue (i.e., child labour), and has within it groups that are right at the bottom of the supply chain of some of the most prominent and recognized leading brands in the global marketplace like Nike and Adidas. Thus, the topics and issues that my thesis would explore were found in the Sialkot child labour elimination project, making it an ideal case study candidate for the thesis.

There were also practical reasons for choosing Sialkot as the case study site for the thesis. I am a faculty member on leave at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) which is located in Lahore. Lahore is just 144 kilometres from the research site. Several senior faculty members of LUMS have had a close professional association with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), the trade association of Sialkot's most influential businessmen that strives to advance their common interests on a number of issues (e.g., Pakistan Government's export promotion policies). SCCI has its own secretariat and is run by an executive committee of about 21 individuals who hail from Sialkot's most prominent business families. Thus, it was hoped that this institutional connection between LUMS and SCCI would help facilitate gaining access as SCCI was known to have contacts with the organizations involved in the Sialkot child labour project. Furthermore, I had already conducted preliminary research in Sialkot. Thus, I was already somewhat familiar with the site and, therefore, would have to invest less time and effort in getting myself familiarized with it, as opposed to another site. I had made some contacts there already, based on my pilot study, which I hoped could be used for this thesis research. Finally, I

am a Pakistani citizen who has spent about seventeen years there, two of which have been spent in Lahore, and have fluency in its two main languages (i.e., Urdu and English). This exposure to Pakistan I felt would undoubtedly help me in conducting this research in Sialkot as compared to performing research in a site where all the languages spoken were alien to me and where I lacked knowledge of the local context. These were some of the practical reasons guiding why I chose the 'Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Pakistan' as the case study for this thesis research.

In terms of using a single or multiple-case study design, I chose to go with a single open-ended case study approach for several reasons. Firstly, the classic case studies from which much seminal theory has been and continues to be generated were single-case studies (e.g., Selznick, 1949). So there was no a priori reason to suspect that a single-case study would be less fertile than a multiple one in generating theory and insight. In fact, the success of the single-case studies would suggest just the opposite. Moreover, my case study meets the criteria outlined by Yin (1989) for a single-case study. It was a unique case in that it is rare to find a social issues case that has received such wide and diverse range of commentators and commentaries from being demonised by Pulitzer-prize journalists to later being lionized at the highest peaks of officialdom (e.g., Clinton's presidency). Also, a single-case study is appropriate when it is a revelatory case defined to be one where there is an opportunity to observe and analyze phenomena previously inaccessible to scientific investigation (ibid). The case study fits this criterion as well as it seeks to access or explore the perspectives of rural Muslim women working at the bottom of global supply chains, a group that is difficult to access and had hitherto not been accessed by MOS scholars. Lastly, it would take less time and resources to do a reasonably thorough single-case study than to do a multiple-case study where if the time and resources do not also multiply proportionately, as was the case with this research, the overall quality of the multiple-case study research may fare poorly in relation to a single-case study research. Thus, based on both theoretical and pragmatic

considerations, a single open-ended case study design was chosen for this research.

By February 2003, I had formulated a research design within a thesis proposal. It contained a review of the literatures that the thesis would converse with, the gaps in them, and the research questions stemming from them that the thesis would address. It was important to find the gaps that the thesis would seek to fill in order to ensure that one's efforts would be able to safely pass through the issue of research contribution that has perhaps wrecked many a research effort.

The research questions formulated tended to fall into the basic theme of my thesis: the communication constraints facing the poor in an interorganizational domain situated in a developing country. Following the advice of prominent qualitative inductive case study methodologists, these questions were broad and open-ended, fitting the nature of the inquiry which was exploratory aimed at generating theoretical insights (Mason, 1996; Patton, 1990; and Dyer Jr. and Wilkins, 1991).

During this process of my research design, I submitted an informed consent documentation to McGill University's Ethics Review Board, whose approval was needed before I would be allowed to interview human subjects. This procedure helped me in thinking and documenting my field procedures (e.g., who I would interview and how). The informed consent documentation together with my thesis proposal meant that I had a case study protocol. According to Yin (1989), it is important to have such a documented protocol to increase the case study's overall reliability. A written protocol enhances the transparency of the research and facilitates future researchers in following the path that led to the research design.

*Data Collection*

Negotiating Access & Field Study Logistics

Armed with my case study protocol, I proceeded to Pakistan on February 29, 2003. It had been two years since my pilot study. Many of the people I had interviewed, particularly the Sialkot office employees of SCF and UNICEF, had

moved. In fact, these organizations had wound up from the project. The industrialists, I felt, would vaguely remember me but I would now need to produce credentials they would find solid. Also, they had become less important as the aim of my study was to listen and represent the themes and issues relating to and hopefully from the perspectives of soccer ball stitchers located at the bottom of the global supply chain.

The time between February and end of April 2003 was spent negotiating access to the site. LUMS proved extremely helpful in this endeavour. They had, at that time, recently started an NGO training program with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funding. As a result, LUMS had extremely good links with the NGOs active in all of Pakistan, including the ones working on the soccer ball project, as several of their executives and grassroots organizers had participated in the many programs for NGOs that LUMS was running as part of this CIDA-funded NGO training program. The faculty knew these NGO personnel on a first name basis and quite happily contacted them on my behalf and were able to get from them commitments to help me with my research, which I was to find thankfully quite genuine.

There were other ways in which LUMS helped with negotiating access. A senior faculty member, holding one of the top administrative positions there, was related to a senior-ranking army officer of the Pakistan military stationed in Sialkot. He called his brother-in-law, who, being quite a gifted intellectual himself, was quite keen to assist me in my research. He basically put the resources of his office, including his Military Intelligence Unit (field staff and jeeps) at my disposal. While I did not use the Military Intelligence operatives for interview access in villages for obvious reasons that they would scare the interviewees, they nevertheless proved invaluable in taking me through the Sialkot district, especially the border areas where access was often restricted for civilian vehicles. Thanks to them, I was able to go see the remotest nooks in the district that immeasurably helped me get an overall feel for the site as well as get close to it so I could begin to get a sense of things and people there. A sense of 'how they feel, smell, seem' critical to case study research (Mintzberg, 1979).

Finally, my own former supervisor at LUMS, for whom I had served as a Research Associate, knew extremely well one of the key owner-managers of one of the largest sporting goods manufacturing and exporting concerns in Sialkot. His family business enjoyed a high reputation in Sialkot for their corporate social responsibility. This owner-manager also proved extremely valuable in helping me get in touch with a relative in charge of the firm's social responsibility projects. From this individual I obtained a wealth of information.

I arranged to have the LUMS' NGO and corporate sources be contacted not only by senior LUMS colleagues but also by my Sialkot Pakistan military contact who also knew them. I was basically bringing as much fire power as I could muster to establish my credibility and legitimacy to bear on the organizations I was interested in so that they would be willing to accommodate me. The strategy worked. With referrals from LUMS and the Pakistan military, together with my own credentials of being an Oxbridge graduate, educated in the best private elite schools in Pakistan, having a father who had been a senior superior services officer in the Pakistani Government Service, and knowing illustrious feudal and industrialist families on a first name basis, meant that the doors of access did not just open. They nearly blew off their hinges. I was as establishment as can be and, thus, the establishment of trust was easily forged between the organizational members and me. I say nearly blew off, for though I got access to extremely privileged information (e.g., internal emails and faxes), the organizations still kept a few documents that they did not allow me to copy such as some accusatory letters written by one organizational head to another. Thus, I got much more information than I possibly could have expected but, as is true with any research, not all that is yearned for by a researcher.

During this time (February-April, 2003) I was only able to make one trip to Sialkot (March 22-March 27, 2003). I took the train, which was to be my most favoured mode of transport because of safety it provided from both bandits and road accidents. Also, the train allowed me to see much of Sialkot district, especially its southern part, as it snaked through that district on its way to Sialkot city. In that trip, I spent about five consecutive days introducing myself to the

sources that had been lined up for me by LUMS and the Pakistan military. I also interviewed a stitcher who worked for Nike's soccer ball supplier. During this trip, the Military Intelligence gave me good access to their vehicles, and I travelled extensively in the district and truly gained appreciation for my drivers, trained by the Army's Signals Corps, who drove me in their jeeps over what appeared to be un-passable rural paths.

The Pakistan military also provided me with accommodations at an army mess during this trip. Quite luxurious it was with air-conditioning, satellite t.v., phone, a study, and two personal attendants available 24-7 for me. I, nevertheless, decided not to tax the military for accommodations as well as the transport they were providing me, lest they feel I be too great a burden and revoke both these essential privileges that I needed for my research. I wanted to use the transport facilities of the military which meant I had to make alternative arrangements for my lodging. The latter was resolved when an extremely dear friend of mine, from my McGill undergraduate days, reacquainted me with a LUMS MBA graduate who was running his own quality control firm in Sialkot. He had come to Sialkot in 1996 and worked three years in the quality department of one of Pakistan's largest leather exporters (Leather Field) based in Sialkot. His firm now represented a major Japanese buying house of Leather Field ensuring that the shipments met the Japanese quality standards. He was an important man for Leather Field and, in his years there, had also developed excellent contacts of the owners of that firm and their cadre of senior executives. He promised to use his personal influence with them and in my next trip I was provided accommodations in one of Leather Field's guesthouses that served as weekday residences for its executives who would commute back to Lahore during the week-ends to be with their families. The guest-house was an odd structure reflecting new-wealth and tackiness. Resembling a two-storied Georgian Mansion but with just a tiny square patch of glass in front, it had eight air-conditioned bedrooms with attached baths plus a wide dining room and two giant lounges. Of course, the cook slept on the floor in one of the lounges and the night-watchman quietly napped on the *charpai* in the drive-way. This was to be my residence for my thesis field work. Quite

comfortable except for the cold showers in September and October. The geysers just did not work and were still getting fixed the day I was leaving the field after having completed my study.

This five-day trip had been a useful one. I had negotiated access, secured transport and a promise for lodgings that later was made good. As well, I found office space in one of the organizations where I could conduct interviews. It was a good location for my field research office as it was situated near a major artery and a few minutes' walking distance away from one of the main NGOs involved in the project and about the same distance from the office cum residence of my friend who had arranged my accommodations. I went back to Canada to teach summer courses and was expected back in the field by early July 2003.

July 2003 was spent waiting for lodging arrangements complicated by the fact that my friend, who had promised to arrange my accommodations with Leather Field, had gone to Far East Asia and would be back towards the end of the month. So I waited for his arrival and he quickly arranged accommodations for me upon my arrival. In the meanwhile, I read a chapter from the published dissertation of Anita Weiss (1991) that discussed the history of Sialkot's sporting goods industry — perhaps the only academic work written specifically on that subject in the English language. I also re-read various works on methods (e.g., Patton 1990; Berg 1998; Mason 1996; and Yin 1989) taking copious notes. Just when I thought I was able to go, I fell sick and lay bed-ridden for almost all of August. It was on September 4, 2003, lugging my methods texts, that I returned.

## Operationalizing Research Questions

From September 4, 2003 to October 15, 2003 I was in the field collecting data for my thesis. The first thing was to operationalize the main constructs of my research: interorganizational domain; communication processes; and poor and powerless groups/weak stakeholders (what I had referred to as the subalterns). The interorganizational domain was to be the Sialkot soccer ball child labour project. A domain, according to interorganizational collaboration literature, is defined as consisting of a problem or an issue and a set of organizations that have

an interest or stake in that problem (Gray and Hay, 1986). In the case of the Sialkot project, there were many organizations that had a stake in the soccer ball child labour issue from labour rights advocacy groups in the US (e.g., International Labour Right Fund) to the municipal government in Sialkot. Thus, a sharper conceptualization was required. Following the suggestion of Patton (1990) that when overwhelmed by field complexity, go back to the main themes of your research, to get clarity and resolution, I did that and realized that what I was interested in was understanding the dynamics currently unfolding in this domain in the local site of Sialkot itself as, after all, I was trying to illuminate the social issues dynamics unfolding at the bottom of the global supply chain involving the other. Thus, the aspect of the Sialkot project that was relevant for the research was what was happening on the ground in that local site. In terms of defining the domain, this meant that the set of actors pertinent to the research would be the organizations present in Sialkot working on this project, and the soccer ball stitchers who were the weakest of all groups in this domain.

The next step was identifying which organizations were involved with this project. Following the standard practice of mapping interorganizational domains, one defined the boundaries by asking the organizations which other organizations they considered to be part of the domain (Phillips et al., 2000). Starting with the International Monitoring Association for Child Labour (IMAC) that was directly involved in the Sialkot project as it was responsible for monitoring work-places to ensure child free production, as well as monitoring all the other organizations involved with the social side of the project (i.e., prevention of child labour and rehabilitation of stitcher families), I was given a list of organizations that IMAC felt were currently part of the soccer ball child labour project. In the weeks that would follow, I would go to each of these organizations and ask the people I would interview to provide me with names of organizations that they felt were part of the soccer ball project. I found the same set of names that IMAC provided me. Only in two instances were different organizations named that were not part of the IMAC set. At that point, I felt that my respondents had been misinformed given that the weight of evidence that I had collected did not support their claims.

Nevertheless, for sake of completeness, I went to these organizations and learned that they themselves did not view themselves to be part of the soccer ball project.

In terms of identifying subalterns, they were the soccer ball stitchers (henceforth referred to as stitchers) based on my research (both field and archival). Labour laws did not apply to them for they were not permanent employees of factories but temporary workers. Furthermore, their social standing and pay were the lowest among all classes of workers in the soccer ball production process. The stitchers were, to use Fanon's (1965) felicitious phrase, 'the wretched of the earth' as far as the soccer ball project was concerned.

When one went further delineating stitchers, one realized that, at a first order of approximation, there were three types. The child stitchers (below the age of 14) and male and female adult stitchers.[2] Of these three, the last among equals were probably the women and the children. I decided to operationalize my subaltern in terms of adult-female stitchers. First of all, the children were not in a position to provide me with much of the information that I needed. For example, there was no point in asking a 9 year old in 2003, what the situation was for stitchers in pre-1996 prior to the child labour issue and how do you evaluate the current situation as compared to the pre-child labour issue era. Also, in terms of agency, female adult stitchers were more fruitful for exploration. The project itself had a heavy focus on protecting the welfare of adult-female stitchers as the project organizations had linked the welfare of the children to the welfare of their mothers. Whereas participation of the children in the project could be dismissed on grounds that they were not mature enough, the same argument could not hold for adult female stitchers. Thus, in terms of theorizing about a weak and powerless agent that has the most potential to make its voice heard in a social issues domain given the central position accorded to it by key organizational players, yet is unable to do so or have its most important interests reflected in the domain, the choice of female adult stitchers was, it could be argued, an

[2] In 2003, approximately 95% of Sialkot's soccer ball industry production was being monitored and found to be child labour free by ILO (IMAC, 2003). The child stitchers interviewed in this study belonged to the remaining 5% of soccer ball production that was not being monitored by ILO.

appropriate one. Male stitchers and child stitchers were also interviewed but emphasis was placed on ensuring that the significant number of stitcher interviews would be with adult female stitchers. This meant that when I would elicit information about stitchers from my respondents, I would ask about stitchers as a group in general as well as more specifically about women stitchers in order to more finely differentiate my data on stitchers.

The last construct that I felt needed sharpening was the notion of communication. There are a myriad forms of communication from silent body language to noisy mass public demonstrations. For the purposes of this thesis, communication that I was interested in had to do with spoken and written public use of language. Thus, I was not interested in barriers to communication in private space (e.g., within the household) but with those related to communication in public space (e.g., a plea to a NGO representative).

Identifying Data Sources

The next stage involved identifying the data sources. Following the advice of Yin (1989) and Mason (1996), I constructed a table of three columns. The first column contained the main theme of the thesis (i.e., communication constraints of weak stakeholders in problem domains located in developing countries) and the questions to be explored. The next column contained sources and methods. The third column contained explanations. As I started writing tentative explanations to the questions in the first column, I began identifying possible sources of obtaining the evidence for my explanations. For example, I began giving explanations to the communication constraints question. As I wrote, for example, gender as a communication constraint, the source would then recommend itself. In this case, I could find out whether gender was an issue by talking to NGO representatives, stitchers, particularly women, and by my own observations. Moreover, the first column of this table, where I had to list questions that would assist me to investigate my theme, helped me in developing my semi-structured interview protocol. This consisted of the major theme (stated above) with a quiver of open-ended questions crafted to explore this theme fully with my interview subjects.

For example, under the theme of communication constraints, a sample of such open-ended questions were: (i) In your experience, what problems are faced by stitchers, particularly women stitchers?; (ii) what complaints do they make to you?; and (iii) how do stitchers, especially women, make their voices heard regarding some issue or problem that they find disagreeable overall and in this project? As the interviews progressed, constant iterations were made between the protocol and the interview transcripts. The latter suggested new avenues of exploration and they were incorporated in the protocol (e.g., questions of work-related illness and drug addiction were added to the protocol when they came up in subsequent interviews and were not part of the protocol as originally formulated).

## Field Interviews

*Interview Sequencing Strategy.* Having reasonably operationalized the thesis's themes and questions, the time to do thorough field interviews had arrived. There were basically two groups that were to be interviewed: the organizations involved in the domain and the female stitchers. An interview sequencing strategy was devised whereby the organizations would be interviewed first and then the stitchers (for breakdown of respondents, see Appendix B).

The main reason for this sequencing strategy was that I felt the organizations to be an extremely useful source for obtaining rich information about stitchers so that when I would go to the latter, I would have a sufficient grasp of their context to make my interview sessions with them as rewarding as possible. The NGO personnel, especially the social organizers and community mobilizers, have been dealing extensively and intensively with stitchers for over five years. They, thus, would be of significant help in learning about the problems facing stitchers as well as the ambit of their agency in trying to overcome these problems and the constraints that these subalterns face in those attempts to do so.

Such information, as it happened, assisted me to get into the weltanschauung of stitchers, especially as two of my informants turned out to be

ex-stitchers, helping me to refine and sharpen the questions that I would pose to them. Stitchers, as I was to learn later, often were living hand to mouth and would not be able to give me much time as a few hours of lost output could well mean going to bed with a half-empty stomach. Thus, it is well I chose this sequencing strategy, as thanks to the wealth of information on stitchers that I obtained, I was able to utilise well whatever little time the stitchers generously donated to me by asking pertinent questions. Furthermore, during these interviews with the personnel of the project organizations, I was able to find key informants for my research that later would play a crucial role in serving for me as bridges to the stitchers as the latter often respected and trusted them. Without the help of these key informants, it would have been difficult to get access to stitchers in an atmosphere of trust where they were comfortable to open themselves to me.

Lastly, as it turned out, knowledge of the stitchers familiarized me with their lingo and jargon (e.g., the term *bhan lagana* means the stitching of the last six panels of a soccer ball considered the most complex part of the entire stitching procedure). Employing such terminology in my discussions with stitchers helped establish rapport with them by signalling to them that I was not a clueless outsider and they, thus, would take me more seriously thereby improving the quality of responses I would obtain from them. Based on my field experience, the importance of rapport stressed in methods texts cannot be understated for getting authentic responses from subjects (Patton, 1990).

Apart from obtaining information about stitchers, there were strong theoretical reasons for interviewing the organizations. Firstly, conducting interviews in the organizations would help me to get a feel of the structures found in them. This would assist me in ascertaining the structural organizational barriers to participation that stitchers would face. The response that policy makers in these organizations would give would also help me explain questions related to lack of direct stitcher participation in the project as well as understand the perspective of the local office heads of these organizations.

*Interview Locations & Approaches.* The personnel of the organizations active in the Sialkot project were interviewed in a wide spectrum of locations ranging from their offices to the backs of their motorcycles as they dodged, twisted, weaved and ducked their way through congested traffic, including bullock carts, displaying a piloting skill that would have impressed Battle of Britain's Spit-Fire aces. Both informal conversational interview and the general interview guide approaches were used. In the case of the latter, notes were taken during the interview trying to record as much as possible the verbatim content of the interviews. Early on in the first interviews I detected considerable unease among subjects with regard to tape-recording our sessions so I decided to abandon the idea of tape-recording and did not mention it with subsequent interviewees in order to avoid any feelings of discomfort at the onset of the interviews.

In the case of informal conversations, a write-up of the interview was undertaken immediately after the informal conversation trying to, as best as one could, record verbatim the contents of the informal conversation.

*Interview Mechanics.* Interviews with the personnel of the organizations would begin around 9 a.m. and would go typically till 7 p.m. Average length of interviews was about 90 minutes. The verbatim contents of the interviews (i.e., what I refer to as the interview notes) were written in a notebook and when it finished in another notebook which I labelled respectively as *Rough Notebooks I* and *II.* After returning home, I would have my dinner at around 8 p.m. I would rest for one hour and then begin re-transcribing more legibly my interview notes into another set of notebooks after I had first written up in them any informal conversations that I had that day (usually a maximum of two per day, often occurring at the end of the day). These second set of notebooks were labelled as *Interview Notebook I, II,* and *III.* The next day the same routine was followed.

The advantage of re-transcribing my interview notes led to an extensive familiarization with the data. It helped me refine my questions in the protocol as well as assisted me in identifying new lines of inquiry (e.g., to learn about the veracity of heroin smuggling in soccer balls by exporters that often came up in

discussion on corporate social performance). Also, by doing this every day, I was beginning to get a sense of the field, at what points there was convergence and divergence, forcing me, in my next batch of interviews, to reconfirm the convergence and try to explain the divergence by soliciting from my new set of interviewees information that would help me understand these convergences and divergences of my data. The drawback was that I had little time to maintain a field notes journal where I wrote my own observations about my field experience. Interviewing was exhaustive work and I worked about 16 hours a day finishing around 1 a.m. retranscribing the interviews done and reading the documents I had collected that day. Thus, I had little energy to maintain a field journal.

As it turned out, an informal field diary or journal was kept. Questions and new lines of inquiry that in theory would be written in a field journal were jotted down in my interview protocol as they emerged from the interviews. In terms of writing descriptions about the Sialkot setting, urban and rural, there were photographs in the studies I had collected as well as video documentaries on the project. So, there was little need to visualize the site from written text when it had largely been done in photographs and video documentaries. I would record in the interview notes, on the margins, observations when something was observed about the interviewee and the site that was striking or noticeable (e.g., tone of sadness in voice). Sometimes these observations would be written in the text of the interview notes themselves, rather than in the margins. In this case, I enclosed such comments within square brackets to differentiate my thoughts from the contents being supplied by my interview subject.

In terms of the actual mechanics of an interview, it would follow more or less the following format. The interview would begin with small-talk on the latest cricket match or films to ease the subject. After that, the subject would be asked for his informed consent. An informed consent form would be given for his signature. At the same time, the subject would be informed that if he so wished, the informed consent form could be administered orally and he would only need to give his verbal consent. Apart from three subjects who signed the informed consent form, all others preferred the oral route. In that informed consent

procedure would be, inter alia, a brief introduction about me and my research (see Appendix C for the written and oral informed consent procedure protocol administered to the subjects of this research).

After the informed consent procedure, questions would begin with the interview subjects being asked about their assessment of the project, its strengths and weaknesses. Since the question was directed at the project and not specifically at them or at their organizations, it was easy to instill a sense of comfort in them. Shortly afterwards, the interview protocol would be used to elicit information from the subjects with regards to the questions relevant to the thesis. Since I was questioning them about stitchers, particularly women stitchers, I had to ensure that I consistenly employed this unit of analysis. Thus, my questions were not about a stitcher or a stitcher they knew, but rather about the group of stitchers, particularly women. In their answers they would often illustrate or explain their answers about stitchers as a whole by drawing on their own personal experiences with stitchers. Often they would tell stories about stitchers that provided me with extremely rich and thick data.

During an interview, probing would often be done to deepen the response of a subject. Probes would often be in the form of detail-oriented questions, the basic '"who," "where," "when," and "how" . . . that are used to obtain a complete and detailed picture of some activity or experience.' (Patton, 1990: 325) (e.g., 'You mentioned that Save the Children became involved with the project; could you tell me when?'). Apart from detail-oriented probes, elaboration probes were often used. Articulated both in body language (e.g., gentle nodding of the head now and then) and verbally (e.g., 'Could you say some more about the lack of co-operation between the project organizations.') the aim of these probes was to encourage the respondent to keep talking on a particular point that appeared to to be quite exciting in terms of deepening understanding of the case study. Finally, clarification probes were used, at a few places, where I did not fully understand what the interviewee was saying or where I wanted to ensure that I had correctly recorded the interviewee's statement. This probe took the form of 'Let me restate what you have told me so that you can tell me that I have recorded accurately

your point.' Clarification probes were also used in follow-up interviews which were done wherever possible.

In all these interviews, rapport was important in getting honest, authentic answers. Though my powerful establishment credentials had given me access to these organizations, I now had to quickly close the power-distance gap so that my respondents would treat me as one of them and give me sincere answers. A variety of techniques was used to establish rapport based on the Islamic principle of giving gifts as a means of increasing the bonds of love between the hearts. I gifted my respondents with the two commodities I had: time and some expertise. For example, in one organization, I edited a report on a project and gave them articles on child labour that they found useful. In another organization, I gave a lecture to the staff on institutional theory. These rapport improvisation techniques worked. For example, after demonstrating superbly my incompetence at a game of badminton with a NGO's staff, a person walked up to me and said 'You have [been] interviewing us about the project and stitchers, let me tell you how it is as I was a former stitcher.' This was the break that I was looking for. The person turned out to be not only a former stitcher but also was one of the big subcontractors (i.e., individuals who supply soccer balls for stitching to stitchers and earn commission per ball stitched from soccer ball manufacturers)[3] for large soccer ball export firms. He gave me a wealth of information about the world that stitchers inhabit and would serve as a vital bridge connecting me to the stitchers he knew as well as the communities of subcontractors who interfaced between the stitchers and the Sialkot firms who produced for big brands such as Nike and Adidas. Another indication of rapport was the length of the interviews. Some were about 3 hours while the average was about 90 minutes. It is hard to voluntarily spend this much time with someone with whom you feel discomfort.

*Interviewing Stitchers: Special Accessibility Challenges.* Finishing with the organizational side, interviewing began in the villages with stitchers in the first week of October 2003. I was keenly aware of the dangers of respondent bias

[3] The word 'contractor' is often also used interchangeably for the word 'subcontractor' in Sialkot.

where, out of fear or insecurity, vulnerable respondent groups give only politically correct responses (Scott, 1985; 1990). It was for this reason that I did not use Military Intelligence operatives as my bridges to the stitcher communities. When I had entertained using them, one operative had enthusiastically jumped at this call of duty and had said '*Sahib* [respected sir], just tell us when, we will round up the villagers and you can get the information you want from them.' When it was pointed out that this may bias the findings, the operative expressed puzzlement and said in a slightly irritable way, '*Sahib*, do you want the information, or don't you?'

A similar exchange had occurred earlier with another operative from Military Intelligence. During my March 2003 trip to Sialkot, when I was scouting the Sialkot district to tune myself to its rhythms, I had been introduced by a Military Intelligence operative, who was doubling as my driver, to a stitcher, a close friend of his, right at the forward lines of defence of the Pakistan infantry near that country's border with what Pakistanis call Indian-occupied Kashmir. Firstly, I did not know we were so close to the border that witnessed on a fairly frequent basis a regular exchange of artillery fire. I can still remember the glee on my guide's face when he said '*Sahib*, just beyond the tree lines, sits the Indian infantry. We are now within their mortar range.' I, of course, did not beam at hearing this news but was concerned with how quickly I could bravely run away from that site. Nevertheless, things did look quiet on this Eastern front. So I decided to proceed with the interview. When introduced to his stitcher friend, who worked for Nike's soccer ball supplier, the first words he said to me were '*Sahib*, I will tell you whatever you want me to say.' At that point, my guide intervened telling him it is okay, *sahib* is one of us, and you can tell him honestly what is going on. This, however, took about ten minutes of convincing before I felt the stitcher was somewhat comfortable with me. Such experiences with Military Intelligence suggested they may not be the best bridges to the stitchers.

The bridges that I used came largely from the friendships I had struck with the personnel of the organizations that I had interviewed. One was a former stitcher, a subcontractor, as well as a quality control manager of a large stitching

centre belonging to a Nike soccer ball supplier. The other was a field monitor for IMAC who had contacts with subcontractors through whom I got access to stitchers. The third was a lady social mobilizer for the microcredit agency who took me to meet stitchers that knew her well and trusted her. This is basically how I accessed the stitcher community.

I tried to avoid using sources of access that were employers of stitchers to be interviewed. Only in two instances did I deviate from this rule. In one case, I used a personal assistant of a family member of a prominent Sialkot business family who was responsible for the health and welfare programs the family business was running for their stitchers. This family member, an elderly woman, was known to be a vocal supporter of the stitchers employed in her family's business. She would be constantly fighting on their behalf for better facilities (e.g., fans in stitching centres) and financial assistance for their marriages. One of my key sources told me I should use her to get access to her family business' women stitchers as they really trusted and loved her and, therefore, knowing that I was being sent by her, would be quite honest with me. I trusted the judgement of that source and I was not disappointed. The interviews I received from the women stitchers had critical things to say about their employment conditions which could be taken to indicate that they were being honest in their responses. That was the only instance of using a factory owner source for accessing stitchers. The other instance of using an employer source was when I used a subcontractor to interview three of his female stitchers. It helped that the interviews took place in their homes away from the subcontractor and the subcontractor's representative who took me to the home of the three women but was not interested in the proceedings. Again, I felt the responses were authentic as they had critical content, describing the conditions of the female stitchers, and resonated with what I had learned about the stitchers from other interviews and reports.

Interviews with stitchers were conducted at their homes, sometimes with the entire immediate family, most of whom were involved in stiching as well, in a village school, in stitching centres both in and away from their villages, as well as in places outside their homes and stitching centres (e.g., on the side of a road). In

one particular case, having obtained permission to interview personnel of a Nike soccer ball supplier, I visited a stitching centre unannounced with my guide who had been a quality control manager at that centre. Information about me had not been communicated to the stitching centre by corporate headquarters. Thus, when I interviewed the general manager and also the quality control manager of that centre, I could feel palpable tension and fear. They kept repeating they not heard about me from the corporate headquarters and were not comfortable giving me interviews but at the same time trusted my guide and wanted to oblige him by allowing me to interview them. This experience was useful in terms of tasting the sheer fear that runs through the veins of the employees of Nike's soccer ball supplier with regards to outside investigators. In such atmosphere of fear and mistrust, I could not hope to interview the stitchers there, who anyways I had learned from previous interviews, had been instructed not to speak with outsiders. Improvisation was required and so I waited just before the bend of the road beyond which lies that stitching centre. The bend of the road effectively blocks the vision of the centre and so safe from its gaze, my guide recognized an old stitcher of his, told him that we needed to interview him. The stitcher in turn called his mates, and we went to a house being constructed next to the bend of the road that was being used by that stitcher and his mates as their residence and there I had my interviews with stitchers of that centre. Through this, I was able to capture a rich contrast between what officialdom of that centre had told me and what the stitchers conveyed to me on roughly the same set of questions (e.g., freedom of unionization at that stitching centre).

Without these bridges, it would have been next to impossible to access stitchers. I tried cold-calling by visiting a village and seeing if I could get to stitchers myself. My Military Intelligence guide was ordered by me not to reveal his identity or retribution would be swift from his higher-ups for disobeying orders. Having taken care of this, I approached a village that had seen plenty of activities related to the project. I realized then how difficult it would be to gain access without bridges.

Villages in rural North Eastern Punjab are quite inaccessible. For example, the architecture of the villages in itself, denies access. The layout is in a shape of a pretzel, no beginning no end, tiny lanes that turn back on themselves and often lead to dead ends, what Sardar called 'a complex maze without plan.' (1998: 28). Istanbul's description by Melville and the sinking feelings it invoked in him that the city would be beyond the grasp of his comprehensibility, could well be evoked to describe my experience at the tiny village in North-Eastern Rural Punjab that evoked it:

> nothing stood apart and addressed itself . . . to the outsider, to the observing subject. There was no name to the streets and no street signs, no open spaces with imposing facades, and no maps. The city refused to offer itself . . . as a representation of something, because it had not been built as one. (Melville cited in Mitchell, 1988: 32).

The village had not been ostensibly built and designed, in a teleological sense, for this function of inaccessibility and incomprehensibility. Its layout probably grew organically. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that the architecture did serve this function perhaps in a subconscious and inadvertent way, or to borrow Mertonian terminology, in a latent fashion (Merton, 1968). One could not blame the villagers nor their architecture for trying to keep out outsiders given their experience with the latter, especially with the state interested in them largely in terms of extracting taxes and labour from them (Scott, 1998). There was good reason to be incomprehensible, for incomprehensibility meant less chances of extractive interventions from above as it usually hard to intervene in something that eludes one's understanding.

I, thus, relied on my bridges for taking me to the stitchers. Given the difficulties with accessibility, especially when interviewing Muslim women holding to traditional Islamic values of modesty and gender segregation with respect, I could not interview female stitchers on an individual basis. I had to interview them as the opportunity presented itself. Sometimes in groups of three, other times with their immediate family consisting of their father, mother, and a few younger siblings, and, in some occasions in groups of fifteen. In all my group

interviews, I consciously was sensitive to the threat of group-think and the danger of one voice dominating the others that may, thus, not reflect the diversity of views present in the assembled company. These issues were minimized by the roughly egalitarian culture that women stitchers have towards each other. In group interviews, there would be about three that would be answering my questions, with the rest nodding their heads. When someone disagreed, they would shout over their representatives to get their views heard. Such instances, as well as disagreements between the women stitchers that occurred during my interviews, suggested that the threats of false consensus or a monolithic voice masking diversity were largely avoided.

In the course of these interviews, I also ended up interviewing the subcontractors of stitchers though they were not the focus of my study. They provided good information that helped me understand the implicit moral compacts between them and the stitchers that shape the redistribution of surplus value socially produced and privately appropriated. Also content from them assisted me in evaluating later in data analysis, claims made about them by others not belonging to this group (e.g., NGO personnel) and, thus, added to my own understanding of the dynamics unfolding in the bottom rung of the global supply chain of soccer balls.

*Guiding Principles of the Study's Interviewing Process.* Having described the nuts and bolts of the interviewing process, I would now like to discuss the troika of principles that guided it: strategic sampling; theoretical saturation; and documentation. Strategic sampling is the principle in qualitative research that helps the researcher to explain who to interview (Mason, 1996). The identification is based on theoretical grounds, choosing those sources that are most relevant to and most appropriate for answering the questions posed in the research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Cobin, 1998). The theoretical rationale for choosing stitchers, particularly women, and the organizations involved in the Sialkot project, has already been provided above.

There was tremendous diversity within these two groups. Two of the organizations contained employees working on projects having little relation to the soccer ball project. As for stitchers, they were dispersed all throughout the district, some worked near homes, others worked in large stitching centres, and some had been exposed to the project's activities while others had not. Therefore, again, theoretical considerations had to be advanced to isolate who was to be sampled from this diversity.

In the case of organizations, based on the themes of the research identified above, the appropriate choices were the heads of the organizations, who could shed light on policy issues, and the grass-root mobilizers, who interacted directly with the stitchers, for the wealth of information they would have on the project and on the stitchers from the ground perspective.

With regards to the stitchers, based on my NGO interviews, I identified the area and the villages (basically the central and western part of a sub-district of Sialkot) that had seen the most intense project activities. Stitchers in those areas would have had the most intensive missionary work done on them by the project's agencies and, thus, would be in a position to evaluate the project, and reflect on the reasons that prevented them being part of the decision making process of the project. There was little theoretical justification in interviewing people who had little exposure to the project and asking them to evaluate it. Having identified the area, I then mobilized my bridges to get me access to villages and stitchers, particularly women, located there.

Next, after deciding to interview, is the question of how many. In quantitative research the answer is to have a sample size that can be statistically demonstrated to be representative of the population from which it is drawn (Yin, 1989). Unlike quantitative methodology, where one generalizes to a population, in qualitative studies one generalizes to theory much like an experimenter in a lab who perhaps with one experiment tries to extract a theory to explain his results and does not deal with the issue of trying to pick a 'representative' experiment (ibid). Thus, in qualitative method, one is not generating statistics that tell us about a population but trying to generate theoretical insights that teach us about

theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Therefore, one samples as many units as are needed till one is no longer learning any new insights and is observing phenomena already seen (ibid). When this occurs, one has said to have reached theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Cobin and Strauss, 1998).

In the principle of theoretical saturation is embedded the notion of variation. One hopes for variations in the units sampled so that the data that are culled contain variation. Obtaining data with variation is important because it adds complexity and nuance and, thus, richness to the findings. It also shows that the researcher has been somewhat successful in mapping the various dimensions of the phenomenon. Data without variation may illustrate that the researcher has not been able to deeply explore the phenomenon and identify its various dimensions. Variation is also important for when units, which are disparate in certain aspects (e.g., marital status) nevertheless produce the same results, the validity of the results is increased as if so many disparate sources are pointing to the same phenomenon, then it most likely must exist. On the other hand, when disparate units lead to divergence, then one is confronted with puzzles and paradoxes — solving these often generates fresh theory. For these reasons, variation in sources and data is important.

As far as the variation issue goes with regards to organizations, there the sampling strategy was to map the entire spectrum of the hierarchy (from top to bottom), interviewing both genders, to produce the greatest amount of variation so that when saturation occurs, the data contain much rich nuance and complexity. In the case of organizations, saturation was reached in some by interviewing the entire staff. In other places, saturation was reached after interviewing more than half of the staff involved with the soccer ball project. In the study, an alternate sequence between men and women was attempted so that when saturation would be reached it would be based on data provided by both genders. Otherwise, the saturation reached would be, in effect, not total saturation, but saturation for the particular gender sampled, begging the question that the saturation achieved was a partial one as the other gender may hold new insights not found with the gender sampled. Given the theoretical importance of gender in the study, particularly in

the case of organizational sources where as it did turn out that the female NGO interviewees were able to give more rich data on the issues of women stitchers than their male counterparts, as it was easier for them, in a gender segregated context, to develop relations with women stitchers, it was, therefore, important to alternate sequentially between male and female interviewees so that when no new insights were emerging (i.e., saturation was reached), one felt confident that the insights gained reflected the total experience of all the subjects and not just of one gender. It should, however, be pointed out that most of the staff of the project NGOs were predominately male and, thus, even with alternate sequencing between the genders, the majority of NGO personnel interviewed turned out to be men.

In the case of stitchers, it was not possible to know before hand whether one would be able to get variation for one just did not know who would be interviewed as for the stitchers it was largely driven by wherever one can get access. The sample ended up containing considerable variation. In the sample of stitchers interviewed were, inter alia, found men and women, married and single, adults and children, and those who worked in factories and stitching centres and those who worked at home. As it, thus, turned out the sample of stitchers contained variation producing rich data in terms of complexities, nuances, and creative tensions of divergent information that led to formation of insights. For example, different assessments on the value of education by stitchers led to the insight that they were using the same word to mean different things (e.g., functional literacy, school certification, job-guarantor, etc.) that showed that there were various dimensions to the term education as understood by stitchers.

Finally, the last methodological principle that guided the interview process was documenting the process itself. The first information of an interview that was written down contained its time and location of an interview, along with the demographic information about the subject (e.g., name, age, gender, educational qualifications, and professional experience). I also kept notes on methodology detailing the methodological choices I made and why. These were, however, not kept in one place but were found in my note-pads, at the back of the interview

books, in emails from the field with my supervisor and in a text record of an MSN chat session with the latter. Ideally, it would have been nice to keep the notes in one place but such was the nature of inquiry that notes were taken as the methodological issues emerged and were written on whatever source was available to store the decisions.

Apart from the desire to document the procedures to increase the transparency and reliability of the research effort (Yin, 1989), there was also a strong pragmatic reason for writing a biography on methodology. Firstly, it would aid in writing this section of the thesis which it certainly did. Also, I solve my puzzles by writing. My methodological puzzles reared their heads when I got to the field. How true was Orwell when he said in one of the best essays of English prose, 'Shooting an Elephant', 'that is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes.' (2000 [1936]: 20). When methodological issues were becoming muddled as I confronted them in the field, I thought through them by writing my thoughts about them like the rough work one does to experiment with solutions to an algebra problem. The advantage of this method, apart from giving me clarity and resolution to my methodological problems, was that it automatically documented the study's methodology of the interviewing process.

Documents

The other main source employed in this study for data collection was documents. Documents were both from primary (i.e., the project's participating organizations themselves) and secondary sources (e.g., websites, newspapers, magazines, popular and academic books, conference proceedings, academic journals, and video documentaries, both in film and in transcripts). Whereas secondary documents were public by definition, primary documents were public (e.g., a report commissioned by a project organization for public distribution) as well as private (e.g., memos, faxes, minutes of meetings, emails, drafts of policy papers and reports, written by the organizations to be used within the confines of the project).

*Collecting Documents in the Field.* Documents were obtained both from the field as well as outside of it. The principle that guided document collection in the field was promiscuity. It was hard to know, prima facie, what particular document would be relevant to the study. This is because any document, innocuous as it may well be, held the potential of containing one or two lines, what Chomsky calls a 'nugget' (Barsamian, 1986), that may substantiate a hunch or reveal, to use Goffman's (1969) imagery, the back-stage of frights, in-fighting, ulterior motives, and cover-ups that may throw into question the apparently solid and harmonious public performance being given by the project's organizational cast to interested third parties. Thus, one acted promiscuously chasing as many documents from as many sources as was possible.

The chase in the field was an interesting one. I would ask an organization permission to go through its records, selecting documents of interest or would request it to give me documents, particularly private ones for internal project use, that would help me in my research. With the exception of one case, they opted for the latter, giving me internal (e.g., emails) as well as public documents that they had on hand either published by them or by the other various partners of the project. It was quite surprising to learn that none of the project organizations maintained a proper historical archive containing their own public and private documents written over the course of the years spent in involvement with the project. They had a scanty collection of documents hailing from the early years of the project. Moreover, their own documents were scattered all over the field in the sense that public primary documents (e.g., reports) of one organization would be found not in that organization but in the offices of another organization.

Given my strong establishment credentials and the subsequent development of trust with the organizations, the hunt for documents in the field went smoothly, with the exception of the ILO. According to the project organizations, the ILO field office probably had a good archive, whereas they practically had none, with regards to whatever had been published in the project to date. ILO's Sialkot field office did not refuse access but simply said approval

was needed from Geneva which, at the time of this writing, has not yet arrived. I was particularly interested in obtaining from ILO the minutes of the meetings of the various project partners that was held on a monthly basis throughout the course of the project. I was especially keen on obtaining the minutes of the first meetings as I felt that they would help me in writing the history of the case, as several of the early key players who could have told me the early history of the project had died (e.g., Khurshid Soofi of Saga Sports, Nike's soccer ball supplier) or left the field (e.g., heads of SCF's and UNICEF's Sialkot offices).

This limitation was largely addressed by a prominent industrialist, who had and continues to play a leading role in the project, giving me access to his private records about the project. Of course, his private records concerning the project were stored in a filing cabinet, dumped there together with pages of invoices, faxes dealing with buyers about shipping orders, and other such exotic textual oddities. I had to skim and sift through literally thousands of pages found in that cabinet to find the nuggets in the rough. These nuggets turned out to be quite precious. I found drafts of policy papers, faxes, letters, emails and other such internal project documents written by the various project organizations as well as public reports published by organizations no longer in the field (e.g., SCF) overlooked during my pilot study. The industrialist's records also contained minutes of the meetings of the project coordination committee, especially the early phase. I was able to, thus, get the minutes of the project meetings held by the participating organizations from the start of the project meetings (May 1997) to December 2002. There was now no need to do a follow-up with ILO concerning my request for the said minutes of the project's early meetings.

I identified the documents from this expedition that I would need. All were mailed with the exception of a couple of letters. I should have written down the contents of the letters, knowing that they would most likely not be released due to their sensitive nature. However, I remembered them well. Thus, even if I did not have them with me, I was aware of the gist of their contents, and they, thus, did inform my study.

*Acquiring Documents outside the Field.* As for documents collected outside the field during the course of this thesis research, a variety of sources were employed. Throughout the research, google searches would be done on the internet looking for information regarding the project. Most of the internet searches were done during the time period between the pilot study and the main study. The searches operated on the following algorithm. I would start with certain key words e.g., 'child labour/child labor' and 'Sialkot'. Search results would be thrown up by google. I would go through them and if I found that a particular web document was useful, I would print it out. Printing these documents turned out, in hind-sight, to be a good practice for some of the documents I had printed from the web, which I used for my study, are no longer available today. While reading these web documents, I would come across clues containing names of organizations and reports cited in these documents that I felt would be relevant for the case study. I would investigate these clues by doing a search on them, reading the web documents that were identified, finding in these documents yet other clues which would begin another round of investigations. I would temporarily stop these investigations when I would not be seeing any new relevant content. After a hiatus of some months, I would begin again to see if new pieces of information had been added since the last series of investigations.

The other electronic techniques of document collection used were PROQUEST, PROQUEST dissertation abstracts, and Lexis-Nexis. Concerning the first two, key word searches were done following the same procedure as the above mentioned one employed for internet searches. As for Lexis-Nexis, I became aware of this database after returning from the field in October 2003. I needed to find corroboratory evidence of a story given by one of my subjects about Sialkot's soccer ball industry being involved in drug smuggling. After the internet and PROQUEST did not give any results, for some reason Lexis-Nexis came to my mind so I went to our library and did a search looking for information on soccer ball industry and drug smuggling. To my surprise, I found newspaper stories dealing with that issue (e.g., Willis, 1983).

Lexis-Nexis is probably the largest database of most of the world's major newspapers and magazines from 1980 onwards. I did two key-word searches 'soccer and Sialkot' and 'football and Sialkot'.[4] I figured that if there was a newspaper story dealing with my case it would be nearly impossible to write it without mentioning at least Sialkot or soccer or football. The two searches generated about 800 items each. Many of them overlapped and quite a few turned out to be irrelevant. There were, however, approximately about 294 newspaper stories and magazine articles that dealt with the soccer ball child labour issue. Ideally, I should have used Lexis-Nexis early on in my research. However, such is the nature of scientific discovery that, in practice, it is far more muddy and messy than the prescriptive linear sequential maps laid for it in theory.

Pakistani press is covered in Lexis-Nexis from 1998 onwards. I could not locate any electronic databases that covered Pakistani newspapers prior to that date. Since I wanted, for the sake of completeness, the conversation on this issue taking place in Pakistan, I chose to do, with a help of a research associate from LUMS, a manual search for the soccer ball child related matter in the issues of the Pakistan daily *Business Recorder* for the period 1995-1998 as after that point it is covered by Lexis-Nexis. This particular newspaper was chosen as it is the Pakistani 'Wall Street Journal' having the most likelihood of all the other Pakistani dailies of covering this child labour story and, given its ideological position, representing the public views of the local business community on this matter that they would like to convey to their stakeholders in Pakistan. This was useful as a foil to compare and contrast the versions of the stories the business community gave to me in my interviews, and their positions taken in the international media and publications (e.g., their trade association's trade magazines). It would have been better to survey more Pakistani newspapers but under the circumstances of time and resource constraints (it takes a long time to do manual searches), as well as the nature of the research not being primarily historical, I felt the choice made was, it could be argued, an appropriate one.

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[4] What North Americans refer to as soccer is referred to by the rest of the world as football. Thus, the word 'football' where used in this thesis is to be understood as being synonymous with soccer.

In terms of non-electronic sources, apart from the interviewees themselves providing me with documents or making me aware of them that I would later try to fetch, one of the best search tools for other documents for the case study was the documents themselves collected during the pilot and main studies. Some of these documents would be part of a series, in which case one looked for the other issues. Also, these documents would include references to documents (e.g., an edition of *Sportshop/News Bulletin* (news letter of the sporting goods industry) alluded to a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) report (1995) containing important information about the project. In both circumstances, to the extent that one was aware of these missing documents, one tried to find them while in the field. When one learned about documents after exiting the field or could not find them while there, in that case, for non-Pakistani sources, email would be used to request them. In most cases, the requests were heeded to the letter though in one instance I received a different document than what I had requested that, nevertheless, turned out to be useful. In a few cases no action was taken by the publishing organizations on the document requests (e.g., request for *Sportshop* issues, a trade magazine, published by the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)). At least, by making such requests, the study ended up being thorough in trying to explore and exhaust all possible leads that came into notice during the thesis research. As for the Pakistani sources, I was able to get most of the documents by asking my friends there and at LUMS to procure and mail them to me.

A Data Collection Limitation

To conclude this discussion on data collection, I would like to touch upon one limitation of the thesis with regards to the latter. That limitation deals with the issue of translation. As stated above, I spoke English and Urdu fluently. My writing speed in Urdu was, however, quite slow as I had not written formally in Urdu since graduating from high school in 1988. Thus, with regards to the interviews in organizations, in which the respondents spoke a combination of English and Urdu in their responses, I simultaneously would translate and write

their responses down in English. Where I could not find equivalent words in English, then I would write the original Urdu word in my notes. The danger of this simultaneous translation is that one may in translating be adding concepts or using words that are outside of the vocabulary of the respondent (e.g., 'workers are given not enough in terms of pay' translated as 'workers are exploited in terms of pay.'). I tried to be cognizant of this danger and did my best to do literal translations so that I would not be importing my own concepts that could mask or hide the concepts coming from the interview.

The language barrier was particularly poignant with regards to interviewing stitchers. The stitchers spoke neither Urdu nor English. They spoke Punjabi which has a grammatical structure as well as many words in common with Urdu. I certainly was not fluent in that language. I, thus, had to rely on my bridges to be my translators. I coached them in interviewing techniques going to great lengths to drill in them the notion that they were not to summarize but to translate verbatim the responses of the subjects. I also asked them to write the responses of the stitchers in Punjabi simultaneously while they were responding. After the stitcher had finished a response, I asked my translator to translate what had transpired using his notes. If the translation said to me was couched in a summary form 'e.g., she basically said . . .' I would then remind the translator to not summarize but tell me word for word what the concerned stitcher had said. After a few such exchanges with my translators that would happen at the beginning of the interview, they learned what was required of them and followed the desired instructions.

In the meanwhile, I had enough knowledge of Punjabi to follow the gist of the stitchers' statements. One reason for this was that, in some cases, the women representatives of a group could communicate largely in Urdu. At other times, stitchers would try to increase the use of Urdu words that they knew to make it easier for me to follow them. The good thing was that they understood Urdu well so that they could understand my questions, most of the time, without translation. I say this because the responses that would then come would be apt to the question that was asked.

During these interviews, I took my own notes as best as I could. Afterwards, I would have an exhaustive debriefing session with my translator asking the latter to translate and dictate to me the notes of the interviews which I then would write in my interview notes. I would use my own notes, a few times, to help my translator remember the contents of the interview session that he had not taken down (e.g., I would say 'Remember she said something about rainy season' and then the translator would say 'yes, she said in her words, "that demand for stitching labour fell during the rainy season."'). The debriefing session would also confirm that I understood the gist of the interview as whatever notes I took down were confirmed by the translator as being accurate. Translation was a challenge for the study but not an insurmountable one. A researcher who spoke Punjabi fluently would have obtained data from the stitchers that arguably would have been a bit more rich but it is unlikely that such a researcher would have found major insights beyond what was unearthed in this study, solely on the basis of conducting research where translation was not an issue.

*Data Analysis*

Revising Methods Texts & Preparing to Document Process

As can be seen from the above section on data collection, I was analysing and making sense of data as I was collecting them. However, this analysis was on the go, scribbling insights, themes of the data on my notes. A methodical, rigorous data analysis, guided by principles laid out for such a task by the canons of qualitative research, was carried out after I had left the field and returned to Canada in mid-October 2003.

Miles and Huberman state that 'we have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness.' (1984: 16). This could be easily seen by witnessing in method texts different understandings on issues and concepts of data analysis (e.g., how to generate valid findings). As Patton writes:

> There are no formulas for determining significance. There are no ways of perfectly replicating the researcher's analytical thought processes. There are no straightforward tests for reliability and validity. In short, there are no absolute rules except to do the very best with your full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study . . . strategies, guidelines, and ideas [of data analysis] are meant to be suggestive and facilitating rather than confining, comprehensive, or exhaustive. (1990: 372).

The scholars disagree on what constitutes data analysis and how to perform it. Thus, the first thing I did, as part of my data analysis, was to re-read their texts to learn about data analysis and extract from them the suggestions and ideas that I felt would take me to the heart of my data and produce valid defensible understandings of it. In data analysis, I relied heavily on Eisenhardt (1989), Mason (1996), Patton (1990), and Yin (1989). The last two were extremely helpful in guiding me through this process.

Data analysis began with the purchase of a spiral notebook to record the decisions made in this process along with the reasons and the time at which they were taken. It acted as a diary, trying to document the history of the data analysis process, a process that Eisenhardt calls 'the most difficult and least codified part' of building theory from case studies (1989: 539). Documenting the data analysis process was primarily done, as per the advice of Yin (1989), to increase the reliability of the study as the documentation served as a map that future researchers could use to retrace the steps taken on this journey. Another beneficial aspect of documenting this process was that it immensely facilitated this write-up.

Interview Coding

The next step was to code the interview notes. That is, to identify the patterns and themes found in the interview data. I decided, before sorting and organizing my entire data set, to do coding of the interviews while my memory was still fresh of the context of the interviews, while the dust of Sialkot's villages were still on my sandals. This is because remembering context, according to

scholars (e.g., Patton, 1990; Mason, 1996), and confirmed later by my own experience, is critically important in discerning meaning of and identifying themes in the interview data for meaning, as Geertz (1973) so brilliantly demonstrated, requires knowledge of context otherwise one may mistake a romantic wink for a nervous twitch if one is not aware of the context in which this rapid contraction and opening up of the eye is taking place.

Coding began with first collecting the interview notes (i.e., the verbatim transcripts of my interviews). This was easily done. The complete and legible interview notes were contained in three notebooks labelled respectively as *Interview Notebooks I, II* and *III*. They contained all the interview material in legible form except for three interviews which were contained in complete and legible form in *Rough Notebook I*, one of the two rough notebooks in which an interview was first recorded before being re-transcribed, with proper legible writing for future reading, in *Interview Notebooks I, II* and *III*. I felt that since the interviews in *Rough Notebook I* were legible there was no point re-transcribing them. Instead, post-notes were placed in the *Rough Notebook I* to indicate where the interview contents of these three interviews could be found. While the interview notebooks had been labelled, they had not been page numbered. This I now proceeded to do. Each individual interview notebook was page numbered. *Interview Notebooks I–III* contained respectively 210, 213, and 63 pages of data pertaining to the interviews. The pilot study interviews had already been converted to word document. The pages were numbered and they totalled to 35.

Completing the numbering and the labelling of the interviews, efforts were taken to more intensively familiarize oneself with the data, considered a necessary rite of passage to generate themes from them. According to Mason:

> your first question may be 'where will I get my categories from?' . . . so we will consider what generating indexing categories from the data might mean. In the first place, it means making sure that you are as familiar as you can be with your data – read them, study them, listen to them, think about them and the process of their production, sleep with them under your pillow if you think it will help. (1996: 120).

Mason's advice was followed barring the putting of my notes under the pillow. To further facilitate the familiarizing process, I began to re-read the interviews and write summaries of them. The summaries contained main points that emerged in the interviews with placement of stars besides what I considered to be key points or pieces of information relevant to my thesis' broad themes and research questions. As can be seen, here as well as before, there was constant movement between data, questions, and theory, where one progressed forward in the interview notes but every now and then made a loop back to questions and theory before proceeding again kind of like a child's dinky-car race-track which has these giant vertical loops like ferris wheels that the toy car goes through before returning to the race track and going forward.

By summarizing each individual interview, I began to see certain topics emerging from the data. In some interviews I found extensive discussions of NGO corruption while in others I found content dealing with unions. I now went back to my summaries and started noting down the topics they contained, or in other words, subjects that they discussed. The aim was to exhaust the subject universe of my interview data by identifying all the possible subjects contained in it. Whether those subjects were initially related to my thesis questions, was not my concern here for I wanted to see the entire universe of my interview data. Once the universe had been mapped, I could later decide to focus on those planets (i.e., themes) most germane to my thesis journey.

About 19 topics/subjects were initially identified. The stage had now been set for intensive coding. An excel worksheet was created where the 19 topics/subjects were put in separate columns. I took the first interview read a chunk of text in it, discerned its theme (e.g., talking about low wages) and then slotted that chunk of text by typing its contents in the column containing the topic that was reflected in it (in this case the column containing the topic 'wages'). Book number and page number (e.g., I3 representing Interview Notebook I, page 3) were added to the chunk of text so that I would know for future retrieval purposes from where the text chunk came. I did this for the rest of the interview

typing chunks of texts into the various columns in the worksheet that corresponded with the themes found in the text. When I had finished, I had a worksheet containing information dispersed in an area that was about 15 rows high and about 19 columns wide. The rectangle formed on the worksheet was labelled as interview number 1 with the rows representing the interview number and the columns representing the topics. Starting on a fresh row, separated from the contents of interview 1 by a horizontal line, the same intensive coding procedure was followed for the next interview.

After coding interview 9, coding was stopped to take stock of what had transpired and to ensure that I was consistently coding (i.e., that I was following a consistent algorithm for coding my data). I had started with 19 topics or columns (e.g., unions) and had added by the time interview 9 was finished another two themes or categories (e.g., health i.e., work-related illnesses) plus miscellaneous. They had emerged thanks to coding line by line that allowed me see more deeply and finely into my data. Moreover, the resulting 22 topic categories (including miscellaneous) were placed in the columns based on the order in which they had emerged. As such they did not reflect any thematic grouping for you had unions that dealt with the issue of voice sitting beside NGO reporting that dealt with content commenting on the veracity of NGO reports. These categories needed to be thematically grouped so that one could see in one place the different aspects pertaining to a particular theme (see Appendix D for the list of topic categories thematically organized).

Finally, it appeared that I had been somewhat consistent in coding. I seemed to identify text chunks belonging to various categories by looking either at key words of the category contained in the text chunk that gave me a clue to the category to which it belonged. Alternatively, where no such key words were present, I would look at the context in which the interview chunk was generated (e.g., content revealing dissatisfaction with work of an NGO employee that was generated in the context of questions asked about the overall assessment of the project) helped me place the text chunk in the most appropriate place. The fact that I had followed an interview guide helped me find the context, as I could tell

from my notes, that a particular chunk was asked during a discussion on project evaluation because it appeared early in the interview when I would pose the project evaluation questions (see Appendix E for an extract from the interview coding worksheet).

In some cases, the interview chunk fit or addressed several topic categories. Here context was important for judgement. It would be placed based on the context of discussion in which it was generated. For example, a text chunk pointing out misreporting by NGOs could easily fit the topic category 'Reports'; it could also fit the category 'NGO corruption'. Since it was generated during a discussion of NGO reports (dealing with the theme of text production), it was placed in the category created to house such contents called 'Reports'. A comment was placed that this text chunk also was relevant to the NGO corruption category to help recall this link later. At other times, there was ambiguity and the text chunk was copied and identically placed in the topic categories reflected in it. Lastly, with respect to coding, up till the sixth interview, I had not placed the exact text in the various columns but just its main message (e.g., wages stagnant). From the seventh interview, I had stopped summarizing and started placing the direct contents of the texts which I found far more useful for later analysis as it gave me more content to understand the chunk of text than the two to three word description of it. For example, in my first interview, my informant had told me a rich story about an ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, an industrialist, and how he dealt with labour. I coded that story in three words 'Nawaz Sharif story'. Later I would forget what that story was about and would have to dig it up from my notebooks. Had I written the contents of the story I would have been saved the trouble of going back to my notebooks to figure out what was meant by the 'Nawaz Sharif story'. Proceeding from the seventh interview, I had started putting the direct contents in the various topic columns. Doing so, I avoided for myself the hassle of constantly going back to original sources to decipher what the information (e.g., 'Nawaz Sharif story') meant.

Taking stock was of great benefit. I learned that I was coding by key word and context and this helped me to go more quickly go through the coding process

as I could now take a text, slot it into a category based on key word or context and then move on to the next text chunk with confidence in a consistent procedure. Also, reflecting on my coding efforts helped in another way. As I tried to make sense of my topic categories, I realized that many of them reflected five broad research themes (i.e., issues dealing with stitchers, particularly women, especially in connection with using communication processes to alter the social issues domain at the local site; issues of corporate social performance; text production; NGOs; and project evaluation). I looked at my topic categories and realized they were sub-themes of these broader overarching research themes. Thus, I grouped or placed all the columns dealing with topic categories that were related to stitcher issues next to each other and did the same for the other four overarching themes. That way, I now had a worksheet consisting of five slices with each slice representing one broad research theme containing columns housing all the topic categories that were related to it. I also had another column called miscellaneous to store content that I could not classify into any one of my topic categories and my five research themes (e.g., the information that the Military Intelligence had organized the last political elections in Sialkot).

Cleaning up the coding that I had done already (e.g., grouping topic categories under overarching themes), I started coding the rest of the interviews. By the time I had finished this ordeal, I had a worksheet about 22 columns wide and 2931 rows thick. Under each topic category were now found all the contents from all the interviews that dealt with that topic category. This was to be of great help when it came time for analysis for I could now see at a glance the entire breadth of debate on a particular topic category as well as the nuances or variation found in that debate.

While I was coding in the worksheet, I created another work sheet in which I began to write thoughts and insights that were surfacing during the coding exercise. I wrote these ideas down as they flew through my mind lest I not be able to remember them later. These ideas ranged over a wide terrain. Some were questions that had piqued my curiosity (e.g., how many soccer balls fit in one shipping container). Others were insights or ideas general in nature (e.g.,

'institutional elasticity', a thought about institutional theory lacking a discussion on elasticity or flexibility of institutions) or specifically dealing with my thesis content (e.g., 'communication is time consuming activity', suggesting that time can constrain communication). Again, during the coding process, true to the spirit of inductive research, there was constant movement back and forth between theory, research questions, and the data.

Organizing & Sorting the Data: Creating a Case Study Database

After finishing coding, the rest of the data (documents, a database, and four documentaries) were sorted and organized. This was a daunting task. In good qualitative research one ends up with a staggering volume of data (Eisenhardt, 1989). Mintzberg and McHugh (1985) for their study of the National Film Board of Canada looked at over 2500 movies, and this was only part of the evidence they had collected. This study also tried to live up to such illustrious predecessors. Apart from the over four hundred pages of interview notes, the study's data contained over 10,000 pages of documents including a quantitative database of an NGO containing basic demographic information for about 2000 stitching families. The documents were derived from a variety of sources, some of which were: newspaper stories; internal organization documents (emails, faxes, memos, letters, project evaluation reports, and minutes of meetings); US Department of Labor hearings; Spanish legal archives; public fact-finding reports and surveys published by both organizations involved with the project and those that were not; conference proceedings; popular non-fiction books; academic journals; and transcripts of video documentaries made about the Sialkot child labour issue. The list does not include the articles printed from the internet nor the four video documentaries obtained during the course of this study.

The above documents, including the documentaries, were catalogued with each one being given a distinctive alpha-numeric number. Following the guidelines of Yin (1989), each document was read and an annotated bibliography of it was prepared using the bibliographical software *EndNote*. The annotated bibliography contained basic bibliographic information together with a short

abstract of the document including its key terms and words. The exercise of preparing the annotated bibliography helped the research effort in a number of important ways. It made me familiar with the wealth of information contained in my documents and added to the store of knowledge about the case that was accumulating in my mind. It also facilitated the final write up of the case by simplifying access to the data as references to substantiate or illustrate a point, or to look for information pertaining to a particular topic (e.g., Pakistani labour law) was greatly facilitated by just typing the topic word in EndNote and it would produce all the documents that I had coded with that topic word.

All the documents together with the interview notes, notes on methodology, and the case study protocol were placed in a central location (i.e., a filing cabinet) according to their catalogue numbers. This filing cabinet was in effect the library of the case study, what Yin (1989) calls a case study database, containing the entire set of information pertaining to the case study. Not only did this case study database enhance retrieval of information, as one knew by catalogue numbers where the exact document containing the sought information was stored, but it also further increased, according to Yin (1989), the reliability of the study as all the data of the case was available in one location enabling other researchers to more effortlessly and directly access all the study's data, making it, thus, easier for them to review the evidence directly and not be restricted to the written reports.

During all these phases of collecting, coding, sorting, and organizing data, there was constant movement between research questions, the data, and the tentative answers proposed to the questions. Each informed and refined the other. From out of these iterations, emerged the findings, interpretations, and conclusions of the thesis. These can be found in the chapters that follow. How they came into being is described in the following section.

The Interpretation Process & Methodology's Trinity (Reliability, Validity & Generalizability)

Albert Hirschman (1977), in his exquisite monograph on the ideas that initially legitimised capitalism, *The Passions and the Interests*, records the following tale:

> In an old and well-known Jewish story, the rabbi of Krakow interrupted his prayers one day with a wail to announce that he had just seen the death of the rabbi of Warsaw two hundred miles away. The Krakow congregation, though saddened, was of course much impressed with the visionary powers of their rabbi. A few days later some Jews from Krakow travelled to Warsaw and, to their surprise, saw the old rabbi there officiate in what seemed to be tolerable health. Upon their return they confided the news to the faithful and there was incipient snickering. Then a few undaunted disciples came to the defense of their rabbi; admitting that he may have been wrong on the specifics, they exclaimed: "Nevertheless, what vision!" (1977: 117).

The above disciples' defence is a tempting one for one does away with the challenge of issues of validity by convincing others that one's explanations are true. Alas, this is not a thesis in Freidmanite Economics where issues of validity can be dismissed away with the waving of the magical assumption wand a la 'let us just assume our description of reality is true, and let us also, by the way, begin with assuming we understand reality.' This magical wand is not available for inductive case research. In its stead must be offered evidence to substantiate the study's validity.

*Data Quality.* A study's validity, according to Mason (1996), pivots around two questions: how good (i.e., accurate) are the data and how true is the interpretation. Interpretations are only as solid as the data on which they are based. If you give the most capable physician a wrong list of symptoms, her diagnosis or interpretation of the disease may be reached rigorously by being diligent and ensuring that all symptoms were considered, but it would still be wrong because

her diagnosis or theory fits data (i.e., the symptoms) that do not exist on her patient. She would be, to slightly paraphrase Keynes, not imprecisely right, but precisely wrong. Thus, ensuring good data is the first step towards realizing good interpretation that the latter is, at least, imprecisely right rather than being precisely wrong.

Good data, according to Yin (1989), revolve around having a robust research design and an equally strong data collection process. If one looks back at the study, one sees that, based on the criteria outlined by Yin (1989), a high quality research design was maintained throughout this research effort. Construct validity was achieved by operationalizing contructs to ensure that they adequately measured the phenomena of interest (e.g., subalterns were operationalized as stitchers, with a special focus on women stitchers). Internal validity was attained by anticipating possible alternative explanations (e.g., Sialkot business community's decision to phase out child labour stemming from moral, not economic reasons that using child labour will lead to bad publicity and hurt sales) and then trying to seek data in the data collection phase to verify them (e.g., asking business leaders their motives to phase out child labour) or doing the verification later in the analysis stage using all the evidence that had been collected in the study (e.g., examining internal company documents containing information about motives to phase out child labour). As for external validity that deals with issues of generalizability, the Sialkot child labour project, in many respects, had features generic to social issues cases in the other parts of the developing world and, thus, its results could be generalized to those contexts. For example, many social issues in the developing world typically involve NGOs and the business community collaborating to solve a business practice deemed unethical by Western consumers, an example of which is Nike's subcontractors in Indonesia working with a NGO like Fair Labor Association to ostensibly show that ethical standards are maintained in the workplace (Locke, 2002). Lastly, reliability (i.e., the ease with which the same study can be done over again by a later investigator) was realized by thoroughly documenting each step of the research process, by preparing, for example, a case study protocol and a case

study database, and also keeping a diary to document the decisions on methodology as they were made during the research, including their rationale.

To ensure good data, as stated earlier, a strong research design must be complemented by a data collection effort of equivalent quality. I tried to adhere to the three principles set out by Yin (1989) that make for a rigorous data collection effort: multiple sources of evidence were used so that findings could be corroborated from a variety of sources to achieve triangulation; a case study database to increase the reliability of the study; and a chain of evidence to link the theoretical discussions to cited portions of the case study database (the exact book and page number of an interview extract used in an argument). Any investigator can then see the derivation of the argument and not be in the unenviable position described by Miles and Huberman where: 'One cannot ordinarily follow how a researcher got from 3600 pages of field notes to the final conclusions, sprinkled with vivid quotes though they may be.' (1984: 16).

Apart from the above to ensure high quality interview data, I did my best to follow the guidelines of good interviewing techniques, especially those articulated by Patton (1990) and Berg (1998). Learning from Scott (1985), who carried a methods book into the field to guide his field study that became one of the classic works on peasant resistance, I too took my methods texts to the field. I read them avidly there, particularly scouring for information on interview techniques.

The revision helped me remember the lessons learned from my qualitative methods course and refreshed my memory on the major blunders to avoid while interviewing. I tried to avoid capture from such interviewing snares as asking leading questions, not writing down content that I felt to be 'implausible' instead of acting as an agnostic tape-recorder recording whatever was said, putting words in the mouths of my informants, using words without ensuring that what they meant to my informants was what they meant to me (e.g., avoiding situations like asking an old man of a village, 'do kids [meaning to you children under 14 years] stitch soccer balls' to which he would say yes [where kids meant to him anyone under 30]), or instilling fear in them – a method that my Military Intelligence

contacts often encouraged me to practice, enthusiastically offering to volunteer their expertise to help me in such interrogation techniques – whereby the subjects would just be interested in giving me not honest answers but answers they felt I wanted. Also, as discussed in detail above, I tried to solicit honest responses from my subjects by building rapport. However, one of the highest quality interviews that I ever did occurred when rapport actually failed.

In one interview in a village, rapport just collapsed, and I came to an inch of being thoroughly trounced by a stitcher who had become fed up of the various visits by outsiders to his village. I can remember that he has waving a soccer ball in my face as I was writing down his outburst while saying in my heart, 'keep going, this is really good stuff.' Of course, I had to dissipate the tension, at some point, for love of life and limb, and so I asked his brother how many children he [the brother] had. When he said nine, I queried, 'How did you manage that? Did you marry four women?' At that point, tension erupted into laughter. I asked a few more questions and then quickly exited lest I find myself punching a hard soccer ball with my face.

The moral of the high quality data enterprise is that it is one fraught with dangers. The best one can do is be cognizant of these traps and try to avoid as many as possible though there will be a few places where one may stumble but hopefully not fall. This is the ideal that I tried to reach for as far as possible given my constraints of time and resources (including my own abilities).

*Interpretation Quality.* Data quality is a necessary but not sufficient for valid interpretations. Valid interpretation requires much more, coming out of a complex process that eludes articulation. Reason and intuition, facts and vision, knowledge and experience, all these and more play their parts in the symphony of interpretation. Thus, describing linearly how one reached one's interpretations is as easy as attempting to pass a camel through the eye of a needle.

With interpretations, just as with interviews, I felt it was prudent to refresh the memory on basic mistakes that can occur when interpreting data. Thus, I read the texts and tried to be conscious of standard pitfalls in interpretations so as to be

the better to avoid them. I did my best to avoid such common mistakes, outlined by Eisenhardt (1989), as leaping to conclusions based on limited data (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973), being overly influenced by vividness (Nisbett and Ross, 1980) or by more elite respondents (Miles and Huberman, 1984), ignoring basic statistical properties (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973) and inadvertently dropping disconfirming evidence (Nisbett and Ross, 1980).

Knowing what not to do was important to do solid interpretive work. Equally important, or perhaps even more so, was knowing what to do. On this list, the first item is gaining familiarity with the data and, as I was to realize, the significance of this item for quality analysis cannot be overstated for it shapes your intuition about your study which becomes your guide as you wade through pages of information. To put it a bit more formally, by the time you have familiarized yourself with the data, that is after reading the entire data set consisting of over 10,000 pages of documents, hundreds of pages of interview notes, not to mention your own experience in the field, something forms in you that is called in analytic philosophy, a plausibility structure (Parrish, 1997). This is basically a sensibility that develops through intimacy with the data. This sensibility, the plausibility structure, counsels you as to what appears plausible, to be correct, to be true, and what appears as just the opposite based on all the information that you have read, understood and absorbed regarding your study. The plausibility structure is like the collected wisdom you gained on a venture that enables you to see towards its end, its beginning with much sharper clarity. Perhaps it was the plausibility structure that T.S. Eliot was describing in his poem, 'Little Gidding':

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time. (1943: V).

Data familiarization both during data collection and afterwards helped form this plausibility structure which became deeper as my relationship to my data became closer. A new piece of information was evaluated in relation to all I

had absorbed. This examination would tell me if it appeared accurate. I did this even during data collection. For example, during an interview, a female stitcher said stitching work is an honourable and respectable profession. This jarred with all testimonies that I had absorbed before which were pointing in the opposite direction. Perhaps, this is indeed reality. I came back to this issue later in the interview and asked her whether she would be willing to marry her daughters to soccer ball stitchers to which she emphatically replied 'No!' Perhaps, it was because they earned less relative to other occupations and not to the low status of stitching. So, a rival hypothesis to the low status stitching one, was advanced in the form of a question to her whether she would be willing to marry her daughter to someone with a pay lower than that of stitchers. To this question, she replied yes, citing low status of stitching as an important factor behind her position, contradicting her earlier statements, but now agreeing with my other interview data and documents.

The above is an example of one the principles Yin (1989) identifies for high quality analysis: that one's analysis should cover major rival interpretations. I tried to think of alternative explanations during data collection and afterwards so that major alternative interpretations could be ruled out in favour of the one that I found to be the most convincing. It was especially important to worry about and test alternative explanations while in the field for one may later find that one does not have the data to put them to the test. Thus, for example, when interviewing stitchers about the various channels of voice available to them, if they replied there are none, I would methodically go through a list of options (e.g., unions, politicians, subcontractors, etc.) to learn whether they had thought of these options and if they had then I could rule out a rival hypothesis that perhaps they said no out of ignorance of these other options and not because they had thought about these options and had found them infeasible.

One can easily detect from this discussion that interpretation involves evaluation. One feels like an investigator arriving at a scene of a crime where the witnesses to the events are the various interviews and documents collected. Not surprisingly, testimonies diverge. Often, they are complementary, adding to

nuance and richness much like an ear can testify a gun was shot and the eye can testify who shot whom. For example, reports can give facts and the interviews can shed light on why these facts were chosen. Sometimes, testimonies were contradictory but a resolution could be reached. For example, an observation by an NGO employee about stitchers which went against my plausibility structure was resolved by noticing the demographic of the NGO employee indicated that he had not interacted with stitchers and, therefore, he was not a competent source on this matter. Of course, there were the few occasions where one had Akiro Kurosawa's 'Rashomon' effect, where contradictory stories were told that appeared equally plausible. For example, an accusation of fraud in terms of misreporting and a counter explanation given by the defendant both had adequate arguments to justify their position. One informant had accused an NGO of showing funding given to families for this year when actually it had been given for a year before. This was a reliable source. The other, an equally reliable source, said such practice did not happen in the organization and it was quite likely that families often received in consecutive years the same amount of fundings. Of course, resolution could be obtained by asking the family in question itself about whether they received additional funding but time and resource constraints prevented this follow-up.

Making sense of this vast volume of data was greatly assisted by examining all relevant evidence, the other important principle that Yin (1989) states makes for high quality analysis. Triangulation, or the use of multiple sources, was deployed in ascertaining the plausibility of information contained in the data or an interpretation derived from them. If different sources (e.g., NGO reports, corporate documents, stitcher interviews) with different motives and interests, were all making a similar argument, then that argument appeared to gained validity for so many different sources motivated by such divergent motives cannot all be wrong, making claims that do not exist in reality

Apart from triangulation, helped immensely by the rich variation of sources contained in the data, explanations were built by a fine-grained contextual examination of the witnesses (e.g., the various interviews, documents, etc.).

Contextual in that each piece of information given by a witness was matched not only by my plausibility structure to determine its validity but also by evaluating the witness's competency to make those claims as in the example above,where the NGO employee, who had little interactions with stitchers, gave information about NGO work that added to and confirmed my plausibility structure but the information on stitchers just appeared incorrect in the face of massive quantity of evidence that pointed in the other direction. This led me to accept his NGO testimony but reject his observations on stitchers when it came time for crafting explanation as I felt he was not in a position or competent enough to make those claims. Thus, each document, or interview had to be read and judgements made as to what from it I could take and what I could leave for there was no source that was totally right or totally wrong. Most fell in between these two extremities with some more nearer one end than the other.

As with contextually evaluating sources in terms of competency, one also had to carry out this fine-grained analysis but this time paying attention to motives, ensuring that the testimonies were both honest and well-informed. In the case of interviews (see discussion above) I felt that my informants were honest with me so if they gave me a piece of information that turned out to be incorrect, it was simply that they were misinformed. I did not have this ease for evaluating documents for my interviews had thrown enough evidence to realize that motives played a significant role in what was expressed in them with each organization hiding embarrassing details that would throw into questions claims they were making (e.g., an NGO claimed to have set up 58 Village Education Committees (VECs) and an equivalent number of Family Education Committees (FECs) in its documents but reliable sources pointed out that of these VECs and FECs combined, only 10-11 of them were active i.e., actually functioning).[5] Documents

[5] A VEC is set up by an NGO consisting of 7-9 village personnel to oversee the administration of a Non-Formal Education Centre (NFE). A NFE is a small school (i.e., 1–3 classrooms) established by a project NGO where 3–4 hours of instructions are provided daily to about 35 students per room to bring them up to Grade 5 level proficiency after which they are mainstreamed to Government schools for further education. Teachers for NFEs are hired by the project NGOs usually from the villages where the NFEs are located and are provided with teacher training by the project NGOs. A FEC, consisting of roughly the same number of individuals as a VEC, is created

either sensationalized (i.e., made things appear worse than what they were) or euphemised (i.e., sanitized things to make them appear more pretty than they were). Once again, they were not purely sensational, completely euphemistic, or totally accurate, but rather had mixture of all three in varying degrees. Thus, plausibility structure and triangulation assisted in trying to sift through the documentary evidence and taking from it what seemed true.

Building valid explanations was also assisted by adhering to Yin's (1989) third principle of high quality analysis which is practically unavoidable and that is to bring one's own prior knowledge to the case study. The much of the little that I had read in my thirty-three years of existence was pressed into service of trying to get at, as best as one could, the truth of the case study. Over the last 11 years, I had been constantly reading material from the social sciences with the major chunk of my readings revolving around power and domination themes. Also for the last three years I had taught 'Business and Society' and 'Social Context of Business' at the undergraduate program in Commerce at McGill University. These courses were surfaces in which I explored the often deleterious political and social consequences of economic activity. Such experience was of great assistance in analysing the data, in reading evidence in the style of great Marxist historians like E.P. Thompson and E.B. Hobsbawm, and intellectual giants like Noam Chomsky which is, to use Eagleton's (1996) felicitious expression, to read against the grain. That is, to take a text written in one context (e.g., a draft of a communication strategy for the Sialkot project written by an international NGO for other project organizations) place it in another context (e.g., see the draft as an instrument reproducing a power structure) and then begin to interrogate it, to deconstruct it, to pry it open, by bombarding it with questions such as who does this text serve, who does it hurt, how does it sanitize injustice, what issues does it emphasize, what issues does it overlook, who does it legitimise, and who does it marginalize.

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for a NFE by a project NGO. Its objective is to promote awareness in a village about the importance of education (Sudhaar, 2003).

Lastly, such concerns dealing with issues of domination and subordination helped in achieving high-quality analysis by allowing me to adhere to Yin's (1989) last remaining principle of quality analysis, which is to focus your analysis on the most significant aspect of your case. This my Saidian concerns did, making me concentrate my analytic skills on the largest issue running through my case study, understanding marginalization and exclusion dynamics of the poor and the powerless. I could not agree with Yin more that why go through the effort of doing a case study unless you can address the largest issue such as what I tried to do with my thesis. Indeed, there seems to be waste of curiosity in ignoring in one's research matters that find concern in most human beings. Of course, Thoreau beat both Yin and I in expressing this methodological principle when he astutely observed, 'it is not worthwhile to go around the world just to count the cats in Zanzibar.' (2002 [1854]: 454).

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS: AN APOLOGY FOR STYLE

I wrote this section in an unconventional style that, in some significant manners, parts company with the standard way by which this section is written in most dissertations. The heresy committed was not without cause.

Most of a thesis' dominion is reserved for telling the story or perhaps several stories about its subject matter. A space in this dominion, methodology, is, however, demarcated for telling the story about the thesis itself: how did it come into being and why. When one travels in the lands of methodology of various distant and near dissertations, one is puzzled to see pastures without people. Extensive discussions on methodology where the author's personal voice and feelings are largely absent. How can this be? For a thesis does not write itself. It is a deliberate act. Born of deliberations of a living human being. There is indeed a hand that writes it and, therefore, the story about a thesis (i.e., its methodology) is ultimately the story about the private agonies and triumphs visited upon that quite visible hand for it is these privations and ecstasies that guide the hand that

wrought the thesis into being. Yet, this hand and its moving impulses are made invisible. By whom? Where lies the culprit?

The culprit casting this spell of invisibility is the taken for granted understanding that methodology should try to minimize contents about the author and his struggles to craft the thesis. The personal voice and the personal struggles of the author, according to reigning scientific superstition and custom regarding methodology style, belong elsewhere. Certainly not in these lands of methodology. But why? The thesis should tell a tale other than about itself. Otherwise, it would be a thoroughly self-indulgent affair. Such tales, not about the making of the thesis, are indeed told, in the other lands of the thesis (e.g., the section on literature review, the chapter containing the case, etc.). But where are the stories about the authors? They do not belong to the lands where the thesis is supposed to tell other tales. So if such contents cannot, rightly so, be accepted as refugees there then it is in the lands of methodology where they must claim their citizenship. I think they have inalienable rights there for to write a story about a thesis without the personal feelings and voice that brought it to life would be like writing a story about love without lovers.

These are the reasons why I forged my methodology in this particular style. I had read too many dissertations of colleagues and found too many times the methodology sections wanting. The authors' difficulties and openings that sired their thesis were absent in a section that ironically is about documenting how the thesis was produced. There are yet other ironies.

For theory, we are encouraged to be iconoclastic but for method we are preached conformity. For our stories, we are encouraged to write thickly but not when it comes to the story of our story being told. If thick description enriches us in theory why do we suppose it will not do so in method. There are many strengths of the way methodology is understood in academia. There should be rigour, warrants and evidence, transparency and thoroughness. These are essential to good scholarship. However, methodology, to use Baconian terminology, has its idols of the cave (Burtt, 1994). One such idol is this preferred style of minimizing personal contents of the author that leads, in my opinion, to a rather barren and

flawed understanding of the research process and is not, claims to the contrary, a faithful witness to the historical record of how the thesis was produced.

The research process is not a clear linear sequential road, a myth spun by this idol of preferred style. It is a muddy and messy path, constantly turning and twisting with plenty of forks and roundabouts. Methodology, the story of the research process, has a heart. And it beats at an organic pace and not at a mechanical rate. Research is plan and chance. Method and instinct. Mistakes and corrections. The idol masks all these realities. By doing so, it does a great disservice to future scholars. When they confront these realities in all their glorious fullness, instead of taking heart that they are indeed on the path of research, the myth of the idol produces despair for the myth says that they should, from the on-set, be seeing clarity not confusion. Therefore, let it be smashed and room made for personal contents that further illuminate these realities of the research process so that where presently one finds dejection let one in the future find hope. Let these realities be invited so the historical record of the research process becomes more honest. Let this section stand and be counted as one blow, certainly not the first and hopefully not the last, to smash the idol. And let this section stand to warn against going to the other extreme and making personal contents a dictator over methodology, exiling its virtuous subjects (e.g., rigour) that serve it so well. The truth, as always, lies in the balance.

# CHAPTER 4: THE CASE STUDY

## INTRODUCTION: PAKISTAN & WORKING CLASS POETRY

If context is critical to understanding, then attempts at understanding a local site arguably would often necessitate having some sense of the wider national context in which the site is situated. A nation-wide strike in Pakistan may disrupt some business in Montreal, but it would have far more noticeable impact on Pakistani local life. Thus, given that we wish to explore the dynamics unfolding in a local site in Pakistan (i.e., Sialkot), let us spend a few moments describing its national context, giving the reader hopefully a glimpse of the soil from which has emerged the cactus that interests us (i.e., the 'Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball industry in Pakistan'). This glimpse will aid the understanding of the cactus in question and help make more intelligible its few flowers and its many thorns.

The area now known as Pakistan (see map, Appendix A) has long been inhabited. The ruins found in it boast of many ancient civilizations. The ruins of Mohenjodaro, once a large thriving city of wide avenues and sophisticated city-wide drainage sytems (dated 2500–1700 B.C.) of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, is found slightly north of Karachi, Pakistan (Mumtaz and Mitha, 1996: 13). However, in terms of a nation-state, as understood by contemporary international law, with explicitly defined territorial boundaries, Pakistan came into being as an independent country on August 14, 1947.

At the time of independence, Pakistan was considered by TIME magazine to be 'an economic wreck with serious social unrest' (cited in Zaidi, 1999: 84). Gustav Papenek, an influential member of the Harvard Advisory Group advising the young country on its development path, wrote:

> At independence, Pakistan – simultaneously created and disrupted by the partition of British India – was widely considered an economic monstrosity. The country was amongst the poorest in the world and

> had no industries to speak of, almost no industrial raw materials, no significant industrial or commercial groups. It was difficult to see how Pakistan's economy could grow more rapidly than its population. Economic chaos and political disintegration seemed more likely. (Papanek, 1967: 1-2).[6]

I can distinctly remember my own father, who migrated from Agra (India) to Pakistan immediately upon its independence, telling me how his Hindu teachers in his college (i.e., St. Johns College, Agra) who were fond of him, would say 'Pakistan is not going to last. We will see you back in a few weeks.'

Such dire prognosis, on the economic front at least, turned out to be incorrect. Since 1947, Pakistan's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (net of inflation) has grown, with slow-downs in the 1970s and 1990s, at an annual average rate of about 5.0%.[7] To have an annual 5% real growth in output over a time period spanning more than half a century is quite impressive. Pakistan today produces on a wide spectrum of items from soccer balls to nuclear bombs, many of them manufactured for export markets including even nuclear technology and weapons. Agriculture, which dominated the country's economy at its inception, now contributes less than a quarter to the GDP (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2003: 40) though it is still the largest sector in terms of employment, accounting for approximately 42.1% of Pakistan's workforce (Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan], 2003a: viii). The relative decline in agriculture's contribution to the country's economy has been matched by the ascendancy of the industrial and services sectors of the economy. Industry accounts for a quarter of the national output while the services sector now accounts for half of the

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[6] Pakistan being almost absolutely bereft of industry at the time of its independence can be more starkly observed by noting that the entire country in 1947 had only a single textile mill and a single sugar mill (Ali, 2001: 102) to take care of a population roughly the size of the Canadian population today (i.e., roughly 30 million) (Statistics Canada, 2004; Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan], 2003: 11).

[7] GDP growth rate compiled from statistics provided in *Pakistan 2003: Statistical Pocket Book.* published by the Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan (Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan], 2003: 76).

country's GDP (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2003: 40). The output from all of these three sectors translates to a per capita income for Pakistan of US$400.[8]

Poetry is often used to make sense of experience and I think it can be deployed here to better come to grips with the economic expansion story outlined above. In poetry, questions are often posed that force us to examine the same terrain with different concerns. So let us interrogate the terrain of Pakistani economic expansion with the set of concerns articulated in Bertolt Brecht's poem 'A Worker Reads History' excerpts of which are as follows:

> Who built the seven gates of Thebes?
> The books are filled with names of kings.
> Was it the kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone? . . .
> In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished
> Where did the masons go? Imperial Rome
> Is full of arcs of triumph. Who reared them up?
> Over whom
> Did the Caesars triumph? . . .
> Each page a victory
> At whose expense the victory ball? (Brecht, 1947: 108-109).

If we begin to examine the economic history of Pakistan with these Brechtian concerns, we realize that the economy's victory ball has come at the expense of the vast majority of the Pakistani population. Immediately after independence in 1947, agriculture was starved of resources which were diverted to industry at a time when over 80% of the country's population was heavily concentrated in rural areas (Zaidi, 1999: 3 & 85). When it was decided to pay attention to agriculture in the early 1960s, a technology package (i.e., high yield seeds, tractors, fertilisers, pesticides, and tube wells for irrigation) was crafted by the military government for the sector (Belokrenitsky, 1991). Though output increased remarkably in the agricultural sector, the main beneficiaries of this green revolution have been the large feudal landowners who had the capital to acquire and make full use of the technology package (Hussain, 1986). As a result, more wealth and hence more

[8] Per capita income compiled from statistics provided in *Pakistan 2003: Statistical Year Book*, published by the Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan (Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan], 2003b: 487).

influence has come to be concentrated in their hands (Alavi, 1986). The green revolution further exacerbated the power imbalance in the agricultural sector in yet another way. Seeing the rich rewards of the green revolution, large feudal land owners began to cultivate their lands themselves. This has led to the pauperisation of the tenants, often the poorest of the agricultural classes as they have been dispossessed of their tenancies. Such ex-tenants have ended up, if they have been able to find employment, as agricultural wage-labour or have migrated to urban centres (Zaidi, 1999).

As for the working classes in the urban centres, whatever gains industrialization brought them were soon eroded by a conspiracy of factors that gutted their purchasing power and future opportunities. Three decades of spiralling corruption among the three groups that have dominated Pakistan's political economy (i.e., the civil-military administrative services, the feudal oligarchy, and the industrial bourgeoisie),[9] rampant inflation (especially in the form of what Hussain (2003: 10) calls 'astronomical electricity tariffs'), labour repression[10] (All Pakistan Federation of Labour [APFOL], 2003), the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment programs that forced the government to cut further its already miniscule social development expenditures (Zaidi, 1999), an industrial sector unable to keep pace with additions to the labour force (Hussain, 2003), arbitrary human rights abuses by various state agencies often acting on the behest of powerful private actors (see various Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports), and a public sector job freeze together with its downsizing (Dawn, 2001), took their toll on the Pakistani population. Poverty was at the end of the 1990s as high as it was at the beginning

[9] Corruption had reached such levels in 1996 that Transparency International ranked Pakistan, which was under the Oxford and Harvard educated Benazir Bhutto's administration, as the most corrupt country in the world second only to Nigeria (Transparency International, 1996). The popular joke amongst Pakistanis at that time was that actually Pakistan was the most corrupt but Benazir and her husband (known as Mr. 10% because that was his commission charge on almost all state contracts) had bribed Nigeria to take the first position. As an aside, a Swiss Magistrate found Benazir Bhutto guilty on August 6, 2003 of taking bribes in a business deal involving a Swiss firm that was conducted when she was Prime Minister of Pakistan (Langley, 2003).

[10] The Pakistan state's hostile attitude towards labour underwent a slight hiatus during Zulfiqar Bhutto's administration (1973-1977), only to return with renewed zeal beginning with Zia's martial law in 1977 (Weiss, 1991) and continuing to this day (Amjad, 2002).

of the decade, with nearly one-third of the population classified as poor (Keefer, Narayan, and Vishwanath, 2003). According to the latest human development report on Pakistan published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the percentage of population below the poverty line in Pakistan increased from 18% in 1987 to 34% today (Hussain, 2003: 3).

After over five decades of economic growth that saw eight of the wealthiest seventeen top US dollar billionaires and millionaires in Pakistan being retired military officers or their sons (Zaidi, 1999: 439), the social register read grimly as follows:

> In Pakistan, 42 million people or roughly 30 percent of the population are income poor; 47 million adults or 62% of the adult population cannot read or write, 76 percent of the female population is illiterate; 8 million children are out of school; 61 million people or 45 percent of the population have no access to safe drinking water; 54 million people or 40 percent of the population have no access to even basic health services; 72 million people or 53 percent of the population have no access to sanitation; 9 million children under the age of 5 or 38 percent of the under 5 population are malnourished. (Haq, 1999: 3).[11]

Pakistan at the turn of the millennium is a classic case of what Engels referred to as 'immiserating wealth': increasing wealth, increasing inequality, and increasing impoverishment. A veritable sea of poverty dotted now and then with a few islands of prosperity. Such a state can best be seen in multinational food outlets (e.g., Pizza-Hut) located in the smarter sections of urban locales where the rich and mostly obese clientele stuff themselves inside while outside stand shot-gun totting Pizza Hut guards shooing away, with the barrel of their guns, the emaciated little children, decked in ragged tatters desperately beseeching any one caring to listen to part with a few rupees.

[11] Pakistan Rural Household Survey (2001), a representative survey for rural Pakistan, indicates that by the time a child reaches the age of 5, she/he has a 62 percent probability of being stunted and a 45 percent chance of being underweight (cited in Keefer et al., 2003: 3).

These are the many cruel ironies that nest in Pakistan. On an ordinary day you will find on the same page of a newspaper a headline 'Internet connection prices slashed' and another one that reads 'Sugar prices up by 30%'. Marie Antoinette would have been impressed. The market indeed delivers if you can pay the appropriate price whether it be first world standard airports or internet cafes. On the other hand, if you are unable to afford cappuccinos or for that matter necessities such as adequate health care, which is sadly the case for most Pakistanis today, then be prepared to be smited by the invisible hand's iron glove for in unbridled capitalism where earning a living is the creed, then not earning means not living. Indeed, as E.P. Thompson so incisively observed, 'the greatest offence against property is to have none.' (1968: 61).

To conclude our discussion on the Pakistan national context, I quote some excerpts from a poem that captures the present day realities of the Pakistani poor. The poet is Faiz Ahmad Faiz, probably the greatest Pakistani poet next to Muhammad Iqbal, and like him, a native son of Sialkot:

> Let me write a song for this day!
> This day and the anguish of this day
> For this wilderness of yellowing leaves which is my homeland.
> For this carnival of suffering which is my homeland.
> Let me write of the little lives of office workers
> of the railmen
> and the *tonga-wallas* [the poor who transport goods and people on horse carriages]
> and of the postmen.
> Let me write of the poor innocents they call: workers
>
> Lord of all the world
> promised heir to all that is to come.
> Let me write of the farmer
> this Lord whose fief was a few animals-
> stolen
> who knows when;
> this heir who once had a daughter-
> carried off
> who knows where;

this chief whose turban is a tattered rag
beneath the feet of the mighty . . .

Let me write of the students
those seekers of the truth.
Who came seeking the truth at the doorstep
of the great and the mighty.
These innocents who, with their dim
flickering lamps came seeking light
where they sell naught but the darkness of long endless nights. ('Dedications' translated by Shoaib Hashmi; cited in Mumtaz and Mitha, 1996: 17)

## SIALKOT: AN OVERVIEW

The national drama of economic expansion coupled with the human condition crisis is largely mirrored in the district of Sialkot, home of Pakistan's soccer ball industry. Sialkot district (hereafter referred to as Sialkot) is tucked in the north eastern corner of Punjab (Pakistan's wealthiest and most populous province) and borders the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir. As a result of being so close to Kashmir, Sialkot district often suffers in its Kashmir border areas from Indian artillery shelling that is intermittently quite regular, claiming the lives of poor peasants and their live-stock. Reports of such inter-border shelling appear quite regularly in the national dailies (e.g., see Dawn, 2003). Border insecurity has, however, done little to dampen the dynamism of Sialkot's economy as illustrated by the following economic statistics contained in table 1:

## TABLE 1: SIALKOT'S ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Area | 3016 $km^2$ |
| 2 | Population | 2.7 million (average household size: 7-9) |
| 3 | Urban/Rural Ratio | 26:74 |
| 4 | Largest City (population) | Sialkot City (0.4 million)<br>12th most populous city in Pakistan |
| 5 | Per Capita Income | US$1000 (approximately 2.5 times greater than the national per capita income) |
| 5 | Main Crops | Wheat and Rice<br>Rice is a major export crop from Sialkot given that the district is the 3rd largest rice producing district of Punjab (Pakistan's largest rice-growing province) |
| 6 | Industries | Beverage, Cutlery, Cycle Tyre /Tubes, Diesel Engines, Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Earthen Ware, Flour Mills, Fruit Juices, Hand Tools, Hosiery Products, Iron and Steel Re-Rolling Mills, Leather Garments, Leather Products, Locks, Musical Instruments, Readymade Garments, Rice Mills, Sanitary Fittings, Sanitary Ware, Sports Goods, Sugar, Surgical Instruments, Tannery and Vegetable Ghee / Cooking Oil |
| 7 | Number of Industrial Units | 3229 (only 10% employ 100 employees or more) |
| 8 | Total Value of Exports | Over US$700 million.<br>Sialkot's per capita export is 20 times greater than the per capita export figure for Pakistan |
| 9 | Major Export Industries | Sporting Goods (including soccer balls having 60-80% of the global soccer ball market); Surgical Instruments (2nd largest exporter next to Germany, enjoying 20% of the world's total surgical market); and Leather (accounting for 30% of total Sialkot exports) |

**Source:** Bureau of Statistics [Government of Punjab (Pakistan)]. (1998). *Punjab Development Statistics 1998*. Lahore: Government of Punjab, Pakistan; Ghani, J. (2002). *Sialkot A City at Work*. Retrieved January 1, 2004, from http://www.the-south-asian.com/March2002/Sialkot%201.htm; Nadvi, K. (1999). Shifting Ties: Social Networks in the Surgical Instrument Cluster of Sialkot, Pakistan. *Development and Change, 30*, 141-175; Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry website URL: http://home.scci.com.pk; Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan]. (2003). *Pakistan 2003: Statistical Pocket Book*. Islamabad: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, Government of Pakistan; Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan]. (2003b). *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2003*. Islamabad: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, Government of Pakistan.

As can be seen from the above table, Sialkot is, relative to the rest of Pakistan, quite prosperous. This can be easily observed by visiting the district. With the exception of its southern tip being somewhat barren, the rest of the district, especially the areas bordering Kashmir, is a visual feast. The agricultural plains of Sialkot stretch from East to West like the open arms of an ocean. As far as the eye travels on this vast horizon, one sees alternating patches of intense green and vivid gold colours of rice and wheat fields, embracing and intermingling with each other as if in a collective village dance. These colours rush flatly beyond you into the distant horizon. Your eyes give chase. Before you know it, the terrain bursts into elevation and you stand looking upwards at the majestic blue misty Himalayan foothills of Kashmir towering over you and making you drunk on the exquisite plane and height contrasts evoked by them.

On this luxuriant agricultural canvas of Sialkot, one finds Sialkot city at the centre. The rest of the canvas is liberally splashed with tiny villages (numbering anywhere between 1400 – 1600) and two small towns (i.e., Daska and Pasrur) (Save the Children [SCF], 1997: 13; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2000: 1). In both the urban and rural areas, one finds industrial activity, especially in the north and central parts of the district. In terms of industry, Sialkot is a veritable sea of small spartan workshops where poor hands are busy at work producing much export wealth in forms ranging from moulding stainless steel into scalpels to stitching soccer balls. Every now and then you will come across the few large factories in Sialkot to which most of these workshops act as subcontractors. These factories and their office buildings are the most visible signs of Sialkot's export success. With their gleaming glass facades and expensive automobiles, from Mercedes-Benz sedans to Toyota Land Cruisers, basking on their parking lots, these factories appear to have been taken straight out of a technological industrial park on the East Coast in North America and transplanted in Sialkot.

By virtue of its agriculture and its industry, Sialkot ranks as the 14$^{th}$ highest district out of 91 districts in Pakistan in terms of the human development

index. (Hussain, 2003: 12). Thus, one can easily be lulled into the false notion that economic progress has translated into social development. One way to check against falling into this mistaken notion is to remember that the ranking is relative to the situation in Pakistan which is hardly a pretty one in terms of social development. To see the social consequences of economic progress, we need to look at Sialkot in and of itself.

When we do so, we see plenty of squalor in Sialkot. In fact that is the word used to describe the district by a recent US Department of Commerce report (2000) that is otherwise and unsurprisingly singing eulogies to the dynamism of Sialkot's private sector. Another report, equally gushing in its praise of Sialkot's 'culture of enterprise', mentions briefly and somewhat euphemistically in passing that 'Sialkot's road and other infrastructure are primitive and choked' (Ghani, 2002). But 'primitive' fails to adequately capture the abysmally poor social development in Sialkot. Only 2.6% of villages, where more than 70% of the population reside, have a piped water supply (US Department of Commerce, 2000). Drainage facility is available in only 27% of the villages (APFOL, 1999: 3). Only half of the roads in the villages are asphalt (SCF, 1997). Of these roads, the majority of them are in a poor state, and often become flooded and impassable with a slight amount of rain (ibid). The new wide-lane roads bypass most of Sialkot's population as they are built in a confined area in Sialkot city where most of the large Sialkot industrialists' offices are located to make it easier for them and for their foreign customers to commute between Sialkot and Lahore. The roads in the inner-city of Sialkot, where the working classes live, are in a state of complete neglect, becoming cesspools with a slight rainfall.

Moving from roads to health care, we find that most of Sialkot's population cannot afford basic health care or have access to basic health facilities (APFOL, 1999: 7). As for public schooling, it is in disarray. According to a survey by SCF, 'most of the schools were lacking in basic amenities including drinking water, toilet facilities, and blackboards. Many teachers were absent and SMCs [school management committees comprising teachers and parents] were either nonexistent or inactive.' (1998: 10). Thus, it should not surprise us to

behold that the female literacy rate in Sialkot, though better than the national average, is still unforgivably low at 51.5% dropping inexcusably further to 45.5% for rural females (Bureau of Statistics [Government of Punjab, Pakistan], 1998).

Municipal services are equally non-existent. There are only three traffic policeman to regulate more than 18,000 vehicles that ply on the roads of Sialkot (Dawn, 2003a; US Department of Commerce, 2000). These resource-starved municipal services are also overwhelmed by the stresses brought about by industrialization. Thanks to the boom in leather exports in Sialkot over the last two decades, there are now 163 tanneries just around the city itself (US Department of Commerce, 2000). They are, 'a consistent source of pollution, generating contaminated waste water' (ibid). Instead of responding to this environmental degradation by helping to build a waste water treatment plant in Sialkot where none exists, the private sector is responding to this crisis by building a multi million US dollar international airport that perhaps will be used by less than 1% of Sialkot's population.

One can proceed further to list the litanies of social ills that beset Sialkot (e.g., poverty-induced suicides (Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme [SAHEP], 1998) that are also occurring elsewhere in the country (Hussain, 2003).[12] However, what has been written above is arguably sufficient to demonstrate that the fruits of economic expansion have, with some minor exceptions (e.g., all the villages have electrification, albeit with a highly unreliable electricity supply (Dawn, 2003b)) not significantly touched the lives of the vast majority of Sialkot's population. In spite of or perhaps because of its economic expansion, Sialkot reflects the wider picture of national poverty within its boundaries.

As we can see, the national drama of economic expansion coupled with dismal social performance plays itself out in Sialkot as well. It is, however,

[12] The above cited Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme (SAHEP) (1998) report mentions the following: 'Mohd. Sohail, age 17, left school in 9th grade in 1997 and started stitching [soccer balls] to support his brother's (age 12) and his sister's (age 9) education as well as his paternal grandmother, they live with, after the following tragedy happened to them: in a fit of anger his father, who was an air force officer, shot his mother dead and when realizing what he had done, shot himself also. Four younger siblings are living now with the maternal grandparents. He is receiving monthly support [from SAHEP] since April.'

experienced more acutely there in terms of inequality for the relatively greater industrial and agricultural wealth of the district leads to a much sharper and, therefore, more painful contrast with the wider human poverty found there. Sialkot, then, in many ways, encapsulates the experience of a society in the developing world in the throes of export-oriented industrialization. Tremendous economic success (e.g., impressive and commanding foreign market penetration) coupled with stagnant or deteriorating social indicators (e.g., low literacy rates, especially among women). As Nadvi states, 'it is a relatively wealthy place . . . Such wealth is not reflected in Sialkot's civic amenities or social services however: while Sialkot's skyline is dotted with satellite dishes, many of its congested neighbourhoods lack adequate drainage and sanitation' (1999: 149). For me, the following couplet from Oliver Goldsmith lamenting on the English social landscape being turned into a human wasteland by the industrial revolution, adequately captures the essence of Sialkot today:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
> (Goldsmith, 1900 [1770]: 28).

## SIALKOT'S SOCCER BALL INDUSTRY B.C. (Before Child Labour)

### *Origins: Entrepreneurial Invasions*

Clues to the origins of the soccer ball industry in Sialkot can perhaps be provided by reflecting on Sialkot's own ancient history. Sialkot is a land that has seen many invasions. It lay in the favoured path taken by most invaders from the North to reach India, from the Huns in the 6$^{th}$ century (C.E.) to the Mughals in the 16$^{th}$ and 17$^{th}$ centuries (C.E.) (Weiss, 1991; US Department of Commerce, 2000; and Ghani, 2002). These invasions stimulated industry by demanding arms and so Sialkot, in the true entrepreneurial spirit of profiteering from war, developed expertise in the manufacturing of metal-based weapons from swords to fine daggers, equipping the armies on their way to slaughter in the fertile central plains of India. The craftmanship gained from making fine metal instruments of war would later lead Sialkot to producing surgical instruments (e.g., scalpels, scissors,

and forceps) that save lives, creating an industry there that is today a global player in the world-wide surgical instruments market, the 2nd largest exporter of surgical instruments after Germany (Nadvi, 1999). The Weberian pattern of actions having unintended consequences seems to hold there as well with war spawning an industry helping to save lives.

If Sialkot's surgical industry owes its origins to invaders, could the same be said also for its soccer ball industry? The answer seems to be yes. Its origins too stem from invaders who also came from the North. Unlike the Huns, they were sipping tea and more interested in booty than in blood. The few works where the history of Sialkot's soccer ball industry has been mentioned (e.g., SCF, 1997), albeit very patchily,[13] all unanimously agree that it was established by the British Raj.

The question naturally arises as to what were the chain of events that brought the British occupation forces subjugating India to sire Sialkot's soccer ball industry. There are many theories addressing this question. One answer is provided by the documentary, 'Golden Hands' (1999), which argues that soccer production took place in the largely Muslim populated Sialkot because leather for soccer balls was available here unlike the other predominately Hindu parts of India where leather was scarce owing to the religious prohibition on slaughtering cows deemed sacred (Soldevilla, 1999). As a Pakistani soccer ball executive explains in the documentary:

> At the time, they needed a large amount of leather in order to play football and cricket, and above all, for cavalry boots and saddlery. However, the cow is considered sacred in India so that one had to wait for the animal to die naturally before to use its leather. This way, the leather was of poor quality. On the other hand, the Muslims from this part of the

[13] Most articles and books on the Sialkot soccer ball industry or its child labour issue do not provide a history of Sialkot's soccer ball industry, including the history of its origins. The few that do discuss this subject, with the exception of Weiss (1991), devote at best one or two lines to it. For example, Schoenberger who has an entire section on the Sialkot child labour issue, devotes one sentence to the soccer ball industry's early history. The sentence is 'Indeed, stitching leather balls for sporting games has been a traditional local craft here for more than a century, since the days of the British Raj.' (2000: 133).

> Empire did not practice this delay so cows were killed right away for their leather.' (ibid).

This hypothesis, on closer examination, proves somewhat unsatisfying. The hypothesis can explain why the industry would be situated in Muslim-dominated areas but fails to explain why precisely would it situate itself in Sialkot. After all, Lahore as well as Muslim-dominated Bengal (what is now Bangladesh) on the opposite end of India, could also be suitable places for soccer ball production if the only facilitating condition was Muslim-dominated areas where leather was available. Another explanation is required.

The most detailed exposition where the answer to the above question of the British origins of Sialkot's soccer ball industry can be searched for is Anita Weiss' (1991) *Culture, Class and Development in Pakistan* that devotes an entire chapter to Sialkot's sporting goods industry. According to Weiss, soccer balls came to be produced in Sialkot in the late 19$^{th}$ century by firms there that were producing a variety of sporting goods for British India from cricket bats to hockey sticks and had decided to add soccer balls to their production lines. She does not provide any information as to why these firms decided to branch out into soccer ball production. She does, however, explain the origins of the sporting goods industry in Sialkot from which stemmed firms that would later diversify into soccer ball production. What follows is taken largely from Weiss (1991: 121-124).

According to Weiss, 'the history of the sporting goods industry [in Sialkot] has taken on near-mythological dimensions' (1991: 121). Out of these many legends explaining how the first sports item came to be made in Sialkot, why it was made, and who constructed it for whom, the most cited are the following three:

- A craftsman producing a cricket bat for an English Colonel.

- An East India Company's employee getting his golf club fixed.

- A priest having his tennis racquet fixed by a local furniture maker.

Weiss considers the priest story as being the most authentic and it goes, according to a Sialkot business executive, something as follows:

> In 1870, one Father's tennis racket broke. He was very upset that it would take a three-month journey just to get it to England so it could be fixed, and by the time it came back, his tennis game would go bad. So he went to see a furniture-maker in the bazaar. He asked him to fix it. Now this man had not done that work before — he made chairs, tables, and other things, but not tennis rackets. So he glued it and bound it. The Father gave him five rupees for fixing it, and the furniture-maker was astonished to see such a large amount for his labor. So he went to the Father's house and sat down outside and when the Father came out, he asked if he had any other broken tennis rackets. He offered to make one for the Father, and the Father said fine, go make one. So with the help of an apprentice, he prepared one. It was a bit awkward, the shape was not quite right, but the Father — he was a good man — he was pleased, and gave the craftsman ten rupees for the racket.
>
> So now the craftsman was so happy, he was prepared to make another dozen tennis rackets. He began preparing them and delivering them, and slowly their quality improved. The Father gave him a letter, that he could go to the Lahore Cantonment and other military areas and sell them. He was able to make much money, from selling the rackets. When money came, his wife started cooking things at home. When the neighbours saw smoke coming out of his chimney, they began to say that he has become rich. So they sent their women to check what his source of wealth was. He would make rackets at home, and then go out and sell them. The women came and saw what he did, and went back and told their husbands. They also started manufacturing them. (cited in Weiss, 1991: 122).

So began the sports good industry in Sialkot.[14] Sialkot's sporting goods reputation soon spread to other parts of India. British soldiers and missionaries would be sending their damaged sports items for repairs. At this same time, Sialkot's tennis rackets became highly demanded even if they still were somewhat, at that time, roughly shaped.

By 1880, the tennis racket industry was organized in the following way. The *mistris* [artisans] were Muslims. The middle men who interfaced between them and the British clientele were predominately Hindus and Sikhs. These middlemen would send Sialkot's sporting goods to the rest of the British Empire, including the English metropolis itself. Production during those days occurred on a cottage-industry basis with the manufacturing of rackets in the workers's homes. Eight years, later, a qualitative shift in the organization of production took place in Sialkot.

In 1888, two Sikh brothers, Ganda Singh Uberoi and Jhanda Singh, opened Uberoi Limited, the first sporting goods factory in Sialkot. They started off with a half dozen men manufacturing cricket bats using the willow found amply in the Kashmiri forests nearby (Apna Sialkot, 2003). Seeing the lucrativeness of the sporting goods market, they soon added other product lines such as 'tennis and badminton rackets, hockey sticks, polo sticks, and *assorted balls* [my emphasis]' (Weiss, 1991: 123). Thus, it seems that soccer balls production in Sialkot came into being in the early 1890s.

The Uberoi factory, on account of its commercial success, became the 'dominant design' for organizing sporting goods production in Sialkot. The cottage-based form of organization gave way to factory organization with Sikhs and Hindus owning the factories. They also 'arranged for the raw materials and quality control, while Muslim craftsmen did the actual manufacturing' (Weiss, 1991: 123). Along with adults, children came to work in these factories, learning the craft of skillfully producing cricket bats and hockey sticks by becoming

[14] Ghani (2002) dates the sporting goods industry to 1895. However, his assessment seems questionable because he is defining time of origin as when the racket industry became famous. It takes time for fame to be achieved which means that the industry must have existed prior to that date in order to become famous by 1895. Thus, the 1895 date, advanced by Ghani, is suspect and Weiss' assessment of origins being around 1870 seems more accurate.

apprentices to adult master craftsmen. As a former child worker and later successful entrepreneur, Bashir Ahmad, recounts his experience:

> For three years I worked at Uberoi's factory, during my childhood. When I was a little body, and I would have the *takhti* [school slate board] around my neck, they would put me to work when school would finish. At that time we continued to learn for seven years from our teachers at the factory. (cited in Weiss, 1991: 123).

Another account explains the organization of labour in these factories at that time:

> A system of apprenticeship was started and workmen in Sialkot trained to follow English methods. Apprenticeship indentures were not actually employed but boys were taken on for a couple of months or so, to judge of their suitability, and were paid 3 to 4 annas a day; their parents were then asked if they agree to the boys being bound for three years; they were then specialised in light work such as stitching balls, and as they grew they were pushed up into higher grade work in the same line. After the first period they usually signed on again , and were put on to piece-work, and were finally graded into classes. Many boys left after six years and many stayed on for 14 or 18 years. The first grade workmen, able to turn out work equal to English model , only formed about 2 to 3 percent of the total and they were extremely difficult to retain. (Apna Sialkot, 2003).

These factories began innovating their production processes by importing European industrial technology, entering into joint-ventures with British firms (e.g., Summer and Cox, a joint-venture between English and Sialkotian entrepreneurs) and hiring British engineers as consultants. For example, Uberoi Limited imported a boiler engine from England for its factory in 1913 and, consequently, became the first factory in all of Punjab to be powered by a machine source (Weiss, 1991: 123). Around this time, it also employed the services of English experts (e.g., Mr. Trimmings and his son) who introduced

many patents and improvements to the factory production process (Apna Sialkot, 2003).

The industry received a massive boost by the advent of the first world war (ibid). Factories in Europe came to be at a stand still and Sialkot began to fill the production void (ibid). Sialkot goods began to be found primarily in areas conquered by the British Empire, but also in other parts of the world as well: Japan and the United States (ibid). Thus, by the 1920s, Sialkot's sporting goods industry produced a wide variety of sporting goods from tennis rackets to polo sticks and, of course, soccer balls, sold internationally, and its export success quickly drew the notice and admiration of the colonial administration. In 1922, one Sayed Sahib[15] was awarded the British Empire Export Award for supplying soccer balls to the British Army (Ghani, 2002). It is interesting to note that, contrary to the image of a few large industrial units constituting the sporting goods industry that one would likely envision given its impressive performance on the international scene, the sporting goods industry comprised factories that were quite small in scale, mostly comprising units employing between five to eight workers (Weiss, 1991:124). The industry continued on this pattern of scale and ownership until it experienced sudden and massive changes brought about by Partition in 1947.

*Post-Partition: Opportunities of Independence*

The partition of India into two sovereign states, Pakistan and India, was an event of monstrous proportion, where monstrosity is to be understood in the classical and not the modern sense of the term. That is, referring to a phenomenon so awesome in magnitude and powerful in intensity that it threatens to destroy the life systems in which it is embedded. The partition led to the greatest single act of migration of human beings ever witnessed in history. Seventeen million people crossed the borders of these two new states in both directions to flee from the

[15] The name, apparently, is Muslim, thus suggesting, that while the dominance of the industry by non-Muslims was overwhelming, it was not total. This also strengthens Weiss' claim that some Muslims, albeit comparatively few, came to own their own units prior to partition though 'Hindus and Sikhs had a strong hold over the exporting networks and other middlemen activities. It is clearly not a matter of incentive but rather one of opportunity which first denied and later provided access to ownership in this industry to Muslims in Sialkot.' (1991: 124).

violence occurring on sectarian (i.e., Hindu – Muslim) lines. Those who found themselves to be minorities in one state (e.g., Muslims in India) sought sanctuary in the other state where their co-religionists formed the majority to escape from being persecuted or worse executed for their religious beliefs.[16]

The partition, thus, was quite a disruptive affair. Not surprisingly, Sialkot was not spared from its effects. The onset of partition brought about a wave of migration of Hindu and Sikh Sialkot factory owners to India. What this meant was that effectively the Muslim workers in the sporting goods industry found themselves 'without capital to procure raw materials, the acumen for quality control, or the connections necessary for exporting' (Weiss, 1991: 124). At this point Weiss' account becomes quite thin in how the artisans, particularly in the soccer ball industry, overcame these challenges at independence. Hers is the only account I came across that at least talks about the crisis for the industry at the time of partition. Future historical research would be needed to fill this gap.

My own research based on a few, albeit highly slender, corporate histories that a couple of Sialkot soccer ball firms (e.g., Anwar Khawaja Industries (AKI)) have written about themselves and interviews with soccer ball executives, especially with one soccer ball exporter who was working in Sialkot as early as 1962, tend to suggest that whatever disruption may have been experienced was quickly overcome not by artisans but by individuals hailing from the urban educated middle class in Sialkot who quickly stepped into the shoes of the Hindu and Sikh owners who had fled to India. For example, one of the earliest post-partition soccer ball firms established in Sialkot was Anwar Khawaja and Brother

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[16] My own father fled at partition to Pakistan from Agra (India) to escape execution. He, Masihullah Khan, had been the Secretary-General of the Muslim League in his college, St. John's College. His story contains those strange twists of irony that celebrate human complexity, brought about by friendship in his case, that makes it so difficult to sustain binary analysis on terms a la clash of civilization polemics where human beings are defined as belonging exclusively to just one group that is viewed internally and externally in relation to other groups as being either monolithically 'bad' or 'good', either being with 'us' or with 'them'. My father's close friend in his college was the head of the college's RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* [National Volunteer Corps]), the Hindu extremist group that would later carry out the assassination of Ghandi. He came quietly to my father one day and said, 'Masihullah, I just received a list of people we have been ordered to execute. Your name is on the top of my list. Please, take my advice and leave.' My father packed up one bag, taking the only asset he had, a master's degree, and headed to Bombay with his younger brother to board a ship sailing for Pakistan.

(later to be known as AKI) which started producing medium quality footballs in 1952, according to a report published by them on AKI's 50th anniversary (AKI, 2002). Anwar Khawaja hailed from a middle class family and was an educated man unlike the workers who were mostly illiterate (Weiss, 1991). In fact, according to the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) personnel and industrialists interviewed in this study, the histories of the top soccer ball firms in Sialkot show that perhaps with the exception of one firm,[17] all were started by middle class men from urban Sialkot who were at least literate, with some having even completed post-graduate studies. For example, Capital Sports, one of the main suppliers to Adidas was founded in 1968 by two partners. One partner had an MBA and the other had an undergraduate law degree (Pilot Study, 2001: 32).

Till the mid 1960s Sialkot was producing soccer balls for exports that were of medium to low quality. The entrepreneurs were benefiting from an overall business environment being created by the Ayub military regime that was extremely favourable to industrial interests, especially those with an export orientation. Through out the 1960s, the Government of Pakistan maintained an export bonus scheme whereby the government would give to exporters credits worth 40% of their export earnings which they could use to expand their factories or import foreign technology used for their export production (Lewis, 1970). Such export-friendly industrial policies, together with a business-friendly low tax rate regime (Weiss, 1991), led to capital formation enabling entrepreneurs to aggressively seek new technologies and markets abroad.

A combination of these technology and market acquisition efforts coupled with a growing awareness among some European soccer ball manufacturing firms

[17] The one firm in question was Talon Sports. This was, however, set up not in the 1950s or 1960s but in the early 1990s. The owner of this firm is an illiterate former soccer ball sticher/subcontractor whose rags to riches story looks as if it were plucked out of a Horatio Alger novel. According to a former worker of his, the Talon owner, after beginning work as a soccer ball stitcher, became a subcontractor to Soofi, owner of Saga Sports, Sialkot's largest soccer ball exporter and the exclusive soccer ball supplier to Nike. As my source tells the story, 'One day [stitcher turned Talon owner] was there [at Saga Sports] seeing [Soofi's] negotiations not working out on rate with foreign buyer. Told someone to ask foreign buyer what rate he would like and he [Talon owner] would deliver.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 150). The rest, apparently, is history as a lucrative business relationship began between the foreign buyer and the subcontractor that would lead him to establish one of the largest soccer ball exporting firms in the industry.

that it would be in their business interests to transfer their manufacturing technology to their Sialkot suppliers, who had a considerable cost advantage in manufacturing,[18] led to technology transfer in the later half of the 1960s from Europe to Sialkot. As an example of Sialkot entrepreneurs seeking technology abroad, Anwar Khawaja visited Germany in 1964 and learned the technique of making stretched leather which was the leather type needed to make high end leather soccer balls at that time (AKI, 2002). With regards to the other way technology was transferred to Sialkot (i.e., by foreign companies wishing to move away from manufacturing), pre-stretched leather techniques were transferred to Capital Sports by their main German buyer who was seeking to outsource its manufacturing operations. Thus, by 1966, Sialkot began to produce pre-stretched leather balls which were the premium soccer balls at that time used for top class international tournaments and matches. A year later Sialkot reached a milestone by producing the first Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) approved soccer ball in Sialkot. The ball was made by AKI who, thereby, arguably became Sialkot's first top quality soccer ball manufacturer.[19]

The organization of the production process did not alter from the pre-partition era in that all stages of production including stitching of the panels (i.e., the hexagons and pentagons that make up a soccer ball) were conducted under one factory roof. This underwent a drastic change in the early 1970s.

*Sialkot's Great Spanish Prison Break*

Just as the first partition dramatically changed the character of Sialkot's soccer ball industry, in terms of ownership, a second partition in 1971 would change the industry's character, this time in the organization of production. In 1971, Pakistan underwent a partition when the Eastern part of the country seceded, becoming Bangladesh after a bloody struggle where, according to some

[18] As one entrepreneur recalled, '[The German firm] saw labour costs high [in Germany]. Stitching costs [there] were US$1.50 whereas could buy the whole ball from us at US$1.00' (Pilot Study, 2001: 33).

[19] The honour for the first top quality soccer ball manufacturer in Sialkot is contested by another large soccer ball firm. However, they provide no evidence pre-1967 that they were producing high quality balls, such as provided by AKI, to substantiate their claim.

estimates, about a million people, almost wholly civilians, were killed by the Pakistan Army in its brutal efforts to suppress the separatist movement in East Pakistan. Pakistan plunged into gloom, and the lower classes were harbouring grievances of injustice at being left out of the economic miracle of the 1960s when wealth had concentrated in few hands. In fact, according to some writers on the history of Pakistan's economy (e.g., Ahmed and Amjad, 1984; Lewis 1970), the partition of the country was fuelled by the government's industrialization policies that basically transferred massive resources from the Eastern part to industrialize exclusively the Western part from whence came most of the military and civilian administrators of the country even though the Eastern part had half of the population. This atmosphere of inequality was ripe for a socialist message that was spreading in the mid-60s through the third world. Its champion in Pakistan became Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who became Prime Minister in the wake of the 1971 debacle.

Bhutto's political campaign, which he would later betray as would most socialists of that era (e.g., Gaddafi, and Gamal-Abdul Nasser), was based on removing class-based inequalities and ushering in an era of worker and peasant rights (Burki, 1980). His populist rhetoric radicalised the working classes, and though he suspended fundamental rights and the constitution, nevertheless, the rhetoric encouraged labour and collective action against private industrial interests (ibid). An elderly gate-keeper at Saga Sports described with fondness the debt of labour to Bhutto saying 'Bhutto taught us [that] you were human beings, equal to the *seth logh* [factory owners]. Before *mazdoor* [worker] could not sit on charpai [where owner would be sitting]. With Bhutto [a worker] could look employer in the eye.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 21).

Sialkot saw plenty of strikes and union actions in the 1970s (Weiss, 1991). Unions began making many demands ranging from higher pay and better working conditions to bonuses and increased representation. At the same time, the government passed labour-friendly laws to address the inequities that had

developed in industrial relations.[20] Factory owners reacted to this state-supported labour activism in a way that was not expected by the government or the unions. They decentralized operations, sending stitching operations, in which most of the labour in a soccer ball factory is employed, back to the homes and villages. Stitching became a cottage industry: raw materials travelled through a chain of subcontractors to the homes of workers in villages, and the finished soccer balls returned via the factory subcontractors just like the practice that was done in the early pre-factory years of the soccer ball industry.

This was a stroke of brilliance from the point of view of the masters. First, they dispersed labour that before being communally assembled in a central location, such as a factory, could more easily be organized and mobilized. Moreover, by cottaging-out work, they were able to evade the labour laws which largely apply to factories having salaried employees (Raasta Development Consultants [RDC], 1996). The stitchers were hired on a piece-rate contract and by this artifice, many of the benefits of Bhutto's progressive industrial laws were rendered inapplicable (APFOL, 1999). As an industrialist pointed out, 'Only that work which can't be done in the house is being done in the factories' (cited in Weiss, 1991: 137).

In spite of such a tumultuous environment, the soccer ball industry continued to prosper, gaining international market share. Though the government, at one level, was antagonizing the business interests, through its support of organized labour, at another level, it was also supporting the industry through various means from setting up industrial estates where adequate electricity supply and low customs duties would be provided to setting up institutions in Sialkot like the Sports Service Centre that made available expensive machinery (e.g., for rounding footballs) that local firms on their own could not afford (Weiss, 1991: 136). However, as much as this type of state intervention helped industry, it was largely an endogenous dynamic of seeking new markets together with an

[20] For example, Bhutto's government passed Workers Children (Education) Ordinance 1972 which required the employer to provide free education to two children of each worker (APFOL, 1999: 11). The law is still on the books but as with the other forward looking labour laws in Pakistan, is observed in the breach rather than in practice.

exogenous change taking place in Europe, that brought added prosperity and ensured Sialkot a prominent place in the global soccer ball industry.

Up to the early 1970s, according to one of the longest-serving suppliers of soccer balls to Adidas (interviewed during the pilot study; see Pilot Study, 2001: 34), big brands like Adidas used to source from Spain. Soccer balls there were stitched in prisons. The Spanish government began discouraging this practice in the early 1970s, eventually passing a constitutional amendment in 1978 banning the use of prison labour for commercial purposes (Spanish Legal Archives). It appears that Adidas and other major brands were not waiting for this constitutional amendment to take action. They had already begun since the early 1970s to search for alternative sources. Sialkot entrepreneurs had been trying to obtain contracts from Adidas since 1970. They continued making efforts towards this end, oblivious to the changes that were taking place in Spain. When they approached, just before 1975, the founding owner of Adidas, Adi Dassler, they found, to their surprise, a sympathetic audience. In 1975, two Sialkot companies entered into an agreement with Adidas. Three years later, when Adidas won the bid to supply the soccer ball to the World Cup of 1978 in Argentina, it was Sialkot that made the famous Adidas 'tango' ball for the World Cup named ,presumably, after the Argentinian dance. This brought Sialkot into the most prestigious realm of the international soccer universe. Soon other international brands started sourcing from Sialkot. When Nike decided to make soccer balls in 1995, it came straight to Sialkot and sourced exclusively from there (US Department of Labor, 1996). In spite of such a tumultuous labour relations environment of the 1970s, Sialkot's soccer ball industry continued to prosper.

By 1995, just before the onset of the child labour crisis, Sialkot accounted for anywhere from 60-80% of the world's soccer ball production (Cummins, 2000: 4 and 27). The industry became more concentrated with less than twenty local firms controlling 60-70% of exports even though there were and continue to be possibly hundreds of soccer ball firms in Sialkot (Awan, 1996: 5). Only a handful of the top ten firms have been employing over 100 employees while the majority of firms in the industry employ less than 50 employees (APFOL, 1999:

1-3). The number of people employed in this industry varies from estimate to estimate. For example, an International Labour Organization (ILO) study estimated the soccer ball work force in 1995 to be around 100,000 (Awan, 1996: 5). A corporate publication put the figure at 75,000 (Saga Sports, 1998). The stitching workforce estimates similarly vary from a low of just over 30,000 (IMAC, 2003) to a high of 65,000 (Awan, 1996: 5).[21]

Throughout this time (i.e., up to 1995), the decentralized village-based organization of the soccer ball production remained in place with the cottage industry spreading to about a 10 miles radius of Sialkot city. Panels (i.e., the individual hexagon and pentagon shaped pieces that constitute a soccer ball) were prepared in the factories but then through an elaborate chain of subcontractors were taken to the 1600 odd villages surrounding Sialkot (SCF, 1997: 13; UNICEF, 2000: 1), where they were stitched together, mostly in homes. After the stitching, the completed soccer balls went back through the network of subcontractors to the firms who then exported them to their international customers (see figure 1 for a diagrammatical representation). An insignificant number of balls was stitched in shacks called workshops that were owned by the subcontractors (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP], 1995; RDC, 1996).

Women constituted a significant percentage of the stitching workforce. Estimates obtained from interviews and documents show that women made up anywhere from 30% to 58% of the total stitching workforce (SCF, 2000). Similarly, estimates of children involved in stitching ranged from 5000 to 17,000 though more accurate estimates of ILO place the figure at about 15,000 (Husselbee, 2001: 133; ILO, 1999).

Though the local industrialists prospered in the soccer ball export trade with their international brands (e.g., Nike), building opulent office buildings with gleaming glass facades that would earn the envy of high technology industrial

[21] Such a wide range is there because of the part-time and 'flexible' nature of the contracting work. In a world cup year, more hands are brought into the industry to meet the additional demand and, thus, the figure swells to the maximum of the range indicated above. Similarly, in a downturn year, the number seems to gravitate towards the lower end of the spectrum.

parks in North America or Europe, such riches, contrary to the faith of trickle-down economics, did not percolate down to the soccer ball stitchers. Theirs was a life of grinding poverty where what Marx called 'the dull compulsions of living' pressed all hands, including children, into stitching soccer balls to make ends meet. Wages, depending on a host of factors from the quality of balls being stitched to whether stitchers were near the location of subcontractors or factories with those further away receiving less rates, varied from Pakistani rupees (Rs.)[22] 45–100 (i.e., approximately US$1.42–US$3.16)[23] for a full day's work (SCF, 1997: 23). A stitcher could stitch at most three to four balls per day and the ball rate ranged from Rs.15–Rs.25 (US$0.47-US$0.79) (ibid). The top quality balls in the West would retail upwards of US$100 according to a major Sialkot supplier to Adidas. In other words, for every US$100 earned in the sale of a top quality soccer ball, less than US$1 would make it back to the stitcher households. Given that the average household size in Sialkot was about eight and that almost half the stitching households, had only one bread earner, the stitching families just barely if at all eked out an existence (Saaed, 1998:18-19). All worked long but flexible hours (RDC, 1996; SCF, 2000a). For example, women would stitch in the spare time between their household chores and tending to their children. For these workers, there appeared little scope of union agitation like of the early 1970s. Labour activism was suppressed by successive military or business-friendly civilian governments, particularly the Zia regime (1978-1988) that harshly cracked down on unions and organized labour, reversing the gains such groups had made in the Bhutto era (Weiss, 1991). In 1995, Sialkot's soccer ball industry, thus, seemed to be in the presence of the Weberian eternal yesterday where the present reflected the past 15 years and was expected to continue into the future with no major disruptive events envisioned.

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[22] All rupees (Rs.) mentioned in this thesis are Pakistani Rupees.

[23] Rupees will be converted in this thesis based on annual average exchange rates prevailing for the year pertaining to the currency number in question. For annual average exchange rates of the Pakistani Rupee to the US Dollar, see Appendix F. Discrepancies between figures, especially when dealing with small sums (e.g., Rs.1) may arise due to rounding-off of exchange rates to only two decimal places. Values below one hundred US dollars will be shown to two decimal places. All other values will be rounded off to the nearest dollar.

## THE WHISTLE BLOWS: CHILD LABOUR CRISIS BEGINNINGS

*Puran's Curse & the Workshop of Empire*

In those 15 years preceding 1995 and even before, Sialkot's soccer ball industry rarely attracted the notice of the international media. When it did so, the media's gaze was a benevolent one. Some articles praised the important contribution the soccer ball industry was making to Pakistan's economic development, earning vital foreign exchange. For example, Lamb in the *Financial Times*, wrote, 'In almost every house in the otherwise unremarkable town of Sialkot, people are busy stitching footballs . . . Today Sialkot footballs are used everywhere from Japan to the US and the industry earns Dollars 60 m (37.5 m Pounds (pds)) in foreign exchange a year.' (1989: 2). Other pieces of journalism, such as Crossette's (1990) article in the *New York Times*, 'Soccer Balls Sustain Pakistan Town' highlighted as well the entrepreneurial and economic prowess of the soccer ball industry, but also gave detailed description of the people stitching the soccer balls. Noting like Lamb that the industry was cottage-based with stitching done in 'homes, shops and courtyards all over Sialkot', the article went on to idyllically describe stitching as a craft where 'youngsters' learn the craft sitting in a shade at the feet of a master craftsman, earning upto $28 a week which the article hastened to add was 'a good wage in Punjab' and provided much needed income for the families of the boy apprentices (Crossette, 1990: 4). A photograph of a young boy, a primary school drop-out, shown stitching a soccer ball, accompanied the article. The caption read matter of factly 'Shahid Amanatulli, left, learning how to stitch a soccer ball in Sialkot, Pakistan, where there are more than 20 companies that produce soccer balls. He earns about $4.76 a week.' (ibid). As can be seen, the motif of these stories was basically that the entrepreneurial energies of the soccer ball industry and the skills of stitchers, including young boys, working at their homes, were helping to build a better, more prosperous Pakistan. The young boys were invariably shown as skilled and proud of their work: 'In villages around the town, thousands of families living in

mud-brick homes provide the skilled labour to hand-stitch the balls . . . "I am very proud," said a young boy with a grin as he sat crosslegged in his home in a village outside Sialkot, swiftly sewing together the 32 panels of a brightly coloured non-match ball.' (MaCartney, 1994: 6).[24]

This motif would undergo a dramatic shift in April, 1995. A CBS television crew from the prime-time show *Eye to Eye with Connie Chung* had arrived in Sialkot to produce a story on the global soccer ball industry (i.e., Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers and their international brands customers such as Adidas, Nike, and Reebok to name a few). Given what they were to air on April 6, 1995, it seems that they had stopped off at a well in Sialkot, called Puran's well, that attracts pilgrims to it, peered into its abyss, and found an ancient connection, described below, between Sialkot and its reported mis-treatment of children which they would later relay to US audiences in the context of the soccer ball industry.

Puran's well takes its name, according to folklore, from a name of a young prince from ancient times called Puran. Legend has it that though Sialkot was founded by Raja Sul (3000 B.C.), the uncle of Pandhavas, whose heroic deeds are recorded in the rich Hindu pantheon contained in the epic *Mahabharata*, its name comes from a person who was to rule that land around 500 B.C. (Apna Sialkot, 2003a). The ruler was Raja Salivahan from the 'Sia' caste (ibid). He built the city and a fort and, thus, the name of the city came to be called Sialkot, the 'fort of Sia' as the ancient Vedic word for fort is 'kot'.

Puran was one of two sons of Raja Salivahan (US Department of Commerce, 2000). He was killed in a well (i.e., Puran's well) by his father for rejecting the worldly life of the palace (ibid). Legend has it that Sialkot was later blighted by famine and plunder, attributed to a curse set by Puran (Apna Sialkot, 2003a). Thus, from ancient times, the folklore of Sialkot has the area's history inter-woven with its reported mis-treatment of children. This mythological theme would be re-told in the CBS story that would contextualise it in the current

[24] MaCartney also pointed out that stitching was done primarily at homes in villages as evidenced by the following: 'In thousands of homes across central Pakistan villagers are stitching millions of footballs for the world cup' (1994: 6).

modern setting of the global soccer ball industry. Given the consequences that would flow from this story to the inhabitants, especially the poor, one could not blame them if they felt that Puran's curse was once again set on them, this time resurrected by the wrath of the international media.

On April 6, 1995, CBS aired at 9 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) a short documentary on the soccer ball industry in Sialkot that would send shock waves immediately around the world, including Sialkot (CBS, 1995). The documentary investigated and addressed the following question formulated by CBS anchor-woman Connie Chung: 'You look at a wonderful product, maybe a soccer ball for your child. The tag says 'hand-made'. But did you ever wonder whose hands actually made it?' The documentary explored the question and its answer was evident from its headline: 'CHILDREN AT WORK'.

The hands that stitched the soccer balls, according to the CBS story, were those of children as young as six years old working in dark and dank one room workshops without electricity and without water. The poverty of the working conditions and of the children was richly displayed in the images that were beamed nationally. CBS (1995), in its words, told audiences the following:

- One study by a respected Pakistani child-rights group estimates up to 25 percent, or 25,000, of Sialkot stitchers are children. [This would imply that the total number of stitchers in Sialkot are 100,000].

- They can make about $2 a day just under minimum wage in Pakistan. But they're sometimes paid even less than adults. The kids come cheaper. They are very good workers. No complaints. They work full time. They take the abuse, they take everything, and they don't protest. You couldn't find better labor anywhere else.

- Kalil [child stitcher interviewed] told us he can stitch two to three soccer balls a day. The job, he says, pays about 75 cents a ball . . . he's 12 and started when he was just seven years old.

The conversation with Kalil, the child stitcher, took place in a dark one room workshop where it was also mentioned in a voiceover that the workshop had no electricity or water, just to avoid the possibility that the US audience may not get these obvious points from the derelict images of the workshop. The documentary also showed images of children sanding and filing sharp surgical instruments without any protective equipment. Ironically enough, the surgical instruments were being made for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Brief space was given to representatives of international soccer ball brands (i.e., Adidas and Reebok executives in the US and the Adidas and Reebok manufacturer in Sialkot) and a UNICEF spokesman. The industry executives from the US and UNICEF pleaded ignorance of this practice and said they would immediately investigate it. The Adidas and Reebok Sialkot manufacturer (i.e., Sublime Sports) said these practices were occurring 'behind our face'. The documentary went on to add that Sublime Sports had told them that 'there are no controls over workshops that use bonded laborers and employ children.' (CBS, 1995).

The CBS story had forcefully brought to the fore the unsettling irony of poor children at work so rich American kids could play. What CBS did was, thus, in intent, quite in line with what Said (1993) had done for Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*: expose the workshop of Empire. Said had pointed out how the opulence of the stately estate, known as Mansfield Park, was attributed by Jane Austen, without much thought, to 'successful' sugar slave plantations of the English owner in Antigua. Said went on to brilliantly show how Jane Austen, by noting this 'fact' of slave plantations in a banal thoughtless matter-of-fact way, much like how one would describe unproblematic naturally occurring aspects in life such as the sun, was in effect making the phenomenon of Englishmen owning slave plantations in foreign lands, extracting surpluses from them to build their estates in England, appear to be quite 'normal'. Doing so, Austen was helping, most likely inadvertently but, alas, effectively, to naturalize, sustain, reproduce, and reinforce in the wider culture through literature the imperial mind-set in whose scheme of existence slave plantations in foreign lands *were* to be taken as a natural part of the social order, thus, meriting a la Jane Austen, little discussion

beyond superficially noting their physical presence. An imperial administrator would have found nothing amiss, unlike Said, in Austen's sparse allusion to the Antiguan slave plantations in Mansfield Park.

Though one could perhaps give CBS the benefit of doubt regarding intention, it is somewhat challenging to be so charitable when evaluating the diligence of their reporting effort on this particular case. To begin with, their interpreter was Fawad Usman Khan, an education activist based in Lahore. His NGO, Sudhaar, would later become involved in the project to eliminate child labour.[25] He was not a native of Sialkot nor did he have any extensive experience at that date with the soccer ball industry there. Thus, relying on him to give statements on the general condition of child labour in Sialkot's soccer ball industry was quite a questionable way of obtaining accurate information on this complex issue.

There were yet other ways in which the CBS story failed the test of journalistic rigour. Allegations were made that children earn less than adults. No evidence was provided except for the questionable testimony of CBS' interpreter, Fawad Usman Khan. Assuming for a moment, that indeed children were paid

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[25] It was well for Fawad Usman Khan that the industrialists could not recollect, based on my interviews with the key players that articulated Sialkot's soccer ball industry's response to this crisis, what was the original story that brought the child labour issue to international attention. Given their policy of not involving NGOs that they considered had played a role in highlighting this issue, it is quite unlikely that Fawad's NGO, Sudhaar, would have been allowed to participate in the project had they been aware of the key role of Sudhaar's founder in helping to break out this story. In fact, contrary to popular activist rhetoric about the all-seeing eye of big business, even the international industry players were and continue to be quite vague on the specifics concerning how this issue originated. For example, Andre Gorgesman, a key player from the side of the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI), the international federation of national sporting goods trade associations, in a speech to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) got the date and program of the CBS story wrong. He said the story was aired in April 1996 in the CBS program '60 minutes' (Gorgesman, 2001). One cannot rule out the possibility that this anachronisitic account may have been deliberately crafted as by suggesting the story to have broken out in April 1996, Gorgemans was able to give the impression to ADB executives that the global soccer ball industry had been proactive on child labour as they had held a global conference on it as far back as November 1995. The date of the conference in his speech is indeed correct and when corrections are made for the date of the CBS story, it seems clear that the conference was in reaction to the child labour issue, a point corroborated by WFSGI's own trade publication *Shop Talk* issue of January/February 1997. Gorgemans gave his ADB speech in Manila on May 8, 2001. Given this date, by which time the Sialkot child labour project had received kudos from international officialdom and the global soccer ball industry appeared vindicated, it seems that there would be little motive for Gorgemans to purposely give such a misleading account simply to impress upon the historical record that the industry had been proactive as opposed to reacting to the crisis.

lower wages than adults for stitching soccer balls, could this rate differential be because of adults worked on different higher quality soccer balls requiring more strength of sewing stitches and, therefore, commanded more pay as opposed to children, who because of having less physical strength, could only stitch lower quality balls that paid lower rates regardless of who stitched them?[26] Alternatively, could the wage differential be explained by noting that there were different types of stitching operations[27] and wages differed on what operation one did so a child would usually be involved in operations, again due to physical strength limitations, on operations (e.g., sewing just half a ball) which would command less of a rate than sewing a complete ball? By taking stitching as a monolithic and homogenous undifferentiated work, ignoring its nuances and complexities (wage rates contingent on the combination of types of stitching work and types of soccer balls), the report misleadingly implied that since the stitching work was the same, and the apparent fact that children were getting paid less than

[26] Wage rates differ based on the type of soccer ball being stitched. There are basically three types of balls:

- *Valati* [meaning foreign or English] (high end grade A ball used in professional and club matches). Stitchers call this ball a 'hard' ball as it requires the greatest strength to stitch and usually only adult men can stitch such balls.
- *Lahori* [meaning Lahore] (lower end Grade A ball used in club matches, amateur clubs and general retail). Adult men and women, and some children can stitch this ball.
- *Desi* [meaning local] (Grade B ball used in general retail and for promotional purposes). These balls can be stitched by men, women, and children.

*Valati* balls command the highest wage rates while the *desi* balls have the lowest wage rates. Wage rates are paid per piece and in 1995 the range was from Rs.15–Rs.25 (US$0.47–US$0.79) (SCF, 1997: 23).

[27] There are at least five types of stitching operations (Kazmi and Macfarlane, 2002):

- Thread waxing (primarily done by children)
- Stitching individual panels (primarily done by children and women)
- Stitching half a ball (done primarily by children, women, and some men).
- Stitching that joins two halves of a ball (done by some children, but mostly by women and men).
- Stitching the last six panels called putting a *bhan* on the ball. This is the most intricate part of the stitching process and it is largely done by men though a small number of women and children do this work.

Wages would depend on whether one did the whole ball, including all the stitching processes, or just did one or more of the different stitching operations with of course the whole ball stitching commanding the most wage rate. On a per operation basis, stitching the last six panels was the most lucrative as an expert stitcher could do it in 1/3rd of the time it would take to stitch a half a ball and get paid 2/3rd of the wages that would accrue to a stitcher who stitched half a ball. As a stitcher explained to me, 'Tricky technique inverting the ball and stitching last six panels. Called giving it a *bhan*. Other stitchers would bring balls [to me] for this *bhan* procedure. And I would charge good amount and do it in less time [i.e., make more money in less time so to free time for study].' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 135-136).

adults, it must then be the case that children were being employed in the industry because they were a cheaper labour resource than adults, thereby justifying a widely-held popular stereotype about why children are found working in the developing world that often does not hold upon close empirical scrutiny. As Human Rights Watch, an internationally renowned human rights organization, stated in a written deposition to the US Department of Labor in 1996 when it was conducting public hearings on child labour:

> A common misconception . . . is that there is a clear difference between a child and an adult with a consequent difference in wages between a child laborer and an adult laborer within the same industry or factory. In reality, the only difference between child and adult is the legal distinction which designates fourteen as the minimum age of employment . . . A thirteen year old is a child; a fourteen year old is an adult, and in many cases, there is no difference in wages, especially when industries pay adults and children on a piece-rate basis. (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996).[28]

There were other misleading impressions. Though the CBS report at its beginning mentioned a line that the stitching is done in the surrounding villages, the interview with the child stitcher took place in a workshop. Other footage of children at work in Sialkot was also of those working in workshops leading to the incorrect understanding that children worked in Sialkot in workshops, whether it be for soccer balls or for some other industry there such as surgical instruments. For soccer balls, the evidence was overwhelmingly in the opposite direction that children stitched balls at home.[29] Also by juxtaposing images of children making

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[28] When work is performed on a piece-rate basis, as is the case with soccer balls, the subcontractor is only concerned with the finished product. Who makes it (i.e., child or adult) becomes somewhat irrelevant as the price of the work is already fixed and would not fluctuate were a child to make it as opposed to an adult.

[29] The evidence overwhelmingly points in the direction of children stitching at home and not at workshops. Numerous sources testify to this fact from international NGOs like Save the Children (SCF) to soccer ball players like US national women soccer ball team's mid-fielder Julie Foudy who went to Sialkot to ensure children were not working in Reebok's factories before accepting to sponsor their new ball for women's soccer (Gardner, 1997); not to mention the writings in journalism that covered Sialkot before the crisis (e.g., Lamb, 1989; Macartney, 1994).

soccer balls and images of other children sanding and filing surgical instruments without inserting any commentary that the two jobs were qualitatively different, especially in terms of hazards posed to the children, the audience was left with a seamless narrative where the two qualitatively different sets of images of children were blurred into one. As a consequence, one was likely to come away with the false impression that the general ambience of child labour in Sialkot, whether it be for soccer, surgical instruments or anything else for that matter, was an undifferentiated whole consisting of dark and dangerous one room workshops where children were made to sweat all day without electricity and water for mere pittance of a wage.

*Media Penalties: Quick Feet & Sloppy Foot Work*

The CBS story was picked up by other mass media organizations both in the US and abroad who embellished and distorted the already factually questionable documentary. For example, the *Herald Sun* (an Australian daily) wrote 'As many as 25,000 children labour in workshops in Sialkot, Pakistan, according to a report last night on "Eye to Eye with Connie Chung" stitching soccer balls' whereas the CBS story had made no such explicit connection between 'workshops' and '25,000 children' though the documentary implied it for the 25,000 children fact was mentioned in the voice over that showed children stitching in workshops (Jackson, 1995). The *Herald Sun* had apparently made what was implied explicit. It also inserted additional information about children as young as four being chained and made to work in carpet looms, thus, once again, encouraging the reader to think that the plight of children in carpets and soccer balls were one and the same for no effort was exerted to explicitly point out that the two industries had qualitatively different working conditions for children.

The international media, particularly the European press, given the immense popularity and centrality of soccer there compared to the US went on a frenzy, doling out a blitz of moral penalties to the global soccer ball industry for being found in bed with child labour. TV teams and journalists descended to Sialkot from as far away as Australia and Norway. Sialkot's saturation by media

personnel can be discerned from a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), investigating this child labour issue in Sialkot, where they noted that 'in many places the team encountered open hostility [by villagers and subcontractors to manufacturers] . . . This was the result of the films made on child labour by different foreign television networks in Sialkot earlier this year.' (HRCP, 1995: 9).

Like the CBS story, this subsequent media reporting tended to show, to borrow vocabulary from soccer, quick feet (i.e., in bringing the child labour involvement in the global soccer ball industry story quickly to their various respective audiences) but, alas, quite sloppy footwork (i.e., highly inaccurate reporting of the situation).[30] As time went on, each successive story about child labour in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot would make more scathing and, thus, even more untenable claims and allegations on the venality of the global soccer ball industry and its exploitation.[31] Ages of children employed by the soccer ball industry to stitch their balls went down from the CBS low of seven years to a toddling three years (Schanberg, 1996). Children were not a part of the stitching

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[30] In 1995, HRCP published a report about the veracity of allegations being made about Sialkot's soccer ball industry. Except for agreeing with reports on the issue of wages being exploitative, the report refuted most of the main charges that would be levelled by the media such as the prevalence of bonded child labour, work place beatings, children working predominately in workshops for long hours, and differential wages for children and adults. The validity of the HRCP (1995) report was corroborated by evidence on Sialkot's soccer ball industry published prior to the crisis (e.g., Weiss, 1991) as well as later by numerous studies and surveys done by other independent organizations such as international NGOs (e.g., SCF and ILO), international trade unions and their Pakistani affiliates (e.g., International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and APFOL) and local organizations (e.g., RDC). In those crucial early days, the international media made no allusions to the HRCP report and its evidence contradicting most of the 'facts' being presented by their stories.

Nuanced and less sensationalist reporting would begin to emerge in the international mass media after US President Clinton in a historic and well covered media speech at the ILO head quarters in Geneva on June 16 1999, praised the project to eliminate child labour in Sialkot as a model example of industry and civil society collaborating to address a social problem (Clinton, 1999). However, no media story, to my knowledge, either before or after this date, has acknowledged the sensationalistic and inaccurate nature of the initial reporting of this child labour case.

[31] There were only a few exceptions that were largely drowned out by this sensationalistic clamour of the mass media. For example, an article in the *Seattle-Post Intelligencer* (April 12, 1995) did not dispute the allegations made but at least stated that child labour is a complex matter and that it is best to leave it to the people of Sialkot who know their context best on how to handle this matter (Ramsey, 1995). Even the *Financial Times* of London (May 30, 1996) felt prudent, such was the popular moral outrage in Europe, not to rush to the defense of business, meekly stating that the child labour charges were allegations that needed to be substantiated (Taylor, 1996).

labour force but they were alleged to be the entire force in toto.[32] Children were not only working but they were enslaved and bonded (i.e., sold for loans by their parents under the desperation of economic compulsions to usurious 'loan sharks' who would use their labour as payment for the loans extended to their parents.)[33]

The drum beat went on in ever higher octaves and was being heard on both sides of the Atlantic, except by the children and their families in Sialkot, who being mostly illiterate and lacking subscriptions to such newspapers as the *Financial Times*, were not aware of what was specifically being said about them in the international arena. By early 1996, claims being advanced by the mass media had reached a pitch of feverish exaggeration. Below is an excerpt illustrating these hysterical claims. This excerpt taken from a much to be cited article was published by none other than the prestigious journal *Atlantic Monthly*:

> No amount of preparation could have lessened the shock and revulsion I felt on entering a large sporting-goods factory in the town of Sialkot, 70 miles from Lahore, where scores of children, most of them aged five to 10, produce soccer balls by hand for 40 rupees, or about $1.20, a day. The children work 80 hours a week in near-total darkness and total silence. According to the foreman, the darkness is both an economy and a precaution: child-rights activists have difficulty taking photographs if the lighting is poor. The silence is to ensure product quality: "If the children speak, they are not giving their complete attention to the product and are liable to make errors." The children are permitted one 30-minute meal break a day; they are punished if they take longer. They are also punished if they fall asleep, if their workbenches are sloppy, if they waste material or miscut a pattern, if they complain to their parents or speak to strangers. A partial list of "infractions" tacked to a wall is of dubious utility: the children are illiterate. Punishments are doled out in a storage closet at the rear of a factory. There, amid bales of

[32] For example, the Deutsche Presse-Agentur, June 12, 1996, carried the following headline: 'Pakistani children produce 36 million soccer balls a year' (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 1996).
[33] See for example: *Sunday Times* (May 14, 1995) 'Scandal of football's child slavery' (Lees, 1995); and *The People* (May 21, 1995) 'Cup Stars Earn Thousands as Slave Kids Get 5p an Hour Making Footballs; India and Pakistan Use Slave Labour to Make footballs' (Double, 1995).

> wadding and leather, children are hung upside down by their knees, starved, caned, or lashed. (In the interests of economy the foreman uses a lash made from scrap soccer-ball leather.) The punishment room is a standard feature of a Pakistani factory, as common as a lunchroom at a Detroit assembly plant. (Silvers, 1996: 83-84).[34]

Public outrage began earlier in Europe than in the United States. Immediately after the Sunday Times (Lees, 1995) broke the story to its UK audience, a wide swathe of the public from pub-going soccer enthusiasts to soccer club owners and members of parliament demanded from the global soccer ball industry an end to child labour (Double, 1995). It would reach its peak after the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) televised, in Europe and in some parts of United States in June 1996, a day before the commencement of the much awaited Euro 96 soccer championship (the most prestigious soccer tournament in Europe), a 10 minute video showing children making in Dickensian conditions soccer balls destined for Euro 96 (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU], 1998).[35]

In the United States, it would be Sydney Schanberg's 'Six Cents an hour' article published in *Life* (Magazine) in June 1996 that would galvanize the American public from soccer moms and youth soccer leagues across the nation to high officialdom such as Robert Reich, Secretary of Labour, to deliver ultimatums to the global soccer ball industry to cease its evil ways. That Schanberg's article would receive such wide audience and ignite such deep passions is not difficult to

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[34] A calmer reflection on the quoted passage would reveal several puzzles. If total darkness is the modus operandi, how are these kids able to find the tiny perforated holes in the various panels through which they have to pass the needle in order to sew them together? Furthermore, where is the evidence to substantiate that punishment rooms are typical feature of a Pakistani factory. Silvers makes no claims on having an extensive experience of Pakistan nor does he claim any source for this allegation that he writes as an uncontested fact. There are other problems from this passage that I leave the reader to discern such as if children are beaten so commonly why do their pictures, taken and shown in numerous magazines and documentaries, not show signs of such beatings?

[35] The 10 minute video report was called 'Hell for Leather'. It was co-produced by international trade unions and Parachute Pictures (a UK based documentary production company). According to Parachute Pictures, the documentary was broadcast in the United States, United Kingdom, and throughout the European mainland (Parachute Pictures, 2003). I was not able to view this documentary.

comprehend. He is, after all, an icon of great American journalism being a Pulitzer-prize winner whose journalistic exploits during US military aggression in Indo-China were put into celluloid by Hollywood in a film called 'Killing Fields' that later went on to win an Academy Award in 1984 for best picture along with a slew of other Oscars.

Schanberg, unfortunately, repeated the mantra of child slaves in Sialkot's soccer ball industry.[36] He wrote about children in that industry being taken into outright slavery, bonded and denied school, and compelled to spend days in dreary sheds making soccer balls for those better-off. However, given his writing genius, he brought this mantra to its arguably most forceful expression. Moreover, he covered not just child labour in Sialkot's soccer ball industry but child labour in Pakistan as a whole. However, as was usual with the reporting at that time, he failed to make mention explicitly whether the horrific scenes of child labour in Pakistan he was describing were applicable to the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. Once again, the implication was that they were which would sadly lead to

[36] The emergence of such a homogenous mantra from such a plurality of sources across the globe can be partially explained in the following way. Closer examination of the media reports at that time indicates a number of mechanisms that would keep the international media party line within quite narrow parameters. For example, the same story produced by a news agency would be picked up often word for word by another news agency located in another part of the world. Thus, a story by Agence France Presse (May 29, 1996) was picked up almost verbatim and published in the *Irish Times* on May 30, 1996 (The Irish Times, 1996). Another way by which a homogenous discourse emerged was that the same writer would be publishing his or her story in international publications. Thus, Jonathan Silvers who wrote his sensationalist piece for the *Atlantic Monthly* in February 1996, recycled it almost word for word for the English daily *The Independent*, who published virtually the same story on April 28, 1996 (Silvers, 1996a). Finally, another mechanism for producing a consistent message, was that the local sources or 'experts' used to comment on the child labour plight in Sialkot's soccer ball industry were often the same individuals. They, thus, had roughly the same stories and understandings regardless of which newspaper was interviewing them with the consequent result that various media publications ended up sharing similar content because such content was being derived from the same sources. For example, Fawad Usman Khan, the CBS story interpreter, was also interviewed by the *Sunday Times* (May 14, 1995) (Lees, 1995). The *Sunday Times* story extensively also quoted an anti-child labour Pakistani activist, Eman Ullah Khan who had worked on the bonded child labour issue in Pakistan's carpet industry though there was no evidence to suggest that he was familiar with the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. His statements that later would be not substantiated would add further weight to the understanding that he was unfamiliar with the soccer ball industry in Sialkot and was transposing his carpet industry knowledge to the soccer industry when the two, as it would turn out later, were qualitatively different in their treatment of children. Nevertheless, Eman Ullah Khan was used by the *Sunday Times* to talk about bonded child stitchers and their cheap nimble fingers and he was interviewed by Jonathan Silvers for his *Atlantic Monthly* piece and, thus, there was considerable overlap between the *Sunday Times* piece and the *Atlantic Monthly* story on account of relying on a common source.

ordinary Americans forming an erroneous picture of the situation. For example, after describing the bonding of child labour in the soccer ball village of Mahotra, he wrote immediately, 'As I travelled, I witnessed conditions more appalling than those in the stitching sheds of Mahotra – children as young as six bought from their parents for as little as $15, sold and resold like furniture, branded, beaten, blinded as punishment for wanting to go home, rendered speechless by the trauma of their enslavement.' (1996: 41). There is no reason to suppose that this was the plight of the children in Sialkot's soccer ball industry. However, only writing this description with the prefatory remark that 'As I travelled' could lead one to presume that the harrowing scene inked was about Sialkot's soccer ball industry while he could have been writing about other Pakistani villages having nothing to do with making soccer balls. The text was ambiguous at best but given the juxtaposition of its contents, the public felt this was the situation of children in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot as later writings by school teachers and school children (e.g., Bigelow, 1997) would quote this particular passage when describing the soccer ball child labour situation in 1996.

Schanberg's searing prose, coupled with photographs showing children stitching, made for a potent combination that would enrage even the most stolid of hearts. For example, a photograph carried in that article showed a 12 year old hunched over, stitching a soccer ball with a Nike swoosh sign prominently visible even to the most unobservable eye with an inflammatory caption underneath that read:

> Children are not only the easiest to intimidate, they're also the cheapest workers. Twelve-year-old Tariq, one of thousands employed in Pakistan's soccer ball industry, which produces five million balls a year for the U.S. market, stitches leather pieces in Mahotra. He earns 60 cents a ball, and it takes most of a day to make one (Schanberg, 1996: 38).

Earlier such photos (e.g., the photograph of a child stitcher found in the New York Times story by Crossette discussed above) had elicited admiration for the plucky 12 year old earning needed income for his family and foreign

exchange for his country. Now, in this highly charged atmosphere the photo would be read with an altogether different interpretation: that of child slavery. No surprise then that just a week or two after the publication of the Schanberg article, activists were standing in front of Nike outlets, holding up Tariq's photo (Foul Ball Campaign, 1997).

One could not blame soccer moms and youth league players for this behaviour as the universe of information that they were exposed to regarding this issue since April 1995, though varying on specifics, was largely convergent on the theme of child slaves at work subject to beatings and long hours in dark workplaces so their children and friends could play. Appendix G contains a sample of mass media reporting on this issue, arrayed by themes that these reports touched upon, to help us understand how difficult it would be for a news consumer not to form a Wildean opinion that life was imitating art in that the child labour situation in Sialkot's soccer ball industry seemed to have been busy trying to emulate, in the medium of life, Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Contrary evidence, such as by the HRCP (1995) also included in Appendix G to show the contrasts between international reporting and ground reality, that would have led to an agnostic position or raised doubts about the veracity of reporting, did not surface in the international media info-sphere.[37] As a result, powerful propaganda was produced that mobilized public bias severely against the global soccer ball industry practices in Pakistan for, according to Jhally, when you have, as was the case with this issue, a monopolization of public space where alternative voices are excluded combined with an infusion of powerful images and words reinforcing the same message (in this case brutalized child slaves working for our leisure),

[37] It is difficult to view the HRCP as a dubious organization hostile to emancipatory struggles for even the most sensationalist and apparently the most pro-children early pieces on the child labour issue, such as by Schanberg and Silvers, vouchsafed for the credibility and integrity of that organization and used it as a source for their articles though they did not cite HRCP's (1995) particular report on Sialkot's soccer ball industry. This omission throws into question many of their claims. If they were not aware of this HRCP report, then their reporting could be criticised on lacking comprehensiveness. If they were aware and did not engage with it, then a more serious allegation of hiding contradictory evidence to advance a particular opinion, can be levelled against them. Either way, their reporting cannot be viewed as great expose journalism meeting the highest standards of that profession.

you get a cultural power of the very first order having devastating persuasiveness (Boihem, 1997).

On June 28, 1996 with official endorsement of the US Department of Labor and prominent politicians (e.g., Joseph P. Kennedy II), a campaign was launched to bring an end to child labour in Sialkot's soccer ball industry. The campaign came to be known as the 'Foul Ball Campaign' coordinated by the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) (a Washington based labour advocacy group) in cooperation with a network of labour, consumer, religious, sports, and child advocacy groups (US Department of Labor, 2003). The campaign called on everyone from youth soccer leagues to school administrations to put pressure upon industry to stop using children in the production of soccer balls. It also sought to add further pressure to the European pressure on FIFA to put an end to child labour in Pakistan's soccer ball industry.

## INJURY TIME: INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE

### *Fumbling in Pakistan*

Industry had not been waiting for the Foul Ball Campaign to be initiated to be galvanized into action. Both brands (i.e., import buyers with well recognised brands typically commanding a premium due to quality and intensive marketing e.g., Nike, Adidas, Mitre, etc.) and their manufacturers (i.e., Sialkot-based soccer ball manufacturers with factory capacity supplying soccer balls to brands) began to stir when the first media salvo was fired in April 1995.

The manufacturers formed their response to the emerging child labour crisis drawing on their immediate experience. By 1995, Pakistan's industry was no longer a stranger to child labour controversies. In 1992, the international media began highlighting the involvement of children in Pakistan's carpet industry (Silvers, 1996). The carpet industry was primarily located in the Sheikhupura area, near Lahore, and the district of Gujranwala which bordered Sialkot district (International Labour Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [ILO-IPEC], 1999). Some carpet looms spilled over into Sialkot district though the major production areas continued to be Sheikhupura and

Gujranwala (ibid). In 1994, a Swedish funded local NGO, the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF), was able to bring the international media gaze on the carpet industry by making its poster boy, Iqbal Masih, 12 years at that time, a cause celebre among rights activists in Europe and North America (Silvers, 1996). Iqbal Masih had been a former bonded child labourer knotting carpets that BLLF had rescued who had then campaigned with them for freeing bonded child labourers in Pakistan. His efforts by 1994 came to be noticed by the international press who feted and honoured him.[38] The media exposure further highlighted the plight of children in the carpet industry. That industry's treatment of its child workers was quite ugly. The evidence put forward of childrens' hands crippled from knotting the carpets, bonded labour, and violent beatings was attested by even Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers. As one admitted, 'Child labour issue [in carpets] came into prominence due to a documentary that showed bonded labour, children working horribly, chained to looms. For carpet, child's hands are good . . . In carpet, children cruelly treated. Women were being raped. Kids were chained' (Pilot Study, 2000: 9 and 11).

On April 16, 1995, shortly after the CBS documentary had been made, Iqbal Masih was shot dead in a rural village under mysterious circumstances (Silvers, 1996: 90). BLLF blamed the carpet industry though the carpet industry vehemently denied the allegation.[39] The position of the carpet industry seems to have been strengthened by an HRCP investigation carried out later in the wake of the killing that concluded that the death was an accident (Silvers, 1996).

The HRCP report on Iqbal Masih's murder came later. In the meanwhile, the chief of BLLF, Ehsan Ullah Khan, headed to Europe where in the later part of April 1995 he publicized the death of Iqbal Masih. The activisit network in Europe and the mass media took up the story of their fallen hero, gave plenty of

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[38] For example, ABC News featured him as its Person of the Week (Silvers, 1996) while Reebok International awarded him with its Human Rights Youth in Action Award in December 1994 in Boston (Moore, 1996). The April 1995 CBS story on child labour in the soccer ball industry also carried a clip about him (CBS, 1995).

[39] According to an interview I conducted with a senior executive of the Child Care Foundation of Pakistan, an organization set up by the Pakistani carpet industry to handle child labour-related issues on their behalf, 'Iqbal Masih was killed due to local quarrel not by employers.' (Pilot Study, 2000: 3).

space to Ehsan Ullah to tell his version of the story where the finger was squarely pointed at the carpet industry for the murder of Iqbal Masih and eventually as Schoenberger was to write, 'the boy's martyrdom helped galvanize a global crusade.' (2000: 135).

At about this same time, the child labour story of Sialkot's soccer ball industry was breaking into public light in Europe and Ehsan Ullah was once again featured in the stories telling carpet industry's barbarities along with the crimes of the soccer ball industry. For Pakistan, its name was becoming synonymous with child labour. The media was baying for blood and the otherwise intransigent Government of Pakistan that had previously flatly denied any incidence of child labour in the country, wilting under the international criticism, offered in July 1995, as a token sacrifice to mend wrongs, the commissioning of an ILO study to investigate the incidence of child labour in the country (Business Recorder, 1995). Even when announcing the commissioning of the survey, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister went on record in a news conference to heroically assert that the government had found no incidence of child labour in any industry and it was only a propaganda campaign carried out by India to hurt Pakistan's exports (ibid). The other act of penitence done by the Government of Pakistan was that it organized a series of raids on businesses suspected of using child labour in the entire country, including Sialkot, to demonstrate that it was cracking down on child labour (Ikram, 1996; US Department of State, 1997). While these raids were been conducted, the Labour Minister who ordered them was still publicly maintaining the government line and denying that child labour was involved in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot (Ikram, 1996). Given this child labour free doctrinaire belief of the government, unsurprisingly the raids were largely symbolic as, according to the US State Department, the raids resulted in fines being levied at businesses that ranged from a minimum of US$10 to a maximum of US$117 (US Department of State, 1997). The State Department went on to emphasize, 'There have been no reported jail terms' (ibid).

As a result of this media campaign against carpets, intensifying in April 1995, but as stated earlier beginning in 1994, carpet exports declined by about 8%

(US dollar values) during this period (Statistics Division [Government of Pakistan], 2003b). The contraction of sales, the United States alone cancelling US$10 million worth of orders (Schanberg, 1996), and pessimistic expectations of the future, led the carpet industry to wind up its activities in peripheral areas such as Sialkot on account of a lack of orders or a future expectation of a decline of orders. It began to concentrate its activities on its core production areas. The carpet industry, thus, effectively wound up in Sialkot. As an NGO activist who had lived all his life in a village in Northern part of Sialkot district remarked 'Before in my area people used to knit carpets. That industry finished because of [the] uproar [over the carpet child labour issue]' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 178).

The experience of the carpet industry turned out to be quite pivotal in shaping the responses from Sialkot. Though the carpet industry soon recovered in the following years as it had only lost about 8% of export values, the public discourse it generated in the national media tended to suggest that it had all but been wiped out by the child labour scare (RDC, 1996; Silvers, 1996). Perhaps this was cynically done to occupy the position of victim so as to deflect attention that may perhaps have been focused on uncovering the unpleasant truths of the labour practices prevalent in that industry. Alternatively, maybe in the subjective perceptions of the carpet moguls any cancellation of order would be magnified and read as a fatal blow to the industry. Nevertheless, the crying wolf of the Pakistan carpet industry, either sincerely or cynically, significantly impacted how the large Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers came to understand their own crisis.

In an almost Shakespearean comedy of errors, the incorrect national lament of the carpet industry being wiped out seemed to have been confirmed by the Sialkot manufacturers' own experience as they had seen first hand the wiping out of the carpet industry in Sialkot, not realizing the Sialkot closures did not generalize to the national situation. The Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers for the top brands, Adidas and Nike in particular, felt that if they did not act to deal with this issue they too would be wiped out like the carpet industry. As the chief Nike soccer ball manufacturer, Khurshid Soofi of Saga Sports, was to state later in a

newspaper interview, 'If we don't take measures industry will collapse' (Zubeiri, 1996). His views were echoed by one of the main Adidas manufacturers who stated that they had to act to preserve Sialkot's soccer ball industry given the fate of Pakistani carpets: 'Carpet industry had child labour. Carpet industry suffered because they did not take any action. Industry suffered. Not has been able to come to level where it was before [as] after Iran's isolation, Pakistan used to be number one in carpet manufacturing.' (Pilot Study, 2000: 9).

Though some of Sialkot's soccer ball manufacturers, especially the three top manufacturers in the industry, decided to address this child labour issue, other industry members were still following the standard script of denial saying that there were no children stitching soccer balls. For example, Sheikh Zafar Iqbal, an executive member of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI),[40] and himself a soccer ball manufacturer, while addressing a press conference on June 26, 1995, stated that there was no child involved in the soccer ball industry as soccer ball making is a difficult work requiring years of experience (Business Recorder, 1995a). Similarly, the chairman of the SCCI, in the words of a local community organizer, 'kept a ball on his desk all the time and said to every one, "no child could stitch this"' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 55).

There was, thus, much ruckus in the 'Chamber'. The fumbling that was going on with how to handle this issue was further complicated by structural macroeconomic changes occurring in the US market that had not yet been fully discerned by Sialkot's soccer ball industry players who were caught up in the fog of the child labour crisis.[41] In 1993, Sialkot had seen a surge in exports due to higher US demand, especially on account of the expectations of increased demand stimulated by the World Cup that was to be held there in 1994. That was the peak year of exports to the US. At that point US demand tapered off and actually declined. It was to pick up again in 1996 but in 1995, the crucial year in question, exports to the US dropped. Instead of attributing the decline in demand largely to

[40] SCCI is also referred to as the 'Chamber' by factory owners and employees as well as by NGO personnel.

[41] This discussion on macroeconomic changes, unless otherwise indicated, is taken from data found in Cummins (2000: 11-18).

a saturation of the US market that could no longer sustain the growth rates of the previous two years, especially since soccer playing in the US did not catch on as was hoped in the world's richest market, the manufacturers made the fundamental attribution error of linking the levelling off of US demand completely to the child labour crisis.[42] Thus, they claimed to the HRCP, that Sialkot's soccer ball industry had suffered a loss of three million US dollars in 1995 on account of this crisis (HRCP, 1995).

Apart from saturation, another shift was occurring in the US soccer market that had started well before the child labour crisis but whose effects would arrive in Sialkot in terms of lower orders at roughly the same time as the child labour crisis erupted. A significant portion of US demand had been *desi* balls. These balls, unlike *valati* or *lahori* balls, could be stitched by machines. US buyers of *desi* balls had started sourcing these balls from China due to lower prices offered there. The shift in orders began roughly at the same time as the child labour crisis in mid-1995. Though the drop in orders were compensated initially up to 1996 by an increase in the other two higher categories of balls in the US, the change in the pattern of US ordering had interesting consequences in terms of interpreting the child labour crisis in Sialkot.

The loss of lower quality ball orders, in spite of overall growth in value of soccer ball exports, was perhaps perceived by manufacturers as being due to the child labour issue, leading them to erroneously assert that their exports were declining (Zamir, 1995) while according to data collected by the US Department of Labor and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the contrary seemed to be the case. The composition of US demand was changing where China was replacing Pakistan at the lower end of the market while Pakistan continuing to increase its share at the upper end of the market. By 1998, the composition of US demand would further change favourably towards China as it began to significantly reduce in 1997 and 1998 its demand for higher quality balls

[42] Some orders were cancelled from the US on account of this crisis. For example, Baden Sports cancelled its orders in June 1997 because of the child labour issue (US Department of Labor, 2003). However, even this cancellation came much after 1995, thus, reinforcing the argument that it is unlikely that the drop in orders were due to the child labour controversy as imagined by Sialkot exporters in 1995.

from Pakistan, replacing them with orders of lower quality balls from China where the latter had a significant cost advantage. As a result, compared to the base year of 1996, in 1997 and 1998 China had forced Pakistan's market share in the US to drop from 65% to 45% in terms of volume. The major portion of the demand being of lesser quality balls as can be gauged by falling average US dollar values of soccer ball imports to the US.

By mid and later 1995, this change in composition of US demand was beginning to make itself felt not only among the manufacturers but also among the villagers, particularly the women and the children who primarily stitched the lower end balls. They began to feel a drop in income as orders for lower quality balls slowly dried up which they again attributed not to invisible market forces but to visible media personnel who were seen driving through their villages (HRCP, 1995; RDC, 1996). They were also predisposed to reach the conclusion that the drop in orders had primarily to do with the child labour controversy by their own experiences of what had happened to the carpet industry when such an issue had surfaced, as well as by their subcontractors who brought soccer balls to them for stitching, telling them that the loss in orders of cheap balls were due to the foreigners meddling in Sialkot.

The comedy of errors was quickly turning into a tragedy of errors as manufacturers, subcontractors (i.e., those individuals, not owning a factory but having stitching labour in villages, who are responsible for getting the balls stitched for the manufacturers for a commission) and villagers were wrongly blaming the child labour issue for being solely responsible for the changes that were occurring in the industry that they experienced to be detrimental to their well being, resulting in the creation of a highly charged atmosphere pregnant with possibilities of violence that unfortunately came to be realized. A Norwegian TV crew was badly mauled by villagers who felt that the TV crew was part of an effort to reduce work in the village (Business Recorder, 1995b).[43] Both the HRCP

[43] According to the HRCP report, 'the manufacturers had taken contractors to task, not so much for employing child labour as for letting it become visible [by not stopping journalists]. At one large football factory the [HRCP] team was told that the contractors has been told not to permit any one to film or make inquiries of this nature *even if they had to use force* [my emphasis] (1995: 9).Thus,

and Raasta Development Consultants (RDC), the latter doing an investigation for brands, reported during that time, the antagonisms they faced. The HRCP report stated 'In many places the team encountered open hostility . . . Even though on learning that the owners and manufacturers were co-operating in the investigation some fears were allayed, most people were cautious in their comments.' (1995: 9). Similarly, the RDC report is replete with the opposition they experienced in Sialkot as demonstrated by the following excerpts taken from the report:

- The official ban on child labor and recent international scrutiny of child labor in Pakistani industry have created a highly-charged atmosphere in which to assess child labor in the soccer ball industry. (1996: x).

- The difficulty in gaining the cooperation of the community and the highly charged political nature of discussion surrounding the issue in the country means that any figure must be viewed with caution. (ibid: xi).

- In addition a number of villages were hostile toward the project. (ibid: 5).

- Due to the politically sensitive nature of the project, the project team had to face a number of problems even before the inititation of the field work. The reconnaissance visit revealed that people were highly sensitised to child labor issues and did not welcome questions or information being sought on the subject. Reasons include the recent crisis faced by the carpet industry; as a result of accusations of employing bonded labor, the carpet industry has suffered immense loss of business, internationally. (ibid: 8).

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it appears that some manufacturers, especially those hoping the issue would blow away soon, would likely have given permission for the villagers to attack media personnel. It is unlikely that such attacks would be carried out by the villagers unless they had blessings from manufacturers. This is because in a repressive country like Pakistan, the lower orders would dare not show evidence of exerting physical force, especially against foreigners, given the retribution that would await them at the hands of the Pakistani state and their pay masters unless they were given sureties by the elites that such sanctions would be suspended. If this analysis is correct, it would seem to provide further evidence for Scott's (1985; 1990) position that the lack of rebellion of the lower orders is not due to them suffering from some kind of false consciousness where they feel no need to rebel, but is due to the palpably lived sensation, based on experience, that revolt will be met with swift and punitive reprisals from the higher orders and, thus, not worth the pain.

- A number of villagers informed the field teams that the manufacturers and/or contractors had asked them not to let anybody access information about children working in the villages and take photographs. It was learnt that two or three months previously, two foreigners had been physically assaulted and their cameras damaged by the agents of the manufacturers/contractors. (ibid: 8).

This intense situation worked favourably for those who were advocating that the SCCI should not deny this issue but work towards eliminating child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. They were able to point to the carpet industry's case as a chastising example of what fate would befell the industry if they were not to act quickly on this matter. Also, the changes that had been occurring in the industry at about this time, especially the loss of orders of lower quality balls, were perhaps also used to persuade industry members that the child labour issue had brought them about and that these were worrying portents of future sales losses to come. The argument that the problem would not go away but only worsen, a position held by the group that wanted to tackle this issue, seemed to have received further support by the media frenzy that occurred immediately in June 1996 on both sides of the Atlantic followed by an invasion of international press and NGO activists in the Sialkot area, not to mention the Government of Pakistan beginning to crack under international pressure. The pressure, starting to growl menacingly at the government, was beginning to display its fangs of possible trade sanctions (The Record, 1996). Under such threats, the government burst into a flurry of activity, ranging from the symbolic child labour raids (discussed above) to commissioning another ILO study to examine the incidence of child labour in the soccer ball industry (Alam, 1996). All of these governmental actions, together with international media scrutiny, must have created a more intense feeling of being besieged from all quarters in Sialkot's soccer ball manufacturing community (Agence France Presse, 1996; Fleck, 1999). Such an emotional state undoubtedly would have favoured those pushing for the

position that Sialkot's soccer ball industry acknowledge child labour and commit to its removal from its production processes.

Thus, by August 1996, SCCI had officially come around to the idea of sending a team to one of the two largest annual trade exhibitions of the sporting goods industry, the ISPO trade show in Munich, to sit down with brands and negotiate a strategy to eliminate child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. The most prominent members of the team had already been in touch with their respective brand customers on how individually they were to tackle the child labour problem. Now they were speaking on behalf of the entire SCCI to devise an industry-wide solution in which all of Sialkot's soccer ball manufacturers could potentially partake.[44]

*The Brands Close Ranks*

Individual Initiatives: Advancing Ideals & Retreating Commitments

The brands also, like their Sialkot suppliers, did not wait to be bludgeoned by the Foul Ball Campaign to spring into action. The brands (e.g., Reebok, Adidas, and Nike) were actors in their own rights but they were also members of trade associations. Most of them acted through their trade associations. Based on my research, evidence could only be found for two brands (i.e., Nike and Reebok), who enacted initiatives to tackle this issue both in their own individual capacities (e.g., Reebok setting up a school for its supplier's workers' children) and as members of trade associations.

It is difficult to trace Nike's response to the crisis given contradictory statements issued by it on this matter. For example, in a written deposition to the

[44] Even at this point, only a handful of manufacturers (approximately 10 to 12 (Pilot Study, 2000: 10)) had agreed to phase out child labour but given their clout they were powerful enough to carry the SCCI with them, positioning themselves as its official and legitimate representatives on this matter. As a prominent manufacturer stated in an interview, 'In 1996 meeting in Germany, we [top manufacturers] decided we can tackle this matter. Less than 100 exporters that matter. Top 10-20 firms controlling 60-70% of exports.' (ibid). In fact, as late as October 1997, only 29 manufacturers out of a '100 that matter' had signed up for the soccer ball child labour project (ILO, 1997). Sialkot's soccer ball industry internationally was, thus, being represented by a minority opinion while the majority (in numbers) held a different view which was denial and do nothing.

US Department of Labor hearings held on June 28, 1996, Nike is on record to have stated that they began sourcing production of balls in Sialkot in 1995 (US Department of Labor, 1996). The deposition states that after they began soccer ball production in Sialkot (i.e., perhaps in the Fall of 1995),[45] Nike 'implemented more steps to protect worker rights than companies that have operated in the country for decades' (cited in ibid). The deposition goes on to state that at Nike's insistence its supplier (Saga Sports) began to ensure child-free production by establishing stitching centres that could be easily monitored, unlike homes in disparate villages, to ensure that no children were involved in the production. Whether these urgings were backed by financial assistance from Nike is not stated. A view that there was little or any substantial financial assistance to its supplier for child labour free production from Nike seems to gain credibility given that the reports that I examined of Saga Sports about their corporate social responsibility make no mention of receiving any corporate philanthropy from Nike. Similarly, I could not find any evidence from Nike's own reports where they explicitly mentioned financial assistance being provided by them to Saga Sports to move to child labour free production. All this tends to suggest that Nike was quite willing to give instructions but not any material support for its concern with child labour for it never explicitly mentioned its financial assistance for this cause and it is highly unlikely that it was dispensing charity in secret given its penchant, like most corporations, to flaunt corporate philanthropy initiatives.

The story given by Phil Knight, the founder of Nike, gives a different version. Knight, speaking to the National Press Club on April 12, 1998, said:

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[45] The deposition written on June 27, 1996, gives no specific date on when socially responsible actions claimed in it by Nike began. The only reference to time is, 'When we began soccer ball production in Pakistan last year' (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996) thus suggesting sometime in 1995. However, we can obtain a more precise location of the date, assuming that the deposition is factually accurate (i.e., Nike started production in 1995), by a statement of Nike made at another time. In November 2001, Nike published a report on corporate social responsibility in which they stated, 'By far our worst experience was in Pakistan, where we blew it. In 1995, we began to order soccer balls from the city of Sialkot, the world's leading centre for hand-stitched balls. By the fall of 1995, we realised that production was done through village contractors, and sometimes by children. We reversed course, restricting our production to one contractor, Saga Sports, which agreed to build high-quality monitored stitching centres near villages, and to hire no one under the age of 18.' (cited in Dabowski, 2002: 1). Apart from the apparent teary admission of contrition, the passage tells us that they 'reversed course' around Fall 1995.

> In 1994 Jack Beecraft (ph) of our Singapore office flew into Sialkot, Pakistan to check out the first ever Nike soccer ball order. What he found was conditions that were not acceptable. What he found was the conditions that did not meet Nike's code of conduct, and were not controllable, because essentially for 50 years the Pakistan soccer ball industry had been made up of a process in which the ball uppers were sent out into a cottage industry into -- with very little controls on who the upper were sewn by, and they in fact, were sewn by children, old people, blind people, under all kinds of bad conditions. Basically seeing this he said that is not acceptable under the way we do business, and he and Mr. Sufi (ph) got together in Beverton, Oregon three months later to hack out a different way of making soccer balls in Pakistan. (cited in Federal Document Clearing House, 1998).

Phil Knight's version would tend to indicate that the response began as early as 1994. However, on another occasion, at roughly the same time he gave the above speech, Phil Knight seems to have shown little concern over work-age issues. In the documentary film, *The Big One*, the following conversation occurred between Michael Moore, the film maker, and Phil Knight:

> Moore: 'Twelve-year-olds working in factories? That's okay with you?'
>
> Knight: 'They're not 12-year-olds. The minimum age is 14.'
>
> Moore: 'How about 14, then? Doesn't that bother you?'
>
> Knight: 'No.' (cited in Miller, 1997).

Traces of the attitude displayed in the above interview can be found as far back as 1996 in Nike, thus, suggesting that Knight was not making a one-off statement but articulating a longly held attitude in Nike. For example, when confronted in 1996 with evidence that children were involved in the making of Nike soccer balls, Nike spokeswoman, Donna Gibbs, defended the company saying '"it's an

ages old practice [and] the process of change is going to take time. Too often, well-intentioned human rights groups can cause dramatic negative effects if they scare companies into stopping production and the kids are thrown out on the street.'" (cited in Schanberg, 1996: 42).[46] In that same interview, she had acknowledged that her company had not implemented, till that point, its stated goal of child labour free soccer ball production. Given that Nike did not contest this account of their corporate behaviour by Schanberg, this seems to suggest that such views were indeed articulated and the quotes were not taken out of context. Also, in other places Gibbs expressed Nike's gradual approach to the child labour issue by stating that the problem is a large one, in her words, 'Child labour is really an epidemic in Pakistan' (Denby, 1997), which by implication would mean that a substantial expense of time would be needed to address it, reflecting a position that was already expressed explicitly in Schanberg's interview.[47]

We tend to get three different tales from three different sources, suggesting that if we were to find additional accounts of Nike's response to the child labour crisis, we would perhaps also find more different stories of Nike's response to this crisis. Based on the evidence at hand, dates of Nike's response

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[46] While Gibbs' arguments of gradual intervention in the child labour context can be considered to be quite valid, it seems, given Nike's historical track record of indifference and do nothing attitude to labour issues in its international supply chain, that the argument was being advanced insincerely as an excuse not to take any action.

[47] What is also interesting about these different versions of Nike's response is that Nike's response, no matter which of the three versions one takes, was qualitatively different than the response of other brands. When Adidas and Reebok were confronted with being complicit with child labour, they expressed shock and promised immediate investigations, thus, further confirming the Soccer Industry Council of America's (SICA) confession made by its executive director Sandy Briggs: 'To be fair, most of the companies weren't aware of this. But when we found out about it, we moved quickly to find some kind of an answer.' (cited in Ward, 1997: 10). In Briggs' set of most companies not knowing about their involvement with child labour, it would be hard to place Nike as for one thing, if we go with Phil Knight's speech (quoted above), then we know that Nike had knowledge of this matter prior to the crisis. Moreover, Nike's response in the Donna Gibbs version, unlike that say of Reebok which was one of shock and a promise to investigate this matter, was one of trickle-down morality saying this is an ancient practice and will need time for resolution. To show such calmness and articulate such a measured, and given its smoothness, probably a rehearsed response when confronted with damning evidence, would tend to support the claim of critics (e.g., the coalition *Justice. Do it Nike!)* that Nike, unlike the other companies, knew about the prevalence of child labour prior to the crisis (Bigelow, 1997). The critics are wrong, however, to then assert that it was because of cheap child labour that made Nike choose Sialkot for sourcing soccer balls. This is difficult to sustain given that Sialkot to begin with was the world's centre for soccer ball production and, thus, it would make perfect sense to source balls from there as quality would be assured.

seem to be range from anywhere in 1994, predating the crisis, to around Fall 1995, a few months after its outbreak. Also, as can be seen, accounts differ on the urgency felt by Nike in tackling this matter, with the Knight's and Department of Labor versions indicating that when the company became aware, it changed course immediately while the Gibbs version indicates that the course reversal was a gradual one. All the accounts do agree, however, on one count. None of them contain any evidence to suggest that Nike provided any material assistance to its supplier, Saga Sports as the latter went through the costly process of building child-free stitching centres with health dispensaries and other such worker facilities.

Like Nike, Reebok acted alone as well as with trade associations when it came to grappling with this crisis. Unlike Nike, evidence from a variety of sources suggest that Reebok was genuinely upset at children working for it and wanted them removed in a way that would not hurt the well-being of the children or their families. This differential response can be explained by its unique corporate culture and the leadership showed by the head of its Global Soccer and Rugby Division.

Reebok had shown from the beginning, much before the anti-globalization activism would begin to unearth corporate labour abuses, a deep concern with human rights and corporate social responsibility. [48] It had withdrawn from South Africa in 1986 as an act of protest against the apartheid regime. In that same year, it funded Nelson Mandela's tour to the United States. In 1988, it began giving human rights awards to young activists before the Tiananmen Square massacre would make human rights a household conversation piece. Also, unlike Nike, which denied responsibility for worker abuses at its shoe contractor plants, Reebok quickly responded to the matter. Though, one can view all this corporate activism as a cynical ploy to gain a marketing advantage, it becomes harder to subscribe to this line of thinking when one is cognizant of facts like Reebok giving human rights awards to dissidents in countries from which it was sourcing

[48] Reebok's human rights activism history, appearing in this paragraph and the one following it, is taken from Schoenberger (2000: 134-139).

production which could and actually did invite reprisals from governments disrupting and thereby hurting its business interests. In 1992, Reebok gave the award to Fernando de Araujo, the East Timorese activist who had been imprisoned by the corrupt and repressive Suharto regime controlling Indonesia at that time. Indonesia was a country in which Reebok had significant business interests, sourcing from there about 30 percent of its shoes. Due to the award, company officials were subject to harassment by Indonesian authorities who also raided a Reebok contractor factory to show their displeasure. It is difficult to argue that a company would be willing to court such risks to its profitability just to cynically preach activism in order to gain greater market share. As Doug Cahn, a senior Reebok executive, describing the Indonesian experience went on to add, 'Anybody who tells you we're doing this for public relations is absolutely wrong. If we as a company had used our concerns about human rights for crass marketing purposes, we would have done things very differently.' (Schoenberger, 2000: 139).

Reebok's concerns for social responsibility were mirrored in several of its executives, particularly Peter Moore. Moore came from a working class family from Liverpool, England. Prior to joining Reebok, he had been involved with the game of soccer for over 25 years in the varying capacities of a professional player, a coach, and a marketing executive (Moore, 1996). When CBS broke the story of Reebok's soccer balls made with child labour, Moore was aghast. As he recalls:

> Children stitching soccer balls? I was mortified. I have three kids, and the company I work for has a well-established policy of corporate conduct that states in part: "Reebok will not work with business partners that use child labor." The more I thought about the questions CBS wanted to ask me, the more ironic the situation became. Six months earlier I had met Iqbal Masih, a former bonded child worker from the carpet industry in Pakistan, when he came to Boston to receive the Reebok Human Rights Award. How could this have happened? I was caught without the facts, and I had no explanation. But I wasn't the only one. (ibid).

Moore, according to the CBS documentary, immediately stopped Reebok's purchases from a large Adidas manufacturer and tried to quickly find a partner with whom it could enter an arrangement whereby its high workplace standards could be attained.[49]

By June 1996, Reebok had found a Sialkot partner, Moltex Sporting Goods (Pvt.) Limited (Lunt, 1996). Moltex agreed to build a factory that would produce soccer balls for Reebok and where all the production processes would be carried out within factory premises by adults (ibid). Almost a year later, Reebok once again started sourcing from its new supplier (Shorrock, 1997).

Reebok took these initiatives to ensure that no children were producing the 350,000 soccer balls it sourced annually from Sialkot (Moore, 1996). When it actually came to material assistance, Reebok was tight-fisted though less so than Nike. This research could not find any evidence, including statements from Reebok itself, that it assisted in any meaningful financial way Moltex in building a new factory. Nor did Reebok's deal with Moltex imply better than prevailing wage rates for its Sialkot workers.

Reebok did make much noise about committing in November 1997 a million US dollars into a fund called the Reebok Educational Assistance to Pakistan (REAP) program that was to help provide schooling to Sialkot children (PR NewsWire, 1997; Schoenberger, 2000). Evidence seems to suggest only US$50,000 (PR News Wire, 1997) have been disbursed from this fund in the shape of a school in Sialkot with a capacity for forty school children. It seems the commitment was taken back. One can find no mention of REAP anywhere in Reebok's otherwise comprehensive website suggesting that the program has been cancelled. In its section on child labour, the school is mentioned but the announcements of a million US dollars or the program itself are nowhere to be found.[50] They seem to have fallen down what Orwell (2000a [1949]) referred to in

[49] The decision to stop orders would have hurt the local suppliers and their workers. But given that Reebok was to resume production within a year with another supplier, it may have compensated for the losses to Sialkot that its abrupt order halt may have caused.

[50] In fact, there is a short video clip about Reebok's child labour free ball. Vague allusions are made to outreach programs and assisting displaced child stitchers but no specifics are given such

*1984* as the 'memory hole' where inconvenient facts from the past are buried. Both Reebok and Nike seem to have been happy to advance ideals while at the same beating a retreat when it came to what mattered: committing real resources to translate one's ideals into actions.

Apart from the school, Reebok went one step further than Nike in that it apparently set up a worker management committee at Moltex. It also selected two human right activists, what it calls its human rights consultants, from Sialkot itself to act as its monitors to ensure no children were working at Moltex. It should be commended for this practice of hiring locals as the custom usually is to hire 'experts' from outside Sialkot. These consultants were to also ensure that the management worker committee would act as a forum for discussing labour issues through dialogue and that top managers of the factory would attend the committee meetings, resolving differences more through discussion than through the usual practice of threats and coercion, according to one of the two human rights consultants (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 54). Moreover, to give Reebok credit where it is due, the two activists they chose had been quite unpopular at that time with the business community on account of their radicalism. Thus, it seems that Reebok, under Peter Moore's direction, was not choosing 'yes-men' as monitors but was sincerely trying to ensure that its corporate social responsibility ethos would be reflected in its Sialkot's manfacturer's operations both in spirit and law.[51] Such apparently genuine concern of Reebok to be free of child labour seems to have impressed outsiders such as Julie Foudy, the US national women soccer team's mid-fielder and an Olympic gold athlete:

> I was pretty skeptical at first. Everyone comes to the factory to stitch, so they can monitor it. But how do you know nothing is leaking out of the factory? They (Reebok) hired two spies who are human rights activists, who are actual commoners from the

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as the level of funding or results achieved. As is to be expected, REAP is now not part of the historic narrative devised, as our most narratives of this nature, to reflect current exigencies.

[51] What was interesting to observe is that how one of the two Reebok's Sialkot based Human Rights consultants by the time I interviewed him, had completely been bought over to the business community's way of looking at things. That gentleman refused to acknowledge the negative consequences of the child labour crisis that even hard-nosed businessmen admitted had occurred such as how the issue had caused women stitchers to suffer.

> village. I thought, They're serious about this. (cited in Gardner, 1997:7).[52]

Trade Association Actions: Catching Up with Child Labour

Reebok and Nike also acted through their trade associations. In fact, the response of the international sporting goods industry to this crisis was articulated largely by its trade federations. Of the many different trade associations that populate the global sporting goods industry, the following two crafted the industry's policy on this Sialkot soccer ball child labour issue: The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) based in Switzerland and the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) based in the United States.[53]

WFSGI, founded in 1976, is an association of national organizations of sporting goods manufacturers. Headquartered in Verbier, Switzerland, WFSGI promotes the world's sporting activities through a range of activities from standardizing the size of equipment and the rules of sport to improving the quality of sporting goods. It is the only industry association officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee. WFSGI has its own secretariat consisting of several standing committees. The standing committee entrusted with the task to handle the child labour matter was its Committee on Ethics and Fair Trade (CEFT). The committee was headed by John Riddle who was also the President and Executive Officer of SGMA.

SGMA is the national trade association for North American producers and distributors of athletic footwear, sports apparel and sporting goods equipment. It was formed in 1906. SGMA is a member of WFSGI and is dedicated to increasing participation in sports and fostering industry growth and vitality. Proceeds from 'The Super Show' (the other main annual international trade exhibition for the sporting goods industry apart from Munich) that SGMA organizes in Atlanta, are used to help subsidize a large number of SGMA's projects involved in contributing to the growth of sports participation. Like

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[52] Julie Foudy appears prominently in the video mentioned in footnote 50 guaranteeing to the public that the soccer balls are child labour free.

[53] The following description of WFSGI, CEFT, SGMA, and SICA comes from (Business Wire, 1998; WFSGI, 1997).

WFSGI, SGMA consists of various trade associations that it refers to as councils and also as standing committees. The council that represented SGMA and worked on its behalf with regards to the child labour issue was the Soccer Industry Council of America (SICA) headed at that time by Peter Moore of Reebok. SICA is a national (US) trade association of manufacturers and distributors of branded soccer apparel, footwear and equipment. SICA works to attain the above mentioned SGMA's objectives in the specific domain of soccer. It, thus, seeks to encourage participation in soccer, works to promote greater awareness of the game, and also endeavours to increase playing opportunities for the disadvantaged and handicapped. Organized in 1985 as a committee of SGMA, SICA currently represents about 100 companies.

As can be seen from above, the two main agencies (SICA and CEFT) that were entrusted by brands with formulating a strategy to bring their global soccer ball industry out of this child labour mire had interlocking ties connecting them. For example, John Riddle, head of CEFT was also associated with SICA as he was the president of its parent organization SGMA. Similarly, both SICA and CEFT were related in that they were sub-bodies of organizations that were members of WFSGI. Despite these interlocking ties, initially, both SICA and CEFT acted independently though most likely, given the membership overlap, they kept each other abreast of their initiatives. A global division of labour seems to have been at work in the early days where SICA was orchestrating the North American reaction to the crisis and CEFT was performing the same role for Europe. In August 1996 at the IPSO convention in Munich, these organizations closed ranks and from that point worked in unison. The history of the actions of the brands through SICA/SGMA and CEFT/WFSGI, stated below in this section, are largely taken from the January/February 1997 issue of *Sportshop*, the international trade magazine for sporting goods and sportswear.[54] In that issue

[54] That was the only document that I could find in my research that provided a reasonable 'official' history, especially from the perspectives of the international soccer ball brands, of the internal conversations and the steps that the brands undertook to address the soccer ball child labour problem. Since our purpose here is to primarily demonstrate the important role played by international players in foreign locales in significantly deciding the fate of poor stitching families

John Riddle provides the official version of how the global soccer ball industry responded to the crisis. Unless otherwise stated, the history is from Riddle's account found in the aforementioned issue (Riddle, 1997: 1-2, 14 and 16).

In Europe as the crisis broke out in May 1995 and gathered momentum, CEFT's first priority became to identify individuals and organizations with substantial expertise on issues of child labour who could inform the global sporting goods industry of their concerns. These individuals and organizations once identified, were called to WFSGI's headquarters in Verbier, Switzerland, to participate on a conference geared towards exploring the 'responsibilities of the global sporting goods industry in the countries where their products are manufactured and assembled' (Riddle, 1997: 1) with a special emphasis being placed in the conference on child labour issues and how industry could help to resolve them.

The conference came to be known as the Verbier Conference. Over 60 representatives of soccer ball brands, NGOs, and international organizations travelled to the conference from around the world. Organizations such as SCF, ILO, Anti-Slavery International, and the Fair Trade Foundation, discussed social responsibility matters with the sporting goods industry. The industry received a chance to understand the perspective of the activist community. More crucially, the conference gave CEFT the opportunity to identify organizations and individuals with whom it could collaborate to chalk out a project to eliminate child labour from Sialkot's soccer ball industry. Two of these organizations, SCF and ILO would later be invited by the industry to collaborate with it on a project to phase out children from soccer ball production in Sialkot.

During the discussions at the Verbier conference, the industry, given its interactions with SCF and ILO, most probably would have learnt of the notorious child labour case involving Bangladesh's garments export industry in the early 1990s. That case became extremely well known in the NGO and UN

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in Sialkot, a theme that will be more forcefully explicated in the next chapters, the 'official' history sanitized as it may well be, is nevertheless sufficient for our purposes.

communities, significantly impacting their understanding on how to intervene in industries with child labour.

The case concerned child labour in the Bangladeshi garment industry. It began in Washington D.C. when in early 1993 Tom Harkin, a Democrat senator, tabled a bill (i.e., The Child Labor Deterrence Act 1993) on the floor of the US Senate. Harkin's bill, as the aforementioned act came to be popularly known, if passed would place a ban on imports to the United States of any goods that were found to have been made with child labour at any stage of their production process (Rahman, Khanum, and Absar, 1999). When the Bangladeshi garment export industry learnt of this proposed law, it panicked. At that time, the industry employed just over 65,000 children in its various garment factories (ibid: 997). Fearing a ban on their exports, the garment industry virtually overnight threw tens of thousands of its child workers on to the streets. According to Rahman et al.:

> The impact of Harkin's Bill in Bangladesh was devastating: garment employers immediately dismissed an estimated 50,000 children from their factories, which accounted for approximately 75 percent of all children in the industry. The children were freed, but actually they were trapped in a harsh environment with no skills, little or no education, and precious few alternatives. A series of follow-up visits by UNICEF, local NGOs, and ILO discovered that the children were looking for new sources of income and found them in work such as stone-crushing, street hustling and prostitution, etc., which are more hazardous and exploitative occupations than garment production. In some cases, the mothers of dismissed children had to leave their jobs just to look after their children.
>
> The working children were dismissed from their jobs without creating any effective and alternative means for their rehabilitation. It bought untold misery not only to them but to their families, as children's financial contributions to the total earning of their families are considerable. (1999: 997).

Harkin's Bill never became law. This gave time to the international community, particularly ILO and UNICEF, who becoming aware of the damages

done to children, to assist the garment export industry cope with its child labour problematic. One of the earliest projects of ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) was devised for this case (ILO-IPEC, 2003). The project not only sought to remove children but also to rehabilitate them and, crucially, their families. A three pronged rehabilitation strategy was deployed: 1) The children who were removed from work would be placed in schools and would receive a monthly stipend of Taka[55] 300; 2) The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) would offer employment to qualified family members of terminated child labourers; and (3) child labourers, after reaching 14 years of age, would be given a chance to work in the garment firm where they had been previously employed (Rehman et al., 1999).

It was not only CEFT in Verbier that was mulling over the dilemma of removing children from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot in a way that would not be detrimental to their well-being so to avoid the Bangladesh fiasco. In the United States, SICA and especially its president, Peter Moore, were also struggling with this dilemma. In those days just after the CBS story in April 1995, Moore recalls asking himself:

> How do you end a long-practiced pattern of economic activity without placing the children further in harm's way? If child labor is eliminated in one region or one industrial sector, won't it simply migrate to other areas and other types of work? What about the hundreds of thousands of people in Pakistan who depend on the income generated by the . . . soccer balls made there each year? If children are prevented from working, can they be provided with an education instead? How could Reebok, a company that accounts for only about 350,000 balls a year, have a significant, positive impact on this situation? As I searched for answers, my boss, Bob Meers, made the issue quite simple for me. He pointed to Reebok's code of conduct, framed on the wall of our office, and said:

[55] Taka is the national currency unit of Bangladesh.

> "You make them without kids or you don't make them. It's that simple."
>
> Well, it hasn't been that simple. (Moore, 1996).

The fact that Moore, nor most of his colleagues at SICA, did not even know that child labour existed in the soccer ball industry, did not help him or them in meaningfully answering the above questions. The newspaper reports were not of much assistance either. Tom Cove, Vice-President of SGMA and a leading member of SICA, voiced industry's quite legitimate feelings that from the beginning and well into almost the end of the first year of the crisis, media coverage was creating more heat than light. In his words:

> Despite the extensive coverage of the child labour issue, in newspaper and on television over the past year, we [industry] were surprised by the absence of any serious inquiry into the issue. No one could answer such basic questions as: How common is child labor? What percentage of soccer ball stitchers are children? Do child stitchers work at home with their parents or outside the home? Why do children work? What steps might be taken to encourage them or their families to send them to school instead of to work? Under what conditions do children work? (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996)

Instead of waiting for the media to shed light on these questions posed above by Cove, SICA acted to answer them using its own resources. It set up a task force in the summer of 1995 to investigate the situation and recommend proposals to remove children from soccer ball production (Riddle, 1997).[56] The SICA task force commissioned RDC, a Pakistani research firm, to study the scope and extent of child labour in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. It also hired Elliot Schrage, an adjunct faculty member of Columbia's law and business schools, to

[56] The task force was led by Keith Heyes (Umbro USA). It also included Tom Cove (SGMA) as well as representatives from the leading soccer ball companies such as from Adidas, Nike, Mitre and Reebok (Riddle, 1997).

apparently oversee this research effort and report its findings to SICA.[57] In the meanwhile, SICA got hold of the HRCP (1995) report on Sialkot's soccer ball industry (mentioned above) that, according to Tom Cove, at the time when the crisis began, was the 'only one report that purported to examine the scope and extent of child labour in soccer ball production in any disciplined or quantitative manner.' (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996). That report, as discussed above, threw into question many claims being made by the media.

The RDC report (1996) that came later towards the beginning of 1996, tended to confirm HRCP's (1995) findings. Information from both reports tended to suggest that the media had been, to put it politely, inaccurate in depicting the situation as being one worthy enough to be source material for a Charles Dickens novel on the savagery wrought upon children by industrial capitalism. Though the situation was less alarmist, SICA was learning, due to its own research, that it was also far more complex than that portrayed by the media.[58] Industry was, thus, catching up and forging ahead of its critics in coming to a better, fuller understanding of the highly complicated ground reality of soccer ball's child labour issue. Thus, when it came time to testify at the US Department of Labor hearings in June 1996, SICA felt it was confident enough to meet its opponents in that public field.

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[57] Interestingly, Elliot Schrage efforts or his involvement appear neither in the RDC report (mentioned above) nor in the testimony given by Tom Cove at the US Department of Labor hearings on June 28, 1996.

[58] Unlike the glib absolutist solution being peddled by the media that children ought to be in school no matter what, RDC's (1996) findings were that it was not work preventing children from attending school but family poverty as a result of which they worked rather than attend school. Thus, sending them to school without compensating their families for their children's' lost income would be seriously prejudicial to the well-being of their children and their families who were just eking out an existence even with the income of children. Moreover, the sheer fact that stitching took place in homes meant that the task of monitoring stitching activities to ensure no children were involved almost seemed an impossible one. How would one go about prying into deeply conservative Muslim households examining their family members, including females, to ensure no children were stitching in the households? Lastly, given 1600 odd villages where stitching was taking place (SCF, 1997; UNICEF, 2000), where was one to get the wherewithal in terms of just monitors alone to stand on guard over each village household to ensure no children were stitching in that house?

Crying Foul: The Reich Directives

On June 28, 1996 the US Department of Labor held its hearings on international child labour. The prominent topic of discussion was the child labour issue in the global soccer ball industry. This is not surprising given the intense coverage that broke out around that month on this issue from Schanberg's article that sent shockwaves through American society to the uproar created on the other side of the Atlantic by ICFTU broadcasting its Euro 96 child labour video.

Given that the hearings were taking place in such a highly charged wider context, drenched as it was in anti-soccer ball industry sentiments, it is interesting to note that this bias was not reflected in the hearings in terms of its participant composition. A reasonably large spectrum of individuals and organizations, holding varying and sharply diverging views on child labour, participated in the hearings. A wide body of opinion was heard from politicians (e.g., Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy II) and primary child labour activists (e.g., Shannon Goold, an eighth grader of George Mason Middle School (Fall Church, Virginia) to industry spokespersons (e.g., Tom Cove representing SICA) and diplomatic missions (e.g., Embassy of India). The rich discussion that took place mirrored quite well Seabrook's (2001) typology of child labour discourse motifs. Testimonies presented at the hearings were largely: pietistic (saving the children), prejudged (children should never work), fatalistic (children must work to support their families), bureaucratic (it may be possible to eliminate some of the worst abuses) or economistic (when countries become rich, child labour will whither away).

Some witnesses (e.g., ILRF, coordinator of the Foul Ball Campaign) clung predominately to one type of discourse (e.g., prejudged motif) while others (e.g., ILO) combined different motifs (e.g., pietistic, prejudged, and bureaucratic).[59]

[59] It was quite striking to note that there appeared be a systematic difference between those who combined motifs and those who stuck largely to a singular one, particularly the prejudged motif. The testimonies of organizations and individuals (e.g., Human Rights Watch) who had dealt with child labour in the field were more balanced, measured, and combined multiple motifs in their conversation on child labour. Contrary to them were organizations and individuals (e.g., US senators and advocacy groups) that had never themselves worked on child labour issues in the developing world and, who, as a consequence often ended up being vitriolic, reductive, and monolithic in their understanding of child labour (e.g., 'Today, our laws prohibit the importation

Apart from the variety of motifs, there was also richness in that some of the testimonies gave plenty of nuance and sought to question commonly held prejudices on the child labour problem. For example, Human Rights Watch, as stated earlier, presented evidence that seriously challenged the widely held assumption that child workers received less wages than adults and, hence, were preferred over adults due to their wage 'competitive' advantage. Similarly, ILO marshalled a considerable array of data to problematize the apparent truism that children were put to work in many places (e.g., carpets) because of their nimble fingers that allowed them to do tasks that could not be done by adults. ILO, based on its studies, found that there was little warrant for the nimble fingers argument, especially in those industries (e.g., carpets) where such an argument was perceived to hold true.[60]

As there was diversity in the hearings, so too was there unanimity. Virtually all testimonies, were pietistic in nature. Though they differed tactically on how best to address the child labour problem, they were united in their condemnation of child labour and that children must be saved from it. None was willing to make arguments commonly found in say academic anthropological academic literature that work teaches children valuable skills (Niewenhuys, 1996) nor were they willing to seriously question the value of public schooling as the antidote to child labour in an Ivan Illichian type of way where it is basically regarded as a giant factory lobotomising the creative spirits of children (Illich, 1971). Perhaps, this was due to the virulently hostile popular feelings about child labour that kept organizations from espousing such doctrinal heresies to voice

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of endangered species such as the spotted turtle. Our laws prohibit products made from prison labor. But our laws fall silent when it comes to products that are made by exploiting children. We protect animals. We protect prisoners. But we abandon children.' (Senator Tom Harkin, cited in US Department of Labor, 1996)). Recall the devastating consequences that had befallen on the Bangladeshi children when such simplistic understanding was being translated to action. It seems that Harkin did not learn from the Bangladeshi example that child labour is a much more complex matter than simple regulation.

[60] Interestingly, the nimble fingers argument was also occasionally made for the soccer ball industry (e.g., see Lees, 1997). In the soccer ball case as well, the argument was found to be invalid, thus, further corroborating ILO's understanding gained from its investigation of the carpets, bangle making, and gem polishing industries in India. For soccer ball stitching, children on account of their fingers gained no advantage over adults. In fact, the opposite held true as for higher quality balls required more force to stitch, children being of weaker strength were at a disadvantage relative to adults.

instead conventional pieties. The hostile popular mood may also explain why I could not find any organization that braved putting forward in the hearings the fatalistic and economistic motifs together a la Nike's Donna Gibbs, arguing for a hands-off approach to the child labour problem on the grounds of trickle-down economics that as countries will grow rich, the problem would disappear. All participants seemed to agree that the long term solution to child labour is economic development but in the meanwhile action of some type had to be taken to stop child labour for 'children do not have time to wait' (Reich, cited in US Department of Labor, 1996).

One also found commonality, surprisingly, between the parties at the opposite ends of the pole on the soccer ball child labour issue. The industry (represented by Tom Cove of SICA) and the Foul Ball Campaign (represented by Reverend Dan McCurry) both cried foul play being done to them, trying to claim the high moral position of victimhood. Both had some just cause. SICA claimed being victimized by 'the sensationalist reports of exploitation of children that have surfaced in the press' (ibid). Cove obliquely accused the mass media and activists of spreading 'misinformation' 'sensationalism' and 'public posturing' (ibid). The Foul Ball Campaign, in turn, claimed to being hoodwinked into believing in a wholesome game like soccer that turned out to be dripping with the sweat of exploited young children. As McCurry put it, 'People are just saying "I am mad as hell. We have been fooled. And we can't take it anymore."' (ibid).

Both sides had warrants to support their position. Stitchers, adult and child, were being exploited as claimed by the media in the specific sense of not being paid a living wage or wage commensurate with their efforts. This allegation was confirmed by the reports from which Tom Cove cited refuting evidence to accusations being made against the global soccer ball industry such as child slavery and corporal punishments being meted out to child labourers. Needless to say, Tom Cove did not quote at the hearings content from the reports that agreed with the critics. However, in terms of these latter allegations, found baseless by the aforementioned reports, the soccer ball industry could say with some

justification that they were being victimized and falsely accused of crimes that they did not commit.

Similarly, the Foul Ball campaigners could say with some righteousness that the grim realities of soccer ball empire's workshop had been kept hidden from them behind engineered wholesome idyllic images of young children playing soccer on wide grassy playing fields. However, like SICA which selectively quoted evidence playing to its strengths and failed to be honest enough to acknowledge facts that confirmed the position of its opponents,[61] the Foul Ball Campaign too refused to acknowledge evidence put forward by SICA that contradicted and, at that time, effectively demolished much of their claims (e.g., bonded children, child wages cheaper than adults, and that the stitching workforce in Sialkot largely comprised children working in workshops). Coming after Cove's testimony, instead of saying that they would look into the matter, Dan McCurry launched into a tirade against the industry, repeating the mantra found in the media stories being published on this issue as illustrated by the following:

> The industry talks about children and adults receiving the same pay for the same work. It's phenomenal, it's like they did a study on men and women, and said they have the same pay for the same work. We would know that there was something wrong with that. I know from the witnesses I have talked to coming back from Pakistan there is something wrong with the notion of saying that children and adults receive the same pay for the same work. Children will be doing different kinds of tasks, perhaps on cheaper balls, different kinds of balls. But the pay will not be the same. The adults will have more power. The

[61] For example, the HRCP (1995) report apart from indicating a lack of a living wage, went on to state that workshop conditions, albeit without physical punishments, were nevertheless quite dreary, employers were largely indifferent to the miseries of their workforce, that stitching over long periods of time had damaging consequences to the hands and backs of stitchers, and the ringing indictment that the Sialkot manufacturers were deliberating undermining workers rights enshrined in Pakistan's labour laws by extensively using the system of contract labour. In their words, 'The system of contract labour is a serious violation of the rights of workers and has deprived them of important benefits provided in labour legislation. It has encouraged child labour . . . The growing trend towards driving workers out of the formal sector into the informal one and home-based work is a matter of grave concern as they become more vulnerable to exploitation in the absence of the necessary legislative control and regulation.' (1995: 21-22).

> children less. And that is why the industry has continued to recruit children as the expansion of this industry has gone on. (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996).[62]

It seems that facts on the ground seemed to be of little relevance either to the industry or its critics who were selectively using whatever evidence they could get their hands on ignoring data that might undermine their position. Scoring against the other side seemed to have a higher priority for the protagonists than sincerely learning about the situation of the child stitchers and their families so as to be better able to assist them.

The US Department of Labor too did not seem to be interested in suspending judgement till all the witnesses had been heard. The introductory

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[62] McCurry does not provide any proof about the reliability of his 'witnesses' unlike SICA whose 'witness' HRCP enjoys a reputation of being independent and having integrity. ILRF's investigations, including the talking to witnesses, seem a bit questionable for the following reasons. During the period after my pilot study, I spoke to ILRF. Talking to a former senior executive of ILRF who had been heavily involved with the Foul Ball Campaign, I asked him whether they had done an initial fact finding study to investigate the matter, for the claims they made were radically at odds with reports published by independent NGOs like SCF especially their first report 'Voices of Children' (1997). The ILRF executive curtly stated that SCF had rushed the report and it was consequently inaccurate on a number of counts. He did not provide any evidence to back this statement apart from saying that ILRF's evaluation of the report and the situation in Sialkot was based on his people in Pakistan in whom he had confidence. When asked who his people were, he refused to provide any contact information. He said that a report based on their initial investigations is with the ILRF and I can request it from them. I did so and the staff came back to me several days later that not only did they not have any such report, but there was no evidence they could find to suggest that such a report had ever been written.

As for ILRF's Pakistan-based contacts, they turn out to be non-Sialkot residents. According to a former ILO project manager in Sialkot and numerous other sources (e.g., a former administrative officer of SCF in Sialkot, business executives, and human rights activists in Sialkot) ILRF's contact in Pakistan is an NGO called Association of Network for Community Empowerment (ANCE), an organization having, in the opinion of the project NGO community in Sialkot, a dubious reputation (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 16-17; Interview Notebook III, 2003: 57). As a former SCF officer put it, the head of that NGO 'is a *do number admi* [number 2 person].' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 190). It is hard to translate what *do number admi* in the colloquial language of Pakistan means in the English language. The semantic contents of the term would cover meanings associated in English with terms such as a man of shady origins, not genuine, a fake, and a fraud. The opinion seems to have some merit as the ANCE helped produce a story published by Global March Against Child Labour in 2002 claiming that there were still plenty of children stitching soccer balls. The SCCI and ILO put together a fact finding mission to investigate the allegations. In the mission were included the Sialkot representative of Global March Against Child Labour and an official from APFOL, a trade union affiliated with ICFTU (Brussels). Their investigations pointed out that the allegations could not be substantiated. They went to the children who were photographed and featured in the story who told them that they had been asked to pose as soccer ball stitchers. For the original Global March Report, see Roy (2002). For SCCI's fact finding report on this controversy, see Mirza (2002).

remarks by Secretary Reich basically provided the conclusion the Department of Labor had reached on international child labour. The Secretary, in keeping with the historic practice of the US Government of passing judgements on other peoples without bothering to hear first from them, pronounced that his department was to have a zero tolerance policy on child labour. Crucially, the Secretary, much to the pleasure of industry, delinked child labour from the issue of wages. His reasoning, in his words, was a legalistic one:

> I want to emphasize that these conditions [of child labour] violate international law. This is not an issue that one can simply attribute to the poverty of a particular nation. Unlike wages or certain working conditions, the employment of very young children is a fundamental breach of international law. It is something that almost every nation has laws against. It is bad for even a developing nation because those young children need to be in school if that nation is to develop . . .
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> These young children need to be in school if these nations are to continue to develop. This is a basic human right. The International Labor Organization has international treaties these nations have subscribed to. This is different from developing standards such as wages, which do rise as a nation can afford them.[63]

Like the important delinking of child labour from wages, Reich's speech and comments at the hearings basically set out the other two parameters (i.e., schooling and ILO involvement) within which a solution to the soccer ball child

[63] Apart from the Freidmanite trickle-down approach to understanding wage dynamics, oblivious as such an approach is to history, particularly the important role played by union struggles in giving ordinary working men and women their rights including a living wage, Reich's appeal to law was both hypocritical and flawed. Hypocritical in that the United States had ratified about 14 ILO conventions, significantly fewer than an apparently regressive developing country like Pakistan who had ratified 34 of them (ILOLEX Database). Also the US had refused to sign on to the UN Convention on Child Rights enjoying the company of Somalia as the only country in the world who was not a signatory to that charter (Myers, 2001). In terms of flawed understandings, Reich's use of ILO conventions to pass judgement on Pakistan's soccer ball industry was quite inappropriate. ILO conventions, including ones on child labour and minimum age requirements, basically applied to formal sector factory contexts and not to the household or cottage industry in homes in the informal sector. Pakistan would have been well within its legal rights, internationally and domestically, to not take any action on children stitching soccer balls in their homes.

labour crisis were to be sought, parameters that would be slavishly adhered to by the global soccer ball industry and those who would participate in the effort to phase out child labour from Sialkot's soccer ball industry.

The second parameter guiding a policy solution is already found in the quote above and that is the linking of schooling to child labour where the former is to act as the anti-dote of the latter. Exploitation, according to Reich, was not about the children being paid six cents an hour but was defined as lost future opportunities due to not being able to attend school on account of work. That is to say, exploitation for children, as Reich perceived it, was the notion that they were being exploited out of schooling and, thus, exploited out of their future. This was the exploitation that needed to be addressed.

Making public schooling the chief strategy, goal, and measure of successful rehabilitation of child labourers was coupled with the third parameter that Reich felt should guide policy in combating child labour in industry.[64] The third condition was that the ILO should be involved in these efforts to combat child labour in industry. Reich ostensibly argued for the ILO's involvement based on his own experience with the organization in tackling the child labour problem that arose in Bangladesh. Given the direct allusion to the Bangladesh case by Reich, it seems to have impacted his department's response to the soccer ball crisis, thus, further confirming the point made earlier that this case had a powerful effect in shaping understanding of international policy makers on how to approach the problem of child labour involvement in industry.[65]

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[64] As Reich stated, 'And I want to emphasize something that I said before at our press conference outside, and that was that it is not enough simply to shut down these child labor sweatshops, to stop abusive conditions around the world of slave labor and bondage for children, we have got to get the children into school, because otherwise the problems simply go underground and these children may be even more viciously exploited.' (cited in US Department of Labor, 1996).

[65] The three parameters articulated by Reich reflected the much wider pro-business Clintonian vision. Clinton, contrary to popular understandings, had not deviated significantly from the previous Reaganite-Bush administrations in terms of espousing free markets for the rest of the world while protecting and heavily subsidising key industries in the United States (e.g., high technology). Clinton's adherence to the overtly pro-business agenda has been substantially documented (e.g., see Zinn, 2003). For example, prior to Clinton, trade policy towards China was conditional on the latter's human rights performance. Clinton delinked the two (i.e., human rights and trade), an action that even the hawks in the previous Republican administrations would have lacked the zeal to propose let alone enact. In this pro-business Clintonian context, Reich, even if he had trade union values, would not likely make central the issue of wages as he would not be

If the global soccer ball industry were willing to abide by these three rules of Reich, the US Department of Labor, Reich not so subtly hinted, would be willing to help finance the industry's efforts at eliminating child labour. Reich had made industry an offer that they would find difficult to refuse. ILO seemed like an ideal partner. Historically, it had caused no trouble to industry and, thus, could be looked upon as a reliable partner. In fact throughout its over seventy-five years of existence, which was the ILO's age at the time of the hearings in 1996, it had not once recommended action against a member state for violating any of its conventions (Elliot, 2000).[66] The most it had done was establish commissions and not once were the reports of the commissions taken to the international court to begin prosecution against a member state (ibid). Thus, industry had a trusted ally who was unlikely, given its consistent performance, to create any public, and, hence, costly embarrassments for it. Also, partnering with ILO, an organization enjoying considerable international repute and having trade unions in its membership, would allow industry to borrow that reputation and attach it to its child labour elimination efforts thereby enrolling the trust of external stakeholders who would, on account of ILO's involvement, view its efforts and claims made towards eliminating child labour as being credible and legitimate.

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able to garner much support in the administration that was tilting to the right. This pro-business context could also explain the importance that ILO began to receive under the Clinton administration. Critics of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been advocating that it incorporate labour standards and rights in the global trade regime being fashioned by it. The Clinton administration perhaps by giving renewed recognition and importance to ILO was strategically positioning it as the more correct forum to discuss labour standards than the WTO. Effectively, like in the case of China, this would delink labour issues from trade matters, allowing the WTO to proceed at full speed with trade liberalization not being bogged down by human rights and other such distractions that often obstruct the accumulation process. ILO would be left to handle labour problems and dislocations caused by globalization, and the interests that matter could rest secure in the knowledge that from ILO the labour standards would not create problems or barriers for them given its impressive, that is virtually non-existent, record of enforcing its conventions (Elliot, 2000). Thus, the propping up and favouring of ILO by the Clinton administration, could be explained as a move to strategically deflect concerns over global labour standards into a forum where they would be effectively made impotent all the while trade liberalization would be continuing with passionate intensity. Of course so too would be its catastrophic dislocations for it is hard to expect otherwise from a system where the highest principle to be consulted is one's own base interest, what Adam Smith (1999 [1776]) referred to as the vile maxim of the masters: All for ourselves and nothing for others.

[66] Of course, the state would often be violating these conventions, for example ILO conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association, on the behest of private industry whose interests such violations would serve such as Pinochet's crackdown on unions was a boon to the surplus extraction activities of the Chilean private sector.

Finally, ILO as a partner, apart from the above, became even more irresistible to the global soccer ball industry when the US government attached the promise of funding the industry's efforts to remove child labour if they were to follow its parameters, which included working with ILO. Effectively, the carrot of government funding meant that the public would be paying the costs of cleaning up the mess of private industry, a practice found quite regularly in US history (Zinn, 1990). Cove and industry must have sighed a breath of relief for though they had spoken moralistically about how industry viewed child labour to be intolerable and that it would take all necessary actions to remove it, they had kept assiduously silent, like their members Nike and Reebok, on making any financial commitments to bring about this result. With the likely prospects of government funding, later to be realized, Cove and the brands had largely and adroitly passed the burden on to others, namely the American public, to pay for the changes in production practices even though they (i.e., the brands) would be the major beneficiaries of these changes as such changes would at least help to protect the image of the brands on the basis of which they are able to extract large profits from the market place. The brands most likely would be rehabilitated. Whether or not the changes would rehabilitate the poor children and their families was altogether a different question. Given the amounts of money being publicly committed at that time by the multi-billion US dollar sporting goods industry to fight child labour in the soccer ball industry (i.e., none),[67] it apparently was a question that concerned them but very little.

[67] Reebok's REAP program, as stated earlier, did not substantively materialize, apart from the US$50,000 it committed to a school. Even if it had, the argument would still hold that the sporting goods industry had till that time made no *collective* financial commitments to remove child labour on an industry-wide basis though a member of it (i.e., Reebok) did make a public commitment as far as its *own* production processes were concerned. As we will see,the international soccer brands eventually ended up committing on behalf of its members through SICA US$100,000 and about US$400,000 through FIFA to fund industry wide efforts to phase out child labour from Sialkot's soccer ball industry. Adidas would later in 2003 commit about US$50,000 for this effort. All told international soccer brands forked out less than US$600,000 to tackle the child labour issue between the periods 1996-2003. To put this global commitment in perspective, the sales figure of one international brand (i.e., Adidas) for 2003 alone was over US$7 billion (Adidas Corporate Annual Report, 2003).

Human Sewing Machines & Fashion Slaves: Hyper-Confusion in Hyper-Reality

Whatever comforts the brands may have felt in obtaining in the hearings a promise of public funding to clean up their private mess were largely dissipated by the media reporting. The media hostility after the hearings continued unabated. Instead of reporting on the different points of views raised in the hearings, the serious evidence brought by the global soccer ball industry to refute several of the charges levelled against them, the complexities of the child labour problematic articulated in them, and some of the 'myths' exposed, (e.g., the nimble fingers and child labour cheaper than adult labour arguments) in that forum, the media stuck to its pre-hearings standard formulaic style of reporting on this issue. For the media, the children stitching soccer balls were brutalized slaves at work and the rich information provided by the hearings made little dent in this understanding. Given this belief and the tendency, according to Kuhn (1996 [1962]), of seeing saliently evidence that affirms one's a priori beliefs and being somewhat unwatchful of contradictory evidence, as one is on the look out for that which confirms one's ideas, the media in their reporting on the hearings that dealt with the soccer ball case, unsurprisingly featured quotes made by participants that reflected the media's overarching theme of child slavery pertaining to that case where, in the evocative metaphors of Dan McCurry and Tom Harkin, the children have been turned into 'human sewing machines' and 'fashion slaves' to the soccer ball industry (US Department of Labor, 1996).

Structural features of the media reinforced this selection bias. For example, deadline pressures would most likely push the media to focus on what they deemed to be key players (e.g., the political media personalities on Capitol Hill a la Robert Reich and Joseph P. Kennedy II) and their testimonies for they would not have the luxury of time, having to quickly report on the event, to go through all the 400 odd pages of testimonies presented at the concerned hearings. Also, these key players were considered news worthy in their own right (e.g., Joseph P. Kennedy II, a member of arguably America' most celebrated political family) and, therefore, it made sense, given these parameters, to focus on them.

Neither the readership nor the editorial board would show displeasure at reporting on a Kennedy. Now these key players from the American plutocracy and the power establishment (e.g., Secretary of Labor) were also the ones most vociferously repeating the child slavery media theme. Here was an interesting instance of Weberian elective affinity where things not normally associated with another (e.g., a rich and powerful Kennedy talking about poor third world child labourers) were coming together to confirm and intensify the media's prejudice on this issue. No wonder then that the media's line did not deviate significantly after the hearings from what it was before and the public, thus, basically received the impression that the soccer ball industry was suffering from the 'scourge of child labour' a phrase used by Reich that was constantly reiterated in the media (e.g., see Croot, 1996: 1). When the child labour issue was already framed as a scourge, then there was little to debate or understand about the matter for scourges, being what they are, had to be quickly removed. This was strongly reminiscent of an Alice in Wonderland kind of situation where the sentence is executed before the verdict has been delivered.

The implacability of the media must not have been lost on the brands. Seeing that their story was not been given space that it merited, the brands must have been convinced that the do-nothing option was now beyond the pale of contemplation, even if before they had remotely fancied the idea of flirting with it. They would now have to seriously work to remove child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. Only such a convincing demonstration on the ground could possibly extinguish the intensifying media rage. In the meanwhile, with the media growing more strident and using similar language and imagery (e.g., child slavery and beatings), the brands might have been justified in feeling that the initial reports where such distorted themes had first been articulated had by this time sunk deep into media psyche or consciousness, forming a generative world view on the child labour situation. Generative in the sense that many of the new reports that were being spewed forth were not based on any fresh direct investigations but simply using and embellishing the themes found in the accepted world view. In effect, chains of transmission about the case were emerging where

most of the links (i.e., reports) in the chain were either simply writing from the worldview taking it as self-evidently true, or were carrying on an internal conversation, borrowing from and adding to each other while not really bothering to ascertain whether their conversations, so many steps removed from the field, actually bore any correspondence to the reality in Sialkot over which they were so animatedly pontificating.

One would, thus, not be wrong in believing that one was in the presence of a veritable surreal self-insulated Baudrillardian hyper-real world regarding the child labour case (Baudrillard, 1994). A world where texts are increasingly written solely from texts (e.g., books on Hawaii written from other books on Hawaii), in a closed circuit fashion to the extent that a point is soon reached where none of the texts had made any direct investigations about or had access to the reality (e.g., text on Hawaii written by an author who physically went there) over which they were laying claims. Given that there were unfounded allegations such as child slavery and punishment rooms for children being levelled all of a sudden at the brands from all directions, often from sources not having been to Sialkot but relying on the somewhat dubious testimony of others, a good case can be made about the global soccer ball industry finding itself transported to a surreal hyper-real world where these texts and their largely incorrect claims came to be accepted as The Reality. Quite a strange world it must have been for industry creating hyper-confusion for them where quite a bit of fiction was masquerading as fact and where they were being forced to confess sins they had not committed (e.g., whipping children) while not being asked about the sins that they were committing (e.g., not paying the parents of the children a living wage). Both industry and the stitching families of Sialkot would have no choice but to cope with this hyper-reality that had effectively usurped the world they knew.

Faced with universal condemnation in hyper-reality that had, true to its nature shown a remarkable indifference to facts, and given a chance for salvation if they were to implement the Reich directives, the brands now moved to action with added urgency. They began by closing their ranks. WFSGI and SICA, the

two trade bodies that had been separately negotiating the crisis, decided to collaborate under a unified structure. As Riddle explained:

> The SICA Task Force quickly realized that the global nature of the soccer industry required a global solution. By definition, international brands do not recognize national boundaries; consequently, branded soccer balls manufactured in Pakistan might easily be sold in the United States, in Europe, or in Asia.
>
> At about the same time, press reports in Europe began to spotlight allegations of child labor in soccer ball production. Reports in the Norwegian and British press, for example, began to highlight the issue.
>
> As President of SGMA and Chairman of CEFT, I had monitored the work of the SICA Task force. The internationalisation of attention led me to propose that SICA pursue its initiative in collaboration with WFSGI and CEFT, an idea that was embraced by all. (1997: 14).

Having decided to collaborate together on the child labour issue, WFSGI/SICA headed a month after the hearings to the ISPO trade fair in Munich. They looked forward to meeting the SCCI team who shared with them the same determination to see this crisis through to a successful resolution where being private interested parties with much at stake, 'success' was to mean an outcome where their interests first and foremost were served and protected. The welfare of the children and their family were in a lower priority order, platitudes notwithstanding from the masters (i.e., brands and their soccer ball suppliers). This can be discerned not only, as stated earlier, from the absence of financial support publicly committed or promised by the global soccer ball industry to help the stitchers. It can also be ascertained by exhaustively wading through statements made over the years by its representatives where one can find brief moments of candor long enough to illuminate motives that show, as is to be expected from publicly avowed self-interested actors, that child stitchers and their families found themselves to be at quite the bottom of the supply chain's priorities hierarchy. For

example, Riddle himself is on record to have said in a moment of unguarded frankness:

> What they're [sporting goods companies] reacting to is a potential degradation of the value of their brand. They think their brands are important, that their corporate good name is important, and they don't want to see that impaired. (cited in Greenhouse, 1997: 12)

Thus, a successful resolution to the crisis, as far as brands were concerned, was to be measured primarily in terms of their own welfare not those of the children. This view was shared by their Pakistani manufacturers who years later, when their project to eliminate child labour had made some head-way, more explicitly articulated the operational definition of 'success' that they and their brands were striving to achieve and that was, thus, guiding their response to the crisis. In an editorial to an ILO publication 'Update Sialkot', the President of SCCI gushed:

> Elimination of child labour in soccer ball industry was a dream that is coming true. The soccer ball manufacturers participating in this programme are quite enthusiastic about its success since it is building their credibility as socially responsible entrepreneurs within the country and abroad with the international buyers and consumers. (ILO, 1999).

Interestingly and somewhat worryingly not once either in the quote above or in the entire editorial is there any mention of how 'successful' the project has been from the vantage point of children and their families.

*Stitching a Game Plan*

ISPO's ipso facto

With this overarching objective of ensuring industry welfare, WFSGI/SICA organized a meeting to discuss the child labour crisis at the 1996 ISPO trade show in Munich that was being held in that year in August. Apart from the SCCI team and the WFSGI/SICA joint child labour task force working on this issue, representatives of over 60 soccer ball suppliers and global brands

attended the child labour meeting to determine how the industry should proceed. The meeting lasted several hours where participants 'candidly' exchanged views on the responsibilities of industry to eliminate child labour and the feasibility of imposing standards on companies that their governments, were either unable or unwilling to enforce.

Consensus was forged on some but not all matters. As Riddle chronicles:

> Certain points were readily agreed. All companies agreed that child labor was neither appropriate nor necessary for the manufacture or assembly of soccer balls. All agreed that the allegations of child labor were damaging the industry. And perhaps most importantly, all agreed that industry alone could not solve the problem; a true solution would require the cooperation of the industry, local government, and other social institutions committed to advancing the best interests of children.
>
> On other points, no clear consensus emerged. How should child labor be defined? How could the industry demonstrate to customers that child labor is not present in soccer ball assembly? What should be done if other governments are unwilling to cooperate? (1997: 14).

The facts (i.e., ipso facto) of ISPO, as presented by Riddle's account, are instructive in a number of ways. Firstly, it is important to note that industry was willing to contemplate solutions because child labour was not just morally inappropriate but it was unnecessary. Unnecessary to what? The answer seems to be to the doing of business or putting it more honestly, to the extraction of profits. This admission strengthens the argument, and subsequently weakens that of the mass media, that children were not cheaper or their labour indispensable to surplus extraction, for then they would have been 'necessary' for business.

The admission of children being unnecessary to the profit process also instructs us about late 20$^{th}$ century business morality. Soccer ball industry players (i.e., the brands and their Sialkot suppliers) were willing to act, according to their own narrative, because: 1) the crisis was 'hurting' them not financially as yet for people were still buying soccer balls, but in terms of taking a toll on their brand

image, a critical profit making resource that they could not afford to dissipate; 2) the actions of removing child labour would be found appropriate in the wider North American/European culture; and 3) the actions taken would not interfere with the sources of profit making, for example, cheap unorganised labour, where removing cheap unorganised child labour and substituting in its place equally cheap unorganised adult labour would not interfere with the accumulation process. What was guiding them was the lofty principle of expediency. If children were indeed 'necessary' to the soccer business, they would perhaps have behaved like the surgical industry. Given that child labour exists in the surgical industry in Sialkot, where it is cheaper and hence 'necessary' than adult labour due to long apprenticeship periods where children apprentices are paid less than adults, the industry, thus, has been dragging its feet, both internationally and locally, in dealing with this issue (Sudhaar, 2001). Understandably, as removing child labour would be removing a valuable profit making source. Since children were not such a valuable resource for soccer balls, there was less structural profit making gravity that might have slowed the response of industry to phasing out this 'resource'.

Of course, the surgical industry's lack of response could be due to the fact that they did not suffer from an international child labour scandal. However, by making a crisis a critical factor in determining response, only confirms the understanding that industry (soccer ball or otherwise) behaves pragmatically. This is because if the crisis were not there, and the soccer ball industry were not 'hurting' as a result of it, there would seem to be little motive, especially given the historical comfort with which the miseries of the workforce have been tolerated by brands and their manufacturers, for them to have acted in a socially responsible manner out of ethical considerations. There had been plenty of time to display conscience and it was only presented with an onset of a menacing crisis, then it was the latter and not altruism that drove industry to act. Such a conclusion seems to be corroborated by a major Adidas supplier who bluntly pointed out when asked whether high principles were behind their efforts to be rid of the scourge of child labour: 'it was a survival matter, we took it as a business issue . . . there were no other motivations' (Pilot Study, 2000: 12).

The White House on Paris Road (Sialkot)

The subjective perception of the crisis being a survival matter for Pakistan's soccer ball industry seemed to be warranted given the events that were unfolding around the time of the ISPO 96 convention. The media for one was continuing its fury, constructing a hyper-real world that was bewildering the local suppliers. The soccer balls manufacturing elite would often meet in SCCI's main building in Sialkot to try to make sense of the rapidly moving situation. The main building was a hideous miniature imitation of the White House with plenty of white pillars to sorely hit at the eyes. The building oozed with wealth but it was not old aristocratic money but nouveau-riche fortunes. It depicted a strange aesthetic, part nouveau-riche and part high development modernism. The latter was the aesthetic of the social engineers who tried to bring the kingdom of Western development heaven, as thinly understood by them to be Western high modernism of cities with grid like streets and tall sky scrapers, down to the earth of developing countries. For their part in bringing this heaven down to Sialkot's earth, the SCCI constructed their building in the shape of a White House and named the road it was on Paris Road. Giving the road that name most likely had to do with the fact that the industrialists, being young men in the 1960s, when modernist development thinking of emulating the 'modern' aspects of the industrialized Western world held sway, the industrialists had deeply internalised this aesthetic. Now with resources at their disposal, they were presently trying to desperately realize this aesthetic and by doing so, hopefully convincing themselves and others that 'progress' had been made on the path to development.

On Paris Road, in their White House, the manufacturers worried (Fleck, 1999). The media was intensifying its onslaught. Any hope of abatement, a slack by the media, seemed unlikely given that the Foul Ball Campaign was gaining momentum that would not only likely pick up that slack, but add to the public outrage. The Foul Ball Campaign was beginning to mobilize youth soccer leagues, city councils, and other groups with sports programs to pass resolutions that would ban the use of balls unless they could be shown to be not made by

child labour (The Communication Initiative, 2003). Drawing on the aforementioned misinformed generative base, the Foul Ball Campaign, coordinated by ILRF, was busy shoring up and extending the hyper-reality surrounding this issue. ILRF's executive in charge of the Foul Ball Campaign, Dan McCurry, had illustrated through his testimony in the hearings, the misleading world view on this issue that he, of course, held to be true based on highly questionable warrants (see discussion above) and which he was prepared to publicly disseminate as part of the campaign beginning with his testimony at the hearings. Thus, the public not only from the media, but also from the Foul Ball Campaign's network of advocacy groups, was receiving a mixed information bag containing some truths (e.g., Sialkot is the largest producer of soccer balls) but mostly allegations, many of them unfounded (e.g., institutionalised beatings of children at the workplace).

The campaign and the media pressure was beginning to excite the public. Children began to form free the children chapters across North America and began pressuring anyone involved with soccer not to buy child labour made balls. Children like Alicia, age 12, president of *Free The Children* chapter in Fort McMurray, Alberta, began lobbying city councils to pass resolution banning the use of child-made soccer balls and fireworks on public property (Klein, 1997). Some like Alicia actually succeeded (ibid).

City councils were not the only organizations experiencing the public wrath on soccer balls. Brands began to receive an avalanche of consumer petitions in the mail from thousands of soccer playing children and their parents from Europe and North America (Greenhouse, 1997). As for phones, according to Peter Moore of Reebok, 'We were literally bombarded by telephone calls and letters' (cited in Shorrock, 1997: 3A). The pressure was palpable and much to the concern of the brands and their suppliers, FIFA, which approves balls for the major tournaments (e.g., the World Cup) and whose approval stamp is sought by brands to signal to the marketplace that they make top quality balls, was beginning to cave in to the pressure.

On September 3, 1996, FIFA announced that it was setting up a code of conduct in consultation with European trade unions that its licensees (i.e., those brands who are allowed to use the FIFA logo on their balls) would have to adhere to if they wished to keep their licenses (ICFTU, 2003). The code of conduct, drafted in collaboration with unions, was quite all-encompassing, ranging from child labour prohibitions to fair wage clauses (ibid; Islam, 1996). Industry was upset. Manufacturers in Pakistan felt that their products would now be banned for they would not be able to meet the conditions of the code (Business Recorder, 1996). A month later, frustration having reached the point of release with no end in sight to the set-backs, the Pakistani manufacturers reacted with impotent rage. 'They (anti-child labor groups) are hell bent on destroying our industry and putting thousands of people out of work', Siddique Lone, managing director of Lofty Sports, a soccer ball exporting company, spluttered in an interview (Mir, 1996).

The manufacturers need not have worried. The FIFA code was never put into practice, though a few of its clauses that had already been part of the brands' codes of conduct were written by FIFA into its licensing agreements with brands (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], 2003). According to trade unions, FIFA's code was effectively sabotaged by WFSGI (ICFTU, 2003).[68] Given that a prominent member of WFSGI, Adidas, had close links with FIFA leadership, such a theory is not entirely implausible (Tomlinson and Sugden, 1999). It becomes actually quite plausible when the WFSGI itself admits in an open letter to its members that it was largely responsible for stopping FIFA. In the bureaucratic language of Andre Gorgemans, Secretary General of WFSGI:

> A meeting was arranged with FIFA officials, SICA members, and Stephen Rubin at the FIFA house in

[68] According to FIFA's website, their contracts with brands only account for about 4% of worldwide sales of soccer balls (FIFA, 2003). That is to say only 4% of all soccer balls made in a year carry a FIFA logo. FIFA's importance to the global soccer ball industry cannot, thus, be explained on account of it being a valuable customer or market since its consumption accounts for less than 5% of total global soccer ball production. The importance of FIFA probably has to do the prestige of quality its name carries and that it decides in several of the world's major tournaments which brand's soccer ball would be used, an honour that can be used to great marketing advantage by brands to create a highly lucrative aura for their products of sporting excellence.

> Zurich to discuss the implications and ramifications of the "Code of Conduct" agreed upon between unions and FIFA. It was agreed at the meeting that FIFA would wait with further actions for the "Industry Code of Conduct" which is being developed by WFSGI and SICA at this time. (Gorgemans, 1997: 7).[69]

In the Fall of 1996, however, the Pakistani manufacturers did not know that the FIFA threat would be made toothless in the future. At that time, it represented danger that was quite clear and present, contributing further to the mood of besiegement and paranoia gripping the White House on Paris Road that all may well be lost. In the words of a leading Pakistani soccer ball exporter interviewed by the *Christian Science Monitor*, that time 'was a moment of great anxiety. We were charged into taking action when it became obvious that it was a matter of . . . change for survival.' (cited in Fleck, 1999:1).

In this situation of intense tension, both the brands and the manufacturers girded their loins to stitch together a game plan that would rescue them. Good news needed to emanate to signal that industry was taking steps to deal with the child labour problem. By November, the industry could plead penitence by demonstrating through action that they were beginning to reform. On November 19, 1996 Reebok announced that it would be making child labour free soccer balls carrying such a guarantee emblazoned on them (Agence France Presse, 1996a). A few days later, amid much fanfare, Nike and its manufacturer announced on

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[69] In the sanitized version of history, Riddle (1997) does not refer to the FIFA stimulus as being responsible for the WFSGI coming up with a code of conduct. Instead, he attributed the WFSGI's code, brought out in early 1997, to the brands having recognized by November 1996 'the strong feeling that industry must look beyond the child labour issue, the group [WFSGI members] also authorized the development of a model code of ethical conduct for the production of all sporting goods.' (1997: 16). In this version, Riddle also does not account for the tussle that took place between WFSGI and ICFTU that had helped draft the FIFA code. According to ICFTU, 'On 22 November [1996], the WFGSI announced its intention to develop "a model code of ethical conduct for the production of all sporting goods."' (ICFTU, 2003). For the WFSGI, FIFA as a governing body for a sport was not an appropriate organisation to adopt a code of labour practice for manufacturing. Recalling their experience with the toy industry, the international trade union organisations questioned whether any trade association such as the WFSGI, which could not compel its members to adopt any code, was an appropriate organisation (ibid). In their view, FIFA, which had the power to have labour practices incorporated into legally binding contracts with licensees, was the more appropriate organisation to adopt a code of conduct than the WFSGI. The WFSGI released its "model code" in 1997. (ibid).

November 25, 1996 what they claimed was Pakistan's first stitching centre. It was state of the art facility able to house 500 stitchers. The centre came equipped with impressive facilities such as, to name a few, a small pharmacy, a canteen where workers would be given free lunches, and a fair price shop where they would be able to purchase subsidized groceries for themselves. Phil Knight, chastened by his Michael Moore interview, was now restricting himself to conventional statements. Giving a speech from the United States on the opening of the centre near the village of Seokee, Knight read his script, 'We are proud to take a leadership position in our industry to eliminate the use of underage workers in the production of soccer balls, a practice that has been part of the economic landscape in Pakistan for generations. NIKE [original capitalization] will not tolerate the use of underage labor in the production of its products and this stitching center, and the others that follow, will ensure that.' (cited in PR Newswire, 1996). Apart from the use of politically correct expressions, 'underage' as opposed to the blunt 'child labour' that showed Nike still trying to push its association with child labour down the memory hole, the other note worthy feature of Nike's remarks on the stitching centre opening event was its diligent silence on financing such efforts. In fact, by keeping silent on the funding aspect, and talking about zero tolerance policy manifesting itself in the centre, Nike gave the impression that Nike had helped pay for the construction of such a stitching centre. The impression was a misleading one as neither Nike nor Saga Sports have made any claims that would suggest such an impression having a factual basis.

Though Nike did not pay for the centre, the opinion is split on whether the stitching centre and its excellent facilities were imagined by Nike who then forced Saga Sports to transform this vision into reality. According to a former quality control manager at Saga Sports, 'Soofi sahib generous. But facilities given because of *gora* [translation: literally white man used here to denote foreign brands] pressure.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 159). Another person, also a former quality control manager of Saga Sports, belonging to the other school of thought on this issue, attributed the grandness of the stitching centre to Saga Sports's owner and not to Nike. According to this former Saga Sports employee,

'[Soofi sahib] had a vision. Said he wanted to do things now that others would do 10 years later' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 151). In this understanding, it was Soofi sahib's trail blazing way of doing things in Sialkot years before others would even think of them, which produced the centre. Most likely, it seems to be a combination of the two. Nike probably placed the pressure for the centre on Soofi. Without this pressure, they may not have been an impetus to build such a centre. When the Nike demand came, its operationalization was probably done by Soofi's approach to life of doing things grandly that led to a centre being built near a remote village in Pakistan that would earn the envy of workers in technology parks in the industrialized West. Naturally, Nike would not object to such a centre for it could use the centres effectively, as Phil Knight apparently did at the opening of the centre, to show what a great employer it is. Saga Sports, much to Nike's delight, went on to construct nine more of such centres dispersed throughout the Sialkot district (Saga Sports, 1998).

While the individual brands like Reebok and Nike were taking such initiatives in their individual capacities, they were also busy working through the WFSGI/SICA team to crystallise an industry-wide solution to this problem. In that same month of November 1996, WFSGI/SICA sent a mission that travelled to Geneva and Sialkot, trying to reach a definitive closure on the response industry would take to solve its problem of child labour (Riddle, 1997).

The first stop of the abovementioned WFSGI/SICA mission was ILO headquarters, Geneva. On November 6, 1996 a meeting was held there with members of the mission and ILO representatives, including those who were in charge of ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC).[70] We know from our earlier discussion that the global soccer ball

[70] ILO-IPEC is today the world's largest technical cooperation program on child labour. It was launched in 1992 with funding from Germany and seeks to end child labour, particularly in its most extreme forms such as child labour in hazardous working conditions and occupations, bonded child labour, child prostitution, and trafficking of children. In addition, the program gives special attention to children who are particularly vulnerable; i.e., children under 12 years of age and working girls. The US Department of Labor began providing funding to ILO-IPEC in 1995 (US Department of Labor, 1996) and it presently has 22 donors. At the time of the meeting, 23 countries had signed a memorandum of understanding with the ILO-IPEC program, including

industry had begun talks with ILO as far back as the Verbier Conference held in November 1995. With pressure mounting, most likely the WFSGI/SICA team must have been discussing with the ILO-IPEC representatives the possibility of constructing for Sialkot a project similar to the one ILO-IPEC created to address the child labour issue in Bangladesh's garment industry. Instead of reinventing the wheel for which there may not be time, WFSGI/SICA might have reckoned why not just apply the Bangladesh solution, perhaps with a few modifications, to Sialkot. After all, the project contained all the Reich directives (see above) and could provide a concrete tried, tested, and internationally acclaimed example of responding to the child labour crisis. Moreover, ILO's involvement would mean hopefully funding from the US Department of Labor as well as greater international credibility being attached to the industry's child labour elimination efforts as it would now have the attestation of ILO. SICA/WFSGI must have been, thus, tantalized by the Bangladesh type project as a quick fix solution for the soccer ball industry's child labour woes.

ILO would, of course, not object supervising to another project. Since ILO's projects are funded by external donors and not through its own internal funding, the involvement in a new project for ILO, from an organizational perspective, would mean an increase in its fiefdom, as more donor money would be pumped into ILO to finance its activities associated with the project. Also, an additional project under the belt would add status and prestige to ILO. It would, thus, assist ILO to further fashion itself as an internationally relevant organization, especially given its moribund past where it was largely ignored and belittled (Elliot, 2001), helping the organization to claim a place in the same international institutions league a la the Bretton Woods Institutions. Thus, given the prospects of more resources, activities, and international prestige and recognition, ILO was quite happy to participate in a child labour project for Sialkot's soccer ball industry. The question for WFSGI/SICA was now not

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Pakistan in 1994. All information provided in this footnote, unless stated otherwise, comes from ILO-IPEC, 2003.

whether ILO would be on board but whether they would be able to sell the ILO-IPEC Bangladesh project solution to their Sialkot manufacturers.

A day later (i.e., November 7, 1996) WFSGI/SICA mission arrived in Pakistan. They would stay in Pakistan for another nine days (Riddle, 1997). During this time, the mission travelled to Islamabad, Lahore, and Sialkot. In Lahore and Islambad, the delegation met with senior officials of foreign embassies, international governmental organizations (i.e., UNICEF and ILO), the Government of Pakistan (including those staffing the Export Promotion Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Social Welfare), and NGOs (i.e., SCF, Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC) and HRCP).

In Sialkot, the WFSGI/SICA team met with more than a dozen exporters individually.[71] The WFSGI/SICA team then participated at a meeting of the SCCI held at the White House on Paris Road. Riddle, in his sanitized version, refers to the meeting as being a 'spirited' one. This is quite a euphemism, borrowed from the language of diplomacy where, for example, the word 'frank' is politely used to describe hostile exchanges. The atmosphere of the meeting must have been a highly charged one given that many of the big Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers thought that their industry was going to be crushed by the child labour juggernaut. Many could not understand some of the baseless allegations being levelled at them of which they were innocent but, of course, not for all (e.g., low wages paid to soccer ball stitchers). Conspiracy theories had consequently gripped their paranoid imaginations. The most popular conspiracy theory seemed to be that the child labour issue was an Indian plot abetted by some European states to destroy Pakistan's industry.[72] Such theories were widely held even by those intimately

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[71] Presumably these would be the most important Sialkot manufacturers as the mission would not waste its time on players of no consequence. This piece of information (i.e., dozen important manufacturers) further corroborates the quote mentioned earlier in the thesis of an important soccer ball exporter who said that the Sialkot soccer ball industry is highly concentrated where only a handful of companies really matter.

[72] See, for example, *Business Recorder* June 1, 1996, 'Child Labour Issue Raised to Damage Pak Economy' (Business Recorder, 1996a: 12). Such conspiracy theories, apart from entertainment value provided by them couched as they were in extremely crude xenophobic nationalistic jingoism, also showed the minds that wielded them as being largely absent from reality. India's industries, including its small soccer ball industry, had their own child labour issues. Indeed if India, as claimed by the Pakistani soccer ball business sages, was devious enough to hatch a global

working with WFSGI/SICA to finalise the industry's solution such as Sublime Sports patriarch, Mian Amin Javed. The Middle-East news journal *Money Clips*, interviewed him in November, 1996. In their words:

> Talking about the child labor problem in Pakistan, he [Mian Amin Javed] said certain forces are out to tarnish the image of Pakistani products of carpets and leather goods. He said Pakistan has no problem of bonded and under-age child labor as alleged by certain foreign industrialists who are unable to compete with the Pakistani leather goods, especially footballs and soccer balls. Pakistani soccer balls have been used in prestigious international events, including the last World Cup . . .
>
> He emphatically said that a baseless propaganda had been made under a pre-planned conspiracy aimed at defaming the football industry. (Siddiqui, 1996).[73]

To these insults, considered as such by manufacturers, from which they were reeling, were added, as perceived by the manufacturers, injuries by the brands. The brands had begun shifting lower quality ball orders to China largely based largely on economic considerations. The manufacturers though felt that the shift was occurring due to the child labour crisis. Resentment at being ditched in favour of China often surfaced in both interviews with Sialkot industry executives and in the minutes of Chamber meetings, breaking out often sharply later in 1998 when China was seriously moving into the lower quality ball market and the orders kept going there that industry felt was not a way for brands to reward a partner who had by then worked hard to clean up its act on child labour.

If this were not enough, to use the powerful language of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, the unkindest cut was yet to come. In this charged atmosphere of smouldering resentment and open wounds, WFSGI/SICA had the quite

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conspiracy, how then could it be so stupid as to not see that obviously the child labour problem will come to haunt it given the high incidence of child in that country. This did happen where though the focus was on Pakistan, several of the articles would also briefly mention India (e.g., Schanberg, 1996).

[73] The information that the owner of Sublime Sports gave in this interview seem to contradict what he had told CBS in April 1995 where he admitted to the problem of child labour in Sialkot's soccer ball industry, being done as it were, 'behind our faces' (CBS, 1995).

remarkable gall to point out to the manufacturers that they would be footing the bill for the entire monitoring costs of the project. WFSGI/SICA, bless their souls, would provide supervision and guidance and would try to get non-legally binding verbal promises from their brands that they purchase only from suppliers participating in the project. Given this, a spirited meeting indeed would have ensued. Unfortunately Riddle does not document the contents that made for a spirited meeting noting only cryptically that 'Great concern was also expressed at the meeting over the impact this voluntary program might have on the children prevented from employment.' (1997: 14).

Facing the threat of arriving bans and fleeing orders, the soccer ball manufacturers were not in a position to seriously negotiate. WFSGI/SICA outlined the Bangladesh style course of action, to which they acquiesced. The WFSGI/SICA mission and the manufacturers interested in tackling the issue agreed upon a set of principles that would underlie an industry-wide program to eliminate child labour in Sialkot's soccer ball industry. The principles were:

> The program would be voluntary, open to any local manufacturer that agreed to abide by its terms and conditions. The program would include a clear timetable participants would agree to follow to ensure that child labor was not present in any part of the manufacture of assembly of balls. An internationally credible monitor would be selected to verify whether participating manufacturers are in compliance with the terms of the program. The monitor would regularly report his findings to the participants, to their customers and to the international community. Local industry would accept responsibility for financing the cost of the independent monitoring program. (Riddle, 1997: 14).

As for the children to be affected, a vague consensus was reached on the principle of capitalism found quite often in practice though seldom in theory. The principle being that the public will bear the costs for private profits. WFSGI/SICA and the Sialkot manufacturers agreed that they would seek the help of governments and international organizations for assistance and guidance in

dealing with rehabilitating child stitchers stopped from working and preventing other children from entering the industry in the future. The afterthought on the rehabilitation and prevention side seemed to indicate once again, together with the dogged refusal of brands to publicly commit on the humanitarian side of the proposed solution, that the welfare of the children and their families was not of primary consideration, lip-service notwithstanding.

Drafting Team Players & Agreements

Armed with the agreement reached at the White House on Paris Road with Sialkot Chamber's Steering Committee on the Child labour Issue, which represented the major manufacturers who showed a willingness to do what was necessary to make their production child labour free, WFSGI/SICA headed to London to a conference organized by Mitre International, one of the leading soccer ball brands in the world, whose soccer balls have been the first choice for the prestigious English FA (Football Association) League (Double, 1995; Mitre website).

According to Riddle, the London conference held on November 21, 1996, comprised many of the same participants as the Verbier Conference held last year. There were also new participants including, 'some of the soccer industry's harshest critics, such as the organizers of the Foul Ball Campaign in the United States . . . as well as other interested parties, such as the governments of Pakistan, and the United Kingdom and FIFA.[74] From the participating international

[74] As always with industry representatives, one has to read between the lines. It is unlikely that the ILRF was invited. Riddle mentions all other notable organizations by name yet becomes inconsistent when it comes to describing the organization(s) from the Foul Ball Campaign perhaps indicating that from the Foul Ball network, the organization(s) invited were so marginal or unknown that they did not merit specific mention. Also, it would have been in Riddle's interests to explicitly name ILRF for by doing so he would be showing exactly rather than vaguely how magnanimous industry was and how they were so concerned for the various stakeholders that they even invited their 'harshest' opponents (i.e., the ILRF) to listen to them and see how industry could accommodate their concerns in the project it was formulating to eliminate child labour. The foregoing weakens Riddle's claims that the conference included some of the industry's harshest critics. These claims become even more suspect when we learn that the trade unions that participated with FIFA in drafting its aborted code, were not invited to the conference. In the trade union version about who participated in that conference, 'Although NGOs were invited to participate, trade union organizations, notably the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation [ITGLWF] (i.e., one of the main trade unions that helped draft the FIFA code) were deliberately excluded.' (ICFTU, 2003).

organizations at the conference, the industry narrowed its list of candidates or team players from them. Over the year, since the Verbier Conference, industry had been exchanging ideas with these organizations and, thus, had by now had a good feel who they could trust and, more importantly, whose participation would bring benefit to the project being proposed in the form of material resources, legitimacy or preferably both. ILO, UNICEF, and SCF looked like the best candidates. Offers were made to them to help design and implement a project that would aim to provide a comprehensive solution to child labour in soccer ball production.

ILO, UNICEF, and SCF accepted the offer made by WFSGI/SICA. The project's team was now in place. Under the tutelage of WFSGI/SICA, intensive work began immediately on drafting an agreement that would herald the project's birth, containing its main objectives and the organizations responsible for attaining them. The agreement, in effect, would provide the project's framework delineating the goals that the project would encompass. The global soccer ball industry eagerly wanted to announce the project in two months time at the Atlanta SuperShow, the second largest international sporting goods trade fair besides ISPO in Munich. There would evidently be plenty of the international business press covering the trade spectacle and, thus, an announcement made there could receive maximum publicity. Also, since most of the sporting goods industry would be present there, an announcement would seem to indicate to the press that the entire sporting goods industry, not just the soccer ball industry, was behind the initiative for it would be formally announced under the auspices of the sporting goods industry's annual Atlanta SuperShow.

Given this Atlanta urgency, work on drafting the project's agreement or framework began in earnest. David Husselbee (2001), representative of SCF and privy to the discussions that led to the agreement's final draft, recalls that there were plenty of compromises on all sides though he does not go in great details as

to what they were.[75] He does tell us that the final draft had to be agreed at various geographical levels as the organizations participating in drafting the project agreement spanned two continents. Husselbee briefly describes the drafting process that took place after the London conference and before the formal unveiling of the project agreement at the SuperShow on February 14, 1997 in the following words, 'international company associations acted as the brokers which drafted the partnership agreement, which involved negotiations with the ILO in Geneva, UNICEF in New York and SCF in London.' (ibid: 131). Sialkot was evidently kept out of the drafting process, an outcome that would later create a distinctive feeling among the local Pakistani NGOs working on the project that it was largely a top-down project will little input from the grassroots. At that time, the participation principle was giving way to business' highly favoured principle of expediency. True to its maxim of efficiency that often meant paying little thought to matters of effectiveness,[76] international business had indeed been able to put together a project agreement in time for SuperShow 97.

## THE PROJECT: CHILD LABOUR'S FINAL SOLUTION

### *Booting Out Child Labour: The Atlanta Agreement*[77]

#### Putting Forward the Text

On February 14, 1997 at the SuperShow in Atlanta (Georgia) the soccer ball industry unveiled at a press conference its final solution to the child labour crisis that had been plaguing it for almost two years. Facing a battalion of journalists armed with their prying microphones and glaring spotlights, the

[75] Husselbee's (2001) account was the only historical account of the project unearthed by the research that at least explicitly albeit briefly made any allusions to the drafting process that led to the project agreement.

[76] For example, torturing may be a highly efficient way to extract confessions but be also highly ineffective in getting at the truth for under torture the poor tortured subject will say whatever his inquisitors want which may be a problem when they genuinely want honest answers. Weber worried about such situations where devotion to efficiency (what he called instrumental rationality) may take such primacy that it eclipses concerns over effectiveness (i.e., whether desirable outcomes were produced) (Ritzer, 1996).

[77] Unless otherwise stated, all content in this section is from the text of the Atlanta Agreement found in SCF, 1997: 63-71.

industry announced that a project would be jointly established by SCCI, UNICEF, and ILO to phase out children from Pakistan's soccer ball industry in the next 18 months. The project's broad principles were articulated in an agreement called 'The Atlanta Agreement' co-signed by the SCCI, UNICEF and ILO. SCF became a non-signatory member of the partnership. These organizations came to be known as the 'partners' to the project. The project in turn came to be officially named in the Atlanta Agreement as the 'Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball industry in Pakistan' While this was its official name, it was referred to by project personnel and official documents in a variety of ways from the Sialkot Child Labour Project to the Sialkot Child Labour Elimination Project.

In terms of normative justification, the project grounded itself in international labour law, particularly ILO conventions 138 and 59 that basically prohibit employment of children under the age of 14. Basing itself largely though not solely on the above mentioned ILO conventions, the agreement defined what child labour was to mean for the purposes of the project: '"Child Labour" shall be deemed to be present in Pakistan whenever children under age 14 are working in conditions that interfere with schooling, or that are hazardous or otherwise injurious to their physical, mental, social or moral well-being'.[78]

With this understanding of child labour, the project was articulated as consisting of two goals. The first goal was the elimination of child labour in

[78] This child labour definition is a far more elaborate one than the ones used in ILO conventions 138 and 59 that make the definition contingent on age (i.e., children employed under 14 years of age) whereas the definition proffered in the agreement, as can be seen, incorporates the age contingency but then adds a slew of other factors into its understanding of what constitutes child labour that go beyond the ILO conventions that are alluded to in the agreement. These additional factors seem to stem from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) given that language deployed in the agreement's definition of child labour mirrors quite closely CRC's understanding of child labour as stated in its article 32: 'State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development'. Cognizant of this CRC understanding of child labour, it seems that the agreement's definition of child labour seems to be a hybrid one combining some elements of CRC with ILO. Given that SCF's position on child labour is based on CRC (articles 3, 12, 27, and 32) (SCF, date not given), then it appears the agreement's definition, taking as it does some parts from SCF's CRC position (e.g., article 32) while remaining largely loyal to ILO child labour conventions, is a compromise candidate between these two organizations that were involved in the agreement's drafting. Perhaps, this is a case of the compromises made during the agreement's drafting by the various organizations involved in that process that Husselbee (2001) mentioned (see above) without giving any detailed examples as to their nature.

soccer ball production to be accomplished in an 18 month period. This first goal was characterized as the project's 'primary goal'and comprised the following aspects:

i) To assist manufacturers seeking to prevent child labour in the manufacture or assembly of soccer balls in Sialkot district and its environs.

ii) To identify and remove children from conditions of child labour in the manufacture or assembly of soccer balls and provide them with educational and other opportunities.

iii) To facilitate changes in community and family attitudes to child labour, including in the soccer industry.

With regards to this first goal, it was acknowledged that project's success in attaining this primary goal would be reliant on integrating these aspects and being able to garner the support of other organizations, particularly the Government of Pakistan.

The project's second goal was the 'Elimination of Child Labour in Other Local Industries' in Sialkot. This was viewed as a long term goal to be worked upon after the attainment of the primary goal. This secondary goal, according to Husselbee (2001), came about as a result of the insistence of ILO and SCF in the teeth of opposition from industry. The latter eventually relented though, as Husselbee conceded, the inclusion of this long term goal came at the price of industry forcing the exclusion of other objectives that Husselbee unfortunately does not delineate. The official reasoning for the second goal was as follows:

> The Partners recognize that efforts to eliminate Child Labour in the soccer ball industry in Pakistan can best succeed if they are complemented by similar efforts in other local industries and by the creation of meaningful new opportunities for children in this district. It is the hope of the Partners that the development of the Project shall encourage other sectors of the business community in Pakistan to explore how they might do more to contribute to the end of Child Labour. (Atlanta Agreement).

The achievement of the above mentioned mention goals was to be made the responsibility of a body known as the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) (also known as the Project Coordinating Committee) consisting of the Atlanta Partners and any organizations they wished to induct into its membership. At the signing of the agreement, SCF, though not a signatory to the Atlanta Agreement, had been made a member of the committee by the other project partners. As can be seen from the induction of SCF, the PCC came out as a result of the negotiations that occurred during the formulation of the Atlanta Agreement. Given that its members were the writers of the Atlanta Agreement, one can say that the PCC already existed de facto prior to the agreement. The agreement bestowed on it a de jure status and codified its ambit of responsibilities which were, to quote Husselbee:

> Facilitating communication . . . promoting cooperation between the partners, identifying individuals and organisations qualified to implement the various parts of the project . . . integrating the monitoring and social protection elements of the project . . . providing public reports on the project . . . encouraging international sports businesses to support the project . . . encouraging other businesses in Sialkot to join efforts against child labour. . . approving plans and proposals for the project. (2001: 135).

The PCC was to achieve the goals of the project, as per the Atlanta Agreement, by the creation of two programs. These two programs were: a) Prevention and Monitoring Program; and b) Social Protection Program. The prevention and monitoring program would be a program whereby Sialkot's soccer ball manufacturers would voluntarily join the program and would work under its directions to phase out child labour from their soccer ball production as well as prevent children from working in their production processes in the future. The social protection program would strive to ensure that the children stopped from working do not end up in more hazardous or exploitative employment. This was to be done by providing the affected children with educational and other opportunities as well as by changing community attitudes towards child labour so

that they do not make their children enter the labour market. Details of the two programs, as stipulated in the Atlanta Agreement's text, are provided in the following table:

**TABLE 2: SIALKOT CHILD LABOUR PROJECT**

| Programs | Elements/Initiatives | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **I. Prevention and Monitoring** | A. Registration of Contractors, Stitchers, and Stitching Facilities | Participating manufacturers shall publicly commit to a series of actions designed to prevent the practice of stitching by children under 14 years within 18 months by requiring the formal registration of i) all contractors responsible for overseeing stitching on behalf of the manufacturers, ii) all stitching locations such that they are clearly identifiable and open to unannounced inspection and iii) all stitchers, including documentation verifying that they are over 14 years. |
| | B. Establishment of Internal Monitoring Systems | Each participating manufacturer will establish an internal monitoring department to verify that it is in compliance with the (prevention and monitoring) program and will designate a senior manager with responsibility for this function. The monitoring department will be required to provide training to employees to enable them to monitor the ages of stitchers and to prepare periodic reports on its monitoring efforts. |
| | C. Agreement to Independent Monitoring | Each participating manufacturer will agree to have its compliance with the program verified by an independent third body (referred to as the 'Independent Monitoring Body') who shall provide periodic reports to the project's coordinating committee (consisting of the Atlanta Partners and those organizations they wish to induct into the committee) and to WFSGI (for dissemination to its customers/ consumers). The concerned reports will be made public. Participating manufacturers will work closely with ILO and other project organizations so as to integrate their efforts to remove children from the conditions of child labour with the Social Protection Program's efforts to provide such children with educational and other opportunities. |

## TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

| Programs | Elements/Initiatives | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **II. Social Protection** | A. Provision of Educational and other opportunities to be achieved through three initiatives: Rehabilitation, Education, and In-Kind Assistance | i. Rehabilitation: A rehabilitation initiative shall target children under 14 removed from the soccer ball industry to support their placement into appropriate education programs<br><br>ii. Education: An educational initiative will seek to discourage children at risk of becoming engaged in child labour from abandoning the educational system by upgrading the relevance and value of educational opportunities currently available to them.<br><br>iii. In-Kind Assistance: An assistance initiative will also seek to provide appropriate in-kind forms of support to facilitate the participation of children in educational programs. |
| | B. Changing Community Attitudes toward Child Labour in the Soccer ball industry to be achieved through | i. Awareness Raising: An awareness raising initiative will target communities in Sialkot which serve as important sources of child workers and educate local community leaders (including members of the business community), religious leaders, parents and children of the importance of education for all children and the serious health and developmental consequences of sending children to work instead of school.<br><br>ii. Income Generation: An income generation initiative will offer families the opportunity to replace the income lost when children have been removed from the soccer ball industry by means that do not require child labour. Such opportunities will include, but not be limited to, replacing stitchers under age 14 with qualified members of their families who are older than 14 years. |

**Source:** The Atlanta Agreement

The three signatory partners (i.e., ILO, SCCI, and UNICEF) were jointly held responsible for the project consisting of the two programs described in the above table. Apart from overall responsibility, the Atlanta Agreement also

explicated the specific individual responsibilities of the partners. These specific responsibilities are shown in the table below:

## TABLE 3: SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SIGNATORY PARTNERS

| Partner | Specific Responsibilities | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **ILO** | A. Determination of Programs and Implementing Agents | In consultation with the Project Coordination Committee (PCC), ILO will be responsible for proposing for approval to the said committee a plan that articulates the programmatic priorities for the Social Protection Program and the NGOs who will implement the said program within a time frame consistent with the Prevention and Monitoring Program. The plan is to be provided within two months of the Atlanta Agreement. |
| | B. Enlisting the Participation of the Government of Pakistan | ILO would be required to make every effort to secure additional resources from the Government of Pakistan to improve educational opportunities for all children in Sialkot and to assist in the implementation of the Social Protection Program. |
| | C. Financial and Technical Support | ILO will make available over the next 24 months no less than US$500,000 in IPEC programmatic funds contributed by the US Government to support the Social Protection program element of the project and to provide technical advice and support for the establishment and implementation of the Prevention and Monitoring Program. Furthermore, ILO will also provide appropriate technical resources, staff assistance and expertise to support the Project and to facilitate the operations of the Coordination Committee. |
| **SCCI** | A. International Support for the Project | SCCI will work with WFSGI and SICA to determine how their members can demonstrate their support for the project and will encourage Pakistani manufacturers of soccer balls to participate. |

## TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

| Partner | Specific Responsibilities | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **SCCI** | B. Development of Terms of Reference | SCCI will work with the members of the PCC to propose a definitive version of the Terms of Reference for the Prevention and Monitoring Program. |
| | C. Selection of the Independent Monitoring Body | SCCI will work with the members of the PCC to identify an internationally credible Independent Monitoring Body to be approved by the Coordination Committee. |
| | D. Financial and Technical Support | SCCI has agreed that all the costs associated with the development and implementation of the Prevention and Monitoring Program, including the costs associated with constructing the new facilities, establishing internal monitoring departments and complying with the terms of reference of the said program, will be borne by the participating companies. SCCI will contribute funds to finance verification of their compliance by the Independent Monitoring Body. This amount is expected to total not less than US$250,000 over the next 24 months.<br>In addition, SCCI will contribute on behalf of SICA US$100,000 towards the Social Protection Program. |
| **UNICEF** | A. Awareness Campaign on Child Labour | In consultation with the PCC, UNICEF will develop an awareness campaign to educate parents, employers, community members and children in Sialkot on ways to protect against the exploitative and hazardous conditions associated with child labour. At the national and provincial levels, UNICEF will advocate with policy makers and parliamentarians to revise laws, improve enforcement and monitor violation of rights of children at risk from child labour |

## TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

| Partner | Specific Responsibilities | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **UNICEF** | B. Determination of Programs and Implementing Agents | In consultation with the PCC, UNICEF shall present a plan in collaboration with ILO for approval by the coordinating committee which will articulate the programmatic priorities for the Social Protection Program and the NGOs who will implement the concerned program. |

**Source:** The Atlanta Agreement

The Text Scores

At the press conference and afterwards, the soccer ball industry crowed, and the critics (e.g., the International Foul Ball Campaign) jeered. The media largely sounded industry's boastful note with a few comments from critics thrown in, perhaps to appear not too triumphalistic, which could throw into suspicion its objectivity. If one wished to be more charitable, the media, having forced industry to make amends, were feeling magnanimous. In this mood of magnanimity the media were willing to let bygones be bygones, reciprocating industry who, after the hearings, never questioned the highly inaccurate and misleading reporting on the child labour situation in Sialkot. Industry's concession on the past had little to do with magnanimity but more with resignation that nothing could penetrate the hyper-reality that was being created and that their testimony lacked credibility, especially their Pakistani members who, basing themselves on the country's reputation in corruption, had already answered Hamlet's question of raising arms against a sea of troubles in the negative. As a senior executive of SCCI said in an interview, 'We [Pakistanis] have no credibility in the world. Who would believe us.' (Pilot Study, 2001: 35).

With an indulgent media, the industry made no apologies for the past. In fact, it is amusing to note, that the allusions to child labour made by the global soccer ball industry at the time of the Atlanta Agreement never once acknowledged its role in the problem. As far as the industry was concerned, at

least in its popular rhetoric, child labour resulted from vague and unfathomable reasons. Like a mystery virus, it had afflicted the whole soccer ball industry and now the industry was going to expunge the alien host. Issues of its own culpability in perpetuating child labour (e.g., not paying a living wage to stitchers and being more concerned with the rich gloss on soccer balls than the poverty ridden faces that made them)[79] were conveniently ignored as it mounted the pulpit and thundered its moral probity with an immodest passion that would make a born-again evangelist blush, as illustrated by the following remarks made by WFSGI President, Stephen Rubin, at the Atlanta Agreement's press conference:

> The soccer community has asked for reassurance that child labor has no place in producing the soccer balls used in neighborhood sandlots or national stadiums. This new partnership is an unprecedented response to that concern. For the first time ever -- in any industry, in any part of the world -- local manufacturers, global brands and internationally respected children's organizations have agreed to work together to address child labor in a responsible manner. (cited in PR Newswire, 1997a).

One would have expected to hear remarks after Rubin from the expectedly grateful child stitchers and their families for rescuing them from the scourge of child labour. They, as was to be expected, were nowhere to be seen, even though, puzzlingly, the agreement was mainly about them. It did not matter. The void of the child stitchers at Atlanta was apparently filled by their non-elected unrepresentative representatives who, with the exception of SCF, provided a grovelling chorus to industry's diva:

> The ILO via its International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) believe that the soccer industry project could well serve as a model for other industries and regions . . . The soccer industry contains some of the most competitive sporting goods companies in the global marketplace. We are impressed that these enterprises have agreed to put aside their

[79] For stitchers earning non-living wages, see, for example, HRCP, 1995; Saeed, 1998; and SCF, 1997.

> competitive differences and unite around a program to eliminate child labor. And we are pleased that IPEC will be able to contribute its experience and resources in support of the monitoring and social protection programs. (Kari Tapiola, Deputy Director-General of ILO, cited in ibid).
>
> UNICEF applauds the move to eliminate child labor from the production of soccer balls in Pakistan and we encourage the expansion of this initiative to other industries around the world. We are delighted to contribute as partners to this major step forward for the rights of children. (Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, cited in ibid).

Only SCF provided a guarded note of optimism to this otherwise ebullient chorus:

> Save the Children (UK) has been working with Pakistani soccer ball manufacturers for several months to ensure that their commitment to end child labor in their industry is complemented by other efforts to ensure that children removed from work do not end up in more damaging physical or economic circumstances. Today's announcement formalizes this relationship and offers the promise of substantial additional resources from the ILO and UNICEF to assist at-risk children and their families. (David Husselbee, Director of the Sialkot office, SCF, cited in ibid).

The Foul Ball Campaign activists seemed to have been caught off-side by the Atlanta Agreement. They had based their campaigning on eliminating child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. With the industry announcing its project to deal with just that objective, with three international organizations of immense international repute vouchsafing its sincerity to that commitment, what was now left to campaign? The industry had effectively snatched the child labour free cause from the Foul Ball Campaign by taking it up as its own cause, leaving the Foul Ball Campaign as now rebels without a cause.

Faced with a fait accompli, the Foul Ball Campaign began to show signs of fracturing. Its most powerful sponsor (e.g., US Department of Labor) had already declared mission accomplished (i.e., to get the soccer ball industry to

remove child labour). Moreover, it was now one of the major donor agencies of the project and would not want to bring suspicion to it as that would only, given its role in the project, reflect poorly on it. Others, like ILRF, continued their opposition to industry by, for example, raising doubts about the project's success chances. As Dan McCurry of ILRF pointed out, monitoring to ensure stitching would be difficult as most of the stitching is done in homes (Haq, 1997). ILRF also began to stress that the project should go beyond child labour (ibid). With industry deciding to tackle child labour by itself, and ILRF consequently orphaned of a cause, ILRF sought to now bring other considerations on the child labour debate so that it perhaps could take them up as causes to ensure a continuing role for itself in this child labour drama. In that same interview where Dan McCurry had raised doubts about the project's success because of monitoring challenges, his colleague, Pharis Harvey, felt that the project's agenda was too narrow and needed to go beyond just child labour considerations. In his words:

> Many of these children are the third generation of their families (who are) stitching balls. Until their parents are paid a living wage, guaranteed freedom of association and other globally recognized workers' rights, these families will remain trapped in poverty. (cited in ibid).

McCurry concurred with Harvey for if the situation of the parents is not improved, the children would simply return to labour. As McCurry put it, 'Adults simply cannot live off of 60 cents a ball. Either the wages in the industry rise, or the temptation to hire children anew to meet production demands will be immense.' (ibid).

The position of the ILRF, on the morning after the Atlanta Agreement, seemed to be that industry's commitment to removing child labour was not enough. The industry needed to go beyond this issue, incorporating labour rights and wage advocacy, if it were to provide a sustainable solution to child labour. Otherwise, as McCurry argued in the quote above, the poverty of parents would force children back into work. That the Foul Ball Campaign itself had not ventured into this territory of labour rights and living wages and, in fact, had

hitherto restricted the solution to the very narrow terms (i.e., focusing just on the elimination of child labour from soccer ball production) which it was now criticising, not only hinted at hypocrisy but also of opportunism. For example, at the US Department of Labor hearings in June 1996, McCurry had gone on record to state that children were earning 60 cents a ball which he argued was cheaper than the compensation being paid to adults. He had also pointed out that stitching was done in sheds not homes. Now attacking the Atlanta Agreement on grounds of monitoring challenges and being an unsustainable solution, McCurry included information to shore up these two points of attack that contradicted his previous position. He was now saying that stitching was done at homes (so monitoring was difficult) and that adults earned 60 cents a ball (and thus remained poor always tempted to send children to work). Stitching done at home contradicted his earlier position that it was done in stitching centres. Similarly, adults earning 60 cents a ball as he now claimed contradicted his earlier testimony where this was the rate that children earned per ball and was lower than the adult rate.

A plausible explanation for these sudden shifts that led to such painful contradictions can be explained through the motives of opportunism.[80] Excluded from the project, seeing its chief sponsor deserting its ranks, and having its cause appropriated by industry, ILRF may have raised these new criticisms to continue playing a role in the debate as opposed to the grim situation it faced of being effectively thrown on the sidelines by industry with diminishing expectations of playing a central role in the resolution of this problem. The fact that this opportunistic behaviour painfully contradicted its earlier position, throwing into question the veracity of its earlier claims and the sincerity of its present actions, did not seem to have bothered ILRF. This contradiction was never made explicit for to notice the contradiction one would need to match the present with the past. Knowledge of the past would, thus, be critical in making such an explication

[80] The rival hypothesis that the ILRF shifted its position based on gaining a wider understanding, though logically possible, does not apparently seem to be supported by corroboratory evidence. I could not find any comments from the ILRF that suggested or alluded to them having gained a wider understanding over time or having come into possession of new information that had convinced them to shift their position and focus on a wider set of issues than just removing child labour.

which is to say that a long historical memory would be indispensable. In an age that Hobsbawm laments as being one most characteristically defined by a withering historical memory whose extent, exaggerating only slightly, is perhaps the last CNN headline, ILRF could, thus, place faith in the shortness of memory that would prevent such contradictions from being identified.[81]

The jabs of ILRF made little impact in the post-Atlanta media glow in which the industry was now basking. The latter was enjoying a reprieve ushered in immediately by the Atlanta Agreement, from the vicious media storm that had been buffeting them for almost two years. The text had indeed scored for industry. Industry was, however, not to rest contentedly on these newly-won laurels. In the ensuing lull, it hoped to proceed quickly to shape the present situation on the ground in Sialkot in way that reflected the child-labour free map drawn up by the agreement. Like the maps of IMF's neoclassical economists drawn up as prescriptions for developing countries, here too the main effort was not to be on making the map fit reality but rather on reordering reality to fit the map. The judgement had been rendered: no more child labour. Sialkot was to undergo top-down social engineering. In the construction of the Atlanta Agreement child stitchers and their families had been ironically absent from the agreement's discussions even though it was primarily about them. The other irony of this social engineering effort was that it was going to be administered not by Soviet state planners but by their ideological opposites. That is, full-blooded capitalists with child and labour rights international governmental organizations (i.e., UNICEF and ILO respectively) and a grass-roots international NGO (i.e., SCF) acting as their willing associates.

*Implementing Project's 'Prevention and Monitoring' Program: No Child's Play*

Towards Teamwork: Learning to Pass the Monitoring Ball

As can be seen from table 2, the project description in the Atlanta Agreement was couched in broad terms. The agreement, after all, was basically a

[81] For examples of the absence of historical memory, see Hobsbawm, 1994.

statement of intent, outlining, in general language, the project's goals and the mechanisms (i.e., the two project programs) to achieve them. The goals and mechanisms were to be spelled out later. This task was begun immediately after the agreement's announcement. Negotiations commenced between the partners on operationalizing the agreement to translate the abstract and general goals and mechanisms of the agreement (e.g., the need for an independent monitor) into tangible and specific objectives and activities (e.g., who precisely was going to be the independent monitor) whose realization would transform the agreement from a reality in text to a living reality on the ground.

To assist the task of making the Atlanta Agreement into a reality, the international organizations (i.e., ILO, SCF, and UNICEF) decided to establish field offices in Sialkot. By August 1997, the offices of these organizations had been established. Staff strengths of these organizations varied with ILO's staff reaching over 20 personnel in Sialkot while UNICEF's was about eight. SCF's size was between these two organizations and numbered between 12-15 individuals. Together with SCCI, these organizations began deliberations in Sialkot on how to go about implementing the prevention and monitoring, and social protection programs of the Sialkot soccer ball child labour project.

In operationalizing the prevention and monitoring program of the project, the partners were greatly assisted by a monitoring 'expert' flown into Pakistan by ILO-IPEC, Mr. Rijk van Haarlem (ILO, 1997). Van Haarlem had been involved with the ILO-IPEC project in Bangladesh and was to advise the partners on the nuts and bolts of implementing a child labour elimination project in an industry. Mr. Van Haarlem was to arrive in the middle of May 1997. In the meanwhile, the participating Sialkot manufacturers, with the keenest interests in getting this project to a start, found themselves adrift in a sea of questions that needed answering. How many children's jobs were there that needed 'elimination'? How quickly were they to be eliminated? How were they to make the home-based

stitching transparent so it could be monitored by an independent organization? Who was to be to that monitoring organization?

Being businessmen and, thus, possessed with the creed of pragmatism, Sialkot manufacturers began correspondence with the other partners (based in Islamabad) to arrive at tentative solutions to the above questions. By the time of the PCC's first meeting on March 27, 1997, at ILO head quarters in Islamabad, the partners had arrived at a working consensus on several though not all of the 'how-to' questions dealing with project implementation. The number of working children that was to be the 'target group', was identified to be around 7000. This number was based on the latest ILO survey on children labouring in the soccer ball industry that was published in December 1996. The 7000 number was just a working figure.The partners, including ILO itself, had little faith in the soundness of that number, an admission that they were willing to confess in private sessions though not in public.[82]

Ascertaining the number of children from the Sialkot soccer ball industry's perspective would turn out to be a largely irrelevant activity. This was going to be the headache of the organizations involved in the social protection side of the project that had to deal with the affected children. The industry's concern for which they had primary responsibility was to demonstrate to the international community that their work places were free of child labour, a task easier to accomplish than going house to house in over 1600 villages (SCF, 1997: 13; UNICEF, 2000: 1) to determine the number of stitching children. Moreover, industry felt justified in focusing their energies on worrying exclusively about removing children. After all, this was the primus inter pares goal of the Atlanta Agreement and its raison d'etre.

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[82] A leading member of the Sialkot Team (also known as the Steering Committee of the SCCI) that negotiated the Atlanta Agreement called the ILO study 'not scientific' (Pilot Study, 2000: 10) while a former ILO project manager, serving in ILO in Sialkot at that time, had the following to say about the study: 'The survey looked at the soccer ball and the surgical instruments industry. We are a very stupid people, just trying to prove our work. Not sincere in our work. The survey found that there are 7000 children employed full time in the soccer ball industry. This is perhaps not true. It found 7700 in surgical industry. Survey method faulty. In Sialkot there are about 1600 villages but the survey only sampled 18 villages which were chosen purely on the basis of convenience. You can hardly get representative figures from such a sample for the entire industry situation.' (Pilot Study, 2000: 6).

On March 27, 1997, at the first PCC meeting in Islamabad, a proposal was tabled and accepted regarding organizing stitching, the activity where child labour was present, that would not only eliminate child labour but also make the activity transparent and monitorable to an outside monitor unlike the situation present at that time where that activity was being performed at the privacy of homes not open to surveillance by outsiders (PCC minutes of meeting #1; March 27, 1997). The stitching activity was to be made transparent and, hence, monitorable, by shifting it to free standing identifiable stitching centres that the independent monitor could visit to ensure no children were involved in stitching.[83] This shifting of stitching production was to be done not immediately but as gradually as feasible within the 18 months time frame set by the agreement.[84] In that

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[83] Recall that Nike's supplier, Saga Sports, had set up the first purpose-built stitching centre that could be monitored to assess whether child labour was involved in its stitching activity. Saga Sports' owner (i.e., Khurshid Soofi) was also the head of the Sialkot negotiating team and had been lobbying, according to an industry insider present at the negotiations, that his model be adopted by the industry for organizing child labour free stitching. Thus, it seems quite likely that the stitching centre proposal largely came from Saga Sports that became acceptable to the other members of the negotiating team largely because they had the wherewithal to build such centres and they were being pressed with the urgency of time where action was more critical than discussion at exploring all possible avenues to this transparency issue. To these large manufacturers, the effects of such a model on small manufacturers who perhaps could not build such centres and the families who would see the disappearance of a house-hold based income generating activity, were of little concern. According to the same insider, these caveats were raised but were overlooked in the rush to expediency. Also, it cannot be ruled out that the model of stitching centres may have been initially proposed by large manufacturers to muscle in on the small manufacturers' market share who, being unable to build such centres, would see export orders going to their larger rivals who could give surety to the international customers that their workplaces were being monitored for child labour. Nevertheless, even on this issue of stitching centres there was not total unanimity among the Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers. Some manufacturers feared that they would be centralizing the labour force again after they had dispersed it by shifting stitching to homes and, thus, would be helping labour to reunionize and create what they perceived to be problems for them. On this point, an NGO manager whose NGO was active on the Sialkot child labour project right from the post-Atlanta agreement period remembered regarding the move to stitching centres that, 'Factory owners complained to us that it took so long for us [factory owners] to get them [labour] out and now you want them to come back in.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 100-101).

[84] The announcement of the Atlanta Agreement did not constitute the starting date of the project as was later retroactively construed by the partners in the 3rd PCC meeting held in SCCI (Sialkot) on October 17, 1997. According to the minutes of that meeting, the partners, after having discussed at length the commencement date of the project, arrived at the following conclusion. In their interpretation, the agreement had only stipulated the time period (i.e., 18 months) within which child-free status was to be realized. It did not categorically state when the project was to begin. The birth of the project was not to be confused with its starting date which was now linked to be the date that monitoring of the industry would formally begin by an independent monitor. Moreover, the 18 month time period was understood by the partners to be referring exclusively to the project's monitoring component (i.e., the time period by which monitoring, as per the

meeting, a schedule was agreed upon for phasing out home-based stitching and moving it to conspicuously monitorable stitching centres. This was to be done in three phases over an 18 month period as illustrated in the table below:[85]

**TABLE 4: PROJECT SCHEDULE**

| Phase | Duration | % Stitching Activity to be Moved to the Stitching Centre(s) |
|---|---|---|
| I | 6 months | 25 |
| II | 6 months | 25 |
| III | 6 months | 50 |

**Source:** Dogar, N. (2000). *Workplace Monitoring as a Tool for Combating Child Labour: Experience in Pakistan.* Paper presented at the ILO/Japan Asian Regional Meeting on Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Save the Children. (1997). *Stitching footballs: Voices of Children* (Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children Fund.

One question not addressed at the meeting that was, nevertheless, a highly significant one. It was which organization was to be the independent monitor. According to the ILO, the choice was apparently made on May 29, 1997. ILO's account of that choice is as follows:

> In a Meeting of the ILO-IPEC with SCCI Steering Committee on Child Labour, WFSGI, and SGMA, Mr. Khurshid Soofi, Chairman, SCCI Steering Committee on Child Labour, welcomed the mission members and assured the meeting of the commitment of SCCI. Mr. Gorgesman of WFSGI said the pieces of the puzzle in this partnership had now come together and that the partnership process was a matter of pride for all those involved in it.

conditions of the Atlanta Agreement, was to end). Thus, on October 17, 1997, the partners retroactively adjusted the time of the project to have begun not with the announcement at Atlanta (i.e., February 14, 1997) but when formal ILO monitoring officially commenced which was on October 1, 1997. Effectively, through such reinterpreting , the participating manufacturers had bought themselves an extra seven months as they were now being clocked to have removed children within 18 months starting from October 1997 and not from the original starting time marker of February 1997.

[85] The date at which Phase I was to start for a participating manufacturer, based on the 3rd PCC meeting, (see footnote immediately above), was to be then either the later of the following two dates: date at which the manufacturer signed on to the project or October 1, 1997 (date at which formal monitoring began).

> Giving his impressions of the mission to the Bangladesh BGMA project, Mr. Zaka ud-Din,[86] SCCI representative on the Sialkot Project Coordinating Committee, said visit had strengthened the industry's confidence in the partnership. Mr. Tom Cove of SGMA said that the industry would like the ILO to take an active role in designing and implementing the Monitoring Programme in Pakistan. The ILO gave its assurance of its commitment to the programme. (ILO, 1997)

As ILO would like to have others believe, the choice was made in the meeting in question where the other partners and parties requested ILO to take the monitorship which it gracefully accepted. The scene depicted by ILO seems to suggest imagery less of a meeting than a gentle medieval pageant held at an English court with flutes and dancing where the wine of decision, flowing in the court, was made from grapes that were pressed congenially, peacefully, and consensually. Such imagery should make us feel slightly suspicious. In the grim reality of the child labour situation with the organizations involved being interested parties, many of them avowedly having non-altruistic profit-seeking motives, it is difficult to suspend disbelief that ILO's account does justice to reality. If nothing else, where is the background that led to this decision unless we are to hold that such a key decision did not have a history of negotiations in the backrooms but was magically arrived at on the day of the meeting as would be implied by the ILO account.

Fortunately for us, there seems to be other accounts that throw into question ILO's sanitization of history. Husselbee (2001), who was party to the decision making process involving the choice of the monitor being as he was the SCF representative on the PCC, characterized such early negotiations as being 'confrontational', though, in the language of diplomacy, he skirts providing details that might give us a better understanding of the intensity of the

[86] Also known as Khawaja Zakauddin or Khawaja Zaka for short. Khawaja Zaka had been a former SCCI President and is one of the two longest soccer ball suppliers to Adidas. He was heavily involved on behalf of SCCI with the child labour crisis and continues to be one of the top decision makers for that body on soccer ball child labour issues. He presently chair's SCCI's child labour committee and is also the chairman of IMAC (the organization currently monitoring Sialkot's soccer ball industry for child labour).

confrontations waging in the partnership. His account also is, thus, a sanitized one as we will see when we look at other sources. However, despite the euphemization, the account is sufficiently revealing to cast two key features of ILO's account into suspicion (e.g., the absence of others besides ILO for the monitorship and the non-conflictual nature of the partnership). Husselbee describes the partnership as being rife with suspicions and misunderstandings between SCCI and ILO up to May 27, 1997 two days before the monitor decision was reached. To quote Husselbee about the teeming suspicions about the partnership's teaming:

> To begin with, SCF played the role of mediator in Sialkot. The manufacturers were troubled by the ILO's institutional links with trade unions, this concern being exacerbated by the international-level negotiations which had limited communication and the development of mutual trust within Pakistan until the UN mission arrived. SCF facilitated communication at the beginning of the mission, based on its understanding of the views of all parties. The private-sector actors relied on this until personal contacts among the other organisations began to build the trust upon which the partnership is now based. SCF could then step back from the bridge-building role, in order to allow direct and strong relationships to grow across the partnership.
>
> At various points in the confrontational stages of the discussions, SCF's role in explaining the perspectives of the corporate sector and the ILO to each other was misinterpreted by both SCCI and ILO as a lack of impartiality on SCF's part. Such issues were not resolved until the UN mission had left Sialkot, and the ILO invited SCCI and its international customers to visit Bangladesh to see the work of the ILO in monitoring the garment industry. Constructive discussion became the glue in the partnership, and confrontation was left behind. (2001: 132-133).[87]

[87] Husselbee (2001), as can be seen, does not give the date when the SCCI's Bangaldesh trip took place that led it to adopting a more constructive stance towards ILO. The ILO (1997) 'Update' only mentions that the visit was made in May 1997. It is by going through that part of the correspondence between the partners that was made available to this research that we can arrive at

Concerning ILO being the natural choice for the monitor's role, Husselbee says the following:

> The international sports industry had favoured hiring a private accountancy or investigation firm for this role, but doubts about the impartiality of such organizations were raised by the pressure groups. The ILO was seen as impartial and gained the support of the sports industry because of its experience in child labour monitoring in the Bangladesh garment industry . . .
>
> Before the signing of the Atlanta Agreement, SCF had been invited to serve as an independent monitor, but had declined. (2001: 134-135).

Husselbee's (2001) account then raises serious reservations about ILO's version of the monitor choice, particularly its implications of there being no other contender for the role and the choice arising harmoniously without going through several options and iterations.

What is interesting about Husselbee's (2001) version is that though he mentions the confrontational atmosphere on the overall negotiations taking place at that time, he does not explicitly address whether this charged context marred in any way the negotiations on finding a suitable monitor. It is only when we look at the internal correspondence taking place between the partners that we can fathom that the monitor negotiations were riddled with conflict, a vital piece of this negotiating puzzle that is absent in Husselbee's rendition leading us to suspect, as

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the date in question. Sifting through piles of memos, letters, and minutes, we find a letter written by Robert Dudley (Director of ILO operations in Pakistan) to his UNICEF counterpart (S.H. Umemoto) on May 26, 1997 that contains the date of the Bangladesh trip (Letter from Robert Dudley, Director ILO (Area Office for Pakistan and Afghanistan), to Mr. S.H. Umemoto, Representative UNICEF (Islamabad), *Project to Eliminate Child Labour in Soccer Ball Industry, Sialkot, Pakistan: Special (Third) Meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee*, May 26, 1997; Ref. No. IPEC-170 (Sialkot)). According to the said letter, an SCCI delegation together with members from WFSGI and SGMA and Ms. Amanda Tucker (ILO-Geneva) was visiting Bangladesh from 25 – 27 May, 1997 to see the monitoring operations of ILO-IPEC's project in the garment industry. Thus, the pivotal trip that, according to Husselbee, shifted SCCI's position in favour of ILO took place on May 25-27, 1997. The delegation might have arrived at the latter date, quickly briefed the rest of its Sialkot negotiating team members on the soundness of choosing ILO during the next 48 hours for in the PCC meeting on May 29, 1997, SCCI gave its blessings to ILO.

argued earlier but now substantiated, that his account is euphemistic though less so than the one presented by ILO.

The minutes of the SCCI's Steering Committee meeting (i.e., the SCCI team negotiating the Atlanta Agreement and its implementation) held on April 3, 1997, show SCCI's aversion to ILO and its desire to marginalize it. To quote:

> The Central Management Role would be given to the Project Coordinating Committee and not the ILO.
>
> The BGMEA example is a good learning opportunity but the Monitoring System for Sialkot would be designed based on the needs and realities of Sialkot and Soccer ball Industry.
>
> The services of the ILO consultant on inspections, are welcome resource to the Chamber, however, the PCC would be the body responsible for managing the Monitoring Programme.
>
> The Independent Monitor would be hired, as acceptable to the PCC members, its work would be independent of the PCC however it would be obliged to report the PCC on a regular basis.
>
> SCCI will seek advice from WFSGI on the selection of the External Monitor. (Steering Committee of the SCCI minutes of meeting; April 3, 1997).

The SCCI team was formulating its response to ILO's proposal of the monitoring system known as Option C.[88] Option C was basically that ILO would allow the manufacturers to hire an international accounting firm to take care of their internal monitoring systems whereby they would audit themselves to ensure

[88] This research could not unearth what the other options were. Their presence indicates that the partners had to negotiate between several choices that are glossed over in the numerous subsequent partners' own accounts of the project. Such public accounts tend to give the latter's history largely as a monolithic and deterministic progression of events that naturally arose without there being any hint that things could have gone otherwise or that there were alternative possibilities which were rejected. Conflicts and agency that shaped the eventual face of the project are buried deep in these public accounts that refashion the project's history, in a Parsonian functionalist framework, as just a series of outcomes (e.g., ILO chosen as the monitor) occurring as natural phenomena and existing because they are serving to help the project function in the most optimal way.

no children were working for them. The external monitoring of these firms was, however, to be done by ILO itself, whereas, based on the minutes quoted above and Husselbee's account, the industry wanted the external monitoring to be also done by a private firm with the ILO basically having a nominal role of providing advice and guidance to the independent monitor.

The above decisions reached by SCCI on monitoring were communicated to ILO office in Islamabad on April 4, 1997. Three days later, came a stinging reply from ILO, couched as bluntly as is possible within the constraints of international bureaucratic language. Calling as 'reactions' the said proposals on monitoring by the Steering Committee in a letter addressed to the latter, Kevin McGrath (ILO Mission Head-Pakistan) went on to state in that missive:

> On behalf of the ILO mission, permit me to offer my comments on your letter and its annex relating to the deliberations of the Steering Committee. You will recall that the Mission met with the Chamber in Sialkot on 21 and 22 March. In those meetings we pointed out that for the ILO to meet its requirement to provide effective technical advice and support for the establishment and implementation of the Prevention and Monitoring Programme (Section 111.B.3 of the Partners' Agreement) it would be obliged to exercise direct supervision of the monitoring programme, reporting, it would be understood, to the Coordinating Committee which would have overall responsibility for implementing the elements of the Project.
>
> On 27 March, the Coordinating Committee consisting of ILO, UNICEF, SCF-UK and SCCI represented by Mr. Khawaja Zaka-ud-din formally met for the first time to review the Partners' Operational Framework, and, in compliance with Section 111.A.4 of the Agreement to review and approve the Terms of Reference for the Prevention and Monitoring Programme. The Terms of Reference, as spelled out in Option C, were approved by the Coordinating Committee . . . Paragraph 3 of the Framework, you will note, states that the ILO will supervise the Monitoring Programme.

> It is therefore with some surprise that I now learn that the SCCI Steering Committee, following our agreement reached in Sialkot wishes to void the decision taken by the Project Coordinating Committee. I am sure you will understand that ILO would not be able to agree to the SCCI Steering Committee's latest proposals which, in effect, supercede the Project Coordinating Committee's approval of the Terms of Reference as spelled out in Section 111.A.4 of the Agreement. This is certainly a great pity for all of us, the Chamber, ILO, UNICEF and SCF-UK who have worked so hard to forge a partnership to address the issue of child labour in the soccer ball industry in Pakistan. (Letter from Kevin McGrath, ILO Mission Leader, to Khurshid A. Soofi, Convenor Sialkot Steering Committee on Child Labour, Sialkot, [No Subject given], April 7, 1997).

ILO, after so many moribund years, was laying claim to its new turf acquisitions (i.e., role of monitoring child labour elimination projects involving industry) and would brook no suggestions that the monitoring contract be given to another party. The SCCI, fearing intrusion by a labour-based organization into its operations, too stuck to its position. It had no way of knowing whether ILO would spread its tentacles to other labour rights issues such as organizing workers into independent unions. Also, it had not worked with ILO whereas the private accounting firm that the Steering Committee had in mind, most likely was going to be one with which at least one of its members had had a prior business relationship. Since Saga Sports was chairing the Steering Committee, quite likely the accounting firm it had in mind for the monitoring contract was the one Nike had chosen to audit its suppliers' workplaces including that of Saga Sports. Ernst and Young was the accounting firm that socially audited Nike contractor workplaces and probably this was the accounting firm the Steering Committee had in mind when it tried to modify option C of the ILO (Locke, 2002). After all, they would have been favourably disposed to Ernst and Young as one of their members or certainly its patron (i.e, Nike) had interacted with that firm and could vouchsafe for the firm's trustworthiness while the ILO was an unknown entity

sinisterly boding the promise of potential labour troubles. However, when the SCCI delegation returning from Bangladesh informed the Steering Committee that there were no dangers of ILO doing any kind of labour rousing work as well as not airing industry's questionable practices in public but rather given to using 'persuasion' (PCC minutes of meeting #3; May 29, 1997), in the words of a returning delegate, to interact with industry, the Sialkot manufacturers felt somewhat reassured and acceded to ILO the project's monitorship.

The foregoing tends to suggest an interpretation that diverges from Husselbee's (2001) account of the monitoring episode. It now seems, when private correspondence is taken into account, that the ILO being given the monitoring contract in favour of a private auditing firm stemmed from these considerations of ILO jealously guarding its newly acquired turf and industry beginning to trust that the ILO would not embarrass them, rather than from fears, as claimed by Husselbee, that a private firm would be viewed as not being impartial. Husselbee was right, however, that the mistrust and suspicions were significantly cleared at that point and the ILO and industry's collaborations were put on a more constructive footing, or to put it in soccer language, SCCI had learned not to hog but to pass the monitoring ball over to ILO.[89]

Administrative Hurdles & Training Sessions

While the negotiations were taking place on identifying the monitor, other operationalization issues were also being discussed and resolved. The SCCI, having to defray the entire US$250,000 monitoring program costs, was devising a financing strategy. The strategy would ask participating manufacturers to pay a

[89] The mistrust and suspicions reigning between the relationship of ILO and SCCI found in the correspondence between SCCI's Steering Committee and the ILO can also be observed in the minutes of the meeting of May 29, 1997 where ILO was made the monitor for the project. The minutes are usually a highly sanitized representation of the discussions in meetings but if one is sufficiently keyed into the context, thanks to interviews and written documents, one can begin to intelligently read between the lines. Thus, given the discussion on the project's monitorship and its award to ILO, the following can be read to further substantiate the points made in that discussion that there was plenty of distrust on industry's part towards ILO stemming from its fears of the latter's institutional links to organized labour: 'Mr. Zaka-ud-Din, SCCI . . . said the mission to Bangladesh to see the BGMEA project had strengthened the industry's confidence in ILO's partnership and *any apprehensions* [my emphasis] they had have been cleared . . . Mr. Tom Cove (SGMA), said they have seen that the ILO *understands the concerns of the private sector* [my emphasis] and *a lot of confusion* [my emphasis] has been cleared.'

one time fee of Rs.100,000 (US$2433) and a pro rata fee of 35 paisas[90] (US$0.009) per ball exported (SCF, 2000: 5; Cummins, 2000: 25). At the same time, the SCCI, in consultation with partners had set up a Sialkot Implementation Team (SIT). The SIT's membership would be that of the PCC's membership at the time of the Atlanta Agreement's signing (i.e., ILO, SCCI, SCF, and UNICEF) (SCF, 1998a). The PCC was to worry about 'what is to be implemented' policy decisions leaving the SIT to formulate the 'how to implement' answers to the PCC's directives that, of course, would need the approval of the PCC prior to their execution (Husselbee, 2001). SIT deliberations and actions would often be included in PCC meeting minutes.

The trust beginning to forge between Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers and ILO gave SCCI confidence and added to the momentum of their members shifting production to stitching centres. This shift had started to occur from the time of the Atlanta Agreement. By the middle of May 1997, participating manufactures felt confident that their internal monitoring systems would begin operations by June 1, 1997 (PCC minutes of meeting #2; May 15, 1997). In this task, they had been aided by ILO who had informally given SCCI proforma formats of documents (e.g. attendance sheets) that they would need to administer as part of the activities to be done by their internal monitoring systems (ibid).

Though internal monitoring by Sialkot soccer ball manufacturers of their own facilities began by June 1997, ILO had not yet formally begun its own monitoring activities as it was waiting for its project document (known in bureaucratic language as prodoc) to be approved by its donor, the US Department of Labor (ibid). That approval came in early September 1997 along with funding of over US$700,000 (PCC minutes of meeting #5; September 17, 1997; ILO, 1997). In the meanwhile, ILO had started, as soon as the decision to appoint ILO as the monitor had been made by the PCC, to advertise positions for individual monitors and for the monitoring team's leader (ILO, 1997). By August 1997, it had set up a program office in Sialkot and had selected 15 monitors (4 of whom were women) and a team leader to staff its Sialkot office which officially

[90] 1 Rupee = 100 paisas.

commenced operations in September 1997 with the arrival of the US Department of Labor's funding and approval (ILO, 1997; PCC minutes of meeting #5; September 17, 1997). ILO's Sialkot staff also began monitor training in that month (ibid; ILO 1997). The training was provided by Rijk Van Haarlem, the Bangladesh-based monitoring expert of ILO (ILO, 1997). This training continued till the end of November 1997 even though ILO announced, perhaps out of the pressure to show positive developments on the project, that it had officially commenced its monitoring operations on October 1, 1997 (PCC minutes of meeting #6; October 17, 1997; and #7; November 26, 1997). The first ILO field monitoring visits, however, did not commence until sometime in December 1997 (PCC minutes of meeting #8; January 22, 1998).

Making Field Adjustments: Defining Stitching Centres

Selecting the monitor and readying the monitoring team were not the only implementation challenges confronting the partners immediately after the signing of the Atlanta Agreement. The monitors' role was to visit stitching centres of manufacturers to see whether children were involved in stitching. Thus, for monitoring activity to occur there had to be centres that could be monitored. Despite this intrinsic link between stitching centres and monitoring where the latter could not proceed without the presence of the former, there was little forethought devoted to explicit definition of what would constitute a stitching centre in the sessions taking place to iron out the implementation details of the prevention and monitoring program.

Perhaps the reason for the absence of a discussion on what constitutes a stitching centre is because there was no reason to have the discussion. As far as the ILO was concerned, they would go to and monitor those sites pointed out to them by participating manufacturers where their stitching was taking place. Whether these sites were under a tree, in a workshop shack, or on factory premises, was irrelevant to the ILO team as long as the sites were accessible. As for the manufacturers, they had been impressed by the Saga Sports model. Even if a few of them could not build such centres themselves or did not want to spend

that much money on their construction, the Saga Sports model had convinced them to construct purposely built stand alone stitching centres accessible to monitoring by outside parties. Thus, for most of industry, stitching centres were uncontroversially assumed to be stand alone buildings that ranged in a spectrum from single room workshops, albeit a bit less dreary and more spacious, that some of them or their subcontractors were already using for stitching to elaborate buildings housed in a complex with green spaces and all accommodating upwards of 500 stitchers a la Saga Sports. Thus, for industry, what was there to discuss on a seemingly pedantic issue as stitching centre definitions.

The issue, as the partners would come to learn, would turn out to be not so pedantic. Though most of industry took the view on stitching centres described above, there were a few dissenting voices within its own ranks that sought to problematize this notion. These voices argued that the stitching centres being located outside of homes and in most cases, as envisioned by the industry, in remote locations even outside of villages, would create hardships for handicapped stitchers who could not commute to such distant locations. They were to offer another argument that would, however, turn out to be far more unnerving.

Dissenting voices within the industry pointed out that the present course of action was being built on an erroneous understanding of the reality on the ground. They asserted that the stitching centres being envisioned, discussed, and created by industry were all-male centres revealing industry's working premise that the stitching force largely comprised males.[91] The truth, they argued, was radically different. A significant percentage of stitchers were women who stitched balls in the privacy of their homes and they would not be able to go to all-male stitching

[91] This working premise is understandable given that the manufacturers contact with the workforce was largely restricted to their factory employees who were predominately men. The manufacturers, having subcontracted out stitching, no longer dealt with stitchers. Stitchers were the domain of their subcontractors whereas for the manufacturers all they were interested in is that the subcontractors deliver the goods at the right time and quality. Thus, when crafting the implementation strategy and envisioning the stitching centres, manufacturers most likely would have presumed that what holds for the factory workforce must hold for stitching as well. That is, its workforce would largely comprise men. As a SCF officer, present at the discussions on establishing a transparent system, remarked, '[Manufacturers] organized centres for males. Saga Sports presented a model, support of [demanded by] Nike for big stitching centres. SCF felt focus was only on men. Stitchers were viewed as men. No work was being done for women.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 163).

centres because of the social norms that predicate gender segregation (i.e., women should minimize interactions as far as possible with non-familial males).

By May 1997, SCF had completed its situation analysis of Sialkot's soccer ball industry. Based largely on the report's findings, it too added its voice to these dissenting voices in the industry. According to the SCF's study that surveyed 100 villages, 58% of all adult stitchers in those villages turned out to be women (1997: 6). SCF allied itself with a few voices within industry that had been stressing the need to take into consideration the effects of the move to stitching centres on women stitchers. SCF and a few manufacturers raised these concerns in the 3rd PCC meeting on May 29, 1997 as shown by that meeting's minutes. The minutes, being sanitized versions of events, do not provide any clue as to whether the reservations were expressed emotively. The minutes simply record the following:

> Concern was expressed by several manufacturers and members at the displacement of those women and handicapped stitchers who could not leave their homes and come to centres. The general opinion was that once the project started and the situation was more defined, the PCC could review the situation and perhaps make some exceptions in specified cases that would not jeopardize the objectives of the Agreement and they would disrupt income earning of adults. (PCC minutes of meeting #3; May 29, 1997).

Though we cannot discern the nature and content of the 'concerns'expressed from the above quote, there is sufficient detail provided about the 'general opinion' of industry, as per the minutes, from which we can deduce that its representatives seemed to be engaged in classic bureaucratic delaying tactics.

Much to industry's chagrin, the matter kept getting raised in successive meetings. Sensing foot-dragging, SCF began contacting women's groups to solicit their opinions about stitching centres (PCC minutes of meeting #7; November 26, 1997). In the meantime pressure was kept to bring this issue on the agenda that now began to include ILO as well. Eventually things came to a head. According to a former SCF officer present during the meetings at that time:

> In our opinion, centres should be opened for both [men and women]. SCF raised this issue of women being ignored . . . Also raised it at the PCC meetings that efforts not helping women stitchers. Especially since they are likely to contribute to household income.
>
> Industry was upset. Khawaja Zaka said we are losing focus. We need to stay on track and focus on children and child labour. Why are you raising the issue of women. We are getting away on agenda. [We SCF] said if income falls [when] women [are] not accommodated, then children forced to work and solution removing child labour may not work. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 164-165).

By March 1998, under pressure from NGOs and from their subcontractors complaining that women were refusing to work in stitching centres, industry relented. The PCC assigned the task to SIT to come up with a female stitching centre model. SIT began work on this task. Defining homes as centres would not do because ILO would not have access to them nor have the resources to visit a large number of homes compared to a relatively fewer centres. Defining stitching centres along the lines of Saga Sports would not help either as few manufacturers could afford constructing them and even then women would not be able to go to such centres due to the normative reasons alluded to earlier. What then was to be a definition of a stitching centre acceptable to the ILO and that would work for women as well? Eventually after almost one year, incorporating several discussions on this matter and the findings of a report commissioned by SCF on exploring the feasibilities of women stitching centres completed in December 1998, the following definition was proposed by SIT at the 19th PCC meeting held on February 25, 1999:

> The code of Conduct for women stitchers is under;
>
> > i) An agglomeration of minimum of three women sitting at one place, stitching for a minimum of five hours daily be declared as a Women Stitching Centre.

ii) Manufacturers or his subcontractor arranging for the women stitching facility, as described above would ensure the following:

> Installation of identification signboard declaring it as a Women Stitching Centre.
>
> Provision of this information along with some details of the women stitchers using this facility to ILO-IPEC for monitoring purposes;
>
> Determining of the timings for women working at the center in such a way that at one given time the women stitchers are available at the center to facilitate effective monitoring by the ILO monitors, and, is also convenient to the women stitchers.
>
> Arranging for the services of a lady in the village/location to act as a contact between the women stitchers and the contractor/subcontractor. (This will help reduce any likely opposition from males who may be averse to their female members going out of their homes for work).
>
> Provision of facilities like bathroom, drinking water facility, and such other [remaining part consisting of another line illegible in the copy of the minutes used in this research]. (PCC minutes of meeting #19; Februrary 25, 1999).

In the next PCC meeting on March 25, 1999, this code was adopted with some major modifications. The number of women for a place deemed to be a centre was raised from three to five convenient to both ILO and manufacturers as it meant having to deal with fewer centres. The other significant changes, probably done at the behest of the manufacturers, were to remove the conditions pertaining to the hiring of a female go-between the manufacturers and their women stitchers, and the facilities to be found present at the site to be deemed a stitching centre. Perhaps, these conditions were dropped because they interfered

with the accumulation process as both conditions involved additional expenses. Alternatively, these conditions may have been dropped because the manufacturers feared that if these conditions were placed then several of them and their subcontractors would not have the wherewithal to build these village-based centres, as they came to be called, as a result of which women's welfare would suffer. The women would not have centres at which they could work and, thus, the whole purpose of the exercise, which was to protect the women's income, would be defeated.

Prior to this consensus on what constitutes a female stitching centre, some manufacturers and subcontractors had already begun establishing all female stitching centres (PCC minutes of meeting #15; October 21, 1998; and #17; December 17, 1998). Given the above minimalist criteria that was adopted, these centres were easily accepted by ILO as monitorable centres. However, as we will discuss later, in spite of the project giving full sanction to the construction of female stitching centres, the centres that ultimately were formed ended up catering to just a tiny percentage of the overall estimated female stitching force.

With the definition approved, more impetus was added to the building of women stitching centres than had existed before. Over time, the women centres regime that eventually came to be formed ended up encompassing a variety of stitching centre forms, a few being home-based (i.e., in a room of a female stitcher's home where the above conditions of a female stitching centre could be observed) while the majority of women stitching centres came to be village-based, taking the shape of all-female workshops. Three large manufacturers, beginning with Saga Sports, built large female stitching centres (about 5 in total) with a capacity to seat several hundred female stitchers.

The facilities that came to be provided in the women centres also varied. They ultimately would revolve around the independent codes of conduct that manufacturers had with their brands. Some brands insisted that facilities (e.g., bathrooms) be provided in village and home-based centres though they did not provide funding to their Sialkot suppliers to enact their wishes. The suppliers, in turn, often shifted the burden of the costs of such facilities to their subcontractors

who often then shifted it on to the poor female stitchers, especially the home-based ones, to provide these facilities if they wished to obtain stitching orders from the subcontractors.

The definitional struggles over what constitutes a female stitching centre helped clarify and define the stitching centre for both men and women. The minimal criteria for women began to serve as minimal criteria for male centres as well. After all, if ILO showed no objections to monitoring centres of five women why would it place objections to doing the same for male centres. Though the minimal number criteria was set, most male stitching centres exceeded the minimal criteria where the smallest subcontractor ran a workshop that could seat at least 10 stitchers (IMAC, 2003). Finally, as a last comment on the stitching centre regime that evolved during this intervention period, the big stitching centres (i.e., housing 100 or more stitchers) were built by large manufacturers. The workshops and the village-based centres, however, were built either by subcontractors or by the stitchers themselves though the slightly more prevalent practice seems to be that of the former (Cummins, 2000).

The Brands' 'No Logo' Policy

While the partners were struggling with the stitching centre definitional problem and beginning to move towards its resolution by early 1998, another crisis arose at that time that diverted their energies. This crisis too would turn out to be a definitional one as well centring on the scope of the prevention and monitoring program being managed by ILO. The crisis had to do with child labour free logos that some participating manufacturers in the project were attaching to their soccer balls that contradicted the global soccer ball industry's avowed policy on this matter.

At the end of the important London Conference in November 1996, after which drafting of the Atlanta Agreement commenced, WFSGI's President, Stephen Rubin, had issued a statement regarding the global sporting goods industry's policy on providing labels on products that informed the consumer that the product was made under ethical conditions. In his words:

> At the London Conference the majority of Companies looked at and discarded the possibility of labelling products with a statement saying that human rights had been respected or that child labor had not been used. We concluded that our own industrial brand names were statements of quality and ethics in their own right and any disclaimer would only weaken that statement and the perception of the brand. Furthermore it could imply that any of the branch goods on which no label had been affixed had specifically been made by child labor. (Rubin, 1997: 3).[92]

The international brands, with few exceptions (e.g., Reebok) had opted for a no logo policy regarding human rights labelling. The latter would have entailed affixing 'child labour free' labels or logos containing the same information content on soccer balls. However, the ILO monitoring team had discovered during their inspections in early January 1998 that some manufacturers were affixing child labour free logos to their products (PCC minutes of meeting #8; January 22, 1998). Most likely, these logos were being placed on products made by companies that did not have a brand name for producing high quality soccer balls (e.g., promotional balls for companies like Coca-Cola or Walmart). This is because it is difficult to imagine such labels being placed on branded soccer balls (e.g., Adidas) as the labelling and design of such products is tightly controlled by the international brands who would not have given permission to their suppliers to affix such labels as that contradicted their no logo policy enunciated by their apex trade body (i.e., WFSGI) in November 1996 (Rubin, 1997).

This practice of labelling child labour free balls should not have been a concern for Sialkot's soccer ball industry as their trade body's policy did not extend to these soccer non-brands (e.g., Walmart) who were not members of WFSGI. However, given Rubin's reasoning stated above of going with a no-logo practice, this practice had to be stopped. A proliferation of balls saying that they

[92] Though Rubin was averse to human rights labelling by individual brands, he was, however, quite willing to entertain, in that very same speech, the possibility of WFSGI's name being used to signal ethical product quality. After all, why would he foreclose that option as WFSGI's name emblazoned on products of internationally recognized brands, vouching the human rights credentials of those products, would only bring further prestige and recognition to the trade body.

were child labour free would throw into question the balls of the brands and their Sialkot suppliers that carried no such labels. Consumers would certainly be suspicious of such silence and may reach conclusions that the reason for such logos being absent is because these companies do not have ethical work standards and, thus, are not able to provide such guarantees.

On the PCC meeting on January 22, 1998, SCCI denounced this child labour free labelling practice of some its member threatening that 'Participating manufacturers who do mark their soccer balls as child labour free will be asked to terminate participation in the project.' (PCC minutes of meeting #8; January 22, 1998). Having uttered this threat, SCCI went on to offer the following constructive suggestion:

> While *no logo* [my emphasis] will be adopted to recognize participation in the programme, the use of some common message may be considered. The use of any such message and the message itself would have to be cleared with the headquarters or concerned departments of the ILO, UNICEF and othe participating agencies as well as SCCI itself. (ibid).

The prevention and monitoring program's scope was now being expanded to worry about thinking of a logo for the program that participating manufacturers could use on their products. A brand for the project would have been appealing to SCCI as it could use it as bait that held prestige and possibly future orders to lure more Sialkot manufacturers to participate in the program. Its position was interesting in that it was caught between the no-logo policy strictures of its international masters and its own desires, stemming from its own local context, to have a prestigious logo to offer to its currently non-participating members to join its prevention and monitoring program. Thinking of devising a logo for the program was, thus, an ingenious solution to transcend this impasse created by the contradictory demands placed on the SCCI by international forces and the local context.

In April 21, 1998, SCCI proposed a further increase in the program's scope. Losing patience with some of its members for disobeying its no 'child

labour free' logo policy, it requested ILO to start issuing letters to its disobedient members (PCC minutes of meeting #10; April 21, 1998). For ILO to do so would tantamount to the prevention and monitoring program being not only concerned with monitoring workplaces for child labour but would also with the task of monitoring labelling practices of manufacturers apart from its recently added duty of devising logos for the program.

There seemed to be every indication that the program had found a new course. For example, in May 1998, the ILO had agreed to work with SCCI on a standard program logo (PCC minutes of meeting #11; May 25, 1998). By June of that year, the program would begin to shift back to its original course. On June 25, 1998, ILO announced that it would not monitor the labelling of soccer balls as this was not part of its mandate (PCC minutes of meeting #12; June 25, 1998). It did, however, promise to work with SCCI on the labelling matter (ibid). However, it went back on that promise in the next meeting (i.e., July 21, 1998) where it stated quite categorically that not only the program but the entire project could not become involved in labelling issues:

> Mr. Werner Blank, Programme Manager, IPEC Geneva, stated that ILO constituents do not share a collective view on labelling, with the result that ILO does not hold a policy on labelling at present. He informed the meeting that ILO project in Sialkot can therefore not be pro-active on developing a label for those participating in the project. (PCC minutes of meeting #13; July 21, 1998)

The brand labelling issue seems to have died immediately afterwards, according to the minutes of the PCC meetings, as no allusion is made to this issue in the minutes of the subsequent meetings. ILO had returned the program to its original purpose and so the brand labelling issue could be said to have been inconsequential as nothing changed. However, to think this would be to have perhaps missed an important sociological observation. The brand issue, much like Kai Anderson's seminal Durkheimian work on the role of crime in early New

England Puritan societies, performed the function of value clarification.[93] Thanks to the branding issue it became clear what was going to be the contours of the prevention and monitoring program's mandate. The partners, largely due to ILO, had reaffirmed the contours as being those that had originally been laid down for it in the Atlanta Agreement. The branding episode had, thus, crucially served the function of reaffirming the precepts laid down in the Atlanta Agreement and had helped to create a culture, especially for the ILO side, that they were to adhere closely to the parameters laid down for the program in that agreement.

Sustaining the Effort: Wash-out Fears

The last major challenge that I would like to discuss regarding the prevention and monitoring program's implementation is the question mark of sustainability that plagued it from its beginnings. Initially, the Sialkot soccer ball industrialists had little faith that the program could become a reality. It is only when the SCCI delegation returned from Bangladesh that they were able to instil in their members hope that the program could become a reality. However, that faith in its viability would be subject to various tests that would unfold over time.

The first test was, of course, getting Sialkot's soccer ball industry to participate in the program. On this dimension, the industry initially had mixed results. Only twenty odd manufacturers had agreed to participate in the program. This, however, on its own would not look promising to external stakeholders making them suspect the claims that industry was on board and rectifying its

[93] Kai Erikson (1966) had argued that, in spite of the prudishness of Puritans, a constant level of crime was found in their societies. Using a Durkheimian analysis, he made the argument that the crime existed because it served a valuable function for the Puritans. It allowed them to vent their moral outrage collectively and by doing so, it helped clarify and reaffirm for them their moral values as by expressing anger at the crime (e.g., theft) they were in fact cherishing and reaffirming that which stood opposite to it (e.g., honesty). Of course, he posited a teleological argument (i.e., because it performed this values clarification and reaffirmation function or served this end, crime had to exist). Crime did not exist *because* it was functional, but rather a more accurate understanding would be that though crime came about due to a complex set of causes unrelated to value clarification, nevertheless, its presence did perform a function in society which was values clarification and affirmation. Thus, in our human rights labelling case, we can say that though the issue arose for reasons (e.g., desire for greater sales by some of Sialkot's soccer ball manufacturers) not related to the actual physical operations of the prevention and monitoring program, nevertheless, the issue did perform certain valuable functions for it one of which was to clarify that program's boundaries.

practices on child labour. The obstacle was overcome by emphasizing quality where the program lacked quantity. What was stressed initially was not the numbers of the participating manufacturers but the overall industry capacity that they represented. Thus, emphasizing the quality of participants allowed the program to make claims that it had industry-wide ramifications. The stratagem worked. In June 1997, when there was nothing on the ground, the project received the 'Pioneer in Global Ethics Award' from the Council on Economic Priorities, the New York-based public interest organization (Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association [SGMA], 1998). This was the first accolade received by Sialkot's soccer ball industry that had prior to this been the scorn of the international media.

Apart from stressing quality, there seems to be little indication from the minutes of the PCC and SIT meetings that there were any serious concerted efforts being made at recruiting new manufacturers into the program. In October 1997, around 29 firms had joined the project (ILO, 1997). After almost one and a half years (i.e., end of March, 1999), only an additional 10 manufacturers out of a universe of at least one hundred non-participating manufacturers had been added to the program (Dogar, 2000). At this point, according to Dogar, who was the ILO's soccer ball project manager based in Sialkot, industry began to make a serious push for recruiting new participants. The joining fee was slashed from Rs.100,000 (US$2020) to Rs.15,000 (US$303) (PCC minutes of meeting #24; May 24, 1999). This act alone, in the opinion of Dogar, led to a positive response from smaller manufacturers who began to enlist in the program. By 2000, the program could claim 78 participating manufacturers (Dogar, 2000), a number that was to stand in 2003 at around 103 (IMAC, 2003). Truly part of this success had to do with the lowering of the fees. Also, most likely as the years progressed, international buyers began to demand some kind of child labour free certification from manufacturers before placing their orders that created another incentive for Sialkot manufacturers to join the program, especially since they had seen that the program did not disrupt the work practices significantly by, for example, mobilizing labour.

The swelling of the ranks, as can be seen, came later. At the beginning quality was stressed to outsiders to cover for any deficiency the program may have had in terms of numbers of participating manufacturers. Though the quality of participants was stressed to outsiders, as far as the internal workings of the program were concerned, that quality did not translate when it came to complying with the monitoring requirements of the program.

ILO constantly complained at the PCC meeting that participating members were not disclosing all their stitching centres (e.g., see PCC minutes of meeting #9; March 1998). Visiting all the centres, ILO could only account for 48% of all the stitchers that, according to the participating manufacturers, were working for them in their centres. This led ILO to suspect that over half the centre-based stitching workforce was working elsewhere in undisclosed locations. Though it could sanction non-complying manufacturers by ejecting them from the program, the problem of non-compliance being at that time of an endemic nature, would have caused a large portion of the membership to be dismissed, a fact that if brought to public light would reflect poorly on ILO itself whose reputation was tied to the fortunes of the project in which it was a partner. Instead ILO applied 'persuasion', categorically telling manufacturers that 'it is the responsibility of manufacturers to make their subcontractors comply with the procedures laid down under the monitoring system' (ibid). ILO's stern dictates found a receptive audience in industry who, at that time, were willing to do what was needed to keep the project going that they felt was the only salvation route to their industry, brought to the brink of extinction by the child labour crisis.

Even with the industry's best of intentions, the progress was slow. At the end of the first six months, by which time manufacturers should have transferred 25% of their stitching to their centres, only 18 of the 34 manufacturers had attained that target (PCC minutes of meeting #12; June 25, 1998). It was only towards the end of July 1998 that progress began to be made in terms of getting stitching into the centres (PCC minutes of meeting #13; July 21, 1998). Manufacturers began to deploy more coercive methods to get their subcontractors to move stitching from homes to centres. Manufacturers representatives went

around visiting subcontractors threatening the loss of orders if they did not comply with their patron's demands of stitching balls in centres. At the same time, to attract stitchers to work at centres, manufacturers offered higher piece-rates to those willing to stitch in centres that were as much as 50% above what had been the prevailing market rate prior to this wage hike. This increase in the piece-rate showed that industry was serious in shifting its stitching activities to centres where they could be monitored.[94] Such effort paid off as by October 1999 ILO could report the following to the PCC:

> Since after 31 March 1999, no stitching had been identified or reported outside the monitorable stitching centers, therefore it is assumed that all the participating manufacturers have transferred their 100% production to the monitorable stitching centers. (PCC minutes of meeting #27; October 26, 1999).[95]

As can be seen, the process of shifting stitching operations to centres began to gain momentum around the middle of 1998. The spectre that haunted the program members, that they would not be able to make all their stitching activities monitorable and free of child labour, appeared to be receding. There was renewed hope that the program would not be a wash-out after all. Now the concern was shifiting to how to ensure that program would be sustainable and that these efforts would continue beyond the 18 month duration of the project.

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[94] It should be pointed out that in 1998, stitching wage rates had been stagnant since 1990 in spite of the overall consumer prices in Pakistan (adjusted for under-reporting; see Zaidi, 1999: xvii) increasing by over 250% during that period 1990-1998 (Lamb, 1989; SCF, 1997; World Development Indicators Database; Zaidi, 1995). Thus, the increase in piece-rates did not raise the sub-subsistence (i.e., not able to cover basic needs) income of stitchers (HRCP, 1995; SCF, 1997) to a living wage level. Moreover, whatever increase in household income that could have been made by the higher stitching centre piece-rates was wiped out by the subsequent years of double digit inflation and a drop, in absolute terms, in monthly income on account of less women and children stitching soccer balls as stitching shifted to the centres. The effects on stitchers brought about by the advent of the stitching centres are more fully discussed in chapter 6.

[95] The claim of 100% seems to be slightly exaggerated. In fact after March 1999, ILO continued to report to the PCC the presence of several non-registered stitching centres (e.g., see PCC minutes of meeting #21; April 29, 1999; and #22; May 24, 1999). However, such unregistered activity was now a small fraction of the total stitching activity as the same minutes that point out unregistered activity also mention that about 90% of all stitching was now being monitored. Thus, the program's claim contained in the quote above though certainly incorrect in specifics, seem largely vindicated in terms of substance. That is, almost all stitching activity of the program members was being done in monitorable centres.

These concerns for sustainability began to be raised in PCC meetings. For example, in PCC meeting #12 (May 25, 1998), the rhetorical question was posed 'What will happen to the project after 18 months' that was immediately answered as 'Some kind of monitoring system has to be set up beyond 18 months. ILO was requested to prepare a proposal.' (PCC minutes of meeting #12; May 25, 1998). By October 21, 1998, ILO had brought a proposal to the PCC. The proposal outlined four possible successor arrangement options that could be pursued for the program after the expiry of its original time period (i.e., March 31, 1999). These four options were:

1. To continue with the present arrangements.
2. To transfer monitoring to another independent corporate body.
3. Non-profit agency to take over monitoring after March 1999.
4. ILO to be involved in monitoring the agency who may be assigned the job of external monitoring after the expiry of the time frame of 18 months. (PCC minutes of meeting #15; October 21, 1998).

As it would turn out all the above options save option 2 would be pursued in the post-March 1999 world. To begin with, the partners once again played with the clock as they had done in October 1997 when deciding the project's start date. Now it was with the project's end date. It was decided in the PCC meeting on February 25, 1999 that the program would be extended to the end of October 1999 bringing it on par with the social protection program which had a time frame of 24 months (PCC minutes of meeting#19; February 25, 1999).

This was the program's first extension where the present arrangements were to be maintained. In September 1999, it would get another major extension. According to Dogar (2000) an ILO team had visited Sialkot and had performed an external independent project evaluation that led them to propose that both the programs be extended for another two years so that adequate time is provided for the programs to be made sustainable as the early time had largely been spent in getting the projects working on the ground. Though the report in September 1999 formally advanced this conclusion, minutes of the 15$^{th}$ PCC meeting held almost a

year earlier seem to indicate that ILO had already reached that understanding. According to the minutes of that meeting held on October 21, 1998:

> Mr. Kari Tapiola [ILO] in his address while thanking the PCC for inviting him to the meeting appreciated the Sialkot Project and said that it was one of the better known projects of ILO. He, however, stated that the time frame was too short and needed extension. He observed that it will be an incomplete exercise if ILO after the lapse of 18 months time frame, just packed up and left the project unfinished. (PCC minutes of meeting #15; October 21, 1998).

Given this perspective held by ILO's Pakistan chief as far as back as October 1998, the fact finding mission of September 1999 seems to have been more an exercise in myth and ceremony than in actually ascertaining the feasibility and sense of extending the project. The decision on extension seems to have been a foregone conclusion, especially when the following is taken into consideration. By September 1999, the Clinton Presidency had put the Sialkot project on the pedestal of international officialdom as a model project of ILO, worthy of emulation in tackling social problems related to industry. Thus, with such prestige heaped upon this project, ILO and the US Department of Labor had even more at stake in seeing that this project succeed for it was to be their poster boy. The evaluation report's conclusions of extending the project when placed in this context seem unremarkable. Also, unremarkable is the funding that swiftly came for the extension from the US Department of Labor totalling roughly one million US dollars (US Department of Labor, 2003).

This extension came to be known as Phase II of the project and was officially inaugurated on November 3, 2000 (SCCI minutes of meeting; November 20, 2000). In addition to funding from the US Department of Labor, Phase II also received financial assistance from FIFA (US$100,000 per year for four years) and SCCI (US$180,000 for the two years of Phase II) (PCC minutes of meeting #27; October 26, 1999; SCCI minutes of meeting; November 20, 2000). During Phase II, discussions began to be held by the partners on which of

the four options outlined by Tapiola (see above) should be pursued so that by the time Phase II ends a successor arrangement is already functioning.

By October 2001, a decision had been reached on how the program was to proceed beyond Phase II which was expected to end by December 2002 (PCC minutes of meeting #39; October 19, 2001). An independent organization was to be created that would take over the monitoring duties of ILO. The staff of the monitoring team of ILO was to be transferred to this organization and ILO would provide a supervisory role over this organization for a period of the organization's first two years. During these first two years, the organization would receive funding from ILO and FIFA's Phase II funding commitment (ibid). After that period, it would be responsible for financing its own activities.

The organization came to be known as IMAC (Independent Monitoring Association for Child Labour) and, according to its chief executive officer, was incorporated as a non-profit organization on May 14, 2002 (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 60). Its Board of Governors comprises eight members representing WFSGI, SCCI, Government of Pakistan (Export Promotion Bureau), All Pakistan Free Trade Union (APFTU), an ex-officio place for an NGO, *District Nazim* [District Mayor], Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers Export Association (PSGMEA), and a soccer ball manufacturer in an individual capacity; ILO and UNICEF are associated to the IMAC Board as technical advisors (ibid, 61). The ILO monitoring team (about 20 individuals) was gradually transferred to this organization over a period of six months. The transferring process ended in March 2003 and since then IMAC has been performing the monitoring functions of the prevention and monitoring program under the supervision of ILO's Sialkot office, comprising now just five individuals. That supervision, along with ILO funding, is expected to end by March 2004 (ibid). IMAC is expected to raise its financing after that period from the assistance of its Board of Governors and by levying a pro rata charge per soccer ball exported (e.g., 35 paisas per ball) by the manufacturers that are being monitored by it (ibid). As for ILO, even though it will no longer be associated with the child labour project after March 2004, it will

maintain its Sialkot field office after that date which will now work towards removing child labour from Sialkot's surgical industry.

*The Social Protection Program: Dodging Poverty Traps & Building Safety Nets*

Identifying the Stretcher-Bearers

The prevention and monitoring program dealt with the policing side of the project. Its job, to extend a soccer metaphor, was that of refeering. It was to blow the whistle on unwanted players in the soccer ball production game (i.e., child labourers) and to ensure that these players or their ilk do not return to the playing field. There was, however, another dimension in the project existing separately from but interrelated with the prevention and monitoring program. This was the social protection program that, together with the prevention and monitoring program comprised, as we may be reminded again, the child labour elimination project. If the prevention and monitoring program dealt with sending the unwanted players off the field, the social protection program was concerned with ensuring that those sent off the field did not suffer any trauma from the referee's decision. The organizations involved with the social protection side of the project were to be the stretcher-bearers rushing on to the field to ensure that the unwanted players (i.e., child labourers) were gently removed from the field in as least an injurious manner as possible, that their injuries coming from the referee's exit decision were properly looked after, and that these unwanted players found placement in alternative games deemed suitable by these self-appointed caretakers (e.g., schooling). But first, as with the case of prevention and monitoring program, the partners had to agree upon the stretcher-bearing team's composition who would carry out this Nightingalean task.

As noted earlier, Sialkot's soccer ball industry's initial response to the Bangladesh monitoring project being administered by ILO was that though they could learn from it, the industry would not be obliged to emulate it. As SCCI's Steering Committee on Child Labour noted, 'The BGMEA example is a good learning opportunity but the Monitoring System for Sialkot would be designed based on the needs and realities of Sialkot and Soccer ball industry'. (Steering

Committee of the SCCI minutes of meeting; April 3, 1997). In the prevention and monitoring program, industry would, as it would turn out, prove unsuccessful in its bid to forge a path separate from Bangladesh. In that program, industry had to concede ground on the team membership (i.e., who would be the monitor) and the nature of the program which became simply another application of the BGMEA model with the same ILO personnel that devised that model ending up devising the prevention and monitoring program for Sialkot as well. However, industry would experience a favourable reversal of fortunes by obtaining voice in the social protection program side of the project.

The BGMEA model, as we can recall, had placed obligations on the part of participating manufacturers to give a direct income subsidy to children displaced from their factories as well as a genuine commitment to employ as far as possible their relatives of legally employable age who could take up their now vacant positions. The brands and their Sialkot suppliers would effectively manoeuvre out of such commitments that they had given in the Atlanta Agreement on grounds of such commitments being infeasible. The only Atlanta commitment they would honour was to bear the monitoring costs of the project. This is understandable since keeping their markets open by convincing the international community that their products were child labour free was the paramount concern and valued end of industry. They, thus, being largely motivated by 'consult nothing but self principles', devoted resources to the monitoring task that was geared to bringing about that instrumentally valued end. Children and their families were of lesser concern. The needs and realities that the monitoring task had to cater to were primarily those of 'Sialkot' and the 'soccer ball industry', not the children and their families.[96]

[96] One could argue that the US$100,000 that SICA gave on behalf of the SCCI to the project's social protection program can be construed as industry's commitment to that part of the project. However, this amount of money was given as a donation not arising from any contractually binding obligations in the Atlanta Agreement, unlike financing the monitoring commitment where the industry committed itself in writing to take care of the monitoring expenses. No such commitment was rendered to any component of the social protection program, unlike ILO who committed in the Atlanta Agreement to defraying the expenses related to the latter program. Thus, the industry was able to craft an agreement whereby they would perhaps be 'encouraged' to help the humanitarian efforts of the project but could not be obliged to do so.

The Sialkot soccer ball suppliers would also have an important say in influencing who would participate in the project's social protection work. This, of course, in turn would impact the contents of that program (e.g., keeping out radical labour groups would work to significantly ensure that their radical views and project ideas they would bring with them would be excluded from the social protection program).

As in the case of the prevention and monitoring program, the concern of industry with organized labour played a role in determining the membership of the social protection program's team. The Sialkot soccer ball industry had been averse and suspicious of ILO due to its institutional linkages with organized labour, only making ILO its monitor when somewhat convinced it would not undertake any activities associated with organizing labour. In the case of social protection program, industry would be successful in keeping out organized labour groups, much to the chagrin of SCF, who wanted the program to have a more inclusive stakeholder membership.[97] Regarding the opposition of industry to labour, a project evaluation report on the soccer ball project done by Edinburgh University for SCF and DFID after it had exited from that project, politely states in a footnote:

> It should be noted that attempts were made to include the Government and trade unions during the early stages of the Project . . . However, the inclusion of Trade Unions met with *considerable resistance* [my emphasis] from industry and it was felt that it may have negatively impacted on the partnership. (Crawford, 2001: 12).

Of course, Sialkot's soccer ball industry would have some legitimate reasons to be wary of collaborating with trade unions. Trade unions in Sialkot and in

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[97] So successful has this effort been that in all the articles reviewed for this thesis in which were mentioned the donors who financed the project, I could not find, with the exception of one ILO publication (Mehra-Kerpelman, 1998), any allusions to trade unions even though APFTU had contributed to the project US$1000 (ibid). Only in one study, cited above, is this fact mentioned. In all other project publications prior to and after that study, the contribution of the trade unions has been expunged from official memory. The contribution may have been made by APFTU as a goodwill gesture when there was hope in the early days of trade union participation in its social protection program.

Pakistan in general were prone to leadership corruption, a point conceded by even unions themselves (e.g., see APFOL, 1999) with corruption usually taking the form of union leaders creating industrial unrest in order to extort rents personally for themselves from industrialists. Extortion in turn could take a variety of forms from cash bribes given under the table to union leaders being made heads of their respective company unions with substantial privileges in return for policing their own unions to ensure that they did the bidding of the union leaders' corporate paymasters.

This union corruption, however, was functional to industrial interests and they were not too upset by it. At worst, union leadership corruptibility made the industrial elites loathe the unions even more. What brought about fear regarding unions in industry was that unions were susceptible to indulging in a set of behaviour deemed 'negative' by industrial elites. That is, disruptive acts (e.g., wild cat strikes) and inflaming worker militancy which industry argued would hurt industrial production that in turn would hurt the workers themselves.

This image of unions was largely formed after the Bhutto era (1970-1977) based on the labour experience of that period which saw considerable union activity and concomitant with it, some abuse of labour power. This labour power abuse was often portrayed later in vivid imagery in the minds of the Pakistani industrialists and the managerial classes that often recounted horror stories, though never substantiated, of belligerent labour to justify their equally belligerent stance to the latter (e.g., in Pakistani business schools that both shape and reflect the ethos of the Pakistani elite, one can often find stories being told of steel industrialists being thrown in boiling steel ingot cauldrons by blood-thirsty workers drunk on labour power).

This class propaganda where the abuses by labour that did take place are made salient and grossly exaggerated without substantial documentation, while the abuses of labour that led to such outbursts and the progress made by collective effort are ignored, have deeply seeped into middle class Pakistan. This has had the effect, in the context of the Sialkot project, that Sialkot's soccer ball industry could find support for its anti-labour stance in the project not only within its own

members but also in the middle-class Pakistanis who staffed the offices of their NGO project partners, especially those referred to as implementing agencies (i.e., those local NGOs whose services were contracted by ILO, SCF, and UNICEF to carry out the activities of the project). From these NGO technocrats, one also heard regurgitated, with a few exceptions, the same anti-labour pieties and at times frankly anti-democratic sentiments such as the following: 'Sialkot is rich. Look at [the] number of brick houses, motorcycles. [I] do not believe in democracy, [I] believe in results. [I am] Interested in outcomes.'(Interview Notebook I, 2003: 40). The NGO personnel, with few exceptions, agreed with industry in its anti-labour position. This has made the latter's stance a sustainable one and helped to keep off both organized labour and its concerns (e.g., freedom of association and living wages) from entering the project's agenda even though ironically, one of the main partners was ILO that, at least in theory, was required to represent the interests of the labour classes.[98]

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[98] This Edmund Burkean perspective held by Sialkot industry, that the labouring poor are immature and incapable of governing, has a long distinguished genealogy. For example, Kant was fighting these arguments as far back as the late 18th century when they were being made by the masters in relation to the French Revolution's reign of terror in order to justify the rule of the privileged few over the marginalized many. Kant passionately argued that it is only by being free that the subordinated classes will undergo a learning experience of political maturity and without that learning process, which necessitates that they be made to govern themselves from the onset regardless of the mistakes they would make, it is futile to expect the arrival of political maturity. As Kant argued, 'If one accepts this assumption, freedom will never be achieved; for one can not arrive at the maturity for freedom without having already acquired it; one must be free to learn how to make use of one's powers freely and usefully. The first attempts will surely be brutal and will lead to a state of affairs more painful and dangerous than the former condition under the dominance but also the protection of an external authority. However, one can achieve reason only through one's own experiences and one must be free to be able to undertake them.' (cited in Chomsky, 1987: 144). Chomsky citing this passage goes on to state, 'No rational person will approve of violence and terror . . . Yet no person of understanding or humanity will too quickly condemn the violence that often occurs when long subdued masses rise against their oppressors, or take the first steps towards liberty and social reconstruction.' (ibid: 144-145). Sadly for Sialkot's labouring poor, there were neither Kants nor Chomskys present among the project's social engineers deciding their fate who could have put their passions and intellects to the defense of the dignity of these subordinated classes.

As an aside, the abuses of the poor are often exaggerated thanks to class paranoia in public consciousness. Thus, one remembers, to use the above French Revolution example, the brutality of the French Revolution and the flood gates of blood it unleashed. What is interesting is that the number of people killed by the Revolution was about 1/5th the numbers killed by Louis Napoleon's Army in crushing the Paris Commune uprising of 1871 (Edwards, 1973). Yet, such is public memory forged in the crucible of class bias, that one remembers the rampage of the French Revolution against people that matter and not the five times greater blood letting, committed in less than 1/10th of the time, against ordinary working men and women by the guardians of private

The importance of living wages, while recognized by one of the partners (i.e., SCF) as being the most critical factor in ensuring that the industry would remain child labour free (SCF, 1997), was effectively ignored, most likely due to the above pro-industry technocratic organizational milieu in which the social protection program was created. This milieu slighted such traditional labour concerns as fair wages. This milieu significantly filtered the selection of the program's collaborators known in the project jargon as 'implementing agencies' (all without exception being non-labour rights Pakistani NGOs). This in turn substantially influenced the shaping of the various schemes that would be crafted to realize the chief objective of the social protection program. As stated in the Atlanta Agreement this was to avoid the poverty trap in which were stuck the child stitchers and their families by creating social safety nets to help families cope with the loss of income once their children stopped working.

Administering Social Engineering : Opportunities, Opportunism, & Observations

The thinking that produced the social protection program on the ground was, thus, largely technocratic in nature. As came to be understood by these social engineers given the schemes they implemented under this program, the poverty trap responsible for producing child labour was not the absence of living wages that forced parents to send children to work. Rather, the poverty trap that the social protection program would dodge was the lack of education among children that condemned them to low menial work as adults such as stitching soccer balls. The thrust was to be, following the Reich directives, on getting the kids back to school to ensure an opportunity of a bright future what the Atlanta Agreement labelled as 'Element A'. Community attitudes would need to be re-engineered if found implacable to this solution (known as 'Element B' of the social protection program). However, since it was understood that sending the children to school would deprive their households of much needed income, some compensatory income generation scheme needed to be constructed as part of Element B to act as

property in the suppression of the 1871 commune uprising whose senseless slaughter was evocatively described by Marx: 'The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge.' (Marx, 1871).

a social safety net for the affected families. This was the way to tackle the poverty trap in which these children and their families had been mired. Of course, higher wages to parents, direct income subsidies to children going to school, and any other such social safety net scheme that compromised the accumulation process was to be put aside and other alternatives were to be explored. Thus, under the guidelines of the Social Program's two elements (A and B) outlined in the Atlanta Agreement, a three pronged offensive, would come to be fashioned aimed at targeting community awareness (enjoining the good of education and prohibiting the evil of child labour), increasing educational opportunities for children, and generating income for affected families that was hoped would achieve the objectives of the social protection program articulated under the overarching philosophy of that program which was: 'To ensure that the quality of the lives of children leaving work will not decline because of falling family incomes or education standards and that children will not enter more hazardous forms of employment.' (SCF information pack, date not given).

The individual components or activities (e.g., small one room child education centres for the increasing educational opportunities thrust) of each of these three a priori conceptualised separate thrusts of the social protection program (i.e., education, income generation, and awareness) that would give the latter a concrete presence on the ground, would be derived largely a posteriori. For example, SCF tried to create women's based stitching centres as part of the income generation plan for affected families. Their field experience had pointed out to them that as stitching shifted to centres, women who preferred to work from homes would not go to centres. They thereby experienced a sharp decline in their livelihoods. If this were not treated, these women may end up sending their children to the workforce. In other instances, the schemes enacted under this program were contingent on organizational capabilities with schemes being implemented as the prerequisite capabilities were developed in the organization. For example, when SCF was given a grant of US$900,000 from DFID of the UK Government (Business Wire, 1998), it decided to implement a microcredit scheme where those funds could be utilised as it now had the organizational wherewithal

to put that scheme into practice (Crawford, 2001).[99] Prior to this, there seemed to be no explicit indication from SCF that they were contemplating a microcredit scheme as part of the program's income generating work for the affected families. However, in several cases, the schemes that were put in place by implementing agencies appeared to have been done so opportunistically, implemented to extract more project funding for the organization. For example, Baidarie implemented a health project scheme (where child stitchers' health would be evaluated by doctors) somewhat opportunistically as it did not have prior experience in such schemes but proposed and implemented the scheme, according to the Baidarie personnel interviewed for this research, because the ILO had money for health-related activities in the project that was not being utilised. Thus, the activities that came to constitute this social protection program were mothered by an adhoc mixture of opportunism, opportunities (e.g., enhanced capabilities thanks to donor funding leading SCF to microcredit) and observations in the field (e.g., need to establish all women stitching centres). A description of these activities and the organizations that constituted the program are found in the following table:

[99] The story of SCF's microcredit funding from DFID illuminates an interesting reality of transnational capitalism. Husselbee (2001) mentions just the fact that an international brand brought SCF into the Atlanta partnership. Being circumspect in his account, especially where NGO corporate links are concerned whose exposure may lead to the posing of questions regarding NGO credibility, Husselbee gives us no name of SCF's corporate patron. However, in a project evaluation study for SCF and DFID, the brand's name is mentioned (i.e., Mitre) along with the fact that 'With a representative from the Pentland Company (Mitre), a sporting good company purchasing footballs from the Sialkot area, SC-UK [Save the Children] approached DFID for funding'. (Crawford, 2001: 9). Once again as with US Department of Labor picking up the tab for the mess created by private enterprise, here too we see the same principle where the British taxpayer, in this case, is paying for solutions aimed at removing problems created by private industry. Such instances of public subsidies to bail out large transnational corporations tend to make the latter's arguments about their success being a result of rugged individualism and virtues of free market competition sound a bit hollow and self-serving.

# TABLE 5: SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

**November 1997 – October 2003**

| Program Thrust | Donor | Implementing Agency[1] | Scheme/Activities Description | Commencement and Expiration Dates[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | ILO | BLCC | Establishing and operating Non-Formal Education Centres (NFEs). (These are 1 –3 room classrooms where 3-4 hours of instructions are provided daily to about 35 children per room to bring them up to Grade 5 level proficiency after which to mainstream them to Government Schools for further education. Teachers for NFEs are hired usually from the village where the NFEs are established and are given teacher training. | November 26, 1997 – March 2003 |
| | | Baidarie | Health Awareness Program seeking to ascertain illnesses of child stitchers (e.g., weak eye-sight, stomach worms) and provide medical treatment (e.g., eye glasses, medications) so that school attendance and learning are not hindered due to medical reasons | April 2003 – March 2004 |
| | | BLCC | First Aid training to NFE teachers and Doctor visits to school children for medical check-ups. | October 1998 – October 1999 |
| | | Sudhaar | Establishing and operating NFEs (see above for details). | February 2001 – September 2003 |

## TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
**November 1997 – October 2003**

| Program Thrust | Donor | Implementing Agency[1] | Scheme/Activities Description | Commencement and Expiration Dates[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | SCF | Sudhaar | Creating School Management Committees (SMCs) consisting of parents and teacher(s) and then helping them raise funds from their own sources as well as giving them partial funding to improve the infrastructure of their schools (e.g., replacing a blackboard) to create an hospitable classroom environment for children that would attract them to schools. Also, providing training to government school teachers in subjects (i.e., maths and science) so that they can more effectively teach in their schools. | April 1998 – present time [SCF pulled out of Sialkot in September, 2001. This project is currently being funded by Adidas on a nine monthly basis at an annual cost of US$ 30,083]. |
| | UNICEF | Directly and with PCYO and PCSW&HR | Improving infrastructure of schools like Sudhaar (see above) on a partial funding and community/self help basis. | October 1998 – May 1999 |
| | | BLCC and ABES | Providing Child-Centred teacher training to teachers of Government schools so that they can provide an appropriate caring environment in their schools to retain children. | April 1998 – September 1998 |

## TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
**November 1997 – October 2003**

| Program Thrust | Donor | Implementing Agency[1] | Scheme/Activities Description | Commencement and Expiration Dates[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | UNICEF | BLCC, Baidarie, CDC, PCYO, PCSW&HR, and SAHE | Universal Primary Education (UPE) project seeking to enrol all children between the ages of 5-7 in Sialkot district in Government schools. The implementing agencies visit villages to search for children between the ages of 5-7 not in school and then through a series of interventions (ranging from counselling with parents to village meetings) aim to enrol the children in government schools | September 1999 – October 2000 |
| **Income Generation** | ILO | BLCC | Providing microcredit to families in villages, primarily aiming for stitching families with child stitchers prevented from working due to the project. Community organizations (COs) of about 16-20 village members are formed to whom credit is disbursed individually to start small business enterprises (e.g., credit given to purchase a buffalo so that the member of the credit collective can start a milk dairy business). Also vocational training (sewing/tailoring skills for women). | October 1998 – Octber 1999 |
| | | PRSP | Same as above + women stitchers training in tailoring women's/garments track suits | January 2002 – December 2003 |

# TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

**November 1997 – October 2003**

| Program Thrust | Donor | Implementing Agency[1] | Scheme/Activities Description | Commencement and Expiration Dates[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income Generation** | SCF | NRSP | Same as BLCC microcredit service (see above) plus vocational training for members of their COs. Male vocational training ranged from plumbing and driving to arc and gas welding while female vocational training ranged from tailoring to beautician training. | October 1997 – March 2001. |
| | | Baidarie | Creating All Women based Stitching Centres that could stitch and sell soccer balls directly to manufacturers. Also, forming all female COs to be linked up with NRSP vocational training schemes | April 1999 – September 2001 |
| **Community Awareness** | ILO, SCF, and UNICEF | BLCC, Sudhaar, PCYO and PCSW&HR | Communicating primarily to parents of child stitchers, and soccer ball subcontractors but also to villagers, and employers in Sialkot about the dangers of child labour (continued on next page) | November 1998 – October 2000 (BLCC); April 1998 – September 2001 (Sudhaar); and July 1998 – October 2000 (PCYO and PCSW&HR) |

## TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
### November 1997 – October 2003

| Program Thrust | Donor | Implementing Agency[1] | Scheme/Activities Description | Commencement and Expiration Dates[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community Awareness** | ILO, SCF, and UNICEF | BLCC, Sudhaar, PCYO and PCSW&HR | (e.g., jeopardization of a child's future if child works and does not get an education). Variety of tools used for communicating this information such as meetings with village influentials, and addressing villagers collectively at a mosque as well as door to door counselling to parents. | |

Notes to the Table:

1. For organizational profiles of implementing agencies, see table 6.
2. Dates should be taken as rough approximations as different dates are sometimes given by the same organization to mark the beginning and end dates of a particular activity. This confusion arises, for example, with an organization using the date at which funding was released to mark the beginning date (e.g., in an internal document) while in other places an activity's beginning date is measured by when a particular contract was signed (e.g., in a document prepared for public circulation). Yet in other instances, dates refer to when the project actually began to be implemented. I have tried as far as possible to denote beginning dates that were commensurate with when planning began for a particular activity. Similarly ending dates were chosen that marked when work related to a particular activity ceased to be performed.

**Source:** Bunyad Literacy Community Council [BLCC]. (1998). *Quarterly Progress Report on the Social Protection Component (Period: From 1st November 97 to 28th February 98)* (Internal report for ILO-IPEC). Lahore: Bunyad Literacy Community Council; Crawford, S. (2001). *Lessons Learned from the Project to Protect the Rights and Livelihoods of Working Children in Pakistan.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University; Email from Sheraz Ali , Team Leader, Sudhaar Sialkot, to Javaid Akhtar, Country Manager [Pakistan], Adidas, *Adidas Support – Budget for Apr – Dec 2003*, January 23, 2003; International Monitoring Association for Child Labour [IMAC]. (2003). *Fact Sheet of the Sialkot Soccer Ball Programme (July 2003).* Sialkot: International Monitoring Association for Child Labour; Project Coordination Committee (PCC) Minutes of Meetings # 1-22, 27, 34, 38–39, and 48; March 27, 1997–December 18, 2002; Punjab Rural Support Programme [PRSP]. (2002). *Provision of micro-credit and skill training to the soccer ball stitching families in Sialkot: Midterm Report (January December 02) ILO-PRSP partnership* (Publication). Sialkot: Punjab Rural Support Programme – Sialkot; Save the Children (SCF) (date not given). *Save the Children-UK: Sialkot Project up Date for 23rd PCC.* Sialkot: Save the Children; Save the Children (SCF) (date not given). *Save the Children-UK: Sialkot Project up Date for 33rd PCC.* Sialkot: Save the Children; Save the Children. (1998). *Social Monitoring Report (January-June 1998)* (Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children; Save the Children. (1998a). *Social Monitoring Report (July-September 1998)*

(Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children. Save the Children. (2000b). *Social Monitoring Report (April-June 2000)* (Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children; Sudhaar. (2002). *Sudhaar Quarterly Report (July–December 2002)* (Public Document). Lahore: Sudhaar; Sudhaar. (2002a). *Sudhaar Education Magazine.* Sialkot: Sudhaar; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF]. (2000). *Universal Primary Education & Elimination of Child Labour from Hazardous Occupations* (Public Document): UNICEF.

## TABLE 6: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES: PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES (SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM)

| Organization | Profile[1] |
|---|---|
| ABES | ABES stands for Adult Basic Education Society. It was established in 1971 and works in Punjab with UNICEF and other international governmental organizations and NGOs in adult literacy programs. It did not have an office in Sialkot though it did provide teacher training services for UNICEF's education work undertaken as part of the social protection program. |
| Baidarie | Baidarie is a Sialkot based NGO founded in 1993. It has a strength of about 20 employees and is largely concerned with a wide range of activities associated with community development from clearing drains to rural women 'capacity building' projects (e.g., workshops on hygiene). |
| BLCC | BLCC stands for Bunyad Literacy Community Council. BLCC is a Pakistani NGO and has country wide operations headquarted in Islamabad. It was founded in 1994 and presently focuses primarily on non-formal education, especially for girls. Its Sialkot staff strength was about 30 individuals at the peak of its operations during the implementation of the project. |

## TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

| Organization | Profile[1] |
|---|---|
| CDC | CDC, standing for Community Development Concern, is a Sialkot-based NGO having a strength of about 12 employees. It offers a wide range of socio-economic services from microcredit to teacher training. It is also Reebok's external monitor, ensuring that its Sialkot supplier, Moltex, conforms with Reebok's code of conduct. |
| NRSP | NRSP stands for the National Rural Support Programme. It is an NGO established by the Government of Pakistan in 1992 to spur grassroots rural development by providing microcredit through the formation of village-based organizations as well as also finances community based infrastructure projects such as the construction of irrigation channels that help to raise productive capacity of the poor. NRSP is a large NGO with a national presence. Its Sialkot office that worked on the soccer ball project had a field staff of 20 professionals as well an office staff that supervised them. |
| PCSW &HR | PCSW&HR is a Sialkot-based NGO. Its acronym stand for Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights. Little information is known about this organization except that it worked with UNICEF. However, UNICEF's own documents and the project meeting minutes just allude to this organization by name without giving any details about it. Most likely, it was established by people who wanted to take part in the child labour project and created an NGO on the basis of which they could participate and ceased their operations when funding of the project dried up for them, which in PCSW&HR's case would be the time UNICEF exited from the Sialkot project in October 2000. |

## TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

| Organization | Profile[1] |
|---|---|
| PCYO | PCYO stands for the Pakistan Crescent Youth Organization. Not much information is available for this NGO. It is located in Sialkot and seems to have come into existence in 1998 at the time of the child labour project and now appears to have become dormant with the departure of UNICEF from the project in October 2000. Its strength when it was working with UNICEF reached about 13 mobilizers. |
| PRSP | PRSP stands for the Punjab Rural Support Programme. PRSP is an NGO that was established by the Government of Punjab in 1998 on the model of NRSP. Whereas NRSP's activities are national in scope, PRSP's are restricted to Punjab. It is a well-endowed organization (endowment size: US$8 million) and has the same strength in Sialkot as the NRSP office. In fact, PRSP took over NRSP's microcredit part of the project after NRSP exited and several members of NRSP's staff were transferred to PRSP. |
| SAHE | Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) is a Sialkot-based NGO established in 1992 that is modelled after a Lahore-based NGO with the same name. SAHE Sialkot undertakes research on the state of education in Sialkot as well as organizes seminars and lectures aimed to create awareness on education and other matters of social significance. It is also running a Reebok-funded school in Sialkot, established jointly by the former and its Sialkot supplier, Moltex Corporation. The total strength of SAHE is around 18 individuals. |

## TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

| Organization | Profile[1] |
|---|---|
| Sudhaar | Sudhaar came into existence in 1994 in Lahore. Its early projects involved working with children in tanneries located in Kasur (area near Lahore) to discourage them from working. Presently, it has operations throughout the Punjab, covering the areas of non-formal education, improvement in performance of government primary schools, and district education planning and implementation has operations throughout Pakistan. Its Sialkot office works on projects related to the soccer ball and surgical instruments industries and has a strength of about 15 employees. |

Note to the table:

1. Organization strengths, in terms of number of employees, should be taken as rough approximations as these organizations are project-based and the number of employees they have will be a function of the number of projects for which they have a contract at any given point in time.

**Source:** Baidarie. (2000). *Annual Overview 2000* (Public Document). Sialkot: Baidarie; National Rural Support Programme [NRSP]. (2000). *Annual Report 1999-2000*. Islamabad: National Rural Support Programme; Punjab Rural Support Programme [PRSP]. (2000). *PRSP: First Annual Report 1998 99* (Public Document). Lahore: Punjab Rural Support Programme; Minutes of PCC Meetings (1 – 22, 27, 34, 38-39, and 49); Save the Children. (1997). *Stitching footballs: Voices of Children* (Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children Fund; Sudhaar. (2002). *Sudhaar Quarterly Report* (Public Document). Lahore: Sudhaar; Sudhaar. (2002a). *Sudhaar Education Magazine*. Sialkot: Sudhaar.

The above tables provide us with a panoramic view of the organizations involved and the activities taken under the aegis of the social protection program (see also figures 2 and 3 for a diagrammatical representation). It, thus, provides a context or sets the stage where we can now proceed to discuss some major themes and challenges that arose during the implementation of the said program.

### Hostile Spectators

One of the greatest challenges confronting our social engineers at the inception of the social protection program was the hostility of villagers, including, of course, stitching families. They had seen their carpet industry being decimated by a child labour crisis that had sprung up in that industry in the early 1990s. Now a similar crisis was approaching their soccer ball industry, bringing international

media and organizations in tow along with their feverish questioning about the presence of child labour in their villages. At the same time, some of them were receiving instructions, as stated earlier, from manufacturers and their subcontractors to use physical force if necessary, as a Norwegian TV crew found out much to its regret, to foil the prying activities of these uninvited nosy strangers who only meant bringing harm to them in forms of lower stitching orders or stopping stitching work altogether in their villages. These foreigners, they would have reckoned, had to be stopped at the village gates. Otherwise, the stitchers too would suffer the miserable fate that had befallen the carpet industry.

In this context when SCF did its first situation analysis in February and March 1997, it had to report at several places the hostility they tasted in the villages that they visited (SCF, 1997). For example, the situation analysis team recorded:

> This research may underestimate the involvement of children in football stitching. Many villagers were extremely reluctant to reveal any information about children stitching footballs, and some were hostile. Some villagers had been told by contractors not to talk about working children to researchers, and many feared the loss of jobs and livelihoods, as happened when child labour in the carpet industry hit international headlines a few years ago. (ibid: 12).

The hostility of villagers was further aggravated by macroeconomic shifts that had seen lower quality ball orders drying up in the villages, on which women heavily depended, as international customers began to switch to China on cost considerations. They, of course, did not see these invisible macro economic forces at work but did see all too painfully their visible effects which they blamed on the anti-child labour activities going on in Sialkot. Furthermore, if insult needed to be added to injury, the mis-timing of the project's two program elements catered to fulfilling that unwanted want.

As we can recall, immediately after the Atlanta Agreement in 1997, production had started shifting from households in villages to centres, anticipating and seeking to realize the prevention and monitoring program's objectives even

though that program would be launched, on the ground, several months later. While in effect the prevention and monitoring program was making itself felt on the ground, its counterpart, the social protection program that was going to ameliorate the harmful consequences of the former, was nowhere to be seen. In fact, it would not be until the next year in early January (PCC minutes of meeting #8; January 22, 1998), much after the effects of the prevention and monitoring program had pronounced themselves in the villages, that the social protection program would make itself felt in Sialkot and that too in a few villages. Thus, with orders disappearing and no recompense coming from any other quarter, largely due to the absence of synchronisation between the project's two programs, with the punishing program (prevention and monitoring) preceding its ministering counterpart (social protection), villagers were not too pleased with what was unfolding. They had been reduced to the hapless position of being spectators to a play that was about them. It would have been actually surprising if the SCF team found from these spectators a mood other than that of bewildered hostility. Among these spectators, the most bitter would be the women. With China taking away these women's low quality ball orders while the stitching centres were taking away their higher quality ball orders, these women found themselves caught in a vicious pincer movement that was squeezing their already marginal livelihoods.

The situation was, thus, a highly charged one. In this context, the NGOs waded in with television crews and jeeps prominently displaying foreign origins (e.g., UN license plates and UN seals emblazoned on the doors of their vehicles). This is how they were received as a BLCC official remembered a village visit in those early project days following the Atlanta Agreement:

> Early on our car windows broken. We were surrounded by angry mob in our car for several hours with a Canadian making [a] movie. Initially some foreigner had come and made a movie. When work stopped, [villagers] felt that movie had stopped work. Bringing bad name to village. After that for sometime using police protection. [Villagers] accused us of taking bribes . . . Found

> out films are going abroad and then work is stopping. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 97-99).

The implementing agencies quickly learned that tact was the order of the day. Participating manufacturers were asked for village contacts. Protocol became one of first contacting people of prestige and power in villages (e.g., imams of mosques, village head man (known as a chaudhry) and school teachers), individuals that internal documents of the project (e.g., UNICEF briefings for its mobilizers; see UNICEF (date not given), 'Major Activities Under UPE') referred to by the term 'influentials'. The agencies explained to these 'influentials' their virtuous intentions of helping villagers and after securing the cooperation of the influentials, would request them to vouch for their bona fides to other villagers. At that point, according to the same BLCC official quoted above, community meetings would be organized 'where we explained ourselves' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 99).

Another complementary approach to establish ties with the village community was for the project's implementing NGOs to present themselves as just Pakistani development organizations and to remove the NGO tag and their UN connections from their discussions with villagers. The NGO and UN labels, due to the wider discourse on NGOs being disseminated from the Pakistani mosque pulpits, had been associated with proselytising Christianity or some other 'Western' creed that endangered the faith of the believers. They were a liability as illustrated in the following quotes from two social mobilizers of Sudhaar:

> At another village, when we say UN, they [villagers] say not working for our betterment. What are you doing for Palestinians? What are you doing for Iraqis?' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 116).

> Yes, [we] face resistance . . . One a school teacher in village Nakhnahal, Pasrur border. From Lakshr-e-Tayyiba [an Islamic fundamentalist jihadi organization waging armed struggle or what they refer to as jihad in Indian-held Kashmir]. [I] Said I come from a *taraki idarah* [development organization]. Not saying NGO because it is viewed with negative connotations. He asked me 'who is

> funding.' Said UN. Then he said [that] we 'are all fraud. You should get up and go. I do not talk to NGOs.' Tried to reason with him. 'Are they not Jihadi organization some of which also eat money? [that is engage in embezellment].' [He] Said yes. Then I said 'same is the case with NGOs. Some are fraud. Others are not.' Now everytime Sudhaar goes, he inquires about me and would like to meet with me. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 115–116).

The interesting bit was that the NGOs could not discard their international credentials completely either. They needed, for example, the UN license plates on the motorcycles of their mobilizers to dissuade local police from applying to their employees the police's usual practice of harassing motorcyclists in order to extort money from them.[100] In the neo-colonial context, local police understood that meddling with UN agencies or other international Western agencies would not be tolerated by their masters as such action could bring international condemnation and a reduction of aid both of which were undesirable to Pakistan's ruling oligarchy. Thus, the NGOs had to constantly reinvent themselves sometimes as foreign organizations and sometimes as local ones depending on the audience fervently hoping that the audience would not catch on to their other performances contradicting the ones they were presenting to the audience in question. They were trying to follow the old adage of when in Rome do as the Romans do with the only problem being that they had to deal with not one Rome but with several Romes.

Winning the trust of the local people was a slow, arduous process. A BLCC report submitted to the PCC around March 1998 reported, 'The families, stitching soccer ball, have developed a fear of economic loss, as a result of the withdrawal of working children. Moreover they don't hope much for the openings in the labour market, with whatever the new skills etc., they are taught. These are

[100] This type of police corruption is more accurately described as extortion because state officials are illegitimately using their offices to deny to individuals what they are legally entitled to which in this case would be free road passage (Nielsen, 2003). This is quite different than bribery which is 'a payment initiated by an individual or business of some resource to a government official for a service or permission that one is not legally entitled.' (ibid: 129). Needless to say, the Pakistani police indulge in both bribery and extortion.

the few reasons why the lack of participation in the community is so witnessed.' (Bunyad Literacy Community Council [BLCC]. (1998). *Quarterly Progress Report on the Social Protection Component (Period: From 1st November 97 to 28th February 98)* (Internal report for ILO-IPEC). Lahore: Bunyad Literacy Community Council). Similarly, a report commissioned by SCF to explore the feasibility of women stitching centres in August 1998, reported the same local community wariness as the BLCC report:

> The focus of the international community on football industry connected to the child labour issues and the resulting shortage of work for the stitchers made it difficult for the research to be carried out in an apolitical environment. Rumours were abounding regarding women football stitchers. Many women were not willing to admit that they stitched footballs and hence it was difficult to collect information.
>
> The villagers were suspicious of the team. Word had spread that women should not claim that they were stitching footballs. Almost all villages would claim that there were no women stitchers in the village. (Saeed, 1998: 60)

According to some NGO personnel, this hostility began to abate as the social protection program came to be realized more visibly on the ground. As villages started to receive some fruits of the program from microcredit to school improvements, word spread on the grapevine that these NGOs could be tolerated for they brought some benefit to the village. Also, the fact that NGO NFEs used the government curriculum allayed somewhat the fears of the Religious community who were concerned that these NFEs would be dens for poisoning the minds of their young children with notions of sexual promiscuity and other such depraved Western ideals.

Resurrecting Gradgrind: All Thumbs but No Fingers

The initial hostility faced by the social program NGOs had a major impact on how the program came to be formulated on the ground. Ideally, the program

was to target child stitchers and their families who would be affected by the new stitching centre-based regime being brought about by Sialkot's soccer ball industry to make its operations transparent and monitorable. However, with the village proving difficult to penetrate, the prospects of gaining accurate data on child stitchers appearing slightly dubious, and the presence of the Atlanta Agreement deadline sinking in, the partners decided to abandon the enumeration endeavour of ascertaining the number of child stitchers. Within the constraints outlined above, such an endeavour appeared to have little chances of success. Thus, efforts aimed at quantifying the number of children were scraped largely due to the above constraints showered upon the organizations by a hostile atmosphere. There was some hope that perhaps the monitoring program could do this enumeration task as suggested in the following:

> Save the Children's research is not intended to establish precise numbers of children stitching footballs throughout the Sialkot District. This will be the task of the Sialkot programme's monitoring component. (SCF, 1997: 6).

Later, as it came blindingly clear that the animosity and wariness in the villages placed the task beyond the pale of the monitoring program, an alternative justification was retrospectively given. The official line was no longer that this would be somebody else's task as stated in the report (cited above), but that actually the report did not attempt this enumeration task on grounds of high principle:

> The priority of the SCF study was not to verify these figures, but to focus on the *quality* [original emphasis] of the lives of the working children. It was clear that thousands of children were involved in the football industry, but the nature of their involvement needed clarification. (Husselbee, 2001: 133).

Apart from the unconvincing revisionism attempted here, what is interesting to note is that both justifications fail to mention the pragmatic considerations that led to the project dropping the notion of worrying about child stitcher numbers,

considerations which are nevertheless mentioned in at least one PCC meeting (PCC minutes of meeting #6; October 17, 1997). Given the evidence provided by the internal record and the overall context prevailing at that time, it seems difficult to accept that the hostile environment played no role in the decision to jettison ascertaining the number of child stitchers.

The project's emphasis, based on the foregoing, shifted from focusing on child stitchers and their families to focusing on children and their families per se. In other words, a blanket approach was to be adopted where all village families would be eligible for program assistance as opposed to the previously conceived notion of providing assistance to child stitchers and their families. The hope now was that the safety net to be constructed would catch amongst the haul of beneficiaries, some affected child stitchers and their families. To use the vocabulary of the project practitioners, with such a wide 'target', the program courted the danger of missing its own target (i.e., the child stitchers and their families) for which it had been initially devised. Other factors would make that danger even more real.

Even if the program social engineers had determined accurately the number of children to be 'targeted', it is difficult to conceive how they could have restricted access to government schools whose infrastructure they helped rebuild to serve just former child stitchers. Similarly, if microcredit NGOs had restricted themselves just to providing credit to affected child stitching families, other villagers feeling disenfranchised at being excluded from such largess and already hostile to them, may have created problems for them or their clients. Thus, in this context there was nothing surgical about the interventions. It was all thumbs but no fingers. Child stitchers and their families who had suffered from trickle-down economics were now being subjected to trickle-down humanitarianism using ironically, instruments (e.g., microcredit) that had been devised for direct assistance to vulnerable groups. In this trickle-down humanitarianism that came to be sprouted in the slippery soils of expediency, it was hoped that by helping the villages eventually that assistance would trickle-down to the child stitchers and

their families. As it would turn out, the trickle-down approach in this case as well did not do much to aid the plight of its intended 'targets'.

To take SCF's own interventions, only 30% of SCF's microcredit recipients hailed from stitching families (Crawford, 2001: 16). Since credit extended to a person whose relatives were stitchers could be classified in the statistics of NRSP (SCF's microcredit implementing NGO) as credit extending to the stitching family, the figure of actual stitchers helped by credit would be most likely lower than that. In fact, figures slightly higher than those admitted in PCC meetings that only 12% of borrowers belonged to soccer stitching families, seem more accurate (e.g., see PCC minutes of meeting #21; April 29, 1999).

Not only the blanket approach would see to the target of stitching families largely being missed, but also the approach of establishing trust in the villages. First, the NGOs forged relationships with 'influentials'. These influentials for services rendered would want to participate if not run the microcredit schemes. They would have an important say in the membership of the COs formed whose individual members would be the recipients of credit. With influentials having a say who participates in the NGO largesse, it was likely that the lower orders, including the stitchers who comprise the poorer elements in villages, would be excluded, an eventuality that was actually borne out, to quote an SCF report:

> community organisations (COs) [came] to be formed, which excluded the lowest income groups and football stitching households, women in particular. In the early stages of the project, the composition of the CO was considered less important than the actual formation of one. As awareness of the CO's activities grew, more COs were formed and their composition began to include more stitcher households and women. (1998a: 3).[101]

[101]As microcredit personnel explained to me, a Community Organization (CO), in the context of the project, is a group of villagers consisting of about 16–20 members that is set up by a microcredit agency. Individual group members receive credit, upon recommendation by the group, from the microcredit agency while the group collectively is responsible for ensuring that each one of its members returns their respective loans as per the terms of the credit agreement. This collective obligation is called 'social collateral' in the microcredit jargon (see also PRSP, 2000).

Alas, as we know from above, this prognosis of stitcher inclusion failed to reach the scale implied in this SCF's apology of why stitchers were being excluded from microcredit.

Some of the other SCF social program activities did not fare qualitatively better than the microcredit initiative. The school infrastructure building efforts were exhausted in just thirty schools (Crawford, 2001: 14). Given that there are at least 2600 schools, this effort was a drop in the bucket (ibid). The much-publicised vocational training, similarly, ended up helping, at best, an insignificant percentage of stitchers. For example, to take SCF's training scheme, only 1190 people received some kind of skill training, 80% of whom were women (Crawford, 2001: 32). Though this is commendable given that there were at least, by the project's own estimates, thirty thousand stitchers (IMAC, 2003), the vocational training extended to only about 4% of the stitching population. Lastly, SCF's women stitchers centre program only benefited just 63 women. Its aim of setting up centres where women could run their own stitching centres failed due to not accounting for certain obvious market conditions that showed not much forethought had been given to such a scheme. Some of the factors overlooked by SCF and Baidarie, according to the former, that later undermined this project were:

- A lack of co-operation from subcontractors.
- Quality problems in work done by the organised women's group.
- Reluctance of the manufacturers to provide regular work to such small groups.
- When manufacturers demanded that the subcontractors provide stitchers with special facilities, such as spacious workrooms, toilets, etc., the subcontractors made the same demands of the women stitchers – demands they could not afford to meet. (SCF, 2000a: 9).

Like SCF, the income generating schemes of other partners and their implementing NGOs dazzled with the same lack lustre statistics (e.g., BLCC's microcredit scheme dispersed credits to only 68 families (IMAC, 2003)). The

only reprieve seems to have been on the education side. The NFEs, for example, seem to have made about 10,000 children literate (ibid). Public figures are not available to judge how many of these children were actually former stitchers. A rough guess can be made. An NGO who set up NFEs as part of the social protection program was kind enough to give this research effort access to its internal NFE database of 2,381 children who were educated in its NFEs. Based on that database, 65% of all children were former stitchers which is markedly higher rate of successful targeting than that provided by the crucial income generation program.

Effectively, the social protection program had resurrected Gradgrind, perhaps the most memorable character of Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, arguably his most polemical tract against the heartlessness of industrial capitalism. Gradgrind, an ex-mill owner, while aware and somewhat indifferent to the fact that workers were being bled dry by industrialists of Victorian England, nevertheless, ran schools for their workers' children with the proviso that they be taught 'only facts'. Succeeding in setting up schools, actually quite like the ones Grandgrind established (i.e., one room affairs filled with emaciated faces) and not doing much to alleviate the material suffering of the children and their families, the social protection program ended up resurrecting Gradgrind with, given its imprecise interventions, all thumbs but, alas, no fingers, much to the regret of the stitching families.

Sole Proprietorships in the Partnership

The final theme that I would like to briefly touch upon is the collaboration dynamics of the partners and their implementing agencies involved in the social project's protection program. Though the Atlanta Agreement was termed a partnership, it seems that many of the organizations, that came to participate in this partnership acted as sole proprietors, effectively setting their own course of action often with little consultation. As a SCF's end of project review notes:

> To gain real synergies in partnerships, there needs to be more than an alliance of organisations, each following their own separate, but broadly

> complementary agendas. In Sialkot, 74 businesses joined the partnership, contracting to work towards socially responsible business. But, the partnership between the wider group of stakeholders: Government, SCCI, ILO, UNICEF, SC-UK (in practice, though not as a signatory) bore more resemblance to a functioning network than to a real partnership. This meant, for instance, that there was "Collaboration that did not infringe on the ideology and approach of any organisation involved, or risk the collapse of any, or all of the organisations into a single one" and that there was "shared recognition of the distinct added value, and role, of each organisation involved". This meant that while, for example, SC UK was instrumental in the ILO decisions to develop women only stitching centres planning, monitoring and assessment were not fully integrated. (Crawford, 2001: 12).

This evaluation should not surprise us. The fact that the PCC was called the Project Coordination Committee and not the Project Collaboration Committee seems to suggest a bias towards arms-length communications and interactions as long as ideologies were not crossed where intensive discussions would result among the partners (e.g., on the inclusion of unions).

Crawford's comments on an absence of substantive collaboration, where the activities of each organization would be closely coordinated and integrated with the others, were particularly true for the social protection program. For example, the 16th SIT meeting dealt exclusively with the need for the social protection program to have an integrated approach by which was meant that microcredit, awareness raising meetings, and other such social program initiatives should be coordinated and made to occur simultaneously in the same area rather than the present practice of one initiative being undertaken in one village while another is undertaken in another village located at the other end of the district (SIT minutes of meeting #16; November 18, 1998). This approach which continued throughout the project was criticised early on by BLCC in its mid-term report submitted in March 1998. BLCC wrote in large bold letters a subheading 'A Little More than just a Coordination Amongst the Partner Organizations',

under which they emphatically stated 'Joint working by all partner organizations in one area, supporting and building on each other's activity is the dire need on the grass root level. Awareness raising campaign, revolving credit/saving loan facility, if simultaneously take place, would combine all efforts to ensure the withdrawal of working children. The joint working is essential.' (Bunyad Literacy Community Council [BLCC]. (1998). *Quarterly Progress Report on the Social Protection Component (Period: From 1st November 97 to 28th February 98)* (Internal report for ILO-IPEC). Lahore: Bunyad Literacy Community Council).

The absence of close joint-working led to considerable overlap among the activities of the implementing NGOs. For example, both BLCC and NRSP engaged in microcredit. Similarly both Sudhaar and PCYO and PCHR&SW engaged in community awareness. Given this overlap, turf battles among the participating NGOs were not uncommon. This was most intense in the realm of microcredit. The entire project community objected to BLCC's launching of a microcredit scheme, which it continued nevertheless (PCC minutes of meeting #19; February 25, 1999; and #21; April 29, 1999). The lack of communication also meant that organizations could not learn from each other or through discussions reach some best-practice understandings on a number of matters (e.g., which type of books are most effective in imparting literacy to children). However, where lack of communication would most seriously menace the social protection program was with regards to its sustainability.

Unlike the prevention and monitoring program, the sustainability of the social protection program seemed to have been a non-issue at the beginning. In the first PCC meeting, a Pakistan Government-established NGO, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) was inducted into the partnership (PCC minutes of meeting #1; March 27, 1997). PBM was created by a 'government statute with a charter to assist needy widows, orphans and disabled and chronically sick people, by providing assistance for education, shelter and rehabilitation.' (SCF, 1997: 60). PBM was to take over the social protection program from the implementing agencies after the program had reached its 24 month deadline stipulated by the Atlanta Agreement (ibid).

In the early days, PBM initially showed enthusiasm for the project. It committed in the next PCC meeting (held on May 15, 1997) approximately US$300,000 to the project's social protection program. The funds, at least per the PCC meetings as well as other documents that show sources of funding, seem not to have materialised. However, this fact would dawn upon the partners later. In the meanwhile, the Atlanta partners were boosted by PBM's commitment which was substantial as it was one of the largest single contributions to the project. In January 1998, PBM showed a desire to begin working with BLCC on NFEs so that it would be able to administer such centres as soon as it would take over the operations from BLCC in October 1999 when the 24 month deadline of the project would be reached. However, as per the PCC meeting minutes, no such activity took place. By the Fall of 1998, PCC strongly encouraged PBM to 'start participation as soon as possible' (PCC minutes of meeting #14; circa September 11–October 20, 1998).[102]

By December 1998, PCC was growing concerned about the lack of PBM's involvement in the project that was now beginning to open an issue that they had considered was a forgone conclusion: sustainability of the social protection program beyond the time frame stipulated by the Atlanta Agreement. The minutes of the 17th PCC meeting record the following:

> Khawaja Zakauddin raising the issue of Pakistan Bait Ul Maal's [PBM] involvement in the Sialkot project observed that the activities of PBM were not visible and there were no visible signs of successor arrangements by PBM to take over from BLCC, as already agreed. He requested that PBM to give something in writing about the future programme of PBM, for information of PCC.
>
> Mr. Abdul Rasheed Awan, representing PBM said that Pakistan Bait Ul Maal would definitely take over from BLCC after completion of 18 months time period. He added that arrangements have been

[102] The minutes of the 14th PCC meeting contain no date of the meeting. However, the document contains items dated September 10, 1998. Keeping this fact in mind and that the next meeting was held on October 21, 1998, leads us to estimate the meeting date to be between September 11, 1998 and October 20, 1998.

> made to adopt BLCC system in due course of time. He also promised to give PBM's programme on successor arrangements, to PCC in 10 days time. (PCC minutes of meeting #17; December 17, 1998).

No such PBM program for successor arrangements was forthcoming at the next PCC monthly meeting (held on January 28, 1998) which was also to be PBM's last meeting as a member of the Atlanta partnership.

With a question mark now looming over not only the prevention and monitoring program, but also its social protection counterpart, the partners began to search for a sustainable arrangement for the latter. By March 1999, SCF proposed a creation of a 'Child Labour Cell' to be established by SCCI which would perform the social protection program's activities (PCC minutes of meeting #20; March 25, 1999). SCCI enthusiastically asked SCF to prepare a formal proposal (ibid). The latter was presented two months later (PCC minutes of meeting #21; April 29, 1999). By October of the same year, the proposal had become a reality (PCC minutes of meeting #27; October 26, 1999).

A 'Child Social Development Programme' (CSDP) was created by the SCCI as a new activity for its secretariat and came to be housed in SCCI's building with the objective of carrying out the social protection program activities when the second phase of the project was to end in December 2002 (SCF, 2000). SCF provided two computers to the office of this program (PCC minutes of meeting #27; October 26, 1999). The only change between the SCF proposal and the one that was enacted by October 1999 was in nomenclature. As an industrialist who became the first head of CSDP, informed me that the name was changed from 'Child Labour Cell' because the latter would constantly remind external stakeholders that there had been a child labour problem in the industry, an association that the industry hoped would be buried by the past. The CSDP was to be financed initially by SCF and a memorandum of understanding concerning the financing arrangement just needed to be finalised and signed (ibid).

Once again, it seems that the social protection program's sustainability had been secured. The lack of communication that had marred the project would

now create serious turbulence for this solution. While publicly hailing the arrival of CSDP in the colourful project publications, especially right after the October 1999 two year project anniversary (e.g., see SCF, 2000), not much had happened on the CSDP front. The project had been extended for another two years and the implementing agencies continued to work as before. The initial intention held by the partners of CSDP taking over the project's social protection activities after these 24 months turned out to be never realized.

From SCF's perspective, after October 1999, there seemed to be little hope of CSDP becoming more than just a paper reality with a small office in the SCCI chambers as its empirical referent. This is because by June 2001, according to SCF's understanding, the memorandum of understanding had not been signed between it and SCCI (Letter from Dr. Amena Hasan Project Manager Sialkot, Save the Children UK, to Mian Naeem Javed, President, SCCI, *Concerns related to the recent developments regarding CSDP*, June 22, 2001). Thus, it was surprised when it learned that without such an agreement, and without consultation, SCCI had hired personnel for the CSDP (ibid). An angry letter was written by the SCF's Sialkot Project Manager to the SCCI President on June 22, 2001 containing the following decision bluntly delivered:

> It is encouraging to see that SCCI is willing to support the CSDP. At the same time the step taken by SCCI to go ahead independently to fill the position of the Director for an interim period, without any discussions with the partners, has raised serious concerns for Save the Children regarding the transparency of the process in which this decision had been taken. Given that we have already, in principal [sic], agreed to a joint decision making process in the project agreement.
>
> I would therefore like to register Save the Children's serious reservation, after this recent development, to enter into a partnership to support the CSDP in the present situation. (ibid).

The SCCI must have found SCF's letter perplexing. According to the President, the memorandum of understanding had already been signed and what was

blameworthy was that SCF had not approached SCCI on CSDP, and after having exhausted its patience, it had decided to make recruitment decisions by itself. This was stated in an earlier letter to which SCF had penned the above response:

> I would like to inform you that as the President, SCCI had already signed the MOU [memorandum of understanding] last year, indicating its agreement to the MOU of CSDP . . . In the meantime, the SCCI had decided to go ahead with its role as envisaged in the MOU, and beyond, through its own resources. In order to avoid any further delay in this matter, this step was necessary to make CSDP operational, we have arranged for Director CSDP. The position of Director will be occupied in consultation and with all the partners later, as already decided. (Letter from Mian Naeem Javed, President SCCI, to Dr. Amena Hasan, Project Manager Sialkot, Save the Children UK, *Comments on CSDP Memorandum of Understanding*, June 13, 2001; Ref No. CSDP/1306/23/13-B).

The above shows that there was a serious lack of communication between the partners, leading to grevious misunderstanding among them on strategic matters. SCF withdrew from CSDP and left the project a few months afterwards. CSDP then fell into a moribund status. Later it became the Child and Social Development Organization (CSDO), an independently incorporated NGO (staff size 4), because it was felt by several observers both inside and outside the SCCI that if CSDP were not given a veneer of an independent organization, it would continue to quite starkly depict the reality that it was SCCI's mouthpiece. By giving CSDP a nominally independent existence, SCCI hoped that should support be needed from independent organizations to vouchsafe for SCCI's integrity in front of pressure groups or external stakeholders, CSDO could be summoned for such a good cause. Having the veneer of being independent, its guarantee would go longer than a guarantee coming from a program being run explicitly and directly by the SCCI itself. Thus, CSDO has become a last emergency resort for industry. Neither its staff nor the project NGOs consider CSDO to be a part of the Sialkot child labour project. In the meanwhile, SCCI gives it partial funding to

engage in general child labour rights awareness campaigns by visiting villages and holding meetings where CSDO imparts such information. CSDO too tries to raise its own funds and is presently hopeful of getting money for an anti-begging profession campaign. All this is a far cry from what had been envisioned for it: the premier agency carrying on the social protection activities of the project after the international partners had ended their associations with the project.

SCF's decision to leave the CSDP partnership and then the Atlanta partnership altogether a few months later (i.e., September 2001) put a question mark on the sustainability aspect of the social protection program which it has not been able to shake. SCF, of course, justified its decision to exit on the grounds that:

> [SCF's] role in Sialkot is complete – at least for the foreseeable future.
>
> This is largely because SC-UK's major objectives in the area – to assist in protecting children during a precarious period of transition when they were being removed from work in the football stitching industry – have been met. (Crawford, 2001: 21)

Given the lack of microcredit provided to child stitcher families by SCF and an absence of a credible sustainable social protection program in evidence at the time of SCF's departure it seems questionable whether the major objectives had been met. It seemed that despite SCF's rhetoric to protect children, its solidarity with them ran only as far as its funding for its exit seems to have matched the ending date of its DFID funding for the Sialkot project.

Unlike the prevention and monitoring program which had insecure beginnings but ended up on a somewhat sustainable path towards the end of the international Atlanta partners' commitment to the project, the reverse seems to have held true for the social protection program. Its sustainability is seriously in question. Many of the social protection program NGOs left the scene when the patrons departed while the remaining few are desperately trying to acquire new patrons. Some have even grovelled to SCCI, as depicted in a letter written by a social protection program NGO beseeching the SCCI for funds or linking them up

with patrons who would finance them to carry on with their good works.[103] When the funding could not be procured, the activities were terminated. This was the case, for example, with NFEs that had to be wound up as funding finished for them. BLCC's NFEs were wound up soon after March 2003 when its funding came to an end and Sudhaar was doing the same in October 2003 as its funding for this activity had ended. Efforts were being made to make the NFEs, in the project jargon, 'sustainable' (i.e., capable of operating without project assistance) as well as mainstream the NFE children into government schools those that are available and functional, two conditions rarely found in Sialkot. Project personnel were highly pessimistic about both these efforts. Only a few NFEs had made it to sustainability. As for mainstreaming NFE children, internal PCC meetings were noting that reports from project organizations were mentioning 'significant dropout rate, figures about idle children, children not interested [in going to government schools]' (PCC minutes of meeting #48; December 18, 2002).

At the time of this study, the international NGOs that had worked on the social protection program had pulled out of the project. SCF left Sialkot altogether in September 2001 while UNICEF was busy winding up its Sialkot field office. It had exited from the project by October 2000 and the NGO project personnel expected UNICEF to leave Sialkot by December 2003. In October 2003, only three NGOs were at work in the social protection program, a far cry from the program and the project's zenith (see figures 2 and 3). Baidarie was continuing its ILO-funded health awareness program. The funding for this program was to finish by the end of March 2004, the date by which ILO was to pull out of the Sialkot child labour project. PRSP was providing microcredit up to December 2003. The last remaining social protection NGO, Sudhaar, apart from winding up its NFEs, was working with Adidas funds to continue its basic school infrastructure upgrade program that was expected to end in December 2003. Based on correspondence between Sudhaar and Adidas, there were good chances of that project being extended unlike the PRSP microcredit activity funded by ILO that was pulling out in March 2004 but gave funding till the end of December

[103] This letter is available in the private archives of IMAC (Sialkot, Pakistan).

2003 for PRSP's microcredit program. However, it is quite likely that PRSP will use its own funds to keep the project alive as it is a well-endowed organization and prides itself, according to its Sialkot employees, on using its own internal as opposed to donor-given funds for its activities. The same cannot be said for Baidarie. It is a small Sialkot-based outfit, and based on the interviews with its personnel, there were little chances of its health program continuing once its ILO funding was to end in March 2004.

*The Official Score Card*

To conclude our section on the child labour project, it is fitting to end with the following table listing statistics relating to the major achievements (for which data were available) claimed by project organizations (past and present) for both its prevention and monitoring, and social protection programs:

## TABLE 7: PROJECT'S MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS (OFFICIALLY CLAIMED)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prevention and Monitoring Program:** | |
| Number of Manufacturers in the Program: | 103 |
| No. of manufactures removed due to non-payment: | 6 |
| Estimated Number of Manufacturers Still Out of the Program: | 78 (approx) |
| Total Number of Stitching Centres Presently Monitored: | 1367 |
| Total Number of Small Village-based Stitching Centres for Women: | 222 |
| Total Number of Exclusive Female Stitching Centres: | 276 |
| Total Number of Combined (Male+Female) Stitching Centres: | 70 |
| Total Number of Female Stitchers: | 3262 |
| Total Number of Centres being Monitored outside Sialkot: | 106 |
| Total Number of Monitoring Visits carried out, so far: | 55,769 |
| Total Number of stitchers being monitored: | 25,580 |
| Volume of soccer ball export production under monitoring: | >95% |
| **Social Protection Program:** | |
| **BLCC** | |
| Total Number of Non-Formal Education Centres (NFEs)[1] established by BLCC: | 185 |

## TABLE 7 (CONTINUED)

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Number of Village Education Committees (VECs)[2] established by BLCC: | 119 |
| Total Number of Family Education Committees (FECs)[3] set up by BLCC: | 185 |
| Total Number of Children Enrolled at 185 NFEs: | 8189 |
| (Male:2,994+Female:5,195) | |
| No. of children stayed at NFEs for longer period: | 6019 |
| No. of children mainstreamed into Formal Education: | 4751 |
| No. of NFEs converted into regular schools by communities: | 9 |
| Number of Children provided Healthcare: | 3229 |
| Total Amount Disbursed as Microcredit (by BLCC): | 718,000 |
| Total Number of Families benefited from BLCC's Microcredit: | 68 |
| **Sudhaar** | |
| Total Number of NFEs : | 70 |
| Total Number of Village Education Committees set up by Sudhaar: | 58 |
| Total Number of Family Education Committees set up by Sudhaar: | 58 |
| Total Number of Children enrolled at Sudhaar's NFEs: | 2381(Males: 887+Females:1494) |
| Total Number of Children mainstreamed into formal education: | 539 |
| **NRSP** | |
| Total Number of stitcher families provided with microcredit facilities | 7000 |
| Total Amount disbursed by NRSP as microcredit | (Rs.) 155.23 million (US$2.59 million) |
| **PRSP** | |
| Total Number of stitcher families identified as potential beneficiaries: | 1491 |
| Total Number of stitcher families provided with credit facilities: | 1466 |
| Total Amount disbursed by PRSP as microcredit: | (Rs.) 14.6 million US$243,780 |
| **UNICEF** | |
| Universal Primary Education (UPE) Project | 100% enrolment in schools of all children between ages 5 – 7 in the Sialkot district |

Notes to the Table:

1. A Non-Formal Education Centre (NFE) is a small school (i.e., 1–3 classrooms) set up by a project NGO where 3–4 hours of instructions are provided daily to about 35 students per room to bring them up to Grade 5 level proficiency after which they are

mainstreamed to Government schools for further education. Teachers for NFEs are hired usually from the villages where the NFEs are established by the project NGOs who also provide them with teacher training.

2. VEC stands for Village Education Committee. A VEC is created by a project NGO consisting of about 7-9 village personnel to oversee the administration of a project NGO's NFE.
3. FEC stands for Family Education Committee. A FEC is established by a project NGO for its NFE. It consists roughly of the same number of individuals as a VEC. The objective of a FEC is to promote awareness in the village about the importance of education.

**Source:** Crawford, S. (2001). *Lessons Learned from the Project to Protect the Rights and Livelihoods of Working Children in Pakistan.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University; International Monitoring Association for Child Labour [IMAC]. (2003). *Fact Sheet of the Sialkot Soccer Ball Programme (July 2003).* Sialkot: International Monitoring Association for Child Labour; Sudhaar. (2003). *Process of Establishment of NFE Centers in Sialkot* (Public Document). Sialkot: Sudhaar.

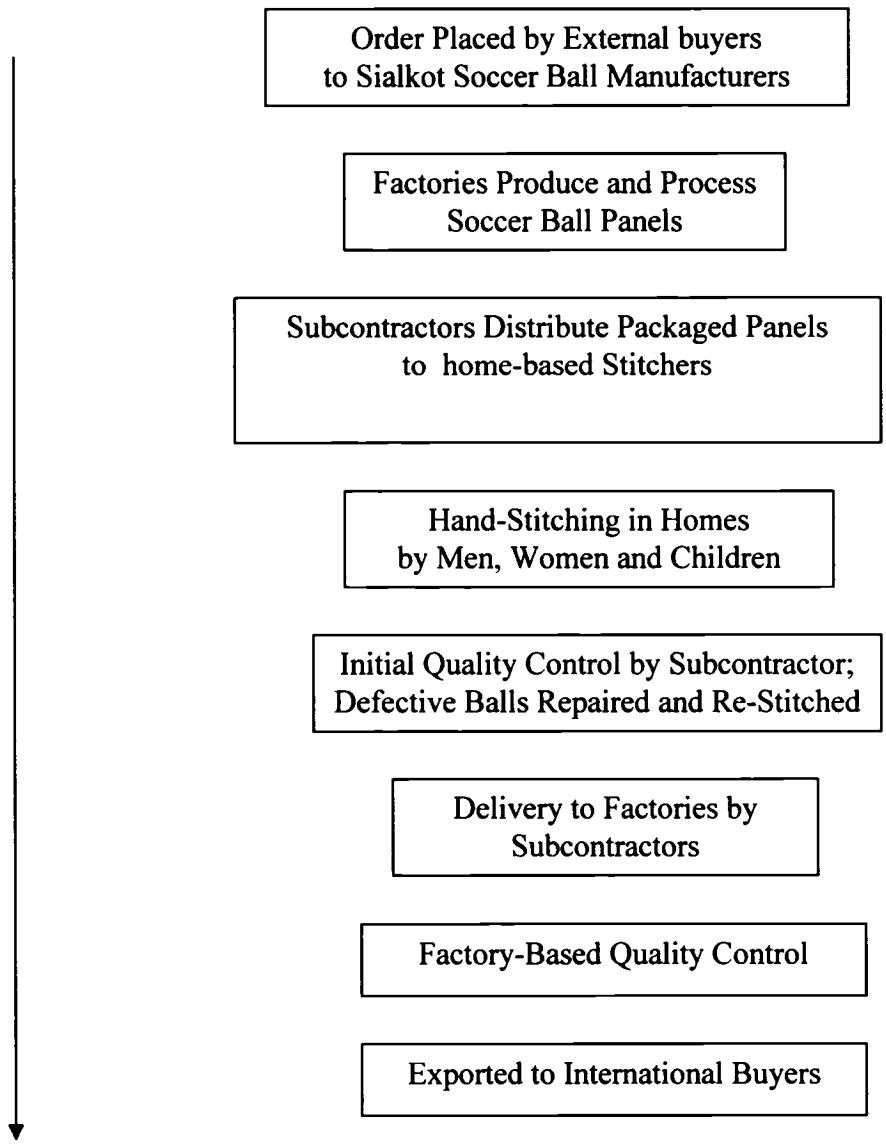
Being achievements that are publicly claimed by the project organizations themselves, the table, in effect, is the proverbial official score card for the project. Apart from providing information about the project's successes or goals scored as defined by its organizations, the table also helps us get a feel for the scale and scope of the multifaceted activities that have been undertaken under the project's banner.

Since we are dealing with the official score card, it is prudent to insert a few caveats regarding the information it bears. To begin with, care should be exercised in not falling into the error of viewing these statistics as precise indicators when they are at best very rough approximations, an admission frequently though not always made by the sources from which they have been derived. Also, this score card is purely descriptive. As rich as it may be in descriptive statistics, it is quite destitute when it comes to evaluation. What do these numbers mean for the NGO employees that worked on this project? What fictions are being implied by these facts? The score card records the goals the organizations claim to have scored. What are the goals that were missed? And what about the goals that were scored against them? For these qualitative questions, the score card has nothing to offer us for the moment. It contains only quantitative information. Thus, if we wish to make deeper sense of it, we need to read this quantitative data with a qualitative eye (e.g., the education statistics make no mention of what percentage of the children mainstreamed have not

dropped out from schools, an issue that we have seen was raised in a PCC meeting on December 18, 2002 (PCC minutes of meeting #48, December 18, 2002). Much of what we have already written can be brought to bear for this qualitative reading task. The next chapter will hopefully move us further in this crucial sense-making endeavour.

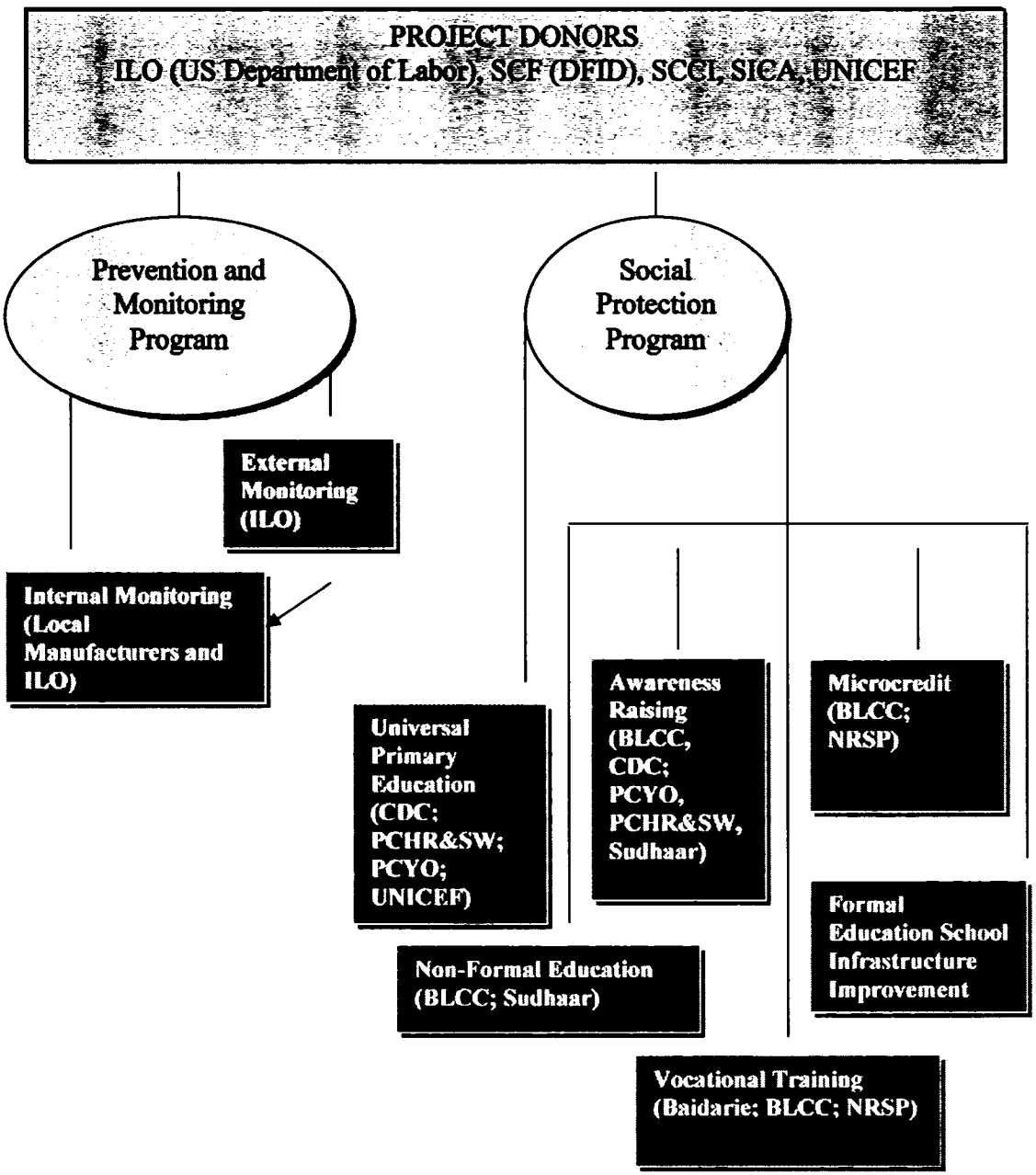
In this chapter I provided a case study on the Sialkot child labour project. This required providing a history of the child labour crisis that brought the project into being and the Sialkot soccer ball industry with which it has been intimately connected. Reflecting on that industry, two interesting observations can be made. Firstly, it seems that the industry seems to be following a repeating cycle of cottage to factory economic organization. The industry began as cottage-based in the late 19$^{th}$ century. After that, one witnessed a period of factory organization that lasted up to the end of the 1960s. In the 1970s, thanks to the labour riots, industry cottaged out production only to return to greater factory organization in the form of stitching centres in the 1990s (see figure 4 for changes in the soccer ball production and distribution chain). While several industries show a linear path from cottage to factory, in this case, we tend to observe a circular one. The second observation to note is that the catalyst that produces the cottage to factory and then back again changes is often foreign, emanating from outside Sialkot. As figure 5 shows, the catalyst for change in the production organization of the industry was actually international in nature whether it was the British colonial presence or the more current child labour crisis that led to the stitching centres. Even the 1947 subcontinent partition was an international event, involving three countries (i.e., the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and India). The only exception was the labour radicalization by Bhutto which was an indigenous catalyst.

## FIGURE 1: SOCCER BALL SUPPLY CHAIN (1995)



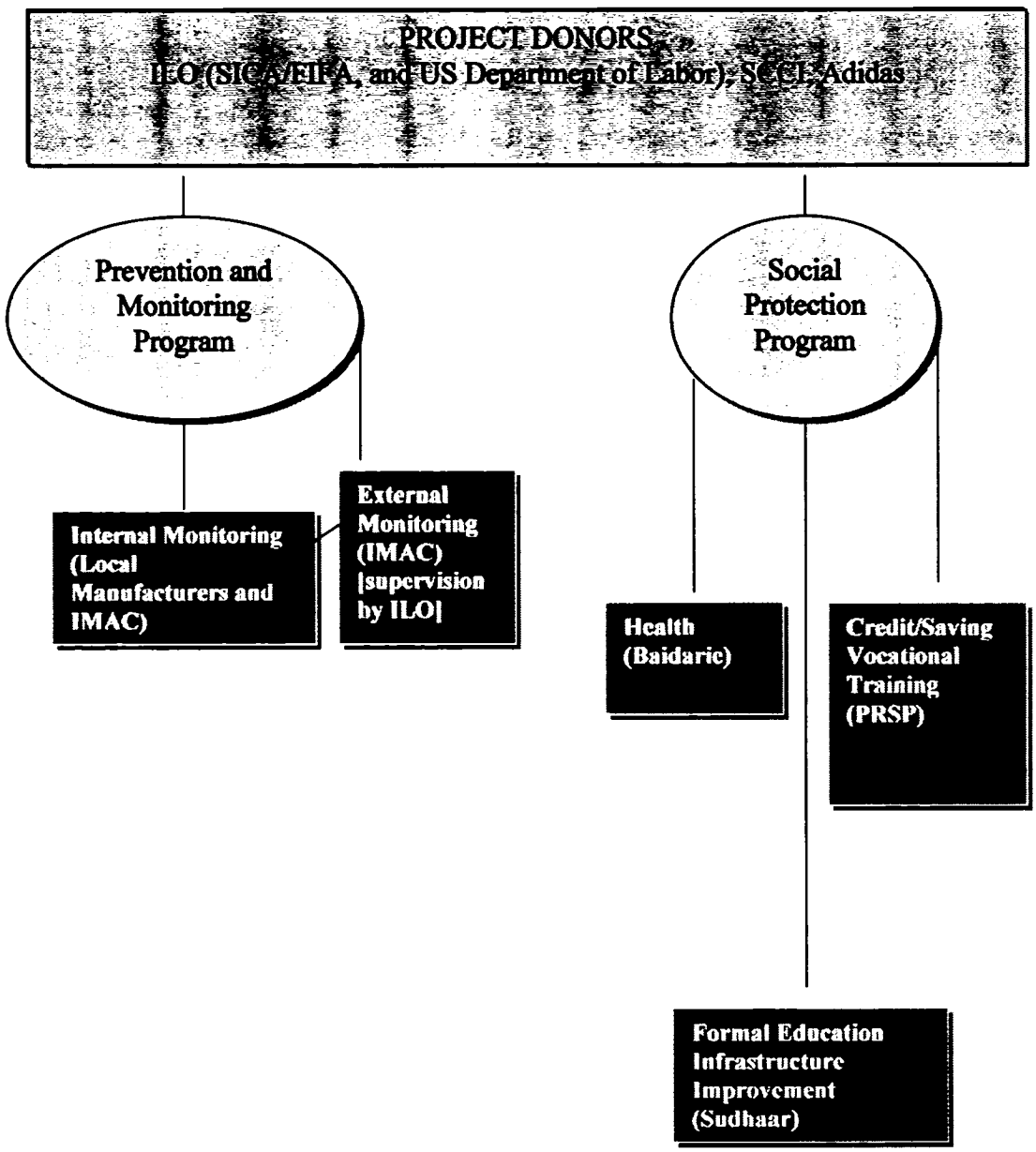

Adapted from Save the Children. (date not given). *Info Pack* (Public document). Islamabad: Save the Children.

## FIGURE 2: PROJECT AT ITS PEAK (DECEMBER 1999)

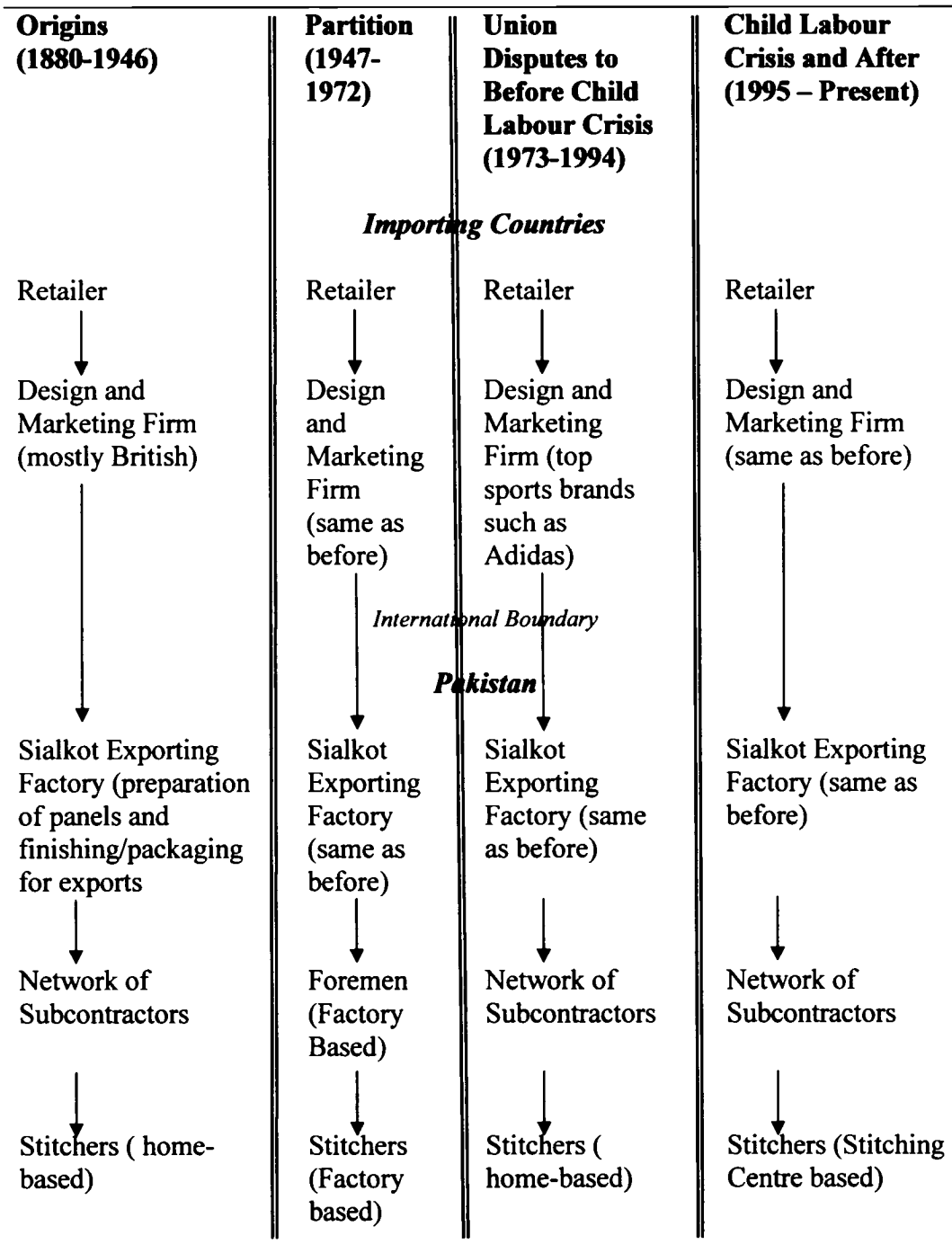



Adapted from Kazmi, B. A., & Macfarlane, M. (2002). *Elimination of Child Labour: Business and Local Communities*.Unpublished manuscript.

## FIGURE 3: PROJECT AS AT OCTOBER 2003



## FIGURE 4: SOCCER BALL SUPPLY CHAIN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



## FIGURE 5: PERIODIZATION OF PAKISTAN'S SOCCER BALL INDUSTRY

| **Time Period** | **Pre Independence (1880-1946)** | **Pre Bhutto Era (1947–1972)** | **Bhutto – Pre-Child Labour Crisis (1973–1994)** | **Child Labour Crisis and after (1995-present)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Catalyst** | British Colonial Presence | Indian Subcontinent Partition | Labour Radicalization by Socialist Government | Child Labour Controversy |
| **Ownership** | Sikh/Hindus | Muslim middle class | Same as before but now upper class. | Same as before |
| **Mode of Economic Organization** | Cottage-Based | Factory | Cottage-Based | Stitching Centres |
| **Product Value Range** | Low | Low-Medium | Low–High | Low-High |
| **Market Location** | Mainly Indian Subcontinent and England | Europe | Europe and Far East Asia | Europe, Far East Asia, and North America |
| **Gender Composition (stitching workforce)** | Not available. If stitiching at village, then likely equal split between men and women | Mostly men | Roughly equal split between men and women | Mostly men |
| **Labour Relations** | N.A. | N.A. | Open conflict and later suppression of unions | Sporadic strikes and labour repression |
| **International Media Coverage** | Favourable (industry known for craftsmanship) | Favourable (craftsmanship + contributing to development) | Favourable (same as before) | Initially hostile to currently appreciative of efforts to phase out child labour |
| **Child Labour** | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

# CHAPTER 5: DOMAIN DYNAMICS: NGOs IN THE FIELD

## INTRODUCTION: 'THE MOST PROFITABLE BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN IS NGO'

The sun seemed to be at the end of its endurance. It was descending swiftly towards the horizon, trying to quickly pull it over, much like a weary traveller pulling over a blanket at night after a hard day's fatigue-riddled journey. As the sub-continental sun nestled below the horizon, it cast off a rich shimmering golden hue, unique to this part of the earth. Life began to look less like Edith Piaf's classic 'La Vie en Rose' and more like 'La Vie en Gold', as if one were looking at the world through a 1950s tinted Leica camera lens. The hue filtered in through the windows of a Non-Governmental Organization's (NGO's) office where I found myself concluding an interview in a day which had been long and exhausting. The yellowish hue was beginning to drench my notes with its Midas touch. Feeling as always the absence of gold in my interview transcripts, I was touched by the sun's gesture of doing its bit in trying to fill that void by giving the words the appearance of gold. Little could I know that my most riveting interview session for that day was yet to come.

The descending sun also signalled to me that I should now be departing the premises of the NGO's office and be making my way towards the confines of my Sialkot residence where I would begin the laborious process of writing more legibly all the verbatim interview notes I had taken for the day. As I stood outside the gates of the office, one of my informants came up to me and offered to drive me on his motorbike home. He lived in the opposite direction to where I was staying, and it was important to get to his village before dark as that area was notorious for hold-ups by dacoits. If you could evade the dacoits, then there were good chances that you would fall prey to the local police who also performed this service of redistributing wealth. Thus, I was puzzled by his offer and politely refused. He insisted. His insistence was articulated in a few words. But all that needed to be communicated, was communicated in the meeting of the eyes. There was restlessness there which intuitively made me feel that he needed to say much

more to me than what he had said in the interview. So I agreed to his kind offer. As we reached the confines of my residence, he added a post-script to his interview. At my Sialkot quarters, he burst out:

> You ask me about NGOs. They are all frauds. All appearances. All hype. All of them without exception. Received [rupees [Rs.]] 100 *lakhs*[104] [US$167,029] for basic education. Actually what was spent on infrastructure just [Rs.] 24 *lakhs* [US$40,073]. Others went into overheads. NGO is a way to fill their stomachs.
>
> Worked in Save the Children [SCF]. Asked me to do an evaluation of NGO work. Submitted report. Showed little work done in field. Submitted report. But that report when it came back to me had 'coating' [original word used by informant] on it. Parts coated over. When we did the stitchers report and finding things damaging to industry, talked to others that should this report damage industry, then we will make trouble for SCF. Expose their problems that we know of. Then donor not give funding.
>
> [Project NGOs] Not concerned with social protection. Just interested in lining their pockets. Why does not ILO push for labour rights. Not interested in welfare of people. We keep quiet because people getting at least some benefit. If expose them [NGOs] for wastage, then fear industry will be hurt and whatever benefits poor getting they would not even get that. So we keep quiet.
>
> If we get money for wage rights then do advocacy. Projects driven by donor money. Even when we know that spending money on a project is not useful, but we have to spend it and if we do not, will not get the money, we spend it. So spend even when there is no use.
>
> If the amount of money spent overall on this project, each stitcher would get 30,000 rupees [US$501]. What will be benefit of your study? Would it not hurt local NGOs?

[104] 1 Lakh = 100,000.

> Somebody told me that 'the work you do is honourable but your source of income is *haram* [illegitimate].' Some people made money by supplying heroin in soccer balls during Zia time. America opened up trade with Pakistan. Zia said I need money do not care how you get it. Some years ago, some bust where their consignment was caught.[105]
>
> Feel we are being used by external donors for their agenda. Why [would foreign organizations] spend millions on so limited a project like DOL [US Department of Labor]. But try to find opportunities to benefit ourselves, the nation. True my salary is tied to NGO sector but do not feel good about the way it is operating. Top managers make 150,000 to 200,000 rupees [per month] [US$2505 to US$3339]. The most profitable business in Pakistan is NGO. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 124-131).

The above outburst is noteworthy in at least two important respects. First, it represents anger that had been swallowed and bottled up by the NGO social mobilizer. Most likely, the mobilizer had likely rehearsed these lines time and again in the safety of his own mind. Such outburst, when publicly articulated by the subordinated classes, as social theorists have argued (e.g., Scott, 1990), rarely represent random words of anger put together. Often they take the form of an impassioned speech, suggesting that these thoughts had been formed much prior to the occasion that brings them forth. It is, thus, difficult to attribute such outpouring of feelings and emotions to some spur of the moment sensation that would produce such cogent and well deliberated vituperation and anger. The words and flow or torrent of arguments in the passage quoted above seem to have been thought out much before the interview session. They were not knee-jerk reactions. Rather, they most likely represented deep-seated and long-held feelings that were now being given the privilege of public expression.

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[105] International newswires and news publications have frequently carried reports of sporting goods exports from Sialkot, especially soccer balls, being found to contain contraband drugs (e.g., heroin). See, for example, Agence France Presse (1996b); Agence France Presse (1997); Willis (1983); and Xinhua General News Service (2002).

The other noteworthy feature of the above passage is that it illuminates some of the main dynamics of current challenges in the trenches of the Sialkot child labour project, the interorganizational domain of interest to this study. This chapter explores the dynamics occurring in this domain among the organizations working in Sialkot to implement prevention and social protection programs directed towards soccer ball child stitchers and their families. We examine how their interactions enact and make sense of the child labour project. It is these field dynamics that constitute the project's organizational drama, so to speak. It is this drama that enables us to palpably taste how that project is being experienced and made sense of as a lived reality for the organizational players.

As our focus is on the issues and challenges besetting the project's implementing organizations, those who are doing the hands-on work and directly interfacing with child stitchers and their families, it is useful to begin by looking at dynamics unfolding within the set of these organizations. Having discussed these collaborative dynamics among the project's implementing NGOs, we can then introduce donors and stitching families into our analysis and interrogate how they impact the functioning of the implementing organizations, especially in terms of turbulence, if any, that donors and stitchers create for the project NGOs.

## INTERORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS: COLLABORATIVE BILE

### *Corrupt Samaritans: NGOs Mostly Show & Drama Bazi*[106]

The project in terms of implementing organizations consists presently of the International Monitoring Association for Child Labour (IMAC), Baidarie, the Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP), and Sudhaar. The last three are involved with the social protection side while IMAC is handling the prevention and monitoring side of the child labour project. Within these organizations, reflections by their employees on the state of the project tend to shed some light

[106] *Drama bazi* basically means an activity that is all theatrics, lacking any real substance, a fraudulent act and any other such words connoting similar meanings.

on the tensions and conflicts between these implementing organizations which we will refer to now on as the NGO community as all these organizations are NGOs.

A common theme that surfaces from conversations with representatives from the project's NGO community, that seems to mar the quality of interorganizational relationships in the community, is the widely held perception that there is corruption taking place in the project. From the way that word was used by NGO workers, it appears that it takes two forms. One is old fashioned fiscal or financial corruption, for example, over-invoicing donors by charging far above the costs incurred by the NGO for performance of a service for the project. For example, a number of invoices were presented to me that indicated massive irregularities on the part of the NGO that had prepared them. In one instance, a doctor's bill for visiting a village contained the amount of Rs.275 (US$4.59). In different handwriting a '1' was added to the original figure yet the word description for the invoice amount read ('Rupees two hundred and seventy five only') indicating that was likely the original amount. When the person brought such discoveries to the attention of the concerned donor, he was, according to him, given a dressing-down. He recalls that encounter in the following way: 'Boss in Islamabad says, "Everybody does it. What is your problem!" He is now in Geneva. A yes man. Told him, "look do not ask me to check their [invoices] authenticity' then I will do audit. If you leave me out of it [then] would not care."' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 47).

The above form of corruption was often associated with one particular NGO that is no longer a part of the project NGO community. In only one instance could I find this corruption allegation being levelled by an NGO worker at one of the current project organizations.[107] The consensus seems to be that this type of corruption was practiced by a singular organization which is no longer part of the project. Nevertheless, the alleged corruption and indulgence of that NGO by the

[107] In that instance, a charge of corruption was levelled by one NGO employee at the workings of a fellow NGO. In her words, 'My husband worked at NGO X [part of the project NGO community] and saw fraud in terms of false invoices. Personal expenses being shown as office expenses'. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 51). This information seems somewhat suspect as NGO X in the evaluation of all other NGO workers interviewed in this study, while suffering from numerous other problems (e.g., conducting faulty surveys), was innocent of such a charge.

international donors has soured the mood of current NGO workers. It has added to their doubts about the integrity of the project organizations, instilling in them a sense of disillusionment regarding the NGO community of which they are a part.

Disillusionment within the ranks of the NGO community regarding the integrity and worth of the latter has been further compounded by the second form of corruption that is frequently referred to by NGO workers. This deals with corruption in the form of waste of resources. The passage quoted, at the beginning of the chapter, made allusions to how much money is absorbed by overheads that should be going to child stitchers and their families. This sentiment I found to be widely shared among the NGO staff. Complaints such as the following were often made:

> [NGOs] hide all the money they are getting in their [i.e., stitchers'] names. If everyone [stitchers] was paid what has been spent in this project, they would all be driving Pajeros. Look 60 mobilizers [of different NGOs working with] UNICEF. ILO 20 monitors at 20,000 rupees [US$334] a month. 25 at Bunyad [Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC)]. Not to mention people in Geneva who are earning [US] dollars on this project. For every one [US] dollar goes to people ten [US] dollars are consumed in overhead. If we tell true picture, project closed. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 155-156).

What is particularly irksome to middle and lower ranking employees regarding resource waste that they view as a corrupt practice is the NGO office facilities and top management salaries drawn by their executives, particularly those based in Lahore. The Sialkot NGO staffs feel that these go far beyond the dictates of functionality (i.e., expenses needed to be incurred as part of the project's operations). Echoing the complaints found in the passage above and that quoted at the beginning of the chapter, a thoughtful NGO field worker remarked, with a sense of sadness:

> NGO culture is like other organizations in Pakistan. Means of livelihood without doing any work. All these NGOs are mostly show and *drama bazi* . . .

> [Project NGOs] paying top management large salaries a part of which could have gone to say teachers who are paid very little and do much of the real work. No need to buy Land Cruisers when Suzukis would do . . . NGOs created by top executives to line their pocket. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 194–196).[108]

The complaint about driving large luxurious jeeps, when Suzukis would functionally do the same job, I also observed throughout the project. For example, SCF would send a vehicle to pick me up for interviews with their staff in a UK made Land-Rover. This jeep is one of the most expensive vehicles of its class found in Pakistan. There are hardly any mechanics who can repair it and spare parts are not as readily available for it as for the locally assembled and one-tenth as expensive Suzuki jeeps. Yet, the project felt that the few US dollars earmarked for child stitcher rehabilitation would be better spent on Land-Rovers. Perhaps, this was the case of projecting power and prestige upon villagers so that SCF would be taken seriously. Alternatively, and most likely, Land-Rovers were perhaps the outcome of tied-aid. SCF was financed by the UK Government and perhaps one of the conditionalities of aid was that it would only purchase vehicles and other such equipment from UK vendors. Once again, a public subsidy, earmarked for the poorest of the world, being used to benefit large 'home-based' private industry, a theme alluded to several times already in this thesis.[109]

---

[108] The inequality between upper management and the lowest level workers found in the project NGO community could easily rival that found in a corporate sector notorious for steep wage inequality. In our case, top management of education NGOs drew salaries upwards of Rs.150,000 per month while their teachers who taught at their NFEs were paid Rs.1000 per month. It is in this context that we should understand the complaint made here.

[109] The tied-aid phenomenon is not just restricted to the UK. Recently, BLCC won a project, worth almost one million US dollars, from USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to deliver literacy to adult females in the Punjab. According to a senior BLCC official who negotiated the project and its budget, their request for vehicles was turned down by USAID. The official reason given by USAID was that it would only allow purchase of vehicles under its program that were made by American auto makers. BLCC had filed a budget for locally assembled Japanese jeeps. Interestingly, when it turned out that it would not be administratively possible to supply American jeeps nor feasible (i.e., their steering wheels are on the left-hand side made for right-handed sided traffic while in Pakistan it is the opposite case, where driving occurs on the left-hand side of the road and cars have their steering on their right-sides), USAID simply removed vehicle allowances from the project budget altogether. No exception was made to allow BLCC to purchase locally assembled Japanese jeeps. Such is the ardent mercantilist commitment of the ostensibly pro-market US Government to its local industry.

The above claims of resource waste by NGO employees, though perhaps slightly exaggerated, especially those claiming 90% of funds are utilised in overheads, are nevertheless real in terms of perceptions.[110] And since there is a tendency for perceptions to guide actions more than reality, they have to be taken into consideration. What these perceptions of corruption as resource waste do is sap the positive energies the community might have towards serving the poor, in this case, the child stitchers and their families. When these realities are contrasted with the stirring NGO rhetoric of grass-roots empowerment and poverty alleviation, a debilitating cynicism creeps in and attention focuses more on drawing salaries and passing time rather than being engaged in the work that the project has been ostensibly set up to do. As opposed to this sense of disheartenment with its accompanying guilt that 'we have failed to protect children' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 49-50), there a few NGO workers who out of personal conviction do not let this gloom get in the way of their commitment to the poor. For example, the same employee directly quoted above that acknowledged NGO resource wastage, went on to say, 'But have to bring peace to my conscience and to make my *rozi halal* [livelihood legitimate]. So now I want to help and try to do work that would benefit others.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 196-197).

*NGOs' Sniping Egos*

The overall cynicism, described above, tends to make each individual project NGO retreat into its shell and not reach out to other project NGOs. Thus, the evaluation of an internal publicly-available report for SCF (Crawford, 2001) about organizations working in a solitary fashion without there being much genuine exchange and pursuit of joint activities seems to ring true for the project's organizational workings at present as well. Though it is a partnership, each NGO seems to act as a sole proprietor in the partnership, pursuing its own agenda and objectives with little care about involving the other partner NGOs in its activities.

[110] I could only obtain internal costing information for programs being delivered under the project from one NGO known in the community to be somewhat fiscally responsible. The internal costing information tended to suggest that office overheads consumed about 70% of the budget of a program aimed at improving education facilities for child stitchers.

There is, thus, little collaboration taking place, much to the consternation of several NGO workers, particularly the field staff. As a microcredit female NGO worker put it:

> There is communication gap between NGOs. Coordination at international level. Not at grass roots level. No coordination. What ends up is we work on same target groups. We do not know as a whole what we are doing and duplicating our activities. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 50-51).

The absence of grass root level coordination level is mirrored at the project's policy level. The Project Coordination Committee (PCC), which is supposed to coordinate the activities as that is what its name and mandate, imply, is now, according to one of the PCC participants, a body 'only in name. Not really working.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 185). Such sentiments are expressed by another senior executive of another project NGO, who bitterly complains, 'In PCC no question, no answer . . . Look forward to positive feedback but none given. No one interested. [NGOs] Just present and [when they] ask for questions, there is no response.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 191).

The problem, apart from losing the opportunity to benefit from each other's experiences, is that it promotes egotistical behaviour in the NGO community where each organization immodestly brags about their achievements and how crucial their activities are for the well-being of the child stitchers, while downplaying the contribution of others. This downplaying of others, what I call sniping, takes several forms.

A favourite sniping activity is to question the accuracy of reports published by other project NGOs. This practice has been continuing since the early days of the project. We can recall that the ILO's survey on soccer ball child labour stitchers was questioned in terms of accuracy as it was not, according to the critics, based on a representative sample. Similarly the report by SCF (1997) that claimed 58% of village stitchers in 1997 were women has been recently attacked by some project NGOs as being inaccurate on the same grounds of non-representative sampling. The problem with this accuracy criticism is that, firstly,

it tends to be more pedantic than substantive. Even if 30% of village stitchers were women in 1997, as the critics claim, this does not change the fact that women constituted a substantial part of the stitching workforce at that time which is basically the point that the 58% figure wishes to convey. Moreover, the critics assume to know a priori what the representative sample is on the basis of which they judge the surveys of other organizations as inadequate. This form of criticism is highly questionable as the critics do not produce any evidence to demonstrate how they attained their own understanding of a representative sample which they feel is lacking in reports of other NGOs. Thus, this form of criticism appears to be self-serving, motivated to cast doubt on the findings of other NGOs. Deeming such behaviour as self-serving becomes slightly more warranted when we notice that the same stringent accuracy criterion is not used to judge the validity of their own reports.

In a few cases, however, this criticism of accuracy seems to be warranted when it is based less on non-representativeness and more on faulty reasoning. Recently, an NGO came out with statistics that 30% of stitchers suffered from work-related illnesses. Among the illnesses cited were lung diseases. As correctly pointed out by the other NGOs, it appears difficult to link these illnesses to the practice of stitching soccer balls, unlike callused or hardened fingers, as they could have been a result of other non-work related factors (e.g., air pollution caused by Sialkot's industrial activity).

Another sniping activity used by NGOs to discredit or look with suspicion upon the achievements of their fellow project organizations takes the form of questioning the interpretation put forward by project NGOs regarding their activities' statistics. To the detached observer, this can take on comical proportions. In one NGO, the observer finds the employees waxing eloquently and egoistically about their organization's achievements, reading statistics like a Field Marshal's sycophant would read the former's successful war campaigns. In the next NGO, all these statistics are savagely assaulted, after which that NGO gives its own roll of war campaign successes which are then subjected to the same harsh treatment. What the detached observer gets, then, is a NGO community

where everybody is sniping at everyone else, helping the detached observer to notice the weaknesses of others but leaving him with little grounds to observe any strengths for, after viewing all the criticisms, it is hard to be sanguine about whether the project NGOs, in toto, achieved anything at all, so devastating have been their criticisms of each other.

To illustrate how the sum of their vicious sniping throws the entire project into question, consider the case of microcredit. Microcredit practitioners criticise the project NGOs for not being concerned with empowering the poor, especially the women. They then go on to point out that:

> We, on the other hand, engaged in empowerment by giving credit. Helping women get out of husband dependency. Provide free training such as for stitching clothes. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 46).

This boast is subject to severe derision at the hands of yet other NGOs. Some point out that women are made worse off by the microcredit as depicted in the following quote from a senior official of a project NGO:

> Also microcredit situation figures and reality differ. Went to village where funds have been disbursed. Spoke to one. Said bought a goat and then had to sell it to give a bribe to police. Now she is worse off. Indebted.
>
> Second [person] bought wheat to sell at higher prices but rats ate it. Where is the sustainable livelihood in these microcredit practices? (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 40).

Others offer an even more damning criticism. They argue that microcredit, far from helping the disempowered, helps to further reinforce and entrench the pre-existing village power structure that marginalizes them. Since, microcredit practitioners use 'influentials' to set up community organizations (COs) [111] whose members receive credit, these critics argue that the 'influentials' play a pivotal role in not only taking a central position in the community organization but also

[111] For description of COs, refer to table 5; see also footnote 101.

play a decisive role in who gets be a member of that organization. Thus, the critics argue, microcredit ends up fortifying and extending the influence of the village powerful by providing a wider patronage resource base from which to project power in the village. One critic, upset at this perverse outcome of grass roots mobilization, blasting specifically the microcredit practitioners but also the other NGOs given to using 'influentials' to set up their COs through whom they interact with the village, stated angrily:

> Community organizations purpose to solve problems. That is why they are created. But COs made by organizations to achieve their own targets, their own purposes. Not care about awareness [community learns value of self-help], ensuring the spirit of CO is there. Just feel like meeting targets. To create COs, then just go to the village *chaudry* [headman usually one with the largest land holdings] and ask him to be a manager. Ask him to please help me create CO and you will get microcredit or the people you nominate will get it. This will further strengthen his social standing in village. The SO [social organizer] tries to reach his target of 100 COs so that he can survive, his contract not cancelled [for failing to reach this target]. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 189-190).

Whether these comments on microcredit are true depictions of how microcredit was actually handled by the project is not our concern here. These comments have been placed simply to bring to the reader's attention the prevalence of sniping in the NGO community. This vicious pattern of sniping is not restricted to microcredit alone. No part of the wider project is exempt from this pattern. Prevention and monitoring is accused of not doing enough to stop the leakage of balls being stitched outside of the stitching centres being monitored, although the most vociferous proponents of this charge concede that the leakage is minimal relative to total soccer ball production and is being stitched almost totally by adults. Similarly, the education component is criticised on the grounds of what is the point of imparting education to these child stitchers when there are so many educated people unemployed in Pakistan and that the education being imparted is

shoddy, because a large number of village and family education committees touted by the educational NGOs have a reality just on paper. One NGO found that of the combined 100-plus Family Education Committees (FECs) and Village Education Committees (VECs) established by an educational NGO, only 7-8 were active (i.e., meeting and carrying out their responsibilities such as informing the community about the importance of education, and taking care of problems related to their Non-Formal Education Centres (NFEs)), a figure confirmed by other sources.[112] There is much bile in the 'collaborative' field. This bile just acts to further isolate and fragment the NGO community into solitary players, where the leadership of each project organization seems to be cocooned with the righteousness of its cause, viewing the others as heretics while fulminating about their heresies to its faithful. Of course, several of the non-leadership faithful are somewhat cynical of the mantra from the pulpit, agreeing with the leaders about the faults in others but also courageous enough to bear witness to the wrong doings of their own congregation, such as the outburst quoted at the chapter's beginning that damns all the project NGOs, including the one in which the person is employed.

## ADDING EXTERNAL AGENTS TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHEMISTRY: DONORS & STITCHERS

Thus far we have described the chemistry at work within the project NGO community. This chemistry interacts with two powerful agents outside of the NGO community: donors and stitchers. Let us explore how the chemistry reacts to and is shaped by these two agents, beginning with donors.

### *Donors: Powers in the Heavens Above*

Donors (particularly the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI)) are brought to play in the NGO project community dynamics to resolve conflicts. They are often viewed, on

[112] For descriptions of FEC, VEC, and NFE, see table 7, notes 1-3.

account of the funds they disburse to NGOs, as their life-lines, as powerful entities, worthy of being obeyed and to whom invocations for succour can be placed. Sniping often results in the donors being called into the NGO community as referees, especially when the sniping NGO takes its complaints about another NGO to the latter's donor. Such action, when it does occur, further creates feelings of embitterment among the project NGOs and intensifies their sense of alienation from each other. This point can be illuminated by the following story, told from the vantage point of an NGO whose donor was called to investigate a complaint lodged by a fellow NGO that it was engaged in misconduct in the field:

> We [NGOs] do not discuss or share with each other. For example, in project document there was something vague dealing with photographs for children's health cards. Not state who would pay for photographs. Just written that 2 photos be used for cards. Whose responsibility would be to arrange and pay for the photographs not clear. So we went to villages and asked children to bring their photos. Those who could not, they could give us the money and we would arrange for photographer to come and take pictures.
>
> NGO X[113] went to villages and understood that we were asking money from people. Lodged a complaint with ILO. [ILO] said we have a complaint that you are taking money from people. Kindly investigate and report within 2 days.
>
> [I] asked our people. Said 'Sir if we were to do this, we would do it at end of project not to do it at the beginning where we would risk losing our jobs.' Talked ILO and said we know of no such practice. That is when they told us that complaint had to do with photographs. Explained to them our position. Said if you want to do an investigation go right ahead. They said if we do investigation, then we will have a team of two; one from each organization to go to villages and talk to them. [I] said fine. But seems they have forgotten about this issue for they did not pursue it further.

[113] Name disguised.

> [I] went to mobilizer in NGO X. Said we should not go in field, look for negative things and try to highlight them. Come to us and tell us to fix it. It is not right to declare it publicly. There is no coordination in this project! (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 194-197).

Donors, however, do not just passively wait to be called into the project's interorganizational fray. Sometimes, like the gods on Mount Olympus, they descend into the plebeian world of the NGO project community trying to appropriate whatever suits their liking. Take SCCI, for example. It is a major donor for IMAC. Its key members also help arrange funds for project NGOs. Khawaja Zaka's (former SCCI President, soccer ball supplier to Adidas, and one of the key Sialkot soccer ball industry representatives that has been involved with the project since the time of the child labour crisis) son-in-law is the Pakistan country manager for Adidas. Based on internal documentation, when a particular project NGO needed funds on account of its patron SCF withdrawing from the project, it turned to Khawaja Zaka for assistance. Adidas filled that void and, thus, the Khawaja Zaka son-in-law connection cannot be ruled out as having something to do with the NGO finding Adidas as its new donor. Also, given that the first SCF Sialkot project director, who had given that NGO the initial funding while at SCF, had become the head of Adidas' Global Social Responsibility division, must have also helped the NGO in securing Adidas' support. Thus, knowing the potential munificence held by Sialkot's soccer ball industry itself and the resources for which it can act as a gateway, project NGOs learn to oblige demands made by industry's prominent members on them.

These demands have a significant impact on the projects that NGOs launch on the ground. For one thing, key members of SCCI prefer the activities to assist stitchers to take place in areas where they have stitching centres. For some, this is a free way of earning goodwill among their workers. Others have political designs, using NGO work as a way of showing civic contribution to village communities in order to garner political support for elections. This seems to have been the case for one of the owners of Sublime Sports who 'persuaded' one of the

project NGOs to do its development work in the area where it was establishing his political base for a district mayor election that he successfully won. NGOs, thus, become a resource base or a resource pawn for donors to use for their own agendas, having nothing to do with the project objectives which, nevertheless, impact how that project is manifested on the ground where project activities take place. Sometimes the extra-project demands of the donors means that project activities have to be put into abeyance. For example, to continue with our Sublime story, according to one of my most reliable sources, the concerned NGO not only did work in the concerned Sublime Sports owner's area but also ended up devoting its field workforce to canvassing votes for him which meant that those staff could not attend to their other project-related duties.

In a rare instance, donors are also used as resources by NGO staff to influence decisions made by their organizations. An example of this is what occurred when a project NGO fired three of its employees on grounds of incompetence. The fired employees appealed to ILO which, according to the NGO director that had fired them, threatened to cut off funding to the NGO and actually did. The project NGO was heavily dependent on ILO for its funding and had no choice but to take the employees back. The ILO Sialkot office, according to the same NGO director, was interested in reinstating these incompetent employees so as to reduce the NGO's performance by creating internal tensions and factions in the organization. This would then create a basis for the ILO's field office to take over its activities. Thus, employment for the staff and director at ILO's field office would be further assured, which is beginning to be placed into question, as the project is becoming independent of ILO, with its role, when the project becomes totally independent, being one of only providing at best technical assistance which it can do from its Islamabad office.[114]

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[114] The ILO field office in Sialkot did not comment on this episode when it was obliquely broached by me when interviewing the staff and director there in 2003. However, the concerned NGO director was kind enough to show me several emails, memos and letters from ILO's offices in Islamabad and Sialkot from his personal files that showed that there had been much altercation between the two organizations regarding this matter. Also, having spent time with the concerned individuals who had been fired, my own assessment of their professional competence led me to conclude that the director was quite within his jurisdiction to dismiss them on grounds of incompetence.

The above illustrates a direct personal way in which donors create turbulence for the NGO community. There are also impersonal mechanisms for generating the same though these are more inadvertent. Many of the project NGOs that are heavily dependent on ILO funding complain bitterly about its bureaucratic and lengthy procedures for releasing funds. This hampers project activities in the field for they cannot pay the salaries of their staff. This is especially problematic for those engaged in education that have villagers as teachers on their payroll. Failing to pay their salaries tends to signal bad faith to villagers who are already suspicious of these foreign organizations. Whatever fragile trust may have been built can be shattered by these bureaucratic delays. Similarly, donor rules about not taking any food or gifts from villagers create tensions in the field workers between the dictates of the office and the pragmatics of the ground. As an NGO field worker explained:

> In order to do work, first have to build trust, give them [villagers] respect. Rules say we should not eat or take anything from the villagers. But if we do not they get offended. I refused a lunch and they told me to get lost. Now what do we do with our organizational policies, with our rules and regulations. We have to listen to their internal household problems before they can begin to trust us. Some times drink a *hooka* [i.e., a large tobacco water container containing a nozzle through which the water is drunk] which you do not like, just to earn their confidence. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 114-115).

As he and others pointed out principles give way to expediency.

The influence of the donors on project dynamics is indeed quite inordinate. Given the resource dependency of project NGOs on donors, this is not surprising. Many NGOs end up having upward-looking glances, concerned more about appearing pleasant to donors than worrying about the stitchers below. Great sensitivity is shown to appeasing donors, especially the targets they set for their funded NGOs whether they be so many NFEs per month to be established or x number of microcredit community organizations to be formed. Field workers

often lament about this bane of pernicious target pressure that leads them to sacrifice the quality of services offered so as to attain donor quantitative milestones (e.g., x number of COs established). As a male microcredit officer balefully observed:

> Idea [of microcredit] is to get them [microcredit field staff] to disburse credits, the pressure to meet targets reduces the quality of COs. Need time to educate them, to make them aware. You can have a CO that takes 10 minutes and you can have CO that takes 1 month. You need at least three dialogues to form a CO. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 41-42).

Shortcuts, thus, end up being found such as using 'influentials' so that all is well signal can be blown by the project NGOs to their donors who can place a check on their project activities sheet that charts the activities to be completed. The fact that these shortcuts to meet target pressures end up violating the spirit or quality of the activities seems not to perturb donors too greatly.

The shortcuts do, however, take a toll on the morale of the project NGO personnel. The contradictions between the project's outcomes, and the way they have been euphemistically reported to outsiders, creates feelings of cynicism among the personnel. For example, take UNICEF's (United Nations Children's Fund) crowning achievement in Sialkot, referred to constantly by UNICEF and the SCCI: 100 per cent school enrolment of all children in the Sialkot district aged 5 to 7 years. Most of the project NGOs are highly sceptical of this figure: if 100% of children in that age bracket are in proper government schools, then how, they ask, does one explain the incidence of those children learning in their NFEs? The answer, as these NGOs inform us, lies in UNICEF's statistical practices. UNICEF could only make its 100% claim because of the way it defined enrolment: any child who was registered at any point in time in a school would be considered enrolled for the whole year – even if the child were to drop out the next day. A team leader of a project NGO heatedly remarked on the soundness of this practice in the following way:

> [I would tell] UNICEF, well why do you not apply this definition consistently! If a person shows up to work for one day, then why do you not just keep paying him for the whole year. Would you try that? (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 192).

Such behaviour by donors and their implementing project NGOs has made lower-level employees of these organizations question the motives and sincerity of the entire project and their own organizations. In their interview conversations, many of them view the child labour project as one giant *kagazi karawai* – an Urdu expression meaning organizational work where everything looks pretty on paper while reality holds altogether a different story; alternatively, paper work where things reported in the paper are not found on the ground.

The fall-out of this donor intrusion and dependency is that it adds to the feeling harboured by many in the NGO project community that this is a top-down project, contrary to its rhetoric of grass roots participation, empowerment and 'listening to the voices of children'. Donors pronounce and the project NGOs listen and obey. Like Mecca is the *qibla* for Muslims (i.e., Mecca; a centre of devotion to which Muslims face during their five daily prayers), a senior NGO executive ruefully put it, that donors are the *qibla* for the project NGOs as they are constantly turning towards donors. To quote that executive:

> NGOs just implement project. Top down approach. Just implement. Just turn to where the donor would like them to turn. There is a kind of donor *qibla* if you can call it. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 91).

Such thoughts of donor over-lordship and the desire not to upset the donor over-lords seem to be confirmed by another NGO officer who stated, 'We as any small organization would be fearful of donors and their wishes.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 199).

Though the donor qibla is potent, in some instances, project NGOs do defy it, especially when it makes demands made on them which they consider to be beyond the pale. For example, the same NGO that engaged in political canvassing refused to work on the Universal Primary Education project (UPE) because it felt

its target of realizing 100% primary school enrolment rate for all children in Sialkot district between the ages of 5-7 was quite ludicrous and impossible to achieve. Even then it articulated its refusal in polite terms lest the donor (i.e., UNICEF) and its other partner (i.e., the district government), be upset with the NGO's effrontery at refusing such generosity. As the team leader of that NGO told me he did not say to UNICEF and the district government that they were mad at setting up such a target. Instead, 'we said we do not have the capacity or ability.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 192-193).

The NGO in question who refused the largesse did so, however, when it already had alternative funding available for it. If that were not the case, the donor qibla may have swayed its decision in the opposite direction. At present, with funding largely coming from a few sources for the project NGO community, donor influence is, as the NGO community perceive it, quite pervasive and often pernicious, impacting a whole gamut of their activities from the types of programs they can implement (e.g., nothing on labour organizing) to the kinds of texts they produce. Concerning the latter, a senior officer with one of the project NGOs laconically sighed, 'What shapes production of reports is the ideas that the donors would be interested [would find interesting]. For example, if we put a girl with a *niqab* or *hijab* [clothing that covers a woman's entire head or entire head except for face respectively] [on report covers dealing with their education programs], for sure donors will be offended and funding will be stopped.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 186).

*Stitchers: Desperation in the Grounds Below*

The NGO project community's upward-looking gaze towards donors in the heavens above is periodically disrupted by noises from the stitchers below. Like the donors they too add complications for the organizational chemistry at work in the project.

The way some organizations deal with stitchers ends up adding to the collaborative bile already festering in the NGO project community. The more a project NGO acts graciously towards the stitching community, the more bile is

produced in the other NGOs who feel that the NGOs are 'spoiling' the stitchers or making them *teez* [clever or sharp]. That is to say, the royal treatment afforded to a stitcher village community by an NGO leads the village community to expect similar treatment from other NGOs. When the latter are unable or unwilling to deliver such a service, these NGOs find a hard time in eliciting the participation of that stitching community for their activities. As a NGO official exasperatedly put it:

> '[NGO X][115] often cite Nanowali [a village] as a great example of success[116] . . . But NGO X has spoiled Nanowali. Teacher wants us to give the most expensive medicines to kids. At NGO X (villagers) get tremendous protocol. Extra protocol [now] demanded of us. Their attitude now is what we can pull from these guys.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 192).

Other project NGO members tend to look at this situation with a tinge of humour. As one social mobilizer reflecting on NGO-stitching village community dynamics, chuckled:

> Some [villages] have become really NGO savvy. Can easily speak language of NGOs. You can give them the most complicated surveys, can fill it and return it to you in 10 minutes with cooked up information. Know NGOs have a compulsion to work. [Stitchers] seek their own benefit from NGO work. Realize whatever [the] NGO work at least get

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[115] Name disguised.

[116] The concerned NGO often uses its work in the village of Nanowali as the poster boy for how successful its activities have been under the child labour project. In that village, the NGO assisted in setting up a school with the village community where none had existed before. This school was set up on a self-help basis (i.e., partially funded by the NGO and partially by the local village community along with donations from outsiders arranged often with the help of the NGO). The village, therefore, is made to serve as a show-case representing the NGO's success in capacity building. In project NGO jargon, it is called a 'model village'. Nanowali's model village experience is prominently displayed in the publications of that NGO as one of its most noteworthy achievements. The NGO also tends to take foreign delegations to that village to demonstrate the great work it is doing for the poor, hoping to impress upon the delegations that it is a solid grass roots NGO, one worthy of funding. Of course, other project NGOs are not impressed with this performance. As they rhetorically ask the sniping question, 'Why are there just a handful of model villages which they take foreigners, donors, researchers to show their achievements.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 65).

> some *faida* [material advantage/benefit]. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 148).

This feeling of some villagers becoming NGO savvy and demanding is a sentiment that is shared by other non-project NGOs in Sialkot:

> Field workers made them [villagers] smart. 1997 not know what is an NGO. Now NGO is one that gives money. Teachers tell villagers they get T.A. [Travel Allowance] [from NGOs] and are feted by them [creating impression that NGOs are money giving organizations]. — Director of a Sialkot based NGO (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 119-120).

Apart from showing the 'spoiling' of some stitching communities that creates problems for other NGOs and adds to their bile, the above-quoted passages also hint at agency on the part of the stitchers. At least for those stitchers who have become familiar enough with NGOs and their workings to see them as a resource pool. With this perception, stitchers try to extract from them whatever benefits they can obtain.

Though the NGOs feel upset with each other, for having spoiled the stitchers and made them demanding, they are somewhat sympathetic to the latter. The demands for resources being made by the stitchers is not without cause. The NGO personnel recognize and see daily the stitchers' desperation on the ground. This is acutely felt by NGO personnel from Sialkot itself. NGO personnel from outside Sialkot, particularly from the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, feel it less intensely. They argue that the stitchers are far better off than their equivalent class of workers in the Frontier. However, they too agree, that though the Sialkot stitchers may fare relatively better than their Frontier counterparts, nevertheless, their condition is still one of terrible hardship and want. They also point out that due to the immense industrial wealth generated in Sialkot, the inequalities there are far sharper than the ones found in their Frontier villages.

This stitcher economic desperation has been augmented by the project given the reduction in income suffered by women and children on account of work shifting from homes to monitorable stitching centres. The project NGO field

staffs seem to concur that women stitchers and households have suffered even though male wages have gone up, at least in the stitching centres.[117] That they are a part of a process that brought about this suffering tends to elicit different responses in different NGOs. Feelings of guilt in NGO personnel appear to be inversely proportional to the direct material assistance their organization is providing to the stitchers.

The microcredit personnel appear to suffer little emotional anxiety at seeing the plight of the stitchers for they felt they were directly alleviating it through tangible monetary assistance in the form of microcredit. That the microcredit trickled down to only a few stitching families out of all the recipients was a fact that the microcredit practitioners, though finding it bothersome, could somewhat reconcile with their conscience. They could only operate in villages if they involved all sections of the village community and if this meant that credit was to go to others and not just to stitching families, well, that was the unavoidable cost of doing business.

Pangs of guilt are felt far more by the educationalist and health NGOs, though the latter feel them a bit less than the former as the beneficial effects of their interventions (e.g., distributing medicines in villages to cure stomach worms) to stitching families are more instant and apparent. The educationalists feel quite uncomfortable with seeing the material want in stitching households to whom they could only offer the long term palliative of education. They often justify their activities as helping stitchers to get out of the poverty trap by delivering education to their children and some feel that they are creating *shaur* [consciousness, awareness, value] about education to stitchers that they consider to be a commendable objective in and of itself. Nevertheless, given the questionable quality of education being imparted, the far larger number of children needing education than the ones being attended to, their own doubts about the long term utility of their interventions as there were plenty of jobless educated people in Pakistan, and the demands made by stitchers to help raise their wages or bring more work to them, has made the educationalists have little faith

[117] For this increase in wages being eliminated by inflation, please see footnote 94.

in the education panacea rhetoric that they would often deploy to assuage their conscience.

The worst crisis of conscience is, however, observed in the staff responsible for monitoring the stitching centres. The monitors, as per their project roles, provide no material benefit of any kind to stitchers and in fact remove their children from work, hurting the stitching household income. The monitors are to be the bad cop of the project and, much to their chagrin, this has not created space for some of them to have a good cop role. Several monitors, thus, at seeing the wretchedness of the stitchers and not doing anything about it but at times, as stated above, further exacerbating their miserable conditions, bemoan sentiments like the following: 'Great success in eliminating child labour but have failed on the social aspect. We have failed to protect children' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 50).

The desperation on the ground evokes a spectrum of responses from the NGO community. A common one is guilt-riddled paralysis. This becomes especially acute when the personnel note the following recriminations made by stitchers at them:

> We [NGO workers] often hear this accusation from them [stitchers]. They say your salaries are huge, and you drive big cars and all you do is talk to us and nothing happens. Get paid for talking. Not understand our purpose. Negative aspects put forward. — A microcredit female officer (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 57).

> They [stitchers] say to us [NGO workers] we are making a living out of them. But it is not true. We are working sometimes till 10 at night. We listen to them. Sometimes we have to go to places requiring travel of more than 2 hours. — A female social mobilizer (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 2).

The quotes illustrate both the charges made to the NGO field staff and their responses to them. The responses in the quotes above take the form that the stitchers do not understand the work of NGOs (i.e., 'not understand our purpose') or that they fail to see the efforts field workers are exerting for them.

Nevertheless, the complaints undoubtedly seem to sink in for the NGO interviewees and others who made such statements exhibited signs of distress and were seeking reassurances from me through their body language and the pleading movement of the eyes that what they were saying was in fact true and not just a self-serving rationalization.

There are other responses brought into play by NGO personnel to cope with the stitcher squalor. Like Crozier's (1964) bureaucrats, some retreat into project rules to justify why they cannot help stitchers get better wages or more work, the most frequent demands made of them. These NGO personnel refuse these pleas citing the 'organizational mandate' or the 'Atlanta Agreement' that, in their view, does not allow them to trespass into labour rights and wage advocacy.[118]

Such use of project rules, far from being deployed to help stitchers, confirms Crozier's observation that rules are assiduously used by employees to protect themselves, not the clients for whom these rules had been ostensibly created. Grasping the bureaucratic iron cage of the mandate as a shield, however, ends up taking a toll a la Weber on the humanity of those seeking its protection. In the words of one NGO worker, who uses this shield to deflect the incessant demands made by stitchers on her, 'I know this [is a] mundane, *non-human* [original emphasis] basis of working, of keeping distance and *it is not nice* [original emphasis].' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 83).

Being the Weberian 'specialists without soul and hedonists without heart' (Weber, 1978: 171) is a troublesome venture for the conscience. Thus, some NGO workers, including the one quoted immediately above, while deploying the organizational mandate shield, try to assist stitchers where they can, on a case by case basis (e.g., giving stitchers information on the manufacturer that the stitchers should contact to resolve a payment dispute between them and the manufacturer's

[118] What plays out in effect is reminiscent of the last movement in Beethoven's Opus 135 with a stronger twist of pathos added to it. Like Beethoven's debtor whose pleas to him inspired that opus, the stitcher inquires pleadingly 'Muss est sien [Must it be]?' to the NGOs insistence that they cannot help them with wages or work based on the project mandate. Being true to Beethoven's opus, they boom, "Es muss sein, es muss sein, es muss sein, ja, ja, ja, ja!" [translation: It must be, it must be, it must be, yes, yes, yes, yes!] (Kundera, 1984: 195).

subcontractor). However, such personal attention is given sparingly because, 'then people can come to expect it of us. Cannot help everyone.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 83).

To further lessen the moral load that may be placed on their person by stitchers, NGO employees, as a modus operandi, try not to raise the expectations or hopes of the stitchers regarding how the project can benefit them. As explained to me, '[The] Rule of social mobilization is do not raise expectations of people. Do not give them hope that you will do something for them.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 113). The irony that such statements are being made by NGO personnel establishing and running schools with names that translate as 'Hope Education Centres' is somehow lost on them. Equally lost on them is how this modus operandi is so counter-revolutionary. De Tocqueville (1983 [1856]) had written that one of the principal factors bringing about the French Revolution was rising expectations among the peasantry that, when unrealized, helped create the frustration that found its expression in a revolution. It seems the NGO personnel have grasped this insight without reading it.

These are some of the responses NGO personnel use in dealing with stitchers whose dire straits cause severe consternation in their ranks. Such consternation brought about by the stitchers, as we have seen, refracts the domain dynamics in a number of ways, from adding to the already existing collaborative bile in the NGO community to shaping NGO practices such as operating on the principle of giving little hope to stitchers. Of course, the plight of the stitchers and lack of space in the project to deal with their main concerns (i.e., living wages and regular work) often conspire to introduce morale-sapping energies that seriously impact the project's workings. The sapping of morale corrodes the quality of services offered via the project as NGO field workers grow cynical about the project and disengage their creative energies from it.

## CONCLUDING COMMENT: AGENCY WITH A COLONIAL HANGOVER

In rare instances, the above morale-sapping conditions do the opposite. Far from paralysis they help to construct agency, limited as it may be. To understand this, we have to reintroduce donors into our discussion. When we do so, we can realize that the NGO project community is caught between the conflicting demands of the donors and the stitcher community. Donors basically want children out of Sialkot's soccer ball industry and are prepared to give token compensation in forms of education and microcredit but not in terms of living wages and regular work, demands articulated by the stitching community. Thus, the NGO project community finds itself in the proverbial nut-cracker. This nut-cracker is made all the more painful when the donors are themselves international organizations or are funded by international organizations. This is the case with ILO which is an international organization that is funded for this project by the US Department of Labor, part of a foreign government.

This international connection refracts the guilt pangs of NGO employees in quite an interesting way that ultimately creates impetus for some agency. Being funded by foreign sources and implementing a project that is largely not helping their own citizens (i.e., stitchers) in a direct way, the project NGO community, comprising wholly of Pakistanis, worry about whether they are acting as pawns for Western powers. This crisis of loyalty was often articulated by NGO staff in interviews and it is understandable when placed in a historical context. Their country was at one point colonized by a foreign organization (i.e., the East India Company) and the anti-imperialist struggle that led to independence has deeply seeped into the collective Pakistani conscious where Western powers and their institutions are looked at with great suspicion. Formal independence was indeed gained but at the price of this jaundiced view towards Western organizations.

This jaundiced view is what I call the colonial hangover. It colours the perceptions of Pakistanis, including the ones working in the NGO project

community, regarding Western institutions. The colonial hangover is further accentuated by geo-politics and religion. Being Muslims, the project NGO community finds the ongoing bombings and invasions of Muslim countries (e.g., Afghanistan and Iraq respectively) by Western governments and their policies in foisting unpopular regimes (e.g., the Royal family in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) in other parts of the Muslim World, as giving further justification for Pakistanis to hold on to the colonial hangover. Seeing Western-imposed military dictatorships with or without the thin veneer of parliamentary democracy (e.g., former Zia Regime and the current Musharraf dispensation) in their own country, coupled with what they deem to be the West's indifference to human rights violations in Kashmir (a territory that is just an ear-shot distance from Sialkot) by Indian Armed, or what they call occupation, Forces, and the notoriety of NGO work in popular culture where some NGOs have been found to be engaged in Christian missionary work (Sardar, 1998), leads many of the NGO project personnel to experience the colonial hangover as a string of severe loyalty heart aches. No wonder, then, the following sentiments are commonly expressed:

> At times feel like a foreign agent. I mean if donor is giving so much money, clearly he has his own hidden objectives. — NGO field worker (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 197).

> Went to *Maulvi sahib* [religious teacher] [from whom I] learnt Quran. Respect him very much. Told him will start classes for [his] students so that they learn maths, English so they can communicate with international community. Said 'you are an NGO agent.' Not take up the offer although I could have obtained finances for project. Told my friends 'are we not pursuing their agenda?' [They] Said 'but we are [implementing] projects.' But [I] said 'what happens if the thought that produced the project [implementation] also put in us by them.' — Senior NGO staff officer. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 188-189).

At times the sentiments become couched in angry language:

> The West is stupid. Creating a parallel system of education [in the project]. Did not use the *madaris* [Religious schools in Sialkot]. That system is more compatible with our culture and society. They denied it and new system inducted. Religious school system has flaws. But why not work to remove them. It would still be better than parallel system. People of poor study there. Also learn good values morals there, learn not to cheat, steal, be good to neighbours. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 70-71).

For most NGO staff who feel the colonial hangover, it only produces quiet, deeply disturbing resignation and loyalty qualms, or generates vituperative outbursts like the one quoted immediately above. The anger that is generated, in just a few occasions, goes beyond rhetoric and starts to translate into practice creating agency which is quite subtle. In those few occasions, actors are galvanized to do acts that confirm that they have not sold-out their countrymen or their religion, thus, quelling the feelings of disloyalty welling up inside of them. We have already seen this earlier. Recall the words of an NGO worker who was willing to make public what he considered were embarrassing facts about SCF if it created trouble for Sialkot's soccer ball industry which he looked at as akin to hurting Pakistan's economy, and, hence, the Pakistani people. Here is another instance of subtle agency being produced out of a need to reinsert values that are being restricted out of the project:

> Sometimes I wonder whether we are doing things against our country, our religion . . . So have to do things in round about way. If we have to give them [stitchers] some Islamic knowledge, then we put it as 'Ethics' component of our education program. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 186).

Here we see how language is deftly deployed by subordinated classes to exert agency and overcome structures of constraint. The victory is not massive and is not certainly not frequent. Nevertheless, it is not non-existent either and the few such moments of triumph are enough to quell somewhat the brooding loyalty

suspicions of the Pakistani NGO workers. Thus, based on the foregoing, we can say that the project dynamics tend to be one of long periods of donor domination that are punctuated by a few brief bouts of subtle, albeit limited, resistance, stemming largely from a strange welter of forces prominent among which is the colonial hangover, imbibed by the local Pakistani NGO agents, that both inhibits and facilitates agency.

With this note on agency, we seal the discussion on all the major formal organizational players in the project and their dynamics that they are collaboratively constructing. The stage is now set for us to move beyond this organizational world into a world that is often overshadowed and obscured by it. A world that is central to the project but, as we will see, is quite peripheral to its policy articulation and its decision-making calculus. The world in question is that of the women stitchers, the subaltern group of interest to us in this thesis research.

# CHAPTER 6: WOMEN STITCHERS

## INTRODUCTION: A MALE STITCHER'S TALE

> I am [a] 28 years old [man]. Five years with NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] X.[119] Before manager of quality, Saga Sports. Just [worked] there for 27 days. Today work and study part time. Have studied privately.
>
> Started stitching football in grade 4. My experience different from other stitchers. Met a good guide. When I wanted to start working, he himself was a football stitcher, Mr. Arif. Said will teach you to stitch if you study. Said to me, look you do not have lands. The only way you are going to improve your condition, the only asset you can have is education. So deal was I would enrol and he would teach me stitching.
>
> Started stitching because of economic compulsions. My father supporting three families. His own. We were six brothers and sisters. Then his younger brother's family consisting of 3-4 kids and his elder brother's family also. 5-6 people. They were total 15–16 people and my father was just a bus conductor. So I would stitch and rarely go to school.
>
> Somehow kept passing but then failed grade 8. Went to seek private tuition 3–4 hours walk from village for a tutor, Mirza Aslam Beg. Said to me you know who will be the boy that tops the board in *middle* [grade 8]. I said no. He said you. I could not believe it. I had just failed grade 8 and how could I top the board. But I did come first.
>
> I was taken into grade 9 but had difficulty coping with English so put me back to grade 8 where I was much more comfortable. And as he said I topped middle. Wanted to pursue science subjects in *matric* [grade 10], but there was no science teacher. So taught myself and other students who wanted to take science subjects.

[119] Name disguised.

In 10th grade mother fell sick. But I still got A plus grades. Also by now I was doing speciality work in stitching. Tricky technique of inverting the ball and stitching the last six panels. Called giving it a *bhan*. Other stitchers would bring balls for this *bhan* operation. And I would charge good amount and do it in less time.

I appeared in a competition for Allama Iqbal scholarship for FSc (grade 12). Won scholarship. Rs.3800. Helped pay for my studies in FSC at Gujranwala. Had a friend of father [there]. A lecturer in physics. Said he would help me prepare so I sat for FSc in Gujranwala board. But after a year, scholarship finished. Had to work.

Saw a painter making posters hung on cinema halls. Learned craft. Graphics designing. Was good in maths so its graphics were easy. Needed to learn colour coding but did not take much time. My father's friend insisted that I do my FSc so wrote the exams. Then did my BSc in double maths and economics from Punjab university. Also sat for first part of papers in MSc maths. Failed paper on topography. Have not reappeared.

For BSc had a friend who was studying full time in Gujranwala. Would learn from his notes and discuss the subjects. Funny thing is I got 10 marks more than him. Also, I started teaching my stitcher [friends] in village get educated. Helped a friend reach up to grade 9 and then matric [grade 10].

[I] stitch[ed] for Talon and then for Saga Sports. Saga Sports centre, a German came in 1997. He started talking with me. Was impressed with my abilities. My broken English and his broken English were the same. Said you should not be stitching but in management post. Will tell Saga Sports management to give you a management post. So I was made a manager of quality control.

When I was pursuing education, not interested in learning, but felt means to a better future. At Saga Sports, just sat in A/C [air conditioner] not working.

> Wanted to leave. Job opening came at NGO X. [Monthly] Pay was less, 3000 rupees [Rs.] [US$50.09]. At Saga Sports making 4200 rupees [US$70.12]. But took it because I was now interested in education.
>
> Now trying to do a MSc in education planning and management from open university. Classes Sunday and Saturday so not interfere with my work. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 132–140).

The above is a tale of a former male soccer ball stitcher who out of sheer dint of supreme effort managed to get himself educated and escape the desperate situation of his class. When individuals escape the clutches of repressive political regimes, tribute is paid to their ingenuity and will to persevere. Praise is rarely shed for the oppressive webs in which they were ensnared and from which they made their great escapes. Yet, when it comes to savage capitalism, where the accumulation logic rides roughshod over decency and dignity, as is largely the case in Pakistan (see chapter 4), this is what perversely happens. Its apologists latch on to its few Horatio Alger barefoot to millionaire stories, to morally vindicate rampant human predation. They actually end up arguing that the few success instances, such as the case of our male stitcher, just goes to prove that any rugged individual can succeed and those who do not are merely eating their just desserts and only have themselves to blame for lacking talent and initiative. This is akin to calling prisons systems of freedom, because a small number of individuals managed to escape. A few runaways hardly make prisons an emancipatory project. Yet, when it comes to the poor, supporters of Pakistan's unbridled capitalism, and I would trust elsewhere as well, trot out on cue a few similar economic runaway success stories to justify it. That unbrindled capitalism, where luxuries for a few are produced rather than necessities for all, where education and health are commodified and priced out of the reach of many, where economic clout is often used to procure political muscle to discipline and extract more surplus from the recalcitrant masses organizing to improve their collective situation, where markets allocate according to effective demand (demand backed by purchasing power) rather than biological demand so that meals are wasted in

expensive restaurants while many go hungry because they lack the money to purchase, and other such systemic constraints denying the poor the ability to improve their lot, are all magically brushed away by a few success miracles.

Though stories of such agency (i.e., of overcoming such formidable social constraints) can be pressed into the apologia of power and privilege, they can equally be read to destabilize them. The stories can be read with an eye to show how daunting are the challenges of breaking out of poverty's trap with the Herculean feat of evading its jaws; the success depicted in the stories only serving as testimony to how unreasonable it is to expect others to follow suit.

The story with which began this chapter is of *male* stitcher agency. Though our thrust will be on exploring the world of women stitchers, the story has been put here for two specific purposes. Firstly, if men, the privileged gender in a patriarchal society like Sialkot, face such tremendous challenges in escaping from the poverty rife life of stitching, how much more daunting such an escape be for women, the subjugated gender in such a society. Secondly, the story provides clues to agency that we will see are largely absent in the lives of women stitchers. These clues will help us delineate with more clarity the constraints women stitchers face in affecting the Sialkot child labour domain (i.e., set of organizations in Sialkot working on the Sialkot child labour project) in a way that is serviceable to their interests.

## SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE: TAUNTING PRIVATIONS

An appropriate way to begin our discussion on the world of female stitchers is to first paint their socio-economic profile. Painting this canvas is not too onerous a task. Thanks to or as a result of the child labour crisis and the project it spawned, various surveys on women stitchers have been conducted. Thus, there are enough surveys, covering in total well over a thousand women stitchers, that we can proceed to construct such a profile. These surveys, however, have been faulted individually, as we have seen in the previous chapter. It is well to remind ourselves that their findings have been faulted largely on precision not

on their general direction. Thus, whether women constituted over half of the stitching force or just less than a third, as claimed in studies and interviews, all these estimates establish that they made up a significant part of the stitching workforce. Moreover, the individual faults of a study can be overcome when the findings of an individual report are triangulated with other reports, as well as interview data, and are found to be corroborated by them. If these imperfectly precise studies sampling different stitching households, and being produced by different organizations (e.g., local NGOs and corporations) with different institutional interests, are converging on a common realization about women stitchers, that is confirmed by yet other sources (e.g., interview data), there is then a good basis to believe the realization to be true. It is through this triangulation approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative sources, that we will advance claims about women stitchers as well as stitchers in general. This approach should provide us with a reasonable basis to believe that the claims being advanced have validity.

The socio-economic condition of women stitchers is intricately tied to their profession: soccer ball stitching. This profession is at the lowest rung of the soccer ball production supply chain ladder in terms of wages. For example, a cutter who cuts the hexagon and pentagon-shaped panels from broad latex sheets earns an income higher than stitchers. Moreover, numerous reports (e.g., Save the Children [SCF], 1997) mention that pay in stitching is lower than in other forms of employment (e.g., construction work). Monthly income estimates vary in sources that have commented on this issue. This is because the income is, inter alia, a function of the type of ball being sewed and the type of operation being done on the ball (e.g., whether only half a ball is being stitched or a full ball). Estimates range from Rs.2000–Rs.4500 (US$33.39–US$75.13). Though there is variation in the sources used in this study on the monthly wage rate of stitchers, there appears to be near unanimity among them that a household[120] dependent on the income of a single adult stitcher, would be unable to meet its basic needs of

[120] Like wages, surveys vary in their estimates on the average number of people per Sialkot household. Average household figures range from about 7-9 persons (see, for example, APFOL, 1999 and Bureau of Statistics [Government of Punjab, Pakistan], 1998).

food, shelter and clothing, forget luxury items such as health and education. Even if two parents are stitching, satisfying basic needs is an ever elusive prospect. As a Save the Children (SCF) report, based on a survey of 100 villages, stated, 'Both adults and children pointed out that most adults were working as hard as they could but still could not make ends meet' (1997: 2).

Of course, the deficiency in stitching income can theoretically be made up with other alternative sources of income (e.g., agricultural income). This seems to be the case of a few households. For example, in households with income from other sources taking care of basic necessities, women stitch in order to increase household's disposable income or for savings that will be utilised to pay for education and health expenses related to their children as well defray their future wedding expenses.[121] However, such households that generate disposable income or savings through stitching, because they have alternative income sources such as agricultural income, are rare. According to another SCF study that surveyed 1155 households, 64% had no agricultural land (Saeed, 1998: 19). The report went on to state that of the households where stitching occurs, 96.8% of them are solely reliant on soccer ball stitching income and almost half of them have just one income earner (ibid: 19 and 22).

Thus, women stitchers basically belong to households that are barely eking out an existence if other family members, including their children, are also employed. If not, then their situation is one of crushing desperation. This is especially true for families whose main male breadwinner is sick, disabled, or addicted to drugs,[122] female-headed households, and widows. The following

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[121] This is particularly true for women stitchers who are mothers of girls and who must save up money to pay for their marriage dowries that is regarded by custom as a right that is demanded of them. Understandably, given the burdens placed on their already slender purse, women despise the institution of dowry. Articulating the sentiments of a group of women stitchers being interviewed regarding dowry, their teacher hissed, '*Jehaz* [marital dowry paid by the bride's side to the groom and his family] biggest curse in our society'. Her remark met with appreciative nods from the women stitchers. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 4).

[122] Drug addiction seems to be quite common among male stitchers in Sialkot. Reference to male stitcher drug addiction came up often in interviews with NGO field personnel and stitchers as well as private archives of a large exporting firm that contained stories of its stitchers. Estimates of drug addiction vary from some NGO personnel claiming all male stitchers are on hash to the male stitchers themselves, perhaps trying to reduce this unflattering side of their class, putting the figure

excerpts taken from stories of women stitchers found in an unpublished private archive of a soccer ball company gives a heart and a face to the socio-economic painting of women stitchers:[123]

Story 1

> Not long after, Sumaira's mother Parveen [a woman stitcher] is summoned from the fields where she had been working with her husband. Though not very old, the woman is obviously run down by tending to ten children and putting up with a drug addict for a husband . . . When I broach the subject of her husband's addiction, she recounts her difficult past. "The children were all very young and there was little or no income. Whatever I earned through my stitching, was squandered by my husband on drugs." Parveen gets teary eyed at the memory. Now, her elder son Arif, working in a surgical factory, comes to his mother's rescue against his father's regular beatings. (Butt, M. (2001). *The Stories of our SAHEP Children* (Private Report). Sialkot: Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme).

Story 2

> Safia [a woman stitcher] proceeds to tell me how at that time there were seven mouths to feed and virtually no source of income apart from the stitching done by her eldest daughter, Asia, and son, Qaiser. A second son, Ansar, was in another village training as a barber and unhappy with the profession. Little Iqra, who is now enrolled in a nearby primary school, was a malnourished toddler.
>
> [Safia:] "You know how tough it is with just one earning member in the family [consisting of three children and two parents]. It's not just the fee that we couldn't afford, but when a child goes to school

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at around 10%. The estimates most often cited put drug addiction at around 20-30% of the male stitcher workforce.

[123] Stories of stitchers were compiled as part a program initiated by that soccer ball company, in collaboration with its Scandinavian customer, that is providing health and education benefits to its stitchers and their children. The program is known as the Select-Anwar Khawaja Health and Education Programme (SAHEP) (Butt, 2001).

> and watches the others, she naturally wants (toys, candies etc) for herself, and you can't really blame her for it. Children after all will be children." (ibid).

The above excerpts are from women stitchers who can consider themselves fortunate. Their plight was to some extent relieved by a program (SAHEP) set up for their welfare by their corporate employer. SAHEP is the only program of its kind in the entire Sialkot soccer ball industry that provides health and education benefits to the stichers and their dependents. A handful of employers provide health benefits to their stitchers which are not extended to their dependents nor do they provide any education benefits. The rest provide neither health nor education allowances to their stitchers or to their dependents.

Women stitchers live an impoverished existence even though the balls they stitch generate riches for their Sialkot manufacturers and their international brands. The dull compulsions of material existence are sharply felt by these women. Lest we forget, these are rural women. Thus, stitching just forms a part of their workload. Much effort is also exerted by them in fulfilling their other unpaid house-related tasks such as cooking, cleaning, assisting in farm work, feeding animals, fetching water, feed or fodder for animals. Not surprisingly they work themselves to exhaustion and it takes its toll on their health. Most reports, as well as interviews conducted with women stitchers, point out that they suffer from eye strain, joint-pains, back-aches, and deformed calloused fingers. In one medical examination, where 453 stitchers were examined, many of them women, 103 needed glasses (Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme (1998). *SAHEP Fifth Report* (Internal Document). Sialkot: Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme).Work-related health injuries (especially callused fingers) create considerable psychological distress. One female NGO worker pointed out to me how a woman stitcher confided to her that she was embarrassed in shaking hands with others because doing so would make apparent her callused fingers.[124]

[124] Psychological distress created by work-related illnesses I also observed in male stitchers. During an interview with a group of male stitchers, they alluded to their fingers. Deformities were acknowledged through humour, most likely a coping mechanism to bear this ordeal. One of them

These are the physical and emotional injuries of class. To these must be added the sheer disdain with which stitching work is looked upon by village culture. Surveys from various reports attest to this fact. For example, a Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP) report states as one of its findings that 'stitching is considered an inferior source of income.' (Punjab Rural Support Programme [PRSP], 2002: 5). But again how is this cryptic statement digested in the existence of those who endure it. The women stitchers I interviewed felt visibly ashamed at being soccer ball stitchers. This was apparent in groups that contained more affluent women who in the group setting would boast that no members of their family stitched soccer balls. Young and old women stitchers recounted in hurt tones the taunts from other villagers they bore because they stitched soccer balls. In a voice cracking under the strain of suppressed sorrow, one mourned '[the villagers] look down upon stitching. Speak to us in an insulting way. Say [derogatory tone] 'What kind of work is this!'(Interview Notebook III, 2003: 38). The taunts stung. And they stung deeply. One woman stitcher, with a beautiful two year old child in her lap, named Omar, half begged and half threatened me not to proceed with my research if it would legitimise stitching and, thus, keep her and her fellow stitchers in this profession. In an imploring tone tinged with anxious anger, she directed the following volley to me: 'Why do you want to study our problems? Are you trying to keep us in stitching? Will your research perpetuate our work in stitching? We want to leave stitching and do alternative work. Do not want to be *stuck* [original emphasis] in stitching.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 167).

Such is the social pariah status of this profession. This would help us explain why many women would refuse to go to all female stitching centres where the social taboos of working next to non-familial men would not apply. Work in the privacy of their homes meant that they could protect others in the village from finding out that they were involved in this low status profession both in terms of income and social prestige. Agricultural work, based on interviews,

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said, remarking on deshaped fingers said, ''With stitchers, once they [prospective in-laws] shake our [deformed] hands, say thank you very much for [our] marriage proposals.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 213).

was highly prized by stitchers because it enjoyed higher earnings and status than stitching. Even work that paid less than stitching (e.g., clerical work) appeared more valued by stitchers. Given this lowly status of stitching, it is clear that women, who would resort to it, would do so out of *majboori* [necessity; compulsion] the main reason given by NGO reports and almost all my women stitcher interviewees as to why they stitch soccer balls.[125] A family that did not stitch, but would begin to do so and make it public by its women going to centres for stitching, would signal to the village that it had fallen on hard times and would not be able to maintain its earlier social standing. Thus, to maintain their social image, some women stitchers would be loath to go to centres which might signal to the other villagers that they had fallen on hard times, that they were now engaged in undignified labour unbecoming of them, or in worst cases, both. As a woman stitcher explained to me how the village gossip structure impacts their working choices, 'Because of children like home. Centre quite far away. Also, if I go to work, then neighbours see person going. Realize that conditions at home not good. Lose respect. Work at home, neighbours not know hardship at home. Able to keep respect.' (Pilot Study, 2001: 30).

Stitching soccer balls rips mercilessly at one's socio-economic condition and status. Couple this with the baggage of constraints that are already befalling women stitchers because of being women in a traditional rural conservative and patriarchal[126] society such as Sialkot, such as having their educational

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[125] A former Saga Sports employee, while acknowledging the material necessities that drive women to stitch, pointed out that he observed in a Saga Sports stitching centre, women coming from outside, just for a day or two, to stitch balls and have that work credited to their relative or friend working there as a way of helping the latter (Interview Notebook II, 2003).

[126] It should be pointed out that rural Sialkot society is patriarchal most intensely in the public space. Women have to be chaperoned by a male relative if travelling to another village for example. In the private sphere of the home, the society's patriarchal restrictions are less stringently enforced. As the private archives, cited earlier, that note husband drug addictions and wife beatings also state that 'although it is the man who is considered the official head of the family, in most instances I witness first hand, the households are in reality thoroughly matriarchal in structure with the female members bringing in the most income and at the same time running the whole house, in what appears to be a thankless task.' (Butt, M. (2001). *The Stories of our SAHEP Children* (Private Report). Sialkot: Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme). Perhaps the relative openness within the four walls for women may explain partially why men who out of honour would not want their wives be seen working outside in public stitching centres, as this would indicate they are not able to provide for their families, would have no problems in having these women stitch at home. As a final note, patriarchy like all other

opportunities foreclosed because scarce family resources have to be diverted to the education of their male siblings, then one can see them facing massive social and economic forces that are relentlessly marshalling against them. The lot of women stitchers, and stitching families in general, is quite impressively captured in the following words of a matron of a leading soccer ball firm, who after conducting a door to door survey of 403 stitchers comprising one-third of her stitching work force, the majority of whom were women (56.4%), said in a speech to her family firm's international buyer:

> The stitching families frequently took advance payment from the contractor as they received no social security cover, no provident fund, no pension fund provision, no bonus payment, no profit sharing . . . The income from football stitching was simply too little to cater for any medical emergency. With great difficulty could they maintain all their children in school and pay for books and uniforms. Almost all had debts. I was informed that help with educational expenditure and medical care was the most pressing need, followed by others such as: repair work to their homes damaged during the rainy season, dowry for the girls when they get married, toilets, a pump, fans, electricity meter. (Khawaja, 2002: 2).

Such a precarious socio-economic existence of women stitchers may shock us. It need not, however, surprise us. Such an existence is often a feature of rural peasantry in developing countries. Being rural peasants themselves, the women

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systems of domination is highly complex containing deep contradictions and fissures which create possibilities for agency, albeit ones that are highly circumscribed. In the case of Sialkot in particular, it is interesting to note that the understanding of a woman as just being little more than a good marriage proposal and a handsome dowry is shifting. As village boys are getting more educated, the definition of a suitable girl is subtly altering. Based on my conversations with stitchers, NGO personnel, and school teachers in Sialkot, a girl that is educated is considered more eligible than one who is not. Thus, the patriarchal impulse that restricts women to just being born for marriage, nevertheless, is now pushing males to get their daughters educated so that they can realize this patriarchal objective. Women are still considered chauvinistically as little more than a 'good marriage proposal' but we are witnessing a semantic shift of that term. It is now becoming invested with 'being educated' which has, thus, created space for women to exercise their agency in getting themselves educated whereas little of that space had existed previously. Of course, it would be nice if the solidity of the rural patriarchal order were to melt into thin air but the discussion here was just to demonstrate that there are plenty of cross currents, albeit limited in scope and scale, at work in what appears to be a monolithic and stolid social structure.

stitchers socio-economic situation mirrors well the condition of other rural peasantries so succinctly articulated by R.H. Tawney:

> There are districts in which the position of the rural population is that of a man standing permanently up to the neck in water, so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him. (1966: 77).

## EXPLORING AGENCY: GOON SQUADS AND LIPSTICKS

*Women Stitcher Needs & the Project: Latrine, Regular Work, & a Good Pay*

The world of women stitchers is, thus, one of necessity and desperation. Their heads are bobbing up and below the uncharitable waters of subsistence. Any small ripple, for example, a family member falling sick, and they and their families can see their meagre savings being wiped out after which comes the plunge below the subsistence water line into the dark biting currents of strife and perdition. Surveys, such as the one done by the matron of a family business, cited earlier, point out how ill-health can savage a family's well-being. In several interviews with women stitchers, I observed this phenomenon first hand. For example, two young girls, approximately 16 and 14 years of age, had been stitching for the last five years. These girls hailed from a relatively affluent background. Their father had been a worker in Saudi Arabia and had managed to accumulate some savings. Then illness struck their mother. The medical bills accumulated and their savings dwindled. Eventually, to just make ends meet and put food on the table, both girls entered the labour market. Another girl, about 14 years of age, reserved in demeanour, whose slender shoulders carry a weighty burden, tells a similar tale:

> Stitch because I have to take care of the family. Father died [due to sudden illness]. [I am] Supporting my siblings. Two of them. We can either earn at home or we can go ahead to school. But how can we go ahead? How can we get out of

> our situation? How can we go ahead when we have to earn? (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 40-41).[127]

Not surprisingly the burning issue for women stitchers is a living wage. Surveys conducted on stitchers, both men and women, from 1997 onwards attest to this statement. The passage quoted above of Khawaja (2002) quite adequately portrays the stitcher needs. Of course, these needs were even more succinctly expressed by a group of women stitchers. They were asked what are the needs of women stitchers. They thought for a moment and then with concision born from having to struggle daily with the exigencies of physical existence, where time wasted in not working can spell a difference between sleeping with hunger or with food, stated, 'a latrine, regular work, and a good pay.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 25).

The project catered precious little to these needs. These workplace issues were kept off the agenda. Instead, as we can recall, a trickle-down approach was deployed using microcredit, school enrolment drives and informal education centres that ended up missing the vast majority of the women stitchers and their families. Moreover, it seems that none of these social protection programs could be made sustainable; the education centres have been begun to be wound up, so their impact, while beneficial for the few families who came into their safety nets, are transient at best for the rest of the women stitching population. With the income generation and education programs having largely missed the bulk of stitching families that were affected by the project, the lot of the women stitchers seems not to have improved in any substantive way by all the project work carried out in their name to benefit them. Most importantly, the project, by establishing monitorable stitching centres, in which the International Labour

[127] The young girl's statement seems to futher confirm what in the labour studies in the developing world literature is known as the 'luxury axiom': 'A family will send the children to the labor market only if the family's income from non-child labor sources drops very low' (Basu and Van (1998: 416) cited in Ray, 2000: 349). Ray's quantitative study found this luxury axiom to hold for Pakistan. The quote not only provides further evidence for the luxury axiom but adds to it a crucial qualitative dimension.. It allows the reader to access what the luxury axiom means for those saddled with it, a sensibility often missed when such theoretical understandings are communicated through quantitative data alone.

Organization (ILO) could check to see whether children were stitching, actually worsened their plight.

Stitching, prior to the advent of the stitching centres, had been a home-based cottage activity where the whole family would often participate in stitching soccer balls. (SCF, 2000a) For example, the woman in the household might sew the halfs of the ball, while her husband might stitch them together and perform the difficult stitching operation of stitching the last six panels. Stitching also had flexible working hours. Women would intermittently stitch between their household chores (e.g., cooking and tending to children) (Saeed, 1998). Also, stitching at home provided women with privacy. They could stitch at home without too many of the villagers finding out that their families were in hard times or that they were involved in what was deemed to be a 'lowly' activity.

All these home-based benefits the women lost when stitching moved to monitorable centres. True, a handful of new stitching centres provided women with medical and health facilities as well as subsidized rations such as Nike's supplier, Saga Sports. More importantly, the new stitching centres provided women with better stitching rates, done largely in order to attract them to work there. Also, while at home, women received rates set by the subcontractor and the latter would often give women stitchers a lower rate than what the factory had ordered him to give to the women stitchers. At the stitching centres, where stitching rates had to be prominently displayed in a notice board, women at least became aware of what they should be getting. This certainly was a benefit of the new monitorable stitching centre regime. Recognizing this benefit, a woman stitcher interviewed in a stitching centre, said, '[We] did not know the rate. When we came to the centre, found out what rate we should be getting.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 21).

The wage benefits of monitorable centres turned out to be applicable only to a few women stitchers who decided to leave their homes and work in stitching centres and, even for them, these benefits were only momentary. After the initial

increase in 1998, wages have stagnated.[128] In the meanwhile, double digit inflation, especially in basic foods and utilities (Hussain, 2003), has been steadily eroding their purchasing power. Five years later, whatever benefits may have accrued to the women stitchers from the 1998 piece-rate hikes have been decimated by inflation and women stitchers are seeing water levels of economic distress rising. As one woman stitcher put it, 'I have eight children, the other has 4-5 children. We work all day and then start again [in terms of economic position] at same place. Wages not enough to cover expenses.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 23).

Regarding the potential benefits of monitorable centres in ensuring the women get the factory rates and not suffer the abuse at the hands of the subcontractors that pay them a lower rate and pocket the difference, they seem to have been realized only partially. Interviews with NGO personnel and stitchers seem to suggest that the monitorable centres have not made any appreciable dent in this exploitative practice. One of the most progressive and socially responsible soccer ball firms in Sialkot, Anwar Khawaja Industries (AKI), that actively strives to ensure that their stitchers are not cheated by their subcontractors and receive the rates to which they are entitled, conducted a survey of approximately 270 stitching centres that work for them and are owned by their subcontractors. In spite of their admonitions to these subcontractors to pay the women stitchers the rates they had set for them, the survey showed:

> The payment made for the stitchers is not being passed on to the stitchers in full . . . During the survey it has become obvious, while visiting WSC [workshop stitching centre] in the absence of the subcontractor, that the women felt hesitant to tell the correct amount they are receiving and some subcontractors resented our inquiries for obvious reasons. Furthermore, we found out that some women are being deliberately prevented from

[128] Recall that stitching wages prior to the 1998 piece-rate hikes in monitoring centres had not been able to cover basis needs (e.g., education and health) on account of wages not having risen since 1990 while consumer prices had shot up during that period by over 250% (see footnote 94). Even without the subsequent post-1998 inflation, the piece-rate hikes would not have restored the purchasing power of women stitchers to 1990 which also was at a sub-basic needs level.

> stitching complete balls in order for the subcontractors and one contractor ([village] Ugoki) to receive the extra money.
>
> The women in these centres are entirely depending on the subcontractor for getting work and in many cases have been stitching for them for 10 years or more within their locality. Therefore they will accept lower payment rather than loosing [sic] the supply of balls to stitch. (Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme [SAHEP]. (2002). *A Study of the Payment Structure to the Stitchers of AKI (Investigatory Report)*. Sialkot: Select-Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme).

The SAHEP quantitative survey tends to corroborate the interviews that point to the pervasiveness of this exploitative practice. According to the said survey, the women stitchers are being cheated by the subcontractors who are docking from their Rs.40 (US$0.66) per ball factory stipulated piece-rate anywhere between Rs.1 (US$0.02) to Rs.12 (US$0.20). This behaviour of subcontractors squeezing further the already bare subsistence wages of women stitchers was observed in over 90% of the stitching centres surveyed belonging to AKI and the average pocketed by the subcontractor tended to be about Rs.5 (US$0.08) per ball.[129] That this activity was taking place in the one of the more socially responsible Sialkot firms which was actively working to stamp it out, only shows how widespread this form of exploitation must be in Sialkot's other stitching centres. After the study, the matron of that Sialkot firm recounted to me what she did:

> Found one subcontractor deducting 12 rupees [US$0.20] from wage rate. [I] Was harsh with him. Called him a *thief* [original emphasis] Next day, he not only brought rate up to what it should have been, but increased it by 2 rupees [US$0.03]. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 15-16).

[129] Discrepancy in converted US dollar amounts arising out of rounding off values to two decimal places. Average annual exchange rate for 2002 (i.e., the year the said survey was conducted) was Rs.59.72 per US$1 (see Appendix F).

Inflation and subcontractor wiles made the monetary benefits of the monitorable stitching centre regime transient. The same transience could not be said, sadly, for the problems suffered by the women stitchers as the project ushered in a new production regime. These began to sink in more permanently into their sense of well-being. A study by SCF (2000a) in 12 villages, having a concentration of stitching activity, in which 3210 households were interviewed, came up with the following findings:

- Stitchers detest discipline of factory time where they have to work according to fixed hours as opposed to the earlier system of flexible working hours.

- Stitchers feel that commuting to and from the stitching centre wastes time.

- For those with agricultural income, they used to stitch part-time to supplement agricultural income. Now, due to travelling away from their fields to the stitching centre and submitting themselves to the discipline of factory time, their part-time work has become full time and are no longer able to attend to agriculture and, thus, are losing income from that source.

- In stitching centres, output is lower because the soccer ball completed by them has to be approved before they can start on a new ball. Also, in stitching centres, they have use to double knots in stitching rather than single knots. This has increased their completion time from anywhere between 10-15%. Women stitchers are, as a result, stitching fewer balls.

According to that report, a traditional family cottage industry has been disrupted and the following meaningful collective patterns of life may no longer be possible:

> All family members, even those with other jobs, would stitch footballs at home in their spare time to earn an extra 125 to 150 rupees [US$2.33 to

> US$2.79] daily. People described how they would stitch while they watched television in the evenings. Now, they say, the lack of work and high inflation has meant it harder to make ends meet. (ibid: 19).[130]

The interviews conducted for this research tended to as a whole confirm the findings of the above quoted SCF (2000a) report. In all my interviews with approximately 50 women stitchers, only two found working in stitching centres better than at home. One gave the reason that she was free from household chores and, thus, could stitch more balls. The other liked the stitching centre because that particular one provided her with subsidized rations and health facilities. However, as we have already pointed out, only a handful of stitching centres provided such elaborate facilities. Thus, her experience at best can be generalized to about 5% of the women stitching workforce who benefited from such facilities. As for stitching more balls, the stitcher who made this remark was contradicted overwhelmingly by her fellow stitching centre colleagues. Women complained quite commonly that that they stitched fewer balls at the centre than at home. In the centres they could only stitch between a certain period of time whereas at home they had all 24 hours so even with household chores they could use the night time to stitch balls and, thus, end up with a higher production rate than at the stitching centres. Thus, with the exception of the above two women stitchers, all other women stitcher interviewees preferred home-based stitching to centre

[130] There are no precise statistics available on the percentage of Sialkot stitchers owning television. However, we can get a sense of the incidence of television ownership amongst stitchers from the following. According to the Bureau of Statistics (Government of Punjab, Pakistan), approximately 128,943 rural Sialkot households (total rural Sialkot households: 269,973) had access to television (1998). That is approximately 48% of rural households. The percentage having ownership would be far less than the percentage having access for you can have access to television without owning a set. Also, recall that stitchers were on the lower end of Sialkot's poor rural working class community (e.g., those in agriculture fared better than the stitchers). Thus, even if we were to assume that the 48% rural households owned television, the households that owned television sets would predominately be those belonging to the relatively richer income rural income groups (e.g., small land holders). Only a few stitching households would own a television set. The SCF portrayal of stitching families stitching while watching television, thus, probably refers to at most about 36% of stitcher households that had some agricultural land (Saeed, 1998: 19). Nevertheless, the sheer fact that some stitchers could own television sets does suggest that the situation of stitchers while grim, lacking any social safety net to speak of so that an emergency (e.g., medical illness), would put them well below the subsistence line, was not one of utter destitution. A minority among them were able to have durables like television. Sialkot stitchers, thus, were relatively less worse off than many of the working poor in other parts of the developing world.

stitching, largely because they could stitch more balls and they found it convenient.

The convenience of home-based stitching appears, on closer analysis, to have three dimensions or aspects. Home-based stitching was convenient because it enabled them to do their household chores and saved them with commuting time that they could productively deploy for house work or for stitching. These were the first two dimensions and they are illustrated in the following quotes:

> Most of us would prefer work at home. What happens when we come to the centre and a guest comes? — Woman Stitcher A (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 23).

> We could stitch more at home. Here can only stitch during centre times. Here we stitch less. Before we could work at home and stitch in spare time. Now lose time commuting which could be used for stitching. — Woman Stitcher B (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 20-21).[131]

Such is the importance of commuting that even the woman stitcher who liked stitching at the centre because of health and cheap groceries left working there because she had a hard time making the trek to the centre.[132] The hassle of commuting is tied to the third dimension of what convenience means to women stitchers and that is privacy. This is to say working at home provides them with

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[131] These sentiments of producing more, attending to household chores, and being saved from the bother of commuting, were also expressed by male stitchers. For example, a male stitcher reminiscing on the virtues of home-based stitching, remarked, 'Before we used to stitch 4-5 balls at home and also do house work . . . But not restricted [at home]. We were free at home. Felt the urge to stitch in the middle of the night. Get up and start stitching. Made more at home even with lower rates because stitched more balls. Now can only stitch at workplace. Cannot take work home.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 206-207). Interesting to note how the stitcher associates phrases such as being 'free' and 'not restricted' with home-based stitching, when asked to compare the latter to centre-based stitching, This shows that home is associated with freedom and not the workplace which, as a contrast being made, is experienced by that male stitcher, and most likely others as well, as having the opposite properties of imprisonment and restriction. Though the latter are not explicitly stated, they most definitely, given the comparison context, are implied.

[132] Such is the exploitative nature of industrial relations in Sialkot that even this facility of subsidized rations is alleged to have not been spared from opportunistic behaviour by those with authority. According to an NGO field worker, 'In Saga Sports centre, give them [women stitchers] facility [like] health, tuckshop, and store [rations]. [Like] [s]ugar. Less than market rate but managers give them at higher than company rate [but] and lower than market rate.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 138).

the convenience of not exposing themselves as soccer ball stitchers after which come the slurs and the derogatory comments made by their fellow villagers. One woman stitcher, nostalgic about home-based stitching, sighed, 'Before you could earn with respect at home.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 21). Respect is important for women and the visible daily commute to centres open their self-respects up for scathing verbal assaults by villagers, particularly men. One woman stitcher, despite her precarious economic situation, left working in centres because she could no longer tolerate such abuse. In words laced with deep hurt, she recollects her centre stitching experience as follows:

> If we go to factories, people say nasty things about us. [They say] Putting red lipstick, going out, what do you have in mind. [We] do it [stitching] out of necessity. Common feeling [in villages] is that if one cannot do anything [one is useless] then stitch. No respect in village. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 49).

Home-based stitching thus saved women from verbal abuse. At times, it also provided them protection from physical sexual abuse. One former SCF officer, a Sialkot village resident himself, points out that sexual harassment, including rape, was as an important factor that made women overwhelmingly refuse working at centres even at the pain of severe economic deprivation. He also cites this sexual abuse at the workplace as a pivotal issue that helped those in the project who were arguing against large monitorable centres and in favour of all female stitching centres based in their own villages. As he recollects:

> [During early days] subcontractors complained to us that they are being pulled in opposite directions. Industry wants work done in centres. But social pressures from workers, asking that women work should be given at home. We got this feedback [from subcontractors] about issue [of women wanting to work at home].
>
> Then there was near that [area of subcontractors referred to above], a big stitching centre of Saga Sports that provided pick and drop facilities. We told women why not go there. But women were

> being exploited there, sexually. [The centre] had all male staff. Had middle woman would act as middle person. [She would] get girls to agree and then [the girls] taken to head office. This information went back to villages. Women not want to work. They reacted by stopping to come.
>
> [We] got this information from [our] female staff who were establishing school councils for female girl schools. Of course Saga Sports and Nike had to show centre operational. So brought girls from Gujrat. Then we found out [about the sexual exploitation of women stitchers]. But kept this issue [to ourselves]. Did not share it [with other NGOs]. This feedback we did not show to industry for fear they would harass females [sexually abused women stitchers] for telling us.
>
> The big centre model feasible after 10 years but not at this point. We needed to move with the present culture. Get them prepared [to accept this idea]. This is where the idea of a village-based centre began to emerge. Anita Khawaja played major role in promoting this concept. [She] felt that if children going to school, no reason why women should be deprived of stitching. [She] felt women should not be deprived of work. [She] raised issue in PCC [Project Coordination Committee] meeting. ILO made decision if 2-3 women register, view it as a centre. SCF gave support and it was adopted. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 166-169).

Though such sexual molestation did occur in other companies, Saga Sports was often singled out by NGO workers as being quite notorious in this regard. A former quality control manager of Saga Sports said:

> Now in female centres, constant problem of sexual harassment. Centre management [male] [who harasses women] or [women] get harassed by male driver [bus drivers that would pick and drop women employees at certain stops]. There are checks. If found, person [centre male manager] dismissed. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 150).

The same manager, quoted above, while acknowledging the harassment of women, went on to say that in rare cases, the opposite also happens. In his words:

> Also you have in [a] minority [of cases] where women [stitchers] harass the men. Blackmail them [male managers] that they will blame them for sexual harassment if they [demands of this blackmailing union] are ignored. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 150-151).

Of course, for deeply conservative rural women, to proclaim in public that they have been assaulted, would be bringing infamy and disrepute to their household. Thus, the 'black mailing union' quite likely does exist but is, given this context, quite a rarity. And for this very same reason, that is given the male domineering rural context, the other more typical pattern of sexual abuse (i.e., against women) in Sialkot industry in general and at Saga Sports,[133] in particular, seems to regrettably have more frequent showings.

The women stitchers who made the hard migration to stitching centres, whether in their own villages or in remote locations, form at best maybe 20% of the pre-project women stitching workforce.[134] The remainder refused to make such a migration out of a variety of predispositions or prejudices, the three most prominent being self-respect, obligations at the home, or due to permission not being given by their men folk to commute to work. Regardless, their stance has come at a vicious material cost to them. They have found themselves at a sharp edge of a pincer movement. At one end they are losing to lower-price China *desi* ball orders while on the other end, for higher quality balls, they are losing

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[133]Interviews with NGO personnel that touched upon sexual harassment of working women in Sialkot, often would allude to Saga Sports as a company where such incidents occur. This interview material seems to be corroborated by newspaper sources as well. For example, the following headline appeared in the Pakistan Newswire on August 13, 2003, 'GM Saga Sports in China caught red handed'. The first part of the story read as follows: 'Awais Habib Khan General Manager and Amin Muhammad Stitching, Trainer Master of the Saga Sports China has been taken into police custody by the First Guard Station FIZHOL in an assault case with a female factory worker which is a clear cut violation of an agreement with NIKE Sports regarding Code of Conduct mentioned in the MoU [Memorandum of Understanding] for the protection and safety of rights of the women.' (Pakistan Newswire, 2003).

[134] Figure derived from interviews and statistics provided in documents gathered by this research, particularly, All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APFOL), 1999; Awan, 1996; International Monitoring Association for Child Labour (IMAC), 2003; Saga Sports, 1998; and SCF, 1997.

business to the stitching centres where most of these balls are now being stitched. Caught in this pincer of price and prejudice, they are finding themselves having to compete with each other for the fewer balls that are now stitched at village homes, driving wages down even further much to the satisfaction of those unscrupulous subcontractors who further press home their exploitative advantage. A woman stitcher at her home angrily told me:

> Wages are poor. We have children. Work hard to earn bread. We get money on times [from subcontractor] sometimes. Ten years [I have been] stitching. If I protest, there are 1000 people willing to stitch. [Subcontractor will] say fine. You do not want to work, [I will] give it to others. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 35).

Another woman stitcher described the drastic drop in orders in the following way: 'Before we used to get 2 balls, now get 1 ball. If before we get 1 ball, now make half'. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 42). That woman stitcher was fortunate that she only lost 50% of her pre-project production levels. Others have fared worse. Though wage rates initially increased for male stitchers at centres, they were not enough to compensate for the loss of income suffered by women and children now unable to stitch. Overall, household incomes fell in absolute terms. All this happened while the project received international accolades for its humanitarian concerns and the US presidential seal of approval. The women stitchers would have truly wondered if they indeed were the ones being described by Bill Clinton in his ringing endorsement of the project at the ILO headquarters in Switzerland on June 16, 1999:

> Let me cite just one example of the success being achieved, the work being done to eliminate child labor from the soccer ball industry in Pakistan. Two years ago, thousands of children under the age of 14 worked for 50 companies stitching soccer balls full-time. The industry, the ILO and UNICEF joined together to remove children from the production of soccer balls and give them a chance to go to school, and to monitor the results.

> Today, the work has been taken up by women in 80 poor villages in Pakistan, giving them new employment and their families new stabilities. Meanwhile, the children have started to go to school, so that they come of age, they will be able to do better jobs raising the standard of living of their families, their villages and their nation. I thank all who were involved in this endeavour and ask others to follow their lead.' (Clinton, 1999).

The portrayal by Clinton stands starkly in contradiction to reality. Women did not get jobs. Rather, they lost income and work opportunities. Though NGO personnel dislike speculating on this matter, most of them estimate that average household incomes have fallen around 25-30% in absolute terms. Combine this with inflation and the knowledge that the stitching household incomes were, before this sharp drop, barely affording women stitchers and their children with a subsistence-level existence, what we have is not that the project made the water levels rise gently on stichers who had their necks in water. Rather, they became submerged by the child labour crisis tidal wave.

*Imaginations & Evaluations*

The stitchers were not aware of Clinton's ILO speech. In fact, most male and female stitchers were not even aware of the child labour project. It was largely not present in their collective imaginations. When asked to describe the project, they answered with blank stares. This sometimes took on surreal proportions. Parents and children sitting in a project-established Non-Formal Education Centre (NFE) did not know that the centre was established as part of the child labour project, much to the embarrassment of the NGO field worker that had helped to establish the NFE and had impressed upon me prior to our arrival at the NFE how much work his NGO had done in imparting to stitcher families information about the project. Similarly, the stitchers belonging to a microcredit community organization could not for the life in them provide any information about the project. For them, they understood their involvement with the project purely in personal terms. The school was not set up by the project. The school

was not the project's school. It was either Mrs. X's school (the school teacher) or it was Mr. Y's school (the NGO activist who they knew had helped set up the school). They had a pre-bureaucratic highly personalized non-organizational imagination. In their cosmology, flesh and blood individuals existed. Not organizations and they referred to organizational phenomena (e.g., a PRSP's community organization (CO)) on purely personalized terms (e.g., Mrs. Y's CO) with Mrs. Y either being their CO leader or the PRSP representative with whom they interacted. The NGO personnel to whom this project ignorance of the stitchers was communicated did not act surprised. One of them, recognising this state of affairs and further substantiating it, said, '[The] community does not read brochures, [brochures] use is for donors.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 73). Another senior NGO field officer said, 'As for brochures, [they are] for donors. Have not seen a single brochure with stitchers.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 198).

From the earlier chapter, we know the project had been largely a top-down affair. Interviews on the ground seemed to confirm this where the stitchers had been kept largely clueless about all that was taking place in their name. When the NGO personnel themselves, especially at the field level, due to a lack of close collaboration, could not fathom all the project's activities, it was hard to expect that stitchers would be able to envision and give a detailed exposition of the project.

A few NGO personnel were of the opinion that stitchers were participants in the project. According to one NGO worker:

> [stitcher] participation is satisfactory in being involved and participating with us. At policy level no participation. Answer to question is where is policy level being made, at board of governors where there are no stitchers. (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 100).

Even this quote concedes that at best stitchers participated in implementation decisions not at policy levels. However, most NGO personnel were of the opinion that there was effectively no participation, contrary to their public grass roots

empowerment rhetoric. To illustrate this point where stitchers really had no say in what kind of programs would be run under the project, an NGO worker sarcastically stated the following:

> Not consult them in design, just in implementation Guess involvement highly restricted to just your choice whether you want to go to the doctor or you would like the doctor to come to you. That is the extent of their participation. Some do not even ask them these questions but just give them directives. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 197-198).

The lack of stitcher participation can be gleaned from other sources as well. Minutes of PCC meetings referred to stitchers as 'targets', things to be acted upon, never as persons who should be directly participating in the PCC deliberations which were after all about and concerned them. In these internal records, when stakeholders were mentioned, stitchers were conspicuously absent in the laundry list. For example, an internal project communication strategy draft lists the following stakeholders to whom information about the project should be constantly communicated:

> Firstly the media, both national and international, who in turn, serve the public. Secondly, the various interested NGOs, such as human rights groups, employers' organizations, trade unions, etcetera. (Husselbee, David (1997). *Draft II: Communication strategy Sialkot Soccer Ball Project* (Internal Project Document). Sialkot: Save the Children.)

Not only in internal documents were stitchers absent, but also often in public documents where one would think that, out of politeness and political correctness, they would be included among the project stakeholders. Nevertheless, numerous public documents from the project's policy makers exclude stitchers from their interested parties list. This just goes to show that they had become so absent in the mind of decision makers in internal deliberations that the latter often failed to inscribe their presence in their public statements as seen, for example, in the following excerpt from a paper presented in October 2000 by an ILO's child labour project manager:

> In May 1995, news reports about sporting goods manufacturing involving child labour created pressure for change with all stakeholders namely Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA), World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI), Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). Being concerned with the issues of child labour and child rights, international organisations like ILO-IPEC [International Labour Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour], UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund], and Save the Children decided to play their due roles in the soccer industry in Sialkot. Consequently an agreement among all the stakeholders was signed in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) on 14 February 1997. (Dogar, 2000: 3).

Similarly, SCF in a public report also erased stitchers when listing relevant project stakeholders:

> The findings have been shared with all the stakeholders including international brands, trade unions, the media, human rights groups, NGOs, and government agencies. (2000a: 13).

Given the oblivion invidiously enjoyed by stitchers in the mental frameworks of the policy makers where they were either inanimate 'targets' or simply invisible, the conclusion of SCF's project evaluation report concerning stitcher participation need not unduly surprise us:

> In Sialkot, a number of stakeholders did not play strong roles within the partnership. These are: the community (including working children and their families), Trade Unions and Government. Partnerships need to identify the potential roles of *all* [original emphasis] key stakeholders, not just implementing agencies, and to include, where appropriate, representatives from a wide range of primary and secondary stakeholders in project management mechanisms.
>
> In Sialkot, people and people's organisations have not been strong in the partnership equation, and they have been missing from all management

> mechanisms. As yet, their representatives have not been included and this has meant that opportunities to maximise ownership have not been exploited. This has negative implications for long-term sustainability of the project and for mainstreaming children and work issues into all local development. There is a diminished chance that local voice on these issues will drive the agenda. (Crawford, 2001: 12-13).

When the stitchers were so alienated from the project and so ignorant about its workings, it was difficult to ascertain their views on the project as a whole. Instead, one had to discern how they evaluated the project on a piece-meal basis by asking them what they thought about education, health and microcredit given that these three were the main social protection activities undertaken by the project.

Concerning microcredit and health, both men and women stitchers found the ideas of such programs beneficial. This is understandable as both projects provide instantaneous relief in a direct material sense either by example treating some children for illnesses (e.g., stomach worms) or providing much needed cash to women stitchers to start some enterprise promising sustainable livelihood. Response regarding education varied on a spectrum and the variation was largely contingent on what the term meant for the women stitchers. For some, the term education meant certification by some formal authority that would produce gainful white collar employment. Imbued with this meaning, education was thoroughly useless to many women stitchers as the following quotes testify:

> What is the point of education. She has completed up to matric [grade 10] and is still here stitching — Woman stitcher A (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 22).

> I feel disheartened when see educated people roaming around here and there without jobs. — Woman stitcher B (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 39).

When these criticisms of education were made, other women stitchers, including the educated ones who were being shown as being symbols of education failure because they were still stuck in stitching, gave spirited response. For example, in the first of the just above two quotes, the woman stitcher with the grade 10 education defended her education in the following way:

> Advantages of education. Educated and [then can] get job. [Educated person] know[s] where he is going. Advantage and advantage. [I] can read something and then can tell you. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 22).

Similarly, regarding the second quote, other women stitchers shot back. A girl stitcher around 14 years of age said with great maturity and dignity:

> But education not just for jobs. Can teach smaller children. Can teach younger children and siblings. Learn how to talk. Can write letters, can speak properly. Can read directions so that I know where I am going. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 39).

A vehicle for better white collar employment prospects was a seldom used defense by women stitchers for education. The visible unemployment of young men with college degrees made the women stitchers suffer from no delusions about a highly certified level of education being a guarantor against the bane of unemployment. More frequent defences of education were made by shifting the semantic contents of that term so that it came to be viewed either as literacy in which case the immediate functional benefits of education were enumerated as seen above (e.g., ability to read directions) or it was viewed as an end in itself as containing information that would produce a more refined and well mannered human being. On these two grounds of instrumentality and as a valued end in and of itself, education was considered a prize worthy of possession. Interestingly, the value of education, when the term came to be understood in this way, was also mirrored in interviews with male stitchers, as depicted in the following quote:

> Education important. You are writing these marks and I do not know what is being written. Not know how to read. Have problems. Ask someone for a bus

> going to Gujranwala and would not know if he points me to a bus going to Faisalabad. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 213).

Despite the quality and relevance of education for future significantly enhanced livelihoods being perceived to be somewhat limited, it was nevertheless quite interesting to observe stitchers, both men and women, seeing education, at least up to a primary level (grade 5), as useful. Some were willing to make quite impressive sacrifices to ensure that their younger siblings would reach that level of education and, thus, find blue collar non-stitching jobs such as working as mechanics which were better paying but often required enough literacy to read drawings and instructions. One female stitcher spent her entire life stitching and did not get married so that her two younger male siblings could get some education for a better future. Her sacrifice worked as both ended up in the leather industry as pattern cutters a work paying better than stitching wages but requiring a modicum of literacy and numeracy skills. One could notice that, at the level of literacy, women stitchers valued education. When the benefits of education were being articulated by a woman stitcher, a colleague of hers noted with quiet anger directed at her own inner self, '[I] Feel regret for not having studied. Could have taught my [two] kids.' (Rough Notebook I, 2003: 300).

Health and education, then, were valued by women stitchers for themselves and their children. Most of them did not benefit from the project that tried to deliver these two goods. Even if they were to be its beneficiaries, they would still have wanted to satisfy these needs themselves through a sustainable livelihood rather than be dependent on the vicissitudes of charitable project hand-outs which may be present one day and gone the next. Thus, they demanded a latrine, regular work, and a good pay. Apart from the latrine, which arose from the fact that many stitching centres lacked toilets, a facility women stitchers had access to when they stitched at home, the other two can be subsumed into the rubric of a living wage. Quite rightly are women to demand this for this is perhaps the most independent and sustainable way of meeting those needs for themselves and for their families, including, of course, their children. Despite this primary

demand, a project that came around to ostensibly work in their name never made a living wage a part of its agenda. In fact, if anything, the project pushed their fickle stitching livelihood into the precinct of greater jeopardy. In interviews, women stitchers lamented about these state of affairs pointing out how exhausting it was to now survive and somewhat nostalgic of the home-based stitching era that though riddled with hardship was still less grim than their present predicament. In these sessions, women stitchers would patiently explain their difficulties and sometimes one could see gentle hints of anger breaking out of their modest countenance, especially when they would pointedly ask me what I am getting for this research or when they would learn that this participation in this research apart from wasting their valuable time, an hour that could spell a difference between a full stomach for their child or a half empty one, would provide them with no benefit. No angry outbursts emerged from them. Nevertheless, I am quite sure that if the following belligerent speech of two male stitchers had been said in front of women stitchers, the latter would have enthusiastically nodded their heads in approval:

> Stitcher 1: See this ball I am stitching! [shoving the ball to my face] Have been stitching balls for past 5 years at same rate. This is the problem for whole of Sialkot industry.
>
> Sticher 2: We stitch to feed ourselves. Sometimes get no work for 2–3 months . . . Listen, see this kid of mine [a child sleeping totally naked on the cement floor of the stitching centre]. He is without clothes. That is our situation. I have 9 children to feed. Not have time to go around organizing because I need to work every day to eat everyday.
>
> Stitcher 1: NGOs, what benefit have they provided us. Make a NFE and then say we [NGO] will pay master's [i.e., teacher's] salary. Next month say to us 'You pay. Six people per [school] committee. 1200 rupees [US$20.04]. Not that much [for you stitchers]'. But what is the point of you then, if you want us to do self-help. Why are you here? You are here to earn big money. So many teams [foreign delegations] visited our NFE and they [NGOs] must have charged them

> much. Must have prepared big bills. Not interested in us. Just want to show to officers their work and get paid for it. Using us so they can get big rewards . . . In one time 5 teams visited and what did we gain from such visits? Nothing. But they gained. Don't think we are unaware. We know everything what is going on. All these *bharoooni idaarey*: [literally overseas institutions] want to speak to us and raise issue abroad to earn money.' (Rough Notebook I, 2003: 216-218 and 220).

*Agency in the Feudal Industrial Complex*

The outburst quite vividly brings into sharp relief how paramount the issue of a living wage is for both men and women stitchers. Yet, a matter so central to them and one they judged to be critical for the well-being of their children, did not even enjoy a peripheral status in the project. We know due to various compulsions, discussed in the previous chapter, why NGOs were not able to help stitchers on the living wage matter despite being beseeched regularly for this. The NGOs use of the organizational mandate as a shield to deflect demands made on them was noted by women stitchers in interviews who consequently were pessimistic about NGOs' aiding them on the matter of a living wage:

> We have no voice. Who will we ask? We talk to ILO people. NGOs, say they cannot do anything for us. Not part of their job. — Woman stitcher A (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 170).

> We talk to NGO people tell them our problem low wages. They say 'it is not our job. We cannot do anything. You have to talk straight to the manufacturer.' — Woman stitcher B (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 174).

Apart from the NGOs, the other important player at the local scene regarding the project who could have made living wage an integral part of the project is the local industry itself. Let us explore what are the limitations women stitchers would face in using persuasion, given that they lack resources and formal authority, to influence industry to ensure that the child labour domain would, at its core, strive to ensure the payment to their class of a living wage. To explore this

terrain, we need to first describe the web of industrial labour relations working in Sialkot's soccer ball industry's supply chain that connect women stitchers to industry. These sets of relations form a highly sophisticated complex, referred to here as an industrial complex. This is the complex that confronts women stitchers and within which they negotiate their terms of employment with industry. Any action on the part of women stitchers to alter those terms would necessitate an engagement with and through this industrial complex. Thus, it is through understanding this industrial complex that we can appreciate how challenging it would be for women stitchers to intervene strategically in it to advance their own interests.

Nature of Master–Servant Relations: Exploitation as Charity

If one were to look at a word that is constantly brought up to describe industrial relations in Sialkot, it is the word 'feudal'. This is the word most commonly used in interviews and in documentary sources to describe the soccer ball industry's relations with its labour force. Thus, women stitchers find themselves in and confronted by what can be called, being faithful to the perception of the locals, a feudal industrial complex. The term feudal here does not denote landholdings of the soccer industrialists. They hardly have any. Nor does it depict the industry owners as being wasters. Far from it, they epitomize the bourgeoisie Marx so liked in relation to the feudal classes, for they constantly revolutionalize the modes of production. In Sialkot's case, this would mean building more elaborate factories, accumulating higher order ISO certificates, and aggressively seeking new profitable markets and product lines. This is not what feudal conveys here. The term refers to the nature of master-servant relations. All power is with the owner and he exercises rewards and punishments to his underlings in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. To his servants, he is the quintessential despot that can be cruel or benevolent based on his whimsical fancy. This is to say that companies are family-owned and they are run on patrimonial lines. Pakistanis have the word feudal in their vocabulary, given the strong political clout wielded by a few large land holding families in national

politics, and, thus, this is the word that readily comes to them to describe industry's patrimonial airings. Of course, almost all organizations have patrimonial relations as Jackall (1988) so brilliantly illuminated in his case studies of US corporations. The only difference is one of degree not of kind. However, it could be argued that the quantitative difference in degrees that exists between the patrimony in European and North American organizations and those found in Sialkot's soccer ball firms is of such a titanic magnitude that we can make a legitimate case that the difference of degree translates into a qualitative difference of kind. For the sceptical reader, perhaps the following story may make it easier to suspend disbelief:

> Let me tell you a *mazadaar kisaa* [delicious story]. Soofi sahib [owner of Saga Sports] had a driver [chauffeur] who was quite small [in height]. He [the driver] was his [Soofi's] favourite. It was a sight to see. Such long cars [being driven] by somebody so short. You could barely see the driver as [his] head just [came] above the steering wheel.
>
> One day *goray* [white folk, term used for referring to White Caucasian Europeans and North Americans] came [to visit Saga Sports]. Instructions to drivers were when goray were in compound, drivers should not be seen loitering. They were to stand by their cars. So the gora delegation was walking with Soofi sahib in the parkway [where cars are parked]. All drivers were standing at attention. Just then, Soofi sahib's favourite driver bolted from his car and ran to the delegation. As soon as he got to the delegation, he immediately kneeled over and started vigorously polishing Soofi sahib's shoes. Everyone froze. What was going on? Soofi sahib asked him [the driver] 'What are you doing?' He replied, 'Sahib, I was standing by my car. I saw the goray. Saw that shoe of one gora sahib was more shiny than yours. I could not let this happen. [I] wanted your shoes to outshine every one else's.' Hearing this Soofi sahib, beamed. He magisterially turned to his personal assistant and said, 'Give this man a reward of 10,000 rupees [US$186].' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 61-63).

The image of an industrialist walking through the factory doling out change from his deep pockets to his retinue of employees carping for his personal attention and favours, is not the only way in which Sialkot's employer employee or rather master-servant relations are understood to be feudal. They are considered feudal also because of the way the employment contract is understood by the captains of industry. The employment contract is not seen by the captains of industry as an arrangement between employer and employee where each benefits the other. Instead, especially given Sialkot's context of unemployment and lack of opportunities for the working poor, proffering employment to the latter is viewed by the industrial elite as a grace of charity extended by their benevolence to the poor who should reciprocate with gratitude and obedience. This state of affairs is illustrated well in the following quote of a business executive who was evidently disgusted by this perspective:

> Forget about [businesses providing] facilities for workers. [The workers] would be lucky if they get paid by the 20th of the month. All this [i.e., violation of employment rights such as salary payments on time] while [the workers] have to suffer taunts of masters saying 'Don't we pay you! Keep your mouths shut [about asking for rights]!' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 2).

This employment contract as charity understanding is not monolithic. It is contingent on skill. Thus, the understanding straddles a spectrum where at the lowest skill end, the location where stitchers are found, this understanding prevails in its purest form. As we move up on the skill spectrum, we experience a steady dilution of this understanding and it mutedly makes its presence felt at the upper echelons of management hierarchy where industrialists feel that the few professional managers (e.g., chartered accountants and MBAs) that they employ are actually adding value to their companies. The industrialists are afraid of losing such skilled managers and are grateful to them for working in a small city like Sialkot that could not offer them with cultural and social environments comparable to ones found in the main cities of Pakistan where Pakistani professionals prefer to live. That the stitchers are also generating wealth for the

industrialists does not seem to, however, significantly register with the latter who largely perceive their employment relationship with the stitching work force as being one of charity, as illustrated by the above cited quote of the business executive.

Apart from the wide ambit of discretionary power enjoyed by the firm owners, and their understanding of the employment relations with low-skill workers as an act of charity, the third way in which master-servant relations are considered feudal by some quarters in Sialkot is on account of the highly inegalitarian nature of industrial relations that are explained as being maintained by the inordinate political power enjoyed by the business community. If one of feudalism's defining characteristics is that economic and political power are fused at the point of production in the person of the master (i.e., the feudal lord), then we can say that the master-servant relations in the case of Sialkot industry can be deemed to be feudal as well. This third variant by which employer–employee relations are deemed to be feudal can be seen, for example, in the following excerpts from a trade union report on labour conditions in Sialkot:

> The industrialists of this country have steadily increased their hold, are today fully organised and through inroads in politics have emerged as powerful members of the ruling elite. They have won over to their side the state machinery which they are using to suppress the workers.
>
> Trade unions are principal institutions of workers in modern society, but employers believe in feudal–master-servant relationship and are not prepared to allow the workers the place of equality . . . The industrialists who happen to be financially strong are taking measures to further strengthen their positions and consolidate their hold. They are taking greater recourse to organise themselves through various associations, federations, chambers, etc. They are making greater inroads in politics and have emerged as powerful members of the ruling elite . . . The employers are badly afraid of the power of the trade unions and their role. The feudal master psyche is very strong among employers. They are not prepared to allow them the status of

> equality (All Pakistan Federation of Labour [APFOL], 1999: xxi & 55).

Lest we dismiss the contents of the All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APFOL) report quoted above as sheer trade union rant, let us note for the record that Soofi (owner of Saga Sports and Nike's chief soccer ball supplier) had been a member of the provincial assembly before his death. The chief executive officer of Sublime Sports, one of the two main suppliers of Adidas, is presently the *District Nazim* [district mayor] of Sialkot. His father is the Sialkot head of the *Jamaat i Islami* (a large national religious political party). We may also note that the highly powerful post of a provincial minister for industries is currently occupied by a Sialkot industrialist as well, owner of one of Pakistan's largest leather tannery and merchandising concern based in Sialkot with a subsidiary in the United States. His younger brother also happens to be the *Deputy Nazim* of Sialkot. Thus, there seems to be considerable penetration by the industrial in the politic. In this politico-economic context, the APFOL commentary appears to carry some weight. Like in many other parts of the developing world, the political and economic have blurred greatly in Sialkot (Nielsen, 2002). If industry before was able to prostitute the law into its service in Sialkot, it is now in many respects the state itself. Thus, the stitchers face an industrial class that does not only wield considerable economic clout. They also have at their disposal the massive law enforcement machinery of a postcolonial state to see to it that their interests will dominate. With a fusion of economic and political power, Sialkot's soccer ball industry captains should be more appropriately called soccer ball barons.

Patronage Chains in Production Chains

Our soccer ball barons dominate the commanding heights of Sialkot's soccer ball production supply chain that connects them to stitchers through a network of subcontractors. In the case of large firms, these subcontractor networks can be quite vast and elaborate where subcontractors in turn contract out to other subcontractors who do the same until the order reaches the subcontractor that actually interfaces with the stitchers. In the vocabulary of the stitchers, the

subcontractor with which manufacturers deal directly is known as the maker who either supplies directly to the stitchers or reaches them through his own intermediaries that in turn may employ other intermediaries. All these intermediaries are interchangeably called contractors and subcontractors by the stitchers. This is because often the stitchers do not how many levels of intermediaries sit between them and the manufacturers. In the discussion that follows we will use the terms 'maker' 'contractor' and 'subcontractor' as stitchers use them so that our discussion can be more faithful to and consistent with their understandings and cosmology, especially given that we are attempting in this research to create spaces for their voices.

This production chain in turn is wrapped around in a patronage chain. The latter provides the glue which binds the various actors in the production chain together. The manufacturers patronize the makers by placing orders with them. The makers in turn do the same with their own networks of subcontractors who then patronize the stitchers by giving them stitching orders. This patronage chain, thus, creates, what Douglas Hay called 'vertical chains of loyalty' (Hay, 1977). Powerful actors bind less powerful ones to them through paternalism and controlling their incomes and, thus, to a large extent, the 'life-opportunities' of the dependent client. These ties, repeated endlessly form a mesh of vertical loyalties and its corollary, a mesh of dependencies for there is little the client can do to control the flow of patronage if the patron decides to abruptly end it. This mesh of loyalties and dependencies, contingent as they are on the whims of the patron is what provides stability to the otherwise set of exploitative relations experienced by the stitchers in the production chain. When the choice is between patronage with obedience and resistance with prospects of starvation, it is somewhat understandable why stitchers may refrain from creating turbulence. The stitchers are caught in this loyalty-dependency mesh of relations in the soccer ball production chain woven on a feudal patrimonial pattern, what we refer to as the feudal industrial complex. Within its interstices, they negotiate and seek to advance their claims with industry. Having provided an outline of this complex, we can now explore the question, raised earlier, of the extent to which women

stitchers could have and can exercise agency by using communication (i.e., verbal and written use of language) to influence Sialkot's soccer ball industry (i.e., the soccer ball manufacturers and their network of subcontractors) to make a living wage, an important part of the Sialkot child labour project (i.e., the problem domain).

Just as with almost all systems of domination, the feudal industrial complex has contradictory impulses. At one level, it should be amenable to incorporate and advance the demands of living wages. This is because the complex, being feudal, has a paternalistic element that can work in favour of stitchers. Some of the soccer barons feel a sense of noblisse oblige towards their workforce. They engage in a wide variety of benevolent practices such as building mosques for their workers and one or two have established charitable hospitals. During *Ramadan* [Muslim holy month of fasting] many provide fortnightly feasts for their fasting stitchers. However, they are also industrialists. It is this capacity of theirs which dominates their approach to wage relations where stitchers are simply resources from which as much surplus as possible is to be extracted. That some of this surplus can be redistributed back to the stitchers in the form of say *Ramadan* feasts is a decision that should be up to them (i.e., the soccer barons) to make and is consistent with paternalism, for in paternalism it is the guardians (soccer barons) and not the wards (stitchers) that make the decisions on behalf of the latter.

Another explanation, complementary to the one given above, to explain this Gradgrind-type behaviour, is provided by an industry insider:

> Do not know if they [soccer ball industrialists] are God fearing. Do it for show or community pressures that they have to do charity. As for not helping workers instead [by paying them living wages] I think it is a matter of *power* [original emphasis] so they remain dependent on them. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 19).

The emphasis of power given as an explanation for the Gradgrind behaviour seems to be in line with the workings of the feudal industrial complex with its

vertical loyalties maintained by ensuring that clients remain dependent on the patrons. Of course, greater as opposed to lesser patronage would, if anything, deepen the bonds of dependency further as the client would now have even more to lose. However, greater patronage would cut at capital accumulation. Thus, if chains of vertical loyalties can be maintained at a low patronage cost level and there appears no substantive challenge or threat to that order from clients below, it seems to make little business sense, from the perspective of the soccer barons, to increase the flow of patronage to their clients. This would only add to their costs and reduce the surplus that they are extracting.

In the case of Sialkot, the apparent contradiction between apparently positive corporate social responsibility acts and exploitative wages are explained by non-soccer ball factory owners under three distinct albeit overlapping motifs which are contained in the following table:

## TABLE 8: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MOTIFS

| Motif | Illustrative Quotes |
|---|---|
| **Duress of International Pressure** | Why are [corporate social] standards coming in? They [the West] are bonding us. They are hiring our businesses to keep [us] in their command. All bad things are reserved for us to make and then [we hear] abuses [from the West]. All materials, dirty work, sent to us. When we do it, use international law and say we are damaging environment and fine us. Air does not stop in one place. We give them things. Ship breaking in South Asia. All scrap sent to third world and when pollution, give bill [to us]. They rob us with both hands. — Low level manager in a soccer ball firm (Pilot Study, 2000: 16).<br><br>Charity work is for themselves. Airport made because their foreign buyers need it. Daska road made because most of factories . . . on that road. People do not need airport. This is not development — Microcredit officer (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 45). |
| **Enhancing Reputation in Local Community** | Improvement of factories due to prestige status issues. Keeping up with Mr. Soofi [of Saga Sports] — Business executive (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 1-2).<br><br>Not give increase in wages because that is not seen [in community] whereas charity work visible. — NGO employee (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 90).<br><br>AKI gives hepatitis [injections]. Provide social security. But most manufacturers try to get work on as low wages as possible. Some who do social work propagate more than they actually do. Seems not know Muslim way of giving charity where right hand not know what left hand is doing. They broadcast their charity on every occasion. — Senior NGO executive (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 182-183).<br><br>If money [spent by soccer ball manufacturers on corporate social responsibility projects] given [to me] [I will] fix drainage pipes, open schools, dispensaries. [They] build airport because they get reputation for building airport. Get fame. If work at village level, what [fame] will they get? Do it for their ends. — NFE teacher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 50). |

**TABLE 8 (CONTINUED)**

| Motif | Illustrative Quotes |
|---|---|
| **Self-Enrichment** | Every business man seeks to make as much profit as possible. As for charity, they feel they are rich surrounded by poor. Make nice roads so their houses will look nice. If interested in development why do they not fix rural roads, fix the slums or the state of the inner city. Besides all their charity get tax relief. — Senior NGO executive (Interview Notebook II, 20 03: 68). |
| | Sometimes owners deceive them [foreign buyers]. [company x] not getting order from Mondo. When Mondo reps came [to Sialkot] took them to a building under construction and said this is going to be a Mondo Medical Complex. It has been 4 years and it [building] is still being constructed [that is no work has been done on it] but company got order. — Maker of a large soccer ball company (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 33). |

As can be seen, the quotes illustrating the motifs interestingly shows how acts of corporate social responsibility (e.g., building roads) are interpreted differently when refracted in the prism of corporate social irresponsibility. When this irresponsibility centres on a violation of a right (e.g., exploitative wages), it seems that external actors do not view the contradiction as arising from a schizophrenic disorder in industry. Rather, ulterior motives are assigned to explain the apparent anomaly of good corporate behaviour.

The Sialkot soccer ball industrialists, on the other hand, tended to either give the official reasons of the social responsibility initiatives (i.e., to help the workers and the community) or would admit that they are doing these actions out of international pressures. Concerning the latter, at times, the discourse of corporate social responsibility arising out of international pressure would take on surreal proportions. The SCCI on its web page displayed an article, later removed, describing the corporate initiatives to phase out child labour with a title called 'Redeeming the Children of a Lesser God!' In that article, though in the position of power, manufacturers speak in the language of victims to the point where a

reader can easily be mistaken into thinking that the children of a lesser God in need for redemption are not the soccer ball child stitchers but the factory owners themselves. This can be seen for example in the following passage from the article:

> The SCCI, in general, and the soccer ball industry, in particular, is not getting the due recognition of their efforts to address such issues from the international media. In fact, the Sialkot Chamber has offered a successful solution to these issues. All other countries facing the issue of child labour can learn from the Sialkot experience. Unfortunately, the image of the Sialkot Soccer Industry is still being negatively portrayed by the international electronic and print media. This is happening, perhaps, due to the lack of information and understanding of all these achievements. In the endeavours of making the end users aware of the SIALKOT Soccer Industry's initiatives to make their operations child labour free, the international brands also did not fulfil their commitments and responsibilities. Concerted efforts are needed, on the part of all the national and international stakeholders, to widely publicize the successful results of Sialkot experience, so that its benefits could reach everyone — from a poor stitcher working in a village of Sialkot to the soccer ball producers, the international business giants and more importantly to the end users of these products. (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry [SCCI], 2002).

What is interesting to note is that stitchers themselves, both men and women, did not dwell on the motives of the corporate social responsibility initiatives in the interviews. Instead they talked about what kind of initiatives they would launch if they had the money as shown in the following quotes:

> Not need airport. We need schools, colleges. — A group of women stitchers (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 25).

> They [soccer ball manufacturers] are lying saying we do not have enough. Not need airports. Need

> *masjid* [mosque], schools, drainage pipes. — A stitching family including a woman and two girl stitchers around 16 years of age. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 27).
>
> If given airport money do what you are doing. Help the poor. Make schools available. Use it for welfare for people just like us. — A girl stitcher around 14 years of age (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 46).

Stitchers, as can be seen from the above quotes, tend to match corporate social responsibility initiatives with whether those initiatives address their basic subsistence concerns. When they do not, such initiatives (e.g., construction of an airport) are dismissed by stitchers as being of little worth even though industry may view them to be acts of high corporate social responsibility.

The foregoing demonstrates that the feudal industrial complex is not a monolithic whole. It pulsates with a wide bag of patronage from wages to airports that stem from a variety of motives from vanity to more earthy concerns of satisfying the moral codes of international buyers to keep orders as well as spiritual drives (e.g., mosque constructions and *Ramadan* dinners). It is not a vision of hell with no moments of reprieve for the toiling many. Within it, one can find spaces of benevolence. Nevertheless, when evaluated as a whole, it is still a largely repressive order. It refuses to provide living wages for the sake of capital accumulation, often resorting to physical violence or economic coercion (as we shall see later) to discipline labour. Its acts of benevolence are contingent on the whims of the ruling soccer ball barons and, thus, far from liberating the stitchers towards legitimate self-assertion, just reinforce their dependency on the industrial class. As Perrow (1986) argues treating slaves humanely or asking for their advice does not alter the basic relation of dependency of them on the master. As long as patronage is given as a privilege and not as a right and is contingent on the whims of the masters, as is the case in Sialkot, it ends up controlling and binding lower order clients in dependency relations so that surplus and obedience can be extracted from them. Patronage in the complex, given this contingency, resembles quite closely the system of patronage present in 18$^{th}$ century England so

masterfully described by Douglas Hay which I feel quite adequately captures the situation in Sialkot:

> Patronage was uneven, interrupted, often capricious . . . Benevolence, in short, was not a simple positive act: it contained within it the ever-present threat of malice. In economic relations a landlord keeping his rents low was benevolent because he could, with impunity, raise them. A justice giving charity to a wandering beggar was benevolent because he could whip him instead. Benevolence, all patronage, was given meaning by its contingency. It was the obverse of coercion, terror's conspiracy of silence. (1977: 62).

Fear and Futility: Limitations on Individual Persuasive Agency

In this context, the vertical loyalty patronage chains in the feudal industrial context end up chaining stitcher agency tightly to the iron pegs of deference and obedience for insubordination can be met with economic coercion in the form of withdrawal of employment that will then play violence on their already marginal basis of existence. The fear of losing jobs is the first reason that many women stitchers would give when asked why do they not place requests or agitate for living wages with their subcontractors. This can be seen in the following three quotes:

> Whatever manufacturer says [we] will do. [If we ask for higher wages] Say to us go home. You are insulting us. — Two women stitchers. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 25).

> How can we agitate? If one of us agitate, there are 10 to take our place. — Woman stitcher A (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 171).

> If we say increase our wages, give it [stitching work] to someone else — Woman stitcher B (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 49).

The above quotes, combined with the often palpable fear initially expressed by a few home-based women stitchers at interviews that work may stop because of their participation in these interviews, suggest the fickleness of the patronage

system by which they were awarded stitching work. Slightest deviation from the scripted routines, such as talking to researchers, could be met with a swift withdrawal of work with damaging consequences to their already barely subsistence livelihoods. Thus, many would hesitate from asking Sialkot's soccer ball industry to put living wages on the agenda of the project for the punitive sanctions that may follow from such a request. Hesitation in approaching manufacturers directly can also be witnessed in the number of times I was asked by women stitchers to intervene for them with manufacturers. They themselves would refuse the notion of interacting directly with manufacturers fearing loss of livelihood but also, in a few cases, because they felt that 'this [wage advocacy] is [a] *mard* [male] issue' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 170) and is not proper for women to take up such matters publicly.

Some stitchers combined the above notion of fear with the futility of the exercise of communicating wage requests with their patrons, as explanations for why they could not influence the soccer ball industry in Sialkot on the matter of living wages as a central objective of the project (i.e., the problem domain). Remember these are individuals who have been schooled harshly in the political culture of Pakistan where human rights are flagrantly violated and where past experience tends to suggest that power turns out to be quite deaf to the sound of their tears. As one of them said, 'What is the point of raising voices? Who will hear us? Why bother? If we ask, subcontractor can go elsewhere. What will we do?' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 43). Pushing for wage claims is, thus, considered futile not only because the requests would be met with indifference, the fate of many requests of the poor, but also because of industry's perceived intransigence on this matter. Though manufacturers and their network of subcontractors may see themselves dispensing charity, the view of several women stitchers was that they were exploiting their vulnerabilities. In the words of a 15 year old girl stitcher, 'Take advantage of the workers and their necessities these manufacturers and makers' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 44). Given the rather endemic practice of unjustifiable docking and underpayment of wages by the network of subcontractors by, for example, giving stitchers below factory rates, or

paying them less on fabricated grounds that they produced work of a poorer quality, and seeing most manufacturers with few exceptions not doing much about it, Sialkot's soccer ball industry is perceived as an antagonistic and hostile body. Thus, the notion of requesting its assistance in putting living wages on the project's agenda is not put into practice because it is viewed as somewhat nonsensical, akin to asking one's enemy for assistance in advancing one's claims that are detrimental to the welfare of the enemy.

Within this industry as a hostile force perspective, the locus of who is the real willing culprit and who is the unwilling accomplice behind the crime of denying stitchers a living wage varies among stitchers. For some, the soccer ball manufacturers and the entire soccer ball subcontracting network are guilty, as demonstrated in the quote of the 15 year old stitcher found in the above paragraph. For these stitchers, Sialkot's soccer ball industry has resources to raise the wages of the workers. Other women stitchers offer a more nuanced perspective. Industry is rich but the contractors with which they interact are like them: being squeezed by those above. As one woman stitcher said reflectively, 'We would not be given work if we ask for more. [subontractors] Say our hands are tied as not getting better rates from further back.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 38). Another woman stitcher expressed similar sentiments: 'They [manufacturers] have advantage that is why they are doing it. Contractor says not getting rate from above' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 21).

In this reasoning, the sheer fact that business is engaged in soccer ball production means that manufacturers must be making good money in this activity otherwise why would they bother with it. A contractor sympathetic to stitchers echoed this reasoning arguing that the tight-fists of manufacturers were constantly tightening the screws on him, reducing what he could give to his stitchers: 'So when people say they want higher wages. Say I am forced to give them this wage because of what I get from the front. If they do not like it, they can go elsewhere. [I have] no choice because if I do not deliver to factory then my own work will be stopped.' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 176). Like the women stitchers he was labouring under no illusion that the industrialists were in hard times: 'how do they

get [so rich]. From where did they get their cars, bungalows? From where do they pay their management big [monthly] salaries of Rs.15,000 [US$250] and 12,000 [US$200]?' (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 177).

Based on the foregoing, we can deduce that the feudal industrial complex militates severely against the possibilities of using communication processes by women stitchers to request the soccer ball industry in Sialkot to make living wages a key part of the problem domain (i.e., the Sialkot child labour project). Largely out of the futility of the exercise, given that the demand of living wages would work against the interests of the subcontracting network, and the fear of consequences that would ensue from such an exercise, women stitchers refrain from deploying persuasion to influence problem domain through Sialkot's soccer ball industry. Their past experience in using communication to procure desirable outcomes with industry, combined with the present configuration of power relations at work in the feudal industrial complex, seems to create a historical gravity that leads them on a trajectory away from using written and spoken language to influence the problem domain through the offices of industry. This conclusion is reached on the basis of using communication processes individually. What about collective communication processes? That is, can the women stitchers influence industry to put living wages on the project's agenda were they to speak from a collective platform, say an organization such as a union? Let us investigate this question.

Barking without an Organizational Bite: Limitations on Collective Persuasive Agency

Women participating in an organization comprising them or one having a mix of men and women stitchers that can put living wages on the project agenda is not a simple task in the feudal industrial complex where the subcontracting network, especially the manufacturers, have a vested interest to keep such matters outside of the project, the problem domain of interest to us. Women speaking in unison from an organizational platform (e.g., a union), as opposed to in their own individual capacities, would have their personal voices amplified greatly as they

would be speaking not only for themselves but for multitudes of stitchers. If benevolence, as stated above, from the patrons is tinged with malice, then requests made through an organizational throat would be laced with threat of a strike which given the numbers may compel Sialkot's soccer ball industry to listen. Demands for living wages from a stitcher or a handful of stitchers can be dismissed as empty barks. Those coming from an organization representing most if not the entire workforce of a factory would have some bite, forcing industry into dialogue. However, efforts by male stitchers organizing in any force or form, let alone women, are terminated with extreme prejudice by industry. Looking at the difficulties male stitchers face in organizing unions in the feudal industrial complex can provide us a window to view how difficult it is for the working classes to organize. If male stitchers experience such difficulties one can only imagine how much more difficult it would be for women to organize given that no precedent exists for an all-women union. There are social taboos on women engaging publicly in such issues that are considered by many, including some women themselves, to be the privy of the *mard* [i.e., the males].

Male stitchers forming unions would not be restricted on account of them having genteel dispositions that would shy away from confrontations which union struggles inevitably involve. The fact that a sizable percentage of them take drugs, as discussed earlier, shows a persona that is willing to buck social conventions. Several NGO employees often referred to their free-spirited and brusque persona as being 'not that civilized' in the words of a lady microcredit field worker (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 55). A former stitcher who is currently an NGO employee elaborated:

> Stitching is viewed as third class by villagers. There is a saying that 100 *mawalis* [mawali is a person who is totally heedless of social conventions and proprieties] and one stitcher are equal. Lack awareness, manners, education. Like animals. When fighting [occurs] stitchers first to arrive. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 153)

> When stitcher gets his weekly pay, out of his wages pays home the food expenses and then blows it [i.e.,

> whatever is left] on refreshments and entertainment. Watch VCR films all night. Gambles and wagers saying if one team beats the other [in cricket, then losing side] will pay Rs.200 [US$3.34].[135] 70% smoke cigarettes. Out of that 35-40% stichers smoke *charas* [contraband substances, usually hash or opium]. Management tried to ban *charas*, protested. Said it helps them to focus and concentrate on their work. Gives them energy, speed. [Then they] work like robots (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 157-158).

Coarse demeanours, combined with a penchant for gambling and drugs, reflect a free-wheeling spirit in the male stitchers, a spirit that would be quite at home in the risk-taking world of Vegas casinos. A spirit that is not going to steer away from trouble out of sheer timidity or politeness to social conventions. This free spirit is also quite resourceful and creative and devises ingenious ways of overcoming its limitations, such as the absence of literacy. The same former stitcher quoted directly above, illustrates this resourcefulness with the following story from his days as a quality control manager at Saga Sports:

> [I] was surprised [at] how a totally illiterate person kept track [of the number of balls he stitched so he could ensure that the weekly payment he received from the company did not under pay him by saying he had stitched less balls than the actual number]. Most stitchers try to remember by counting on their finger tips but such figures lack confidence and easily challenged. [With] one stitcher who was totally *jutt* [illiterate and could not count] found his tabulations were spot on. Wondered how he did it. [He] said he kept a small *dabi* [box] in which he would place one marble for every ball stitched. Then at the end of the week [he] would take it to a friend who would count it for him and that is how he would arrive at the correct figure. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 155-156).

[135] Another form of gambling indulged in by male stitchers is pigeon competition. As a small contractor explained to me, some stitchers maintain pigeons which are then put in a competition with pigeons from other stichers where the competition revolves around pigeons circling the air with bets placed on the pigeon that can keep circling the longest and be the last pigeon to fall to the ground out of exhaustion (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 51).

Being rambunctious, male stitchers often try to unionize and militantly agitate for higher wages or for being paid a regular income on a timely basis as opposed to a piece-rate basis. All the male stitchers I interviewed either had been directly involved in organizing collectively to advance their claims or knew of such organized resistance. Industry, however, did and does not respond favourably to such grumblings from below. Efforts by workers to organize are met with swift reprisals. A report by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) seemed to find for Sialkot and for other parts of Pakistan that "employers often strongly resist unionisation of their employees, resorting to intimidation, dismissal and blacklisting in order to fight attempts by workers to exercise their right to form a union." (cited in Islam, 2002). ICFTU's report seems to confirm the survey done by APFOL in 1999 that also cited strong-arm tactics used by employers to discipline recalcitrant labour. Interviews with male stitchers supported these reports as shown in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1:

> I remember being part of union action. But mill owners have contacts with labour courts. [We] went to present our demands, but mill office spoke with judge and he [the judge] quickly drove off before we could meet him and present our demands. — A male stitcher (Rough Notebook I, 2003: 220).

Excerpt 2:

> [Forming] union [is] difficult. Will tell us don't show up for work . . . union leader either fired, harassed, beaten up, or bought out . . . [In response to the claim made by company management that they have a union at the stitching centre] What union? Never heard of them? Who is union leaders not know. Never bothered to read signs [code of conduct]. Do not know what they mean . . . If we agitate, [company goon squads] start beating us up. Why did you agitate? Many times went on strikes. But near city in Nowshera beaten up. [Workers there] went on salary strike. Organizers beaten up — Group of male stitchers outside a Saga stitching centre. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 209-211).

Excerpt 3:

> With whom can the poor man talk? . . . I participated in a strike. We said we do not want piece-rate but a fixed regular income. [We] stopped work for 24 hours. Others brought back at higher wages. I was not allowed for three days back to work. Management threatened me not to do this again. — A male stitcher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 5).

The last quote demonstrates that labour struggles, even in the teeth of opposition from industry, can extract, in a few occasions, some benefits. One should, thus, not take industry, formidable as it is in terms of economic and political power, to be so omnipotent that its control over workers is absolute and total. In the case of excerpt 3, workers were able to wrench out some concession from the factory. They were able to get higher piece-rates but failed to realize their objective which was to have a fixed income. The union leader, however, was made an example to dissuade others from attempting such activity again, a message which the interviewee told me had not been lost on him and the stitchers.

NGO personnel confirmed the use of physical violence by Sialkot's soccer ball industry through goon squads in the workplace to keep workers from organizing and communicating through a collective medium.[136] These goon squads can be deployed separately or in conjunction with another weapon that industry utilises to deal with disobedient workers. That is, the economic institution of *peshki*.

Peshki refers to the loan advance given by the subcontracting network to a stitcher. This is the loan advance that was incorrectly interpreted by the mass media as bonded labour of usurious debt from which there is no escape. Reality is

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[136] A few NGO personnel also pointed out that *beradarie* [tribe] also prevented stichers from organizing. These NGO personnel argued that stitchers from one tribe (e.g., the *Gujar* tribe) may not want to join a village organization that largely comprises members of another tribe (e.g., *jaat*). This is because they fear that doing so would strengthen the prestige of the *jaat* tribe. Interviews with stitchers and other NGO personnel, however, tended to show that tribe did not play an important role in terms of organizing though sometimes did mediate other social relations (e.g., marriage where one wanted to marry in one's own tribe or above but certainly not in the tribe below).

more nuanced than that. Peshki is often in amounts that are not crippling. The largest amount does not usually exceed above rupees 5000 (US$83.49) (i.e., less than two months salary). Peshki does not carry any interest and it is not expected to be paid back in most cases while the stitcher is in the employ of the subcontractor. Nominal amounts are deducted for it from worker salaries in some cases though the usual practice is that it is returned when the stitcher switches to another subcontractor or company who, because of orders, requires additional stitchers. The new employer will pay off the original peshki so that the stitcher can work for him. The peshki simply gets transferred over from the old employer to the new employer.

All the stitchers that I interviewed looked upon peshki as their right and in the moral economy of Sialkot, the unwritten contract of employing a stitcher is that one must give him or her peshki. This loan advance has the benefit that it provides stitchers with some capital formation. A family of three stitchers could in this way accumulate savings of say Rs.10,000 (US$167) which may be enough to cover some medical emergency. Peshki, thus, brings into being a tacit unwritten moral contract between stitcher and patron. It is understood by both parties that peshki *ought* to be given to employ a stitcher. In return for this right, it was also understood by both parties that stitchers *ought* to work only for the subcontractor that had advanced the peshki. Working for other subcontractors, under this moral contract, could be undertaken with the permission of the subcontractor or when the subcontractor failed to provide work. At that time, the moral obligations involved with peshki were to be suspended for stitchers and they were free to pursue work from other subcontractors. As a maker (i.e., a subcontractor that deals directly with a factory) explained:

> We have to feed. And my stitchers have to feed. Who will feed them if we [subcontractors] go on strike. [There will be] no work, they [stitchers] have to feed themselves, and [they will] go to others [subcontractors] . . . Have tied up 100,000 rupees [US$1670] in peshki. [If workers go to other subcontractors because I do not get work on account of striking against factory] then [I would have to]

> give to someone else [subcontractors who would have hired his stitchers and paid them peshki] peshki [that they had given stitchers] to get them [stitchers] back. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 31-32).

Thus, peshki is a highly complex arrangement that specifies both obligations and rights to both parties (stitchers and their contract giving patrons) to the stitching employment contract.

The institution of peshki is both beneficial and limiting to stitchers. It provides them with some needed capital but at the same time ties them to the one who advanced the peshki. In this sense it does bind them to the employer. Of course, as we have noted, this peshki obligation is contingent. Unlike usurious loan where the debtor is chained to the contract regardless of the situation of the creditor, in the case of peshki, if the creditor cannot deliver work, the debtor is not bound to work only for him.

Apart from being tied to a patron, stitchers are tied down in another away by peshki. That is, while it enables individual stitchers to get access to some needed cash, it also constraints them from transcending their stitcher worker status. When stitchers wish to become subcontractors and have a number of stitchers under them, peshki acts as an entry barrier to moving to subcontractor status. Stitchers cannot muster the savings to pay peshki to the stitchers they wish to hire and, thus, are unable to move upwards in the production supply chain. As a stitcher explained why it is difficult for individuals in his lot to become subcontractors, 'In other trades a person in 5 years goes to 8000 rupees [US$134]. Becomes a *mistri* [artisan/master craftsman]. Not us. Stuck where we are. [Lack money] to bring people to work, [as] *munday* [lads] need peshki.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 1). Thus, while peshki enables stitcher agency qua stitcher it tends to hinder it qua subcontractor.

Peshki also plays a role in restricting stitcher agency in the arena of organizing. In peshki, it is considered legitimate for the lender to recall the loan at his discretion. The threat of this recall is often used when workers wish to advance wage claims or organize. Most men and women stitchers interviewed

brought up peshki, as seen in the following quote, in explaining why they do not ask for higher wages and signal to the patron subcontractor the threat of not working if their requests are not met. In the words of a woman stitcher, 'We [women stitchers] have taken peshki from 200 rupees [US$3.34] to 4000 rupees [US$66.78]. Not leave subcontractor as can ask for it [peshki back].'(Interview Notebook III, 2003: 37). Such fears that peshki brings about in stitchers inhibits them from voicing wage requests through collective action. This is corroborated by subcontractors themselves. When the same subcontractor that explained that stitchers in the event of no work were allowed to go to other subcontractors, also explained that why do stitchers not complain about their wages, 'If [stitchers] do not like rates, then they have compulsion in form of peshki.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 29).

Peshki, then, is a double edged bargain. While providing stitchers with much needed credit at zero interest, unlike the typical bonded labour situation, peshki, nevertheless, does bind the stitchers to their lenders in that they cannot work for others and inhibits many from engaging in voicing wage demands through collective action because of fear of loan recall. Most stitchers surrender at this stage. This is because paying off the loan can wipe out their savings, exposing them to severe difficulties should they be struck by an emergency or may force them to put off long term arrangements (e.g., wedding ceremonies of daughters) that can have devastating consequences on their reputation in the village. Of course, they can ignore in theory the loan request and press on individually with the struggle to collectively voice their wage demands as say in union action. This would, however, be quite valorous on their part for they can expect physical violence to befall them, as lenders often resort to goon squads for loan recovery. In the words of a former quality control manager of a large soccer ball exporting firm:

> Peshki which is an advance. Advance is also bad. Stitcher main problem is advance on the basis of which cannot leave subcontractor. Contractor *gunda* [thug or goon] type or has gundas [thugs or goons] who can present the stitcher and ask for payment of

> advance. If contractor really smart, then asks the stitcher to get guarantor from village. If he leaves, gets hold of the stitcher and brings him to the contractor. Guarantor usually a prominent influential person in village. System of *zamanat* (guarantorship). Practice of advance is very common. Stitcher not any option but to stitch. If learn driving then he would start driving for living and not stitch. (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 149).

As stated earlier, goon squads are not only used to break up unions in the workplace but are also used in conjunction with peshki to break them up by forcing themselves into the homes of unionizing workers to school them in what their patrons consider to be appropriate labour behaviour. They arrive to give such labour lessons, in the words of a senior NGO executive, 'with fire-arms and [in] a Pajero jeep' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 60) the classic hall mark, as any Pakistani knows, of members belonging to the private armed bands of large feudal lords of rural Pakistan. Even here Sialkot industry seems to emulate its feudal counterparts and adds more evidence to describe the set of industrial relations in Sialkot as being feudal in more ways than one. The prevailing custom of soccer ball barons hiring goon squads to crush challenges to their prerogative (e.g., demands for regular non piece-rate incomes) helps us situate and understand them. It also allows us in coming to terms with their benevolent mosque constructing and *Ramadan* feast-giving acts. Like the 18th century English ruling class, our soccer ball barons:

> However much they believed in justice (and they did); however sacred they held property (and they worshipped it); however merciful they were to the poor (and many were); the gentlemen of England knew that their duty was, above all, to rule. On that depended everything. They acted accordingly.' (Hay, 1977: 53).

Women stitchers find themselves, thus, in a bizarre world of goon squads and lipstick taunts where mortal fear is felt when contemplating asking openly for living wages. The fear of economic, social and physical reprisals on their persons or their beloved ones from such language use is of an order sufficient to inhibit

them from trying to use communication to bring living wages on to the project agenda. Now couple this with the social taboos that prevent women stitchers from engaging in the public space. Add on to all that the experience of living in a hope-hostile wider politico-economic climate. One that either de facto or de jure operates on martial law that time and again remains indifferent to the cries of the Pakistani poor, an outcome in which women stitchers have first hand experience, being involuntary members of that class. When one takes all this into account, then it should come as no surprise that women stitchers do not use communication processes to influence the problem domain in a way that is more beneficial to their interests. No wonder, then, were you to ask them to use persuasion, as a NGO field worker did, they, to quote her words:

> laugh at us and say, '*Bibi* [dear lady] you can afford to say this based on where you are. When you come down to our level, you will realize how absurd it is what you propose.' (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 67).

I could empathize with that NGO worker. I too would ask this question. I too would sometimes be met with such a response where the women stitchers would explain to me why persuasion is not feasible in quite a patient way with a wry smile on their faces as would appear on one's visage when one is explaining patent reality to a complete, albeit well-meaning, idiot.

## THE MATERIAL FACE OF LANGUAGE: COMMUNICATION CONSTRAINTS IN THE DOMAIN

We see from the case, contrary to advocates of communication as a power strategy for weak stakeholders, that the viability and effectiveness of communication is highly contingent on two power bases: critical resources and formal authority. Lack of formal authority (e.g., not having formal representation with decision making power in the NGO and industry communities) and critical resources (e.g., not possessing sufficient income and savings that would make stitchers bold enough to risk economic sanctions of work termination that may

result from communicating demands for higher wages) dissuaded women stitchers from even bothering with communication to attempt to affect the problem domain. In situations of extremities, where weak stakeholders are found to be largely devoid of these two power bases (i.e., formal authority and critical resources), a fate common to many such stakeholders in the developing world, we can expect that they would not be able or willing to utilise communication as a means of exerting agency in a domain. Weak stakeholders would feel that their bark would have no teeth that the two power bases provide and, thus, would consider it a priori as a futile exercise. Alternatively, they may fear that their bark or even a whisper may provoke such crippling sanctions on them from other actors in the domain (e.g., removal of life sustaining livelihoods) that they would refrain from even using communication. Thus, communication does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in tandem with access to formal authority positions and critical resources in a problem domain and the latter two mediate its effectiveness.

Expectations of fear and futility dissuaded women stitchers from using communication as a strategy of agency. To the extent that weak stakeholders find themselves in a democratic context, these expectations would be mitigated and, thus, we would expect a greater tendency to use communication. However, the Pakistani context is far from democratic. Arbitrary state power is at the behest of powerful actors in the domain, some of whom actually are the state representatives themselves. Moreover, the all too concretely lived history of past communication failures is etched in the memories of the poor, where their voices have been callously ignored or muzzled through swift punitive reprisals. Communication is, thus, not an available option for weak stakeholders as a vehicle of exerting power in the domain. As a field microcredit officer, whose patience strained when put the question of why the poor, including women stitchers, do not use the political and legal system to realize their rights, stated:

> These things [publicly voicing and struggling for claims] are related to human rights [situation in a country]. In a country where supreme courts [are] suspended. Courts against Musharraf [the incumbent President of Pakistan who is also the

> Chief of Army Staff] cannot do anything. How can you expect people to struggle and with the beliefs [that] their rights will be respected (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 39).

Of course, at this stage, the argument can be raised that the weak stakeholders could frame their demands in a way that appeals to the passions (e.g., moral values) or the interests of the dominant actors (e.g., wealth enhancement) where the fulfilment of their demands will also be rewarding to the powerful agents in the domain. For example, wage demands could be articulated or framed as higher wages will lead to a more motivated, productive workforce which will generate more profits for the masters, thus, appealing to their interests. Alternatively, wage demands could be stated on moral grounds as noteworthy acts the deliverance of which will make masters better Muslims and, thus, better ensure their passage to heaven.

Appeals to such enlightened self-interested behaviour on the part of the privileged few seem to have bleak prospects on historical grounds. Rights are rarely given by the masters through appeal to their interests or their better passions. Rather, the history of power struggle between the privileged few and the impoverished many tend to suggest that rights are usually taken, largely through collective action, where the demands are backed by credible threats of force that push the masters to concede whether the struggles be in the domains of militant anti-colonial national liberation movements or peaceful internal civil rights advocacy aiming to realize fundamental rights. This is not to say that the framing of issues is completely hopeless as a way of creating space for agency. Several disadvantaged groups (e.g., Jews and homosexuals) largely altered their pariah status in Western democracies through framing their persecution as a violation of democratic norms (e.g., non-discriminatory behaviour towards citizens) that were deeply valued in the Western public ethos. However, these framing victories have largely come about by groups that were highly literate and who could wield symbolic power to great effect. Also, they could appeal to a more independent judiciary that was able to enshrine their claims into law and enforce them into practice. Both these conditions are absent in the case of women stitchers in

Pakistan. Weak stakeholders in developing countries facing hostile legal regimes and having limited basic symbolic skills (e.g., literacy) can hardly be expected to accomplish much through the use of symbolic communication alone.

In fact, when we delve a more deeply into symbolic communication, we see that the literature seems to be making a heroic presumption guiding its theoretical constructions on communication as a mechanism of agency for weak domain stakeholder agency. That presumption is that there is a singular language pervading a problem domain that is accessible and shared by weak as well as powerful stakeholders. This, in our case, does not turn out to be true. Our domain is populated and impacted by multiple languages. The child labour story broke out in all the European languages from the major ones (e.g., French) to their minor counterparts (e.g., Norwegian). The language of the domain was predominately English. This was the language in which the issue was conceptualised, discussed, and its responses articulated in the decision making centres of the domain (i.e., the project organizations). All the major brochures, press releases, newspaper accounts, documentaries were made in European languages. Given that the language of the stitchers was predominately Punjabi, with some possessing a rudimentary command of Urdu, it is somewhat difficult to think that women stitchers would be able to intervene symbolically in such a discourse and reframe it in a way that is to their advantage. It is quite hard to enter a debate in a language that you do not understand. Far from being a means of inclusion as claimed by contemporary communication theorists in interorganizational collaboration, language can be a means of exclusion if the language that is used in a problem domain is not the same as the language of the weak stakeholders as it turned out to be the case in this domain and I would trust in others as well that have transnational organizational actors in play as a result of which the language often tends to be English, given that it is the most universal language in the world and most likely to be made the domain language to facilitate communication and coordination. When that domain language is, however, not accessible to the weak stakeholders, it has the perverse effect of hindering their abilities to participate in the domain through communication and, thus, ends up acting as a communication

constraint. The advocates of communication as power, when advancing this language argument, presume that domain language will be equivalent to stakeholder language which, as we have seen, is a highly questionable notion when held up to the empirical light of domains in developing countries where the domain language (i.e., the language used by organizations and in which the discourse of the social issue is articulated) is often radically different from the indigenous languages held by weak stakeholders of that domain.

This focus on language helps us see that it has a material dimension when placed in a relational context. In relation to Punjabi, spoken by most women stitchers, the English language poses a physical barrier to communicate that is not easy to overcome. It is physical because the barrier is not some figment of their socially constructed imagination but exists separately and independently from them. It is relevant to make salient the concreteness of language as this attribute has been slighted by management and organization studies (MOS) research that discusses language and power, particularly the critical management studies (CMS) research stream of critical discourse analysis.

Exploring language in and of itself, we can see that it not only the domain language qua language (e.g., whether it is English or German) that can act as a communication barrier to weak domain stakeholders. The domain language may consist of several jargons that can also act as communication barriers. These jargons would need to be mastered on their own if weak stakeholders are to effectively intervene symbolically in the domain. For example, even if women stitchers could speak English, the child rights jargon deployed by project organizations, couched often in legalistic terms quoting ILO and UN conventions (e.g., ILO 138), not to mention an alphabet soup of acronyms (e.g., an organization's 'prodocs' containing TORs),[137] would be somewhat incomprehensible to them. The women stitchers would need to apprise themselves not only of English and the peculiar project language, but also of the disciplinary discourses (especially economics, management, law and human rights to name the

[137] Translation: project documents containing terms of reference (i.e., details about the scope and scale of the operations to be undertaken by the organization under the project).

prominent four) to begin to grasp what the jargons mean in which they are being discussed in the domain and how the jargons can then be either pressed into service, resisted, or contested. To the extent that a domain's language festers with these jargons alien to the weak stakeholders, to that extent language again acts as a material constraint, one existing as a social fact separately and independently from the weak stakeholders, that hinders their ability to use communication processes to influence the problem domains.

Based on the foregoing and the discussion on the communication challenges faced by women stitchers, we can see that communication constraints facing weak stakeholders in problem domains located in developing areas can be conceptualised, at a first order of approximation, as being of two types: Language and Societal. Language constraints are those that deal with the favoured domain language itself and the jargons that are deployed under its rubric. Societal constraints are those that are not intrinsically related to language (e.g., withdrawal of patronage). These variegated societal constraints can be further conceptualised as to fall within the Weberian categories that have been used to map determinants of societal phenomena. Societal communication constraints can, thus, be said to consist of the following elements: i) economic (e.g., lack of resources to withstand a termination of employment); (ii) political (e.g., absence of access or presence in political office that can be used to protect weak stakeholders from reprisals following communicative actions); iii) legal (e.g., absence in law of interests being advanced such as a living wage); and iv) cultural (e.g., the understanding in rural areas that women should not participate vocally or otherwise in public spaces to push for their rights).

In our case study, we documented language (e.g., the predominant use of the English language in the domain alien to women stitchers) and societal constraints (e.g., threat of employment termination) working to breed fear and futility among weak stakeholders regarding the viability of using communication as a way of influencing the domain. These constraints contributed substantially to shaping of the problem domain in a way that proved detrimental to the well-being of women stitchers. Thanks to these constraints they were unable as well as

unwilling to communicate effectively the need for living wages. This demand if it had been incorporated from the onset of the crisis may have prevented much harm that befell the stitching families from the project such as reductions in household incomes.

## DISCOVERING COMMUNICATION IN THE TIME & SPACE CONTINUUM

Weak stakeholder communication in a domain and the constraints that are marshalled against it do not exist in a vacuum. They exist in time and space. Yet interorganizational collaboration literature that touches upon weak stakeholder agency through communication tends to overlook the time and space continuum, presupposing effectively and somewhat unrealistically that communication among human agents exists outside of time and space. The fact that it does not but rather is embedded in time and space, would tend to suggest that these two dimensions would be of some importance in understanding the communication dynamics that unfold in a domain. In fact, the research undertaken here suggests the spatial and temporal dimensions can have a powerful influence in shaping the problem domain by disempowering weak stakeholders. Let us explore through our case study how space and time can refract and constrain weak stakeholders from using communication (i.e., written and spoken use of language) as a means of exerting agency in the domain. Let us begin with space.

### *Georgia on My Mind: Agency in Imperial Spaces*

The two key elements of a domain (i.e., a problem and a set of actors who have a stake in that problem) are both located in geographic space. In our case, the child labour problem domain, geographically, was basically transnational in nature. The problem was physically present in Sialkot. However, it was articulated and responded to in such foreign locations as Munich, Zurich, London, and Atlanta. In fact, the agreement that provided the blueprint to address the problem was called the 'Atlanta Agreement'. The label reflected among other

things, the spaces that counted and where decisions were made. These were not only extra-local (outside of Sialkot) but also extra-national (outside of Pakistan).

The transnational locations of key domain decisions constrained women stitcher agency in numerous ways. First, they added to what I call their information deficit disorder. Women had little information about the outside world beyond the four walls of their houses or the fields of their villages. They were largely illiterate. They were also restricted in their mobility due to social conventions. These conventions, while manifesting themselves in a myriad of ways (e.g., the household division of labour, where home duties assigned are to the lot of women), nevertheless converged in anchoring them to their homes. What information they had was either through the village grapevine or through television. While in the city one could find satellite or cable connections, in the villages at that time and even now, these are rare. Even if satellite access was present, both the local state-run and international channels, contained programming that dealt with either animals (e.g., the Discovery Channel) or movies and dramas that rarely, if at all, touched upon issues that would have some relevance to their lives (e.g., dramas on social exploitation or the rights the poor have as Pakistani citizens) and provide them with information that they could use to improve their working conditions. For example, all the women and male stitchers that I interviewed had no idea about the retail prices fetched by the balls their hands stitched. Almost without exception the price they reckoned top quality balls would fetch in North American and European retail markets, were one-tenth of the actual. When they were informed about what the retail price was, they immediately responded by saying that their wages should be increased. This reveals to us that women stitchers' understanding of a fair wage is not only anchored in meeting living expenses. It also has an element based on what they consider to be a fair share of the international price manufacturers are receiving from the brands. This retail price information would, thus, be helpful to them in ascertaining what they regard to be legitimate wages. Should the situation arise, women stitchers, when communicating wage demands to their manufacturers and their international brands, would be able to use this information to buttress their

case. It would also help if they had access to corporate financial statements of international brands that record multi-million US dollar profits. This information could be pressed for wage claims and be deployed to effectively crush the argument that Sialkot's soccer ball industry and their international brands have no surplus to give. However, the information-thin environment of women stitchers, not improved by the light entertainment information content from the little mass media that they have exposure to, precludes such optimistic scenarios. Women stitchers, forget about correctly identifying international brands for which they end up stitching soccer balls, would be hard pressed to name the manufacturers that link them to the international brands. The salient and visible aspect of the production supply chain in which they are a part is at best their subcontractor. Beyond that point the production chain disappears into the fog of oblivion.

All this suggests that women stitchers suffer from not having critical information that they could, under more enabling circumstances, act upon to improve their life opportunities. This information deficit disorder became compounded when the domain was brought into being in such a way that the decisions impacting their lives came to be made in spaces that were out of sight of the women stitchers. *The Financial Times of London* or the other North American and European media outlets that were reporting on the child labour issue did not enjoy a wide subscription or readership among women stitchers in Sialkot. Women stitchers were, thus, actually quite unaware of the tempest in which they were embroiled because the storm was occurring thousands of miles away from them. In the poverty and isolation of their circumstances, there was no conceivable way in which they could have acquired early intelligence to begin participating in the domain using communication or other techniques to avert the storm or at least its consequences. Even to this day, women stitchers interviewed appeared woefully ignorant about the project as seen in the following quote:

> Not know anything about the project. Everyone comes and talks to us but nobody gives us any reports. Do not know what is going on. — A woman stitcher (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 169).

Had the decision making spaces of the domain, in which the problem came to be articulated and the broad parameters of its solution devised, been located in the homes and the villages of the women stitchers, they most likely would have been aware of this matter from the earliest moments. They, then, could have worked through the use of language to influence the flux of actions in a way serviceable to them. However, this was not the case. The remote locations of domain decision making centres precluded such a possibility of using communication to exert agency. This is because they effectively circumvented an important condition necessary for such agency: to intervene in a conversation about you, you have to, as a first condition, be aware of that conversation.

The location of the important actors in the domain, particularly those that drafted the Atlanta Agreement, is also another way in which space refracts weak stakeholder communication agency. All the important actors had links with North America and Europe. Of these, only the SCCI was located in Sialkot. Both the men and women stitchers had neither heard of the SCCI nor its building that housed it, the White House on Paris Road. When asked about the SCCI, women would look at me quizzically and ask either 'What is it [the SCCI]?' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 45) or answer matter of factly 'Not know Sialkot. Not know Chamber. Not know who the manufacturers are' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 39). Once again, we see the information deficit disorder preventing the creation of conditions (e.g., knowledge and awareness) necessary for purposeful communicative action.

Even if the women stitchers had been aware of the location of the SCCI and the fact that deliberations were taking place in the White House concerning them on whose outcome they had a material interest, the culture of the feudal industrial complex would prevent them from venturing into its premises. In a highly authoritarian context, you, as a member of the subjugated class, both in terms of economics and gender, do not just waltz into a private gathering of the masters unless invited. According to a large subcontractor, 'Owner will not allow them [stitchers] to enter the gate. They [stitchers] would be so frightened of approaching the owner.' (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 31). If we were to assume

that women could muster the nerve to approach the chambers, then they could still be refused admission with the full backing of the law for the building in which the SCCI was housed was private property and the rooms where deliberations about them occurred, private gatherings. Thus, we see that if decision making spaces and locations of actors, even if they are not remote, as was the case with the SCCI, nevertheless can still be inaccessible to weak stakeholders on account of their privatized nature that reserves the rights of admissions to those who have deeds to those spaces. The more a domain has actors and decision making arenas in such private spaces, the more inaccessible is that domain to weak stakeholders and the more constrained is the option to use communication because such privatized spaces keep the information within their bounds. They, by their private nature, restrict the flow of information to weak stakeholders on the outside, reducing their ability to learn what is going on so that they can marshal the necessary information needed to intervene strategically. Moreover, such privatized spaces, by shutting the doors in the faces of weak stakeholders, prevent their voices from entering the decision making centres of the domain. Thus, the nature of space in a domain, whether it is public or private, refracts quite significantly the ambit of communication agency that would be enjoyed by weak stakeholders. Where the private predominates and has key decision making locations within its boundaries, as we have noted was the case with the child labour domain, communication as an effective strategy is seriously defanged of its potentialities.

Moving on to the non-local (i.e., international) actors in the domain, we find space again through the twin mediums of private spaces and distances sharply limiting the scope of what can be achieved by weak stakeholders through communication. Deliberations regarding this issue took place, inter alia, at ILO headquarters in Geneva, the US Department of Labor in Washington (DC), the industry-organised conferences in London and Verbier, the trade shows in Atlanta and Munich, and corporate headquarters of international brands located across the swathe of the North American and European continents. All these locations were private spaces. Women stitchers would find the same inaccessibility hurdles there

as they would have found at SCCI which though a stone's throw away, on account of its private nature, might as well have been in another country for them as it was inaccessible. In these international locations, communication for stitchers would be a moot point because most likely they will not make it through the doors and reach a stage where indulging in communication would make sense. After all, there is little point talking to shut doors or to oneself.

Assuming that the locations of international actors, including the arenas in which they deliberated, were public, this would change little on account of their distant locations, which being situated in the developed world, would make them even more remote to the women stitchers of Sialkot. Let us suppose a woman stitcher has Georgia on her mind in January 1997. Somehow she has received intelligence that a project to eliminate child labour would be unveiled there in February 1997. She wants to, thus, go there to present orally and in written form the demands of her class in the media covered project launching ceremony so that she is able place issues that best represent the wishes of her class squarely on the project agenda.

Our communication activist will first have to get permission for her male folk to travel. Given that women barely leave the confines of their villages and they usually have children to tend to as well, permission unlikely will be given. Let us say she clears this hurdle. The next obstacle is where will she get the money to cover her trip expenses which would include a return airplane ticket, and boarding and lodging in Atlanta. On a monthly income of Rs.4000 (US$66.87), belonging to a household of eight people having between them practically no savings and perhaps one other bread winner besides her, the prospects of savings for such a trip are quite remote. Were she to clear this barrier, then she would need a visa from the US immigration authorities in Islamabad to legally enter the United States. Were she to get the visa or perhaps miraculously find her way to Atlanta and make it to the press conference, who on earth there will understand her Punjabi. How will she understand them? The space of Atlanta privileges the English language and marginalizes Punjabi. In what language will she communicate? And how effective would this communicative

agency be if it is a language that no one, not even sympathetic ears, can understand? When we bring the empirical reality of space into consideration, and recognize the domain effectively, in terms of where the major discussions on collaboration are being carried out, is located largely in developed areas mainly by international organizations that respond to their constituencies (e.g., consumers for international brands) also located there, we see how infeasible is the option of weak stakeholders located in developing areas to influence the domain through communication. It is hard for weak stakeholders to transcend barriers in a spatially transnational domain.

Regarding those domain space parts that are not transnational but largely local (e.g., Sialkot exporters), we have seen in our discussion on the feudal industrial complex just how formidable are the communication constraints there besieging women stitchers. Here we may add that space strengthens these constraints in the following two ways. Firstly, women stitchers as well as male stitchers are geographically dispersed in 1600 odd villages (SCF, 1997: 13; UNICEF, 2000: 1). This makes it difficult for them to form unions that could give their communication some teeth and hence be taken seriously by the other powerful actors. Often in interviews, NGO field staff and stichers with union experience often cited the dispersal, a spatial feature, of stitchers as a major impediment in organizing collective struggle. Take the following quotes for example:

> not in stitching [i.e., unions] because [stitchers] are dispersed. — NGO field worker (Interview Notebook I, 2003: 110).

> Also stitchers lack a proper institution. Lack proper factory. Scattered, not able to form union. — NGO field officer (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 188).

> no unions, because they have very little interactions with other stitchers [from the same company in other villages or stitching centres]. For example our workers [at name disguised] and at Saga do not discuss [with each other] They are scattered. Fired at workplaces if try to organize. — Quality control

> manager of a medium sized soccer ball exporting firm (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 90).
>
> [Concerning union organizing difficulties] we meet very infrequently. Maybe in one month or month and a half we meet some people from other centres. — Male stitcher at Saga Sports (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 212).

The second way in which space restricts collective action that, as a consequence, diminishes communication agency is that the space as currently configured is unable to stop stitching activity from leaving Sialkot. The subcontracting network can reasonably effortlessly shift stitching outside Sialkot. In some instances it did so, necessitating ILO to expand its monitoring activities outside the boundaries of Sialkot (PCC minutes of meeting #27; October 26, 1999). The porous nature of this space in terms of work-flight means that should weak stakeholders organize they could see their work leaving to other areas. Such a threat, made possible by the porous nature of the space, dampens any form of resistance, including the use of language.

From the foregoing discussion, we can discern that the space of an interorganizational collaboration domain situated in a developing country can take on the following attributes:

- Asymmetry between problem identification location (e.g., Europe and North America) and problem location (e.g., child labour is found in Sialkot).

- Asymmetry between response (e.g., Atlanta and Munich) and implementation locations (e.g., villages in Sialkot).

- Asymmetry of mobility between powerful and weak stakeholders (e.g., women stitchers, due largely to their financial situation, not being able to reach key decision areas such as headquarters of domain organizations (e.g., ILO offices in Geneva) unlike the

soccer ball exporters).

A domain space which exhibits such sharp geographical asymmetries between problem identification and problem location, solution formulation and solution implementation, and mobility gaps between the powerful and weak stakeholders in the domain, can be said to be an *imperial space*. This is because such a space bears what I would consider to one of the chief features of imperialism: maintenance of asymmetrical space where imperial powers have long reach and access denied to those that are being reached and accessed. As our case study shows, outsiders, particularly foreigners, can barge into Sialkot with ease, having literally in some cases (e.g., American citizens) the gun boats of their countries to ensure that their passage is not hindered. ILO representatives in Geneva can hop on a plane and be in Sialkot poking and prodding stitchers in their homes with questions, having the stitchers' manufacturers representatives on hand to ensure their ready compliance on pain of employment termination as well be translators to these *gora sahibs* [white sirs]. Women stitchers of Sialkot cannot reply in kind. They cannot effortlessly amble into ILO offices in Geneva and begin interviewing ILO officers with representatives of ILO donor countries having the ability to turn off the salary tap of these officials if they are found to be not accommodating to the women stitchers. In such an imperial space where access and movement is at most a few hours for those with political clout and economic muscle while an eternity for those lacking such props, there appears to be little hope for the natives or weak stakeholders to shape the domains to their liking. This discussion, then, tends to lead to the theoretical insight that when the domain's space is imperial (i.e., contains the three asymmetrical properties listed above), we would tend to see that space interacting with language and societal communication constraints further complicating and diminishing the prospects of weak stakeholder agency through communication in a domain. Given that much of the current corporate social responsibility crisis and initiatives exhibit these asymmetrical properties (e.g., domain's decision-making centres or capitals, in terms of problem articulation and response construction, largely situated in the

developed world, while weak domain stakeholders and the problem issue are located in the developing world), this theoretical insight extends beyond the confines of the soccer ball child labour domain to these other domains as well.

*Domain Clocks: Ticking Agency Away*

The counterpart of space, that is time, also seems to refract and diminish the potential of influencing the domain offered to weak stakeholders by language use. To understand how time influences weak stakeholder communication in a domain, it is useful to separate the domain's organizational players or stakeholders from the weak stakeholders that are not formally organized. In our case, this would mean viewing separately the project organizations and the women stitchers. When we do so, we see that both these groups seem to be governed respectively by a particular time schedule or rhythm, what I refer to here as a clock. The domain appears to be running on two clocks that end up constraining communication agency on the part of stitchers, particularly women stitchers. The first domain clock relates to the project organizations and I refer to it as the *technocratic clock* while the second one refers to the stitching community, including women, and I call this the *subsistence clock.* The reasons for these labels will become apparent in what is to follow.

Communication is a time-consuming activity. Thus, for communication to occur there needs to be time for it. The project organizations were working on a clock that gave them very little leeway in terms of time to listen to weak stakeholders, the stitching families. Their clock was being set by Western consumers who wanted to see child labour booted out quickly from the soccer ball industry. This placed sharp constraints on the volume of discussion that would be allowed in the domain by the organizations. The self-appointed experts of ILO, UNICEF, SCCI, and SCF that negotiated the time frame for the Atlanta Agreement largely took this consumer ultimatum in setting the project's clock. Given that the clock was set unilaterally in a non-consultative manner in which weak stakeholders in the domain such as stitching families had little role, it would be quite appropriate to label this clock as being technocratic. It also had another

feature that made it technocratic that it was quite inflexible once it was set. Though it was reset at time intervals, before each resetting, however, it was considered by the project organizations as being final and effort was placed, according to interviews with the project organizations' employees, with the thinking that the clock was not negotiable.

The technocratic clock made time a scarcity and consultation a luxury. Interviews and documents are replete with allusions to the sharp constraints on time set by the project and several of them have been documented in this chapter as well as in the preceding ones. Here are some more of them:

> This month marks the ILO's kick-off of the ILO External Monitoring programme. From now on the clock is ticking. (Rueben Dudley, Director ILO office (Islamabad) cited in International Labour Organization [ILO], 1997).

> In the face of worldwide condemnation something had to be done, or customers would look for other sources . . . There was no time to lose. (Saga Sports, 1998).

> The Partner and Member organisations discussed progress to-date and expressed concern with the delays in the starting of the project, which should have been ready to commence from 1 June 1997. This, they said was not a good sign particularly since the international community was keeping a close look at developments in the Sialkot situation. (PCC minutes of meeting #2; May 15, 1997).

This feeling of being under the international microscope kept the project organizations' technocratic clock ticking at a frugal mechanical rate through out the history of the project. For example, in late 1999 when SCF released a video on the project, two years after it had commenced, it was called 'Extra Time' (SCF, 1999). This scarcity of time was constantly brought up by NGO field workers who complained that they have been constantly given including today highly ambitious targets that do not permit them to interact and consult with the stitching families. In the words of a female microcredit officer:

> There is competition between NGOs. Target pressure Working to meet targets so that they [NGOs] can say they were first to meet target. NGO worried about one's own target. Not see family upgrade [i.e., well-being] whether credit is being properly utilised (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 51).

The adamancy set by a technocratic clock biases project organizations away from authentic dialogue with weak stakeholders. Even if they wanted to, project organizations do not have the luxury of time to engage in authentic dialogue with weak stakeholders. By intensely restricting dialogue, the technocratic clock effectively short circuits the construction of an enabling context for communication and dialogue to occur between domain actors and, thus, ends up acting as a communication constraint for weak stakeholders in the problem domain.

Like the project organizations, stitchers, too, worked on a clock that kept them on a short time leash, preventing them from indulging in communication to influence the domain. Their subsistence-level wage dependency makes them eke out an existence by working long hours and having very little at the end of it. The rhythm of their lives is governed by subsistence requirements and, thus, it is fitting that the clock that regulates time for them be called the subsistence clock.

The subsistence clock makes time a luxury for stitchers. Working long hours and earning subsistence wages leaves them with little time to plot communication strategies for influencing the domain. As a male stitcher ably put it:

> Not have time to go around organizing because I need to work every day to eat every day. (Rough Notebook I, 2003: 217-219).

This perspective was echoed by women stitchers. For example:

> I have 8 children. The other [pointing to another woman stitcher] has 4–5 children. We work all day and then start again same place. Wages not enough to cover expenses. (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 24).

The subsistence clock then runs a tight domain where weak stakeholders cannot make mischief for their masters because their whole days are spent earning to just exist and not much is left over that would allow them to take some time, do a research project, and then communicate the results or engage in some other activities to influence the domain through language use. In fact, the subsistence clock, by squeezing precious time away from stitchers, helps to prevent them from giving some bite to their bark that could make their communicative agency powerful. If stitchers had the luxury to afford time, they could develop alternative skills and, thus, could communicate their demands in the domain with a credible threat of exiting from relationships with domain actors altogether (e.g., working as stitchers for manufacturers). This would certainly force the masters to give the words of stitchers a hearing and perhaps they might alter the domain to satisfy the demands, for failure to do so could bring upon them more distasteful consequences than the ones coming from acceding to demands of weak stakeholders. Alternatively, with time on their hands, stitchers, men and women, could organize a collective movement that could greatly amplify their voice in the domain with the high possibility of the latter being altered in a way favourable to their interests.

With a subsistence clock, both of the above mentioned options of building communicative capacity turn out to be infeasible. Subsistence income, as the quote of the male stitcher cited above shows, inflicts a severe penalty on the time needed to effectively communicate and organize. As for developing alternative skills which can then be used as a bargaining chip in communication struggles, the subsistence clock once again works to the detriment of stitchers as can be seen in the following:

> True there is other work. But takes time to learn other trades and the loss in income we would suffer, we would not be able to bear the loss. — A male stitcher (Rough Interview Notebook I, 2003: 220).

> Cannot switch to other work. There are other opportunities but I will need time to reach a level

> where I will make the same income as I do from football and that I am not able to bear the shortfall in income until I get to speed on some other work. — A woman stitcher (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 170).

Thus, we can see that to the extent that a domain has functioning within it both technocratic and subsistence clocks, then we should not be surprised to find time conspiring to act as a formidable constraint facing stakeholders who wish to use communication processes to influence the domain.

The discussion on weak stakeholder communication constraints in a problem domain in this chapter leads us to the following typology:

## TABLE 9: COMMUNICATION CONSTRAINTS TYPOLOGY

| Type | Elements | Example |
|---|---|---|
| ***Language*** | Natural Language | English. |
| | Jargon | Human Rights/Child Rights Discourse. |
| ***Societal*** | Economic | Lack of savings which keeps stitchers from voicing concerns for fear that, should their employment be terminated because of such actions, they will have no basis for survival. |
| | Political | No access to or presence in political office producing sense of futility among stitchers as to what is the point of communicating to politicians or government officials who do not come from them and have historically been indifferent to their concerns. |
| | Legal | Pessimism about communicating to the law as it does not enshrine the rights stitchers seek (e.g., living wage) or can be used to discipline them (e.g., industrial interests influencing labour court decisions on union disputes). |
| | Cultural | Norms preventing women from participating publicly in rights advocacy. |
| ***Spatial*** | Imperial Space | Problem articulation and response taking place outside of village level (e.g., Geneva, London, Atlanta, Munich and Verbier), making communication difficult. |
| ***Temporal*** | Technocratic Clock | Pressure to meet 'targets' of setting up so many community organizations that prevents extensive consultations between an NGO and villagers. |
| | Subsistence Clock | The need to work all day to earn enough to survive for that day leaves little time for communication. |

## SUBALTERNALIZATION

*Weak Domain Actor Perspective: Power Fluctuations*

When we take all these constraints discussed in this chapter into account, we notice that the domain in developing areas can consist of a vast web of intricate and mutually reinforcing constraints that can castrate the potential for deploying communicative power by weak stakeholders. When these constraints collaborate successfully as they did in our case, they end up producing the subalternalization paradox that we referred to earlier in chapter 2 of the thesis. People central to the domain, on account of their weakness, end up becoming peripheral in terms of influencing the domain in a way that is faithful to and reflects their welfare. The communication constraints and the subalternalization paradox, when largely unchecked, end up having grim repercussions on weak stakeholders. Thus, their relationship to positive outcomes of collaboration, where positive outcomes are defined as those that do not at least hurt the weak stakeholders in a domain, tend to suggest an inverse relationship.

Can these subalternalization processes be resisted? A realistic answer, in a domain containing the communication constraints and the time and space configurations present like the one we studied, would be a pessimistic one. This, of course, does not mean that resistance is futile. In fact, the only glimmer of resisting the subalternization processes we witnessed was when women stitchers refused to work in large stitching centres outside their homes. Their concerns were registered, albeit not to the extent that they liked. The centres shifted to their villages whereas they would have preferred home-based stitching. Nevertheless, the shift did provide work to some women stitchers who would have lost even this work if the shift had not occurred.

What was interesting to note in that affair was that the resistance was of an extra-language kind. It was not primarily in language. It was a bodily response of non-compliance. Women simply refused to work. Also, it was an individual act that was not done through a centrally organized platform like a union. Women

across the villages, in their individual capacities, refused to work, not knowing that women in other villages were making similar decisions. What happened was similar to a mass desertion in an army where soldiers desert on their individual initiative. The systemic or emergent property that emerges from such individual acts is a collective act of resistance, individually enacted, which has no centre. Such a resistance is difficult for the overlords to crush because there is no head of the snake, no nerve centre, no leader, whose arrest could bring the resistance to an end. To paraphrase Yeats, things would fall apart for the master when the centre does not hold. Thus, our case experience would tend to suggest that the answer to what I perceive is an interesting debate on power taking place between the postmodernists and the realist schools with one advocating respectively individual acts of resistance while the other advocating old-fashioned collective organized struggle, is not either or but both and. Individual acts of resistance when done simultaneously in a decentralized way produces an *emergent collective resistance*. This resistance is able to melt, to utilise Marxist terminology, the solid structures of domination into thin air. However, such acts of emergent collective resistance are rare and by definition cannot be explicitly orchestrated. Therefore, one cannot be too hopeful of resisting subalternization processes through this medium.

Further reflections on the subaltern experience found in our case study lead us to other theoretical insights about power and weak stakeholder agency. According to Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998), power contains four dimensions. They are: i) critical resources (e.g., from formal authority, the legally sanctioned right to make decisions, to financial capital); ii) gate-keeping (i.e., ability to restrict access to decision making arenas); iii) persuasion (i.e., use of written and spoken language); and iv) systemic constraints (i.e., deeply-held beliefs in the wider culture shaping the behaviour of both the privileged and the dominated classes such as corporations and unions both subscribing to the view that the corporation is a legitimate form of organizing private business activity). The literature seems to postulate and discuss these dimensions separately as if there were no substantial interactions between them. However, we see from our case experience that the dimensions are quite intermeshed. As we have seen the third

dimension (i.e. persuasion) rests crucially on the first and fourth dimensions. For example, women stitchers could not use persuasion because they lacked the resources to absorb the consequences (e.g., work termination) that would come as a result of exercising this dimension of power. Moreover, they did not wish to exercise persuasion in public space because they subscribed to the wider cultural understanding (i.e., the power dimension of systemic constraints) that it is not something done by women, a position that was also held by their more privileged patrons, whether they be subcontractors or factory owners. Thus, we can see that the dimensions are interrelated and in fact power utilisation in one dimension hinges crucially on how actors fare in the other power dimensions.

The theoretical insight about the interrelatedness of power dimensions, a point not explicitly articulated in the literature, came about by reflecting on power dimensions using the available light of the subalternalization experience found in our case study. If we continue with these reflections, can we illuminate other theoretical understandings on power and its dimensions? The answer seems to be in the affirmative. We see that accessibility of and the strength in each of the power dimensions by weak actors shrinks or expands or, in other words, is quite elastic depending on the nature of time and space in question. That is to say, power dimensions have *time* and *space elasticities*.

Take the first dimension of power, critical resources. With enough time, weak actors may be able to accumulate their savings and gain critical resource power (in this case higher monetary resources). They may also be able to, given enough time, to engage in collective struggles over whose history they may attain formal authority to make decisions and decide who is a position to do so (i.e., also gain some gate-keeping power, the power's second dimension). Similarly managing meaning, the third dimension of power, which often may mean learning and gaining sophistication in a new language (e.g., Sialkot villagers learning English), can become accessible if sufficient time is available for weak stakeholders. The fourth dimension, by definition, is outside of conscious manipulation by human agents. However, the self-evident nature of the fourth dimension can be problematized over time. With the passage of time, it is

reasonable to postulate that contact is likely to increase between different normative social orders. Given time, different normative orders may come into contact with the normative orders of the weak actors and by such contact help problematize their norms that they took for granted. For example, norms of gender stratification that weak actors take for granted (e.g., place of women work is in the home) may be thrown into question when they come into contact with other actors where women are seen in positions of authority (e.g., female community organizers of microcredit NGOs). Thus, what we can discern is that power dimensions are not some rigid unchanging structures in terms of power they can project and how accessible they are to weak actors. Their power magnitudes and accessibility can shift and change (i.e., fluctuate) depending on time. That is, they have time elasticity.

Similarly, power dimensions are elastic relative to space. For example, where decisions are to be made in spatially bounded spaces accessible to weak stakeholders, the power of critical resources, scarce as they may be, increases for them. When the crucial decisions are being made in a village in the developing world, the meagre critical resources (e.g., savings) of the villagers may suffice for them to participate in the decision making process. Compare this when the locus of decision making is in Munich or London. Forget the airplane ticket. Some villagers may not have enough money (as was the case in Sialkot) to go to the capital city to procure the visa to travel to such foreign places. The same argument can be made for the second and third dimensions of power. The closer spatially the decision arena to weak actors, the easier for weak actors to confront and overcome gate access (second dimension) and management of meaning (third dimension) restrictions as well as use these two dimensions to further their cause. It would be hard to restrict entry to the decision making arena when it is squarely located in the village square as compared to when it is being made behind closed doors in office suites located in Geneva policed by security personnel. Moreover, closer the arena is to weak actors, the more they can act as gate-keepers restricting access. In the case of Sialkot, villagers were able to effectively block many international news media film crews from entering their villages and homes.

Similarly, the closer the decisions to the homes of weak actors, the likelihood of the language of that space being used increases, which means they have greater access and ability to use management of meaning power. Lastly, for the fourth dimension, systemic constraints, we see that the more the space of weak actors is open or porous to outside influence, either coming through human agents or through mass communications technology, the more likely is the self-evident normative order to be problematized. Seeing alternative social orders can make visible for weak actors their own social order as well as point to alternatives. Images of democratic societies with elections can throw into question the normalcy of steeply stratified social orders. These images point to alternative and realizable social order possibilities. Weak actors can think to themselves that if other societies are less stratified, then sharp inequalities are not an immutable condition of human existence and, thus, can be challenged and altered. Hence, like time, the four power dimensions have space elasticity. That is the magnitude of power they contain and the ability of weak actors to access them fluctuate with or are elastic to the nature of space under consideration.

Of course, there is no guarantee that abundant time and short distances will increase the prospects for weak actors in each of power's four dimensions. In fact, surplus time and bounded spaces can work to reduce power prospects of weak actors. Think of a long, drawn-out legal battle or a union struggle and we see how a long time frame can restrict and dissipate critical resource power of weak groups. In a similar vein, action in bounded spaces can prevent weak actors (e.g., human rights victims in a dictatorship) from making alliances with powerful actors (e.g., Amnesty International) whose management of meaning skills could have provided such marginal elements with this dimension of power. The point of identifying the space and time elasticity of the four dimensions of power is not to advocate long time frames and bounded spaces for they can help to reduce the power weak actors can access and project. Rather, it is to simply make the case that time and space are important for understanding the dimensions of power. Power dimensions have a geography and a time. This discussion here has been to articulate this theoretical point, largely ignored in the critical management studies

literature, and to show that each dimension of power shifts and changes or has elasticity in relation to time and space.

*Powerful Stakeholder Perspective: Resistance Strategies*

The discussion thus far has looked at the questions of resisting subalternalizing processes from the vantage point of weak stakeholders in the domain and what we can learn about power dimensions from the subalternalization experience documented in the case study. Also, we explored these questions based on what actually happened. If we shift the focus to the powerful stakeholders or players in the domain and, moreover, delve on the question of resisting subalternalization not as how actually it was resisted but as how it could have been resisted, other theoretical possibilities open up for exploration.

We can, at least identify three strategies that powerful players could have enacted to resist subalternatization processes in a domain. There is, firstly, the *enfranchisement strategy*. Powerful actors (e.g., international NGOs) could have opened up the decision making arena to the excluded actors by vesting the latter with formal rights to participate and make decisions regarding the collaboration. That is to have enfranchised them. However, the feasibility of such a strategy is largely contingent on the nature of the domain and the power gaps between the different actors. Where the domain is complex, that is to say it consists of diverse set of actors (e.g., from organized NGOs to unorganized rural workers), speaking multiple languages, having divergent interests, and who are located in different parts of the world, the sheer logistics of bringing all such disparate actors together in one forum may preclude such a strategy from being followed. The viability of this strategy is further weakened where these logistical encumbrances are coupled with power gaps between groups. Weak stakeholders may be intimidated from voicing or advancing their concerns because what could befall them outside of the collaborative forum by powerful actors. In this case, the collaboration may well become a vehicle by which the powerful coopt the weak while presenting the veneer of cooperation. Thus, this strategy would be more appropriate for simple

domains where there are fewer and less diverse players and where the power gaps between them are not so significant.

Should the enfranchisement strategy not prove workable in complex domains, there are other theoretical possibilities of resisting subalternalization processes. One such possibility is what can be called *solidarity strategy*. The idea here is for one or more powerful players in the domain to separate themselves from the decision making circle, go down to the location of the excluded groups and help organize them into a cohesive force. This cohesive force can then bring pressure on the domain players to make space for the excluded players. An example of this would be Jesuit priests from the mid-1970s onwards publicly breaking ranks with the ruling oligarchy (e.g., business and civil administration/military interests) in some Latin American societies (e.g., El Salvador), with which they had been traditionally associated, and organizing the peasants to struggle for their rights (Blum 1998). This was done in spite of opposition from elite groups who often resorted to violence targeting church leadership elements (e.g., archbishop Oscar Romero being assassinated in El Salvador in 1980 for his outspoken support for peasants and human rights). Once again, this strategy will be highly contingent on the nature of the domain. In a domain exhibiting features like the feudal industrial complex where any efforts to organize those below can be met with swift sanctions from threats to the use of physical force, the solidarity strategy may not be a feasible option. Also, if in a domain the members of the excluded groups are dispersed, then logistical spatial constraints may also work against the use of such a strategy.

Apart from the nature of the domain, what appears important for the solidarity strategy to succeed is the powerful domain player or stakeholder in question who decides to break ranks. The stakeholder in question will need to be both a buffer and a bridge. The stakeholder will need to have sufficient political and economic power to block or buffer the weak elements being organized from retaliation by other powerful domain players who would not want the subalterns organized. Simultaneously, such resources of the player that forges a common cause with excluded elements must be sufficient to provide a bridge over which

these marginalized groups can travel and penetrate the decision making arenas of the domain (e.g., having enough money to take the subalterns overseas where decisions are being made about them). This, of course, presumes that the peripheral groups will be willing to work with the domain stakeholder who has come to their side. Should trust not be present which is likely the case where the stakeholder has been associated with elements that have historically worked against the interests of the subalterns, then time and space will be crucial. Where such time to forge trust is not available and where the stakeholder in question is perceived to be foreign, especially when it is an organization not rooted in the local community, such a strategy may not work. On the other hand, should this strategy be tried and succeed, then it would be of immense value to the marginalized, for it would have build their capacity to effectively resist being subalternalized, a capacity which they can leverage to further their cause in other arenas of their lives (e.g., local politics).

Lastly, the third option that can be pursued to resist subalternalization processes by powerful actors in the domain is to create overlapping collaborations in the domain. The *overlapping collaboration* strategy would involve creating collaborations between some though not all of the members of the domain that would pursue a common objective different from the one that led to the creation of the domain. It is called overlapping because some members of the central collaboration that brought the domain into question would be present in the other collaborations. For example, the Sialkot soccer ball industry could align itself with its workers and some NGOs active in the child labour domain and create a separate collaboration effort organized around trying to get higher prices from international brands which can then be passed on to workers in the form of higher wages. Workers, now having enough resources, would then be able to send their children to schools rather than to work. This would involve say a media campaign, in which the international NGOs can provide a pivotal role, where attention is raised on the importance of getting better prices for soccer balls in order to improve the living conditions of the workers. While doing this, the overlapping collaboration can then be used as a check and balance to the

domain's central collaboration (i.e., the elimination of child labour) where members of the alternative collaboration can try to bring the issues of that collaboration (e.g., higher wages) on to the agenda of the central collaboration. We can think of Sialkot exporters together with workers and NGOs using the alternative collaboration as a pressure vehicle to push the brands and their international associations (e.g., the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)) to bring the concerns of the alternative collaboration on to the agenda of the central collaboration.

This overlapping collaboration strategy, like the others, has its strengths and its limitations. One of its strength is that, because there are members that straddle both the central and alternative collaborations, the straddling members can provide access to the central collaboration's decision making arena to the subalterns who may formally be part of the alternative collaboration but not have a formal role in the central collaboration. Also, since the overlapping collaboration strategy does not require maximum feasible participation as only a few domain stakeholders are needed as opposed to all, it has less logistical encumbrances than the enfranchisement strategy.

In terms of weaknesses, the overlapping collaboration strategy requires enlightened self-interest on the part of the powerful. This is quite a historical rarity and, thus, it is difficult to perceive whether this strategy would ever materialize in reality. Moreover, the overlapping collaboration strategy also suffers from the dangers of cooptation where the powerful actors in the alternative collaboration may not fulfil their promises and simply use the grassroots to extract concessions (e.g., higher prices from international customers) which will not be passed on to them. These dangers are quite real when the subalterns do not have any significant means of their own to avoid such cooptation, as is the case in Sialkot in which this strategy may lead to further strengthening of the manufacturers by receiving higher prices from brands which are not passed on to their stitchers. The conditions of the stitchers would remain the same at best or worsen in terms of greater power imbalance given that the manufacturers will have more resources at their disposal on account of the higher prices. Perhaps,

this could be mitigated by the international NGOs serving as a monitoring mechanism to reduce such an outcome. The mitigation will crucially hinge on international NGOs' commitment to the grass roots and their willingness to offend the other powerful players whose behaviours the international NGOs wish to correct.

## CONCLUSION: ACTIVISM THICK & THIN

In this chapter we have discussed the constraints that would face weak stakeholders in using communication processes to influence their problem domain located in developing countries. From our discussion, we see that the myriad constraints can be conceptualised as being either language, societal, spatial, and temporal constraints with each conceptual type containing further sub-elements within it to more finely separate the constraints that would fall within each of the four types. We have also discussed in detail how space and time refract the dynamics of weak stakeholder communication in a way that thwarts such stakeholders from using language to influence the domain. When space of a domain takes on the configuration of an imperial space and where time in that domain runs on what we called technocratic and subsistence clocks, we see that communicative agency is severely restricted for weak stakeholders.

The discussion in this chapter has largely restricted itself to the research questions articulated in the beginning of the thesis. In the remaining space of this chapter, I would like to move beyond these questions to reflect upon the nature and structure of transnational activism which I define as activism where the activists that raise the issues are foreign nationals located in countries different from the communities they wish to assist. This type of activism often produces international interorganizational collaborations as has been the case here with the Sialkot child labour project. While we have looked at the case study primarily as a story of weak stakeholder agency constraints in international interorganizational collaboration domains situated in the developing world, it is hard to deny that it also a tale of contemporary transnational activism. What theoretical insights on

international activism that produces and infuses interorganizational collaborations can we perceive when we listen to this tale? Let us explore this question.

In theorising about any phenomena, analysing the word that names it is often an instructive way to begin. If we look at the word 'activism', it appears that is composed, at a first level of approximation, of two words: i) activity or actions and ii) *ism* which stands for a world-view. Thus, by doing a linguistic commentary on activism, we can see that it has two facets: a world view and a set of actions. When we reflect on these two facets, we notice that each one of them contain certain dimensions.

Take world-view, for instance. By definition a world-view comprises a set of axioms that we hold to be true and that are used to comprehend reality both internal and external to us. The materialist may believe that a flu has come about through a Vitamin C deficiency while the theist may hold that the cold has ultimately come from God to test her patience. What is interesting to note about these preconceived notions is how open are they to change and adjustment based on experience. If the world-view consists of a set of preconceived notions that is not subject to change and not reflective (i.e., constantly questioning the validity of the notions), then we can say that we are dealing with a frozen world-view. Frozen in that there is little that can be done to shake or change those notions. On the other hand, if the world-view consists of notions that are held contingently and are viewed as tentative notions that are open to revisions and change, then we can say we are in the midst of a fluid world-view. Like the frozen world-view, the preconceived notions in a fluid world-view may be passionately held. What separates the two is that while they are passionately held there is a conscious recognition to their contingency and a willingness to change on provision of information provided by, for example, experience that signals the need to alter them. That is to say, in fluid world-views there is the possibility of and desire for learning.

Apart from the world-view exhibiting the properties of being frozen or fluid, a world-view can also be integrated or fragmented. A fragmented world-view is one that looks at a phenomenon from only one or two lenses. An

integrated world-view, on the other hand, is one that looks holistically at a situation and has within it the various lenses or angles that are necessary to form a more complete picture of the phenomenon. For example, 18th century state scientific forestry management techniques looked at forests from a singular and, thus, fragmented perspective: the amount of revenues the forests could yield for the state (Scott, 1998). An integrated perspective would not only have seen the commercial aspects of the forests but would have included other lenses precluded by the fragmentary perspective. For example, an anthropological lens where the forests are seen to be providers of meaning for human beings having significance for them in terms of magic, refuge, and worship (ibid).

Like the world-view, the second facet of activism (i.e., activity or action) can also be construed to have different dimensions. One such dimension is location. Some of the most significant actions in activism, those dealing with problem definitions and response constructions, can be occurring either in the community that the activism wishes to reach and benefit or they can be occurring outside of that community. Thus, we can see that actions have a location dimension. This dimension is on a spectrum with one end being what I would call being locationally remote while the other end is what I would term locationally rooted in that the actions from problem identification to resolution are taking place in the midst of or are rooted in the community that is being helped.

The natural corollary to the location dimension is time. Actions not only occur in places but they also unfold over time at a particular pace. They have a temporal dimension to them which I refer to as pace. The pace of actions in activism (i.e., the time frames within which the actions take place) may be driven by activists' own understanding of how quickly the problem is to be solved or they may be driven by the nature of problem itself. In the case of activist-driven pace, the time of action and resolution is largely set by the desires of the activists themselves. For example, many North American and European activists upset at finding out that the products they consume are sourced from sweat-shops in developing countries, often call immediately upon brands to stop sourcing from such places. Here the desire for immediate action stems, to a significant extent,

from the activists' desire to immediately restore moral integrity in themselves that has been violated on learning about sweatshops and their involvement in such practices by purchasing products made in them. In contrast, in a problem-driven pace, the time frames for actions would largely be set by the problem itself. Where the problem requires immediate actions (e.g., assisting survivors in a wake of an earthquake as happened recently in Iran in December 2003) the pace of actions is swift and one works within narrow time limits. However, where the problem requires a long-term effort, such as the case with sweatshops, whose transformation requires, among other things, a presence of democracy so that workers can improve their living conditions through collective organization without reprisals from their employers, the time frame of actions would be similarly long-term. This is because bringing about substantive democracy in any society is a precarious venture whose fruits often surface after efforts are exerted with temerity and doggedness over several generations. Thus, the bands of time within each of these two paces can be narrow or wide and we should avoid the mistake of thinking that the problem-driven pace will have perforce wider bands or longer time horizons than the activist-driven pace.

Actions in activism not only arise in location and time but they often arise out of a division of labour. This can be said to be another dimension of the second facet of activism. The division of labour structuring the actions can be craft-based or assembly-line. In actions that I would call craft-based, the division of labour is such that the people or activists that raise the issues or problems are also the ones that are both operationalizing and executing the solutions at the grass roots level or are involved intimately with groups or organizations that are doing these activities. As opposed to craft-based division of labour in activism, we can posit the assembly line method where there are multiple actors involved in the chain of actions from problem identification to solution implementation with each actor only being responsible or involved in one specific part of the chain (e.g., problem identification but not problem resolution) and with little or no communication between the different actors.

Of course, when thinking about actions in activism, we not only should think about the actors but also the acted upon. The first three dimensions (i.e., location, pace, and division of labour) that we have listed dealt with the actor side of the activist equation. When we shift the focus to the acted upon, we see other dimensions surfacing regarding the facet of actions. One such dimension is associational style. This deals with how the activists associate with or relate to the communities they wish to assist. Associational style can vary from being paternalistic at one end to being what I call dialogical at the other. In a paternalistic style, activists see the community from commanding heights and pronounce judgements on high. The idea here is that the activists know what is best and the language of communication between these two groups is one of fiats and commands (e.g., stop doing this, do this, etc.). The tone is 'pause-less', can be loud and angry, and carries contents that are predetermined. In contrast, dialogical style is based as the word hints on dialogue. Here, the activists listen intently and inquire deeply with a willingness to be influenced by the community to be assisted. The dialogical style is one of open-ended help where the desire to help is communicated and the identification and solution of the problem emerges through the cooperation of shared experience between the activists and the community. The tone through which these contents are enunciated is soft, filled with pauses for introspection, and welcoming. The action contents with this associational style are, thus, emergent and not predetermined. As such, they are contextual and grounded in the living experiences of both the activists and the community being assisted.

The last dimension on the action facet of activism is the one dealing with goals. Action is usually based on some goals. Goals can be primarily quantitative (e.g., end racial segregation in schools) or qualitative (e.g., end racism in schools). With quantitative goals, the emphasis of activism is on measurement (e.g., did we eliminate segregation in all schools). For qualitative goals, the focus shifts to judgement (e.g., did we eliminate racism). This is a far more complex process than quantitative measurement as judgement requires not only intellect but also intuition and emotions. Measurement is about did we get the right answer.

Judgement is about do we feel right about our answer. Given that in our present day lives, we see measures (e.g., grades) that are disconnected from and often at odds with the reality that they are purportedly representing (e.g., learning), the emphasis on judgement cannot be over emphasized.

Our discussion on transnational activism can be conceptualised diagrammatically (see figure 6). Doing so, we see that there are two types of transnational activism that generate and can be found in interorganizational collaborations. These are *thin* and *thick activism*. Thin activism is what we observed in our case study. The activists came with frozen, preconceived notions (e.g., all child labour is bad and children should go to schools). The ones who raised the child labour issue were not willing to alter their position even when they were presented with information that contradicted their preconceived notions. For example, the Foul Ball Campaign continued to maintain its position on the horrors of child slavery in Sialkot's soccer ball industry even after reports had been published by independent bodies (e.g., the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan) that showed the initial reports had not been substantiated by facts.

Similarly, the activists who raised the child labour issue did so from a fragmented perspective. They only saw children working and zeroed in on this. They did not see that the soccer ball stitching was part of a rural household economy where in the homes not only the children but their mothers also worked as well. Focusing narrowly on eliminating child labour, they missed the presence of women stitchers and the rural household. The activists did not see the children as being located in a complex social fabric and that their interventions to eliminate child labour would rupture this fabric and set into motion forces that would hurt the children by lowering the incomes of their mothers that these activists wished to help. Had they gone in with a more integrated perspective that saw child labour as being connected to other aspects of rural life (e.g., household economy) and local power structures (i.e., the feudal industrial complex) they might have then advocated something other than a ban on child labour. Perhaps, the activists might have worked with the local stitching force for raises in wages that would provide the means for parents to take their children out of the labour

market and put them in public or private schools in case public schools were either not available or of dubious quality.

Moving on to the second facet of activism (i.e., actions) we again see that the activism found in the case study bore all the features of actions that we have classified as actions that belong to thin activism. The groups who raised and brought out this issue from CBS to American soccer moms were primarily outside of and not connected to the community context of Sialkot stitchers. The location of the actions was remote and not rooted. The pace was activist-driven and not problem-driven. Unrealistic deadlines that ignored the complexity of the child labour issue (e.g., that it was deeply interwoven with the household economy that would be ruptured severely with the removal of children from stitching work), were imposed based on an outrage felt by the activist communities in North America and Europe who, for the most part, wanted an immediate end to child labour to make soccer ball retail purchases a wholesome consumption activity again. Moreover, the division of labour producing the actions resembled that of assembly-line production as opposed to craft-based. The organizations that raised the issue of soccer ball child labour were not the organizations that then went to the villages to implement the project to eliminate child labour from the soccer ball industry in Sialkot. In fact, there seems to have been virtually no substantive communication between the problem raisers and the solution providers in this case.

As for the associational style, the evidence marshalled in this case study shows that it was paternalistic. The activist communities knew, before consultation, what was best for the Sialkot stitcher children and their families. Fiat and commands were issued by the activist community to the entire soccer ball industry to eliminate child labour. There was little room provided for dialogue either with the industry or with the stitchers. Had the activists opted for the thick activism associational style of dialogue, perhaps many of the negative unintended consequences of their interventions (e.g., loss of livelihood for women stitchers) would have been avoided. Through dialogue with the local community, the activists may have learned that the problem was not child labour. That removing

child labour by bringing stitching into transparent monitoring centres would preclude a significant portion of women stitchers from this source of livelihood and, thus, have the detrimental effects of lowering household incomes and hurting the life prospects of the very children that they wished to save. Had they engaged in dialogue, the activists may have come up with emergent and shared solutions to the child labour problem such as helping the parents of children organize their unions through which they could receive living wages that could then afford the child stitchers the possibilities of attending school, private or public.

Finally, the activism that we saw in our case study fits thin activism in the goal dimension as well. The emphasis of the activism was on a quantifiable goal (e.g., zero child labour). The activity that ensued (e.g., the monitoring program of the Sialkot child labour project) spent a great part of its energy and resources measuring and monitoring outcomes to see if this goal was realized. Had it been thick activism, the goal of the initial activism would have been primarily a qualitative one (e.g., ensuring the well being of the stitching families). This would have required judgement and may have oriented the energies towards seeing child labour as being one piece of a larger socio-economic system. The nature of the goal may have helped prevent the tunnel vision that gripped the activist community (e.g., exclusive focus on eliminating child labour) and could have, thus, assisted in avoiding the negative consequences that ensued from such a narrow field of vision.

Based on the foregoing, we can see that interorganizational collaboration projects that arise from thin activism can become severely constrained and consequently, produce harmful effects, particularly on the vulnerable communities that are the object of assistance of such projects and activism. Thin activism can handicap interorganizational collaboration projects with an incorrect definition of a problem (e.g., the problem in Sialkot's soccer ball industry being child labour and not absence of living wages). It can thus force such projects to treat symptoms rather than the underlying maladies that produced those symptoms. In doing so, such thin activism may narrow the range of options collaborative projects can undertake and force them into taking some actions

whose consequences can turn out to be worse than the disease that the activism wished to cure. Interorganizational collaborations that skate on thin activism not surprisingly fall through the cracks that such activism contains. When they do so and end up harming the ones they are meant to benefit, they enter the realm of injurious activism.

While the characteristics of thin activism may be conducive to the production of injurious activism, the blame cannot be placed entirely on them. After all, thin activism may itself be considered a condition of wider cultural formations at work in the West. One such formation may well be instant gratification. The hyper-technological society of the modern West, with its increasing computing speeds inures many to expect and demand immediate outcomes whether they are in the forms of instant foods or quick cosmetic liposuction surgery to lose the fat that is also instantly gained from such foods. In times where we are experiencing an erosion of patience as we hurtle at break-neck speeds, the possibilities for thick activism become grim. Combine this with imperial spaces and technocratic and subsistence domain clocks, the prospects for thick activism are further thinned. Having said this, we should not fall into the trap of thinking of thick activism as simply a passive force that is worked upon by the constraints mentioned here, particularly of imperial space and technocratic clocks. Thick activism is also an active force. Its presence can erode imperial space. Activism that is thick and is concerned about the local community can push the decision making centres of the domain down to the local level. Alternatively, it can provide critical resources to the local community for them to access decision making arenas if they are spatially located at a distance from them. These critical resources can also help overcome the limits of subsistence clocks as they can allow weak actors funds to feed themselves without having to work all day and, thus, the time saved not working can be used by these actors towards changing their domain. Similarly, thick activism, with its emphasis on dialogue that by its very nature is a slow, painstaking process that ebbs and flows, can prevent the consciousness from arising that would produce a technocratic clock in whose mind's eye human actions are to unfold at mechanical, predetermined

rates. Whether thick activism is acted upon or acts is, however, for us to determine. Suffice is it to say on that determination will hinge whether activism ends up being judicious (i.e., ends up benefiting those that it wishes to help) or injurious.

## Figure 6: TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM



| | ***Thin Activism*** | ***Thick Activism*** |
|---|---|---|
| **Facet I: World-view** | | |
| *Preconceived Notions* | Frozen | Fluid |
| *Perspective* | Fragmented | Integrative |
| **Facet II: Actions** | | |
| *Location* | Remote | Rooted |
| *Pace* | Activist-Driven | Problem-Driven |
| *Division of Labour* | Assembly-Line | Craft-Based |
| *Associational Style* | Paternalistic | Dialogical |
| *Goals* | Quantitative (emphasis on measurement) | Qualitative (emphasis on judgement) |

# CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Developing countries receive scant attention in the field of management and organization studies (MOS) (Calas and Smircich, 1999). When MOS does turn its gaze towards them, it fixates it on elite decision making groups (e.g., managers) and largely elite concerns (e.g., private profit maximization). If the poor and powerless are underrepresented in MOS literature (Perrow, 2000), then they are virtually absent when it comes to that literature's tenuous contact with the developing world. The field, thus, suffers from both ethnocentric and class biases. This research effort has hopefully helped reduce these biases and the ignorance that comes with them in our field by squarely situating itself in the developing world, discussing the considerable constraints to agency faced by the marginalized elements there (i.e., the other) in the context of a social issue (i.e., child labour) and the interorganizational collaboration venture crafted to address it, and documenting some salient every day indignities wrought on the other often by 'brute force bereft of reason.' More specifically, this research, in terms of its theoretical advancements and empirical findings, has the potential to contribute to the interorganizational collaboration, corporate social performance, and critical management studies literatures.

### *Contributions to Interorganizational Collaboration*

Communication constraints faced by weak stakeholders in problem domains located in the developing world has remained, in interorganizational collaboration literature, an undeveloped area in terms of its conceptual advancement, its level of publications, and its position as a topic for reflection and critique. This thesis has filled this gap by bringing into salience the importance of communication constraints. It has documented them and then it has conceptualized them in the form of a typology containing four basic types of communication constraints: i) language; ii) societal; iii) spatial; and iv) temporal.

In addition, the elements making up each of these communication constraint types have also been articulated. These basic types and their respective constitutive elements represent theoretical concepts through which we can begin to theorize about and explain, as was done in this thesis, the dynamics of marginalization and exclusion of weak stakeholders in interorganizational collaboration domains located in the developing world. The thesis has not only provided this conceptualization but it has also demonstrated how these constraints negatively impact the abilities of weak stakeholders to influence the domain. This is also a contribution to the small body of academic work (e.g., Husselbee, 2001; Kazmi and Macfarlane, 2002; Khan, 2003; Schrage, 2004) that has looked at the Sialkot child labour case from a perspective other than interorganizational collaboration communication constraints perspective.

The focus on language has enabled us to perceive another blind spot in current theorizing on interorganizational collaborations. The few that do discuss the role of language in mediating collaboration dynamics (e.g., Hardy and Phillips 1998) seem to be labouring under the theoretical misconception that there is only one natural language at work. The theoretical insight provided in this thesis is to bring to theory the awareness that there are often multiple natural languages at work in a domain. There are divisions across natural languages (e.g., English versus Punjabi) but also within them. The within language-divisions we referred to as 'jargon', and we pointed out that language divisions do play a pivotal role in determining the ounces of agency that weak stakeholders can exert through the use of language. When decision making is being conducted in a natural language and a jargon not shared by weak stakeholders, the capacity of the latter to influence domain proceedings is quite drastically reduced. We see from the case that the NGO workers who felt they were unwilling agents of Westernization, nevertheless, because they had access to language were able to advance somewhat their Muslim values through symbolic manipulations by, for example, introducing Islamic education content in their programs under the rubric of 'Ethics', so as to evade the secular gaze of their international donor NGOs who would in their views object to such inclusion. The women stitchers could not even exercise

agency at that level, largely due to alienation from the decision making (natural) language and jargons used in the domain.

Another theoretical contribution of this thesis is to highlight the significant role of time and space in shaping the dynamics of interorganizational collaborations, which has not received sufficient attention in interorganizational collaboration research. Just as the interorganizational collaboration literature has overlooked an apparent feature of most domains (i.e., that they are multi-lingual), so too is the case here where the literature has not paid sufficient attention to the dimensions of time and space in its theorizing endeavour: as if domains and collaborations that unfold in them occur outside of time and space, in some sort of transcendental bubble. This research has helped to burst that bubble. It has shown that domain dynamics unfold in time and space that influence the dynamics. It has also theorized about these two dimensions. Concerning space, the thesis has developed the theoretical concept of *Imperial Space*. It has shown that when domains are situated in such a space, the ability of weak stakeholders to impact the domain is sharply curtailed. Similarly, attention to time allows identification of *clocks* present in domains. Domains run on particular temporal rhythms what we have called clocks. Through the case study, we have theorized about the existence of two clocks (i.e., the *subsistence* and the *technocratic clocks*). We have shown that these two clocks can combine to create, along with language and societal constraints, the paradoxical situation where the voices of those whom the collaborative effort is meant to assist, and who are quite central to the domain, are not heard. They are subalternalized and we have shown that when subalternalization happens the outcomes can be grievously injurious to those being subalternalized.

Reflections on marginalization and exclusion of weak stakeholders in interorganizational collaboration domains in developing countries have produced yet other theoretical findings. We have identified three strategies (i.e., *enfranchisement*, *solidarity* and *overlapping collaboration*) that powerful actors in a domain can use to resist subalternalization processes. We discussed the prospects and limitations of each strategy, pointing out that the choice among the

three strategies will be largely contingent on the nature of the domain. For example, enfranchisement strategy that involves formally giving rights to all stakeholders in a domain can work for simple domains (limited distances and small number of actors) but may break down as the complexity of the domain increases (e.g., where you have large number of actors and multiple languages that can create logistical difficulties for this strategy). The interorganizational collaboration literature has undertheorized the subalternalization processes present in domains in developing countries and the strategies to combat them. The thesis, with these contributions, hopes to help the literature overcome these limitations.

Lastly, the thesis addresses an understudied subject in the interorganizational collaboration literature. That is the nature of transnational activism that often gives birth to interorganizational collaboration domains in the form of projects in the developing world. The thesis theorizes about the structure of transnational activism pointing out that the structure consists of two main facets (i.e., world-views and actions) with each one containing several dimensions. The world-view facet consists of the preconceived notions and perspective dimensions. The actions facet consists of the following: location; pace; division of labour; associational style; and goals. From these two facets and their multiple dimensions, we see, at a first level of approximation, that there are two types of activism: thin and thick. *Thin activism* consists of a world-view where the activists have frozen (not open to change), preconceived notions and a fragmented perspective that does not look at matters in an integrative manner. Moreover, the actions of activists in thin activism are remote (i.e., far from the field where they wish to intervene); have a pace driven by a time-frame in accord with their desires not with the time frame appropriate to the problem being addressed; have an assembly-line division of labour where one group raises the issues and is not concerned with or connected to the groups implementing the solutions; are paternalistic (i.e., we know what is best for you); and have quantifiable goals (e.g., zero child labour) with the focus on measurement (e.g., see to it that there are no child labourers) as opposed to having qualitative goals

(e.g., well-being of children) where the emphasis is on judgement with the basis of judgement being difficult to articulate and codify as it is based on hard facts as well as soft-knowledge (e.g., do the children seem happy). *Thick activism* has attributes that run in the opposite direction.

Not only does the thesis make a contribution to the interorganizational collaboration research stream by delineating a possible way of articulating the structure of transnational activism, an area given little theoretical reflection by this research stream, it also makes a theoretical connection between the success of interorganizational collaboration projects and the nature of activism that produced them. This link has not been fully addressed by research. It is argued here that if activism is thin activism, where for example the problem is poorly formulated as is likely to happen with fragmented perspectives and frozen preconceived notions, leads to interorganizational collaboration projects, then the likelihood increases that the collaboration projects may be forced into engaging in interventions, as was the situation with our case study, that end up hurting the ones that were meant to be assisted.

*Contributions to Corporate Social Performance (CSP)*

CSP has been defined by Wood as:

> a business organization's configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm's societal relationships. (1991: 693).

As can be seen from the above definition, the term CSP contains three dimensions: a) the motivations for engaging in socially responsible behaviour by corporations; b) the actions associated with responding to social pressures and demands; and c) the outcomes, in terms of positive and negative effects on stakeholders, of corporate behaviour (Wood, 1991, 1991a).

In what follows, I would like to provide a brief overview of the historical evolution of the concept and the subjects it encompasses before moving onto identifying gaps in the extant literature on CSP.

CSP is a construct that developed in the SIM field (Gerde & Wokutch, 1998) whose wide swathe of inter-disciplinary research comprising it, ranging from corporate philanthropy to issues of employee privacy, is purportedly driven by what some would argue is the central question and concern of the field: 'How can and do corporations contribute to constructing the good society.' (Swanson, 1995: 52). Others (e.g., Wood, 2000) would now contest this representation claiming that the 'field remains incoherent, unstructured, and unstable' (ibid, 363) with no theories that encompass the field and guide its research (ibid). There is, however, little if any disagreement over the fact that the term CSP was crafted in and is indigenous to the SIM field.

According to various scholars (e.g., Preston 1986), the origins of CSP can be traced to the corporate scandals and disasters that erupted in the late 1960s and early 1970s (e.g., the Ford Pinto scandal). These events impressed upon management and organization scholars to begin asking questions about what is the nature of corporate responsibility to society. During this time, the concept of 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR1) emerged and scholarly efforts were spent in trying to define and understand this term (Wood, 1991). Though no agreement materialized about the extent to which businesses should be involved in solving and addressing social problems beyond their economic activities, some definitions of CSR1 did surface by the late 1970s and early 1980s. The most important formulations are listed on the following table:

**Table 1: Early Formulations of CSR1**

| Reference | Formulation |
|---|---|
| Davis, 1973: 312 | 'The firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm... (to) accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks.' |
| Preston & Post, 1975 | Businesses have public responsibility for their primary and secondary involvements with society, but not for social problems or issues unrelated to these involvements. |
| Carroll, 1979: 500 | 'The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time.' |
| Sethi, 1975, 1979 | A socially responsible corporation is one that is responsive (i.e., deals) with social issues. |
| Frederick, 1986: 4 | 'The fundamental idea of 'corporate social responsibility' is that business corporations have an obligation to work for social betterment.' |

These formulations were understood by the academic community to be competing understandings of CSR1. Moreover, by the mid 1980s, considerable research had been published about the processes of corporate social responsiveness (CSR2) that sought to identify the activities by which companies understand and implement their responses to social issues (Ackerman, 1975; Ackerman & Bauer, 1976) which were grouped into three main types that in turn corresponded to three large groupings of research output in SIM: environmental assessment (dealing with techniques and importance of scanning the environment to proactively respond), stakeholder management (dealing with issues relating to inter alia the management of multiple stakeholder relations) and issues management (dealing with the activities associated with the construction and

implementation of policies and programs (e.g., community relations program) for managing social issues) (Wood, 1991). Thus, one found in the mid 1980s several apparently disparate research strands from measuring social impacts of businesses to ethical arguments about the responsibility of business to society, all labouring under the rubric of SIM.

In this context of apparent cacophony, Wartick and Cochran (1985) devised a framework that attempted to integrate the above various research streams into a coherent whole. They called this framework CSP which, according to a recent review (Gerde & Wokutch, 1998), has been given its clearest articulation by Wood (1991, 1991a) who has made significant refinements and extensions to it. To put it briefly, Wood (1991, 1991a) argues that CSP is about: a) the motivations for engaging in socially responsible behaviour by corporations; b) the actions associated with responding to social pressures and demands; and c) the outcomes, in terms of positive and negative effects on stakeholders, of corporate behaviour. Wood called each of these aspects (a), (b), and (c) the three dimensions of CSP and named them respectively as the principles of corporate social responsibility, the processes of corporate social responsiveness, and outcomes of corporate behaviour. She goes onto provide a detailed exposition of each of these dimensions delineating the various elements that constitute them (e.g., in the first dimension, Wood (1991, 1991a) identifies and explains the three main principles that have been advocated for corporate social responsibility).

The three dimensions of CSP not only help us understand what constitutes the latter, but also enable us, according to scholars (Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Swanson, 1995, 1999) to see some order in the above mentioned cacophony of various research strands by viewing them as dealing with various aspects of CSP. Thus, the research on CSR1 and the normative justifications that are advanced and contested there, deals with the first dimension of CSP. Similarly, the work that looks at CSR2, that is the various processes and actions involved in responding to social demands (e.g., managing stakeholders through devices such as company newsletters; Morris, Rehbein, Hosseini, Armacost, 1990) can be located in the second dimension of CSP. Finally, research that deals with

measuring and assessing the impacts of corporate behaviour (e.g, Clarkson, 1988) can be situated in the third dimension.

CSP as a name given to a comprehensive model that attempts to map research in SIM is one way to understand the term. However, such an understanding does not represent the bulk of the literature on CSP that has understood the term to mean basically the third dimension of the CSP model (Clarkson, 1995). CSP, as used in the majority of the research on this topic,

> was intended to suggest a broad concern with the impact of business behavior on society. The concern is with ultimate outcomes or results, not simply with policies or intentions; moreover there is some implication that these outcomes are to be evaluated, not simply described (Preston, cited in Clarkson, 1995: 102).

One could garner, from the above meaning of the term that the significant portion of CSP research would look at outcomes or social impacts of corporate behaviour. However, such a notion is belied by the content of the actual research carried out under the aegis of CSP. Scholars reviewing the literature in MOS suggest that social impact studies have been quite scant (Stern and Barley, 1996). For example, Perrow (2000), in a recent review of the state of organization theory, points out that social impact of organizations was once vigorously investigated but has become neglected. He goes on to state that 'the impact of large powerful organizations, public and private, upon our society remains marginalized by our profession' (Perrow, 2000: 475), and, thus, along with other scholars, joins the call of Wood issued a decade earlier that 'more empirical work is needed in this area.' (1991: 708).

The thesis helps to fill this empirical lacuna. At the empirical level, it documents the social impacts of large organizations, particularly those in the private and NGO sectors, in the context of interventions formulated to address a social issue (i.e., child labour). We see that the impacts range widely from income reduction of marginalized groups (e.g., women stitchers) to challenging long-enduring institutions (e.g., household location of work for women). These impacts

in turn create a wide variety of reactions from the physical and visible (e.g., refusal of women to move to stitching centres) to the intangible and the hidden (e.g., guilt pangs by NGO workers at being accomplices of Western cultural imperialism). Documenting these impacts, some light is shed on an arena where current scholarship sheds precious little light: what is happening at the bottom rungs of the supply chain ladder located in the developing world.

In terms of CSP theory, the findings of this study seem to confirm understandings held both within (e.g., Mintzberg, 1983) and without the management academy (e.g., Saul, 1995) that business usually seeks to only engage in corporate social responsibility when externally coerced to do so. The default position of large business seems to be, with few exceptions, one that is either indifferent to social justice concerns or actively working to thwart them. As Mintzberg notes:

> a friend of business [points out] that it has fought every progressive piece of legislation of this century, from child labor laws up. (1983: 527).

In our case study, the business executives were quite frank in their motivations to phase out child labour. As one of them put it, 'it was a survival matter, we took it as a business issue . . . there were no other motivations' (Pilot Study, 2000: 12). Had the consumer outrage in Western markets not been present, there seems to be little to justify the argument that of their own volition the businessmen of Sialkot or the international brands would have phased out child labour by improving the economic conditions of their workers. In fact, what we see is that change only occurred in those places where pressure was applied. There was no comparable consumer outrage over the lack of unions or living wages and, thus, on these fronts we find no change.

The other main theoretical contribution made by this study regarding CSP is that it helps fill a gap in the literature, which is the absence of a phenomenological approach to CSP evaluation, particularly from perspectives grounded in or found among weak groups located in the developing world. Ideas about measuring, evaluating, and judging CSP are basically fashioned from

abstract ethical systems presently prevailing in the West, held to be usually universal and from the values of the various scholars engaged in this research. The extant conceptualisations of principles and measures of evaluating CSP, thus, tell us, at best, how scholars and their survey informants, usually white-male North American middle class managers, understand and evaluate CSP. They tell us very little about the criteria used to assess and evaluate CSP by those connected to the bottom of the supply chain (e.g., NGO field workers and village school teachers). This is not a problem if the goal of CSP research is simply to classify situations as more or less exploitative or beneficial regardless of the views of such subordinated groups. However, if it is hoped that our categories, standards, and judgements on CSP are also shared and felt by these groups, then, following Scott (1976), we must begin not with abstract normative standards but with the values of the real actors. Such inquiry, according to Scott (1976), then must start *phenomenologically* at the bottom and ask what the peasants' or workers's definition of the situation (in this case CSP) is. We need to ascertain '*their* sense of exploitation, *their* notion of justice, *their* anger [original emphasis]' (ibid: 160).

Chapter six attempts to provide this phenomenological perspective on CSP. Through this phenomenological perspective, we gain some theoretical insights into the dynamics of CSP in the developing world. It shows that evaluation of CSP by groups (e.g., women stitchers) at the bottom of the supply chain in the developing world is largely contingent on how directly it alleviates their subsistence concerns. Much of what the Sialkot soccer ball industry deemed to be socially responsible corporate behaviour (e.g., construction of a multi-million US dollar international airport) was dismissed by stitchers because it did not address their chief worry, which was earning a dependable and sufficient income to provide basic amenities to their families and to cope with emergencies (e.g., illnesses).

There is another phenomenological perspective on CSP contained in the thesis. This deals with the NGO sector in the developing world looking at CSP. How the NGO sector evaluates CSP has been understudied in the CSP literature.

This is surprising given that corporate social responsibility initiatives, a part of CSP, often are done with or involve NGOs and that positive CSP evaluations by NGOs would assist corporations in enrolling their support for corporate social responsibility initiatives.

The NGO perspectives on CSP tend to show that their assessment of CSP seems to be a function of the extent of corporate social irresponsibility that they witness. When corporate social irresponsibility is present and centres on a violation of what NGO personnel perceive as a fundamental right (e.g., exploitative wages that hit at the right of fair or living wages), it seems that these groups evaluate, explain and dismiss positive CSP by assigning ulterior motives to it that tend to fall within one of the following three motifs: 1) Duress of international pressure; 2) Business community enhancing reputations in local community; and 3) Self-Enrichment. From this a theoretical insight follows that the evaluation of CSP by NGOs connected to the bottom of the global supply chain in the developing world may well be contingent on the nature and level of corporate social irresponsibility that they see, with the likelihood of CSP being viewed negatively by them increasing when corporate social irresponsibility is violating what are considered fundamental rights (e.g., a living wage). This would suggest that a favourable CSP evaluation by NGOs would hinge less on acts of the corporate sector doing good (e.g., building a hospital) and more on refraining from acts that cause harm. In other words, doing no harm may well be more important than doing good in tipping favourably the scales of CSP evaluation by NGOs.

Finally, the last theoretical point on CSP that I would like to mention is how corporate social responsibility initiatives, a part of CSP, undertaken in the developing world can be understood as patronage deployed to provide stability to an otherwise exploitative social order. When corporate social responsibility initiatives (e.g., fortnightly free dinners during the month of *Ramadan*) are couched and distributed by the business community as a privilege to be given at their discretion to weak stakeholders and not as a right owed to them, corporate social responsibility can be seen to help increase dependency and gratitude of

weaker segments on the powerful. Such initiatives *remind* the poor where lies the source of munificence and the behaviour required from them (i.e., deference and obedience) to keep the trickle of patronage flowing. Those located at the lower end of the social hierarchy are, thus, reminded of their position of dependency. The passivity and powerlessness that can come with that feeling, as well as the servile mentality it reinforces (i.e., be an obedient servant to improve your life chances), can reduce in them the desire of taking initiatives of their own. What the powerless learn about themselves is that they are dependent recipients of privileges, not independent owners of rights who can demand them from elite groups. From this it follows that the most feasible route of improving their lives is quiet servitude not turbulent resistance. Such servile and timid mentalities do not challenge a social order, even one that gives them hurt. Norms of 'appropriate' class relations are, thus, instantiated, enacted, and communicated through these rituals of corporate social responsibility initiatives as privileges. The thesis helps to highlight this social control side of corporate social responsibility initiatives in the developing world, showing that it can function, when articulated as 'privileges to be given' and not 'rights owed', as one among many instruments (e.g., the law) by which an unequal social order is enacted and maintained.

*Contributions to Critical Management Studies*

Critical management studies (CMS) provides a great service to the wider management and organization studies scholarship (MOS) by highlighting the complicity of management knowledge and practice in the production of exploitation, manipulation, structural inequalities, and other such issues related to power and domination (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Hampson and Morgan, 1999). Though it performs this valuable function, it does so, as in the case of the wider MOS literature, mostly within the confines of the economically advanced countries. Perplexingly, it is largely silent when it comes to the problems of the poor in the developing world, as a review of the articles published under its aegis would readily demonstrate. It is, however, in the developing world that the abuse of power of late industrial capitalism often expresses itself most nakedly,

intensely, and routinely (e.g., frequent factory fires claiming untold human lives in export oriented factories in China and Far East Asia) (Greider, 1997). The thesis helps to break this silence, helping CMS reconnect with the other in the developing world. Doing so helps to mitigate CMS' moral blindness to the overall state of indecencies visited upon the majority of human beings by our organizations and also our activism, poorly conceived and rashly executed.

In terms of theory, the thesis helps to reorient the discussion on language and power taking place in the CMS' postmodern literature, especially the works on critical discourse analysis. Essentially, one cannot wave the linguistic wand and hope that the exercise melts the external reality of one's subaltern status. Similarly, with regard to critical discourse analysis, we need to recognise the material face of language. Language, as is the case with interorganizational collaboration research, is discussed in critical discourse analysis as if there were only one natural language that all actors have access to, can comprehend, and use for their purposes, albeit to varying degrees, through symbolic manipulation. In real life there are multiple natural languages at work and for actors who cannot speak the natural language in which a discourse is being articulated, this means that they are physically shut out from it. The language is not open to their symbolic or discursive manipulations and their words would bounce off it as if it were a building. That is to say that language qua language, independent of the concrete effects that come from its use, has material properties all of its own that can work against the prospects of it being used as a tool of empowerment by marginalized groups in society. This material face of language and how it refracts the dynamics of power and communication is a contribution to CMS, particularly its stream of critical discourse analysis that has paid little attention to the presence of multiple natural languages in theorizing about language and power.

The reorientation towards the material aspects of language and power provides a much needed corrective to the postmodern turn in CMS, which has led it to focus away from material aspects of domination structures (e.g., wage dependency) into more esoteric terrains such as how human resource management discourses punish human beings by subjecting them to constant self-surveillance

and monitoring of their activities and inclinations accomplished by performance management system techniques such as performance appraisal forms filled by supervisors (Fox, 1989; Townley, 1993). The thesis, while recognizing the importance of language (both in its symbolic and material aspects) in the construction, enactment, and perpetuation of domination, nevertheless, makes a case for theoretical balance, saying that the non-language constraints (e.g., physical use of force to bust unions) need also be taken into account in order to come to grips with contemporary play of power and resistance enacted by, in, and through organizations. I trust most of the managed in the developing countries would freely fly to the chains of being treated as 'human resources' in alienating bureaucracies than suffer the material taunts of hunger and the fickle display of power exercised in highly personalized hierarchies found in feudal industrial complexes such as that in Sialkot. It would be, thus, quite perverse for CMS's theoretical focus to continue to rest on the travails of arguably quite privileged subordinate classes in the Western world (e.g., middle level managers) while ignoring the material and very real dispossessions and dislocations experienced by the subjugated classes in the developing world (e.g., women stitchers). By creating space for the latter classes, the thesis helps to reduce this perversity. In Saidian fashion, the thesis assists in realigning the theoretical focus of CMS towards the powerless in the developing countries (i.e., the other), especially workers at the village level, making CMS better able to reflect and document in its scholarship the lived dominated experience of the many, rather than just of a few.

The thesis also contributes to the discussions of power dimensions in CMS. Firstly, it shows a rethinking of the dimensions of power. As the thesis has indicated the various dimensions of power (i.e., critical resources, gate-keeping, persuasion and wider systemic constraints), that are usually treated in the literature as being largely independent of each other, are actually quite intermeshed. For example, women stitchers could not use persuasion because they lacked the critical resources (e.g., savings) to absorb the consequences (e.g., work termination) that would come as a result of exercising this dimension of power.

Alternatively, one could also make the argument that they did not wish to exercise persuasion in public space because they subscribed to the wider cultural understanding that it is not something done by women, a position that was also held by their more privileged patrons, whether they be subcontractors or factory owners. Thus, the thesis brings to the fore that the dimensions are interrelated and in fact power utilisation in one dimension hinges crucially on how actors fare in the other power dimensions.

The thesis helps us rethink dimensions of power in another way. Not only are the dimensions interrelated but their power quotient (i.e., the magnitude of power) that they individually possess and how accessible they are to weak actors changes depending on time and space. The thesis brings to the fore this theoretical insight that power dimensions have *time* and *space elasticity* and, thus, reveals additional facets of the four dimensions of power.

Finally, the thesis' concept of an *emergent collective struggle* contributes to power discussions in CMS by helping to reconcile what I perceive are two factions in CMS. One, by focusing almost exclusively on individual subjectivities (e.g., Jermier, Knights, and Nord, 1994), seems to implicitly hold, according to Eagleton (1995), to a postmodern pessimism that the days of collective struggle are extinct. According to this individual subjectivity resistance school, what is of use now and should be of interest for theoretical exploration are individual acts of resistance such as subverting meaning by introducing irony or humour that destabilizes power (Fleming, 2002; Knights and McCabe, 2000). The other faction believes that such micro-victories make little difference to the position of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy as dependent dominated subjects (Herman, 1996). Moreover, this collective resistance school argues that such victories do not address the structural basis of power (e.g., high degrees of wealth concentration) and seem 'strangely disengaged from the wider issues of justice, equality, democracy and rationality.' (Reed, 1996: 43). Opposed to the postmodern view on resistance, the collective resistance school argues for traditional ways of exercising power by weak groups such as collective organized struggles.

Concerning the above debate between individual versus collective struggle, the thesis posits an intriguing theoretical resolution. The answer is not *either* individual *or* collective struggle but *both and*. Effective resistance or exercise of power by marginalized groups can be both collective and individual at the same time, what we can call an *emergent collective struggle*. The small concessions won by women stitchers, in terms of bringing the monitoring stitching centres closer to their villages, were achieved by individually refusing to relocate to remote stitching locations. These individual refusals occurred simultaneously in a variety of locations. This simultaneous occurrence gave the individual acts the emergent property of a collective struggle. Women stitchers' simultaneous uncoordinated and decentralized refusals to work in remote locations, when done simultaneously, effectively reproduced a collective struggle, as if all the women had gotten together and decided to strike in unison. The strength of power through emergent collective struggle was that it did not have a coordinating centre or leaders that could be captured, coopted or neutralized to crush the struggle. Instead, precisely because no such centre could be found, the masters faced a faceless sea of resistance and eventually had to make some concessions.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned concessions by Sialkot factory owners to create all-female stitching centres located near the villages of women stitchers were largely driven not so much by emergent struggle but by pressures from their NGO partners. The latter were sensitive to women's rights and wanted to ensure that the women stitchers continued to work, even if at non-living wages. Thus, while the emergent struggle cannot be counted as being the critical factor in pushing industry concessions, it did play a significant role. Thanks to the emergent struggle the issue of women and stitching centres was brought to the centre of the NGO project agenda and kept alive long enough for concessions to be extracted from industry, which may not have happened had this issue been raised by a solitary union.

Thus, based on the foregoing, the thesis helps us see that the two opposing views of individual versus collective usage of power by disadvantaged groups are

not, as conventionally understood, dichotomous. Both can be reconciled under the theoretical notion of an emergent collective struggle. This notion, thus, is a theoretical contribution to the power debates in CMS in particular and in MOS in general.

## LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Many of the contributions of the thesis, described above, point the way to future research. Time and space have emerged as significant factors in explaining organizational and interorganizational dynamics in developing countries. Thus, future research needs to theorize more fully how space and time impact organizations and how the latter can in turn shape the former two. While space and time are found in some MOS research, both in the past and in the present (e.g., the scientific management discourse and the innovation literature dealing with industrial clusters, respectively), they are largely absent or are not the main focus in CMS (e.g., Foucauldian studies, with few exceptions such as discussions on the panopticon and the human body, do not seem to pay too much attention to time and space). Both time and space need to be considered as proper subjects of theoretical inquiry and their implications for dynamics of the perennial struggle between the privileged few and the subordinated many will need to be delineated by future researchers. It is time to explicitly inaugurate geography of power and time of power research streams in CMS. To some extent this thesis is part of that inauguration.

As stated earlier, the dimensions of power could be recast in terms of individually having their own time and space dimensions and this allowed us to perceive how time and space can cause fluctuations in the power held by these dimensions and how accessible they are to weak actors. However, much more work is needed. For example, it would be interesting to explore the question of how technology mediates the relationship between space/time and power magnitudes/accessibility in each of the four dimensions. At one point, technology

can make space quite porous, bringing in actors and ideas (e.g., knowledge about legal rights) that can help weak actors transform their situations. Alternatively, technology can also give outsiders more powerful means of interventions (e.g., cruise missiles) that can undermine the ability of the local to shape its own destiny. Technology's impact on the power dimensions, through changing their time and space elasticities, can be an exciting area for future research, giving us a fuller understanding of these dimensions.

Space and time were also explored in the thesis in relation to interorganizational domains. The thesis pointed out the existence of domains having a particular structure of space (i.e., imperial space) and time (i.e., technocratic and subsistence domain clocks). Concerning space structures of domains, future research needs to consider whether there exist other domain spaces besides imperial spaces such as, for example, democratic spaces that are accessible to excluded groups. Future research can work towards identifying or mapping the contours of these spaces and then theorizing about how they impact and in turn are impacted by organizations as well as weak and powerless groups in society. Similarly, for domain clocks, are there other types of domain clocks? What impact do they have for weak stakeholders in a domain? Can these clocks be put forward, made stationary, or even reversed? These are some of the host of questions that spring up with the notion of domain clocks that can productively occupy future researchers.

The thin and thick activism identified by the thesis is another of its contributions that has the potential to fruitfully occupy interorganizational collaboration researchers. For example, what are the mechanisms or conditions that could transform a thin activism to thick activism and vice versa? Other research questions arise from reflecting on the facets of thick and thin activism. For example, what are the mechanisms that would transmit feedback between the two facets? When would feedback be hampered? When would it be facilitated? Do we know of activism cases which have a thick activism world-view facet but their actions facet is one of thin activism? What effects would such a hybrid activism have on vulnerable groups in a domain that it is trying to assist?

Questions such as these may well intrigue future researchers of interorganizational collaborations for some time.

We can also illuminate future research directions by reflecting on the case study. The case study contains rich data to engage researchers in various disciplines of MOS. The case study poses questions for stakeholder theory and organizational legitimacy literatures that look at how organizations, particularly multinational enterprises (MNEs), manage stakeholders and legitimise themselves in various environments both at home and abroad (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975; Kostova and Zaheer, 1999; Mitchell, Agel, and Wood, 1997; and Sethi 1979). The case study brings to the fore the presence of below-subsistence income stakeholders with their own set of values peculiar to their condition (e.g., desire for a stable living wage taking precedence over removing their children from work). This finding is overlooked in these literatures. Thus, questions arise whether organization legitimacy and stakeholder theory are applicable to both subsistence and below-subsistence stakeholders or do we need a separate stakeholder/organizational legitimacy theory for each. Also, how would dynamics of legitimacy and stakeholder management processes differ when the organization is operating in an environment marked by extreme poverty as opposed to when the environment is one of relative affluence with most of the population having access to basic amenities (e.g., food, shelter, due process of law, health, and education)? For example, in contexts of extreme poverty, we may find that consultative processes with external stakeholders may not be feasible as poverty may force them not to leave work for such consultations. The extant literature (e.g., Nasi, Nasi, Phillips, and Zygliodopolous, 1997) at present ignores the role of poverty levels when examining organizational legitimacy and stakeholder management processes. These are some of the questions that can occupy stakeholder theory and organizational legitimacy researchers in the future.

Associated with the literatures on organizational legitimacy and stakeholder management is the research work being done on corporate codes of conduct (e.g., Kolk and Van Tulder, 2004; Pearson and Seyfang, 2001), some of which focuses on child labour codes of conduct (Kolk and Van Tulder, 2002)

While the latter literature has contributed insights into child labour and CSP (e.g., the immediate removal of children can push them into hazardous occupations such as prostitution; ibid), the thesis shows some gaps in it. For example, the literature seems to theorize outside of a historical context. The legacy of colonization, as documented in this thesis, shapes the way in which some local NGOs and their grassroots workers perceive and evaluate codes of conduct in developing countries. Future research in corporate codes of conduct, thus, needs to explore more finely the relationship between colonial history and how these child labour codes are evaluated by local stakeholders in the developing countries. Delineating the conditions under which MNE child labour codes would be perceived as cultural imperialism and when they would be welcomed by local stakeholders, seems to be an exciting area for future research in this field that will help us gain a deeper understanding on why and when codes of conduct may be resisted in developing countries by local stakeholders. Bringing in the historical context of colonization will also add to the literature on meaningful stakeholder consultation and engagement (e.g., Whiteman and Mamen, 2002) that has not yet adequately theorized the implications of colonial history for these activities in the developing world.

The thesis also indicates some interesting future possibilities for feminist approaches in MOS. Feminist approaches, while quite diverse, share some key assumptions, namely the recognition that social arrangements are dominated by men and these need to be resisted (Calas and Smircich, 1996). Such recognition has been applied since the 1970s to economic development and has produced a growing literature called women-in-development. That literature looks at a wide range of issues at the intersection of gender and development (e.g., unequal access of women to development resources and technology; Warren and Bourque, 1991). More recently, women-in-development literature has developed a postcolonial strand that argues that feminist approaches in MOS incorporate Western gender values on what a woman ought to be (e.g., a successful executive) at the expense of alternative formulations coming from the third world (e.g, a servant of God) (Mohanty, 1991).

The contents on women stitchers in the thesis can be explored by feminist and women-in-development scholars in MOS for their future research. The discussion on women stitchers indicated that many used traditional Muslim values (e.g., gender segregation) to push for all female stitching centres and to resist working in workplaces where there was no segregation between the genders. The women-in-development literature can look at that situation as an example of exercising female agency through Islam. This would lead to the questions of are there spaces for female empowerment in Islam and how can they be mobilized to serve the interests of Muslim women at the workplace. Finding these spaces may be of significant benefit to Muslim women workers in Muslim countries given that an effort for female improvement (e.g., higher skills training) based on Islam may be accepted by their male superiors who also subscribe to that religion and to its injunctions. This type of research can be done through a participatory action research approach (e.g., Chambers, 1997) where researchers would work with marginalized groups (e.g., low wage Muslim women workers in Muslim countries) to both research with them as well as work beside them to translate this research into action that will improve their situation.

We have attempted to identify future research directions by reflecting on the strengths of the thesis (i.e., its contents and contributions). Doing the opposite (i.e., thinking about its limitations) can also serve this purpose. Overcoming these limitations, then, would become pointers for future research effort. The thesis was conducted by a male researcher who was not fluent in the language of the women stitchers (i.e., Punjabi). It would be advisable for women researchers fluent in Punjabi to cover the terrain traversed in this thesis. It would be interesting to see whether their research conclusions would match those of the thesis or, if they would diverge, it then would be quite useful to explore why that would be the case.

The use of a single-case study is another methodological limitation is that this thesis was based on a single-case study. It would be useful to conduct other case studies that are related to the thesis' case study (e.g., interorganizational collaboration effort on removing child labour from industry). Presently, efforts are

at work to phase out child labour from Sialkot's surgical industry. It would be useful to study this effort and then compare it with the findings of this thesis to better corroborate its arguments and contentions (e.g., the importance of spatial and temporal constraints restricting weak stakeholder agency) to see whether they hold in other contexts. Where such corroborations do not occur, a rich area opens up for theoretical refinements to explain why such arguments would hold in one context but not in another.

Another limitation arises from the thesis' focus in terms of relevant literatures. This thesis was written in a management school and focused on contributing to MOS knowledge. The theoretical literature that was reviewed was, thus, one that belonged to MOS. As a result, it did not formally address a body of scholarship on women's issues in Pakistan that covers topics ranging from the extent of violence against women in that country (e.g., Amnesty International, 1999) to their potential in national politics (e.g., Ikramullah, 1998). This literature could have added richness to the thesis by, for example, supplying it with more information about the disadvantaged status of rural women workers. Such an opportunity was missed. I believe I was justified in not addressing this women's issues in Pakistan literature as the thesis was concerned with theorizing about weak actors and their communication constraints as opposed to theorizing about Pakistani rural women workers. However, future researchers can initiate, if they wish, a conversation between that literature and the thesis, using the conversation to benefit both. How the literature can benefit the thesis has already been indicated above. What about the reverse?

Though the thesis cannot claim to be the first study on Pakistani women nor can it claim that position for having studied Pakistani women workers, as there have been a few studies that have preceded it on this topic, (e.g., Parveen and Ali, 1996), it does add value to the Pakistani women's issues literature. For example, it extends the literature by providing empirical contents of a group of Pakistani women workers that have not been studied in great depth (i.e., Sialkot's women soccer ball stitchers). It also, by conceptualising the communication barriers facing weak actors, can help researchers explain the absence of voice of

Pakistani women on other social issues that they are investigating (e.g., female illiteracy). Future researchers can engage with this thesis in this manner to see how they can use it to increase current understanding on the scholarship about women's issues in Pakistan.

As a final comment on limitations, the thesis, in reconstructing the history of the case study, relied heavily on secondary sources to document the events and their interpretations unfolding outside of Pakistan, particularly in Europe and North America. Future research should preferably try and establish contact with the key players in the international arena (e.g., ILO officials in Geneva working on this project at that time) who played a part in the history of the soccer ball child labour case and obtain interview data from them. Such data would undoubtedly add richness and nuance to that part of the case history dealing with international players that has been presented in this thesis.

## LESSONS FOR PRACTICE

From the thesis, we can postulate certain, albeit tentative, insights or lessons applicable to the realm of practice. The thesis brings to the fore the fact that international business is often rooted in both the developed and developing world. The North American and European consumers wanted international business to end child labour at once while the parents and the children in Sialkot were more interested in securing living wages. Of course, this Gordian knot of cultural contradictions could be cut by paying living wages to the parent stitchers. This would afford the parents the resources to educate their children and remove them from the labour market. The latter would satisfy the developed world's demand for having child labour free production.

Ensuring the payment of a living wage from the onset of the crisis could have prevented much harm that befell the stitching families such as reductions in household incomes. We cannot re-live the past. We can, however, review what has happened and conjecture about alternative possibilities. These conjectures are

articulated not to blame the actors involved but to see what we might learn so that we might be better prepared to respond to future crises like this one.

For the three main organizational actors involved in this case (i.e., the international brands, their Sialkot suppliers, and the NGO community), the thesis tells us the importance of meeting and working closely with those at the grass roots (e.g., the stitching families). One suggestion how to do this would be to implement the three strategies (i.e., enfranchisement, solidarity, and overlapping collaboration) that powerful actors can use to resist subalternalization processes in interorganizational domains. Involvement with locals that would arise from such strategies would give such organizational actors exposure to local context so that they can devise socially responsible engagements that do not have undesirable negative consequences, such as what happened here with the construction of stitching centres that ignored the concerns and values of women stitchers.

In terms of codes of conduct and international labour standards, the lesson we can gain from the case is that international brands need to pay attention to conforming to the spirit of the international labour codes (i.e., the "good" or "end" or "values" that international standards are attempting to realize, e.g., the reduction of poverty, the improvement of education, the raising the minimum wage levels for adult, the prohibition on forced labour, etc). Exclusively focusing on conforming to the letter of the code (e.g., elimination of child labour) may lead to the violation of its spirit and the purpose for which the code or standard was created (i.e., the well-being of children). To avoid such myopia and its tragic consequences, international business would be well-advised to keep an eye on international labour standards' ultimate objectives or spirit while trying to conform to them in form. By thinking about valued outcomes and ends, international business, if it so desires, will be in a position to see when conformity to the form of the code (e.g., zero child labour presence at the workplace) is leading to the violation of its ultimate objective (e.g., well-being of the children) so that it can take necessary measures to ensure that its socially responsible behaviour is able to realize the valued ends for which it is enacted.

As for the international human rights groups as well as concerned citizens in both the developing and developed worlds who wish to check the abuse of human dignity in the pursuit of commerce, what this thesis has depicted so strikingly is activism that is poorly conceived and implemented (i.e., thin activism) can be worse than no activism at all. We also see how space and time conspired to help produce injurious activism. Being located in space quite distant from the Sialkot villages, the activists were ignorant of the complex social fabric in which they would be intervening and the complications that would arise from such interventions (e.g., women refusing to work outside of home). Their rush for quick results helped produce a technocratic clock that was not synchronised with the nature of changes that were being brought upon the stitching families. These changes required generous and flexible allowances of time, not iron-clad, bureaucratic, rigid 18 month train timetable like schedules (e.g., it took centuries, not months, for women in Europe to work with respect outside their homes). The changes that subsequently followed from such activism, thus, ended up hurting the ones the activists wished to help. Prior to the activism on child labour, the families suffered from stagnant and exploitative wages. The activism that ensued, ignorant of the local context and geared at just abolishing child labour, resulted in a drop in household incomes. If society is to expect international business to act responsibly for development, understood in the widest possible sense of the word, then it does not help to have sensationalist activism that gets its facts wrong as was the case here. One should act on one's decent impulses. However, that practice of solidarity needs to be tempered with judiciousness, a quality that one can move towards attaining by incorporating thick activism's dimensions, so that when activism intervenes with courage and intelligence, it do so in a manner that restores dignity to those who are in want of it rather than worsens their plight through interventions poorly conceived and rashly executed. The activist community, like the corporate community, has to pay heed to the local context.

Incorporating local content into initiatives geared at making business more responsible, whether they originate from outside or within the business community, may, however, be quite challenging. Such initiatives these days are

negotiated far away from the local sites in international arenas involving multiple transnational actors, ranging from international business to human rights groups. This intensely transnational nature of present day corporate social responsibility initiatives has the danger, as sadly realized in this case, of being removed from and, hence, marginalizing the local. Key decisions, in our soccer ball child labour case, were made in Geneva, Zurich, London, Atlanta, and Munich, to name a few of the cities where the blueprint of the project was articulated. The agreement that ushered in the project was called the 'Atlanta' Agreement, not the Sialkot Agreement, even though the agreement was primarily about Sialkot's poor soccer ball stitchers. Imagine how odd it would look if an equally intrusive project that would disrupt something so private as the household division of labour in a major North American or European city was called the 'Sialkot Agreement' where all the key decisions were made by individuals neither from Europe nor North America. At no time during the project's conception and implementation were the stitchers consulted in any substantive way. They needed a latrine, steady work, and a good pay. Moreover, as for women stitchers, they had household responsibilities and were opposed to working in desegregated environments where they would have had to interact with men not related to them. They, thus, wanted to work in the comfort and privacy of their homes. All of these demands were effectively ignored by the self-appointed project social engineers who performed a vivisection on the stitching community under the pressure of Western consumer sentiments. Both Western consumer activism and the corporate response to it should be aware of the contingencies and context of the local site where such action is to unfold if dire unintended consequences are to be avoided. One size does not fit all, as we have seen here, and, thus, actions have to incorporate the contextual exigencies and the particularistic needs of the local communities if such actions are to produce beneficial outcomes for the latter. With the absence of local context content in decision making, what other results could one expect to befall the stitchers, particularly children and women. If anything, the project made the prospects of sustainable livelihood even more precarious for the poor women. Thus, instead of furthering their development, it

did just the opposite. In this eventuality, stitchers might appreciate the following thought of Thoreau given their experience: 'If I knew someone was coming over with the expressed intention of doing good, I would flee.' (cited in Fisher, 1997: 439).

In conclusion, the early sensationalist and flawed media reporting in the Western press seemed to have simply grafted the worst Dickensian child labour nightmares depicted in say *Oliver Twist*, held in their late industrial civilization's collective conscious, on to Sialkot. Though the child labour situation was grim in Sialkot, it was no Oliver Twist. In a strange twist, however, the chain of events unleashed by that reporting brought about changes in Sialkot that made another novel and character of Charles Dickens somewhat relevant. Effectively, the whole episode of soccer ball child labour, with its slew of actors from Pulitzer Prize winners to local NGO activists, ended up constructing a project that resurrected Gradgrind of *Hard Times* in his most impenitent form. That Gradgrind would be resurrected, all thumbs but with no fingers, as seen by the imprecise interventions implemented which benefited only a few of the affected stitching families, largely by the so-called grass roots NGOs, is an irony worth noting. Like Gradgrind, it is simultaneously rich as well as cruel. After all, for the child stitchers and their mothers who, as a result of the interventions, were denied work and saw their household incomes plummet with very little done to mitigate that plunge, they would be hard placed to read anything other than 'Hard Times' into this irony.

## A BRIEF EPILOGUE: PERSONAL INSIGHTS

It is going to be almost one year since the death of Edward Said. While Said is no more, his scholarship remains and in this thesis I have striven to emulate its moral integrity. I tried to create space in the thesis for the voices and concerns of the other (i.e., the poor and powerless indigenous inhabitants of the developing world). I hope the space created adequately reflects their pain as well as their dignity. To the extent that it does, to that extent the thesis can be seen as part of an effort to re-humanise the other for what they are: moral sentient beings, and not just 'targets', 'cases' or some other objectified expression that allows us to treat 'them' with ethical indifference. Said's works can be read as part of this rehumanization struggle whose aim has been to remove this 'us' and 'them' distinction, so that we can more clearly discern our common humanity and more easily act on our decent impulses. I have through this thesis aimed to aid that struggle. The thesis' sheer presence is perhaps a testimony that effort to that end has been made. How well that effort has been made will, of course, be for others to judge.

Reflecting on Said and his literary genius leads me to the classics and to the following phrase: 'Timeo danos et dona ferentes'. The phrase translates as 'Beware of the Greeks bearing gifts'. These words are found in Virgil's *Aeneid*, uttered by a Trojan priest wary of a huge wooden horse that has appeared outside his city's walls. The phrase may have been uttered in the specific context of that epic Greco-Trojan struggle, but its meanings, like that struggle, are universal. Virgil, through the mouth of a Trojan priest, wishes to convey to posterity that one should be wary of what promises to hold deliverance, especially when robed in utopian language. Said also had a term for such illusory promises or beliefs. He called them the 'gods that fail'. Through my thesis, I have come to realize the importance of this term. Simplistic notions of eliminating child labour in the soccer ball industry were gods that failed miserably for the child labourers and their families, pushing them further into jeopardy. One should, thus, be on the

lookout for gods that fail and help oneself and others avoid the fate of becoming their victims. This is an onerous task, requiring acute vigilance, for the gods that fail are numerous and populate a vast canvas, stretching from collaborative projects to imperialism and its utopian promises which are expressing themselves most vividly today in the form of current US military adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan. 'Nation building' in Iraq and Afghanistan is simply the current mutated form of imperialism's previous apologetic and past-failed god: 'the white man's burden'.

It is interesting to observe how discussions on Said inevitably make us trespass into imperialism's ugly terrain. This should not surprise us given that much of Said's writings have been centred on combating this phenomenon. In this sense, Said is a member of that distinguished company of American intellectuals both living (e.g., Noam Chomsky) and dead (e.g., Mark Twain) who have, through their pens and their humanity, waged a magnificent campaign against aggression in solidarity with the other. From their writings can be gleaned a motif of imperialism that I find reverberates in my thesis. The motif is that numbers without context make for impoverished and false story tellers.

Take the Vietnam War. The body counts of ordinary Vietnamese citizens resisting inordinate imperial US power may have shown the story of US victory. The real story was, however, quite different. Similarly, economists focusing purely on quantitative measures such as stitching wages may have smiled that the lot of women stitchers has improved because they are now receiving higher wages at the stitching centre. It would be quite inconceivable for such economists to fathom that this slight improvement in wages, which apparently made women stitchers 'better off', could be experienced by them as a catastrophe. Recall the taunts and the sexual harassments they suffered by working at the stitching centres. The thesis reinforces Thompson's (1968) prescient observation that per capita increases in such ostensibly positive quantitative factors (e.g., stitching rates) can take place at the same time as qualitative disturbances in people's way of life, traditional relationships, and sanctions. In his words, 'it is quite possible for statistical averages and human experiences to run in opposite directions.'

(1968: 211). Stitching rates, in relation to the pre-crisis wage levels, showed an upward curve. To the families concerned, however, this felt like immiseration. Furthermore, what this case study so evocatively portrays to me, as Thompson's own work depicted to him, is that measures that quantify the standards of life (e.g., rise in calorie consumption) tell us absolutely little about how that life is lived and experienced (e.g., whether as free, autonomous individuals or as well-fed slaves) and much confusion is created when evidence from one is used to draw conclusions about the other.

To end the epilogue and this Ph.D. journey with it, I would like to mention three rules that I came across during my doctoral studies. These rules have served me well in the quest for honest inquiry. I have no doubt that they will perform the same service for others. These rules or aphorisms are taken from Islamic scholarship, though, as is the case with all civilizational achievements, they are like our humanity, indivisible. They are not restricted in terms of benefits and use to just one tribe. They are:

1. Always be open to knowledge: 'Knowledge is the lost property of a believer. He takes it from wherever he finds it [whether it be in or outside of his community].' (Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, cited in Tirmidhi, 1983: 2611).

2. Always verify: 'O ye who believe! If a wicked person brings you tidings, verify it, lest ye smite some folk in ignorance and afterward repent of what ye did.' (The Noble Quran, chapter 49, verse 6).

3. Always avoid seduction by arguments that appeal solely to authority: 'This is the practice of those dim-witted men who know the truth by men and not men by the truth. The intelligent man, on the contrary follows the advice of the Master of the Intelligent, 'Ali-God be pleased with him-where he says: 'Do not know the truth by men, but rather, know the truth and you will know its adherents.' (Al-Ghazali, 1980 [1115-1116]: 78).

# GLOSSARY

*beradarie*: tribe
*bhan lagana*: stitching the last six panels of a soccer, the most intricate and difficult part of the stitching process
*bibi*: dear/respected lady
*charas*: contraband substances, usually hash or opium
*chadar[s][plural]*: long blanket[s]/shawl[s]
*chaudry*: village headman, usually one having the largest land-holding in a village
*charpai*: a bed with wooden legs with tightly criss-crossed ropes/cotton straps serving for a mattress
*dabi*: small box
*dakoo*: dacoit; highway robber
*desi*: Literally means local/of the homeland. Used in the soccer ball context to refer to a Grade B ball used in general retail and for promotional purposes.
*District Nazim*: District Mayor
*do number admi*: a man of shady origins, not genuine, a fake, and a fraud
*drama bazi*: activity that is all theatrics, lacking any real substance; a fraudulent act
*faida*: material advantage/benefit
*gora[y] [plural]*: White man [folk], usually used when referring to white Europeans/North Americans
*gora sahib[s] [plural]*: white sir[s]
*gunda[s][plural]*: Thug[s]
*haram*: illegitimate, prohibited, immoral
*hijab:* women's clothing that covers a woman's entire head with the exception of the face
*hooka*: a large tobacco water container containing a nozzle through which the water is drunk
*kagazi karwai*: paper work where things reported in the paper are not found on the ground.
*jutt*: illiterate
*jaat*: a Punjabi tribe
*kashf: epiphany; mystical/religious experience where correct understanding of reality is attained*
*lakh*: one hundred thousand
*lahori*: from Lahore. Used in the soccer ball context to refer to a lower end Grade A ball used in club matches, amateur clubs, and general retail
*madaris*: religious schools
*majboori*: necessity; compulsion
*mard*: male
*matric*: Grade 10
*masjid*: mosque
*maulvi sahib*: religious teacher
*mawali*: a person who is totally heedless of social conventions and proprieties
*mazadaar kisaa*: delicious story; entertaining tale

*mazdoor*: worker
*middle*: Grade 8
*mistri*: artisan
*munda[y] [plural]*: young lad[s]
*niqab:* women's clothing that covers a woman's entire head including her face
*peshki:* loan advance given by a subcontractor to a stitcher before the latter begins to work for him
*qibla:* Mecca; a centre of devotion to which Muslims face for their five daily prayers
*rozi halal*: legitimate livelihood
*sahib*: respected sir
*seth logh*: factory owners/affluent businessmen
*seth*: Rich man usually used to denote a successful businessman
*shaur*: consciousness, awareness, value and any other words carrying similar such meanings
*taraki idarah*: development organization
*takhti*: slate board
*tonga-walla[s] [plural]:* the poor who transport goods and people on horse carriages
*teez*: clever; sharp
*valati*: Literally means foreign/English. Used in the soccer ball context to refer to a high end grade A ball used in professional and club matches.
*zamanat*: loan guarantorship where a person gives a guarantee [*zamanat*] for someone else

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Adidas Corporate Annual Report
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Sudhaar NFE Database
World Development Indicators Database

**Legal Archives**

Spanish Legal Archives (Spain)

**Interview Notes (compiled by author)**

Pilot Study Transcripts (December 2000–January 2001)
Rough Notebooks I and II (September 2003–October 2003). Three interviews found in Rough Notebook I (216-222; 303-306; and 327-329), were not re-transcribed into the interview notebooks because these were already complete and legible.
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# APPENDIX A: MAP OF PAKISTAN & SIALKOT




**Source:** http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/nike/pakistan.html (Retrieved on October 21, 2003)

# Appendix B: Break-Down of Interview Respondents

**Passive Respondent Definition:** Those to whom an informed consent procedure was administered either in writing or orally but who did not directly provide information to the researcher (e.g., people in a group who were nodding their heads while group member(s) spoke to the interviewer).

**Active Respondent Definition:** All respondents to whom an informed consent procedure was administered either in writing or orally and who directly provided information to the researcher.

**MAIN STUDY (February-April, July-October 2003)**

| | Total | NGO | Stitchers | | Miscellaneous |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | **Active** | **Passive** | |
| **Male** | 49 | 24 | 10 | 4 | 11 |
| **Female** | 61 | 7 | 21 | 29 | 4 |
| **Total** | 110 | 31 | 31 | 33 | 15 |

**Notes:** Interviews conducted in Sialkot city and in the following villages/areas of Sialkot district: Chak Qazi, Dhanewali, Head Miralla, Kitara, Lado Pind, Moutra, Nanowali, Rumala Chak, Sambrial, and Ugoki. NGO and Miscellaneous respondents were all active respondents. Miscellaneous category consisted of the following:
4 Factory Owners/Business Executives (Male); 3 Teachers (Female); 1 General Manager Stitching Centre (Male); 1 Quality Control Manager Stitching Centre (Male); 1 Quality Control Manager (Male); 4 Subcontractors (Male); and 1 elderly wife of a soccer ball magnate. She provided me with valuable insider-information to assess the public posturing of the soccer ball industry concerning the child labour issue. The respondents are classified based on their current occupation at the time of the interview even though several had served in other occupations as well (e.g., a current NGO employee being an ex-stitcher).

**PILOT STUDY (December 2000–January 2001)**

| | Total | NGO | Stitchers | Miscellaneous |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | |
| **Male** | 13 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| **Female** | 2 | 1 | 1 | - |
| **Total** | 15 | 5 | 3 | 7 |

**Notes:** Interviews conducted in Sialkot city and in Ghadaray village located in Sialkot district. Miscellaneous consisted of 4 Factory owners, 1 Manager, and 2 lower level office workers. All interviewees were active respondents. The respondents have been classified here on the same classification scheme used for the main study (see above).

# APPENDIX D: TOPIC CATEGORIES THEMATICALLY ORGANIZED

**Theme A: Stitchers (8 categories)**

1. Communication Constraints

2. Unions

3. Subcontractor

4. Wages

5. Organizational Mandate

6. *Beradarie* (tribe).

7. *Peshki* (Advances to stitchers)

8. Participation (stitchers involvement in project decision making)

**Theme B.: Corporate Social Responsibility (4 categories)**

1. Evaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility

2. Women Factory vs home issue

3. Health consequences of stitching

4. Feudal Understanding

**Theme C: Text Production (2 Categories)**

1. Texts/Language

2. Reports [accuracy, etc.]

**Theme D: NGOs (5 categories)**

1. NGO culture in Pakistan (general)

2. Corruption

3. Donor/NGO relations

4. NGO/NGO relations

# APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

5. NGO/Stitcher relations

**Theme E: Project Evaluation (2 categories)**

1. Overall Project Evaluation

2. Thoughts on Education

**Miscellaneous (Not fitting into any category) (1 category)**

1. Miscellaneous (e.g., Military intelligence organizing elections).

**Summary:**

Total Themes = 5

Total Topic Categories (including miscellaneous) = 22

# APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW CODING (WORKSHEET EXTRACT)

| Interview | Comm Constraint | Union | subcontractor | wages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Considered despicable work II37<br>Credit given for them to escape.Use this credit to open khokha, video store. We do not have resources to cover everyman. II37<br>You need awareness<br>Need a big gathering. Awareness slow<br>Even among Educated class. Know peo ple with masters [degree] who do not know their own basic rights II39 | stitcher struggle has to be organized.<br>Labour union not there<br>They [stitchers]are not united<br>Lots of stitchers. There is overcompet ition. Do not stitch take work elsewhere.<br>Kids can stitch so can females II38<br>These things are related to human rights.<br>In a country where supreme courts suspended. Courts against Musharraf cannot do anything how can you expect people to struggle and with the beliefs and their rights will be respected II39 | | wage problems not getting paid on time II34<br>Problems stitchers facing is work not certain. Wages are not certain. Not know when they are getting paid.<br>Much work done outside stitching centre by subcontractors. Delay payment of wages. Use Rs.60,000 and make money on it.<br>A business city like sialkot in one day, you can make much II36<br>Give low price to pind. Work driven by needs of stitchers. Because of this exploited. II35-36<br>Stitcher has no other option but to work.II37 |
| 21 | | | | Journalists themselves suffer fromwage issue<br>They are being squeezed. In the hands of owners they are. II38 |

## APPENDIX F: ANNUAL AVERAGE EXCHANGE RATES: PAKISTANI RUPEE TO US DOLLAR (1980 – 2003)

| Year | Pakistani Rupees per 1 US Dollar |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 9.90 |
| 1981 | 9.90 |
| 1982 | 11.89 |
| 1983 | 13.11 |
| 1984 | 14.05 |
| 1985 | 15.93 |
| 1986 | 16.65 |
| 1987 | 17.40 |
| 1988 | 18.00 |
| 1989 | 20.54 |
| 1990 | 21.71 |
| 1991 | 23.80 |
| 1992 | 25.08 |
| 1993 | 28.11 |
| 1994 | 30.57 |
| 1995 | 31.64 |
| 1996 | 36.07 |
| 1997 | 41.11 |
| 1998 | 45.05 |
| 1999 | 49.50 |
| 2000 | 53.65 |
| 2001 | 61.93 |
| 2002 | 59.72 |
| 2003 | 59.89 |

**Source:** World Development Indicators Database

# APPENDIX G: EVALUATING ACCURACY OF MEDIA REPORTING

| News source | Number of Child Labourers | Wage rate | Ages | Where | Hours worked | Working conditions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. CBS story April 6, 1995 | 25,000 (25% of stitchers). Cites the figure from an unnamed respected Pakistani child rights group.<br><br>Says that UN estimates 8-10 million child labourers in Pakistan. | 75 cents per ball; 2-3 balls a day.<br><br>Asserts children cheaper than adults. | 6 to 12. | Said villages but interviewed in workshops. | Not mentioned<br><br>Mentions children work 9-10 hours/day in surgical industry. | No electricity; no water |
| 2. Herald Sun (Melbourne - Sydney, Australia) April 7, 1995 | 25,000 (source CBS).<br><br>Says that HRCP estimates at least 6 million child labourers in Pakistan. | Not mentioned | At least 6. Also said children as young as 4 chained to looms making carpets. | Stated they work in workshops. [Quoted CBS story but the latter never made this claim]. | Not mentioned. Mentions children work in surgical industry for 9-10 hours. | Not mentioned. |
| 3.Daily News (NY) April 7, 1995 | Identical to 2. See above | Identical to 2. See above | Identical to 2. See above | Identical to 2. See above | not mentioned | not mentioned |
| 4. Sunday Times (UK) May 14, 1995 | Quotes an ILO figure of 20 million bonded labourers in Pakistan of which 8 million are children. No figures given for child stitchers. | 10 pence an hour. | 6 | Workshops [contradiction in reporting: Mentions workshops but interviewees quoted in the article talk mostly about home based stitching]. | Long hours. | Bonded labourers. Described the bondage as a modern form of slave labour. Also used the term 'child slavery'. |

# APPENDIX G (CONTINUED)

| News source | Number of Child Labourers | Wage rate | Ages | Where | Hours worked | Working conditions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. The Independent April 28, 1996 | Says that scores of children. working in sports good factory. Quotes an HRCP figure of 11-12 million child labourers in Pakistan. | $1.20 a day. | 5 to 10 | Factory | 80 hours a week. | i) Near total darkness.<br>ii) Total silence.<br>iii) Punishment rooms. Standard feature of Pakistani factory<br>iv) Children are hung upside down by their knees.<br>v) Starved.<br>vi) Caned.<br>vii) Lashed.<br>Punishment room standard feature of Pakistani factory. |
| 6. Schanberg Life Magazine June 1996 | Quotes HRCP figure that there are 11 million child labourers in Pakistan. Says they work 6 days a week, 9-10 hours a day. | 6 cents an hour. Get paid 60 cents a ball and takes a whole day to make one. Asserts that children do not cost as much as adults. | 3 year old child stitcher in India; Photo of child stitcher Sialkot age 12. | Workshop<br><br>Also mentions something called village factory. | Says that child labourers work 9-10 hours. Implies but does not explicitly state the child stitchers in Sialkot are no exception to this 9-10 hours regiment. | Talks about peshki as a form of bonded labour.<br><br>Asserts that children taken in outright slavery.<br><br>Mentions workshop as having dank interior for air. |
| **Contrast all of the above with the HRCP Report** | | | | | | |
| HRCP 1995 | Did not give a number. But said between 20-25% of stitching workforce comprises children. | Did not give figure. Found no evidence that child labour being used because of cheaper rates to children. | 6-7. Children 12+ found in workshops. | Major portion carried out in homes in surrounding villages. | Only at workshops worked 8-10 hours. At home worked most of the day but had flexibile work hours. | Workshops dreary unlike home<br><br>No evidence of bonded labour available. Peshki viewed as a cash advance that can be paid back. Not observed nor told of physical abuse of child workers. |

# APPENDIX H: STITCHER QUOTES (THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF GROUPING BY TOPICS)

**On Corporate Codes of Conduct**

- Never bothered to read signs [code of conduct]. Do not know what they mean. Never bothered to get them [codes] to [be] read [to us]—male stitcher (Interview Notebook II, 2003: 209).

**On Work-related Health Concerns**

- Pain in ribs [and] back pain [from stitching], fingers [get] deformed, hardened.—male stitcher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 1).

- Our shoulders are in pain. We do not get anything to eat and drink [in the stitching centre]. No latrine installed for us. Difficult to straighten knees. At night it is hard to sleep.—woman stitcher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 22).

- Deshaped fingers. But have to work. Knees become weak.—woman stitcher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 46).

**On Convenience of Home-Based Stitching**

- Not like to go to work in centres. There is time spent in commutting. [Unable to] take care of children—woman stitcher (Interview Notebook III, 2003: 35).

- Husbands not allow us to go to factory. Also who will take care of children. Just have these restrictions. What is wrong with women earning with respect at home instead of going outside & getting pushed and shoved.—woman stitcher (Rough Interview Notebook I, 2003: 299)