

DEDICATION

For Maria

**Your patience, tolerance and understanding are immeasurable.
Mere words could never convey the depth of my gratitude and love.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To paraphrase the Grateful Dead, what a long and strange trip it has been! My quest for a Ph.D. in Sociology began over thirteen years ago when I entered the doctoral program at Virginia Tech in 1987. Research and writing on this dissertation began in 1990, and continued at various levels of intensity throughout the decade. While I alone bear sole responsibility for the length (and any accompanying strangeness) of this intellectual journey, there are many, many people who aided and supported me throughout the years.

I would first like to thank my dissertation committee members: Toni Calasanti, Jack Dudley, Tim Luke, Rachel Parker-Gwin, Mark Wardell and Dale Wimberley. All have made significant contributions, to the present project in particular, and to my intellectual development more generally. I would also like to offer special thanks to my committee chair, Toni Calasanti, and to my mentor, Mark Wardell. At a scholarly level, they each held me to the same exemplary academic standards that they exhibit in their own research. At a personal level, each demonstrated unfathomable patience and understanding as they waited for this research to come to fruition.

There are a wide number of friends and colleagues I would like to thank as well. Before I name names or places, however, let me state that it would be virtually impossible for me to individually identify everyone to whom I have become indebted over the past decade or so. So let me first give a broad and universal "thank you" to all the friends and colleagues, wherever you may now be, who have encouraged and supported me throughout the years. You know who you are, and if you truly know me,

you know that I am deeply grateful and have greatly appreciated any kind words, simple friendship, constructive criticism and/or intellectual stimulation that you may have provided.

I would like to express particular gratitude to various graduate students and faculty in Virginia Tech's Department of Sociology that helped and motivated me over the years. The same sentiment applies to colleagues in Roanoke College's Department of Sociology, as well as friends at Virginia Tech's Newman Library and Art & Architecture Library. Not only did these places employ me, but the people there made the entire journey a much more bearable and enjoyable one. Finally, my friends Kenneth and Lisa Muir deserve special mention. Not only were Ken and Li there at the beginning in 1987, they have supported me throughout this long and strange trip. They are truly special friends that have helped to make it all worth while.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank the many members of my immediate and extended family. Throughout this lengthy process, family members have provided unwavering and unconditional support (whether emotional, material, or spiritual). Most importantly, immeasurable thanks to Maria, my spouse and partner, who graciously endured many hardships and frustrations as I (sometimes selfishly) pursued what has been a lifelong dream. I promise to make it up to you, some how, some way, some day. Also, many thanks to Bradley (age 11) and Jessie (7). Throughout their entire lives, their father has been working on a dissertation. Given their ages, they showed remarkable maturity and understanding when I was too busy or too grumpy to play. I promise I will play more now, especially when it comes to wrestling and video games. Finally, special thanks to the following family members for being there in many ways and at many times over the years: Bradley Nash,

Sr. and Janice Nash (my parents), Michelle Nash (my sister), Ellinor Joseph (mom-in-law), William Joseph (brother-in-law and comrade-in-arms), and David, Lauren, Drew and Corey Anlauf (family-in-law). To all these family members (and countless unnamed others), I promise to visit more often, attend more family functions, and to not always have my face buried in sociology books and research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vii
Chapter One: The Decline of Organized Labor in the 1980s	1
Chapter Two: Theorizing State Agency and the Law	43
Chapter Three: Methodological Issues	101
Chapter Four: Collective Labor Law under the Thatcher and Reagan Administration	128
Chapter Five: Strikes and the Thatcher Labor Law Project-- Three Case Studies	186
Chapter Six: Strikes and the Reagan Labor Law Project-- Three Case Studies	278
Chapter Seven: The Thatcher and Reagan Labor Law Projects in Comparative Perspective	358
Chapter Eight: Unions, Law, and the State in the Twenty-First Century	379
References	410
Vita	437