

Struggles along Supply Chains

Rail & Cross-Sectoral Solidarity

RWU CONVENTION
June 17, 2022

Supply Chain Study/Research Group



“Tell no lies, claim no easy victories

Always bear in mind that the people *are* not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children”

—Amílcar Cabral



Richmond Rail Safety Conference

March 14, 2015

Attendees:

➤ 125 in total

- **25 railroaders** (active & retired) from four major Class I carriers & Amtrak, who came from:
 - California
 - Georgia
 - Illinois
 - Iowa
 - Kentucky
 - Nebraska
 - Nevada
 - New York
 - Utah
 - Washington
 - Washington DC
- **9 refinery workers on strike** (at that time), who came from Tesoro in:
 - Martinez, (northern) California
 - Carson, (southern) California
- ILWU longshore & IBU-ILWU maritime workers from:
 - San Francisco Bay Area
 - Seattle
- **First Nations tar sands extraction worker from Alberta**
- electricians
- **first-responders**
- a power plant worker
- workers from various other trades

Striking USW workers from Tesoro Refinery in Carson, CA
(having driven 400 miles to the conference)





THE FUTURE OF RAILROADS:
BUILDING A LABOR/COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE AROUND RAIL SAFETY

LABOR-COMMUNITY
ENVIRONMENT
ALLIANCE - RAIL SAFETY



Richmond Rail Safety Conference

March 14, 2015

Endorsers:

- Aboriginal Alliance of Northern Alberta
- Asian Pacific Environmental Network
- Backbone Campaign
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Climate Solutions
- Communities for a Better Environment - Richmond, CA Chapter
- Evergreen Islands
- Forest Ethics
- Friends of Grays Harbor
- Greenpeace USA
- IWW – Bay Area, Bellingham & Kentucky
- SMART-TD Union Pacific Local #31 - Watsonville, CA / #239 – Oakland, CA
- ILWU – Puget Sound District Council / Local #4 – Vancouver, WA
- NARVRE – Unit #61
- Power Past Coal
- Pride & A Paycheck
- Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition
- Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA)
- Sierra Club — Bay Area Chapter
- Sunflower Alliance
- System Change – Not Climate Change
- The Lands Council
- Transport Workers Solidarity Committee
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
- Workers Solidarity Alliance
- 350 Sacramento
- 350 Seattle



Energy Supply Chain

downstream



upstream



Legend:



workers/worksites



commodity flows

We all exist along global supply chains.

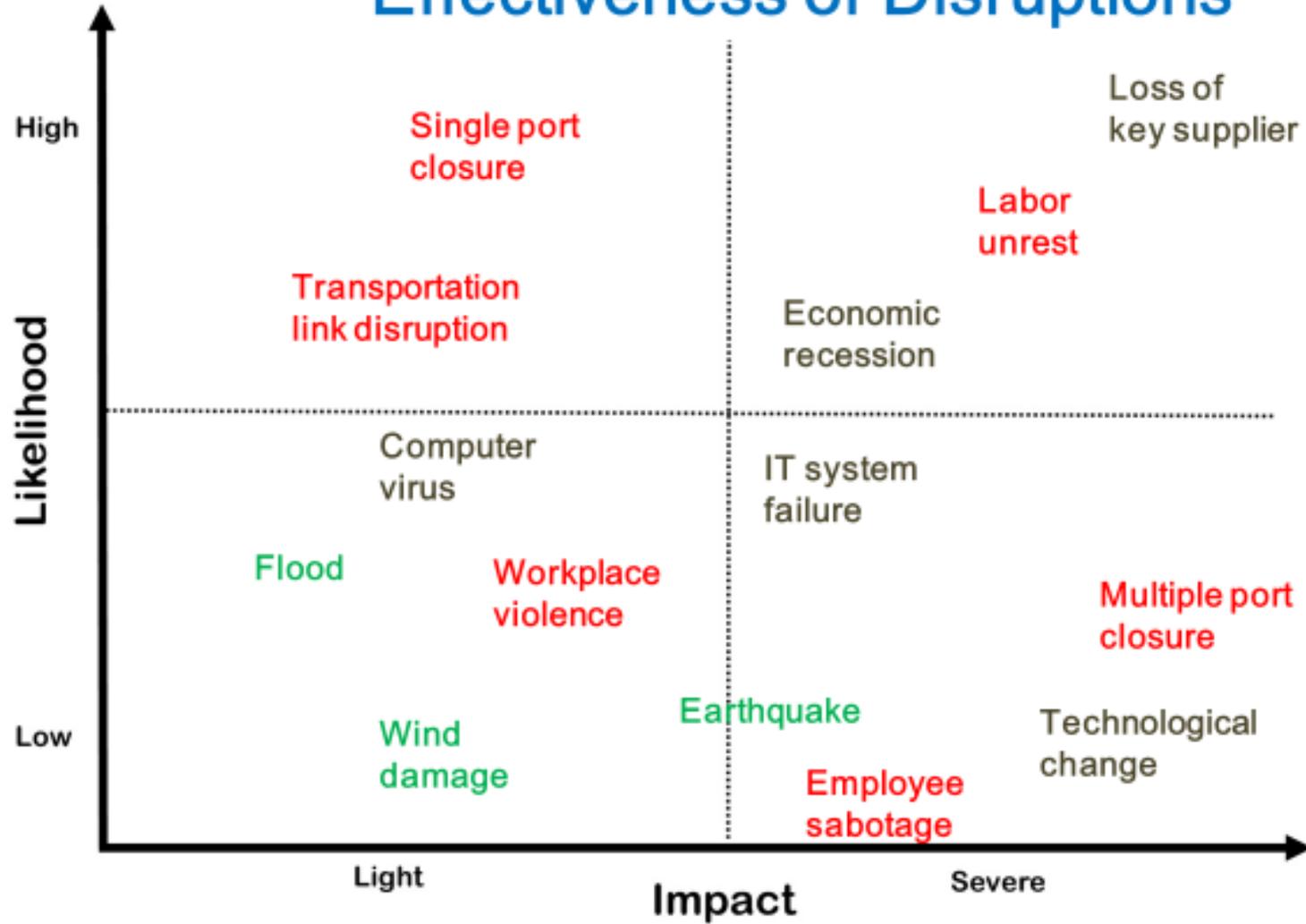
Where are you?

Sources of Workers' Power

(from Silver's use of Erik Olin Wright's definition)

- ***Associational power***: formation of collective organization of workers
- ***Structural power***: power accrues from location in economic system:
 1. ***Marketplace bargaining power***: from tight labor markets
 2. ***Workplace bargaining power***: from strategic location of industrial sector, e.g. ILWU/ILA on docks

Effectiveness of Disruptions



Based on Yossi Sheffi's
*The Power of Resilience:
How the Best Companies
Manage the Unexpected*



Members of the Cargo Truckers Solidarity union gathering in front of an inland containers depot in Uiwang, South Korea, June 13, 2022



안전은 임
일몰되면
지옥으로
가는거다.

WAN HAI
WHSU 606699 5 4661
CAUTION 9'6" HIGH
M.G.W. 77000 KG
TARE NET CUL.CAP. 22500 KG

RAEX450
536

POLICE
5524



Cargo Truckers Solidarity (CTS) Union Strike in South Korea

- June 7, 2022, CTS, part of KCTU, went on 8-day strike over extending “Safe Trucking Freight Rates System,” introduced in 2020 for 3-years to prevent dangerous-driving practices, cargo overload, and guaranteeing minimum rates
 - e.g., ₩350,000 min. (\$270) for 150-mile roundtrip between Samsung display panel plant in Asan to Incheon (formerly paid ₩290,000)
 - Diesel fuel up 46% in May 2022 year-to-year
- After 8 days, strike ended with management conceding to extend the rate system indefinitely



Kia Motor cars stranded by strike of auto haulers, pictured at their factory in Gwangju, South Korea, June 13, 2022

CTS Strike Effectiveness

- Inbound & outbound volumes at Busan, world's 7th-busiest port, reduced to half of normal
- Container volume at all 12 ports in Korea down 53%
- Auto production at Hyundai & Kia down by half, shutting some assembly lines
- CTS picket lines at selective petrochemical plants cause 90% reduction in production
- Test of labor strength against new president, Yoon Suk-Yeol who's pro-business, anti-union
 - 100 military vehicles move goods to weaken strike
- Costs Korean industry \$1.2 billion in lost production

Supply Chain Class Composition

Maritime

- 86,300 maritime transportation workers

Dockside

- 79,200 longshore workers

Trucking

- 75,000 port truckers (*troqueros*)

Railroad

- 105,000 railroad workers

Trucking

- 1,871,700 freight truckers (over-the-road)

Warehouse/
DC

- 830,700 warehouse & DC workers

Trucking

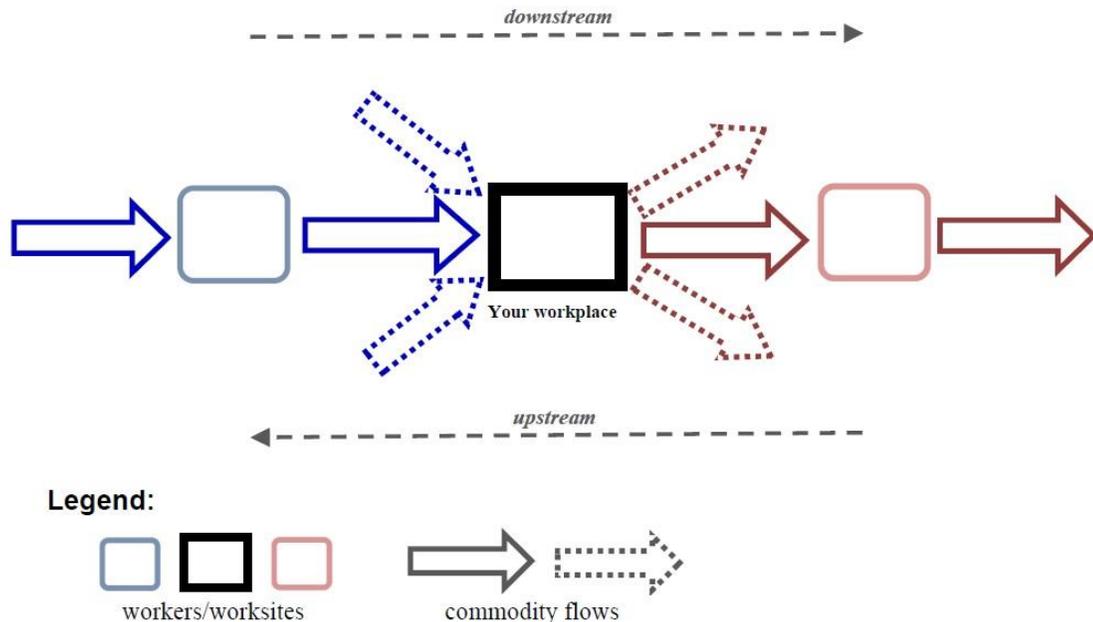
- 877,670 express package delivery drivers

Logistics

- 148,700 logistics planners

Maritime

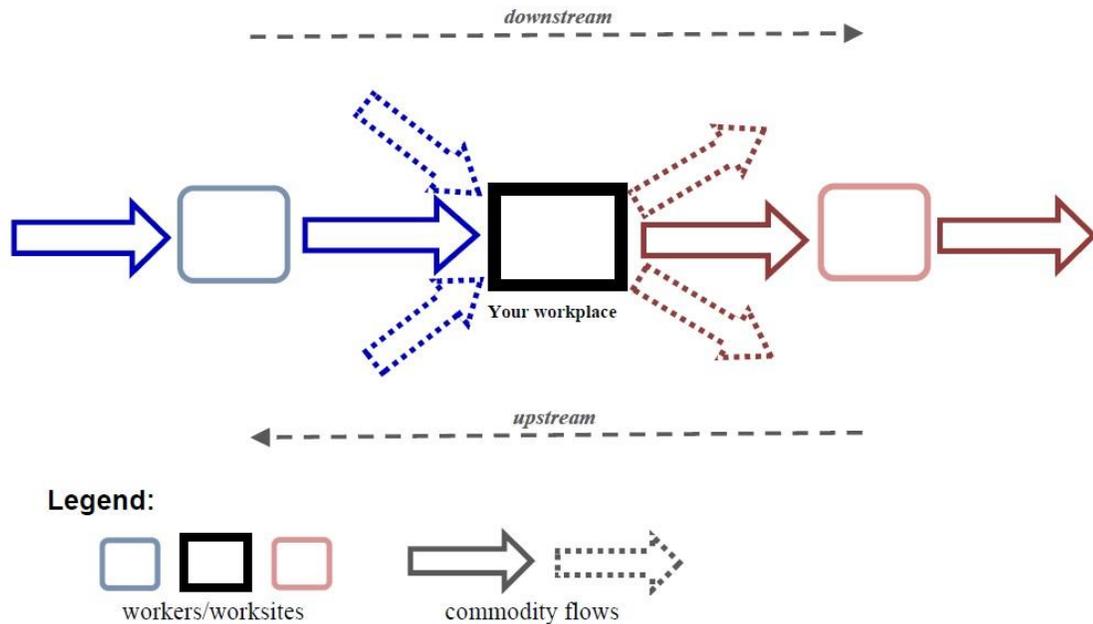
Choke Point Strike Flowchart



1. What sectors are upstream/downstream?
2. What kind of “workers’ power” is there? (e.g., associational or structural power)
3. What cross-sectoral solidarity actions are possible? (upstream or downstream)
4. If you work in this sector, what are your experiences of struggle & solidarity actions?

Dockside

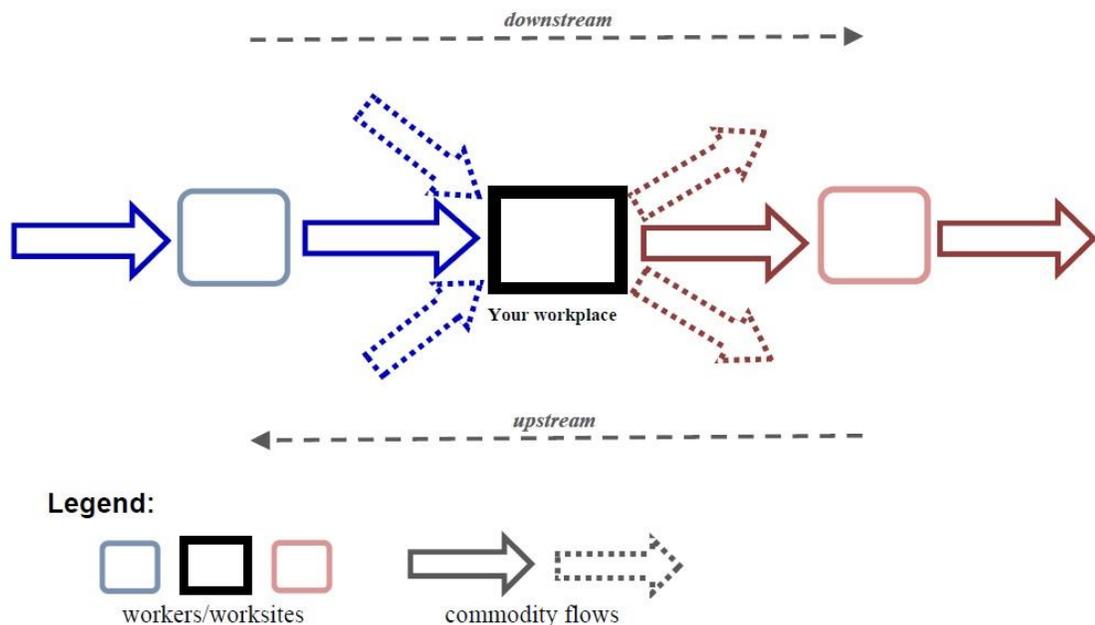
Choke Point Strike Flowchart



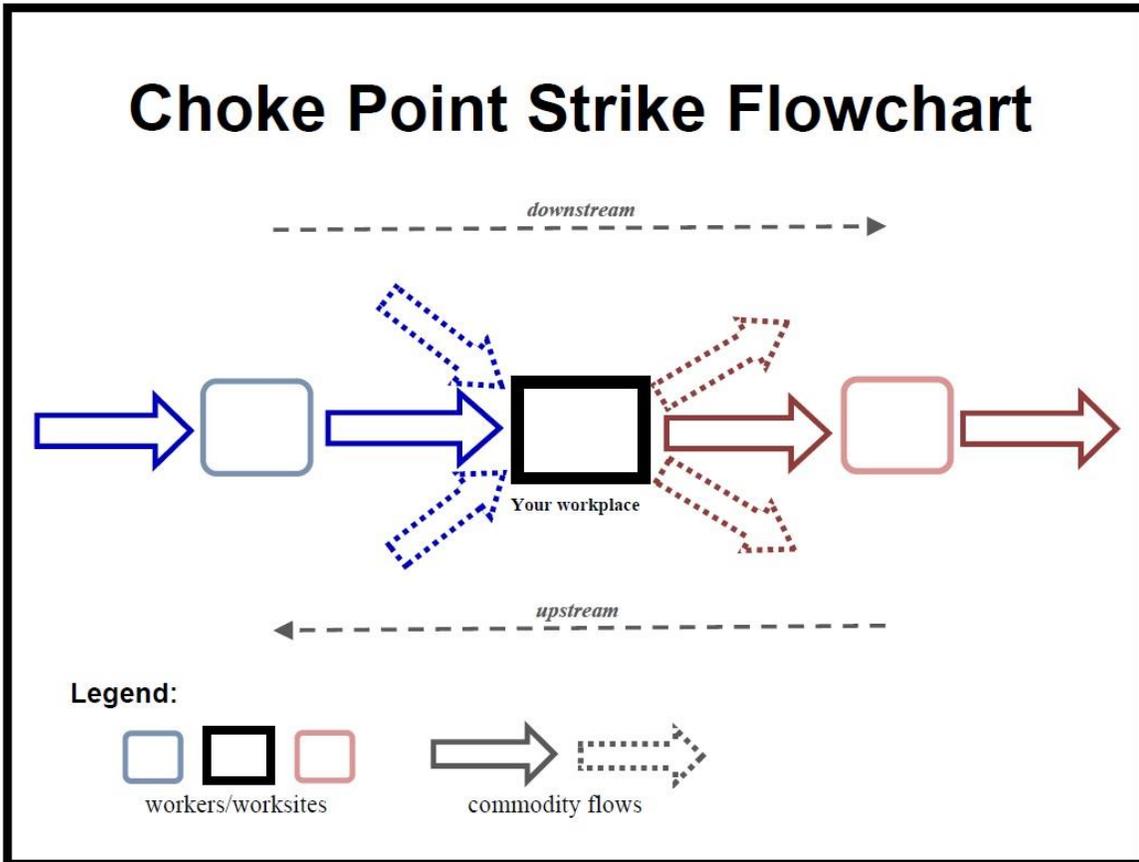
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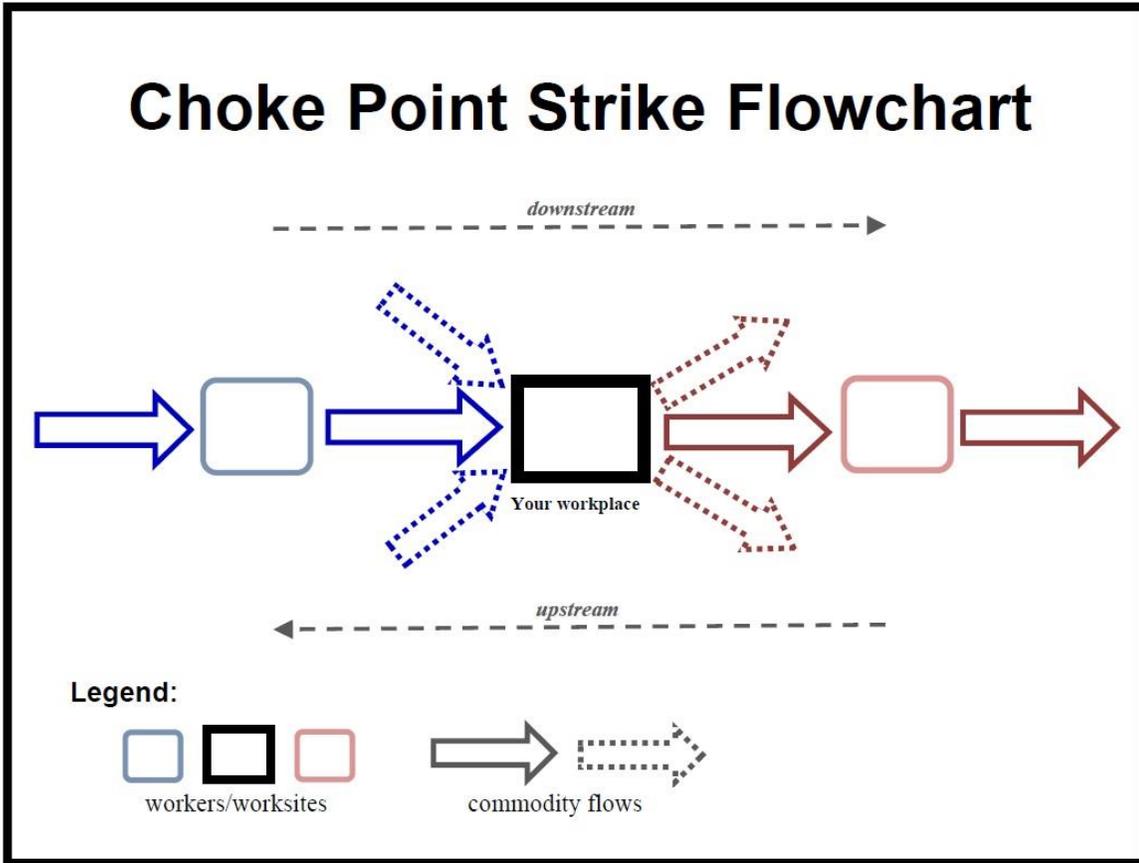


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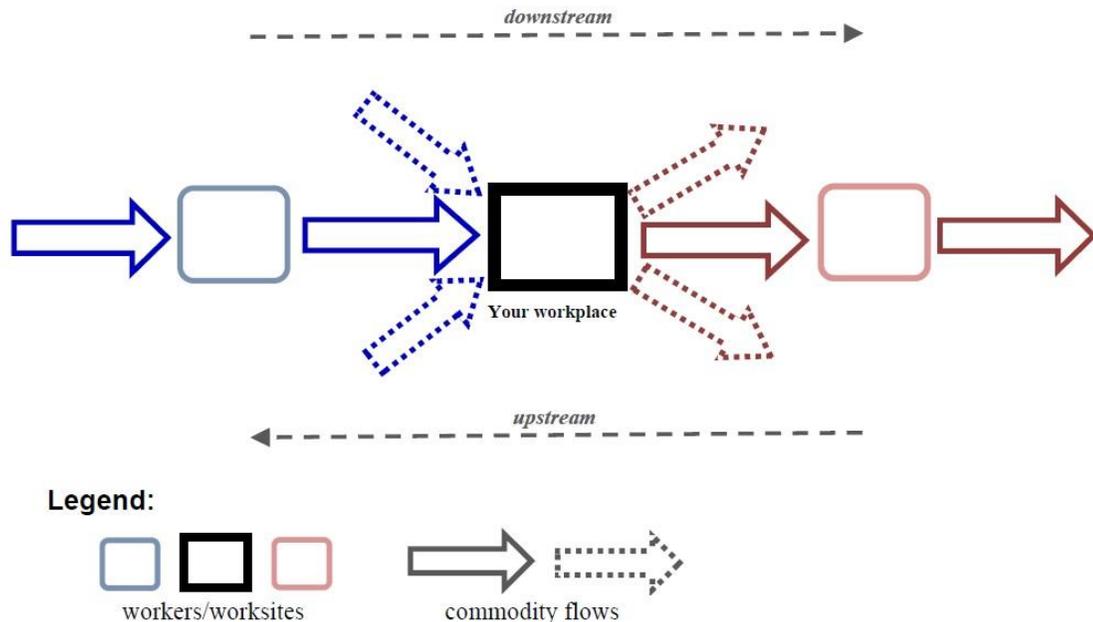
Warehouse/ DC



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Logistics

Choke Point Strike Flowchart



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Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

They are not all organized, but then they would not all have to say ‘No’: just enough of them, acting in concert, at vital points in the chain.

—“On the Front Lines of the World Class Struggle – The Cargo Chain” by JoAnn Wypijewski (2010)

Supply Chain Strike Inquiry

Based on a *hypothetical* strike assume the following:

- **Strike definition:** any effort that stops production, interferes with the movement of goods, or economically costs the boss
- A strike is already underway, with rank-and-file strike committees leading it

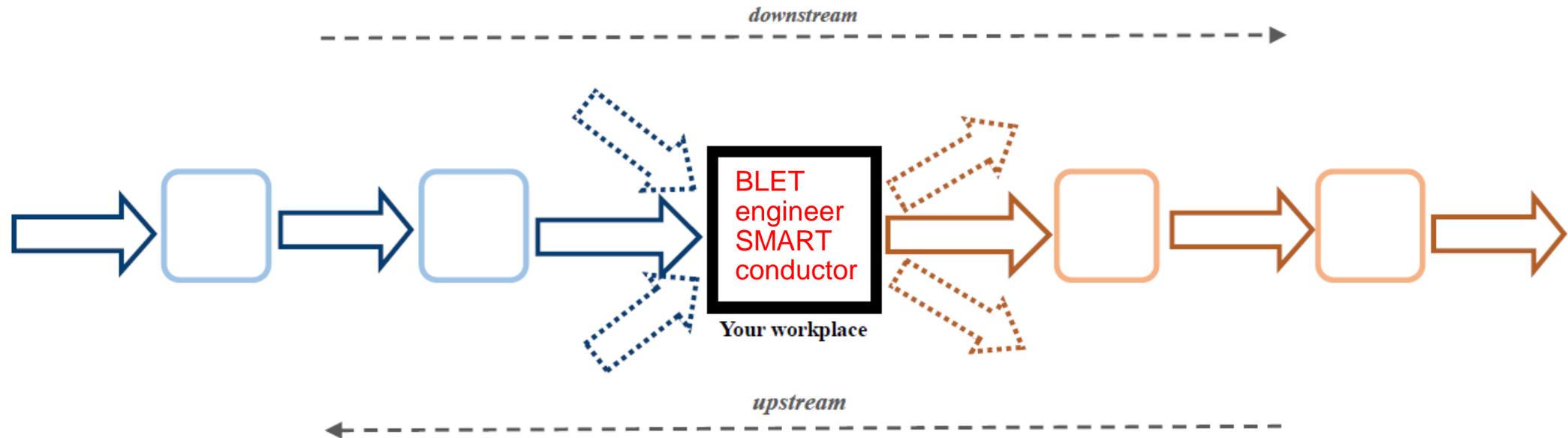
Your task: what strategic choke points can strengthen the strike

(use the Supply Chain Choke Points chart to strategize)

Inquiry Questions:

1. What are the potential chokepoints/vulnerabilities in your workplace that could heighten the impact of a strike?
2. How can the strike to involve other sectors (& the working class in your community more generally)?
3. What additional information do you need to make your action more effective? (e.g., union/non-union, independent-contractor, immigrant workers, NRLA vs RLA, etc.)

Supply Chain Choke Points



Legend:



workers/worksites



commodity flows