

UNION MOBILIZATION AND VOTER TURNOUT IN LOS ANGELES:
THE COUNTY FEDERATION OF LABOR IN POLITICS

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This dissertation empirically tests the role that the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor has played in increasing voter turnout through targeted political mobilization efforts in local elections over a number of years. The literature suggests that the labor organization, often in conjunction with local community groups, is capable of upping turnout for particular candidates in key elections, and as such is a significant force in local politics. However, no empirical work has yet been performed to test this assertion. In measuring labor's influence on turnout in Los Angeles, the dissertation relies on the political science literature to develop a model for determining vote behavior, and contextualizes the empirical study in terms of labor's historical role in politics on a national level, and the rise of labor as a political entity in Los Angeles. Quantitative analysis is performed on a data set of over 188,000 individuals in South Los Angeles, some of whom were contacted by labor and community groups during the course of five elections from 2002 to 2004. The first series of models test labor's influence as a singular entity in three elections, while the second models incorporate all contacting groups and elections. The results suggest that the County Federation, both alone and in conjunction with community groups, has been successful in its efforts to increase turnout, thus validating the accorded praise. The specific findings often support the political science literature on vote-getting efforts, with some key distinctions, most notably when distinguishing between mobilization types.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Ryan Lamare was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, and was raised in New Zealand, Las Vegas, Texas, and Florida, before attending Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations as an undergraduate student in 2001. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial and Labor Relations in 2004, and completed his Master of Science in Industrial and Labor Relations in 2005.

To Jessye, Janek and Tot

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE DETERMINENTS OF VOTER TURNOUT	9
CHAPTER THREE: LABOR'S CHANGING ROLE IN POLITICS	42
CHAPTER FOUR: THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FEDERATION OF LABOR	74
CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF FEDERATION EFFORTS	96
CHAPTER SIX: EXPANSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	124
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION	159

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Meta-analysis of Experimental Studies of Door-to-Door Canvassing	40
Table 2:	Highest Condition Index of Each Model and Tolerance of Contacts	109
Table 3:	Percentage Point Difference in Vote Turnout between Individuals Contacted and Not Contacted by the Federation	112
Table 4:	Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Primary (March 2003)	116
Table 5:	Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	118
Table 6:	Logistic Regressions for SA 47 Primary (March 2004)	121
Table 7:	Mobilization Groups and Number of Contacts in the Five Elections	129
Table 8:	Priority Rankings of the Five Elections Based on Known Criteria	131
Table 9:	Highest Condition Index and Tolerance of Contact	134
Table 10:	Percentage Point Difference in Vote Turnout between Individuals Contacted and Not Contacted by the Labor-Community Alliance	136
Table 11:	Logistic Regressions for General Election (November 2002)	139
Table 12:	Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Primary (March 2003) – All Groups	142
Table 13:	Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Runoff (May 2003) – All Groups	145
Table 14:	Logistic Regressions for Special Election (October 2003)	148
Table 15:	Logistic Regressions for SA 47 Primary (March 2004) – All Groups	151
Table 16:	Comparing the Mobilization Efforts of the Labor-Community Alliance and the County Federation	153
Table 17:	Logistic Regressions for Total Contacts in the SA 47 Primary (March 2004)	155

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The core question of this dissertation appears initially to be quite simple: what influences voter turnout? Becoming more specific, within the wide range of factors that may provide an answer, what role, if any, do labor groups play in harnessing the vote? Adding focus, have labor groups significantly influenced voter turnout levels in Los Angeles over the course of several recent elections? Although the question of voter turnout determinants appears relatively straightforward at first, each additional layer of focus adds significant levels of complexity. This dissertation contributes to three general strands of literature: effects on vote turnout; the general role of labor in politics; and the effects of the local union movement on the political structure of the city of Los Angeles.

Presently, working to mobilize voters under the umbrella of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (called the County Federation or simply the Federation in this dissertation¹) -- the local political arm of the AFL-CIO, with 800,000 members and 345 affiliates -- the Los Angeles union movement is celebrated both locally and nationally as perhaps the most influential political element in the city, if not beyond. Throughout the labor community as a whole, the common perception is that, although (or perhaps because) Los Angeles existed as a stronghold of non-union activity during unions' density ascension (and subsequent decline), it is an impressive fact that organized labor in Los Angeles has managed to create for itself a powerful structure for harnessing political votes through targeted mobilization drives.

Although it may be a commonplace belief that Los Angeles lies at the center of a new labor movement, this dissertation examines whether the pervasive sense of success translates empirically into quantitative proof that union efforts have, in fact,

¹ This name is often shortened to "County Fed" by those within and close to the organization. However, I maintain that calling the organization by this nickname connotes a level of intimacy with the labor group that may imply a sense of bias. As such, the nickname is not used in this work.

made a difference in key political arenas. There is a widely held perception shared by the labor community, some within the business community, public officials, the media, and academics that unions are a force to be reckoned with and a substantial factor in state and local politics. More specifically, it is generally accepted that the County Federation of Labor is able to mobilize eligible voters to cast ballots on election day. As such, some candidates are compelled to actively seek the labor organization's endorsement in order to wage a successful campaign. However, the assertion that unions can turn out the vote in Los Angeles has not been well documented empirically. To do so requires a positive answer to a critical question: do potential voters targeted by this group actually cast ballots, independent of the known determinants of voter turnout?

This dissertation directly answers that question, by analyzing a data set comprising all the registered voters in the broad geographic area known as South Los Angeles as of fall 2004. This data set provides the basis for an analysis of voting behavior at the local, micro level. The data track the voting records of individual registered voters in South Los Angeles, with the key independent variable being contact by the County Federation. The vote turnout levels of contacted individuals can be compared to the non-contacted group while controlling for a number of other population characteristics, to garner a sense of the effects of contact alone on turnout. The hypothesis developed out of this data set is that those individuals contacted by the labor organization are more likely to turn out to the polls than those not contacted.

It must be noted that the data set available for this dissertation is extremely rare. Previous work that measured vote turnout levels (a literature which is covered in detail during early chapters) has been heavily influenced by two approaches: early projects relied on survey data, and more recent studies have used third-party vote tabulation systems, which allow for a more objective measurement of turnout by

avoiding the exaggerations found in self-reporting; the dissertation falls in line with this recent approach to measuring turnout. However, unlike any previous data, the cases available provide information in unparalleled detail over a number of years. For instance, the data account for the vote propensity (or prior voting history) of each individual in the population when testing the effects of contact. A previous study (see Zullo 2004), which can be considered probably the most refined analysis of a union-led mobilization campaign, could not account for this critical variable. This dissertation is able to control for “frequent,” “occasional” and “never” vote propensities when analyzing the influence of contact on turnout. The data also allows for subdivision into contact type, to answer whether phone calls or door-to-door walks work better (forming a testable sub-hypothesis). Equally unusual is that the data provides information for over 180,000 individuals in one geographic location; the sheer magnitude of the data allows for unique accuracy in testing the factors that lead to turnout.

The methodology to be used in this dissertation is predicated on a standard political science explanation of turnout, often termed the psychological theory of voting behavior. The framework for this work was most clearly conceived by political scientists at the University of Michigan, who developed a model known as the “funnel of causality” in their work *The American Voter* (1960); political scientists have since refined this framework in a number of ways to form the overall model used in this dissertation. Within this political science model of voter behavior, the dissertation asks what role, if any, union contact plays in influencing turnout rates, while holding constant as many factors known to effect vote behavior as possible.

However, in order to focus on the empirical analysis, it is critical to contextualize the work by understanding the historical role labor has played in U.S. politics, and also the specific Los Angeles labor circumstances in which the study

occurs. It has been thoroughly established that the American labor movement has played a role, however large or small, in U.S. politics for over a century, from the early pluralism of Samuel Gompers to recent million-dollar Democratic candidate endorsements and mobilization drives. Though labor's role in the political structure has changed vastly, it has remained a strong contributor to the development of American politics. The union movement relies on this political structure to act as a far-reaching and enormously influential body; the political structure enacts laws and enforces decisions that will either increase or decrease the economic power achievable by union organizations. Labor battles for political influence over factors that shape its economic welfare – for instance, without the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, or the subsequent Taft-Hartley Act, the environment in which unions negotiate for economic advantages would be undeniably different.

One might say that the political and economic accomplishments of unions are symbiotic; without the strength of one, the other becomes marginalized. For this reason, the American union movement distributes millions of dollars into political funds each year, with the express intent of increasing labor's presence in politics. Unions look for labor-friendly individuals at all levels of government, candidates whom they can support with designated resources. Many times labor assists favorable candidates monetarily; some of the time, a union's endorsement leads to intensive mobilization drives in an effort to harness the vote for a key individual.

Los Angeles is the focus of this dissertation because the city, once a notoriously anti-union town, has in recent years grown into a great hope for the revitalization of organized labor in the United States. In writing about Los Angeles labor's rise from obscurity to its role as bright spot for a struggling union movement, some authors have focused on the broad economic gains unions have made over the past several years. Others have focused on key campaigns that have galvanized the

local labor movement, such as Justice for Janitors. Still others have focused their attention on the political aspirations of the city's unions. The changing demographics of the region as a whole and specifically the upper echelons of the local labor movement in the 1980s brought new, progressive approaches to organizing efforts. Several union leaders forged alliances with the Latino community and focused recruitment efforts on this new cadre of workers.

Politically, the County Federation of Labor moved away from its tradition of insider politics and followed larger citywide trends in union leadership changes when electing Miguel Contreras as its secretary-treasurer in 1995. Contreras, a Latino, is largely credited with the transformation of the County Federation from an organization known only for its largesse and the weight of its checkbook into a political machine capable of pooling vast resources into targeted mobilization campaigns.² The current mission statement of the County Federation reads, "We want to promote a voice for workers through active participation in the political process, to elect pro-union and pro-worker officials, and to advance public policies that support workers and their families."³

Turning to the structure of the dissertation, this chapter provides a broad introduction to the topic of this work, discusses the issue at hand and the questions posed in the thesis, and explains the subject's relevance as a meaningful area of study. It also gives brief overviews of the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two embeds the dissertation in the political science literature on voting in general and mobilization efforts in particular. It traces the rise of the psychological and economic theories of voting behavior. My model for overall voting influences and behaviors is discussed at length in this chapter in a slightly modified

² For an overview of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor's rise to prominence in the Los Angeles political community, see Frank and Wong (2004).

³ This quote comes from the Federation's website, www.launionflcio.org.

fashion. A second theoretical literature noted in this chapter discusses voting forces from a more economic perspective. Many political scientists argue that voting is an irrational behavior and, as such, the act of voting entails a paradox. They see mobilization efforts as tools employed to overcome this paradox, arguing that mobilization increases the benefits and reduces the costs associated with voting. These authors argue that mobilization campaigns can be used as a form of social pressure, wherein an individual will cast his or her ballot in order to be accepted by the group. Recent studies are highlighted in this chapter, all of which have looked at mobilization efforts by using verifiable public records to eliminate response bias.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the labor movement's role in politics over the course of more than a hundred years. It offers an explanation for the lack of a Labor Party in the United States and notes the various methods the union movement has chosen to exert power in the political arena. The chapter discusses labor's alignment with the Civil Rights movement, its internal political wrangling, and the subsequent decline in union influence on national-level politics beginning in the mid-twentieth century. It ends by addressing the political components of the recent AFL-CIO split, and their possible repercussions for future political efforts, and offers the suggestion that the Los Angeles labor movement's political efforts could possibly be seen as a microcosm of the recent success in national-level union mobilization efforts.

Chapter Four offers a detailed account of the rise of the County Federation of Labor in Los Angeles. It maintains that the Federation gained strength out of the changing local demographic circumstances in the late twentieth century, and became a major player in local politics in the years after Miguel Contreras was elected as its leader. It provides detailed summaries of several political campaigns critical to the Federation over the past six years. In addition, it looks beyond the Contreras legacy to the ill-fated leadership of Martin Ludlow, and turns to the relative stabilization of the

Federation following the ascension of Maria Elena Durazo. It ends by admitting that the narrative account of the Federation's rise to prominence lacks any objective verification, and that an empirical test of the Federation's political efforts can assess whether these claims of success are accurate.

In Chapter Five, an analysis of the County Federation's effects on three local elections is performed. The data (and their limitations) are explained in detail, including the dependent variable (turnout), the key independent variables (contact – any type, personal visit only, live phone call only, and just Latinos), and several control variables. Contact is the key independent variable in that it represents the mobilization of a potential voter by the Federation, which can be tested alongside changes in the dependent variable (turnout). The chapter first runs percentage point differences in turnout between non-contacted and contacted individuals to garner a sense of the general voting trends associated with contact. Noting that percentage increase differences cannot offer a causal relationship between contact and turnout, this work turns to logistic regressions to gauge the precise difference in turnout likelihood attributable to contact alone, while controlling for several factors known from the political science literature to be influential on voting behavior.

Chapter Six broadens the data analysis to include both labor groups acting alone and unions working in conjunction with other mobilizing organizations, and looks at all five elections included in the data set. This broadening is theoretically necessary for several reasons: for one, it allows for a deeper understanding of the labor movement's influence by expanding the study to include statewide elections rather than just local races. Additionally, the expansion allows for a thorough testing of new hypotheses, which were not possible to study in the previous chapter. These new hypotheses include questions regarding the effects of election priority, which is measured by the total number of contacts in an election, the number of groups

included, and the importance placed on the election by the County Federation. This chapter also tests the effects of larger aggregate numbers of mobilizations per election, comparing the results of the three elections studied in the previous chapter (looking at the Federation alone) with the results when all the other groups are incorporated. Finally, this chapter analyzes the significance of multiple contacts on turnout in a single election, using the State Assembly 47 race as its setting. The expansion of the data allows for the dissertation to return to the concept of vote-getting as social pressure, and offers an opportunity to draw some conclusions regarding this theory.

Chapter Seven assesses the implications of the data analysis and offers a conclusion in terms of the influence of the mobilization efforts on voter turnout. The limitations of the data are reiterated, and possibilities for future improvement of the research are offered. This chapter offers a discussion of the contributions that the dissertation has made to each of the three literature streams, and the methodological contribution of the statistical techniques used. The work's key expansion on political science theory is highlighted, particularly in the way that the study differs from current mobilization work. The chapter also provides a normative explanation for the results, in an effort to discuss outcomes that may at first appear to be incongruent with the original hypotheses or expectations.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DETERMINENTS OF VOTER TURNOUT

The fundamental question of this chapter is, quite simply, what causes a voter to turn out at the polls? Why do individuals choose to vote, and what circumstances contribute to their decision? This question is critical because any test attempting to measure the success of voter mobilization must understand why individuals vote in the first place – what drives them to cast ballots at the polls, and what role do mobilization efforts play in influencing this? To fully understand turnout, one must look at why voting occurs across a broad range of individuals, many of whom should not meet the standard dispositional requirements to vote.

Many of the theories championed by political scientists concern voting on a national level. In most cases, presidential elections serve as the units of observation. Further, some theories focus not solely on the act of turning out, but also (sometime peripherally and other times fundamentally) on the issue of candidate choice. However, it is important to understand that, though the level of analysis may be different, the framework for and underlying value of the theories put forth in this chapter can be applied to all elections, from the local to the national level.

The Psychological Theory of Voting: A Basis for the Model

Although political scientists have looked at the turnout question in a number of ways, perhaps the most useful template for explaining voter turnout can be derived from those who see voting as the product of a number of psychological and environmental interactions. This psychological theory of voting behavior has been most clearly conceptualized by using a model known as the “funnel of causality.” This conceptual framework, developed by political scientists Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes at the University of Michigan and expanded upon in *The American Voter* (1960), was used initially to explain voter

preferences at the polls. However, the framework can be used to successfully account for turnout as well. As the authors themselves note at the outset of the work, “We want to predict whether a given individual is going to vote, and which candidate he will choose” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 19). It is with this outcome in mind that the authors set about creating their model of the causes of voter behavior.

The hypothesis proposed by the authors of *The American Voter* is as follows:

Our hypothesis is that the partisan choice the individual voter makes depends in an immediate sense on the strength and direction of the elements comprising a field of psychological forces, where these elements are interpreted as attitudes toward the perceived objects of national politics.... By using our theory and the observations it implies we are able to describe with much greater confidence the influence of these factors on a given election outcome (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 9).

Essentially, the authors theorized that a “multitude of determinants converges to produce the final behavior;” in their case, “final behavior” means the act of voting as well as the choice of candidate (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 19).

The first mention of the “funnel of causality” as a method of representing this larger theory regarding psychological and environmental interactions defines the concept concisely. The authors state:

We wish to account for a single behavior at a fixed point in time. But it is behavior that stems from a multitude of prior factors. We can visualize the chain of events with which we wish to deal as contained in a *funnel of causality* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 24).

Following its inception in 1960, this psychological or social psychological theory of voting behavior has not been challenged in any fundamental way by the political science literature. It appears that political scientists generally accept that voting behavior relies on a chain of interacting psychological events cognized by the

individual voter – although economists sometimes disagree, arguing that voting is nothing more than a rational choice based on cost/benefit analyses. However, in general, political scientists have only refined and expanded on the original theory, rather than establishing any wholly new theory for voting behavior. The clearest criticism of the authors' work involved their emphasis on party affiliation in the original model, rather than the model itself; in a similar manner, the refinements to the model by political scientists over the years have dealt more with understanding which particular factors interact in the minds of potential voters to create those likely or unlikely to vote.

A modified version of the funnel of causality, congruent with modern political science understandings of vote behavior determinants, will be used in this study. This model establishes two conditions that must be accounted for when looking at any influences on vote behavior: irrelevant factors (termed “exogenous” in the original literature) and pertinent conditions (known originally as “relevant”). One must immediately eliminate irrelevant factors from consideration when looking for effects on turnout. As stated in the original work, these factors “include all those conditions that are so remote in nature from the content interest of the investigator that their inclusion in a system of variables...would be undesirable” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 25-26). For instance, the authors cite a case in which a potential voter suffers a flat tire on the way to the polls; he has failed to vote, but not for lack of motivation to turn out. There is no need to read anything into this person's failure to vote; factors along the lines of accidents or mishaps that intrude on the act of voting need not be considered within the funnel. It is important to remember, however, that “the distinction between [irrelevant] factors and [pertinent] conditions is quite relative” and may be calculated dependent on the subject matter of the research (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 26).

Further, the authors distinguish between personal and external conditions. Personal conditions are “those events or states within the funnel of which the individual is aware,” while external conditions “warrant a place in the funnel because they are causally significant for later behavior, yet which currently lie beyond the awareness of the actor” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 27). External elements may be considered irrelevant in that one wants to test factors that are perceived and recognized by the subject; yet some external conditions crystallize in the mind of the voter and become personal, and therefore cannot be dismissed if one seeks to fully understand the relevance of these conditions. For instance, an individual at some point is unaware of the existence of a political candidate. While the events occurring for and surrounding the candidate-to-be are external to the subject, they will have a significant role to play once the individual becomes aware of the candidate’s existence (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 27).

Finally, the authors make a distinction between political and non-political conditions. It is, for all intents and purposes, impossible to determine precisely what factors are “political” ones and what are “non-political;” again, the researcher must use his or her discretion in determining political factors. This discretion must be informed by the particular circumstances surrounding the election and the assumptions that the researcher makes regarding the interaction between these circumstances and the studied individuals. Some issues may become political, while others might be deemed political by one individual and non-political by another. A factory shutdown, a question of same-sex marriage, or any number of issues can be seen as political or non-political. However, the authors note:

If the object or event is not cognized at all (an external condition), then no such determination can be made. But as soon as a condition is made personal, then determination of its political or non-political status can rest upon the

individual's particular perceptions (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 29).

Deciding which factors are political becomes crucial when understanding why an individual turns out. As the authors maintain, "Relevant measurements just prior to the act" of turnout, "will be almost completely political." Further, "at a greater distance we will have to consider a larger proportion of other social and economic factors, unless we eliminate them...at the outset" (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 29). Through our understanding of the conditions necessary to conceptualize the funnel, we should be aware that "as events approach the narrow end of the funnel, they are more completely [pertinent], personal, and political" (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 29). Having ruled out irrelevant factors, one can now look at the composition of the funnel and establish the key influences across time on voter turnout.

I will modify the funnel of causality to establish a clearer conceptualization and motivation of a voting model. One of my key points is to consider three elements which interact to create a conceptualization of the funnel; these include short-term stimuli, immediate triggers, and long-term dispositions.

Short-Term Stimuli

There are an infinite amount of factors in the universe that may be considered "stimuli" in a person's decision to vote or not vote. Potentially anything in the world can be a stimulus that may cause a person to say "yes" or "no" to voting. However, many of these stimuli pass through the universe unseen by a potential voter. To connect the idea of stimuli to the original funnel of causality literature, a stimulus does not move into the funnel if it is not pertinent, personal, and political to a potential voter. Anything that falls outside these three categories simply floats by the funnel

without ever entering it. It is critical to understand that not all stimuli will enter the funnel for potential voters – stimuli, if left on their own without any interactive elements, will have no effect on voting.

Stimuli are considered “short-term” because their effects, while critical, generally last no longer than the election in which they are found. A stimulus can enter the psyche of a person quickly and exert influence instantaneously, but usually will not resonate for more than a brief period of time. As such, stimuli should be considered highly malleable, and in many ways unpredictable over the long-term.

As mentioned, short-term stimuli can include just about anything that may become pertinent to a potential voter. Typical short-term stimuli found in elections consist of the personal characteristics of the candidate (which can involve a number of traits that may also be considered stimuli, such as ethnic background, religion, and gender of the candidate), and the circumstances surrounding the election (which can include anything from the expected closeness of the race to issues that arise during the course of a campaign – for instance, whether there is a war during the election period). Again, short-term stimuli can be virtually anything that may at some point play a role in an election, though most of these stimuli go unnoticed to an individual voter.

Immediate Triggers

How then do short-term stimuli move out of their meandering existence and into a meaningful interaction in the funnel of a potential voter? They need a catalyst, which arrives in the form of immediate triggers. These immediate triggers capture certain stimuli and push them into the funnel, requiring potential voters to cognize these short-term stimuli and decide what effect they will have on voting.

Returning to the literature, the authors developing this funnel of causality theory maintain that immediate triggers (known as “influences” originally) for voter

behavior cause stimuli to become entirely pertinent, personal, and political. These triggers act as catalysts for stimuli the moment they cause a stimulus to strike a chord with a potential voter as meaningful.

For instance, one might consider the characteristics of the specific candidate. For the given campaign in which the candidate is running, a potential voter is not likely to be concerned with any non-political stimuli (as determined by the voter himself) surrounding the candidate. If a subject does not consider the religion of the candidate to be a politically meaningful stimulus, he or she should not be affected if a candidate is, say, a non-Christian. The same logic follows for any number of stimuli that may or may not be political, such as the ethnicity and gender of the candidate. These personal characteristics only play a role as meaningful stimuli on vote turnout when they become pertinent, personal, and political to the individual voters.

As discussed, the way short-term stimuli such as personal characteristics of a candidate are made pertinent, personal, and political is by the usage of immediate triggers. Taking the example of personal characteristics, consider that a candidate may engage in heavy advertisement of certain beliefs or traits in order to make them pertinent, personal, and political to voters. In doing so, the advertising campaign becomes an immediate trigger for the stimuli – say a candidate believes that he can garner support from the working-class. He may run an ad campaign highlighting the fact that his father was a blue-collar dock worker. This stimulus of working-class background would have floated past the funnel with no meaning until the candidate ran the advertisement (an immediate trigger), which then cognized the issue for potential voters, pushing it into the funnel of causality.

Though stimuli gain significance to the individual when they are made pertinent, personal, and political to voters by immediate triggers, not all triggers work for all potential voters. An advertising campaign used to highlight personal

characteristics of a candidate will not resonate with an individual voter who does not own a television, for example. If a subject intends to vote but is unable to due to a mishap on the day of the election, his being aware of the closeness of the race does not play a role in that voting outcome.

Along these theoretical limes, a critical immediate trigger is mobilization by political groups, which will be discussed at great length in subsequent sections. Briefly put, mobilization acts as a major immediate trigger by cognizing certain key stimuli that candidates believe will resonate with potential voters. By mobilizing voters across certain platforms, a party can highlight the stimuli that it considers meaningful to the voters, and will allow other, less critical stimuli, to float by the funnel of causality, thus going untouched for a given election. Mobilization is more personal than an advertising campaign, which allows for a more refined and assertive message, one that can be altered depending on the mobilized group. This makes it a fundamental trigger for any campaign, as the message hits harder than other triggers might.

Assuming the immediate triggers are successful in placing some stimuli within the funnel, the stimuli may play a significant role in determining whether a person will turn out for a given election. The stimuli are identifiable for a single given election, and may change from one campaign cycle to another. For instance, a candidate may be considered extremely charismatic in one election, and proceed to lose his or her luster over the years. Equally, the triggers may change depending on the election. Candidates may spend more or less during different election cycles, and mobilization efforts may target certain groups in one cycle and completely different sectors of society in another. Stimuli influence the election in which they occur, but are not guaranteed to continue to reverberate throughout subsequent elections.

Structural Influences

Structural influences play a significant role in affecting immediate triggers. One could say that structural influences surround the funnel of causality, existing on the same plane as short-term stimuli. They interact most significantly with the immediate triggers (though they also may affect long-term dispositions), and play a meaningful if intangible role in voter behavior.

A structural control can be defined as a human-created barrier to potential voters. These controls present themselves most clearly on a cross-national voting level. In essence, the differences in turnout between the United States and, say, Germany, may come in large part from structural controls on voting (Powell 1986; Jackman 1987; Jackman and Miller 1995; Franklin 1996; 2004; Hill 2006). Though structural controls can range from formal rules (such as a constitution) to informal norms (such as social conventions), there are two examples of structural controls that can be seen as critical barriers to voting: registration laws and type of electoral system.

Registration laws are considered a structural control -- that is, some argue that states' registration laws play a role in dissuading people from voting. Specifically defined, "registration laws are rules that control access to voting process" (Hill 2006: 26). They place various requirements on those who wish to vote, dictate when and how registration will take place and limit potential voters to those who meet certain qualifications. Notably, they provide a disincentive to vote by increasing the cost of voting (which will be discussed in further detail). The greatest effect of this increased cost of voting falls on the young, those of lower socioeconomic status, and people who have recently moved (Highton 2004, Hill 2006: 26).

Registration laws act as hindrances to triggers by making all those affected by them irrelevant to the election. For instance, if a trigger is designed to influence the psyche of a Spanish-speaking potential voter, and a voter registration test is given in

English only, the structural control has interfered with that trigger's effect on the election, as it removes the possibility for the potential voter to turn out no matter the stimuli. Triggers must be filtered through registration laws in order to affect the largest number of people who can actually act on the catalyzed stimuli.

Equally, many political scientists maintain that the winner-take-all system (contrasted with a proportional system) deters people from voting. Jackman's work indicated that a disproportional (winner-take-all) voting system significantly reduces turnout (Jackman 1987). For example, consider the Electoral College in the United States. If a candidate representing a political party receives 49 percent of the vote in a certain state, the candidate's loss in that state is outright – the candidate could have received zero percent of the vote and the outcome would remain the same. This is considered a major deterrent to political participation, as it severely denigrates the influence of individual votes. Consider the 2000 Presidential election. Al Gore lost to George W. Bush in Florida by 537 votes, yet all twenty-five of Florida's electoral votes went to Bush. Though Bush lost the popular vote, his electoral votes reached 271, beating Gore by five. Had Florida used a proportional method of counting votes, Gore would have garnered about twelve of the twenty-five electoral votes.

As structural control sits outside the funnel, it can be considered in many ways abstract to the voter. It cannot be measured in the same way that one can assign tangible characteristics to an individual voter – one can identify potential voters as mobilized, as old, or as Latino. One cannot as easily identify an individual voter as having struggled to overcome difficult registration laws. Yet, structural controls remain clearly influential on triggers themselves – if a person cannot register to vote, the trigger cannot reach him in a meaningful way. If the winner-take-all system sufficiently lowers the efficacy of a number of voters, a mobilization effort may prove fruitless, when it may have been successful under a proportional system.

These structural controls explain in part why this dissertation, essentially offering an explanation of labor mobilization efforts in influencing vote behavior, can be analyzed in the U.S. context alone, rather than in comparison with, say, Germany. As it is quite difficult to account for the role that structural controls play in influencing turnout, any study comparing cross-national vote behaviors must use immense caution, unless it has first explicitly accounted for these barriers. This study has not taken account of structural controls, as the locus of the study is not comparative, and as such, the barriers to vote turnout are identical for the population at hand.

Long-Term Dispositions

The triggering of short-term stimuli will not produce the same results for every triggered voter. Not all potential voters are affected by stimuli in the same way. When the stimuli are triggered and pushed into the funnel, waiting for their arrival are long-term dispositions of potential voters. These long-term dispositions give a preliminary outlook on whether a person is a likely voter – that is, if left untouched by any stimuli for a certain election, a person may be more or less likely to vote dependent on his or her disposition. When the triggered stimuli move into the funnel, they interweave themselves with the long-term dispositions and combine, falling through the funnel to create “vote threshold” – that is, a point at which the combination of long-term dispositions and stimuli causes a person to vote. In some cases, it takes only a small amount of stimuli (or possibly none at all) moving through the funnel to reach the vote threshold and cause a person to vote – this person has such a high disposition to vote that he does not need much stimuli (other than the election itself) in order to reach the vote threshold. Yet if an individual has significantly lower vote dispositions (that is, the person is highly unlikely to vote given long-term

attributes), it will take a much greater amount of stimuli added to the long-term dispositions to reach the vote threshold.

The weight attached to each triggered stimulus varies per individual voter, and is contingent on his or her long-term dispositions. A Latino voter may have a low disposition to vote (to be discussed later), but may vastly increase his or her likelihood of voting if the individual recognizes that the candidate is Latino as well. For a high-disposition voter (say a white male), the ethnicity of a Latino candidate may not push the vote likelihood up as much. Thus, the convergence of triggered short-term stimuli and long-term dispositions varies by individual dependent on how valued the stimuli are, given the dispositions (which are essentially unmovable for an individual election).

As an equation, one might model vote turnout in the following way:

$$V = f \{ S_1D_1 + S_2D_2 + S_3D_3 + \dots S_nD_n \}$$

Where V is the possibility of voting, S is the triggered stimulus, and D is the long-term disposition. At some point, the confluence of the stimuli and dispositions may reach the vote threshold, at which point a person will choose to vote no matter what other stimuli and dispositions exist. One cannot have a “negative” vote – either one votes or one does not vote, but the act of not voting simply means that the addition of all dispositions and stimuli was not enough to reach the vote threshold. Numerically, neither dispositions nor stimuli can equal less than zero; thus, one cannot have a “negative” disposition, but rather one can be deemed “less positive” or “lower” in disposition than others.

Specific long-term dispositions may be determined by age, ethnicity, education level, income level, partisanship, political efficacy, and other demographic and personal characteristics that a potential voter may have. These influences are far less malleable than are those found from immediate triggers. One cannot change

ethnicities between campaigns. While an individual might go to school and get another degree, or get a new job with a much higher salary than previously, such changes occur over long periods of time if at all, and their effects are not necessarily seen from one election to another. Across multiple election cycles, one might be able to find that a shift in economic status eventually leads to a shift in election turnout rate, though again, when looking at a single election (or elections spaced closely) these elements will not be as clearly malleable as those of the short-term variety.

In some cases, the line between triggered short-term stimuli and long-term dispositions may become blurred. For instance, a mobilization campaign is largely considered an immediate trigger, designed to target certain potential voters for a single given election. However, the mobilization effort may be so successful that it fundamentally alters the way a voter views a certain party or person. It is in many ways the ultimate ambition of those using immediate triggers to fundamentally alter voters' long-term characteristics, integrating the stimuli into a person's long-term disposition and rendering the trigger unnecessary.

To summarize regarding long-term dispositions, while these characteristics will influence turnout levels, they are less malleable than short-term stimuli; that is, they provide the waiting entities onto which a short-term stimulus will attach itself and exert pressure. It is critical to note that these dispositions interact with each other to create a person's psychological framework, onto which triggered short-term stimuli will latch in a given election. They should not be considered as independent values or entities, but rather as components of a larger psychological makeup of each individual voter, which involves combinations of these unique dispositions.

Perhaps the best way to describe the interactions between long-term dispositions comes when one turns to the authors of *The New American Voter* (a follow-up to the original work by two of its authors, published thirty-six years after

The American Voter). On the subject of long-term dispositions, they say the following:

[Long-term dispositions] are the result of social and political experiences that define social location and cultural values. The most frequently used characteristics of this sort include voters' race or ethnicity, gender, age (or generation), religion, marital status, level of education, employment status, family income, social class, union membership, and the region of the country in which they live. Each of these variables represents a highly stable characteristic in the sense that voters' current "positions" on the variable were established long before the election, although the political effects of that characteristic may not have arisen until the current campaign. In general, highly stable variables of this sort usually become politically relevant when they serve as indicators of past political experiences that have left their mark on distinctive values or preferences that are then emphasized (or activated) in a given election campaign. Of course, such characteristics may also become directly relevant when they are central to specific campaign issues, as with religion in 1960 and 1992 or race in 1964 (Miller and Shanks 1996: 8).

The following are long-term dispositions that should prove most useful in this work, and for which there is a significant substantive literature.

Age

Age is certainly regarded as a significant factor in a voter's disposition to turn out. The most accepted argument is that age correlates positively and strongly with both vote registration and turnout. According to James W. Lamare, "There is a direct association between a person's age and the likelihood that he or she will register to vote." (Lamare 1994: 60). In terms of voter turnout as a whole, the literature accepts that turnout is lower amongst the young, and largely increases with age, though perhaps reaching a plateau and then slightly falling amongst the very old (e.g. Lipset 1960: 189; Flanigan and Zingale 1975: 25-27; Milbrath and Goel 1977: 114). Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) hold, "People aged thirty-seven to sixty-nine are one and one-half to two times more likely to vote than the youngest adults," a notion

echoed by other authors (e.g. Converse and Niemi 1971: 461, Milbrath and Goel 1977: 115-116).

Looking at voter registration within the state of California itself, the California Opinion Index ('Field Poll') indicates, "Only one-third of the youngest (age eighteen to twenty-four) members of the electorate register. The number enrolled increases steadily in older age groups, reaching a peak of...registered Californians [at] age sixty or older" (Lamare 1994: 60).

Age can be considered a critical long-term disposition given its interactive nature with other dispositions. Older individuals are likely to have a higher income than the young, for instance. They are in many cases the most efficacious group, assigning significant value to the vote process and believing that they can influence the outcome of the election in a meaningful way. In answering why age really matters in an election, one must look at its interactive qualities – it is a unique determinant of other dispositions, in addition to being its own meaningful long-term factor. This dissertation uses a measurement of age in its analysis of voter turnout in Los Angeles.

Socioeconomic Status

The available literature on voter behavior indicates that socioeconomic status plays a significant role in whether people register and cast ballots in elections. In terms of who registers, Lamare's *California Politics* book maintains that, according to the California Opinion Index, "Socioeconomics status also affects registration: Californians with some college education and with high incomes are much more likely to register than those without these resources" (Lamare 1994: 60). According to Verba and Nie, "Citizens of higher social and economic status participate more in politics. This generalization...holds true whether one uses level of education, income, or occupation as a measure of social status" (Verba and Nie 1972). Wolfinger and

Rosenstone argue that the literature suggests, “College graduates vote more than high school graduates; white collar workers vote more than blue-collar workers; and the rich vote more than the poor (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 13). In terms of education, the authors find “a very strong relationship between rates of voting and years of education” (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 17). This corresponds well to other literature which recognizes education levels as most strongly linked to turnout (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960: 476-78; Milbrath 1965: 122-23; Barber 1969: 11-14). The two authors continue, noting, “The literature abounds with data showing that rich people vote more” (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 20). However, there is also a strong suggestion put forth by Wolfinger and Rosenstone in particular that income levels are not meaningful influences on turnout when one controls for other variables like education (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Other authors make different claims regarding income, maintaining that affluence plays a key role in turnout and asserting that income is more important than education in affecting turnout levels (Bennett and Klecka 1970; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978, Milbrath and Goel 1997: 97-98).

The literature discussed above indicates that the role of socioeconomic status cannot be found by taking only one variable, be it income, education, or any other single variable. Indeed, Wolfinger and Rosenstone argue, “The disaggregation of the effect of socioeconomic status on turnout reveals that education, income, and occupation have different effects on voter turnout” (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 34). As with much of the literature on the subject, those discussing socioeconomic status maintain that combinations of variables should be considered when analyzing why a person votes – to take a one-size-fits-all approach to voter turnout would lead to highly inaccurate results.

The broad category of socioeconomic status provides a critical long-term disposition found in potential voters. Socioeconomic status is highly combinable with

certain immediate triggers that may resonate with potential voters. For instance, those with less income will be much more influenced by an advertising campaign that highlights a platform of wage hikes and government subsidies. Alternatively, those in a higher income bracket will be receptive to a trigger involving a stance on, say, a lowering of luxury taxes. This trigger may not resonate with those who cannot afford the same luxuries.

Like age, socioeconomic status is also a key long-term disposition for its interactive qualities with other dispositions. Those with a lower level of education are likely to be much less politically efficacious than those with university degrees, for instance. The highly educated are likely to feel that they understand the political situation better, and in many cases believe that their vote can make more of a difference. Higher-income voters are also more likely to be older, as discussed previously. There is some interaction between socioeconomic status and ethnicity as well, considering that the poor are somewhat more likely to be non-white, especially in Los Angeles (which constitutes the geographic setting for this dissertation). Unfortunately, this dissertation is unable to fully measure socioeconomic status on its own, as no details on economic figures or educational status are provided in this data.

Ethnicity

One other major determinant of voter turnout is ethnicity. Again, there is a strong literature within the field of political science pointing to ethnicity as a key element of both registration and voter turnout levels. Lamare argues that, when looking at Field Poll information, “Registration has an ethnic factor as well: 65 percent of non-Latino whites, 58 percent of African Americans, 42 percent of Latinos, and 39 percent of Asian Americans eligible to vote are registered” (Lamare 1994: 60).

Analyzing turnout specifically, Lamare continues, “Although whites (non-Latinos) make up about 55 percent of the state’s adult population, they comprise the bulk -- some 81 percent -- of the voters. Conversely, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans constitute 45 percent of the state’s population and 31 percent of eligible voters, but only 19 percent of its actual voters” (Lamare 1994: 60). The idea that race is associated with turnout fits with other prevalent literature on the topic. Teixeira holds, “Another popular theory concerning demographic skews and nonvoting posits a large and growing racial gap in voting rates, particularly between whites and blacks. The idea is that turnout decline has been particularly serious among minorities” (Teixeira 1992: 71). Other literature in the field indicates that, generally speaking, minorities turn out at a lower rate than whites, though the size of an existing racial gap is debatable (e.g. Teixeira 1992: 72; Leighley and Negler 1991: 13; Presser, Traugott, and Traugott 1990: 16; Cassel 1979).

Ethnicity plays its own unique role as a long-term disposition, as it provides a rallying point around which some immediate triggers may exert influence. One’s ethnicity generally can be used most readily to place an individual within a certain social network. Ethnicity is in many cases the most obvious connection between individuals and candidates – one can in many situations identify a candidate as white or non-white, and can relate to the candidate’s ethnicity without depending on the pressure of an advertisement or mobilization campaign. Alternatively, mobilization efforts and ad campaigns can easily tap into ethnic groups, cognizing for certain ethnic cadres the idea that a candidate will enact policies favorable to that group. Bill Clinton playing his saxophone on The Arsenio Hall Show was an effort to use a fundamental ethnic trigger, reaching African-Americans across all income lines and identifying Clinton as sympathetic to that group. Likewise, George W. Bush’s continuous declining of invitations to speak at NAACP conventions proved to have

the opposite immediate effect – across all ages and socioeconomic statuses, African-Americans received a clear message from the President regarding his ethnic sympathies.

In sum, many of the long-term demographic dispositions deemed to be critical to vote turnout have in some way been identified in the literature available on the subject. This dissertation replicates in its data some of the demographic characteristics that should play a role in voter turnout levels. The results, according to Lamare, will likely be the following:

The ranks of nonregistered voters are disproportionately composed of the young, . . . the less affluent, and members of the state's ethnic communities. These patterns, as expected, are reflected in the actual turnout of those eligible. In other words, the most participatory members of the electorate are highly educated, financially better off, older, non-Latino whites (Lamare 1994: 60).

It is critical to note that these long-term demographic dispositions do not stand alone and cannot be treated as solely influential qualities. Age matters in that it interacts with socioeconomic status and political efficacy. Income is important as it aligns itself with age, education, and ethnicity. On a fundamental level, all the long-term dispositions discussed in this chapter interact with one another to create each person's unique identity. The combination of all these dispositions makes up the psychological state of each potential voter, which then interacts with whatever triggers are thrown at the person in a given election. Fortunately, this dissertation is able to account for voters' ethnicities to a large degree.

Partisanship

A key long-term factor concerning whether an individual votes lies in his or her level of partisanship, which can be defined as a long-term psychological affiliation

with a certain political party (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). The authors of *The American Voter* emphasize the role of party loyalty within their hypothesis, arguing that, “[Party identification is] a factor that is normally antecedent to [psychological] forces, yet susceptible at times to change by them” (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960: 9). In this, the authors suggest that voting behavior (which includes the act of turning out) is tied to party identification, but that some psychological forces can change party loyalty over time. It is certain that high levels of partisanship are much more likely to increase political participation (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Hill 2006: 16). An individual who is strongly tied to the Democratic Party, for instance, is far more likely to vote than a person with no political allegiance.

Partisanship is certainly a long-term element in voter turnout. The very definition of partisanship relies on a long-time association with a party. These affiliations do not change by election; while an individual may change party preference at some point, it will only occur after a number of elections and a significant amount of time. Over the course of one or two elections, partisanship is unlikely to differ. That said, there are levels of partisanship that one must consider. An individual may be strongly or weakly partisan, or somewhere in the middle. Any affiliation at all is likely to increase turnout, but there is a significant association between level of partisanship and level of turnout (Abramson and Aldrich 1982).

As an interactive disposition, partisanship allies itself with several demographic traits. Strong Republicans are likely to be wealthy and white. Strong Democrats are likely to be found amongst non-whites and the poor. Partisanship is not generally affected by age or by efficacy. Older voters will turn out more, but not necessarily for one party. Those who believe in their ability to comprehend and

influence an election can be members of either party. This dissertation includes a measurement of partisanship in the form of political party affiliation.

Political Efficacy

A less clearly-measured element of voter turnout is the notion of political efficacy, which can be divided into two subsections – internal efficacy and external efficacy. Internal efficacy can be defined as an individual’s belief that he or she can participate competently in an election. Some prospective voters consider themselves unable to effectively understand politics; they may consider it too complicated, or may see themselves as not well-informed enough to make an educated decision. A person with low internal efficacy is much less likely to vote than one with high internal efficacy (Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1991; Craig 1993; Hill 2006).

External efficacy can be seen as a person’s belief that the government can effectively respond to the needs of the people. In other words, those with high external efficacy believe that the results of an election can significantly shape public policy and that, in essence, the electoral system works for the people. These people are, as expected, much more likely to vote than those who feel the government will be unresponsive no matter the outcome (Franklin 1996; Franklin and Hirzcy 1998; Franklin 2004; Hill 2006: 15).

Efficacy should be considered a long-term disposition as, after all, one cannot instill faith in one’s government overnight. The attitudinal change needed to shift efficacy takes many elections and years, which may couple the abstract notion of efficacy with more long-term influences. The underlying internal efficacy of a person -- that is, one’s confidence in oneself to understand politics -- cannot be shifted on an election-by-election basis. Unfortunately, the psychological trait of political efficacy is difficult to quantify, and as such has not been included in the data analysis portion

of the dissertation. Although education and income might be seen as possible proxies for efficacy (that is, the more highly educated and wealthy could have more confidence regarding politics and could also believe more in the government), no such measurements have been recorded in the data.

The Alienated Group

There is a group of individuals who must be discussed in order to have a thorough conversation about vote turnout: the alienated group. These people receive triggered stimuli and have certain long-term dispositions, yet are so alienated from the political process that they refuse to vote regardless of inputs. In many ways, one could consider that their vote threshold is so high that there is no way that any interaction of triggers and dispositions will push them to vote. These people may be disillusioned with the political process – they may reject the structure in which they are asked to vote (i.e., refusing to buy into the democratic electoral system). Or, they may prioritize their own personal beliefs far above those that come into contact with elections (i.e., placing one’s faith in God above all political influence). These people may be triggered and may have dispositions that would suggest a propensity to vote, yet they will not turn out due to “alienating factors,” which outweigh all electoral efforts. Like efficacy, the psychological characteristic of alienation is almost impossible to quantify, and as such this thesis has not controlled for the alienated group in the data.

Having summarized the psychological forces that interact to create a potential voter, this chapter will turn to a second theory, tangential to that promulgated by the University of Michigan scholars. This approach looks at voting from a cost/benefit perspective, and places mobilization efforts within this particular framework for voting behavior.

The Paradox of Participation

When answering questions of voting behavior, some scholars have pointed to a unique paradox that exists for voters. Rather than focusing on the psychological (or social-psychological) influences on voting behavior, certain authors (notably Downs 1957) took an economic approach to political participation. The initial equation put forth by Downs and other authors proposed that the act of voting comes down to a simple question of the utility of voting versus the costs of voting. Utility can be seen most broadly as the amount of benefits an individual receives from voting. Equally, the process of voting entails costs. Prospective voters must spend “time, energy, and money rousting themselves to polling places and marking their ballots” (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993: 21-22). A simple formula can express the paradox:

$$R = f\{(P*B) - C\}$$

In this formula, R indicates the total utility an individual receives by voting. B represents the benefit an individual will enjoy if his or her preferred candidate wins the election instead of the less preferred candidate. P represents the individual’s expectation that his or her vote will make a difference in the given election, and C is the cost to the individual of voting (Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Hill 2006: 22).

The fundamental problem occurs when one considers that one individual’s vote is essentially meaningless. The paradox is explained by the following:

If people are rational, the paradox holds, and if they receive only collective benefits, they will not turn out to vote, and for very good reason: The result of the election will be the same whether they participate or not. In any election, hundreds or thousands of millions of voters will cast ballots; the chance that a single ballot will determine the result is exceedingly small (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993: 21).

The fact that an individual vote does not substantially influence the outcome of the election has an important effect on utility, rendering meaningless an individual's belief that he or she will receive an individual reward of having solely been responsible for electing his or her favored candidate. In other words, voting "consumes resources but achieves no results that would not be achieved otherwise" (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993: 22). According to the equation, then, P equals zero, causing $P*B$ to become zero, thus leaving only costs and no benefits to voting.

To confront the paradox of turnout, one must consider the contexts in which an individual votes. Utility, or the perceived benefits of voting, has a number of components. One's feeling of civic pride at having voted can be seen as providing utility. The praise one receives from family members and friends can also provide utility. Benefits are not limited strictly to the feeling that an individual's vote changed or shaped the election; rather, they are abstract, existing on many levels and in a variety of ways. The resolution of this paradox will be discussed further by looking at mobilization efforts.

Mobilization Efforts

Political parties confront the paradox of participation by mobilizing voters. Two seminal works in the study of voter mobilization effects are *Who Votes?* (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980) and *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Rosenstone and Hansen argue that mobilization by political parties acts as a way to limit the costs and increase the benefits of voting by harnessing a potential voter's social network (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 23-25).

Mobilization can be defined as "the process by which candidates, parties, activists, and groups induce other people to participate" (Rosenstone and Hansen

1993: 25). To mobilize a potential voter, an actor provides a method of increasing the likelihood of somebody's participation (Tilly 1978: 69). There are two forms of mobilization: direct and indirect. Direct mobilization efforts occur when a candidate or party contacts potential voters personally and encourages the individual to turn out. Such direct mobilization tactics can include direct mail, face-to-face interaction, phone calls, or televised appeals for support. Indirect mobilization occurs when a candidate's direct appeal to one person or group has a reverberating effect on another person or set of individuals (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 26-27). At this point, the interaction between the directly contacted person and his or her social network comes into play.

Mobilization of the social network, according to Rosenstone and Hansen, serves to solve the paradox of participation by allowing an individual's friends, family, and colleagues to create social expectations for that person.⁴ If the act of political participation is embedded within these social expectations, a person will turn out to vote in order to gain acceptance from the group, which in turn affects the benefits (or utility) an individual receives from voting (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 24). Additionally, the social network can magnify the significance of voting by encouraging each participant within the network to act in concert (Axelrod 1984). While an individual vote may not matter, an individual voting as part of a social group of 100 or 1,000 can significantly influence politics. If the conformation to social expectations includes voting for a specific candidate (or voting at all), the entire social network may partake in the act *en masse*; a single vote becomes a thousand when it is part of the same concert of voices. It is the mobilizing actor's role to tap into these social networks and weave political participation into the fabric of social expectation.

⁴ For more information on the interaction between social networks and political activity, see Rosenstone and Hansen (1993: 23-25) and Kenney (1992: 259-67).

Recent Mobilization Studies

The aforementioned discussion on mobilization of social networks comes from a theory largely espoused in Rosenstone and Hansen's *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (1993), which was based on, amongst other works, *The American Voter* and subsequent works. In turn, several works have recently been published based on both Rosenstone and Hansen's book and *Who Votes?* by Wolfinger and Rosenstone. These recent studies have both challenged and expanded on mobilization theories.

Recent mobilization studies have determined that Rosenstone and Hansen's book, while undeniably seminal, is limited in some critical ways.⁵ In their method of analysis, Rosenstone and Hansen used National Election Studies (NES) survey data to test their theory. This presents a problem in that survey respondents may tend to overstate their turnout levels when they self-report their results (Green and Gerber 2005: 7). More recent studies on voter mobilization have avoided this problem by using public records of voter turnout, or by running field experiments whereby clusters of subjects are divided into treatment and control groups. Additionally, recent studies have analyzed mobilization efforts from a number of angles, using varying types of mobilization efforts and testing different treatment groups. Some discussion will now be given to the current trends in voter mobilization literature.

Partisan vs. Non-partisan Mobilization

One can engage in two distinct types of direct mobilization: partisan and non-partisan. Partisan mobilization involves targeting individuals and seeking their votes for a particular candidate, party, or platform. Nonpartisan drives seek to turn out the

⁵ For a condensed look at twenty-one of the most recent studies on mobilization (specifically door-to-door canvassing), see Table 1 at the end of this section (reproduced from Bergan, Gerber, Green, and Panagopoulos 2004: 768-769).

vote, but those contacting voters are not connected with any agenda or ideology. They strive to increase turnout, but their aim does not go deeper than this.

Each type of mobilization drive affects its target in a different manner. On the one hand, partisan mobilization drives “may provide a boost to turnout by giving citizens something for which to vote” (Nickerson 2005: 11). A nonpartisan appeal to one’s sense of civic duty may not provide the same motivational incentive.

Additionally, the brand name of a certain political party may add a touch of familiarity to a mobilization effort. This can have a dual consequence: while proponents of the mobilizing party’s virtues may feel strengthened by the get-out-the-vote campaign, opponents are likely to be driven away by the party identity (Nickerson 2005: 11). A pro-Democrat household will be largely willing to be mobilized by a Democratic team; yet, the same family would have no interest in the courtship of a Republican vote effort. In this way, the branding of a mobilization drive may be successful in strengthening one’s base, while a nonpartisan effort will likely have broader, yet probably less dynamic, effects on turnout.

Similarly, these branded partisan campaigns may lead individuals to feel as though they are part of some larger movement. Wearing supportive buttons and planting signs in one’s yard give a mobilized voter a sense that he or she is a part of a broad coalition in favor of a significant goal. This psychological benefit is less likely to occur in a nonpartisan campaign (Nickerson 2005: 11).

On the other hand, nonpartisan vote drives are buoyed by voters’ belief that this mobilization type is more altruistic (Nickerson 2005: 11). Potential voters are more cynical about the intentions of a partisan effort, because there is a direct benefit to be had by a party mobilizing voters for its cause. Nonpartisan vote drives center on the process of voting itself, not the party or candidate for whom the individual votes;

an aura of selflessness permeates a nonpartisan effort, as no ulterior motives are evident.

Although there are virtues and vices to either type of mobilization drive, there is no direct evidence that one works better than another. Too many variants exist across studies to measure the works of researchers on nonpartisan campaigns versus those studying partisan mobilization. It is important to distinguish that results of nonpartisan campaigns may not be directly applicable to partisan efforts. There are large differences between the two types, which should not be ignored when analyzing the results of partisan or nonpartisan drives.

Mobilization Type

Mobilizing parties commonly use three methods to get out their message: door-to-door walks, phone calls, and direct mailings. Recent research based on field experiments has suggested that nonpartisan face-to-face canvassing works the best at mobilizing voters, in some cases increasing turnout by eight to ten percent (Green, Gerber and Nickerson 2003). Nonpartisan direct mail and door hangings have shown a small effect (0.5 percent and 0.8 increases, respectively), while nonpartisan phone calls were found to show either no effect (if done by a professional) or about a three percent increase (if performed by a volunteer) (Gerber and Green 2000, Gerber and Green 2001).

Nickerson reminds the reader that nonpartisan results do not necessarily apply to partisan campaigns, for the aforementioned reasons. He goes beyond this to argue that a researcher ought to test partisan campaigns, as they constitute the more prevalent mobilization type (Nickerson 2005: 11). In a 2002 case, Nickerson finds that partisan volunteer phone calls (3.2 percent increase) and door hangers (1.2 percent increase) affect vote turnout in a manner that is similar to nonpartisan efforts, thus

“suggesting that partisan and nonpartisan campaigns are equally effective” (Nickerson 2005: 13). One must note that the comparative nonpartisan study did not mirror the methods used by Nickerson’s 2005 effort; while it can be argued that the influence of phone calls, direct mailings, and door-to-door efforts seems consistent across multiple studies, one should not assume that these results imply that there is definitely no difference between nonpartisan and partisan campaigns. More research into this question is needed before one can be safe in that assumption.

There have been several recent studies challenging the effects of both partisan phone calls and mailings on vote turnout. Emily Arthur Cardy proffers that partisan phone calls and direct mailings are inconsequential to turnout. Note that previous research had found approximately a three percent increase in turnout for phone efforts and a 0.5 percent increase for nonpartisan mailings. Cardy studies these methods of vote getting both independently and in conjunction with each other, by using a field experiment of a 2002 state gubernatorial primary election. The author finds that “partisan mailings and phone calls, whether used independently or together, have neither significant GOTV effects nor persuasion effects” (Cardy 2005: 29). This work suggests, then, that partisan phone calls are a waste of resources, given that they have no effect on turnout levels. It also suggests that combining methods does not change the lack of significance found in these methods, sending a clear signal to organizations that these types of mobilization efforts do not work.

John E. McNulty’s work appears to confirm Cardy’s assertions. McNulty studied both partisan and nonpartisan GOTV drives in San Francisco in 2002 and 2003. The drives ranged from strictly nonpartisan to quasi-partisan to extremely partisan. Each of the efforts was found to have no influence on electoral outcomes. McNulty maintains, “The preponderance of the evidence, ultimately, implies that GOTV phone calls are inefficient at increasing turnout” (McNulty 2005: 57).

However, other recent studies have offered contrary findings. For instance, Ricardo Ramirez found that, in a test of Latinos in 2002, only live phone calls produced a statistically significant increase in turnout, while robotic calls and direct mail were insignificant (Ramirez 2005: 67). Interestingly, amongst Latinos in Los Angeles County, live phone calls accounted for a 4.95 percent increase in turnout (Ramirez 2005: 79). Note that Latinos have been largely treated as a “neglected” demographic – one that is less likely to vote and usually is not mobilized in a given election. However, even this belief has come under question in recent years. Melissa R. Michaelson tested mobilization efforts of Latinos in California and found that they “are very receptive to voter mobilization campaigns. Getting Latinos to the polls does not require unusually large budgets or special ‘Latino’ approaches” (Michaelson 2005: 85).

Recent studies have focused on analyzing a combination of factors believed to influence turnout. Elizabeth A. Bennion looked at the combination of mobilization and closeness of race to determine whether GOTV drives increased turnout in a hotly contested election. Her study focused on nonpartisan efforts rather than party-based mobilization methods, and found that GOTV efforts significantly influenced voting amongst the young (aged eighteen to twenty-nine) but showed no behavior change amongst older voters (thirty and above). The authors explained the results in some part by arguing that “young people, as new voters, may...be the most affected by the message used to mobilized voters” (Bennion 2005: 137).

The recent literature on voter mobilization types would suggest, if anything, that nobody is quite sure how influential GOTV styles may be. Gerber and Green, two key proponents of the field experiment approach to mobilization analysis, call into question many studies due to their small sample sizes (Gerber and Green 2005: 151).

Bergan, Gerber, Green, and Panagopoulos (2005) ran a study of the effectiveness of mobilization campaigns on turnout for the 2004 presidential election. The authors significantly downplayed the role that mobilization had in increased turnout, although they note that “grassroots efforts generated millions of additional votes [but] probably account for less than one-third of the observed increase in turnout” (Bergan, Gerber, Green, and Panagopoulos 2005: 760). It is unclear why the authors chose to take a position that this increase of millions of votes did not demonstrate a significant effect of mobilization on turnout. In the text, the authors establish that, of the 17 million vote increase in 2004 (compared with 2000), about 4 million of those votes can be accounted for by mobilization drives (Bergan, Gerber, Green, and Panagopoulos 2005: 775). They see this as a demonstration that mobilization is not effective, where some may argue that, in fact, this shows a significant influence of mobilization on turnout.

As shown in the preceding paragraphs, some previous research suggests significant effects of various GOTV efforts on potential voters, while other authors argue that there is little to no effect on turnout. Further, in some work where there appears to be a major effect of GOTV drives on voting, the mobilization efforts are given little credit as meaningful to the election. It is perhaps best to surmise that, while the field of voter mobilization is ripe with hypotheses, it is starkly barren of any definitive, unanimously accepted theory on which types of mobilization work and which do not, or the extent to which mobilization works at all. Clearly, this is an area of study that is both relevant to researchers and rife with unanswered questions. Table 1 provides an overview of recent experimental studies on voter turnout; note that most of the studies covered highly specific sites and often focused on registered, young and minority voters.

Table 1: Meta-analysis of Experimental Studies of Door-to-Door Canvassing (*table reproduced from Bergan, Gerber, Green, and Panagopoulos 2005: 768-769*).

Site	Year	Election	Canvassing Group	Target Population	Voting Rate in Control Group (%)	% of Treat. Group Act. Contacted	Bivar. Probit <i>b</i>	Bivar. Probit SE
New Haven	1998	federal midterm	academic	registered	42	32	0.369	0.109
Bridgeport	2001	municipal	ACORN	registered	10	28	0.548	0.265
Columbus	2001	municipal	Youth Vote	high youth neighborhood	8	14	0.505	0.533
Detroit	2001	municipal	ACORN	registered	43	31	0.212	0.118
Minneapolis	2001	municipal	Youth Vote	registered	25	19	0.307	0.282
Raleigh	2001	municipal prim.	Youth Vote	registered	~29	~45	-0.015	0.086
St. Paul	2001	municipal	Youth Vote	registered	38	32	0.366	0.169
Dos Palos	2001	municipal	academic	registered	22	77	0.113	0.098
Fresno, 2002	2002	federal midterm	academic	registered, 18-25	8	45	0.161	0.096
Denver primary	2002	municipal prim.	Youth Vote	registered	39	100	0.220	0.107
Minneapolis prim.	2002	municipal prim.	Youth Vote	registered	16	100	0.379	0.135
South Bend	2002	federal midterm	Academic	registered	38	41	0.100	0.181
Michigan, Democrats	2002	federal midterm	Democrats	registered, 18-35	36	9	0.359	0.364
Newark, May	2002	municipal	academic	registered	50	6	-0.165	0.742
Newark, June	2002	municipal	campaign	registered	18	30	0.080	0.215
St. Louis	2002	federal midterm	Youth Vote	registered, 18-25	28	37	-0.018	0.084
Phoenix	2003	municipal	ACORN	Latinos who voted in 1+ elections	~7	~75	0.645	0.125
Kansas City	2003	municipal	ACORN	precinct level, voted in 1+ elections	29	63	0.318	0.099
Fresno, 2003, partisan	2003	gubern. recall	academic	registered, 18-29, strata	15	37	-0.177	0.137
Fresno, 2002, nonpartisan	2003	gubern. recall	academic	registered, 18-29, strata	16	33	0.104	0.155

Note – Random effects estimate across all studies: $b = 0.205$, $SE = 0.045$. Bivariate probit estimates were calculated using the biprobit procedure in Stata 8/SE.

Bivariate probit coefficients are interpreted in the same manner as probit coefficients and indicate the effect of contract with door-to-door canvassers on the probability of turnout. ACORN = Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

Summary

To understand why people vote, one needs a model founded on a solid base of literature. The modified “funnel of causality” model used in this chapter (founded on work performed in *The American Voter*) relies on immediate triggers that cause short-term stimuli to become are pertinent, personal, and political to a potential voter and interact with an individual’s long-term dispositions. Immediate triggers (i.e. advertising and mobilization efforts) push the short-term stimuli into the funnel, cognizing the voter and exerting immediate influence on the voter’s long-term dispositions, but do not effectively reverberate across multiple years or elections. Affecting these triggers are structural influences, which include registration laws and the electoral system. Long-term dispositions (i.e. age, ethnicity, efficacy, and socioeconomic status) provide less malleable but more intrinsic influences on voters – while their effects may not be as readily apparent as those of the short-term, they will give a fundamental indication of whether an individual is a likely voter or not. I combine each of these factors to form the model used in this dissertation; while not all of the long-term dispositions will be covered in the data analysis, a substantial number of these characteristics are provided in the data.

Finally, one must address why people vote when the costs outweigh the benefits. This “paradox of participation” can be solved by looking at mobilization drives. The literature on mobilization, into which this dissertation will most readily fit, is predicated on two seminal works (Rosenstone and Hanson’s *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy* and Wolfinger and Rosenstone’s *Who Votes?*), both of which have come under some recent scrutiny. Newer authors have established several hypotheses for mobilization influences, though their results are distinctly uncoordinated and, as with any new approach to a relatively old subject, there is much room for work that expands on previous research.

CHAPTER THREE: LABOR'S CHANGING ROLE IN POLITICS

If one wishes to more clearly understand the role that labor, as a particular political entity, plays in affecting vote outcomes at the local level, it is necessary to look to the national-level context surrounding these attempts . Every political effort performed at the local level is in some way related to the labor movement's national-level position, as either a rebuke, an endorsement, or a show of indifference toward the national stance. This chapter seeks to trace the evolution of the national-level labor movement's role in the United States' political structure. It begins with a question of why the U.S. union movement differed in its political ideology from its European counterpart, explaining this difference through a discussion of class-consciousness and the beliefs promulgated by Samuel Gompers at the AFL. It then looks to explain labor's rise to national-level political power, alignment with the Democratic Party, and subsequent decline in influence over the latter half of the twentieth century.

The role of the labor movement in the political process within the United States is vastly different from that of its European counterpart. Whereas in Europe (and elsewhere throughout the world) the individual worker is represented in government by the Labor Party (or some other unique "workers' party), no such worker-centric political organization exists at the national level in the United States. Rather, U.S. labor unions offer support to whichever political entity (usually the Democratic Party) each individual union feels will best represent its interests at any given time. Politicians vie for the support of labor unions large and small, presenting platforms that they hope will garner both the vote of the organized workers themselves and the financial resources available to the unions. There is no mandate that all unions must back a certain candidate or party. There is a great deal of literature explaining both the reasons behind U.S. labor's uniquely decentralized role in politics (that is,

one not united under a common workers' party) and the methods that unions use to achieve their political objectives.

Labor's Historical Role in Politics

Though the United States was home to the first labor parties in the world, unions are perceived by most to exist most broadly as units by which workers might gain economic advantages (wages and benefits, to name two). There is a claim that the labor movement is "preoccupied with on-the-job benefits" and engages in "political nonpartisanship" (Rhemus and McLaughlin 1967: 3). The basic difference between the European model of unionism, in which labor and government are in many ways intertwined, and the American model, wherein labor relies on a third party to achieve its gains, is one of ideology (or lack thereof). Where the European model relied heavily on the notion of class-consciousness and the usage of unionism as a tool by which political ideologies would be advanced, the American system saw political involvement as "a tool for the achievement of union ends" (Rhemus and McLaughlin 1967: 5).

The Insignificance of Class Consciousness

Simply stated, the class war that identified Europe as a fragmented society of haves and have-nots failed to emerge in the United States. To quote Rhemus and McLaughlin:

American labor is not "working-class conscious"; it is not "proletarian" and does not believe in class war. Some parts of it are...uncompromisingly wedded to rugged individualism.... Others want to "reform capitalism." If there were a standard or typical labor view on the subject, it would probably come close to that of George W. Brooks...who says "labor's objective of 'making today better than yesterday' is predicated on its acceptance of capitalism (Rhemus and McLaughlin 1967:6).

This “acceptance of capitalism” as an ideology has historically affected labor’s role in the political process. Rather than aiming to overthrow the ideological bases of American economics (epitomized by free-market capitalism), unions have sought to make gains within the system. On the other hand, European workers have been historically raised under different social and economic concepts, initially rooted in the existence of feudalism. As feudalism died out, it nevertheless engrained in workers the notions of “class consciousness, rigid obedience, and the desire to share in rank and privileges” (Steinbach 1953: 8). Distinction by class in Europe evolved into class struggle, which resulted in the formation of various worker parties. The United States was formed without the inheritance of feudalism. This enabled individual workers to concentrate on fighting for economic benefits, without involving themselves directly in a political movement (Steinbach 1953: 9). In essence, European workers sought a revolution; American workers wanted to join the middle class.

The Political Objectives of American Unions

American labor organizations have often sought to enact political change in the form of pressure politics, or attempts to influence public policy, as opposed to direct party politics (Rhemus 1967: 11). Some authors define American union involvement in politics as “political unionism,” a notion which argues:

The political approach of American unions...is usually an extension of their economic function. Legislation related to the membership’s interests as workers, consumers, or taxpayers will be supported, and candidates who favor the type of legislation wanted by the unions will be backed. Progressive legislation – such as aid to education – which has an impact beyond their own membership is also generally supported. With few exceptions, American labor leaders have employed the established political channels (Millen 1963: 14).

If there were one phrase that might describe the historical development of American unions in politics, it may be “anti-Marxist.” Karl Marx saw political action as “the supreme weapon of the working class,” whereby the recognition of class consciousness would simultaneously accentuate workers’ political organization: the formation of a workers’ party would be the means by which the class struggle would be won (Sturmthal 1967: 20). When defining the term “political activity,” Sturmthal maintains, “In American discussions the term more commonly refers to either the nominating of candidates for public office or, in a somewhat looser fashion, to the attempt to achieve certain objectives by legislation or administrative action” (Sturmthal 1967: 29).

One aspect of political activity arrived in the form of pressure groups, which, for example, pushed for the ten-hour workday in the 1840s and 1850s (Rhemus 1967: 36). Generally, these pressure groups would attempt to force politicians from one party or another (and sometimes both) to make labor’s concerns part of their platforms. However, this demonstrated an obvious problem for labor pressure groups; that is, they relied on political officials to follow through with promises made in their efforts to get elected.

The Labor Party Question

In the early twentieth century, questions arose as to whether a labor party ought to be formed in the United States. Samuel Gompers in 1919 replied to this question with a stern rebuttal. In *The American Federalist*, Gompers maintained:

The fact is that an independent political labor party becomes either radical, so-called, or else reactionary, but it is primarily devoted to one thing and that is vote-getting. Every sail is trimmed to the getting of votes. The question of the conditions of Labor, the question of the standards of Labor, the question of the struggles and sacrifices of Labor, to bring light into the lives and work of the

toilers – all that is subordinated to the one consideration of votes for the party” (Gompers 1919).

Gompers noted in his writings that the AFL, seen in his time as a largely nonpolitical organization, had pressed for and achieved pro-worker legislation throughout its existence. He argued further that American labor’s interests would be best served by using the already established political channels and parties, and that by exerting pressure on politicians, demanding that they include labor-friendly declarations in their platforms and vote for pro-worker legislation, unions were able to use the political process in their favor (Gompers 1919). The writings of Samuel Gompers, some might say, epitomized the idea that labor’s role should be one of political pressure, and not party creation.

More specifically, the AFL during the early twentieth century adhered to a mantra of pluralism and voluntarism. For one, the AFL refused to align itself explicitly with one party or another. For another, Gompers’ aspirations for political change were entirely at odds with socialism. Gompers’ associate Adolph Strasser maintained at the time, “We have no ultimate ends, we are going on from day to day...We are all practical men” (Karson 1958: 117-118). The implication was that the AFL sought changes in working conditions as necessary – there was no ultimate goal of revolution at some distant point. Not only was the AFL anti-socialist, it generally disliked government interference in workers’ lives. The central tenet of Gompers’ voluntarism “was a principled opposition to all compulsion and paternalism...by government in economic life” (Greenstone 1965: 25). It has, however, been argued by some (see Greenstone 1977 for instance) that labor’s alignment with the Democratic Party in the twentieth century essentially established a *de facto* U.S. labor party.

Though the general sentiment is that American unions have relied in the past on politics only as a means by which they can obtain economic advantages, there have been periods in which workers’ parties have attempted to gain control of the political

process. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), for instance, challenged the AFL's relatively nonpolitical position, drawing in prominent Socialists such as Eugene V. Debs of the Socialist Party of America and Daniel DeLeon of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Though the IWW was politically fragmented and indecisive, it had a clearly manifested awareness of class consciousness. The first sentence of the preamble to the IWW constitution reads: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Though the IWW was condemned as "un-American" during and after World War I, it nonetheless presented an ideological opponent to the more neutral (both politically and socially) AFL (Pelling 1960).

Sympathetic to the plight of the IWW, in 1919 the Communist Party of America (CPA) came into existence. The goal of the CPA was to capture the American labor movement under one political party. According to Kampleman, "Unions were looked upon as 'schools of communism'" (Kampleman 1957). This sentiment was echoed by the Soviet Union at the time, wherein it was reported that:

The Bolsheviks from the time of Lenin to the present have never given up hope of capturing the trade movement of the United States. Our Party received more assistance, more advice, more decisions on the trade union question than on almost any other question. Lenin was particularly anxious to win over the American trade unions. It was Lenin who conceived the idea that it would be possible for the Communists in the United States, by hiding their identity, to form an opposition bloc in the trade unions, which would enable them to dislodge the reactionary forces in control of the American Federation of Labor (Kampleman 1957).

Kampleman notes that in response to these efforts, some Communists attempted to penetrate the AFL, no longer overtly promoting revolution and instead becoming ordinary trade unionists, forming the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) in 1922. However, the strategy failed, and TUEL sympathizers were removed from union offices or expelled from the AFL (Kampleman 1957).

New Deal Politics and Alignment with the Democratic Party

When the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) splintered out of the AFL in 1935, a new political paradigm emerged for organized labor. While the AFL on the whole maintained political neutrality (adhering to Gompers' principles of voluntarism) until 1947, the "radical" CIO mobilized itself politically from the outset. In the midst of the Great Depression, with soaring unemployment, the CIO decided that Franklin Roosevelt's 1936 reelection was essential. In some ways, the union felt that it owed its existence to Roosevelt's New Deal policies, which encouraged union organization of mass production industries (Rhemus 1967: 156-157).

Accordingly, in 1936 the CIO formed Labor's Non-Partisan League, which would become the Political Action Committee (PAC) in 1943. The main and immediate goal of the League was to reelect Roosevelt, by both mobilizing and educating the union vote, and by providing substantial amounts of money to the President's campaign. CIO leader John L. Lewis visited regularly with Roosevelt, both to offer his support to labor's candidate and to push the CIO's political agenda. In 1943, under the supervision of (and largely created by) Sidney Hillman, the PAC was established with the purpose of engaging in "nonparty, nonpartisan" politics (Scoble 1963: 666).

It was not until 1947 that the AFL recanted its position of neutrality and fully entered the political process. Largely as a result of the Taft-Hartley Act (passed despite the veto of President Truman), the AFL formed Labor's League for Political Education. When the AFL and CIO merged in 1955, the Committee on Political Education (COPE) was formed. COPE's main objective was to get "as many union members, their wives and families, and working-class and minority citizens registered as possible" (Rhemus 1967: 201). COPE branched out from the national level down to state and local organizations (aligned with Central Labor Councils), each with the

explicit goal of voter mobilization. It was this political arm of the AFL-CIO that would lead the charge for political action in the mid-to-late-twentieth century, and remains a key player in local and national politics. Branches of COPE are active and influential throughout the country, including in Los Angeles (as part of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor).

Labor as a Special Interest Group

Having aligned with the Democratic Party, labor acted most clearly in the form of a special interest group. The seminal work *What Do Unions Do?* by Freeman and Medoff explains:

Like other interest groups, labor organizations operate in the political sphere as well as in the economic marketplace, seeking as best they can to obtain outcomes beneficial to their members and, in their view, to society as a whole. Many believe that unionism is a political powerhouse (Freeman and Medoff 1984: 191).

After their alignment with the Democrats following the Taft-Hartly Act, labor attempted to exert its influence as a special interest group by pushing for various reforms. George Meaney saw labor as “the finest political organization in the country,” and others maintained that unions were “[one of] the most powerful and active political forces in the U.S.” (Freeman and Medoff 1984: 191). Authors at the time asserted the relevance of the American labor movement to the political fabric of the country, maintaining that the ideals of unions were indelibly interwoven with the U.S. political structure. James B. Carey, then president of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, noted in 1958:

Organized labor could not possibly “stay out of politics” and do one iota of good for its members. Organized labor could not possibly abandon its political responsibilities any more than it could abandon its collective bargaining

responsibilities. To abandon one is to abandon the other. For they are indivisible. Either, without the other, is useless (Carey 1958: 54).

More mainstream scholars (i.e. less tied to the labor movement) have concurred with this sentiment. Harry Scoble at UCLA offered in 1963, “the most fundamental postwar change in the structure and process of political parties has been the entrance of organized labor into electoral activity at the precinct level on up” (Scoble 1963: 666).

Yet labor’s role as an interest group was wrought with difficulties after its entrance into electoral activity. One problem, labor leaders argued, was that the odds were stacked firmly against them in the political arena. If labor were to push its interests across one party, such ambitions would not go unchallenged by the business community and its deep pockets. Carey noted that for the 1956 election, labor “practically unanimously” backed the Democratic candidates across all electoral levels, with the AFL-CIO endorsing the Stevenson-Kefauver bid (Carey 1958: 58). Looking to harness the vote for its candidates, the national union movement collected somewhere between \$500,000 and \$1.1 million in support of its efforts. Newspapers at the time attacked the trade union movement, condemning “union bosses” for hoarding “big union slush funds” to spend on candidates and push the pro-labor agenda. And yet, in the 1956 election, the maximum \$1.1 million spent was nothing more than a “modest amount.” Carey underscores this point, arguing that “with all of labor’s work and effort, twelve wealthy families spent more money than all that which organized labor managed to raise during the entire election campaign,” and noting that the “Salute to Ike” fundraising dinners in support of Eisenhower brought in \$5 million, five times the amount that labor raised for its candidates (Carey 1958: 59).

Yet, the public perception that “big labor” was pushing its agenda on candidates by lining their pockets with “huge union slush funds” persisted.

Newspapers and other mainstream media began arguing that labor's role as a special interest group was a "menace" and "dangerous," while downplaying (in the eyes of some authors) the far greater contributions of the wealthy elites to their candidates (Carey 1958: 60).

Aside from the "stacked-deck" problem argued by those close to the union movement at the time, some maintained that labor faced difficulty in that it could not stretch its influence far. The same union president who suggested an undeniable bond between labor and politics proffered, "labor's activities in the democratic process are limited to three major categories—registration, education, and expression of opinion" (Carey 1958: 55). While it can be argued that labor may not have been limited to only these categories (which provide a rather simplistic, or at least over-simplified declaration of labor's role in politics following its entrance into electoral politics), it does appear that the most easily measurable representations of labor's political effectiveness at the time could be found in a finite number of categories. Scoble notes:

...It is convenient to look at organized labor from the standpoints of the following areas of electoral behavior: the national conventions and legislative recruitment; the party apparatus itself; and vote mobilization in terms first of registration drives, get-out-the-vote drives, and the direction of the vote, and then in terms of labor money in elections. These categories are convenient only; it should be clear that they are not mutually exclusive (Scoble 1963: 667).

Using Scoble's choice of measurable categories of labor's newfound political action, there exists a foundation on which to discuss the union movement's role as a partisan special-interest group. Whether the "stacked-deck" argument applies, labor did offer its best effort going forth as an interest group from the moment it entered politics as an interest group, and this effort can be discussed using Scoble's categories.

National Conventions and Legislative Recruitment

According to Scoble, an individual can fairly assume that any strong interest group will be sure to “seat [its] officers-members in the state delegations to the national nominating convention of that party with which the overwhelming majority of the interest group members identify” (Scoble 1963: 667-668). While there is information suggesting the strength of this measurement of labor’s influence as an interest group in the 1948 elections, scant empirical data appears for the proceeding elections in 1952, 1956, or 1960. Thus, Scoble casts aside the role of national convention makeup as a measurement of labor’s success as an interest group, in the name of poor data gathering by political scientists (Scoble 1963: 668).

Legislative recruitment strikes more to the core of what scholars might consider labor’s ascension as an interest group. Labor’s League for Political Education was the second hand of the AFL-CIO’s arm in politics, and was patterned after COPE. In 1949, the LLPE decided to give subsidies to labor representatives of state legislatures with low salaries (Roche and Stedman, Jr.: 1954: 70). Scoble saw this move as a way for labor to counterbalance the “demographic gerrymander against the union vote in all state politics” (Scoble 1963: 668). One might argue that this was an early response by the union movement to the “stacked deck” problem it faced. Yet Scoble notes the shortcomings of using legislative recruitment as a reasonable measurement of labor’s interest group effectiveness, in that there is no way to tell how successful the LLPE was in its subsidization plan. The only piece of empirical evidence available was that “‘laborers and craftsmen’ constituted 5.5 percent of all lower-house members and 2.5 per cent of all state Senate members in 1949” (Scoble 1963: 669). Again, as an interest group, labor may well have been successful in both the national conventions and in legislative recruitment, but Scoble’s first category simply lacks enough data to allow a clear conclusion.

The Party Apparatus

The idea of labor as the party apparatus revolves around the notion that the labor movement, as an interest group, could have become the center out of which politics operates. In other words, Scoble's categorization of labor as the party apparatus asks whether labor could become "the political party at city, county, and/or state levels" (Scoble 1963: 669). This measurement does appear to have some tangible validity, in that testing has occurred, especially at the local level.⁶ In Scoble's time, the available evidence suggested "that organized labor [had] not yet become the party apparatus of the community with regard to the community or local politics" (Scoble 1963: 670).

Yet, the notion of labor as the party apparatus exists to this day. In Los Angeles, pro-labor experts claim, rightly or not, that a politician can go nowhere in Los Angeles without (a) having been backed by the full endorsement of labor, and/or (b) having been born out of the union movement. The categorization of labor as the party apparatus in measuring of its success as an interest group is especially relevant given the broad scope of this work; in many ways, answering whether unions have been successful in mobilizing Los Angeles voters could also clarify the extent to which labor has become the party apparatus in the city.

Vote Mobilization

The other particularly relevant measurement of interest group success is the viability of labor as a vote-getting mechanism. Interestingly, Scoble's identification of get-out-the-vote efforts as a measurement of effectiveness came just three years after Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes' seminal work on turnout, *The American*

⁶ Local cities include Rockford, Ill. (studied by Hugh A. Bone in *American Politics and the Party System*, p.113); New Haven, Conn. (studied by Robert A. Dahl in *Who Governs?*, pp. 76 and 253-254); and Madison and Kenosha, Wisc. (studied by Harry Scoble, unpublished).

Voter. While it would be a stretch to suggest that Scoble's decision to include vote-getting efforts in his categories was influenced by *The American Voter*, it is safe to acknowledge that political science at the time recognized the value of mobilization campaigns in elections, and Scoble saw these efforts as a recognizable measurement of labor's success as an interest group.

But were they effective? The results in the 1950s appear to be mixed, and again Scoble points out that scant evidence is available to support a firm conclusion. In one instance, a PAC at the New Jersey CIO ran a self-appraisal on registration efforts and found that the CIO was "more successful in registering its members than the general public" (Scoble 1963: 671). Yet the Connecticut CIO found results entirely to the contrary. As these were the only two studies available for Scoble to analyze, the relative dearth of information again led to his maintaining that one simply could not say whether labor was a successful interest group using this criterion.

Of course, the foundational question of this dissertation relates explicitly to the role of unions as agents of political mobilization. In Los Angeles, the perception has been that unions are very much paramount in mobilizing not only their own membership, but pockets of the general population as a whole. Previous to this dissertation, very few authors have attempted to discuss the role of unions as mobilizing agents; only a few recent studies have looked to address this question.

Financial Involvement

The question of unions' financial muscle as an interest group was offered as an argument for the uneven playing field the labor movement faced when it went head-to-head against business. Scoble, however, ignored the "stacked deck" theory that unions are outspent by businesses in an election, and focused instead on how much the labor movement *did* spend and how easily attainable this information was at the time.

Again, it is sufficient to say that no strong conclusion could be made in terms of how much labor spent on candidates in the 1950s. While some authors agreed with the notion that labor's financial involvement constituted only a "modest" sum, Scoble maintained that the true significance of labor's financial contributions to the Democratic Party at the time may have been concealed, with the scholar going so far as to wonder whether the parties and candidates "prefer not to know too much about the entire process of money in elections" (Scoble 1963: 677).

What readers do know, based on Scoble's writings at the time, is that labor pushed itself into politics in a number of ways – through legislative recruitment, mobilization efforts, financial involvement, and a number of other mechanisms. What an individual cannot tell, and what Scoble appears to disdain about his colleagues' research efforts, is the extent to which unions were successful in their efforts, as no data existed to present a comprehensive conclusion on the matter. In Los Angeles, it is known that the County Federation of Labor provided some substantial financial muscle for labor-friendly politicians; however, this financial contribution usually amounted to the full extent of labor's contribution to the local political scene. As such, labor was not known as a group capable of mobilizing voters in politics.

Labor's Goals as an Interest Group

A researcher cannot fully ascertain the extent to which the labor movement successfully entrenched itself as an interest group following the Taft-Hartley Act. Yet, it is possible to establish what, exactly, unions were (and in many cases still are) pushing to ensure. Did (does) labor fight for only its members? Did (does) it fight for a distinct ideology?

Scholars assert that the labor movement "lobbies on behalf of so-called social welfare state programs that benefit union members and the underrepresented and

unorganized in society as well” (Rhemus 1984: 41).⁷ In essence, the literature has for many years suggested that labor, when it acts as an interest group, does not do so to the betterment of only union members and the detriment of others. To jump forward in time, consider the efforts of the Los Angeles labor movement in its present form. Local labor leaders have fought for legislation mandating a working wage, have pushed for the rejection of anti-immigrant political provisions, and have sought to keep big-box retailers out of the state of California, to name just a few efforts. While each of these tasks provides certain benefits to union members (higher wages, more job security, etc.) there is a tangible effect on a far larger facet of the local community, whether union or not. In a similar example taken from the literature, Rhemus notes: “...the state of the economy and the general level of unemployment affect the bargaining power of unions, but unemployment hits union members and the unorganized equally hard” (Rhemus 1984: 41).

Rhemus, in fact, broadens the political interests of unions even farther away from the labor-exclusive center. The author argues, “...to a surprising extent, labor lobbies in areas that are not of direct concern to union members. For example, labor is perhaps the largest organization supporting civil rights legislation in the United States” (Rhemus 1984: 41). Because of its broad reach, the labor movement can wear many hats when it enters the political arena. This idea of a flexibility of ideologies and constituencies (something that Gompers would have likely supported given his thoughts on the uniqueness of the American political system) has allowed the labor movement to form coalitions across a vast array of interests.⁸ Of course, an individual could well take a less optimistic perspective on labor ideologies and, in a way that is

⁷ A similar statement can be found in Gary M. Fink, “The Rejection of Voluntarism,” *ILR Review*, Jan. 1973, p. 809.

⁸ For more on this concept, see Gary M. Fink, “The Rejection of Voluntarism,” *ILR Review*, Jan. 1973, p. 809.

not mutually exclusive with the preceding thoughts, argue that labor needs coalitions simply by the fact that the union movement is not strong enough to exert political influence on its own.⁹ Rhemus does just that with his statement:

Labor always does its best when it is part of a coalition, and in recent years it has not found it possible to put together a coalition on issues purely of interest to organized labor. As a consequence, it has been unable for decades to obtain repeal of so-called right-to-work legislation...to ensure passage of the common sites picketing bill...or to achieve reform of our basic labor laws. When labor has effectively joined forces with other groups, it has been far more successful, however (Rhemus 1984: 41).

Historically, the main goal of labor's political efforts had been the protection or establishment of social insurance. There were specific needs associated with this concept of social insurance, which were pushed by labor groups even under the laissez-faire attitude necessitated by voluntarism. According to Fink, "Workmen's compensation was the first social insurance scheme to gain wide acceptance in the labor movement" on a national, as well as local, level (Fink 1973: 811). The national labor movement had historically fought for a number of other social insurance provisions, as Fink explains:

The labor movement at all levels advocated and supported maximum hour legislation for women and children, restrictions from hazardous occupations, compulsory school attendance and free textbooks for the public schools... Labor at all levels also aggressively supported convict labor reform (Fink 1973: 814).

In the mid-twentieth century, labor's goals became less ideologically broad (i.e. to raise wages or lower hours) and more focused. In large part, this focus was forced upon a labor movement whose influence and livelihood were under attack from

⁹ Derek C. Bok and John T. Dunlop argued that, following the failure of labor to ban right-to-work laws in the 1964 election (a landslide Democratic victory), "organized labor has not been able to achieve important legislative goals unless its objectives have corresponded with the sentiments of the electorate or the prevailing convictions in Congress" (Bok and Dunlop 1970: 424, cited in Saltzman 1987: 163).

many quarters of American society. For instance, unions had no choice but to fight against right-to-work laws on a number of states' ballots. This increasingly issue-oriented focus caused the labor movement to fight politically with a more communal voice than it had during the years of voluntarism, where local labor organizations were free to pick up issues imperative to only their own needs.¹⁰ Rhemus elaborates:

In state after state, unions had to fight back against the right-to-work campaigns permitted by section 14b of the [Taft-Hartley Act]. The right-to-work advocates often joined forces with those who opposed minimum-wage legislation, improvements in unemployment compensation, and in some areas the introduction and enactment of civil rights legislation. These campaigns, as much as or more than election campaigns, forced unions to create a substantial political machinery and demonstrated the gains to be made from its use (Rhemus 1984: 43).

It was this focused approach that formed the template for union political action from the middle of the twentieth century onward. Gone were the days of rewarding labor's friends and punishing labor's enemies. In their place was a clear fight, channeled through the Democratic Party in the form of pro-labor candidates and campaign contributions, against anti-union interests.

More broadly, the attack on unions by the business community with right-to-work laws and the like had a major influence on the objectives of unions. In facing a fight for its very survival, the labor movement could not afford the luxury of focusing on separate political issues, or even politics at all. The union movement needed members, and to obtain these members, it was forced to focus on organizing. In many ways, the labor movement simply ran out of resources to provide on the political front when its new objective was geared toward the basic survival of membership.

¹⁰ See Gary M. Fink, "The Rejection of Voluntarism," *ILR Review*, Jan. 1973, p. 809-811.

The Decline of Union Political Power

Though the attacks on the labor movement after Taft-Hartley helped develop a singular political voice for unions, eventually the pressure on unions won out in terms of political influence. The third quarter of the twentieth century was wrought with anti-union legislation and a decline of union political power. Labor analysts dubbed the union vote “a myth.” It may have been that labor, as an interest group, had succumbed to the “stacked deck” theory espoused by union president James B. Carey in the 1950s. Or perhaps the mythical labor vote was consequent of the shifting objectives of unions, in their new focus on organization and survival rather than political power. A number of factors must be considered in discussing this decline in union presence in politics.

A Disconnect Between the Leadership and its Members

One of the reasons analysts began to describe the union vote as “mythical” lay in the fact that union members, unlike their governing organizations, were not solidly loyal to one party. In the 1950s, two studies were performed to test whether union members’ preferences corresponded with their union’s political positions. Both studies tested Detroit’s United Automobile Workers (UAW) members – the UAW was viewed as one of the most strongly partisan (pro-Democrat) unions of the time, in addition to being one of the most controversial (Sheppard and Masters 1959: 437). In their 1952 test, Kornhauser, Sheppard and Mayer found the following:

The majority of auto workers in the Detroit area (a) vote in agreement with union recommendations; (b) express trust in these recommendations; and (c) generally approve of labor’s political activities, and desire that labor should have greater influence in politics (Kornhauser, Sheppard, and Mayer 1956).

Furthermore, the vast majority of UAW workers in 1953 identified themselves as Democratic Party members (Sheppard and Masters 1959: 438). The second study, conducted on the same union membership four years later, found similar results. As Sheppard and Masters maintain, “These data make obvious the close relationship existing between the desires of the UAW leadership and the general political behavior of the membership” (Sheppard and Masters 1959: 439).

Though the literature still suggested a link between union identification and voting for the union-backed candidate, by 1980 the labor vote had become “nonexistent” (Rhemus 1984: 46).¹¹ It is remarkable to consider that, in the 1980 presidential election, approximately 45 percent of union members voted for Ronald Reagan (Rhemus 1984: 46). Reagan in turn took a strongly anti-union stance in his attitude toward labor relations, most clearly demonstrated during the PATCO strike of 1981. Why would almost half the voting union members cast ballots for such a vehemently anti-union candidate? Perhaps the problem was the weakness of the Democratic candidate in that election. Maybe the problem was that the entire ideology of the union movement had shifted toward organizing, and that the members no longer felt an allegiance to the Democratic Party. In any event, Reagan’s taking almost half the union vote proved that labor unions simply could not manufacture the vote for their Democratic candidates. As Rhemus commented, “There can be little doubt that organized labor’s power to protect and enhance its interests through the political process reached low tide with President Reagan’s election” (Rhemus 1984:

¹¹ For information on the link between union identification and union-endorsed voting, see Charles Rhemus, “Labor and Politics in the 1980s,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 473, May 1984, pp. 40-51; also see Arthur C. Wolfe, “Trends in Labor Union Voting Behavior,” *Industrial Relations*, Oct. 1969; Robert Axelrod, “Where the Votes Come From,” *American Political Science Review*, March 1972.

41). By the mid-1980s, studies suggested that only half the union members thought that their organization was correct in its political activities.¹²

The Political Choices of Unions

Beyond a simple alignment with the ideals of the Democratic Party, the labor movement proved incredibly divisive (both within itself and to the external public) on which issues it would support politically. Internally, labor was often split in its political ideologies between the leadership and its members, lending considerable support to the idea that there was a disconnect between the two groups. During the Vietnam War, the official stance of the AFL-CIO pledged full support for the U.S. invasion. As Battista maintains:

Through each phase and every escalation of the war the Federation supported the objectives and policies of successive administrations; even the Nixon Administration's widely censured invasion of Cambodia and resumption of bombing against North Vietnam in the spring of 1970 received the full support of [the] AFL-CIO (Battista 1991: 175, citing Foner 1971: 20 and 88, and Zieger 1986: 171-172).

However, the union membership did not maintain such unwavering support for the U.S. foreign policies of the 1960s. For the vast majority of the decade, opposition to the war could be found at the lower levels of the union movement. In the late 1960s, this alternate stance spread to the higher union positions, and several labor committees arose to provide an opinion contrary to the official labor stance. Yet, the

¹² See Charles Rhemus, "Labor and Politics in the 1980s," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 473, May 1984, pp. 40-51; Derek C. Bok and John T. Dunlop, *Labor and the American Community*, 1970, pp. 419-422; Alton C. Bartlett, "How Rank and File members View Union Political Action," *Labor Law Journal*, August 1966, pp. 483-494; Norman Blume, "The Impact of a Local Union on Its Membership in a Local Election," *Western Political Quarterly*, March 1970, pp. 398-409.

AFL-CIO never changed its position of indelible support, causing a substantial and bitter division amongst organized labor (Battista 1991: 176).

A similar situation arose regarding U.S. labor's foreign policy choices in the 1980s. When Reagan chose to intervene in Central America, the AFL-CIO not only supported his policies, but its Department of International Affairs and American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) received State Department funding to "destabilize leftist and promote rightist labor movements in the region" (Batista 1991: 177, citing Barry and Preusch 1986). Yet, as with Vietnam, opposition to the AFL-CIO stance arose in the form of rank-and-file members, local and statewide committees, and some international union leaders. The National Labor Committee, comprised of several international union presidents, in the mid-1980s worked to counter Reagan's efforts in Central America through protests, resolutions, and legislative lobbying. At the 1987 AFL-CIO convention, the Committee successfully produced a vote against Reagan's aid to Nicaraguan contras; yet once again, the issue sharply (and publicly) divided the labor movement.

Some political decisions of the labor movement were more divisive externally than internally. As Coleman notes, "Since the early 1960s organized labor has behaved much like a social movement: pressing for a higher standard of living and better working conditions for less fortunate segments of our society such as blacks and the urban poor" (Coleman 1988: 687). As discussed previously, the labor movement found substantial success when it worked as part of a coalition. Many of these coalitions, however, revolved around politically divisive social issues, the most notable of which was the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

According to Coleman, "Perhaps more than any other established political interest, organized labor embraced the civil rights cause, advancing racial equality in both the workplace and through congressional legislation" (Coleman 1988: 696). The

UAW (whose pro-Democratic and controversial political positions have been discussed) led the labor charge that lobbied President Kennedy and the Congress to support voting and other civil rights (Comier and Eaton 1970). Through conferences and newsletters, the labor movement attempted to broadly educate its mostly-white membership on the pervasiveness of racial injustice (Coleman 1988: 696). Unions encouraged and participated in several sit-ins and marches on behalf of the civil rights movement.¹³

While the AFL-CIO tenuously supported these civil rights efforts, the national federation firmly sought to reduce poverty in the U.S. during this period, as emphasized in its War on Poverty efforts. The AFL-CIO sought to draft legislation and lobby Congress for support on bills that supported the War on Poverty agenda. Coleman holds, “The AFL-CIO legislation concentrated on four policy areas: compensatory education, job training for the disadvantaged, urban renewal, and subsidized central city employment” (Coleman 1988: 697). While the federation may not have fully endorsed the civil rights movement, it was strongly promoting its own socially progressive agenda, further coupling the labor movement with social movement politics.

Yet, choosing a politically progressive stance comes not without its risks – social movement politics are inherently polarizing, in that they seek to reform the status quo and challenge the current situation, whatever that may be. Few events have been as polarizing in American history as the civil rights movement in the 1960s. The union movement’s support of civil rights ran in direct confrontation to the “southern” Democratic ideologies of the time, which were rooted in zealous support for segregation, so much so that southern Democrats and non-southern Republicans

¹³ A discussion of these protest efforts can be found in Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 1981.

formed coalitions in order to block the passage of progressive civil rights legislation.¹⁴ The split in the Democratic Party between the north (promoting civil rights) and the south (promoting segregation) was especially problematic for organized labor, as its choice to align with the civil rights movement alienated the union movement from a significant portion of the Democratic Party. This alienation served to contribute to an already-difficult situation for unions in the south, where right-to-work laws were already prevalent following the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. The choice to endorse civil rights put the union movement and the southern Democrats at serious political odds.

The General Decline of Unions

It is also worth considering that the union vote fragmented and declined as a mirror of the trends in unionism as a whole during this period. With the decline in unionism came the decline in labor's political significance. The union push for reform was offered by a considerably weaker voice in 1980 than that of 1952. As Rhemus argues, "Overall, it is certainly true that labor's contribution to a successful Democratic coalition in winning elections has declined because of organized labor's reduced percentage of the work force" (Rhemus 1984: 47). This belief is supported by other scholarly work performed at the time.¹⁵

Certainly, it is fair to make the case that labor's political prowess faltered as a result of its declining power in all areas of influence. It makes logical sense that, as membership numbers fell in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (and continue to fall in the twenty-first century), political power would follow suit; why would a politician

¹⁴ For additional reading on the politics of Democrats in the South during the 1960s, see Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., *The Democratic South*, 1963.

¹⁵ See Gregory M. Saltzman, "Congressional Voting on Labor Issues: the Role of PACs," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, January 1987, p. 163.

prioritize the needs of unions over other needs, when the labor movement is less significant as a whole year by year? With density numbers dropping precipitously in the last twenty years, the motivation to adhere to labor's political demands became less strong. Couple this falling density with the fact that the membership did not appear to be following the recommendations of its union leaders – when forty-five percent of union members vote for a vehemently anti-labor presidential candidate, the already-diminishing potential vote-gain from a union endorsement becomes even smaller.

A reader would be remiss, however, to cite the drop in density as the sole cause for union decline over the past thirty years. Though the number of union members has fallen substantially, there is scant empirical evidence to suggest that falling density was the reason behind the labor movement's lack of power under the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations. It is likely that, while density levels may have played a role in the political decline, there are other factors that were just as critical. There are, in fact, several other arguments as to why labor's political power declined.¹⁶

As noted, labor's role in politics, which had been growing ever smaller beginning in the 1970s, bottomed out by the time Reagan was elected. To reach more broadly beyond the falling density argument, a common suggestion across the literature is that the main reason unions have been unable to get out the vote as substantially as in the past lies in the individual freedoms of both the unions as a whole and their individual members. Authors have been quick to argue against the perception that the backing of labor would guarantee a huge chunk of votes for a

¹⁶ For a theory that party reform caused the decline in union power, see Byron Shafer, *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*, 1983 and *Bifurcated Politics: Evolution and Reform of the National Party Convention*, 1988, by the same author; Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Representation in the American National Conventions: The Case of 1972," *British Journal of Political Science*, July 1975, pp. 265-322; Thomas Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality*, 1984, pp. 49-57. For a theory that internal fracturing caused the decline in union power, see Taylor E. Dark, "Organized Labor and Party Reform: A Reassessment," *Polity*, Summer 1996, pp. 497-520.

Democratic candidate, offering a much less certain outcome of union endorsements. Masters notes, “union organizations and their members occupy varying positions on a continuum of political opinion and activity, and...as a result the AFL-CIO cannot *guarantee* a substantial bloc of votes for candidates in national campaigns (Masters 1962: 252). In similar vein, Rhemus holds:

No political analyst has contended in recent times that the labor vote has the characteristics of a ‘machine vote,’ that is, that labor is able to produce large blocks of votes by a simple endorsement or swing those votes back and forth between two major political parties. Union members, like most Americans, when asked will state, ‘No one tells me how to vote’ (Rhemus 1984: 46).

Whether an inevitable byproduct of individual political freedoms, or the result of a number of specific problems the labor movement endured over the late-twentieth century, there can be no doubt that the once-powerful union vote held little sway in national politics in recent times.

Politics and the AFL-CIO divorce

The last quarter of the twentieth century provided little the way of substantial political gains for organized labor. At the national level, millions of dollars were contributed to a Democratic candidate, with little payoff in terms of worker protection and influence on the vote. In the 1988 presidential election, labor went to bat for Dukakis, although only just. Approximately a third of labor delegates at the 1988 Democratic convention backed Jesse Jackson, and no national-level endorsement was made until after the primary (Battista 1991: 196). Regardless, as with the 1984 backing of Walter Mondale, labor’s push for politics was viewed as a loss. Even following Bill Clinton’s 1992 electoral victory (viewed initially as a success on behalf of the U.S. worker), labor’s political presence continued to wane.

It wasn't until the Republicans took Congress in 1994 that labor went on a notable offensive against its political foes. Jacobson writes:

The Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 provoked a swift defensive response from organized labor. Stung by a precipitous loss of influence, coming on top of years of waning political clout, and threatened by the Republican agenda for labor as well as for working people more generally, the AFL-CIO began a campaign to retake the House (Jacobson 1999: 185).

The following year, the AFL-CIO completed its own reshuffling (or, one might say, an internal revolution), having elected John Sweeney as a new type of leader. Sweeney promised changes in the monolithic structure of the organization, a full-on assault against anti-labor politicians, and massive recruitment and mobilization drives, all of which fell under the umbrella of a "new voice for American labor." It was with this in mind that the new AFL-CIO chief pledged to raise \$35 million to run TV and radio ads against Republicans in their House districts, though this figure ended up at closer to \$20 million (Jacobson 1999: 185). Though the campaign was significantly effective against some Republicans (mainly freshmen), it is debatable whether the vast sums spent on the "voter education" program of 1996 was worthwhile, as the more senior Republicans held their positions and the campaign could not deliver the House for the Democrats (Jacobson 1999: 193-194).

The labor movement faced mixed results in the 2000 presidential election. Organized labor backed Al Gore against George W. Bush, and again poured substantial resources into GOTV efforts for the former Vice President. Though Gore ended up winning the popular vote, he famously lost the Electoral College vote, and thus, the presidency. However, labor scored major victories by playing a pivotal role in mobilization efforts in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and several other critical states, and twenty-six percent of voters came out of union households (Greenhouse 2004).

In the 2004 presidential election, the labor movement chose to back John Kerry. The union had initially supported fiery Vermont Congressman Howard Dean, but reneged on its endorsement when it was clear that Dean would not prevail in the Democratic primary. Sweeney declared, "This is probably one of the most important political campaigns that the labor movement has ever been involved in" (Greenhouse 2004). Kerry wound up losing to incumbent George W. Bush (whose anti-union animus was well known), in what was a demoralizing defeat for organized labor. A disillusioned national-level union movement had been facing deep criticism from within by key union leaders. These union heads (Bruce Raynor at UNITE, Andrew Stern at SEIU, and others) opined that the labor movement was siphoning money into a national-level political machine that had failed to live up to its end of the bargain. The argument was that labor, as a matter of policy, ought to shift its focus from pumping money into the Democratic Party to instead pushing for higher union densities and gains in organizing members. Following the poor 2004 outcome (although the mobilization efforts by the labor movement were once again commendable), labor's internal revolt over political contributions (amongst a multitude of other issues), became a major talking point in terms of the future of the labor movement. The culmination of this bickering came at the AFL-CIO convention in 2005, when the SEIU, Teamsters, and UFCW disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO (Raynor's UNITE-HERE organization would follow a few days later, and three others would join them). The groups' new federation, called Change To Win, proffered the "organizing model" of unionism, maintaining that grassroots mobilization of members would lead to higher density, which would lead to political leverage. Though they did not argue for the elimination of all political ties, there was a clear de-emphasis on the "bureaucracies" of the AFL-CIO.¹⁷

¹⁷ The in-fighting which led to the split, and the arguments for and against political contributions, are

Many feared that the national-level split would cause significant political fallout both in Washington and at other levels. Local labor movements expressed a strong desire to maintain their political unity, as in some cases the traditional AFL-CIO bond had provided great success in the local political arena.¹⁸ There were concerns that labor's divided house would simply expedite the decrease in political (and overall union) power, given that the labor movement was fragmented and would not fight under one name. Some feared that the two federations would begin competing for membership, looking to 'steal' each other's union bases. Currently, these fears have not come to pass. However, the recentness of the situation means that there has been only a small amount of research done into the consequences of the split, political or otherwise.

Certainly, labor should be encouraged by the current political situation – in 2006, the first election since the split, Congress swung entirely to the Democratic side, which can be considered a remarkable achievement. Yet it is not clear what role, if any, labor played in bringing about this Congressional shift. It is well-known that the American electorate ousted the Republican Congress to send a clear message regarding the Bush Administration's failure in Iraq. It is not so clear to what extent the national-level labor movement helped to achieve this outcome, as there has been no empirical work performed which raises such a question (again, this may be due to the recentness of the event itself).

The fact that major mobilization efforts were put forth by the labor movement in 2006, and that union members voted in substantial numbers during the election,

well-documented in a number of sources. The best accounts can be found in newspapers at the time, especially the writings of Steven Greenhouse at *The New York Times*. For just one such reference to the political side of the split, see Thomas B. Edsall, "Two Top Unions Split from AFL-CIO," *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2005.

¹⁸ For a detailed look into the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor's reaction to the national-level split, see the chapter on Los Angeles union efforts in this work.

might indicate that labor's political presence is currently on the rise. Also, the lengths to which current politicians have gone to court the labor vote (especially during the 2008 primaries) indicates that politicians are certainly not writing off the national-level labor movement's current role in politics, and quite likely see the labor movement as a voting block worth wooing. The recent efforts to push the Employee Free Choice Act through Congress, though ultimately unsuccessful, demonstrate that political figures are paying close attention to the interests of the labor movement.

However, it is fundamental to understand that correlation in no way represents causation – simply claiming that the labor movement is a national-level political force because union members voted in 2006, or because politicians were nearly able to pass one pro-worker piece of legislation (compared, for instance, to the multitude of pro-business legislative efforts that have successfully obtained Congressional approval) offers an optimism with which this dissertation is not yet willing to concur. As with the question of local political success (detailed explicitly in the following chapter), it would be incorrect to suggest that there is a causal relationship between a near-victory in legislation or strong union membership turnout and a revitalized political presence for unions without empirical proof.

The scarcity of research on labor's recent political efforts can be found not only when discussing the effects of the national-level labor split and the 2006 Congressional elections. In 1991, Battista noted, "The paucity of research on the politics of organized labor in the United States has been noted by a growing number of political scientists and industrial relations specialists (Battista 1991: 173). Coleman expands:

Despite American labor's societal significance, union politics does not command the scholarly attention it once did, in large part because most of the postwar literature has concluded that American trade unions behave much like other pressure groups. Comparativists have little difficulty demonstrating that

U.S. unions lack the class orientation of their European counterparts.... American unions have never mounted a serious effort to organize a political movement aimed at challenging management's right to control capital. At the same time, political behaviorists cite union electoral and lobbying activities to argue persuasively that organized labor pursues narrowly defined political goals, the principal purpose of which is to extract rank and file benefits from government, benefits otherwise unattainable through collective bargaining (Coleman 1988: 687).

It is thus not particularly surprising that there is a relative shortage of literature regarding the immediate effects of the national-level labor split on the political presence of the union movement. On the other hand, Coleman appears to be suggesting that this paucity of research stems from the fact that, essentially, everything that needs to be known about labor's role in politics is already known. On this point, Coleman is incorrect, especially given the quite reasonable assumption that the AFL-CIO split will lead to significant changes in the future role that labor unions play in the political process. Additionally, one must consider the number of articles that have been published since Coleman's work in 1988 that have provided new and interesting contributions to the literature on labor's role in politics.

Summary

Samuel Gompers' original vision of the AFL's political role was one of flexibility and voluntarism – a system by which the labor movement could adapt to the uniqueness of the American political system, while wielding the power to reward its friends and punish its enemies. This approach came in stark contrast to that of the more radical sects of the American labor movement, who would push for an integration of labor behind a worker-friendly ideology.

It was not until the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal of the 1930s that labor laid itself in the bed of the Democrats. When the Taft-Hartley Act was passed in 1947, labor vigorously asserted itself as a key special interest group,

recognizing the importance of battling anti-union legislation, which came most notably in the form of right-to-work laws. The political power of unions waned with the movement itself, though not necessarily as a product of this decreasing density. Unions became less and less likely to churn out the vote for Democratic candidates, with the low-point occurring in the 1980 election as almost half the union membership countrywide voted for Ronald Reagan. It was a case of more of the same for much of the final years of the twentieth century, with union membership falling and political action remaining largely ineffective, the union vote dubbed “nonexistent” by labor observers (although unions did claim success in helping elect Bill Clinton, though his political policies could not be described as overtly pro-union by any means). In recent years, the 2005 split in the labor movement threatened to hurt labor’s political efforts, especially in terms of mobilization. However, it is unclear whether labor has faced any political damage as a result; it could be argued that, following the 2006 Congressional elections and the efforts to support the Employee Free Choice Act, as well as the courting of the labor vote by Presidential candidates in 2008, that the labor movement is considered a political player once again. Yet the sense of optimism regarding mobilization lacks any empirical proof that would connect labor’s political role to mobilization success in 2006 independent of other major vote factors; the optimism regarding legislation lacks particular foundation given that the Employee Free Choice Act has not yet been approved (though this may change in coming years). Finally, it might be argued that the courting of the labor vote in 2008 is not dissimilar from the wooing of workers in other recent elections, wherein politicians subsequently reneged on their promises and enacted anti-worker legislation.

Yet, if there is one bright spot for the future of the labor movement’s political efforts, it can be found at the local level, specifically in Los Angeles. No city has more closely followed the national-level political trends historically than the City of

Angels. However, within the past decade, the Los Angeles labor movement has become, some argue, the center of political activity for the city.

This political revitalization of Los Angeles begs the question: can a similar event occur at the national level? Some might argue that this revitalization has already occurred, in a manner mirroring the local level success of L.A. Yet before a connection can be made between labor's rise to prominence in Los Angeles and the possibility of a similar trend at the national-level, it is important to consider that a number of interactions between leadership changes, demographic shifts, and events particular only to Los Angeles occurred to create this local-level political revitalization. This specific context will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FEDERATION OF LABOR

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor is regarded by many close to the union movement as perhaps most powerful political force in the city, if not beyond (e.g. Rodriguez 1998; Milkman 2002: 123, 2006: 131-133; Milkman and Wong 2002; Cooper 2003; Frank and Wong 2004: 158; Meyerson 2003; 2005a; 2005b; 2006; Zahniser 2006a; Matthews 2007). One author has called the Federation, "...just about the most effective get-out-the-vote operation in the land on behalf of progressive candidates and causes, and, yes, lesser-evil Democrats" (Meyerson 2005c) and "the best left-of-center political operation in the country" (Meyerson 2005d). The Federation holds such prominence that one politician quit his post after just two years to lead the organization, having been elected (some say) on the back of its endorsement in the first place. Over the past several years, the Federation has garnered unchallenged notoriety as an entity capable of mobilizing masses of potential voters to increase turnout for endorsed candidates.

However, the political prominence enjoyed by the Los Angeles labor movement is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until the end of the twentieth century, the County Federation was anything but a political force. How did this shift happen? This work answers the question by tracing the contextual history of the Los Angeles labor movement, the County Federation alone, and the city itself, to offer a narrative explanation for the perceived electoral success enjoyed by the organization. The main argument of this work is that the rise of the Federation must not be discussed as an event independent of the shifting demographics of Los Angeles during the 1980s, nor can it be meaningfully considered without noting the changing union leadership trends occurring within the city in the late twentieth century (for instance, the ascension of progressive Latino organizers to the upper echelons of the local labor movement). This work looks to explain the Federation's role in local politics by first offering a

brief account of the organization's historical role in politics, then tracing the complex events which led to the perception of Federation dominance in local politics, and finally by noting the recent leadership changes of the labor group. While much has been written regarding the Los Angeles labor movement's success in general, there are only scattered analyses of the local union movement's shifting role in politics. This work intends to wed the previous literature on the subject with a critique of the more recent political events involving Los Angeles unions.

An Inglorious Past

Twentieth-century unionism in Los Angeles began, quite literally, with a bang. On October 1, 1910, in the midst of a strike by metal trades workers, the building of *The Los Angeles Times* was dynamited and caught fire, causing at least twenty deaths. Two union members, James and John McNamara, were implicated in the bombing. Harrison Gray Otis, former Union Army Lieutenant and staunch Republican, owned the paper and through it had expressed a vehemently anti-union viewpoint. The bombing of the building caused uproar both in Los Angeles and amongst labor unions, who believed the two men were framed. As the evidence mounted, however, famed attorney Charles Darrow, hired by Samuel Gompers to defend the McNamara brothers, convinced the defendants to plead guilty and avoid execution. One could say that unionism in early-twentieth-century Los Angeles was doomed the second the McNamara brothers entered their guilty pleas.

For many years following the 1910 bombing, Los Angeles unions were considered both politically and organizationally anonymous.¹⁹ Ruth Milkman, director of the UCLA Institute for Labor and Employment and professor of sociology

¹⁹ A detailed narrative account of Los Angeles' early- to mid-twentieth-century labor history can be found in Ruth Milkman's *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement*, chapter 1 and 2, specifically p. 26-40 and 92-97.

at UCLA, explains, “For most of the twentieth century, L.A. had a reputation as a ‘company town,’ where the powers that be were intransigently anti-union” (Milkman 2003: 104, Milkman 2006: 26). At one point Los Angeles did have a relatively strong manufacturing base, though this collapsed over the years and left only low-wage, non-union industries such as food-processing and garments. Los Angeles had played host to a number of Fortune 500 companies, but the “oligarchy of the downtown business interests” became heavily involved in mergers and closures, leaving for the most part only entertainment conglomerates and land developers (Frank and Wong 2004: 155).

In the political arena as well, Los Angeles unions found scant success for most of the twentieth century. Perhaps consequently, there has been very little written in terms of the historical context surrounding Los Angeles unions’ political aspirations. Any related literature (e.g. Greenstone 1977; Frank and Wong 2004; Milkman 2006) has focused on this aspect of Los Angeles labor only peripherally. As such, this work has pieced together a discussion of much of the early political involvement of Los Angeles unions from only a handful of sources.

The literature cited above maintains that the Los Angeles labor movement, more than other large cities, historically embodied the pluralistic, somewhat apolitical stance of the AFL-CIO, taking the role of influence, instead of dominance or activism in the local political arena. Disorganization played a critical role in the development of labor in Los Angeles politics. Due to the social fluidity of massive immigration, there was no entrenched, stable local working-class population that could be harnessed by either the union movement itself or a single political party. The more politically-oriented CIO had little power amongst unions in the city – consider that no CIO official held a full-time policy-making position in any of the city’s central bodies in 1962.

Following the trends of their broader ideologies at the time, if unions were involved in politics it was generally out of strict self-interest. For instance, unions provided money, campaign workers, and other resources to back liberal school-board members in 1955 and 1957, and again in 1965. However, one of the main reasons for their support was the fact that union leaders were concerned that conservatives would take an anti-union stance and affect the school system's personnel policies. The literature (e.g. Greenstone 1977) has called these policies of political involvement for only the sake of self-interest "limited-goal pluralism."

Limited-goal pluralism continued throughout the 1960s for L.A. unions. Though in 1959 the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor had been established after the merge of six local AFL central labor councils, there was little change in the policies of union separation. For example, in 1961, the Los Angeles Committee on Political Education (or COPE) endorsed Norris Poulson for mayor, a conservative former congressman. Labor had sided against Poulson in 1953 when he ran successfully for mayor, because he had opposed public housing and backed the Taft-Hartley veto override. The L.A. COPE decided to back him in 1961 because support by the press, politicians, and business leaders made him an almost certain winner. However, unionists had no interest in supporting a man they had opposed only eight years earlier; one COPE leader maintained, "We had the wrong horse and couldn't sell him to our members." Poulson ended up losing to Sam Yorty by a sizeable margin. When in 1958 the Los Angeles labor movement permanently aligned itself with the Democratic Party over right-to-work referendums amongst other issues, the trend of choosing politics of union self-interest over politics for the collective good of labor persisted.

When state assembly speaker Jesse Unruh, the dominant Democrat in southern California, attempted to unite labor's position in Los Angeles politics in the 1960s, it was an unequivocal failure. In the words of Greenstone:

Despite Unruh's tactical brilliance and unequalled influence in the California legislature, he could neither impose unity on a divided labor movement nor offset its gratitude to his political opponents who operated as independent political entrepreneurs (Greenstone 1977: 164).

In 1964, Los Angeles unions endorsed Alan Cranston's bid for the Senate rather than the candidate backed by Unruh, Pierre Salinger. In deciding to go against Unruh, who sought badly to unify the labor movement around his chosen candidates, the labor movement established a firm tradition of standing alongside incumbent politicians friendly to its efforts. Labor's challenges to Unruh demonstrated that the local union movement would behave independently in the political arena whenever individual gains were on offer, again congruent with its broader ideologies of political self-interest.

Los Angeles labor's first foray into progressive politics came in 1969, when the County Federation endorsed Tom Bradley's (eventually unsuccessful) mayoral campaign. However, after Bradley won in 1973, the County Federation chose to take up a position of insider politics, opting for a behind-the-scenes approach to garner political influence. While the method could be seen as generally successful (labor exerted political power in several development deals), the insider role meant that labor remained tied to its role of mere influence, and had no established political mobilization capacity (Frank and Wong 2004). Similar to the overall structure of the local unions at the time, labor's role in local politics lacked real authority or independence; this situation would change only following a confluence of factors in the 1980s and 1990s.

A Redefining of the Political Landscape

Los Angeles' shifting demographics in the late twentieth century were mirrored by the change occurring in the local labor movement. In the realm of local politics and in key positions within the locals, the 'old guard' of largely middle-class, largely non-Latino white, and largely traditionalist leaders gave way to a group of generally Latino organizers who had risen through the ranks of their respective unions.²⁰ Experts close to the local labor movement suggest that these new leaders had a much more progressive outlook on the labor movement, and garnered the respect and support of their constituents due to their already strong ethnic and cultural ties with the local union members, who could better relate to their leadership.²¹ At HERE Local 11, for instance, Maria Elena Durazo, a Latina who had risen out of the rank-in-file worker population, was elected president and substantially reformed the union's ideology and focus.

Durazo and other progressive leaders began contacting potential voters in accordance with Marshall Ganz's occasional voter theory of mobilization (Frank and Wong 2004). This theory suggested that mobilizing parties were best served by focusing on voters with intermittent turnout histories, as this group would be the most receptive to a vote-getting attempt. The theory runs contrary to some political science work, which suggests that mobilization groups should target likely voters in that that these voters need only be persuaded regarding candidate choice, rather than needing persuasion to vote at all. However, the occasional voter theory does make sense when

²⁰ For further information on the leadership changes that occurred in Los Angeles unions during the mid-1980s, see Ruth Milkman's *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement*, chapter 3, specifically p. 114-118.

²¹ Opinions attributed to those "close to the labor movement" or to "labor experts" come from several sources, notably interviews with: County Federation staff and community-based mobilizing strategists; Larry Frank and Ruth Milkman; Melanie Hallahan at the California Labor Federation; an SEIU representative; and Nancy Cleeland at the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition, these opinions have been espoused in print, namely in the works of Harold Meyerson, Larry Frank and Kent Wong, and Ruth Milkman, and in several newspaper articles.

a mobilization group is looking to expand its base of likely voters, or if the act of turning out to vote is highly correlated with the selection of the endorsed candidate (in other words, the candidate choice becomes implicit in the voting act). Ganz, an ex-board member of the United Farmworkers' Union (UFW), had applied this theory to successful mobilization campaigns in the early 1980s in Southern California, and worked closely with Durazo and others in the 1988 Campaign for Participation and Democracy (Frank and Wong 2004).

Persistent with the occasional voter model, unions began pushing for electoral candidates friendly to their cause. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, labor backed several politicians and performed mobilization drives in major elections – additionally, following its support of rallies in opposition to Proposition 187, labor allied itself with the Latino community.²² Labor-friendly academics and journalists assert that this inclusion of Latinos in the political process, interwoven with Hispanic-led union campaigns, set the stage for the decade of political action that occurred in the 1990s and continues in 2005. Harold Meyerson (2003) maintained, “Unions have become the primary vehicles through which immigrant communities are socialized into American politics. Nowhere has this process gone further or faster than in Los Angeles.”

Miguel Contreras and the Labor-Latino Alliance

Any elucidation of labor's role in Los Angeles politics must consider the influence of Miguel Contreras. Contreras came from the UFW to organize HERE Local 11 alongside Maria Elena Durazo in the 1980s when the hotel union fell into

²² Proposition 187 was a generally anti-immigrant piece of legislation put forth by California governor Pete Wilson in 1994. The labor movement helped organize rallies against the legislation; over 100,000 demonstrators, mostly Latinos, marched on City Hall with the help of labor and other groups (Frank and Wong 2004).

receivership. Contreras brought with him not only a fresh approach to union organizing, but also his confederates at the UFW, who, along with Durazo, created a paradigm of strong Latino-based influence at the top, as well as new and innovative strategies for success. Their efforts, along with others, provided for political victories in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Contreras accepted a position as the head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor in 1995, where he remained until his sudden death in May 2005. Though Miguel Contreras left behind an organization nationally acclaimed for its success in the political and social arenas, and a legacy of triumph both within the local labor movement and on a national level, the County Federation was a shadow of its current self when he took over. Marc Cooper explains:

When he took over the County Fed from his previous post in the Hotel Workers union in the mid-'90s, L.A. labor was flat on its fanny. Since then its membership has zoomed sixfold to more than 800,000. Some of the largest successful organizing drives in recent history have been concluded under his watch: Thousands of low-wage home health-care workers and mostly immigrant janitors have been brought under the union umbrella. On the political front...labor has become the ground infantry (and often the behind-the-scenes bank) for a benchful of often very progressive...Democratic elected officials (Cooper 2005).

Contreras latched onto the Latino backlash to Proposition 187 in order to kick-start the County Federation in the mid-1990s. In the midst of the Proposition 187 outrage, Contreras began supporting pro-labor, pro-immigrant politicians in local and statewide precincts. Contreras himself stated:

When we helped new Latino citizens with voter participation, we realized that working on immigration issues was the best way to build relationships with the Latino community. So we spent a lot of time and financial resources in making that bridge in Los Angeles. We cultivated the new immigrant Latino vote, and today the labor-Latino alliance in Los Angeles is a very powerful mechanism (Milkman and Wong 2002: 56).

Concerning Contreras's ability to garner support, through the County Federation, for labor-friendly politicians, Milkman and Wong hold:

Under Miguel's leadership, the L.A. County Fed has also been a major force in city politics, mobilizing voters, among them the burgeoning ranks of the city's Latino citizens, at the polls as well as on the picket lines. Most of the candidates whom the Fed has supported in recent years in races for local, statewide, and even national office have been successfully elected (Milkman and Wong 2002: 52).

In 1996, the County Federation supported six candidates in state legislature races, backed by \$160,000 from union campaign contributions. Five of the six won their races. Further, in head-to-head battles with Republican mayor Richard Riordan, labor-backed candidates won the majority of seats to the city charter reform commission. Contreras and the County Federation also backed former SEIU official Gil Cedillo in his successful efforts to gain a seat on the state assembly. In 1998, the Federation waged an all-out battle to defeat Proposition 226, which would have banned the collection of union dues for political means without individual member authorizations. During the 2000 election, Contreras and the Federation targeted several seats, most notably backing Hilda Solis over Marty Martinez, a pro-labor Democrat. Solis was deemed more of a 'labor warrior' (Contreras distinguished between 'labor warriors' and 'labor statesmen' in his categorization of political officials) than Martinez, and, with the Federation's support, Solis defeated the Congressman in the Democratic Primary.

The 2001 Mayoral Race

During the 2001 mayoral race in Los Angeles, both the winner (James Hahn) and his opponent (Antonio Villaraigosa) supported the local union movement, though the latter was considered more of a 'labor warrior' than the former, especially

considering that Villaraigosa had risen from the ranks of the United Teachers Los Angeles union (UTLA) and was closely tied to Maria Elena Durazo, Miguel Contreras, and others influential within the labor movement. Villaraigosa was strongly supported by the County Federation and had an opportunity to become the first Latino mayor in 129 years. Though he lost (by fewer than 40,000 votes), the candidates enjoyed the highest Latino voter turnout ever in the city. According to Antonio Gonzalez of the Southwest Voter Registration Project, “About 20.5 percent of all registered voters are Latino, and 22.8 percent of all votes cast were by Latinos. It’s a very important figure” (Lopez 2001). Other statistics support Gonzalez’s optimism: in the mayoral election, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Latinos accounted for 22 percent of the voter turnout (confirming Gonzalez’ number), compared with 15 percent in 1997 and 10 percent in 1993. Matea Gold, writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, maintained, “Villaraigosa’s loss...overshadowed clear signs that the long-delayed political power of Latino voters continues to expand” (Gold 2001). The implication appeared to be that, while Latinos remained a minority of voters in city and state elections, their voice was ever-growing and continued to gain strength, with Villaraigosa’s 2001 loss firmly entrenching Latinos as a key demographic in the political arena of the city.

One of the most pivotal events in the success of Los Angeles labor movement’s mobilization efforts commenced in 1994 when OLAW, or the Organization of Los Angeles Workers, was created. This group was organized as a coordination effort between leaders of SEIU Local 1877, the Justice for Janitors campaign, HERE Local 11, SEIU 434B, and Union of Needletrades, Textiles, and Industrial Employees (UNITE); its essential goal was to build and maintain Latino-based precinct organization in local politics. Union leaders and employers would agree to a ‘loss-time’ stipulation; workers would be paid for days that they did not

work at their day jobs. This allowed coalition workers to concentrate their efforts on making OLAW a success and organizing their local precincts, without having to worry about losing wages. OLAW workers could invest full-time into their precincts, which led them to become extremely familiar with the local politicians and their supporters.

During Villaraigosa's 2001 mayoral campaign, OLAW targeted 75,000 Latino voters with inconsistent voting records and hoped to get 50,000 to the polls; Maria Elena Durazo claimed that the precincts targeted by OLAW "were voting at twice the rate of past elections" (Tobar, Cleeland, and McDonnell 2001). Again this can be related to the belief that the success of Latinos in politics, the shifting demographics of the city, and the changing leadership trends of the labor movement cannot be taken separately – union leaders were working to put pro-labor politicians into power, and many of these politicians had either come from a union background or had strong labor sympathies; the vast majority were Latino and would be elected by the seemingly active, relatively new immigrant community in Los Angeles.

In the 2001 mayoral race, aside from his playing what Villaraigosa's supporters claimed was dirty politics,²³ James Hahn won the election largely due to unwavering support for another minority group – African-Americans in South Los Angeles (formerly known as South Central). The black community felt allegiance to Hahn because of the role his father, Kenneth Hahn, played in the 1960s. Kenneth Hahn sat on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for forty years (1952-1992) and his ardent support of civil rights brought him (and subsequently his son) great respect from the black community, especially in South Los Angeles. Though the area of South L.A. has become less homogeneously African-American (changing demographics have meant that Latinos now make up a substantial portion of voters in

²³ Villaraigosa's supporters claim that Hahn played to the racial tensions of the city in his campaign by associating Villaraigosa with the grainy image of a crack pipe in an advertisement run close to the day of the election.

the area), Villaraigosa could not make strong inroads with voters in the region in 2001, which may have cost him the election.

After his 2001 mayoral loss, Villaraigosa remained a strong force in local Los Angeles politics. In March 2003, the former mayoral candidate won election to the City Council in District 14. Local labor experts maintain that this victory was strongly influenced by the help of County Federation support in increasing the vote of Latinos and other minority groups. Villaraigosa's mayoral candidacy in 2001 and his City Council victory two years later convinced many experts and local media (e.g. Cooper 2003) that the labor movement had established itself as a major player in the local political arena. It was also intimated at the time that Villaraigosa would run again for higher office, thus setting the stage for his 2005 mayoral candidacy.

The 2005 Mayoral Race

Miguel Contreras died of a heart attack just days before the 2005 mayoral election was to take place in Los Angeles. To say that the labor movement faced a dilemma in the mayoral race could be an understatement. Los Angeles labor leaders, and Contreras in particular, faced a situation that in many ways mirrored the rift that would eventually undo the national-level AFL-CIO that same summer. In the 2001 campaign, the County Federation had strongly backed Villaraigosa, as discussed earlier. Hahn, the winner, had been generally good to labor in the intervening four-year period, holding firm on his promises to provide unions with generous city contracts. Hahn's favors came at a price, however – the beneficiary union leaders were expected to offer reciprocal endorsements for the politician when it came time for re-election. Meanwhile, the County Federation had maintained its alliance with Villaraigosa, backing him in the aforementioned 2003 City Council run.

When Villaraigosa announced his intention to run again for mayor, the Federation faced an unusual dilemma. Would they endorse the candidate they considered one of their own, a ‘labor warrior’ whom they had championed in years prior? Or, would they return to their historical roots and back the incumbent, a Democrat and ‘labor statesman’ who had garnered support from the more traditional blue-collar unions by offering them favorable city contracts?

One of the biggest concerns of the County Federation, and some might say the crucial battle the candidates faced for the Federation’s support, occurred when plans were announced to potentially expand Los Angeles International Airport (commonly known as LAX). Villaraigosa was opposed to the expansion effort, arguing that the international hub was already overcrowded, and that development funds should be put into enhancing the regional airports surrounding LAX, such as Long Beach and Ontario. Hahn was strongly in favor of the LAX expansion, and promised to provide union construction jobs for the effort.

The LAX debate effectively split Los Angeles labor in two; the progressive, service-based unions supported Villaraigosa, while the traditional, blue-collar representatives (such as construction and building trades) pushed for Hahn. The incumbent needed a two-thirds majority to garner full support of the County Federation, and Hahn achieved his goal by promising union jobs at the to-be-expanded airport.

When the dust settled, the County Federation threw its weighty endorsement behind Hahn, the candidate they had fought ferociously four years earlier. Villaraigosa was left without labor’s financial backing, a not-insignificant funding source. Yet all was not well in the local labor camp – the 28,000 member teachers’ union, out of which Villaraigosa had risen, remained firmly allied with the challenger. Progressive media members were angered by the decision, and branded Contreras’

move nonsensical at best. Community organizations, with whom labor had forged a successful partnership in the preceding campaigns, stuck with their guns and backed Villaraigosa. Los Angeles labor had created for itself an incredibly difficult situation.

In the days directly preceding his death, Contreras faced serious challenges from both sides of labor's fence. On the one hand, he was seen as having compromised his powerful federation in favor of a few breadcrumbs thrown out by the incumbent. On the other hand, rumors persisted that, though labor had backed Hahn in name, the County Federation was very much sitting out the mayoral campaign in terms of mobilization efforts. Labor experts maintained that the mobilizing agents who had worked so fiercely to support Villaraigosa in 2001 were nowhere to be seen for Hahn in 2005. Some even went so far as to suggest that many of the local labor leaders, who had ostensibly backed Hahn under the auspices of the County Federation endorsement, were in fact pushing for Villaraigosa. Harold Meyerson (2005b) provides a summation of the events that transpired in the days before Contreras' death:

Sure, the County Fed and most of its member unions endorsed Jim Hahn, but activists from such key locals as Local 11 of the Hotel Employees waged an unofficial but very effective get-out-the-vote campaign among 80,000 sometime voters in the Latino community — and not to the advantage of Jim Hahn. County Fed leader Miguel Contreras...understood that the campaign the Fed had waged for Villaraigosa four years ago resounded still, that there was no way the labor vote would go to Hahn...which was fine with Miguel, who remained a Villaraigosa buddy and backer. One mutual friend told me at Villaraigosa's election-night celebration that in their last conversation before he died, Miguel had asked him, 'When's the earliest on election night that I can come over to Antonio's party? 10:30?' (Meyerson 2005b).

Local 11 of the Hotel Employees was not the only organization running mobilization drives for Villaraigosa. Anthony Thigpenn, a South Los Angeles community activist who had aligned his progressive organizations with the Federation in prior local races, left his position to become a field mobilization organizer for

Villaraigosa. With Thigpenn's help, and with Hahn having incurred the ire of black voters by firing the African-American police chief, Bernard Parks, the challenger was able to garner a significant share of black voters in South Los Angeles. His 17-point victory over the incumbent on election day owed in no small part to the work of Thigpenn, the opposition mobilization efforts by HERE Local 11 and UTLA leaders, and perhaps most tellingly, the apparent inaction of the County Federation following its endorsement of Hahn, seen in some quarters as an implicit backing of Villaraigosa in all but the official endorsement.

The Post-Contreras Years

When Miguel Contreras suffered a heart attack and was ushered to Centinela Freeman Memorial Hospital on May 6, 2005, the waiting room swelled with grieving politicians and labor leaders.²⁴ As the number of mourners increased, a series of meeting-rooms were opened to contain the overflow of grieving acquaintances. As then-mayor James Hahn, recently endorsed by the Federation, sat with the number of other politicians paying their respects, three individuals were ushered into a private conference room, away from the other mourners: these VIPs would shape Los Angeles labor from that moment on. The three individuals were Antonio Villaraigosa (then just days away from becoming the new mayor), Contreras' wife Maria Elena Durazo (then head of HERE Local 11) and a man named Martin Ludlow.

Martin Ludlow

At the time, Ludlow was two years removed from a successful City Council election, into which the Federation (allied with Anthony Thigpenn's community

²⁴ Much of the discussion of the post-Contreras years comes from articles written by David Zahniser (2006), Harold Meyerson (2005d; 2006) and Ruth Milkman (2006), and from interviews with County Federation staff and labor mobilization strategists.

organizations and others) poured massive resources and run a successful mobilization campaign on his behalf. Having served as the political director for the County Federation prior to his running for office, Ludlow was the prime choice to take over the leadership of labor's powerful federation. Immediately following Contreras' death, Ludlow's name appeared on the short-list of candidates for the secretary-treasurer position. It was expected that Ludlow would be elected to the position unanimously, but in the wake of a national-level split at the AFL-CIO, two candidates challenged Ludlow for the position. Eventually the two withdrew their applications for the position, and Ludlow was named Contreras' successor on July 10, 2005.

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor that Ludlow inherited was far different from that which Contreras took over in the mid-1990s. In nine years, Contreras had turned the County Federation from an organization immersed in insider politics into one of the most powerful political machines in Los Angeles. The media (e.g. Zahniser 2006a) had begun to describe Contreras as a 'king-maker,' whose ring demanded to be kissed in order for an individual to garner any political power. Yet the local labor federation was in an immense state of flux – the County Federation had, much like in the 1960s, 'backed the wrong horse' in the latest (2005) election with its endorsement of Hahn, which was a move that threatened to divide the local movement at its core and had offered a rare return to the traditional historical politics of self-interest and incumbency support. On the national level, the AFL-CIO was embroiled in an ugly divorce, and there was major uncertainty as to how the local federations would handle the split.

Immediately following the national-level AFL-CIO split (occurring just after the contentious local mayoral race), Ludlow remained adamant that his federation would not split apart. To his credit, Ludlow managed to help talk the national-level representatives into finding a way to allow their local federations remain intact, even

though the national federation had been split in two (Meyerson 2006). With a renewed sense of security for his union, Ludlow chose to go head-to-head with the Arnold Schwarzenegger over his 2005 special election reforms. Labor organizations across the state geared up to fight Proposition 75, which, like Proposition 226 before it, would prohibit public employee unions from collecting dues from their members for political contributions without prior consent from each individual. This proposition was seen by many at the time as a clear battle over the future of political action for unions in California. Unions across the state poured over \$100 million into stopping the proposition, and sent 4,000 walkers on an Election Day get-out-the-vote campaign in Los Angeles County alone.

Two previous special elections had occurred in California over the preceding thirty years, in 1979 and 1993. In both of these, turnout had been approximately 37 percent. The goal of the union movement in California was to boost turnout to 40 percent – at this percentage, union consultants believed that enough votes would come in to overturn Proposition 75. When all the votes were counted, the final statewide turnout number was 47.3 percent. Proposition 75 had been voted down, with a final tally of 46.4 percent ‘yes’ to 53.6 percent ‘no.’ The 7.2 percent margin was higher than that of the ‘no’ vote on a largely identical referendum sent forth in 1998, which was voted down by a margin of 6.6 percent. It has been argued (e.g. Meyerson 2005e) that Ludlow’s organization played a critical role in harnessing the vote in Los Angeles County, which outvoted wealthier (and whiter) Orange County by 3 percent in the election.

The dust had barely settled on the unequivocal success that had been the November 2005 special election when Ludlow’s promising career came to an abrupt halt. In February 2006, Martin Ludlow was accused of corruption stemming from his 2003 City Council election campaign. The accusations were that Ludlow diverted

union funds and workers from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99 (which represents public school workers) into his political campaign during the 2003 primary election. As part of a major corruption investigation into the practices of SEIU Local 99, Ludlow was found to have misused union resources, and chose to resign his post at the County Federation. Only eight months after taking over for the deceased Miguel Contreras, Martin Ludlow, viewed once as the next great Federation leader, was left disgraced and jobless.

Maria Elena Durazo

Into the void left by the newly-departed Ludlow stepped the other person in that small conference room the night of Contreras' death: Maria Elena Durazo. Contreras' widow could have taken the secretary-treasurer job immediately following her husband's death, but chose to remain in her post as the head of HERE Local 11. John Wilhelm, the national leader of UNITE-HERE, was considering challenging John Sweeney for AFL-CIO presidency, and, had he been successful, Durazo would possibly have taken over his position. With the national-level turmoil that ensued over the following months, the opportunity never arose for Durazo to take on Wilhelm's role. After Ludlow's unexpected departure from the County Federation, the time was right for Durazo, and she accepted the position her husband had once held. The interaction between herself, Ludlow, and Villaraigosa should not be underestimated – Ludlow and Durazo both held extremely close ties to Villaraigosa.

Thus far, Durazo's reign has been relatively successful. She has restored labor's positive public image in Los Angeles following Ludlow's departure. Amongst city voters, authors (e.g. Matthews 2007) note the distinctive brand advantage labor has gained over the local Los Angeles business community. In fact, it has been found that unions in Los Angeles enjoy more public support at the moment than most other

areas of the state and country – in one poll, 55 percent of Los Angeles city voters agreed with the idea that unions were the driving force behind middle-class interests in the U.S. Durazo has also been a key player in a citywide effort to fight a referendum that would block expansion of a living wage ordinance to hotel workers at Los Angeles International Airport. Working closely with the mayor, Durazo has focused her efforts on challenging ‘corporate greed,’ and on maintaining the economic interests of union members through pressuring local politicians.

Further, the County Federation has continued to remain an immensely powerful political force in the eyes of many. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted in early 2008, “the labor movement nationally is struggling to maintain membership, but experts say Los Angeles has been a bulwark, with strong union ties to elected officials including Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa” (White 2008). With no state or federal elections planned in 2007, Durazo and the Federation used the year to send across a pre-emptive message to voters for 2008, so that the mobilization efforts of potential voters in 2008 will resonate more strongly. In all, 2007 was a relatively quiet year for the Federation and Durazo, which came most likely as a welcome relief for the labor organization considering the tumult it has endured over the previous few years.

Conclusion

This work sought to explain the political prominence enjoyed by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor by tracing its historical role in the political arena, and by tying its success to the changing demographics of the city as a whole, and connecting it with the shift in leadership in the local union movement in the 1908s and 1990s. To recap, the Los Angeles labor movement had been politically splintered and individualistic for most of the twentieth century, exerting influence but not dominance on local politics. Following significant leadership changes for unions in the 1980s

(mirroring the increased Latino presence in the city as a whole), the political activism of labor grew stronger. But it was not until the late 1990s and, most tellingly, the twenty-first century, when it can be argued that labor became a major player in local politics.

The political shift gathered momentum with the election of Miguel Contreras as the secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. His nine-year reign led to numerous electoral victories for progressive Latinos (amongst others), again consequent of the shifting dynamic of both the local union leadership and the city as a whole. Though there were some instances of failure during his tenure, Contreras found more success in nine years than labor had enjoyed throughout the preceding century – the culmination of these successes occurred when progressive Latino unionist Antonio Villaraigosa was elected mayor in 2005.

Emblematic of the difficulties faced by labor even as its influence rose, Villaraigosa's election was considered technically as a loss for the local labor movement, which had fragmented and backed the incumbent, James Hahn. Though 'labor warrior' Villaraigosa had won the election, the union movement had just days earlier suffered a major blow, with Contreras' death from heart failure. Into his shoes would step Martin Ludlow (who would resign eight months later amid corruption charges) and Contreras' widow, Maria Elena Durazo. Durazo had been a key player in the original ascension of progressive union leadership in Los Angeles, where in the mid-1980s the 'old guard' of white, traditionalist union leaders had been replaced by progressive, mostly Latino, minorities. Durazo, along with other leaders (such as Contreras and Villaraigosa) had helped reshape the local labor movement into a progressive organizing force. Durazo now sits at the helm of one of the most powerful political organizations in the country, which was born in the most unlikely of places, on the back of a confluence of factors.

It is critical to consider that the story of Los Angeles unions' rise to local political prominence lacks any empirical justification. There is seemingly no opinion that counters these labor optimists; the business community in Los Angeles was for many years silent on the matter, and anti-union politicians spoke only of the dangers of a too-powerful labor movement, associating unions with corrupt "bosses." Recently, businesses have appeared to accept that the County Federation is a political powerhouse; some mainstream sources, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, also seem to accept labor's strong role in politics, publishing articles tacitly endorsing suggestions that the union movement is free to push for its own political reforms. Yet the question remains: do these non-labor sources accept that unions are politically powerful based on their own informed opinions, or based on a perception asserted by the labor movement which has permeated into the mainstream and opposition? Consider that most of the first-hand literature offered as evidence for labor's success has come either from academics closely tied to the movement, or from progressive journalists (as cited throughout this work), subsequently followed by echoes from other sources. Not only is an empirical test of labor's effects on local politics ideal in order to validate the praise accorded to the Federation, but it is necessary if the local labor movement wishes to be deemed a major force in the political arena without any consideration of bias.

It is also important to ask whether the perception of labor's political influence in Los Angeles is a beneficial. Those in favor of a strong labor movement would argue that the perceived power of the County Federation to influence local politics benefits the labor movement in particular and workers as a whole. Consider for a moment, however, a competing argument: labor's power in local politics, in theory (if not yet positive proof), provided the impetus for Martin Ludlow to run for office, and

then to step down after just two years to run the Federation. There have been suggestions that Ludlow did not serve his constituents well; Zahniser maintains:

To many of his peers at City Hall, Ludlow had shown little interest in the drudgery that comes with representing the 10th District, from responding to constituent phone calls to addressing the avalanche of mundane requests like removal of an illegally dumped couch. Staff turnover in his office was not uncommon. Just scheduling a meeting was an uphill climb. On some days, callers had trouble getting a live person to pick up the phone (Zahniser 2006b).

Ludlow, as discussed, was subsequently indicted for diverting union resources to political efforts, in some ways conforming to the stereotypical association between the labor movement and corruption. It is not the aim of this dissertation to answer whether a politically powerful labor movement helps or hurts either the city or unions in general. It is most important to recognize that the labor movement is perceived to fundamentally influence turnout levels and vote outcomes in political races. The following chapter will empirically test whether this perception is accurate.

CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF FEDERATION EFFORTS

This dissertation attempts to fill the quantitative gap that currently exists in any discussion of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor's rise to prominence in the local political arena. This chapter turns to an explanation of the data to be used in the quantitative analysis, and determines the correct methodology that must be identified to achieve valid results.

The Placement of This Study in the Union Mobilization Literature

Much has been written in terms of the contributory factors to voting behavior; the literature overview in Chapter 2 highlighted the psychological approach taken by scholars at the University of Michigan, and delved into the cognitive- and economic-oriented refinements developed by other scholars. While the dissertation has thus far traced both the general political science literature on the subject and the contextual history of the County Federation in politics, it has yet to offer a specific literature review addressing the particular role of union-led political mobilization efforts.

In earlier attempts to analyze quantitatively the role of unions in politics, some political scientists and labor researchers (e.g. Uhlaner 1989; Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995; Radcliff and Davis 2000) have maintained that union membership may influence vote likelihood, especially if the individual is an active participant in the labor organization. Addressing the issue of response bias in surveys of union political efforts, Delaney, Masters, and Schowchau (1988) demonstrated markedly different results when measuring the effects of union status on turnout, dependent on the data source (either survey-based answers or responses garnered through public records).

There is some theoretical basis for union-led mobilization campaigns; of particular interest is the "occasional voter" theory, developed by Marshall Ganz and discussed in the previous chapter. However, the theory lacks a true evidentiary basis,

and its proponents rely on unscientific assumptions of causality between mobilization of occasional voters and electoral victories.

There have been very few studies that have looked empirically at the role of union mobilization efforts on turnout, with much of the mobilization literature either ignoring or marginalizing the role of union efforts (Radcliff and Davis 2000). Recently there has been a small and growing body of work that has aimed to fill this void in the literature. Radcliff and Davis (2000) compared state-by-state union density levels with turnout, though the national-level scope of the analysis ignores the localized nature of mobilization efforts, failing to consider a substantial aspect of vote-getting attempts by U.S. unions.

Zullo (2004) measured the effectiveness of a union mobilization drive on grocery workers in Wisconsin in 2000 using a combination of public records and union contact lists, finding that contact in days immediately preceding the election increased voter turnout substantially. His work is the most methodologically sound and empirical study thus far on union mobilization efforts. Although this chapter uses an approach similar to the Zullo study, substantial differences exist. While Zullo's study controlled for age, marital status, and workplace variables, it failed to account for vote propensity of the contacted individuals, which creates a significant limitation, and likely leads to a problem when determining the influence of mediated variables. It used less precise measurements of factors influential on vote turnout, relying on the employment setting (grocery workers) and work-related variables (wages, seniority, and full- or part-time status) to act as proxies for all the demographic and socioeconomic influences on turnout. In addition, Zullo's study depended on broad assumptions regarding the homogeneity of the individuals within the data and measured only the effects of individual phone calls and workplace-wide political education efforts on turnout.

This study offers a more precise set of control factors known to be influential on voting, accounts for an individual's prior vote record, and provides an analysis of door-to-door personal visits in addition to live phone calls. Finally, this study differs from Zullo's in that Zullo looked at a unique population; Zullo admits that his findings cannot be generalized in any way – as such, they have no real bearing on the Los Angeles situation.

The Data

This dissertation uses a data set comprising a total of 188,551 individuals in the broad geographic area known as South Los Angeles. The region was for many years called South Central, but the stigma attached to the name (high crime, urban decay, poverty, etc.) caused the city of Los Angeles to rename the region South Los Angeles in 2003. Though several communities can definitively be incorporated into the region (e.g. Watts, Crenshaw, Baldwin Hills), other neighborhoods are included or excluded in the region dependent on whether their characteristics match those of the South Los Angeles region as a whole.

Contextualizing this murky geographic definition is important when considering the data sources. The data come from two separate sources, which have been merged together to create one set. The first data source is a list of all the registered voters in the South Los Angeles region as of fall 2004. Strategists interested in mobilizing the population of South L.A. asked a third-party organization (a group called Political Data) to provide a list of the registered voters in the region, along with several characteristics of the individuals. From this list of individuals, a substantial number of people were contacted by union groups either acting alone or in conjunction with community organizations. The contacting agents were either paid or voluntary union members and staff, and, when labor and community groups both

mobilized individuals, some agents were active members of the various community organizations.

The murkiness of the geographic area is slightly problematic, in that the data set, which provides registered voters in “South Los Angeles,” cannot be precisely tied to an exact political boundary. That is, the elections in which the Federation contacted individuals alone (that is, not in conjunction with other mobilization groups) correspond to specific political identifiers – District 10 of the City Council and District 47 of the State Assembly. Specifically, the Federation made identifiable contacts as an independent organization in the March 2003 Los Angeles City Council District 10 (or CD 10) Primary election, the May 2003 Los Angeles CD 10 Runoff race, and the March 2004 California State Assembly District 47 (or SA 47) Democratic Primary campaign. Yet the available data counts all the registered voters in one region – South L.A. – and not in one particular political boundary. As such, the data set contains some individuals eligible to vote in CD 10, some individuals eligible to vote in SA 47, and a large number of people who were situated in both of the political boundaries, and could thus vote in either of the elections.

Fortunately, one category within the data set notes the various political districts in which the potential voter is located. As such, the data has been divided, dependent on the election for which analysis occurs, into individuals only eligible to vote in any given race, given the political boundary of the election. In essence, this creates two separate data sets to analyze – one for CD 10 and one for SA 47. When the non-eligible (by way of location) voters are removed from each set, there exist 62,676 possible voters in CD 10, and 71,226 possible voters in SA 47. Consider also that many of the voters in one data set also exist in the other – that is, they were eligible to vote in both elections given their location. Fully 50,802 individuals lived in both CD 10 and SA 47. However, the broadly defined “South Los Angeles” area consisted of

thousands of voters in State Assembly Districts 46, 48, 51 and 52, and City Council Districts 8, 9, and 15. These voters must be excluded from analysis for the three boundary-specific elections targeted by the Federation alone.

Further refinement is necessary for the SA 47 race in particular. The March 2004 election for which mobilization occurred was a Democratic Primary campaign. That is, those not identified as Democrats were ineligible to vote due to their party affiliation. Fortunately again, the data allow for this discrimination, in that individuals not affiliated with the Democratic Party have been removed from the SA 47 set. This leaves 53,648 possible voters in SA 47 over the three elections.

Several variables are included in the data set obtained by contacting agents, the most important of which (for this dissertation) is vote turnout, which constitutes the dependent variable. The data set provides each individual's voting record for every election from the 1990s through the March 2004 race. This vote history must be coupled with a second variable in the data, which gives the voter registration date of each individual. Looking at turnout without accounting for whether the individual was registered or not would provide artificially low voting results. All the nonregistered (and thus ineligible) potential voters were regarded as "missing" in any given election. From these vote histories, a critical independent variable can be gleaned – the vote propensity of each individual in South Los Angeles. Looking at the five elections prior to the particular studied campaign, individuals have been divided into frequent, occasional, and never voters for each separate election. Individuals who voted in four or all five of the previous five elections are considered frequent voters. Those who voted in one to three of the past five elections are deemed occasional voters, while any individual who either did not vote or was not registered to vote in each of the past five elections (but was eligible to vote in the given election) is called a never voter.

The data set used by mobilization groups also gives several demographic variables for each person in the population. These include measurements of age, gender, party affiliation, ethnicity, and birthplace. These variables are extremely useful in that they provide characteristics predicted by the political science literature to have an influence on voting behavior. As such, they can be employed as controls in the data, wherein the effects of contact on turnout can be measured independently from these known influences on voting.

In terms of specific categorizations within these control variables, age and gender are clearly defined. Party affiliation has been divided into three groups: Democratic Party affiliation, Republican Party affiliation, and Minor Party affiliation.²⁵ Ethnicities have been grouped into Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Jewish, European, Middle Eastern/Asian/Pacific Islander, Spanish/Latino, and generic. These ethnic distinctions have been determined based on the last names of each individual. This presents some inaccuracies, given that ethnic identity cannot always be tied to last name. Further, the technique does not allow for discrimination of “generic” names – that is, a name like Smith or Johnson does not relay any type of ethnic identity. This is unfortunate in that there is no discernible African-American ethnic group, given that it is difficult to separate the African-American ethnicity based off last name alone. One way to rectify this is to consider the overall known demographics of the region. Roughly 40 percent of South Los Angeles residents consider themselves African-American; as such, there can be some level of assumption made regarding the ethnic identity of those grouped into the “generic” category – it is likely that the majority of these individuals are African-Americans, though a definitive number cannot be determined. However, it is critical to remember

²⁵ About three-fourths of the population identified themselves as Democrats, according to their voter registration records.

that the only known way to determine ethnicity without directly contacting all 188,551 individuals is to use their last names as a close proxy for ethnic identity. A tradeoff exists between recording objective, third-party information (which eliminates the response bias problem), and losing some accuracy in terms of characteristic identification. Given the large size of the data set, it is unlikely that any errors in coding ethnicity are so large as to invalidate the use of the variable.

The final characteristic variable in the data is birthplace. This variable has been divided into eight groups, consisting of those born in: California, the West (but not California), the South, the Midwest, the Mountain States, the Middle States, the Northeast, and foreign born individuals. The majority of individuals in the data were born in California, though individuals born in a foreign country make up a substantial number of people as well (not surprising given the geographic area studied).

From this list of potential voters, each containing the above-described characteristics, mobilizing groups contacted individuals across five separate elections. The groups recorded each contact into their own data set. When a potential voter was contacted, the mobilizing agents noted the person's identification number (which aligns with the identification provided in the data set from which the groups worked). The type of contact and organization performing the contact were also recorded. In terms of contact types, the mobilizing groups used either personal visits (door-to-door walks) or live phone calls to send out their message. If a potential voter was targeted via a personal visit in any given election, he or she was not contacted over the phone, and vice versa. Unfortunately, the type of contact was not provided for Federation mobilization efforts in the CD 10 Runoff; however, for the CD 10 Primary and the SA 47 Primary, a discernment by type has been included. The variable showing the organization that performed the contact allows for discrimination between contacts

made by the County Federation acting alone, versus contacts made as part of a labor-community alliance.

Qualitative Contextualization of Elections

As mentioned, this chapter focuses on three elections in particular – the March 2003 CD 10 Primary, the May 2003 CD 10 Runoff, and the March 2004 SA 47 Democratic Primary. The three elections were chosen, quite simply, because there were appropriate data available for them. The data set provides a total of five elections wherein contacts occurred (the aforementioned three, the November 2002 general election, and the October 2003 recall election). However, the County Federation contact of potential voters can be distinguished from the other groups in only three of those elections, which form the basis for this chapter.

It so happens that the three chosen elections are suitable for analysis in their own right. The same general geographic area was used for each campaign. The elections were all local races, with local candidates. The timeframe spanned only one year, allowing little chance for the makeup of the population to change significantly. Yet the elections were unique enough to be measured independently; in the March and May CD 10 races, the major difference was the push made by the labor movement on behalf of the candidate (clearly a meaningful distinction for this paper). In the SA 47 Primary, the election occurred for an entirely different seat, the candidate was not the same as in 2003, only Democratic voters were included in the analysis, and the geographic area studied had some variation from the other races. For these reasons, each of the elections is distinctly independent and worth its own analysis, while the three races are similar enough to be used as acceptable comparators.

In the March 2003 City Council Primary election, two candidates friendly to organized labor ran for offices -- these candidates were Martin Ludlow in District 10

and Antonio Villaraigosa in District 14. When both Villaraigosa and Ludlow chose to run for City Council in 2003, the County Federation faced a difficult dilemma in terms of how to allocate its resources.²⁶ Ludlow had been the political director of the Federation, while Villaraigosa held a long association with labor, having come out of the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) ranks. In the end, local labor analysts maintain that the County Federation decided to split its resources between the two candidates; acting under the assumption that Villaraigosa could win his seat outright but that Ludlow would likely need a runoff election to win, the Federation chose to most heavily back Villaraigosa in the March Primary, while Ludlow would obtain the full Federation support in the anticipated May runoff campaign (Meyerson 2006). However, there was still a concerted mobilization effort in support of Ludlow's Primary efforts in South Los Angeles, for which recorded data are available.

The SA 47 Primary campaign from March 2004 provides the final election in the data. In this campaign, labor's candidate was Karen Bass, a South Los Angeles community activist. The County Federation claims to have made a strenuous mobilization push as part of a broad coalition with progressive community groups (though the Federation acted as a singular entity in terms of recorded vote-getting). Bass was less associated with the labor movement than Ludlow had been -- her work had largely involved community based support programs for South L.A. However, labor was a significant contributor to the coalition pushing to increase turnout for her election.

In each of these elections, it is critical to consider also the role that labor played in pushing to increase Latino voting in the area. Many of the labor leaders orchestrating these mobilization drives were Latinos, and due to the changing

²⁶ The contextual information surrounding these elections comes from interviews conducted with mobilizing strategists, County Federation staff, and verified in articles written by Larry Frank and Kent Wong (2004) and Harold Meyerson (2006).

demographics of the region, the majority of residents in the political districts were also Hispanic. A large part of the labor-Latino alliance in Los Angeles involves mobilization campaigns in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods -- Latinos are typically unlikely voters, and a strong effort has been made by labor to bring this group into the political fold, matching the ethnic makeup of both the city as a whole and much of the local union movement in particular.

Determining the Hypotheses

The key dependent variable in this study is vote turnout in each of the studied elections. The political science literature maintains that voting behavior depends on a number of factors, including a vast array of long-term characteristics specific to each individual voter (e.g. age, ethnicity, birthplace, party affiliation, etc.) and short-term factors related to the particular election (e.g. the expected closeness of the race, the charisma of the candidate, the level of advertising for the election, etc.). A mobilization effort can be considered a short-term factor, in that it almost exclusively covers one particular campaign.

The data set provides several (though not all) of the long-term characteristics influential on voting likelihood. In terms of the short-term factors, it can be reasonably assumed that most, if not all, of these influences are constant per each studied election. To expand on this, the closeness of the CD 10 and SA 47 races are irrelevant for the purposes of this section, considering that there is no between-person variation amongst these factors. Election closeness, for example, is unlikely to change from individual to individual when looking at a single campaign, unless the fundamental perceptions of “closeness” differ amongst individuals. However, it is unlikely that a substantial portion of the population differed in its perception of closeness in any of the races; besides, the quantification of this any change in

perceptions is impossible given the available data. As another example, every individual in the data was asked to pick between the same candidates for each election, thus nullifying any real variation in the charisma of the candidate (again, while individuals' perceptions of charisma may differ, it is highly unlikely that the variance in these perceptions would present a problem in assuming near-identical influences of charisma across the population as a whole). Thus, the only short-term factor that truly varies per election is the occurrence of mobilization for each individual (and, within this mobilization occurrence, the type of contact that occurred).

Three hypotheses can be drawn from this perspective regarding factors related to voting behavior. The third hypothesis is also influenced by the aforementioned relationship between the labor movement and the local Spanish/Latino community.

Hypothesis 1: Political mobilization efforts of any type by the County Federation successfully increased the overall voting levels of the contacted individuals, with cross-election changes in influence levels dependent on the priority of each campaign for the Federation.

Hypothesis 2: The relative differences in the success of the County Federation's mobilization efforts within each election depended on the type of contact employed by the organization.

Hypothesis 3: County Federation contacts of those with Spanish last names led to a substantial increase in the turnout rates of this particular ethnic group..

Models and Suitability Tests

In order to test each of the three hypotheses using the data at hand, it is necessary to create models wherein the determinants of voter turnout are measured by a set of independent variables. In this work, the key independent variable is whether an eligible potential voter was contacted by the County Federation in each studied election. In terms of the offered hypotheses, the key independent variables consist of:

any contact (testing Hypothesis 1), contact by personal visits versus contact by live phone calls (testing Hypothesis 2), and contact of the Spanish/Latino ethnic group, compared to non-contacted Spanish last names (testing Hypothesis 3). Also included in each model are the other factors suggested by the literature to meaningfully influence turnout (e.g. age, birthplace, vote propensity, etc.). The models offer that voter turnout in any particular race depends on all of the demographic variables, on prior vote history, and, critically, on the County Federation contact measurements, which serve as tests of the chapter's three hypotheses.

It is critical at this point to firmly establish whether the models can validly measure the outcomes that will be attributed to each variable. One concern within a study of this type lies in the nature of the data collection itself. This study uses observational data in its analyses. To expand, individuals in South Los Angeles were not intentionally divided into groups at random before being contacted by the Federation. This could, theoretically, lead to a problem of cause and effect between the independent variables – for instance, if the Federation chose to contact only the likely voters, then the influences on voting behavior attributed to contact alone would be overstated and tenuous at best. There are two steps that must be taken to test for this potential effect.

The first is to test for collinearity between any of the independent variables in order to assess whether the variables will provide truly independent measurements within each model. Though there are several methods that can be used to test for independence of the variables, the most appropriate collinearity diagnostic used here is to run a condition index for each of the variables included in the models, which tests for any associations found between all of the variables used in a given model. Accordingly, across all three elections and within each of the three separate models per election, condition indexes were run. As a rule of thumb, if any condition index

offers a number above 30, the model has a collinearity problem; if there is a condition index above 15, this suggests the possibility of a problem.

Table 2 shows the highest condition index found amongst all the independent variables, across each model and election. In none of the models did the condition index reach 15, let alone 30. As such, it can be argued with certainty that the each model is methodologically sound in terms of the independence of all the variables included in the models.

Additionally, the table provides the tolerance of contact in each model. A tolerance test regresses any given independent variable on all the other independent variables in the data; as the variable's tolerance moves closer to 0, it becomes more likely that collinearity is a problem and the variable cannot not be included in the final model without confounding its attributed outcomes – the general rule is that a tolerance of less than .200 presents a problem. In this case, the lowest tolerance of contact was .887, demonstrating that union mobilization was not aligned in any way whatsoever with the other independent variables included in the data. Other tests for collinearity were also run, each of which upheld these findings.²⁷

²⁷ In addition to contact, all of the other variables easily passed their tolerance tests in each model for all elections. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measurements were also run, as was a standard correlation matrix. No problems or potential issues were demonstrated in any of these tests.

Table 2: Highest Condition Index of Each Model and Tolerance of Contacts

	CD 10 Primary (March 2003)			CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)			SA 47 Primary (March 2004)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Largest Condition Index	11.277	11.277	9.549	11.387	N/A	9.591	10.516	10.516	9.472
Tolerance of Contact	.972	.989; .973 [^]	.995	.887	N/A	.999	.889	.913; 955 [^]	.966

[^]: The two numbers provide the different tolerance levels of personal visits and phone calls in the model.

Model Explanation:

Model 1 = Any contact

Model 2 = Contact divided into personal visits and phone calls

Model 3 = Latino ethnicity only

Given that the variables have been deemed acceptable measurements within each model, the second step is to incorporate as many relevant independent variables as possible into the analysis (relevant meaning likely connected in some way to turnout, as suggested by the literature). While it remains possible that there existed some influence on contact that the data could not measure (which would bias the selection of individuals into the two groups and perhaps overstate the results attributed to contact), this work has mitigated the problem by accounting for a substantial number of influences on turnout and establishing their independence from Federation contact.

In fact, it is highly unlikely that the nature of the data causes any meaningful problems. Consider again that the mobilizing strategists received practically the same list of voters as has been incorporated into the data. As such, it is unlikely that the contacting agents were aware of any additional variables, external to the data set they received, that would have caused them to target individuals with specific characteristics unmeasured in the data. It is far more likely that the County Federation and others took the list of potential voters and contacted as many people as possible, regardless of any particular demographic tendencies. Further, given that the data account for vote propensity, and that collinearity tests have established propensity's independence from contact, it cannot be that the voters most likely to answer the door or pick up the phone were the most inclined to vote – after all, the prior vote histories indicate no meaningful connection between vote propensity and contact rate. Finally, it can be offered that even the mobilizing agents associated with the contacting efforts admitted that they were not selective in their targeting patterns. One contacting agent, who mobilized voters in 2005 with an organization closely aligned to the County Federation, maintained that all the vote-getting groups were “just trying to knock on as many doors as possible” in any particular election (Alexander 2005).

Considering the statistical tests, the logical explanations, and the actual quotes from contacting agents, we interpret the empirical findings with the view that the individuals targeted in each election had no obvious features that distinguished them from the non-contacted group. As such, this chapter asserts that, though the data were not intentionally randomized before mobilization occurred, an essentially identical effect has been achieved, given the tests of available characteristics of both the contacted and non-contacted groups. In terms of the suitability of each model, it is clear that no problems exist that would require amendments to the inclusion of the given variables in the data.

Percentage Point Differences in Voter Turnout

Having established with confidence that each of the models is methodologically sound in its inclusion of independent variables, the chapter can now test the hypotheses. The effectiveness of mobilization drives on vote turnout within each election can be first tested by looking at the percentage point difference in voter turnout by those contacted versus those not contacted. Table 3 gives these percentage point differences across the three elections, comparing the change in turnout for those contacted by the County Federation with the non-contacted group in terms of any contact type, personal visits only, live phone calls only, and only Latino ethnicity contacts. Looking at contact overall, in the CD 10 Primary there was a difference of 13.6 percentage points in turnout amongst those contacted in any way by the County Federation relative to those not contacted. Similarly, in the CD 10 Runoff, turnout increased by 20.5 percentage points amongst those contacted compared with those not contacted. Finally, in the State Assembly 47 race, all Federation contacts showed increased turnout of 8.6 percentage points.

Looking at personal visits only, the results differ somewhat. In the CD 10 Primary, County Federation personal visits were associated with a 13.1 percentage point increase, while personal visits in the 2004 State Assembly 47 race offered a turnout increase of 6.3 percentage points. Individuals contacted via live phone calls had turnout increases of 13.1 percentage points in the CD 10 Primary, and 9.9 percentage points in the State Assembly 47 election. Comparing the effectiveness of personal visits to phone calls, the data demonstrate literally no difference in the turnout rates between both contact types in the CD 10 Primary. In the SA 47 race, looking at the percentage point differences, it is surprising that County Federation phone calls appear to have been more successful in increasing the vote than in-house visits. Finally, taking the measure of labor contact on Latinos, the results indicate that the Federation was successful in increasing turnout compared to the relative voting behavior of non-contacted Latino individuals.

Table 3: Percentage Point Difference in Vote Turnout between Individuals Contacted and Not Contacted by the Federation

Type of Contact	CD 10 Primary (March 2003)	CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	SA 47 Primary (March 2004)
Any Contact Type	+13.6	+20.5	+8.6
Personal Visits	+13.1	N/A	+6.3
Live Phone Calls	+13.1	N/A	+9.9
Any Latino Contact	+9.9	+28.8	+21.1

Note: No information was given for the contact types in the CD 10 Runoff election.

Yet it would be inaccurate to imply that each of these increases in turnout was directly caused by organized labor's mobilization efforts. Other factors may have been more, or even exclusively, influential on turnout; for instance, vote propensity, age, party affiliation, and several of the ethnicities and birthplaces may have a substantial role in determining the likelihood of voting. To separate out these other factors and look only at the effect of contact on voting behavior, logistic regressions must be used.

Logistic Regressions

This chapter uses logistic regressions to isolate the critical independent variable from all of the other possible factors that could contribute to turnout in each election. Given that the dependent variable in each model is dichotomous, logistic regressions are the suitable method of analysis. Omitted reference categories were accorded to the measurements of vote propensity, party affiliation, ethnicity, and birthplace, so that there would be a base point for the comparisons of these categorical variables. The omitted variables were occasional vote propensity, Democratic Party affiliation (except in the case of SA 47, which was solely Democratic), female gender, generic ethnicity (except for Latinos), and California birthplace.

The City Council District 10 Primary (March 2003)

The March 2003 CD 10 Primary was the lowest priority election in the data in terms of union contacts. However, potential voters were still approached by mobilizing agents in South Los Angeles, and the results of the regressions prove interesting (see Table 4). In the CD 10 Primary, individuals contacted in any form by the County Federation of Labor (Model 1) were 1.376 times (37.6 percent) more likely to turn out than those not contacted ($p < .01$). Those contacted by personal visits (Model 2) had a 1.331 likelihood of turning out (a 33.1 percent increase), while individuals contacted over the phone were 1.427 (or 42.7 percent) times more likely to vote – surprisingly, phone calls appeared to be more successful than in-house visits in getting out the vote ($p < .01$ for both). Finally, contacts of Latinos (Model 3) provided an increase in likelihood of 1.465 (46.5 percent) relative to non-contacted Latinos ($p < .10$).

In terms of the other variables included in the logistic regressions, age, Republican and Minor Party affiliations, vote propensities, and almost all of the ethnicities (for Models 1 and 2) of the individual voters proved statistically significant, though with varying strength relative to their reference points.²⁸ Given that age is a continuous variable, its odds ratio shows a substantial positive influence on voting – each yearly increase in age provided a 1.021 (2.1 percent) increase (1.015 for the Latino model) in the likelihood of turnout ($p < .01$ for all models). Individuals affiliated with Republican and Minor parties were significantly less likely to vote than Democrats in the first two models (though Minor Party members were not significantly different from Democrats when looking at Latinos). Also in the first two models, ethnicity variables each (aside from Korean) provided a decreased likelihood of turnout relative to the generic ethnicity reference point, while those born in foreign countries were more likely to turn out than those born in California ($p < .01$) for all the models. When assessing Latinos only, those born in the middle states or the Midwest were less likely to vote than Californians ($p < .10$). Finally, an individual's vote propensity appeared to be the most substantial indicator of turnout across all three models, with a frequent voter being about four times more likely to vote than an occasional voter. Conversely, those who had never voted were substantially less likely to go to the polls.

Looking at the role of contact relative to the control variables, it would appear that in the 2003 CD 10 Primary, County Federation approaches to voters were a significant influence on the likelihood of turnout. All measured contacts, including personal visits, live phone calls, and contact of Latinos only, provided for turnout increases between 33.1 and 46.5 percent, which trailed only vote propensity in overall

²⁸ Due to the size of the data, significance tests should be considered generally less important in these regressions than the magnitude of the effect (particularly the odds ratio) attributed to each variable.

influence on turnout odds. In an election to which the County Federation apparently did not give a high priority, the results come as something of a surprise. This increase in vote likelihood in a low priority election begs the question: how would the results differ for an election in which labor engaged in a concerted mobilization effort while essentially all of the external political factors influencing the population (i.e. the candidates, the geography, the year, etc.) remained the same? The answer to this question comes in the analysis of the May 2003 CD 10 Runoff, which was heavily targeted by labor.

The City Council District 10 Runoff (May 2003)

The May 2003 City Council District 10 Runoff election, according to those familiar with the campaign, was heavily targeted by the County Federation. Looking at the results (see Table 5), any contact by the County Federation (Model 1) almost doubled a potential voter's likelihood of turning out in the May election, with an odds ratio of 1.887 ($p < .01$). Though no information is given regarding the relative effectiveness of personal visits and phone calls, Federation contacts increased the odds of a person with a Spanish last name voting by 2.806 times (Model 2) relative to non-contacted Latinos ($p < .05$).

Table 4: Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Primary (March 2003)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 62,676			N = 62,676			N = 15,196		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.319***	.057	1.376	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.286***	.078	1.331	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.355***	.080	1.427	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.382*	.214	1.465
Age	.021***	.001	1.021	.021***	.001	1.021	.015***	.002	1.015
Republican	-.342***	.055	.711	-.340***	.055	.712	-.384***	.083	.681
Minor	-.182**	.076	.834	-.182**	.076	.834	-.221	.147	.802
Male	.026	.030	1.027	.027	.030	1.027	.045	.055	1.046
Latino	-.343***	.048	.710	-.341***	.048	.711	---	---	---
Chinese	-.595***	.213	.552	-.594***	.213	.552	---	---	---
Filipino	-.791***	.138	.453	-.789***	.138	.454	---	---	---
European	-.416**	.189	.660	-.415**	.189	.660	---	---	---
Jewish	-.455***	.092	.634	-.453***	.092	.635	---	---	---
Korean	.217**	.094	1.232	.218**	.094	1.244	---	---	---
Japanese	-.258*	.135	.773	-.255*	.135	.775	---	---	---
M.East./Asia/Pacif.	-.318*	.163	.728	-.317*	.163	.729	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	-.173	.118	.841	-.173	.118	.841	.097	.307	1.102
South	.049	.046	1.050	.048	.046	1.049	-.324	.233	.723
Middle States	-.029	.075	.972	-.028	.075	.973	-.604*	.362	.547
Mountain. States	-.047	.185	.954	-.045	.185	.956	.597	.622	1.817
Northeast	-.063	.122	.939	-.062	.122	.940	.950	.589	2.586
Midwest	-.048	.056	.953	-.047	.056	.954	-.730*	.379	.482
Foreign Born	.163***	.050	1.177	.162**	.050	1.176	.403***	.075	1.496
Frequent Voter	1.426***	.031	4.160	1.426**	.031	4.161	1.362***	.059	3.904
Never Voter	-.829***	.048	.437	-.829***	.048	.436	-.952***	.088	.386
Constant	-2.089***	.058	.124	-2.089***	.058	.124	-2.295***	.097	.101

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

As with the March contacts, the other variables influential on vote turnout were age, party affiliations, vote propensity foreign birthplace, and the majority of the ethnicities (for Model 1). A one-year increase in age led to a 1.6 percent increase in turnout for the entire population and a .9 percent increase for Latinos only. Looking at ethnicities, the European, Japanese, and Middle Eastern ethnicities mattered in March but not May (for the non-Latino model, of course). Similar to the CD 10 Primary, no birthplaces aside from foreign born were found to be significantly different from being born in California (although being from the South mattered when looking at only Latinos). An individual's propensity as a frequent voter again mattered the most in the May election, increasing turnout likelihood by about five times when compared with occasional voters. Never voters were substantially less likely to turn out than the reference category as well for both of the models.

When comparing the May contact results with those of the March election, it would appear that the concerted effort by labor to turn out the vote paid off. The March contacts resulted in about a 1.4 times increase in turnout odds, while the May effort nearly doubled the likelihood of turning out. Contact of Latinos resulted in vastly higher odds of turnout in May than in March. Though these results are helpful in answering the question of whether union mobilization efforts increase voter turnout, there are some limitations; for one, both sets of results focus on a single campaign. Both involved the same endorsed candidate, which may have contributed to the similar voting patterns across the control variables. In addition, the contacts were performed very near each other in time. It would be interesting to see whether the same patterns of labor influence on turnout existed when looking at an entirely different election in a different year; for an answer to this, the chapter will turn to the March 2004 SA 47 Primary.

Table 5: Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.635***	.043	1.887	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	1.032**	.409	2.806
Age	.016***	.001	1.016	.009***	.002	1.009
Republican	-.274***	.055	.760	-.138	.089	.871
Minor	-.167**	.077	.846	-.362**	.145	.696
Male	-.007	.031	.993	-.115**	.054	.892
Latino	.203***	.049	1.225	---	---	---
Chinese	-.454**	.215	.635	---	---	---
Filipino	-.373***	.138	.689	---	---	---
European	-.101	.182	.904	---	---	---
Jewish	-.224**	.095	.799	---	---	---
Korean	.397***	.099	1.488	---	---	---
Japanese	-.071	.141	.932	---	---	---
M.East/Asia/Pacif.	-.203	.172	.816	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	-.190	.124	.827	.039	.302	1.040
South	.028	.049	1.028	-.553**	.243	.575
Middle States	.060	.078	1.062	-.500	.331	.606
Mountain States	-.166	.194	.847	-.698	.733	.497
Northeast	.025	.127	1.026	.561	.616	1.753
Midwest	-.025	.059	.975	-.276	.336	.759
Foreign Born	.221***	.050	1.247	.404***	.072	1.497
Frequent Voter	1.655***	.035	5.234	1.580***	.065	4.855
Never Voter	-1.463***	.048	.231	-1.552***	.076	.212
Constant	-1.809***	.060	.164	-1.379***	.092	.252

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level;

* = Significant at the .10 level.

The State Assembly 47 Primary (March 2004)

The 2004 State Assembly race was considered a high priority by the County Federation (falling between the March and May 2003 elections in terms of total contacts). While SA 47 and CD 10 overlap geographically to a degree, the populations are not identical.

Turning to the results (found in Table 6), any County Federation contact (Model 1) led to a substantial increase in the likelihood of voting, with the odds ratio at 1.629 ($p < .01$). Contact by personal visits (Model 2) resulted in a 1.691 likelihood of turnout, while live phone calls led to a 1.584 odds of voting ($p < .01$ for both). Consider the relatively small gap in odds ratios between the two types of contact in this campaign -- while both types resulted in successful turnout likelihoods, personal visits did not have the expected higher effect that this type of contact, according to the literature, is supposed to offer. Finally, contacts of Latino individuals increased the odds of turnout by 1.603 compared with non-contacted Latinos ($p < .01$).

The other measured variables in the data follow some, but not all, of the results set forth in the 2003 outcomes for each model. Age and vote propensity played a statistically significant and positive role in influencing turnout, while gender was statistically insignificant, as with most of the 2003 models. However, fewer of the ethnicity variables were statistically significant than in the 2003 elections (for Models 1 and 2), while there was more differentiation in the geographic birthplaces than in the other campaigns for Models 1 and 2, though the converse held true (with none of the birthplaces showing influences on turnout statistically different from the reference point) in Model 3.

Comparing across elections, any contact in 2004 resulted in voting likelihood slightly lower than that found in the May 2003 campaign, though the result was markedly higher than that found in March 2003. Latino turnout of contacted

individuals in 2004 also fell in between the results for the March and May 2003 elections. Though personal visits and live phone calls were not measured in May 2003, the March 2003 and March 2004 elections are useful comparators. Both in-house visits and phone calls yielded more turnout success amongst those contacted in 2004 than in 2003, which follows from the results of all contacts. Looking at one contact type relative to the other, phone calls appeared to increase turnout more strongly than personal visits in March 2003. However, in March 2004, there was a higher likelihood of turnout when an individual was approached in person rather than over the phone, which stands in contrast to results of the percentage point differences for this election.

Implications and Discussion

The results of the data offer considerable implications for the study of mobilization efforts on turnout and are particularly important in terms of the effectiveness of labor-run voting drives. The results of the logistic regressions offer a strong confirmation of the opinions promulgated by labor experts studying Los Angeles. It would appear that any contact by the County Federation substantially increased voter turnout amongst the population in the three measured elections, confirming Hypothesis 1. Though the effects of County Federation contact fluctuate across the elections, this likely occurs due to the weight placed on each mobilization effort by the Federation itself (also confirming the first hypothesis). Although many authors have stated this to be the case, none has empirically supported the position with objective research. The effects of contact stand firm across three unique elections, remain strong when broken into measurements of contact type, and stay statistically significant even when controlling for critical influences such as age, party affiliation, ethnicity, and vote propensity.

Table 6: Logistic Regressions for SA 47 Primary (March 2004)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 53,648			N = 53,648			N = 9,350		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.488***	.053	1.629	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.525***	.077	1.691	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.460***	.067	1.584	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.472***	.065	1.603
Age	.016***	.001	1.016	.016***	.001	1.016	.017***	.002	1.017
Male	.031	.026	1.032	.031	.026	1.032	-.011	.056	.989
Latino	-.613***	.044	.542	-.615***	.044	.541	---	---	---
Chinese	.037	.195	1.038	.037	.195	1.038	---	---	---
Filipino	-.775***	.157	.461	-.774***	.157	.461	---	---	---
European	-.053	.158	.948	-.053	.158	.948	---	---	---
Jewish	.468***	.079	1.597	.467***	.079	1.596	---	---	---
Korean	-.627***	.148	.534	-.627***	.148	.534	---	---	---
Japanese	.139	.155	1.149	.139	.155	1.149	---	---	---
M.East/Asia/Pacif.	-.154	.148	.857	-.154	.148	.857	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	.068	.102	1.071	.068	.102	1.071	.149	.332	1.160
South	.050	.038	1.051	.050	.038	1.051	.149	.195	1.161
Middle States	.194***	.065	1.214	.194***	.065	1.215	.266	.270	1.305
Mountain States	.104	.172	1.110	.105	.172	1.111	-.492	.737	.612
Northeast	.278***	.104	1.320	.278***	.104	1.320	.210	.683	1.234
Midwest	.050	.046	1.051	.050	.046	1.051	-.142	.329	.868
Foreign Born	.028	.046	1.029	.029	.046	1.029	.045	.073	1.046
Frequent Voter	1.764***	.038	5.838	1.764***	.038	5.837	1.519***	.075	4.569
Never Voter	-.829***	.033	.436	-.829***	.033	.436	-1.503***	.065	.223
Constant	-.983***	.046	.374	-.983***	.046	.374	-1.434***	.093	.238

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

Addressing specific types of contact, Federation efforts found more success when the potential voters were contacted in person rather than over the phone in 2004, though the opposite held true for the 2003 Primary, confirming Hypothesis 2, which argued that relative (or within-election) turnout likelihoods would vary by contact type. The findings both mesh with and run contrary to the literature on mobilization, which suggests that personal contact most effectively galvanizes potential voters. The results are quite surprising and might suggest that the unmeasured characteristics of the contacting agents could have played a role in causing less turnout likelihood amongst individuals visited personally in the 2003 Primary. Perhaps those running the live phone banks were better trained or more persuasive than those contacting via door-to-door methods. Unfortunately, any differentiation between the contacting agents has not been measured; as such, mere speculation is all that can be offered to explain this result. However, when considering the results at hand, and given the time and resource-intensive nature of door-to-door campaigns and the relative ease of contacting potential voters via phone banks, the outcomes would suggest that union mobilizing groups strongly consider using phone calls in some instances. It is up to the prerogative of the individual mobilizing agent to decide whether the possible bump in turnout accorded to personal visits is worth the extra resources when phone calls appear to be highly successful means of increasing the vote.

Looking at contact of Latinos only, the County Federation found much success in increasing the relative turnout rates of this ethnic group, confirming Hypothesis 3 of the chapter. It has been theorized that the labor-Latino alliance in Los Angeles allows unions to influence Latino individuals substantially, both in terms of organizing campaigns and political mobilization drives. The results of this work support with confidence this assertion. Considering that many of the mobilizing agents were Latinos, the success of the Federation in harnessing the Latino vote may be connected

to the notion that (ethnic) similarity breeds affinity when it comes to mobilizing potential voters. The differences between labor's magnitude of influence on Latino voting across the elections likely follow the explanation offered in terms of the population as a whole, which ties higher voting patterns to election prioritization by the Federation.

Overall, the results indicate that the labor movement would be wise to continue investing significant resources in political mobilization campaigns, especially those wherein the populations mirror that found in this data set. The logistic regression outcomes show that any union contact dramatically increased turnout levels of potential voters. If the differences between the across-election contact effects can be explained by the Federation's prioritization of each election, this would imply that pushing more resources into the non-prioritized elections would have led to stronger vote turnout increases, though such an occurrence may be impossible given that resources (e.g. time, money, mobilizing agents) are scarce.

It would not be unreasonable to assume that the success enjoyed by the Federation in its mobilization efforts could occur for other unions looking to increase turnout in cities with similar demographic and social characteristics. Though South L.A. constitutes a significantly different population from, for instance, Beverly Hills, it shares many characteristics with other urban areas. While there are some circumstantial elements to consider (e.g. the unique ties between the Latino community and the local labor movement), it would appear, given the results of objective statistical analysis, that the labor movement as a whole ought to devote substantial resources to mobilization efforts for political campaigns if the circumstances match those found in this study. The use of these results in a more generalized way will be discussed at length in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: EXPANSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Thus far, the empirical analysis has focused on one identifiable group of mobilizing agents – the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor – and its efforts in three elections. However, the data provide information on more than just this group, and more than just these elections. Potential voters were also targeted in the November 2002 General Election and the October 2003 Special Election. Though the County Federation cannot be identified as a unique contacting unit, the labor-community alliance working throughout all the campaigns can be studied as a singular entity in not only the three discussed elections, but also in the two races yet to be analyzed.

This chapter expands the empirical analysis to include all the elections and mobilization efforts given in the data (as opposed to only the County Federation contacts and elections). There are both positives and negatives to looking at the mobilization effort as a whole, rather than choosing a single group, as occurred in the previous chapter. One benefit to this approach is that more contacts can be incorporated into the analysis. Only 17.9 percent of the total contacts in the data were performed by the County Federation as a separate group. The vast majority of mobilization efforts included a combination of union members and community activists, working under the umbrella of various organizations. As such, bringing all the contacts into the analysis allows for immense accuracy in depicting the success of the various groups in their mobilization campaigns.

A second reason for this expansion is that it offers a chance to compare results, which allows for the formation of hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of adding more contacts to a mobilization effort. It becomes possible, by expanding the data, to compare the effectiveness of all groups working in alliance with the success rates of one group acting alone. This expansion also allows for the comparison of multiple

contacts of the same individual across five unique elections. Finally, expanding the data to include all groups and elections offers a chance to develop more clearly a hypothesis related to election priority. Upon assessing the priority level of each election, this expanded data allows for a robust comparison between election priority and turnout.

As such, this chapter has been divided into several sections, which constitute the remainder of the data analysis. All portions of the chapter use the expanded version of the data, inclusive of all mobilizing groups and all five elections. The differences between the sections can be identified by their hypotheses: section one measures whether election priority influences turnout success rates across all five campaigns. The second section tests the effects of adding substantially more contacts (and groups) to the three previously tested elections, comparing the results to those found for the County Federation alone. Section three tests the argument that multiple contacts of the same individual will lead to increased turnout rates, using the March 2004 election as its setting.

One drawback of this expansion is that it is impossible to differentiate between the separate organizations when including them all under one analysis. That is, there is no indication of the exact percent of the contacting agents who were union members in any of the labor-community coalitions; nor is there any notable characteristic of one single group that would offer an expectation of relative success when compared with the others. The only organization for which separation is clearly possible is the Federation, given that its identity as a unit is unambiguous. The remaining organizations include diverse pockets of individuals, some of whom are union members and others of whom are progressive community activists. Thus, it becomes extremely difficult to explain mobilization success on any level other than the cumulative efforts of the organizations as a whole, which is not particularly

problematic, given that they were all working for the same goal and, to some extent (though how much is, again, debatable) were conscious of and interwoven with each other's efforts.

The Data

As with the previous chapter, the data here consist of 188,551 potential voters in South Los Angeles, this time broken into three clusters of individuals. The first includes all the registered voters in Los Angeles City Council District 10 (62,676 people). The second looks at the registered Democratic voters in California State Assembly District 47 (53,648 individuals). The third cluster is new for this chapter, and includes simply the entire data set (all 188,551 potential voters). It is necessary to include the entire population when looking at the November 2002 General Election and the October 2003 Special Election, as all the people in the state (and thus everyone in South Los Angeles) were geographically eligible to vote, negating any necessary subdivision by location.

The same measurements of vote propensity, ethnicity, birthplace, party affiliation, age, and gender are all recorded in the data again, as is the type of contact. The major difference in the data, aside from the expansion by two elections, is of course the inclusion of several additional mobilization groups, all of which deserve some mention.

One such organization is called the Alliance of Local Leaders for Education, Registration and Turnout, or ALLERT. This group consists of largely a combination of union members and community activists. ALLERT mounted a significant mobilization drive in the November 2002 General Election and the October 2003 Special Election; in fact, Table 7 demonstrates that all the recorded contacts for November 2002 came from members of ALLERT. The organization is considered

non-partisan in its vote-getting efforts, though it has taken stances on some ballot initiatives in the past (notably Propositions 66 and 72 in the November 2004 election, which is not studied here). Generally speaking, however, it can be considered a non-partisan organization.

The three other groups of labor-community activists performing contacts in the five elections were called Angelenos, CCPP, and Neighborhood. Very little (practically nothing) is known about these organizations, other than they were part of the labor-community alliance and they had some substantial contact numbers in the elections (for more information, see Table 7). For instance, the Neighborhood group provided 23,022 contacts (more than any other organization) in the SA 47 Democratic Primary in March 2004. CCPP made several thousand contacts in October 2003, while Angelenos contacted a substantial number of people (over 7,000) in the CD 10 Runoff. However, there is nothing available to suggest that these groups were anything but a partnership between labor unions and community organizations – even the contact data collectors and mobilization strategists, when interviewed about the makeup of the groups, could not remember any defining features of one of these units relative to the others. However, by its title, the group called Neighborhood could be inferred to be quite heavily involved in community activism, although likely inclusive of some labor influence as well.

The final two contacting groups are considered definitely partisan – these are called Campaign and IE, or Independent Expenditure. Campaign can be identified as contacts made by each individual politician’s campaign workers – again, these were likely combinations of union members and community activists, though the work is far more likely to have been of a partisan nature. Additionally, IE was set up largely by labor unions in the CD 10 Primary; here, the contacting agents specifically advocated on behalf of one candidate (in this case, Martin Ludlow). These partisan groups can

be analyzed in the same group as the non-partisan organizations given that the literature suggests that partisanship of the mobilization effort does not markedly change the turnout likelihoods of the individual voters, and also because it is unclear precisely whether the groups were partisan about particular issues and non-partisan about others. It is critical to emphasize that the literature has found no clear distinction in turnout levels when studying partisanship; these findings, discussed in the political science literature review, allow for an aggregation of the contacts in the data regardless of the political positions of the contacting groups.

Looking at the relative efforts of the groups across the elections and the total contacts made in each campaign, the results (see Table 7) indicate that substantial mobilization pushes were made in each of the five races. As mentioned, contacts in the November 2002 campaign were solely the work of ALLERT. This election also offers the lowest total number of contacts of the five, at 18,000. The other ALLERT-based race, in October 2003, is second from last in terms of total contacts, at 26,109. The CD 10 Primary follows, with its 27,477 mobilized individuals -- 19.5 percent were contacted by the Federation alone and 80.5 percent were targeted by the campaign or (in most of the cases) IE. The CD 10 Runoff held the second most contacts, at 27,485 -- 43.5 percent came from the Federation alone, 25.9 percent were in the form of a labor-community alliance, and 30.6 percent were part of the Martin Ludlow mobilization campaign. Finally, the State Assembly 47 race enjoyed the highest total mobilization, with 38,149 total contacts -- 22.9 percent of the contacts were performed by the Federation, 16.8 percent came from the Karen Bass campaign, and 60.3 percent were provided by the Neighborhood organization. Each election had a level of contacts substantial enough for data analysis to be performed.

Table 7: Mobilization Groups and Number of Contacts in the Five Elections

	Gen. Elect. (Nov. 2002)	CD 10 Prim. (Mar. 2003)	CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	Spec. Elect. (Oct. 2003)	SA 47 Prim. (Mar. 2004)	Total
ALLERT	18,000			21,121		44,469
Angelenos			7,108			7,108
CCPP				4,988		4,988
Campaign		986	8,409		6,407	15,802
County Fed		5,360	11,968		8,720	26,048
Ind. Expend		21,131				21,131
Neighborhood					23,022	23,022
Total	18,000	27,477	27,485	26,109	38,149	142,568

Determining the Hypotheses

The hypothesis determination of this chapter follows some, but not all, of the characteristics of the preceding chapter on the Federation alone. Here again, the dependent variable is the vote turnout of each individual in the data, while contact remains the key independent variable. However, there are substantial differences to be discussed, which provide an explanation for the necessity of including this data analysis in the first place.

Consider first the argument that an election of higher priority will increase the likelihood that voters will be successfully galvanized to vote. This argument is based on the assumption that mobilizing agents will be more persuasive in their efforts if they put particular emphasis on a vote-getting drive. The theory also assumes that larger numbers of volunteers will be channeled into a high priority race, which should increase turnout rates. The basis for this assumption is related to the concept of social network mobilization, discussed in the political science literature. If more mobilization agents are contacting more individuals in a particular setting (which is likely to occur in a high priority race), there is more social pressure created on potential voters, which should, in turn, increase the vote likelihoods of contacted individuals.

In this case, election priority is harder to measure than in the County Federation's mobilizations alone. It is unclear whether any of the elections were, as a whole, more important to the mobilizing groups than any of the others. To determine priority, we are left to consider three elements: the total number of contacts made, the total number of groups performing mobilization drives, and the priority level known for the elections in which the County Federation targeted voters.

Using these criteria, it would appear that the 2002 November General Election was the least targeted, or in other words, of the least priority (Table 8 gives the

prioritization breakdowns). It held the lowest total number of contacts and the fewest groups (with only ALLERT running a mobilizing drive). The October 2003 Special Election would come second to last in priority under these criteria, with two mobilization groups and the second-lowest number of contacts. Following the October election would be the CD 10 Primary, given what we know about the County Federation’s favoring Antonio Villaraigosa’s race in the same election, and also considering the total number of contacts. The CD 10 Runoff can be considered the election with the second highest priority, after accounting for the Federation’s prioritization of this race in particular. The election with the highest priority would appear to be the SA 47 campaign, with the largest number of contacts, including a massive Neighborhood effort and a substantial push by the County Federation in a race it indicated was a high priority.

Table 8: Priority Rankings of the Five Elections Based on Known Criteria

	Gen. Elect. (Nov. 2002)	CD 10 Prim. (Mar. 2003)	CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	Spec. Elect. (Oct. 2003)	SA 47 Prim. (Mar. 2004)
# of Contacts	5	3	2	4	1
# of Groups	5	T-1	T-1	4	T-1
C. Fed. Priority	N/A	3	1	N/A	2
Overall Ranking	5	3	2	4	1

It is also important to consider the possibility that voters may be more likely to respond to a mobilization effort if the contacting agents are familiar to them. This argument is predicated on the theory that potential voters are able to relate more closely to those with whom they have some shared characteristics. Vote-getting agents are theoretically more likely to be listened to by potential voters if they offer a perspective that is shared by the targeted individuals, fueled by a common interest and shared identity. This familiarity can come, for instance, in the form of ethnic sameness (e.g. Latinos contacting fellow Latinos), or in terms of geographical

similarity (e.g. South Los Angeles residents contacting others from South L.A.). Looking specifically at these data, it could be theorized that voters contacted by both labor groups and community activists would be more likely to turn out than those contacted by unions alone, in that the shared location of both the mobilizing groups and contacted individuals might lead to increased vote likelihoods. That is, if both the vote-getters and the potential voters share a common geographic location, the targeted individuals may be more receptive to mobilization, as the mobilizing agents can offer, for instance, a shared concern over issues specific to the neighborhood. Similarly, it could be argued that an increased occurrence of ethnic matches between the mobilizing agents and the potential voters, which would also take place when individuals from the community mobilize within their own neighborhoods, would increase the chances of turnout.

Finally, it is possible to test the argument that multiple contacts will lead to increased turnout. The argument in this case is that individuals will be more receptive to repeated mobilization efforts and will thus be more likely to vote as total contacts increase. This argument is based on the theory that voters who are targeted more often will feel more pressure to vote, especially if the mobilizing agents are from the particular neighborhood. The social pressure created by contacting a potential voter might become more intense with each additional contact; if an individual is contacted only once, there may be no perceived social consequence to not voting. Yet if additional contacts are performed, the potential voter might believe that, by not casting a ballot, he or she is failing to partake in a community-wide voting movement.

The data offer five elections for analysis, and as such, individuals could have been contacted from zero to five times by the time of the March 2004 race. One difficulty that must be noted in testing this theory is that potential voters may have been contacted at some point prior to the first election provided in the data. It is

highly unlikely that the November 2002 race constituted the first ever mobilization efforts in South Los Angeles. However, the relative success rates of each additional contact within the five elections can still be approximated, even though potential voters may well have been contacted far more than the maximum five times allowed by the data.

Given the theories discussed here, three new hypotheses can be tested in this chapter, in addition to re-testing the three hypotheses tested in the previous chapter (analyzing the role of any contact, personal visits versus live phone calls, and Latino contacts). The new hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The relative differences in the success of the labor-community alliance's mobilization efforts within each of the five elections depended on the priority of each election by the vote-getting groups.

Hypothesis 2: The political mobilization efforts of the alliance will demonstrate higher turnout success rates than those found for the County Federation acting alone.

Hypothesis 3: Multiple contacts of individuals will result in higher turnout rates, with each additional contact increasing the odds that a potential voter will go to the polls.

Testing the Hypotheses

It is imperative again to perform methodological tests on the variables to establish their suitability for inclusion in the three models used in the regression analysis. As with the previous chapter, the key independent variables consist of: any contact, contact by personal visits versus contact by live phone calls, and contact of the Spanish/Latino ethnic group, compared to non-contacted Spanish last names. The results of these various models can then be analyzed and discussed to either affirm or nullify the three hypotheses posed in this chapter.

Table 9 demonstrates that each of the three models is perfectly acceptable in its inclusion of all the given variables. Again, at no point does the condition index hit 15, let alone 30. Further, the tolerance of contact does not fall below .886, whereas the cutoff is .200. The same logical reasoning applies in this regard as well – that is, the labor-community alliance actively sought to contact as many people as possible from the list of potential voters, and as such, gave no substantial weight to any particular characteristic of the individuals aside from those required by the election (i.e. political boundary or, in the case of SA 47, party affiliation).

Table 9: Highest Condition Index and Tolerance of Contact

	Largest Condition Index			Tolerance of Contact		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
General Election (November 2002)	12.737	12.740	10.982	.994	.995; .992 [^]	.997
CD 10 Primary (March 2003)	12.806	12.821	11.560	.940	.886; .907 [^]	.959
CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	11.964	11.827	11.313	.911	.959; .902 [^]	.892
Recall Election (October 2003)	11.474	11.451	11.264	.945	.981; .945 [^]	.927
SA 47 Primary (March 2004)	11.228	11.229	11.120	.917	.899; .024 [^]	.900

[^]: The two numbers provide the different tolerance levels of personal visits and phone calls in the model.

Percentage Point Differences in Voter Turnout

With the independence of the data established, the first step in testing the influence of contact on turnout by all the groups in the data is to look at the change in vote levels of those contacted versus those not contacted. To do so, this chapter returns to an analysis of the percentage point differences in turnout levels when contact is applied (full results can be found in Table 10).

In the November 2002 General election, any form of contact by the labor-community alliance showed vote increases of 11.9 percentage points. Personal visits raised the vote percents less than phone calls, garnering increases of 9.4 percentage

points and 14.7 points, respectively. Latinos appeared to be the most affected by contact, upping their aggregate vote levels by 15.1 percentage points.

The March 2003 CD 10 Primary followed a similar pattern to the November 2002 election, though the percentage point changes across the board were higher. Any contact appeared to raise overall turnout by 17.8 percentage points. Again, phone calls beat personal contacts in terms of the vote level difference between those contacted and the non-contacted, with those called increasing their turnout by 17.5 percentage points, while individuals personally visited had 11.3-point higher vote amounts. Latinos were not quite as apparently responsive to contact as the overall mobilized population, with vote levels raised by 15.7 percentage points.

The May Runoff election in CD 10 was the most successful of the five in terms of overall contact, with potential voters contacted in any form voting at rates 25.1 percentage points higher than the non-contacted. Once again, personal visits garnered a less-positive vote change than phone calls, with an increase of 14.5, compared with 16.7 for phone contacts. Latino voting levels were essentially on par with any contact, with mobilized Latino vote raised by 25.3 when compared with the non-mobilized Latinos.

Overall contact percentage points drop somewhat when looking at the October 2003 Special Election, though the results are higher than those found in November 2002. Potential voters contacted in any form upped their vote tallies by 14.4 points. For the first time, personal visits led to higher voting records than phone calls, with increases of 15.9 and 12.2 percentage points respectively. Latino voting far outweighed the overall contact numbers, and was in fact the highest of all the elections, with an increase of 27.5 percentage points.

Lastly, the SA 47 Democratic Primary rounded out the strong percentage point showing for the labor-community alliance. Individuals contacted at all were 21.6

percentage points higher than the non-contacted in their voting levels. Personal visits fared better than phone calls again, with those contacted in person upping their vote levels by 18.5 points, while live phone calls led to a 15.0 percentage point increase. Finally, Latinos again followed the same pattern as overall contact, with vote levels increased by 22.0 percentage points.

As with the previous chapter, the results are not intended to imply causation on behalf of the vote-getting groups. A more refined statistical technique, which can separate out the relative effects of particular influences, must be used to determine how much of these increases should be attributed to mobilization, as opposed to other factors. For such a test, this chapter again relies on logistic regressions.

Table 10: Percentage Point Difference in Vote Turnout between Individuals Contacted and Not Contacted by the Labor-Community Alliance

	Gen. Elect. (Nov. 2002)	CD 10 Prim. (Mar. 2003)	CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	Spec. Elect. (Oct. 2003)	SA 47 Prim. (Mar. 2004)
Any Contact	+11.9	+17.8	+25.1	+14.4	+21.6
Personal Visit	+9.4	+11.3	+14.5	+15.9	+18.5
Phone Call	+14.7	+17.5	+16.7	+12.2	+15.0
Latino Contact	+15.1	+15.7	+25.3	+27.5	+22.0

Logistic Regressions

After considering the percentage point differences, it is now time to apply proper statistical techniques to analyzing the data, once again in the most suitable form – logistic regressions. Several variables are once again left out of analysis to provide base levels for the included data; these omitted variables are Democratic Party affiliation (except in the case of the SA 47 Primary), female gender, generic ethnicity, California birthplace, and occasional voters.

This first section of the empirical analysis will focus on a re-testing of the three hypotheses offered in the previous chapter, and will add a comparison of election prioritization across the five races.

General Election (November 2002)

The November 2002 General Election has been identified as the least prioritized of the five elections. It is unclear whether there was one particular candidate or issue of special interest to the mobilization agents, all of whom came from the group known as ALLERT. Given that ALLERT is largely considered a nonpartisan group, it is likely that the mobilization effort was aimed at general turnout increase.

Contact was found to be quite influential on turnout (see Table 11), with any contact (Model 1) increasing voting odds by 1.559, or 55.9 percent ($p < .01$). Live phone calls (Model 2) proved to be the most successful contact type, upping turnout by 65.2 percent, while personal visits led to a 51.3 percent increase in vote likelihood ($p < .01$). Amongst Latinos (Model 3), contact was extremely successful in raising turnout levels, with a 1.747 (74.7 percent) likelihood of turnout ($p < .01$).

Looking at the other included variables, age was found to be statistically significant but essentially meaningless in terms of effect across all three models in the November 2002 election. A one-year increase in age led to approximately a one-half percent increase in vote likelihood across all three models. Republican and Minor party affiliations were all statistically significant and negative compared to the Democratic base in turnout odds. Several of the ethnicity variables (for models 1 and 2) were statistically significant, and all were negative in their vote likelihoods when compared to the generic reference point. Only a few of the ethnicity variables proved statistically different from being born in California, with foreign birthplace causing a substantial increase in turnout odds across all the models. Finally, prior vote history was the strongest indicator of voting likelihood, with frequent voters approximately four times more likely to head to the polls than occasional voters in each model.

Contact by ALLERT (a nonpartisan labor-community alliance) proved to have much success in raising turnout in November 2002. The odds ratios of 1.513 to 1.747 trailed only frequent vote propensity (and, in Model 1, foreign birthplace) in their magnitudes of effect on turnout. In this case, as with all the others, it is most important to consider the magnitude of influence, even more so than statistical significance, given the size of the data set. Looking across each type of contact, phone calls proved more successful than personal visits, which is somewhat of a surprise given the political science literature. Contact of Latinos garnered the highest vote turnout likelihood of all the contacts.

The November 2002 election was the least prioritized race, when considering the number of groups involved (just one) and the total contacts (18,000). Yet the results were highly positive for the labor-community alliance, influencing turnout in a positive and meaningful way. While the results provide a useful starting point for comparing priority level to turnout rates, more tests are needed to determine vote behavior versus election importance. To continue the testing, the chapter turns to the CD 10 Primary from March 2003.

Table 11: Logistic Regressions for General Election (November 2002)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 188,551			N = 188,551			N = 54,284		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.444***	.032	1.559	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.414***	.039	1.513	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.502***	.054	1.652	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.558***	.050	1.747
Age	.005***	.001	1.005	.005***	.001	1.005	.006***	.001	1.006
Republican	-.163***	.031	.849	-.164***	.031	.849	-.185***	.044	.832
Minor	-.193***	.037	.825	-.193***	.037	.825	-.320***	.059	.726
Male	-.006	.017	.994	-.006	.017	.994	-.075***	.026	.928
Latino	-1.135***	.024	.321	-1.135***	.024	.321	---	---	---
Chinese	-.459***	.129	.632	-.458***	.129	.632	---	---	---
Filipino	-.862***	.098	.422	-.862***	.098	.422	---	---	---
European	-.268**	.128	.765	-.268**	.128	.765	---	---	---
Jewish	-.030	.070	.970	-.031	.070	.970	---	---	---
Korean	-1.213***	.077	.297	-1.213***	.077	.297	---	---	---
Japanese	-.344***	.111	.709	-.344***	.111	.709	---	---	---
M.East./Asia/Pacif.	-.133	.110	.876	-.133	.110	.876	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	.067	.077	1.069	.067	.077	1.069	.085	.159	1.088
South	.109***	.027	1.115	.109***	.027	1.115	.016	.102	1.016
Middle States	.070	.056	1.073	.070	.056	1.073	.216	.170	1.241
Mountain. States	.014	.136	1.014	.013	.136	1.013	-.482	.368	.617
Northeast	.157*	.094	1.170	.157*	.094	1.170	-.174	.426	.840
Midwest	.042	.037	1.043	.042	.037	1.043	-.034	.173	.967
Foreign Born	.485***	.026	1.625	.485***	.026	1.625	.524***	.033	1.689
Frequent Voter	1.361***	.022	3.900	1.361***	.022	3.898	1.474***	.035	4.367
Never Voter	-.755***	.020	.470	-.755***	.020	.470	-.815***	.031	.443
Constant	.409***	.033	1.506	.410***	.033	1.507	-.777***	.044	.460

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

CD 10 Primary (March 2003)

The Los Angeles City Council District 10 Primary may have been the least heavily prioritized election of the three races in which the County Federation acted alone in mobilizing potential voters, but when all the contacting groups are included, it lies in the middle of the five campaigns in terms of priority. The mobilizing groups consisted of two partisan groups (Martin Ludlow's campaign team and a union-led independent expenditure effort) and the County Federation, which was acting in support of Ludlow but was not necessarily partisan in the message it was delivering to potential voters. The addition of two other groups should, according to the first hypothesis, result in turnout increases higher than those found for the Federation acting alone.

In the CD 10 Primary (see Table 12), any contact by the labor-community alliance (Model 1) raised voter turnout likelihood by 1.886, or 88.6 percent ($p < .01$). Personal visits were once again less substantial in their influences on turnout (Model 2), increasing vote odds by 1.851 (85.1 percent), when compared against phone calls, which raised turnout chances by 1.951, or 95.1 percent ($p < .01$). Contact of Latinos was immensely successful, with mobilized Latinos essentially twice as likely to vote as non-contacted Latinos.

Turning to the other variables included in the data, the results follow some of the outcomes found in the November 2002 election. Age was found to be quite meaningful in determining vote odds, with a one-year increase in age raising turnout likelihood by 1.020 ($p < .01$). Republican and Minor party affiliations were both less likely to lead to voting than Democratic affiliation, while several of the ethnic variables mattered (for the first two models), though all except Korean were negative when compared with the generic ethnicity. Gender did not matter in any of the models. Birthplace was largely statistically insignificant compared to California, with

the exception of those born in foreign countries, who were approximately one-and-three-quarters more likely to vote than Californians (about one-and-a-half times more likely amongst Latinos). Lastly, vote propensity was highly associated with turnout, both for the never and frequent voters. Frequent voters were about four times more likely than occasional voters to go to the polls in the CD 10 Primary.

Contact once again showed itself to be a vital factor in the improvement of an individual's vote chances. With influence rates ranging from 1.851 to 1.994, the mobilization effort by the labor-community alliance proved stronger in March 2003 than in November 2002. Again contrary to the literature, phone calls worked better than personal visits, with a difference of 10 percent between the two types. Latino contact proved the most successful overall, though the results across all the models were quite consistent.

According to the prioritization determinants set forth earlier in the chapter, the CD 10 Primary effort was the second-least important election for the labor-community alliance. The increase in vote likelihood suggests, so far, that the priority level of the mobilization effort may be associated with higher turnout levels. However, it is difficult to fully determine whether high priority leads to larger mobilization influence without considering additional elections.

Table 12: Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Primary (March 2003) – All Groups

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 62,676			N = 62,676			N = 15,196		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.634***	.030	1.886	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.616***	.034	1.851	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.668***	.043	1.951	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.690***	.056	1.994
Age	.019***	.001	1.020	.019***	.001	1.019	.015***	.002	1.015
Republican	-.318***	.055	.728	-.317***	.055	.728	-.382***	.097	.683
Minor	-.171**	.077	.843	-.170**	.077	.843	-.228	.149	.796
Male	.022	.030	1.022	.022	.030	1.022	.041	.055	1.041
Latino	-.472***	.048	.624	-.466***	.049	.627	---	---	---
Chinese	-.495**	.214	.610	-.492**	.214	.611	---	---	---
Filipino	-.773***	.139	.462	-.769***	.139	.463	---	---	---
European	-.376**	.191	.687	-.378**	.191	.685	---	---	---
Jewish	-.415***	.093	.660	-.415***	.093	.661	---	---	---
Korean	.351***	.095	1.421	.353***	.095	1.424	---	---	---
Japanese	-.229*	.136	.795	-.223	.136	.800	---	---	---
M.East./Asia/Pacif.	-.270	.166	.763	-.270	.166	.763	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	-.143	.119	.867	-.145	.119	.865	.179	.310	1.196
South	.044	.047	1.045	.044	.047	1.045	-.258	.237	.772
Middle States	.002	.076	1.002	.002	.076	1.002	-.581	.369	.560
Mountain. States	-.050	.186	.951	-.046	.186	.955	.662	.641	1.939
Northeast	-.032	.123	.968	-.031	.123	.969	1.256**	.588	3.511
Midwest	-.033	.056	.968	-.033	.056	.967	-.609	.381	.554
Foreign Born	.163***	.051	1.178	.163***	.051	1.177	.390***	.076	1.477
Frequent Voter	1.409***	.032	4.092	1.409***	.032	4.092	1.336***	.059	3.803
Never Voter	-.773***	.049	.461	-.774***	.049	.461	-.905***	.089	.404
Constant	-2.230***	.059	.108	-2.226***	.059	.108	-2.658***	.104	.070

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)

The CD 10 Runoff from May 2003 was the second-highest priority election of the five, according to the total number of contacts and groups, and the known importance placed on the election by the County Federation. It can also be quite easily compared to the CD 10 Primary, which was, overall, the lower priority of the two, but otherwise remained identical in terms of external factors to voters (i.e. exact geographic location, timeframe, scope of election, etc.). The County Federation provided the most contacts in this race, though the Martin Ludlow campaign again made a strong partisan push, while a group called Angelenos, about which little is known, put substantial resources into a vote-getting effort.

The results (found in Table 13) would indicate that, again, contact was hugely successful in turning out the vote in May 2003. Any contact (Model 1) essentially doubled vote likelihood, raising odds by 2.051 ($p < .01$). It must be noted that the type of contact was not recorded for the approximately 11,000 Federation contacts in May; as such, Model 2 reports the success rates subdivided by contact type for only the remaining groups. Amongst these groups, personal visits at last conformed to the literature, beating phone calls by almost 20 percent in the relative increase levels (1.765 to 1.570, respectively). Latino contact (Model 3) actually fared less well than any contact, though it was still highly meaningful to turnout, raising vote odds by 1.862 ($p < .01$).

The other variables in the data conform to most of the findings of the previous elections, though there are some differences between the Runoff and Primary races in terms of important turnout factors. For instance, fewer of the ethnicity variables mattered in the Runoff, using generic ethnicity as the base. Age again proved statistically significant, with a 1.015 increase in vote odds per year. Individuals affiliated with the Republican (except in Model 3) or Minor parties were less likely to

vote than Democrats. Gender was irrelevant to vote odds, though amongst Latinos, males were slightly less likely to vote. Once again, none of the birthplaces aside from being born in a foreign country were distinguishable from being born in California. Frequent vote propensity again led the pack in terms of vote likelihood, with frequent voters being five times (four and a half times for Latinos) more likely to go to the polls than occasional voters – a score higher than that found for vote propensity in November 2002 or March 2003.

Though contact was extremely strong in May 2003, an interesting drop in odds ratios occurred between Model 1 and Model 2. Whereas any contact led to a 2.051 increase in vote likelihood, personal visits and phone calls increased the odds by only 76.5 and 57.0 percent. This difference between the models can be explained by the fact that the County Federation did not record its contact types in the CD 10 Runoff. While all the groups were counted in the first model, only the Martin Ludlow campaign and the Angelenos group contributed to Model 2. This suggests that the Federation was likely the most successful of the three groups in turning out the vote, and that without its singular efforts, vote likelihood would have fallen substantially.

So far, the three elections studied have conformed to the expected results, given their assigned priority levels. The next race will once again expand the population available for mobilization, and should, theoretically, prove more successful than the November campaign but less potent than either of the CD 10 campaigns.

Table 13: Logistic Regressions for CD 10 Runoff (May 2003) – All Groups

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 62,676			N = 62,676			N = 15,196		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.718***	.031	2.051	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.568***	.053	1.765	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.451***	.040	1.570	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.622***	.055	1.862
Age	.014***	.001	1.015	.016***	.001	1.015	.009***	.002	1.009
Republican	-.238***	.056	.788	-.262***	.055	.788	-.102	.090	.903
Minor	-.152**	.077	.859	-.152**	.077	.859	-.353**	.145	.703
Male	.008	.031	1.008	.007	.031	1.008	-.094*	.054	.911
Latino	.045	.048	1.046	-.074	.049	1.046	---	---	---
Chinese	-.424**	.214	.655	-.528**	.213	.655	---	---	---
Filipino	-.428***	.140	.652	-.554***	.139	.652	---	---	---
European	-.085	.184	.919	-.087	.183	.919	---	---	---
Jewish	-.228**	.096	.796	-.336***	.095	.796	---	---	---
Korean	.468***	.099	1.597	.312***	.098	1.597	---	---	---
Japanese	-.074	.141	.929	-.183	.141	.929	---	---	---
M.East./Asia/Pacif.	-.141	.173	.868	-.230	.170	.868	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	-.170	.125	.843	-.214*	.124	.843	.084	.303	1.087
South	.022	.049	1.023	.024	.048	1.023	-.510**	.243	.601
Middle States	.083	.079	1.087	.053	.078	1.087	-.458	.334	.633
Mountain. States	-.165	.194	.848	-.148	.191	.848	-.736	.753	.479
Northeast	.050	.128	1.052	.042	.126	1.052	.639	.611	1.895
Midwest	-.019	.059	.982	-.038	.059	.982	-.193	.335	.825
Foreign Born	.224***	.051	1.251	.222***	.050	1.251	.405***	.073	1.499
Frequent Voter	1.617***	.035	5.037	1.634***	.034	5.037	1.511***	.066	4.530
Never Voter	-1.364***	.048	.256	-1.412***	.048	.256	-1.415***	.077	.243
Constant	-1.936***	.061	.144	-1.747***	.060	.144	-1.650***	.097	.192

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

Special Election (October 2003)

The October 2003 Special Election is most commonly identified as the Gray Davis recall, wherein voters were asked first whether they supported the recall of the governor, and, in the event of a recall, who they would then vote for as governor. The labor-community alliance did make a push to increase turnout in the election, though it is not clear there was one particular candidate or proposition of most interest to the alliance. Labor made it known at the time that they were pushing throughout the state to increase voting and took an interesting approach to the message it sent to voters: the County Federation wanted individuals to vote no to the recall and then to vote yes for Cruz Bustamante, the Latino candidate running in opposition to Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Federation's ambition was essentially twofold: one, it wanted to increase voting as a whole. Two, it expected that more Latinos would vote if they had a particular candidate behind whom they could put their support. The original Federation message was simply for members to vote no to the recall; however, in an effort to bring Latinos into the political fold as much as possible, Miguel Contreras asked voters to support Bustamante in the second part of their ballots. This election is the first of the five studied in this dissertation in which a Latino was on the ballot – as such, it may be expected that the Latino vote should be quite strong amongst those mobilized by the labor-community alliance.

Any contact (see Table 14) by the alliance (Model 1) increased voting odds by 1.720, or 72.0 percent ($p < .01$) in October 2003. This number sits comfortably behind the two CD 10 races and in front of the November 2002 effort. Personal visits (Model 2) again beat phone calls, upping turnout odds by 1.870, while phone calls increased vote likelihood by 1.662 ($p < .01$). The Latino vote was again substantial, with an increase of 1.869 for mobilized Latinos relative to those not mobilized. Yet this

number is not particularly different from those found in the previous election, even though the labor-backed candidate in October 2003 was Latino.

The other observed variables show quite a lot of deviation from the results found in previous elections. For instance, age was actually found to be negative across the first two models, and statistically insignificant in Model 3. Minor Party affiliation negatively affected vote odds compared to Democratic affiliation, while gender was found to be statistically significant across all the models, with males slightly less likely to vote than females. The vast majority of the ethnic variables mattered in October 2003 (for Models 1 and 2), though only European ethnicity was positively associated with vote odds when compared to the generic reference. The most surprising variable in the Special Election has to be birthplace; fully five of the seven birthplaces proved statistically significant in influencing vote odds in this election (three of the seven for Latinos), and all of them were found to be more successful in increasing vote odds than the California base. Lastly, vote propensity of course mattered, with frequent voters being just over three-times more likely to vote than occasional voters.

While all contacts proved quite successful in getting voters to the polls in the October election, the ethnic characteristic of the endorsed candidate (Bustamante) did not appear to drive up Latino vote odds any more than that which had occurred in previous elections. However, the most affirming result comes from the vote odds provided by any contact, which fell behind the CD 10 races and in front of the November 2002 election, exactly as predicted by the hypothesis. In terms of contact type, the success of personal visits over phone calls yields a dead heat between the relative successes of one compared to the other – each type worked best in two of the four elections. To unlock the tie between contact type, and to round out the priority factor hypothesis, the chapter now turns to the SA 47 Primary from March 2004.

Table 14: Logistic Regressions for Special Election (October 2003)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 188,551			N = 188,551			N = 54,284		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.542***	.025	1.720	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.626***	.044	1.870	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.508***	.029	1.662	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.625***	.035	1.869
Age	-.004***	.001	.996	-.004***	.001	.996	.000	.001	1.000
Republican	-.007	.028	.993	-.009	.028	.992	-.036	.040	.965
Minor	-.213***	.033	.808	-.214***	.033	.807	-.225***	.053	.799
Male	-.066***	.016	.937	-.065***	.016	.937	-.085***	.025	.919
Latino	-1.045***	.022	.352	-1.043***	.022	.352	---	---	---
Chinese	-.326***	.122	.722	-.325***	.122	.722	---	---	---
Filipino	-.475***	.097	.622	-.475***	.097	.622	---	---	---
European	.260**	.130	1.298	.261**	.131	1.299	---	---	---
Jewish	.291***	.072	1.338	.291***	.072	1.338	---	---	---
Korean	-1.046***	.068	.351	-1.044***	.068	.352	---	---	---
Japanese	-.150	.118	.860	-.151	.118	.860	---	---	---
M.East./Asia/Pacif.	-.144	.101	.866	-.144	.101	.866	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	.187**	.073	1.206	.188**	.073	1.207	.125	.152	1.133
South	-.012	.025	.988	-.012	.025	.988	.113	.097	1.119
Middle States	.429***	.056	1.535	.429***	.056	1.536	-.024	.164	.976
Mountain. States	.127	.129	1.135	.127	.129	1.135	-.055	.345	.947
Northeast	.526***	.095	1.692	.526***	.095	1.693	1.002***	.324	2.725
Midwest	.225***	.036	1.253	.226***	.036	1.254	.170	.163	1.185
Foreign Born	.550***	.024	1.733	.550***	.024	1.734	.466***	.032	1.594
Frequent Voter	1.201***	.031	3.324	1.201***	.031	3.325	1.245***	.063	3.474
Never Voter	-.890***	.017	.411	-.890***	.017	.411	-1.607***	.026	.200
Constant	1.228***	.031	3.416	1.227***	.031	3.411	.386***	.042	1.471

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

State Assembly 47 Democratic Primary (March 2004)

The SA 47 mobilization effort was, given the number of contacts and groups, the most heavily prioritized election drive for the labor-community alliance. The groups contacted over 38,000 potential voters, outweighing the next closest election by over 10,000 contacts. The Federation is known to have considered this election to be of high priority, though perhaps not so substantially than the May 2003 Ludlow race. It is important to note that the vast majority of the contacts came from a group called Neighborhood, about which not much is known. It is likely that this group consisted of a number of community-based social progressives, given that Karen Bass was well-known in the community and had strong support from the local residents. Though the election might be considered the most prioritized given the criteria set earlier in this chapter, it is necessary to consider that the community role in vote-getting was likely stronger than the labor presence.

Any contact, found in Table 15 (Model 1), raised the odds of turnout by 1.621, or 62.1 percent ($p < .01$). This result is highly surprising, in that it does not fit with the hypothesis that high priority elections will lead to larger turnout numbers. Phone calls (Model 2) were more successful than personal visits, increasing turnout likelihood by 1.659, compared to 1.598 for door-to-door visits. Latino contact (Model 3) raised this ethnicity's relative vote odds by 1.614, or 61.4 percent ($p < .01$). Across the board, these results come as quite a surprise. The 1.621 odds ratio of any contact were higher only than the November 2002 election, while the Latino odds of 1.614 were the lowest of the five elections.

The other results follow some of the trends found in the four previous elections. For instance, age was again statistically significant, and positive, with each increase in years leading to a 1.4 percent increase in vote likelihood (1.7 percent for Latinos). Gender did not matter, while some of the ethnicities were statistically

different from generic. Two of the birthplace variables were statistically significant, though in a break from the other elections, foreign birthplace was not found to matter, except in the case of Latinos. Frequent vote propensity was highly relevant to turnout odds, upping vote likelihood by five-and-a-half times (about four-and-a-half times for Latinos).

Of course, the most intriguing result comes from looking at the effects of contact on turnout in the SA 47 election. The outcomes accorded to contact did not match those predicted by the prioritization hypothesis. It is possible that the mobilizing agents themselves were not as persuasive in this election as they had been in the others. By far the most contacts came from the group called Neighborhood, about which virtually nothing is known. Perhaps this group was less well-trained in mobilization than either the County Federation, ALLERT, or the partisan IE and campaign efforts. Alternatively, it may have been that the population was suffering from being “over-mobilized” in that this was the fifth time in two years that labor and community groups attempted to garner votes for an election. Perhaps this last effort proved less successful because voters were less receptive to this additional mobilization. Before discussing this theory too deeply, however, the concept will be tested again in the portion of the chapter that covers the effects of increases in mobilization attempts on potential voters.

Table 15: Logistic Regressions for SA 47 Primary (March 2004) – All Groups

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	N = 53,648			N = 53,648			N = 9,350		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Any)	.483***	.027	1.621	---	---	---	---	---	---
Contact (Visit)	---	---	---	.469	.032	1.598	---	---	---
Contact (Phone)	---	---	---	.506	.040	1.659	---	---	---
Contact (Latinos)	---	---	---	---	---	---	.479***	.057	1.614
Age	.014***	.001	1.014	.014***	.001	1.014	.017***	.002	1.017
Male	.034	.026	1.034	.034	.026	1.034	-.013	.056	.987
Latino	-.582***	.043	.559	-.582***	.043	.559	---	---	---
Chinese	.052	.196	1.053	.052	.196	1.052	---	---	---
Filipino	-.743***	.156	.476	-.743***	.156	.475	---	---	---
European	-.068	.159	.935	-.068	.159	.934	---	---	---
Jewish	.475***	.079	1.608	.475***	.079	1.608	---	---	---
Korean	-.586***	.147	.557	-.586***	.148	.556	---	---	---
Japanese	.124	.156	1.132	.124	.156	1.133	---	---	---
M.East/Asia/Pacif.	-.145	.149	.865	-.145	.149	.865	---	---	---
West (Not Calif.)	.076	.102	1.079	.076	.102	1.079	.146	.330	1.157
South	.050	.038	1.051	.050	.038	1.051	.129	.197	1.138
Middle States	.204***	.065	1.226	.204***	.065	1.226	.248	.272	1.281
Mountain States	.087	.172	1.091	.087	.172	1.091	-.522	.733	.593
Northeast	.292***	.105	1.339	.292***	.105	1.338	.217	.676	1.243
Midwest	.061	.047	1.063	.061	.047	1.063	-.209	.333	.811
Foreign Born	.044	.046	1.045	.044	.046	1.044	.040***	.073	1.041
Frequent Voter	1.710***	.038	5.528	1.710***	.038	5.531	1.481***	.075	4.397
Never Voter	-.777***	.033	.460	-.777***	.033	.460	-1.439***	.076	.237
Constant	-1.049***	.047	.350	-1.049***	.047	.351	-1.527***	.095	.217

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level; * = Significant at the .10 level.

Comparing the Labor-Community Alliance and the County Federation Alone

The second hypothesis of this chapter offered that multiple groups and mobilizing agents would lead to higher turnout levels than just one organization. To test this hypothesis, the chapter compares the results found for the County Federation alone (given in the previous chapter) with the outcomes of the combined labor-community alliance effort. The data that identify the Federation uniquely are given for only the CD 10 races and the SA 47 campaign, so only these three elections will be used in the comparison (for full results, see Table 16).

In the CD 10 Primary, the labor-community alliance was uniformly more successful in its vote-getting than the County Federation alone. Adding the additional groups and contacts improved turnout likelihood of mobilized individuals by over 50 percentage points. Personal visits and phone calls followed near-identical trends across both the Federation and the alliance as a whole, with live phone calls proving more successful for both. Latino contact was far more successful for the alliance than for the Federation on its own, with turnout raised by over 50 points again.

The CD 10 Runoff provided something of a nearer comparison, though again, the alliance proved to be more influential as a group than the Federation on its own. The odds ratios of any contact differed by about 20 percentage points. As the Federation did not record the types of contact, it is impossible to compare personal visits to phone calls in May 2003. However, amongst Latinos, the Federation appeared to be far stronger at getting out the vote than did the alliance as a whole. In fact, the 2.806 odds ratio is the highest of all the contact likelihoods in any of the studied elections and groups.

Of the three elections, the closest comparison can be found in the SA 47 Primary. There was essentially no difference between the alliance and the Federation in terms of any contact, with the Federation just edging the alliance in influence by 0.8

percentage points. Perhaps most interesting is that the effects of relative contact types were reversed when comparing the County Federation and the entire alliance. While the alliance as a whole was more successful in using phone calls as opposed to personal visits, the converse held true for the Federation. Amongst Latinos, the closeness of the comparison continues, with the alliance being slightly more effective (given a difference of 1.1 percentage points).

Table 16: Comparing the Odds Ratios for Mobilization Efforts of the Labor-Community Alliance and the County Federation

	Labor-Community Alliance			County Federation		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
CD 10 Primary (March 2003)	1.886	1.851; 1.951	1.994	1.376	1.331; 1.427	1.465
CD 10 Runoff (May 2003)	2.051	1.765; 1.570	1.862	1.887	---	2.806
SA 47 Primary (March 2004)	1.621	1.598; 1.659	1.614	1.629	1.691; 1.584	1.603

Effectiveness of Multiple Contacts

This chapter's third and final hypothesis suggested that multiple contacts (i.e., contacts in previous elections) would prove more successful than a single contact (i.e., contact in that election alone) and offered further that each additional contact in a previous election would increase the likelihood of voting by an individual in one particular election. That is, if the contact for a specific election is the potential voter's first, he or she would be less likely to vote than an individual who had been contacted once previously, who, in turn, would be less likely to vote than a person contacted in two prior elections, and so forth. To test this hypothesis, the chapter will look at the final election in the data – the SA 47 Primary from March 2004. This election was chosen because it maximized the possibility of contacts given in the data; individuals could have been contacted anywhere between zero and five times when voting in this particular race. One limitation must be noted at this point, given the comparative

nature of this hypothesis test. Since five elections are recorded in the data, individuals could have been contacted one to five times between 2002 and 2004. However, no information is provided regarding the mobilization of potential voters before 2002. It may have been that some individuals were contacted in races prior to those for which data are available.

To test the hypothesis, a logistic regression has been run that is virtually identical to that found for the previous March 2004 analysis, with one key exception. Rather than using any contact and its variants as a dichotomous key independent variable, this regression looks at the total contacts in one variable, measured from one to five. The output of the regression on this variable will indicate the change in vote odds for each movement of contact across the scale; that is, from zero to one to two contacts, all the way through five. A positive and statistically significant odds ratio would indicate that movement across the scale (or, in other words, adding additional contacts) leads to increased turnout likelihood.

Turning to the regression itself (found in Table 17), total contacts increased vote odds by 1.089 ($p < .01$). In other words, each additional contact raised vote likelihood for a potential voter by 8.9 percent. The positive and statistically significant result demonstrates that, to some degree, additional contacts do appear to play a role in upping relative turnout chances for voters.

The other variables included in this model mirror those found for the previous iteration of the March 2004 model. That is, age, four of the ethnicities, two of the birthplaces and vote propensity all proved to be statistically significant influences on vote turnout levels. These results are not surprising, given that the only change in the model centers on adjusting contact from a dummy variable to a scaled test.

Table 17: Logistic Regressions for Total Contacts in the SA 47 Primary (March 2004)

Variable	N = 53,648		
	Beta	S.E.	Odds
Contact (Total)	.086***	.011	1.089
Age	.015***	.001	1.015
Male	.033	.026	1.034
Latino	-.572***	.043	.564
Chinese	.032	.195	1.033
Filipino	.767***	.156	.464
European	-.067	.159	.936
Jewish	.470***	.079	1.600
Korean	-.625***	.148	.535
Japanese	.116	.155	1.123
M.East/Asia/Pacif.	-.152	.148	.859
West (Not Calif.)	.074	.102	1.076
South	.050	.038	1.051
Middle States	.195***	.065	1.215
Mountain States	.098	.172	1.103
Northeast	.272***	.104	1.312
Midwest	.048	.046	1.050
Foreign Born	.039	.046	1.040
Frequent Voter	1.718***	.038	5.572
Never Voter	-.802***	.033	.448
Constant	-1.004***	.046	.366

*** = Significant at the .01 level; ** = Significant at the .05 level;
* = Significant at the .10 level.

Implications and Discussion

This chapter began by offering an expansion of the data set to include two additional elections and several other contacting groups, all of which formed a labor-community alliance pushing to up turnout rates throughout South Los Angeles. It also tested new hypotheses, which added more than a simple regurgitation of quantitative analyses across additional elections and groups. These hypotheses offered a demonstrable comparative element to the data set.

The first hypothesis suggested that election prioritization, or the effort made by the contacting groups, influenced turnout rates of potential voters, with higher priority elections showing more successful results. Though it is not entirely possible to

determine the full extent to which the relative elections were more or less prioritized, three criteria could be applied to the campaigns to provide a general sense of the importance of the elections to the labor-community alliance. The results of the quantitative analyses indicated that the hypothesis was generally correct. That is, in four of the five elections, the identified priority level corresponded exactly to the vote likelihood results across the three models. However, the one exception was perhaps the most surprising of the results – in March 2004, identified as the most highly prioritized race, the results were far less substantial than expected.

There are several possible explanations for why this may have occurred. Most notably, it is important to consider the concept of “over-mobilization.” The SA 47 race constituted the fifth mobilized election in a very short timeframe, approximately one and a half years. Perhaps it was the case that the residents of South Los Angeles were so inundated with mobilization efforts that the effects on the general population waned by the fifth election. This would, however, run quite contrary to the notion that increased mobilization should exert community pressure on potential voters, who in turn will vote as part of a wider social group. In explaining these seemingly incongruent theories, consider the metaphor of a person blowing air into a balloon. As more air is pushed in, the balloon enlarges, creating the desired effect of the air-blower. Yet eventually, at some critical point, too much air is forced into the balloon, and it proceeds to burst.

In the South Los Angeles case, it may be that the mobilizing agents, the “air-blowers,” forced vote pressure on the same set of individuals again and again, which in turn raised the vote likelihoods of potential voters up to a certain point. At a critical moment, perhaps in this case the SA 47 election, the mobilization balloon may have popped – the potential voters could have become less responsive to this continued exertion of social pressure. The high priority of the election may well have had

something of an adverse effect on turnout levels; given the tremendous number of contacts, made largely by those within the potential voters' communities, the strong exertion of social pressure might have caused targeted voters to in some ways rebel, in a rejection of continued vote pressure by the community.

A further explanation might consider that, although the total contacts were by far the highest of the five campaigns, the vast majority of the mobilization efforts in SA 47 were performed by one community organization, known as Neighborhood. It is possible that some characteristic of this group, or its mobilizing agents, was less successful in galvanizing the population than the other organizations working in conjunction to up the vote.

However, in the remainder of the elections, it appears that priority was connected to electoral mobilization effects. Though the priority identifications are not infallible, they are the best approximations available to determine the effort level put into each of the campaigns. It is encouraging that the hypothesis was confirmed in 80 percent of the elections, which does indicate that priority level can be associated with mobilization success.

The second hypothesis maintained that, overall, the labor-community alliance would be more successful in increasing turnout than the County Federation acting alone. The results, comparing the logistic regressions in this and the previous chapters, appear to confirm this hypothesis to a large degree. The most notable evidence that this hypothesis was correct comes from the March 2003 race, wherein the alliance fared far better than the Federation alone. However, in March 2004, the Federation actually achieved more success as a singular unit than it did when it was grouped with the other contacting teams. Again, it is important to remember the role that electoral prioritization might have played here. In March 2003, the Federation made some effort on behalf of Ludlow, but was not as fully engaged in the

mobilization process as in the other two races. As such, it is possible that the variation in the results across the three elections could be tied to the overall effort factor of the individual groups and the alliance as a whole. Yet generally, the hypothesis did appear to be accurate, with some qualifications.

The final hypothesis added a new variable, which turned contact from a dichotomous variable into a scale, based on the number of prior contacts that had occurred with potential voters in March 2004. The hypothesis asserted that multiple contacts would produce stronger vote likelihoods, and that the voting odds would continue to improve with each additional contact. This proved to be quite an accurate assertion. The results of the logistic regression suggested that total contacts did play a meaningful role in determining turnout, with each additional contact upping vote likelihood by about 9 percent. Yet it is necessary to note that the increase was not particularly large amongst voters contacted multiple times. While a 9 percent increase demonstrates that there was an effect of multiple contacts, it is not clear whether the bump in turnout provided by these contacts warrants returning to previously mobilized voters. Consider, for instance, that in each election, moving from no contact to contact led to anywhere between a 1.4 to 3.0 times increase in turnout. Yet moving from zero to five contacts did not produce nearly as high an increase in vote odds. It would appear that the effect of mobilization does, in fact, begin to wear somewhat as the total number of individual contacts increase. However, it is still critical to consider that additional mobilizations of a single person do produce stronger turnout results, though it is quite possible that, were these contacts to continue across future elections, the marginal vote benefit associated with contact would fall to zero.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

This dissertation provides an empirical evaluation of the role unions have played in increasing voter turnout. Los Angeles was chosen as the setting for the study given that the County Federation of Labor has risen to such prominence as a political entity in recent years. In order to perform quantitative analysis, it was vital to understand three elements influencing the answers to original question. The first element relies on political science literature on the determinants of voter turnout. The second element involves understanding the role labor has traditionally played in politics. The third element provides the context in which labor rose to prominence in Los Angeles politics.

Summary of Qualitative Chapters

This dissertation develops a model of voter turnout by relying heavily on the political science literature regarding voting behavior. The discussion of vote turnout provided a model from which the theoretical basis of the dissertation could be built. This model essentially argues that voting acted as the endpoint following an interaction between a multitude of short-term stimuli, some of which were particularly important to an individual voter, and as such were considered “triggers,” and certain long-term dispositions, largely considered immutable to an individual. Mobilization efforts enter the model by acting as a trigger for particular stimuli, and also by working to offset many of the costs associated with voting. A second theory of voter turnout, known as rational choice theory, wherein voting is based on a cost/benefit analysis, can be used to extend the discussion of voter turnout. Mobilization efforts offer a way to overcome the “paradox of participation” in politics, by serving as a form of social pressure on potential voters.

Though all of this information is tremendously useful in creating a framework for future data analysis, it is critical also to address two other factors that influence the analysis provided in this thesis. These two factors are the historical role labor has played in politics and the rise of the County Federation of Labor in Los Angeles.

The third chapter provides a historical account of labor's role in politics. Its goal is to create an understanding of the typical role the labor movement has played within the national-level political scene. It is important to understand the logic behind the current local trends in politics by couching them within the historic political approaches taken by labor. As such, this chapter traces the pluralism of Gompers, the Great Depression and the associated alignment of labor with the Democratic Party, and the political unrest of the labor movement in the 1960s. It ends by tracing labor's decline in political influence following Taft-Hartley and culminating under the Reagan administration, and concludes with a discussion of the political ramifications of the recent AFL-CIO split and the perceived labor success in the 2006 mid-term elections and the 2008 Presidential primaries. Although the chapter is useful in understanding the historical roots of the labor movement's political psychology, a more local discussion of labor in politics is necessary, given the particular and unique setting for the data analysis.

The next chapter explores the explosive rise to political prominence enjoyed by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor beginning in the latter years of the twentieth-century. It highlights the Federation's traditional role as a check-writing organization acting within the local Democratic Party, and offers the hypothesis that the Federation grew as a result of changing leadership trends, both amongst unions in the city and within the organization itself. These leadership trends tended to mirror the shifting demographics of the city as a whole – that is, the city, its unions, and the Federation all became increasingly Latino. The new Latino leadership brought a new

approach to political participation, and, largely through the leadership of Miguel Contreras, turned the Federation into a political machine, capable of exerting its power on the local governmental landscape almost at will. The difficulty with previous accounts of this story of labor's progress in Los Angeles is that it has lacked the necessary empirical foundation to be considered objectively verified.

Summary of Quantitative Chapters

The fifth chapter begins the quantitative section of the dissertation. It fills the empirical void in terms of research into the County Federation's efforts. It also became increasingly clear that empirical work was necessary when looking at union-led political mobilization efforts in general. Only one study (Zullo 2004) has addressed individual-based union mobilization, and it was more statistically limited than this dissertation. As such, in addressing the County Federation's role in politics, this chapter also helps fill a void in the general industrial relations literature.

This chapter offers three hypotheses, based on the political science models for voter turnout discussed previously. The first holds that any contact by the County Federation played a role in influencing an individual's turnout chances. The second claims that the relative success of the Federation's mobilization efforts depended on the type of contact employed (either personal visits or live phone calls). The third maintains that the Federation would find substantial success in targeting Latinos, given the connection between the Latino ethnic group and the labor movement.

The first and third hypotheses were strongly confirmed by the logistic regressions run on the three elections (two City Council races and one State Assembly campaign). In each race, any contact proved both statistically significant and positive in its effect on turnout. The differences in influence levels across each election were attributed to the priority level of the election by the Federation. However, a more in-

depth test of election priority versus turnout levels would be performed in the following chapter. Contact of Latinos proved to have a substantial effect on their turnout likelihoods, again with any differences likely reliant on electoral priority.

Perhaps the most surprising results came from the second hypothesis. Though the hypothesis was confirmed (given that turnout odds were not consistent across both contact types), the more intriguing aspect of the outcomes was that personal visits did not uniformly increase turnout levels more substantially than did live phone calls, as the political science literature on the subject would suggest. In the two elections for which data were available on contact type, the results were split. It is difficult to explain this outcome. However, it may well have been the case that the mobilizing agents were more persuasive over the phone than in person for one of the elections. It is possible also that the phone calls offered potential voters a stronger sense of empowerment than did the personal visits – that is, individuals had the option of hanging up on the caller, so those who chose not to were perhaps more interested in hearing the message provided by the Federation. The potential voters who agreed to invite the mobilizing agents into their homes may have simply wanted to be courteous to the vote-getters; several of these individuals seeking to harness the vote were from the same community as the potential voters. It may have been that the mobilized population did not want to be rude by slamming the door on one of their neighbors, but were not in fact particularly interested in the message. The less personal phone calls offered individuals a chance to truly decide whether they were willing to proceed with the mobilization, which may have given them more of a choice as to whether the message was meaningful.

Of course, one other possibility as an explanation for this result lies with the data itself. It is entirely possible that the actual data were coded incorrectly or were not indicative of the correct measurement for contact – for instance, perhaps the

mobilizing agents recorded contact whenever an individual answered the phone, regardless of whether the conversation was substantial or whether the message was received by the potential voter. However, this is not particularly likely, though there may have been other coding problems with the data that could have resulted in this outcome. Considering that the data were provided by mobilization strategists in Los Angeles, and were not collected in person, a number of unidentifiable problems may have arisen between the actual contact and the recording of this mobilization into a data set, and also in terms of the subsequent coding and interpretation of the data. In general, given that the results are inconsistent across the elections, it is extremely difficult to provide a definitive explanation for this outcome.

Chapter four builds on the earlier quantitative work, but aims to expand the data to include more elections, contacts, and groups. This chapter measures contact in the form of a “labor-community alliance,” which can be considered the combination of unions and community activists uniting to raise turnout in any particular campaign by exerting increased social pressure on potential voters. This expansion allows for the development of new hypotheses, in addition to a chance to re-test the hypotheses stated in the previous chapter. The new hypotheses add something of a comparative element to the study, with the assertion that election priority would dictate the relative turnout success across the five included races. Another hypothesis offers that the expansion of contacts per race would lead to higher turnout rates for alliance contacts, when compared with County Federation contacts in the three elections for which union-only mobilization could be identified. The final hypothesis argues that multiple contacts of the same individual would prove beneficial to turnout odds in the particular race of interest, and that each additional contact prior to the election of interest would up the turnout odds of the potential voter for the “current” election.

The results strongly confirmed the hypotheses. As with the previous chapter's outcomes, contact in any form proved to be statistically significant and positive in its influence on turnout odds across all the elections. Once again, the relative success rates of the mobilizing agents depended on the type of contact employed. Phone calls were more meaningful in producing voters than personal visits in three of the five races, again confounding the expectation levied by the literature. Latinos were again particularly susceptible to mobilization.

In terms of the new hypotheses set forth in the chapter, the outcomes of the logistic regressions largely confirmed each. With one quite critical exception, the effects of contact mirrored precisely the established priority levels for each election. Essentially, the first hypothesis proved to be correct in four of five elections, though the exceptional case (the election held in March 2004) is quite difficult to explain, given that it was clearly the most heavily targeted race in terms of total contacts.

The second hypothesis was also supported, in that generally the alliance fared better in its overall contact success than did the County Federation alone. However, the results were again not entirely uniform, especially when considering the two most heavily prioritized Federation efforts, in May 2003 and March 2004. In fact, the March 2004 effort showed larger turnout odds for Federation contacts alone than for contacts by the entire coalition, which perhaps offers some explanation in terms of the failure of this election to produce a turnout odds rate in line with its overall priority level (that is, the vast number of contacts by the labor-community groups were not massively successful in their vote increases, as should have occurred given the priority level).

The final hypothesis of the chapter, regarding multiple contacts, was again supported when looking at one election in particular. The March 2004 SA 47 Primary was chosen as the election for study, given that it was the last of the five, which allowed for the maximum contact numbers per individual (i.e. up to five). Though

each additional contact did improve a potential voter's turnout odds, the near-ten percent increase in vote likelihood was not perhaps the huge rise in odds expected for additional contacts. Rather than contacting the same people over and over, campaigns might find more use in contacting a number of people one time, given that the turnout odds of going from zero to one contacts are so much higher than the odds of going incrementally from zero to five times contacted. Yet there is still a positive and statistically significant connection between number of times contacted and turnout odds, thus providing support for the final hypothesis.

Connection between Qualitative and Quantitative Work

It was necessary to extensively develop the three distinct streams of literature before performing the empirical analysis because the empirical work of this dissertation should contribute to all three literatures. In what ways have this dissertation's empirical findings meaningfully contributed to the general literature?

Contribution to the Vote Mobilization/Political Science Literature

This literature stream brought forth the key model of determining voter turnout (the Campbell, *et. al.* model). The model suggests that mobilization efforts play a role in interacting with short-term stimuli and long-term dispositions of potential voters. The first way in which this dissertation contributes to the model is by validating the general idea that mobilization efforts do play a role in increasing turnout. That, it would seem, should be quite obvious, though recent literature on the subject suggests that one must not simply accept that all mobilization works.

Probing more deeply, this work indicates that mobilization efforts do play an interactive role with at least long-term dispositions, although the focus of the dissertation was not necessarily to study exactly how strong this association might be.

However, it is clear from the empirical analysis that the combination of Latino ethnicity (a long-term disposition) and union contact (an immediate trigger) managed to interact in a very strong way. As such, the notion of mobilization as a trigger that activates certain psychological dispositions appears, from the empirical analysis, to have been validated.

A further contribution to this literature comes from looking at the details of the findings. Consider mobilization type – phone calls, found in the literature to increase voter turnout by three percent at best, were clearly much more meaningful to turnout in the elections studied here. Personal visits were also substantial in upping vote levels; though this finding fits with the literature, the magnitude of success again indicates a far higher success rate than previously measured. What does not fit with the literature, and what serves as perhaps the most useful finding, was that phone calls were often more successful than personal visits. If there are no flaws in the data (and given the methodological soundness of the model we must assume this to be the case), this result is both immensely exciting and quite challenging. Given the costs associated with door-to-door efforts, and the uncertainty of the payoff relative to phone calls, it would be advisable for mobilization groups to seriously consider investing in phone-based operations.

Contribution to the General Literature on Unions in Politics

Much of the literature on unions in politics is not strongly developed in an empirical sense. There are very few studies connecting unions to turnout – any studies incorporating this connection consider only the role of union membership status, rather than the function of the union as the agent of mobilization. First and foremost, this dissertation provides the strongest contribution to an essentially undeveloped literature, and offers a number of expansions on the work performed by Zullo (2004).

Looking more broadly, does this study have any relevance to the national-level labor movement in its efforts to regain political clout? It is difficult to give an answer to this question – it would, however, be remiss to assume that the study’s results can be generalized across any population. The characteristics of the population in Los Angeles are not representative of the general population of the United States. Yet, they are quite similar to other pockets of individuals. As such, the study may in fact have some relevance to locally-oriented, labor-led mobilization efforts, especially in urban centers of large cities. Given that most union-led voter mobilization is performed as a coordinated effort focused on upping turnout amongst key potential voters in specific regions, the national-level labor movement might find the results encouraging to their efforts. For instance, during the 2008 election, labor at the national level would be wise to consider targeting typically unlikely voters (ethnic minorities, young people, etc.) in coordinated city-by-city efforts, if the union movement wishes to replicate the results found here. It would not be beneficial to use this study’s findings to enact a sweeping mobilization strategy targeting, say, any potential voter in the country – a mobilization effort in Beverly Hills may not yield the same results found in this work.

Contributions to the Literature on Labor in Los Angeles Politics

This dissertation was premised on the notion that the Los Angeles labor movement has recently been perceived as immensely successful in mobilizing voters for pro-union candidates, yet virtually no empirical evidence tested whether this perception was accurate. The goal was to use quantitative methods to test this idea; clearly, the empirical evidence offers a strong confirmation that labor unions have played a substantial role in increasing turnout levels of potential voters through various mobilization strategies.

This validation of labor's efforts, spearheaded by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, most obviously implies that the union movement ought to continue channeling as many resources as possible into vote-getting efforts in the city. The results suggest that one-time mobilization efforts provide a stronger magnitude of influence on turnout than multiple contacts (that is, while additional contacts are more likely to raise turnout than a single contact, they do not increase vote odds as strongly as going from no contacts to one contact does). Given the scarcity of resources, the County Federation would thus be better off targeting voters who have not previously been mobilized. The analysis also suggests that the Federation should continue teaming with community coalitions, given that the increased size of the mobilization effort does not negatively influence turnout rates. Additionally, returning to the analysis of contact type, it is recommended that the Federation pour the bulk of its resources into phone banks, as this less personal (and less costly) mobilization type works essentially just as well as door-to-door efforts.

The strongest contribution this dissertation offers to the literature on unions in Los Angeles politics is that, using objective data and empirical methods, it can be strongly argued that the Federation is, in fact, a major player in the mobilization of potential voters. Although this perception has existed for a number of years, it has at last been validated by statistical methods.

Methodological Contribution

The dissertation has contributed methodologically to the study of vote behavior as well. It is clear from the results that the best approach to use in empirically studying turnout levels is logistic regressions, as they allow for an explanation of a dichotomous dependent variable (which turnout will always be) and present likelihood estimates for the influences of the independent variables on the dependent. The other

important facet of the methodology is the use of a condition index and tolerance tests to determine model suitability. In vote turnout studies (or any study for that matter), it is crucial to demonstrate that the independent variables are not interrelated. Previous work in the union literature has been unable to account for individuals' propensities to vote, which leads to a challenging question regarding cause and effect. This dissertation suggests that researchers incorporate a methodology based on logistic regressions, wherein vote propensity must be included and condition indexes are run on this and the other variables, to firmly establish that likely voters were not targeted more highly than other voters by the mobilizing groups.

The dissertation contributes to the literature by offering that the methodology used in this study is the best way to establish whether union-led mobilization efforts do, in fact, galvanize voters independent of other factors. While it turns out that the perception of labor's dominance in Los Angeles politics is justified, this perception could have been found to be statistically unfounded had the results of this study found no empirical link between labor efforts and increased voting. The critical argument is that an association between two objects does not imply a causal relationship (in other words, if A occurs, and B occurs, then A caused B to occur). It is not enough to say, for instance, that because labor backed a candidate and that candidate won, labor's support caused the candidate to win. Nor is it necessarily correct to say that, if labor mobilizes voters and turnout increases, labor caused the turnout to increase. It would be inappropriate to make such sweeping conclusions regarding any assertions without first testing these assertions empirically.

Consider the 2006 Congressional election; several sources maintain that unions were responsible for increasing member turnout on behalf of pro-labor candidates (see Kelber 2006 amongst others). These sources cite the fact that massive mobilization efforts were orchestrated by the AFL-CIO, and that union voters backed the

Democratic candidate 74 percent of the time and that 79 percent of union drop-off voters (those who cast ballots during presidential races but not for mid-term elections) voted in battleground states. It has been argued, therefore, that the mobilization effort caused this high Democratic turnout, and that targeting drop-off voters was a successful strategy. Yet this conclusion is premised on an inaccurate methodology; for instance, how do we know if the voters cast ballots because the union mobilized them, or if they were going to cast ballots anyway regardless of mobilization? If a large number of drop-off voters turned out, this could just as likely been due to the high national-level interest in the election at hand, rather than the union effort to get these voters to the polls.

If scholars wish to claim, for instance, that the labor movement is politically viable nationally based on the 2006 elections, or that unions in Los Angeles can up turnout for labor-friendly politicians almost at will, it is important that they support their arguments by using objective statistical techniques, based on sound methodologies, as evidentiary proof. It is not enough to simply point to a favorable association between events and maintain a causal relationship. This dissertation contributes methodologically by offering all the techniques that need to be used to empirically answer questions of labor's role in increasing turnout and of influences on voter behavior in general.

It is not, however, the intention of this dissertation to denigrate the concept of qualitative research in any way. Posing arguments and theories based on qualitative methods is immensely beneficial, especially in laying a strong foundation for developing assertions that can be tested using statistical analysis; the first several chapters of this dissertation demonstrate the benefits of a qualitative approach. I am simply arguing that, before making a sweeping claim about a causal relationship between labor mobilization and voter turnout levels, scholars should first run

empirical tests using the methodological techniques set forth in this dissertation and the political science literature in general.

Theoretical Contributions

While this dissertation has contributed to the political science and industrial relations literatures and offered new methodological techniques for testing mobilization efforts, it is important to clearly explain the work's theoretical contributions. Which theories does this work support, and which does it challenge? Where does the dissertation fit in the historical development of voter turnout theory? Answering these questions requires a brief recounting of the previous voting behavior theories, and then an explanation as to the ways in which this work improves on previous studies.

Twentieth Century Literature

The American Voter (1960) in many ways set the standard for understanding the determinants of voting behavior – this work was the first to attempt a conceptual model for explaining vote choice (and turnout), although it was by no means the first attempt by scholars to analyze political participation. Authors like Gosnell (1927) and Lazarsfeld (throughout the 1940s and 1950s), amongst many others, looked at voting behavior (and, in Gosnell's case, mobilization efforts). However, in terms of defining determinants of vote turnout, the work of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes provided key insights into the interactions between individuals' psychological characteristics and environmental factors.

The notion that vote behavior (i.e. the decision to vote or not) relies on a series of psychological-environmental factors (such as an individual's age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, party affiliation, and other characteristics, combined with

specific short-term influences) has been generally accepted by political scientists. Yet progress has been made since the 1960s in the field of voter turnout. Often this progress has come in the form of refinements to the determinants of voter turnout – that is, challenges to the particular characteristics that interact to determine whether an individual will vote. For instance, Campbell, *et. al.* were said to have overstated the role of party identification as the key factor in influencing vote behavior. Other authors have challenged and refined the socioeconomic characteristics that might play a role in turnout, with some scholars favoring income (i.e. Milbrath and Goel 1977) and others arguing that education is a more accurate predictor (i.e. Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). The effects of religion, marital status, occupational choice, gender, and a whole host of other individual characteristics have been tested, often with compelling evidence both for and against their influences on potential voters. But the fundamental assertion that voting is the final product of psychological and environmental interactions remains embedded in even the most current analyses of turnout explanations.

A second perspective on turnout developed by Downs (1957) and adapted by Riker and Ordeshook (1968) views voting from an economic outlook. In answering the question of why some individuals vote and others do not, this approach focuses not on psychological interactions, but rather on the costs and benefits of voting. The theory concludes that the act of voting represents a paradox, as benefits of turnout, if measured in terms of the opportunity to influence an election outcome, always equal zero given that a single vote has never determined a major election. The authors presented a question to the political science community, which was termed the paradox of participation: if utility always equals zero, why do individuals vote? This approach to turnout became known as rational choice theory.

Political scientists have since built upon these two approaches to turnout, often integrating the theories. Two key contributions to turnout literature in the last quarter of the twentieth century came from Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993). Wolfinger and Rosenstone's work provided critical demographic distinctions between voters and nonvoters, significantly improving our understanding of the determinants of vote behavior. The authors established that age and education were key factors in influencing turnout, and debunked several notions about other turnout contributors.

Perhaps the most critical late-twentieth century work on turnout was Rosenstone and Hansen's *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America* (1993). In this book, the authors built on the Downs and Campbell, *et. al.* theories when discussing the roles of education, experience, gender, efficacy, and other known determinants of voting behavior. But the authors further developed their analysis of turnout determinants to incorporate an understanding of the role of political mobilization in influencing turnout. Rosenstone and Hansen argued that mobilization efforts could overcome the paradox of participation. Further, the authors highlighted the importance of individual voters' social networks, and the tapping into these networks by mobilization groups, through direct and indirect mobilization. They maintained that the lack of political mobilization in the 1970s and 1980s was the key cause for declining turnout during this time.

Twenty-First Century Literature

Following Rosenstone and Hansen's groundbreaking work on political mobilization, a number of recent studies have tested the effects of mobilization on turnout. The key authors of these studies, Alan Gerber and Donald Green, who lead a cohort of new scholars in the field, have established what one might call a new

paradigm for measuring voter turnout. While noting the significance of classical vote turnout studies, the two authors have challenged the methodological techniques employed, arguing that previous work (including that of Wolfinger and Rosenstone, Rosenstone and Hansen, and others) is fundamentally flawed in its approach for three key reasons. For one, these previous studies relied on self-reporting of turnout levels through surveys (without public record verification). Gerber and Green maintain that this technique leads to a significant overstatement of turnout levels by the surveyed individuals, which substantially biases the dependent variable. For another, the sample sizes of these studies were often small, which is likely to have led to unreliable results. Finally, the prior studies were unable to tell whether mobilization groups were focusing on likely voters, which again is likely to have biased the results. Gerber and Green, and their colleagues, have asserted that the best way to analyze the role of mobilization efforts is to use an experimental approach, wherein a large sample of potential voters is randomly assigned into control and treatment groups.

Perhaps the key work highlighting this new approach to studying turnout came in the authors' 2000 piece, "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." In this work, the authors used their "methodologically defensible" experimental approach, and were able to separate mobilization into specific types. Critically, the authors were able to build a reliable sample size for their work, unlike previous attempts to experimentally test mobilization (e.g. Gosnell 1927, Eldersveld 1956, Adams and Smith 1980, and Miller, Bositis and Baer 1981), which, for lack of a large sample, failed to develop reliable results.

The authors found that personal mobilization techniques (i.e. face-to-face contact) were statistically influential on turnout, while less personal approaches like direct mailings and phone calls were essentially meaningless in upping turnout levels.

More recent studies by the authors and others associated with their work have found results that are often supportive but sometimes in competition with these results – while personal visits remain strong indicators of turnout in the newest studies, live phone calls have been found in some pieces to slightly raise turnout (e.g. Ramirez 2005).

This Dissertation's Contribution

The Gerber and Green approach to studying mobilization, using verifiable public records and large sample sizes, and controlling for vote likelihood, sits at the forefront of the mobilization literature. This dissertation's methodological techniques generally followed the Gerber and Green approach, in using an extremely large sample to answer reliability concerns, harnessing verifiable public records to record turnout information, and accounting for prior vote behaviors of the population.

Yet the dissertation did not simply replicate the Gerber and Green approach. In many ways, it offered something of a hybrid model of the observational and experimental approaches. While I did not randomly assign the voters into treatment and control groups (something that Gerber and Green would likely have wanted), I accounted for the theoretical necessity of this random assignment by testing whether vote propensity (and all other known characteristics of potential targets) had any influence on the decision to contact the voters. Given the confirmation that contact was independent of any known characteristics of the population, and also given anecdotal evidence on the matter, I determined that the contacted and non-contacted groups were essentially random in their characteristics. Of course, Gerber and Green would possibly argue that there may be underlying variables for which I simply could not account, as I did not perform the experiment myself.

Yet this lack of hands-on experimentation with the population of potential voters leads to the greatest distinction of this dissertation from the Gerber and Green work, and what I consider perhaps the most significant contribution to and expansion on the political science mobilization literature. In this work, I am able to study an actual mobilization campaign, rather than one simply organized as a political science experiment. Gerber and Green, and their colleagues, set out to experimentally test mobilization efforts, and as such were forced to build a campaign that would meet all the criteria given their criteria for a “methodologically defensible” analysis. Consequently, in their seminal 2000 piece, they employed paid graduate students to contact voters face-to-face. Most critically, they relied on “a large out-of-state telemarketing firm” to conduct thirty-second phone calls to potential voters. Other works by the authors and their colleagues have used essentially the same methods. In a 2001 follow-up piece, which focused specifically on telephone efforts and their lack of success in mobilization, the authors confess:

It should be noted, however, that professionalism in campaigning manifests itself not only in the quantity of calls that can be made but also in the quality of those calls. Having monitored several hours of phone calls, it is our impression that the calls were delivered in a routinized and at times rushed manner. In other words, the calls sounded as though they were made by a professional firm rather than local volunteers or neighbors. The telephone scripts were generally delivered competently, but sometimes hastily or mechanically (Gerber and Green 2001).

The problem with this approach, manifested most clearly in the study’s phone calls but also in the personal contacts, is that paid graduate students and telemarketing firms lack any actual investment in the election outcome. If the mobilizing agents are not fully committed to upping turnout – and I argue that a paid graduate student and/or a telemarketing firm, especially from out-of-state, holds no fundamental commitment to influencing the outcome of the election – the results of the experiment will be

negatively biased. The influence of less personal (or less committed) mobilization should not be underestimated. Putnam (2000) argues that mobilization as a whole is far more professionalized and commercialized than it was in the past. Gerber and Green themselves speculate (2000) that a lack of quality, personal contacts – in this case meaning contacts by local mobilizing agents committed to raising turnout – may explain falling vote levels.

My study tested a real mobilization campaign, orchestrated by local union and community groups, relying on contacting agents largely from the same community as the potential voters. The contacting agents had an immense commitment to the election outcome, as they were fighting to mobilize voters for candidates with close ties to their organizations. The phone banks were not out-of-state telemarketers, but were local union and community workers, looking to up the vote in critical elections and for candidates in which they believed. As such, those who mobilized voters in my study felt an essential pressure to convince the targeted individuals to cast ballots, much more so than a mobilizing agent without any vested interest in the results of his or her efforts.

All of this speaks to the key difference between my results and those of Gerber and Green – the magnitude of the outcomes. I found a higher likelihood of turnout for voters contacted personally than the previous authors, but most importantly, I found that telephone calls not only worked, but worked incredibly well. This result stands in direct contrast to the Gerber and Green findings. I assert that the magnitude of my outcomes, and the tremendous success of phone calls in all the elections, can be largely attributed to the commitment of the contacting agents to actually convincing their targeted voters to cast ballots, which relates back to the fact that my study was not designed as an experiment, but as a methodologically suitable observation of a real vote-getting effort. In cases such as mine, when the election results genuinely matter

to those contacting potential voters, the message is far more likely to convince the individuals to vote. My results are also buoyed by the fact that these mobilizing agents were likely known to the targeted voters (given that they were often part of the same community) and could exert a strong sense of social pressure on the contacted voters. The Gerber and Green cohort was unable in their previous studies to consider the possibility of social pressure by contacting agents, as their mobilization teams were paid graduate students or out-of-state phone banks and, as such, were often not members of the same community.

Thus, the most recognizable theoretical contribution of this work lies in its suggestion the Gerber and Green approach is in some ways correct in its methods, but that it is impossible to grasp the true effects of mobilization efforts without studying actual campaigns in a less intrusive manner. Although such an approach loses its pre-election randomization of voters, it gains the substantial benefit of relying on sincerely committed contacting agents, carrying with them a message that they genuinely wish to impart on potential voters. This message, I argue, is much more convincing than one read from a script.

A further theoretical contribution can be found when considering the contextual circumstances of the study and the assertion that unions and community groups have forged a bond with their potential voters that leads to a high likelihood of mobilization success. This contribution also speaks to the idea that the results might be generalized more broadly than just the Los Angeles setting or just the union mobilization effort. While on the surface it might appear that, given the context discussed, Los Angeles is an exceptional case for the study, I argue that the circumstances surrounding the tested vote-getting efforts are not fundamentally different from other situations. The bond between the County Federation and the local

community is not particularly different from a bond between, for instance, a church and its environs.

While the rise of Latino organizers to positions of power in the Federation coupled with increasing numbers of Latino workers and a politically awakened ethnicity following Proposition 187 might be used to argue for Los Angeles exceptionalism, I maintain that these forces simply created a political bond between unions and Latinos. How the bond was created (the unique L.A. circumstances) does not influence the likelihood that this bond can be created elsewhere, under a different series of events. That is, the bond itself is not dependent on one particular set of circumstances, but can be found in any number of settings. Consider the turnout levels of highly religious voters in the 2004 presidential election, after Karl Rove orchestrated the development of a bond between George Bush and the highly religious. The massive mobilization of this voting bloc on behalf of the Republican Party is not fundamentally dissimilar to the contacting of community members by a labor-community alliance for which there is a strong local affinity. As such, I maintain that any of these results should not be considered exceptional, but rather that outcomes of a similar magnitude would likely be found when any political bond has been developed and is supported by a large mobilization effort that employs contacting agents with a vested interest in influencing the election.

Possible Improvements and Final Thoughts

Although the results of the various quantitative analyses are quite consistent, there is some room for improvement in the study, which should be noted. The largest concern with this work's methodological approach, discussed often in this final chapter, involves the use of observational data, rather than first-hand experimental analysis. While this data set offers a multitude of positive aspects (e.g. its unique

comparative features, its inclusion of a number of controls, its size, etc.), it has been of vital importance to demonstrate that the non-random nature of the data does not indicate any biases that may have skewed the results. I took a number of steps in this dissertation to ensure the methodological soundness of each model used, thus validating the outcomes offered. However, were an absolutely experimental test to be run, with pre-contact randomization and all the usual scientific processes, the results would be even more immune from this methodological challenge; however, the drawbacks of this purely experimental approach (which is essentially a replication of Gerber and Green's work) have been discussed at length in this chapter as well.

Following from this concern over the use of observational data is a similar consideration, in that it is difficult not to question whether any errors might have been made at some point between the contact itself, the recording of the contact, the coding into data, the combination of the data sets, and finally the analysis. More particularly, without first-hand data recording, it is hard to know whether the information provided is entirely accurate in its representation of the actual mobilization effort. There are certain pieces of information that are missing from the data set – such as some differentiating characteristics of the mobilization agents (other than what is broadly known about the contacting groups) or the accuracy of the registered voters list provided by Political Data. Were this information available, it would be useful in explaining some of the more intriguing aspects of the results.

The outcomes found in this dissertation validate the strategy adopted by organized labor in Los Angeles, especially that of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. The magnitude of influence, especially for the Federation but also in terms of the labor-community partnership, indicates that the positive reputation gained by the labor organization over the last several years is entirely justified.

There is room for further theoretical development of this topic, especially when considering the concept of social pressure as a political tactic. The notion of “over-mobilization” of a community based on constant turnout pressure by vote-getting groups would be interesting to study. The theory is that after a certain number of mobilization efforts over a period of time, potential voters will reject the idea that they must vote to be accepted by the community. I argue in this dissertation that such an event occurred in March 2004, wherein the high election priority, combined with the nearness of this race to four other campaigns in which mobilization occurred, led to a turnout increase that did not match the level anticipated by the vote-getting effort. However, it would be interesting to develop this concept further – is there one precise point where mobilization efforts begin to lose their effectiveness? This notion of over-mobilization could also be connected to the economic literature on diminishing marginal utility, and tests could be performed that might contribute to this literature.

It would also be interesting to attempt to understand the extent to which the particular context of the study played a role in the results. Although I argue that the bond forged between Los Angeles unions and the local community should not be considered totally exceptional (nor the results unrepeatably), a further step would be to perform a study across different contexts. It would be useful, for instance, to analyze populations with similar demographic characteristics but different geographic locations – this might provide some empirical test of the uniqueness of Los Angeles as an environment.

It would also be interesting to test the idea that external conditions do not play an important role when looking at one particular set of individuals over several elections. I argue in this dissertation that the factors external to the population being analyzed (for instance, the closeness of the race) are irrelevant, given that the studied individuals are all subject to the same external pressures (although I admit that

individual perceptions of external factors like race closeness may differ to some degree). As such, the model includes no external conditions. A future study might incorporate these external factors in a measurable fashion, or test whether these conditions are statistically meaningless when studying one particular group of people. It is critical to consider that the analysis in this dissertation compared only *relative* vote levels (that is, turnout patterns of contacted individuals versus non-contacted individuals). Any study looking to analyze *absolute* vote turnout rates would need to control for external factors, which will influence blocks of voters differently.

In many ways, the number of future projects that could stem from this study serves as both a compliment to the worth of this type of analysis and a statement on the paucity of literature on this topic. With the political science literature not entirely speaking in the same voice on mobilization determinants and the literature on the role of union efforts to mobilize voters very much in its infancy, there is much room for additional studies. Considering the time and money spent by unions to perform vote-getting drives in recent political campaigns at the national and local levels, research of this type is certainly worthwhile and should prove quite useful for the labor movement. I recommend that those interested in studying this topic perform empirical analyses based on sound methodological structures, which add the benefit of statistical objectivity to the research. However, it is vital first for future researchers to explore the context in which they are working, and to determine hypotheses worth testing within these contexts. As such, I recommend a dual-methods approach as most useful for future studies.

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