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# INSURGENCY OF THE POWERLESS: FARM WORKER MOVEMENTS (1946-1972)\*

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*Drawing on the perspective developed in recent work by Oberschall (1973), Tilly (1975) and Gamson (1975), we analyze the political process centered around farm worker insurgencies. Comparing the experience of two challenges, we argue that the factors favored in the classical social movement literature fail to account for either the rise or outcome of insurgency. Instead, the important variables pertain to social resources—in our case, sponsorship by established organizations. Farm workers themselves are powerless; as an excluded group, their demands tend to be systematically ignored. But powerlessness may be overridden if the national political elite is neutralized and members of the polity contribute resources and attack insurgent targets. To test the argument, entries in the New York Times Annual Index are content coded and statistically analyzed, demonstrating how the political environment surrounding insurgent efforts alternatively contains them or makes them successful.*

From about 1964 until 1972, American society witnessed an unprecedented number of groups acting in insurgent fashion. By insurgency we mean organized attempts to bring about structural change by thrusting new interests into decision-making processes. Some of this insurgency, notably the civil rights and peace movements, had begun somewhat earlier, but after 1963 there were organized attempts to bring about structural changes from virtually all sides: ethnic minorities (Indians, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans), welfare mothers, women, sexual liberation groups, teachers and even some blue-collar workers. The present study isolates and analyzes in detail one of these insurgent challenges—that of farm workers—in an effort to throw light on the dynamics that made the 1960s a period of dramatic and stormy politics.

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Our thesis is that the rise and dramatic success of farm worker insurgents in the late 1960s best can be explained by changes in the political environment the movement confronted, rather than by the internal characteristics of the movement organization and the social base upon which it drew. The salient environment consisted of the government, especially the federal government, and a coalition of liberal support organizations. We shall contrast the unsuccessful attempt to organize farm workers by the National Farm Labor Union from 1946 to 1952 with the strikingly successful one of the United Farm Workers from 1965 to 1972.

The immediate goals of both movements were the same—to secure union contracts. They both used the same tactics, namely, mass agricultural strikes, boycotts aided by organized labor, and political demands supported by the liberal community of the day. Both groups encountered identical and virtually insurmountable obstacles, namely, a weak bargaining position, farm worker poverty and a culture of resignation, high rates of migrancy and weak social cohesion, and a perpetual oversupply of farm labor, insuring that growers could break any strike.

The difference between the two chal-

lenges was the societal response that insurgent demands received. During the first challenge, government policies strongly favored agribusiness; support from liberal organizations and organized labor was weak and vacillating. By the time the second challenge was mounted, the political environment had changed dramatically. Government now was divided over policies pertaining to farm workers; liberals and organized labor had formed a reform coalition, attacking agribusiness privileges in public policy. The reform coalition then furnished the resources to launch the challenge. Once underway, the coalition continued to fend for the insurgents, providing additional resources and applying leverage to movement targets. The key changes, then, were in support organization and governmental actions. To demonstrate this, we will analyze macro-level changes in the activities of these groups as reported in the *New York Times Annual Index* between 1946 and 1972.

### *The Classical Model*

In taking this position, we are arguing that the standard literature on social movements fails to deal adequately with either of two central issues—the formation of insurgent organizations and the outcome of insurgent challenges. Drawing on Gusfield's (1968) summary statement, the classical literature holds in common the following line of argument. See also Turner and Killian (1957; 1972), Smelser (1962), Lang and Lang (1961), Kornhauser (1959), Davies (1962; 1969) and Gurr (1970).

Social movements arise because of deep and widespread discontent. First, there is a social change which makes prevailing social relations inappropriate, producing a strain between the new and the old. Strain then generates discontent within some social grouping. When discontent increases rapidly and is widely shared, collective efforts to alleviate discontent will occur. Though there is disagreement about how to formulate the link between strain and discontent, e.g., subjective gaps between expectations and satisfactions versus emotional anxiety in-

duced by anomie, the central thrust is consistent. Fluctuations in the level of discontent account for the rise of movements and major changes in movement participation.

Recent research, though, has cast doubt on the classic "discontent" formulations. Disorders do not arise from disorganized anomic masses, but from groups organizationally able to defend and advance their interests (Oberschall, 1973; Tilly et al., 1975). As for relative deprivation, Snyder and Tilly (1972) and Hibbs (1973) have failed to find it useful in accounting for a wide variety of collective disruptions. Nor is it clear that we can use the concept without falling into post hoc interpretations (cf. Wilson, 1973:73-9).<sup>1</sup>

In this study, we do not propose to test each of the various "discontent" formulations currently available. *A priori*, it is rather hard to believe that farm workers' discontent was, for example, suddenly greater in 1965, when the Delano grape strike began, than throughout much of the 1950s when there was no movement or strike activity. Indeed, it seems more plausible to assume that farm worker discontent is relatively constant, a product of established economic relations rather than some social dislocation or dysfunction. We do not deny the existence of discontent but we question the usefulness of discontent formulations in accounting for either the emergence of insurgent organization or the level of participation by the social base. What increases, giving rise to insurgency, is the amount of social resources available to unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change.

As for the outcome of challenges, the importance of resources is obvious. Though the classical literature has rarely dealt with the issue directly, there has been an implicit position. The resources mobilized by movement organizations are assumed to derive from the aggrieved social base. The outcome of the challenge, then, whether or not one adopts a

<sup>1</sup> Shifts in perceptions, treated as central by relative deprivation theorists, in our view would be secondary to the main process—changes in social resources.

“natural history” model of movement development, should depend primarily upon internal considerations, e.g., leadership changes and communication dynamics among the membership.

However, are deprived groups like farm workers able to sustain challenges, especially effective ones, on their own? We think not. Both of the movements studied were, from the outset, dependent upon external groups for critical organizational resources. Nor, as the history of agricultural strikes amply attests (McWilliams, 1939; London and Anderson, 1970; Taylor, 1975), have farm worker movements proven able to mobilize numbers sufficient to wring concessions from employers. For a successful outcome, movements by the “powerless” require strong and sustained outside support.

If this line of argument is correct, we need to contest a second thesis frequently found in the classical literature—the assertion that the American polity operates in a pluralistic fashion (cf. Kornhauser, 1959; Smelser, 1962). A pluralistic polity is structurally open to demands for change.<sup>2</sup> As Gamson (1968; 1975) has put it, the political system should be structurally “permeable,” readily incorporating new groups and their interests into the decision-making process. Once organized, groups redressing widely-shared grievances should be able to secure at least some part of their program through bargaining and compromise.<sup>3</sup> Yet our evidence shows that farm worker challenges have failed, in part, because of the opposition of public officials, and that a success-

ful challenge depended upon the intervention of established liberal organizations and the neutrality of political elites.

We can then summarize the classical model as follows. (1) Discontent, traced to structural dislocations, accounts for collective attempts to bring about change. (2) The resources required to mount collective action and carry it through are broadly distributed—shared by all sizeable social groupings. (3) The political system is pluralistic and, therefore, responsive to all organized groups with grievances. (4) If insurgents succeed, it is due to efforts on the part of the social base; if they do not, presumably they lacked competent leaders, were unwilling to compromise, or behaved irrationally (e.g., used violence or broke laws).

In contrast, we will argue that (1) discontent is ever-present for deprived groups, but (2) collective action is rarely a viable option because of lack of resources and the threat of repression. (3) When deprived groups do mobilize, it is due to the interjection of external resources. (4) Challenges frequently fail because of the lack of resources. Success comes when there is a combination of sustained outside support and disunity and/or tolerance on the part of political elites. The important variables separating movement success from failure, then, pertain to the way the polity responds to insurgent demands.

#### *Structural Powerlessness of Farm Workers*

The major impediment to farm worker unionization has been the oversupply of farm labor, undercutting all attempted harvest strikes. There are few barriers of habit or skill that restrict the entry of any applicant to work in the fields. The result is an “unstructured” labor market, offering little job stability and open to all comers (Fisher, 1953). The fields of California and Texas are close enough to the poverty-stricken provinces of Mexico to insure a steady influx of workers, many of whom arrive by illegal routes (Frisbee, 1975). Continuous immigration not only underwrites the oversupply of labor, but complicates mobilization by insuring the existence of cultural cleavages among workers.

<sup>2</sup> Note also the central role played in pluralistic interpretations by the “discontent” hypothesis. Assuming that all groups have ready access to the resources needed to mobilize, Rose (1967:249) argued: “As soon as a felt need for some social change arises, one or more voluntary associations immediately springs up to try to secure the change.”

<sup>3</sup> As the central tenet of pluralist theory, the “permeability” argument can be found in almost any presentation of the view. Dahl (1967:250) argues: “even minorities are provided with opportunities to veto solutions”; Truman’s (1951) speculations about “potential groups” and Smelser’s (1963:364–79) recommendations to elites for channeling “value-oriented” movements into “norm-oriented” ones both build on the assumption of a flexible political system based on a pluralistic social structure.

Furthermore, there are reasons to believe that a significant number of workers have only a limited economic interest in the gains promised by unionization. The majority of farm workers, both domestic and alien, are short-term seasonal workers. During the early 1960s, farm employment in California averaged less than three months of the year (Fuller, 1967). This means that a majority of workers are interested primarily in the "quick dollar." Imposition of union restrictions on easy access to jobs would conflict with that interest. And for the vast majority of farm workers, regardless of job commitment or citizenship status, income is so low as to leave little economic reserve for risk-taking. Since a major portion of the year's income comes during the brief harvest period, workers are reluctant to risk their livelihood on a strike at that time.

In addition to these structural restraints on collective action, there were the very direct restraints of the growers and their political allies. The California Department of Employment and the U. S. Department of Labor have long operated farm placement services that furnish workers for strike-bound employers. Insurgent actions that directly threaten growers, like picket lines and mass rallies, consistently have been the target of official harassment. Though never returning to the scale of the "local fascism" of the 1930s (McWilliams, 1942; Chambers, 1952), grower vigilante actions are not uncommon.

Bringing these considerations to bear on the comparison of farm worker challenges, there is reason to believe that circumstances were slightly more conducive to the mobilization efforts of the UFW. Between 1946 and 1965 farm wage rates rose slightly and a few public welfare benefits were extended, at least within California. Presumably, farm workers were slightly more secure economically by the mid-1960s. More significant, though, were changes in the social composition of the farm labor force. During the late 1940s farm workers in California were either "dustbowlers" or Mexican *braceros* (government-imported contract workers); by the mid-1960s the California farm labor force was predominantly

Mexican-descent, short-term workers, most of whom only recently had migrated across the border. Not only were linguistic-cultural cleavages somewhat less pronounced, but these new immigrants were more likely to settle and develop stable community ties than their "Okie" predecessors.

Also, the United Farm Workers pursued a mobilization strategy better designed than that of the NFLU to sustain the participation of farm workers. From its inception, the UFW was an Alinsky-styled community organization. The primary advantage was that it offered a program of services and social activities that did not depend upon first securing a union contract. Members developed an attachment to the organization independent of the immediate gains that might derive from any strike. Though the National Farm Labor Union had taken limited steps in a similar direction, its program remained primarily that of the conventional "business" union, promising wage gains and better working conditions rather than social solidarity and community benefits.

But the critical issue is whether differences in either the structural position of farm workers or the mobilization strategy adopted by the movements affected either dependent variable. As we shall see, the impetus for both of the challenges came from the interjection, into an otherwise placid situation, of a professionally-trained cadre backed by outside sponsors. Farm worker discontent remained unexpressed in any organized way until outside organizers arrived on the scene.

As for the question of challenge outcome, despite the UFW's advantages, it experienced no more success in strike efforts than did the NFLU. Where the NFLU had to contend with the semi-official use of *braceros* as strikebreakers, the UFW had to deal with vastly increased numbers of illegal aliens and short-term workers crossing the picket lines. The combination of structural constraints and direct controls insured that neither union was able to mobilize a sufficiently massive social base to be effective.

What separated the UFW success from the NFLU failure was the societal re-

sponse to the challenges. The NFLU received weak and vacillating sponsorship; the UFW's backing was strong and sustained. Under the pressure of court injunctions and police harassment, the NFLU boycott collapsed when organized labor refused to cooperate. By contrast, the UFW boycotts became national "causes," receiving widespread support from organized labor and liberal organizations; though official harassment remained, the UFW did not deal with the same systematic repression confronted by the NFLU. The success of a "powerless" challenge depended upon sustained and widespread outside support coupled with the neutrality and/or tolerance from the national political elite.

### Method

To test this argument we need two bodies of information, one bearing on events leading to the initiation of insurgency and the other dealing with the political environment shaping challenge outcomes. For the first, we have drawn on published accounts of the movements, filled in and corroborated by extensive interviews conducted with movement participants and informed observers. For the second, we have turned to newspaper sources to provide a picture of the societal response to the two challengers. By content coding the abstracts of news stories that dealt with farm labor issues printed in the *New York Times* over a twenty-seven-year period (1946–1972), we can determine the types of groups concerned with the question of farm labor, whether their actions favored the structural changes advocated by insurgents, the types of activities in which they were engaged and, finally, the pattern of interaction prevailing between these various groups during the course of the respective challenges. This way we have a systematic data base against which to test hypotheses bearing on movement-environment interaction.<sup>4</sup>

As with any data source, there are limits to the *Times* data. We cannot, for

example, use it to test hypotheses on the internal dynamics of mobilization. For this, we have gone to interviews and published sources. Nor, as Danzger's (1975) work has recently indicated, can we view the *Times* reportage as a complete picture of all insurgent activity and environmental responses to insurgency. Since it is a national newspaper, the *New York Times* will not provide us with day-to-day coverage, for example, of police repression in Delano, California. Nor can we count on the *Times* to reveal the hidden bargains and machinations that might underlie public positions and alliances.

We do not ask it to do so. What we are using the *Times* for is to construct a systematic, reliable index of the publicly visible political activities that formed the environment of each challenge. By comparing statistics drawn from this data base and relating these measures to differences in challenge outcome, we can see if our environmental thesis holds up.<sup>5</sup>

To see if the *New York Times* is a reliable source, we have compared the coverage given by the *Times* with that of two other newspapers, the *Chicago Tribune* for a more conservative picture and the *Los Angeles Times* for a more proximate source. After comparing the stories on farm labor carried by these three papers for one month (selected at the peak of activity for the three periods of analysis), we have concluded that the *New York Times* is basically a more complete version of the same "news." In the month selected from the first period (March, 1951), the *New York Times* covered seventeen events, only one of which was picked up by each of the other papers; no events in the "test" papers were missed by the *New York Times*. In the second period (April, 1958), the *New York Times* carried nine events, two of which the *Los Angeles Times* covered and none of which the *Tribune* covered; again the *New York Times* missed no events covered in the other papers. Only in the third period (October, 1968) did the *New York Times* miss an event, one involving a local

<sup>4</sup> For a copy of the coding schedule used, contact the first author.

<sup>5</sup> Inter-coder reliability was set at 90%; all items failing to meet this standard were excluded from the analysis.

organization that pressured the Los Angeles City Council to boycott grapes. This was reported in the *Los Angeles Times*. Of eight events covered by the *New York Times*, half appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and none in the *Tribune*. In sum, if you want newspaper reportage on farm labor events, the *New York Times* is a more thorough source and reveals no clearly different bias than the other papers during one period of time, say, the NFLU challenge, than another, e.g., the UFW effort.

Finally, there is the question of whether news reportage, regardless of cross-validation with other news sources, is valid. Danzger (1975) has argued that news coverage is affected by editorial policy, and that systematic error creeps in because the geographic location of national wire service offices produces uneven reportage of relevant events. It is important to note that we code events, not news stories. The prominence given to stories by the editors of the *New York Times* is irrelevant, as are the evaluations of the events by news personnel. Additionally, our data set should be relatively immune to the main source of error identified by Danzger. Both insurgencies centered in the same locale. Assuming that the corrective mechanisms within the news agencies identified by Danzger were operative, time-series data should be less vulnerable to error than cross-sectional data. Also, we should note the limitations to Danzger's conclusions given his own data base. As Snyder and Kelly (1976) have demonstrated, news-based conflict data dealing with violence appear quite valid; more error exists in nonviolent protest data (employed in Danzger's test). Extending that distinction to our own data set, we can place more confidence in our measures of "concrete" activities than those for "symbolic" ones.

### *Basic Variables*

Our analysis centers on the comparison of three time periods. The first, 1946–1955, spans the challenge of the National Farm Labor Union. Chartered to organize farm workers at the 1946 American Federation of Labor convention, the NFLU

launched a strike wave in the Central Valley of California that ended with the abortive Los Baños strike of 1952. The selection of 1955 as the end point of the period was somewhat arbitrary.

By comparison, the third period, 1965–1972, covers the sustained and successful challenge of the United Farm Workers. The 1965 Coachella and Delano strikes announced the UFW challenge; in 1970, after two years of nation-wide boycott efforts, the UFW brought table-grape growers to the bargaining table and began institutionalizing changes in the position of farm workers. (The Teamster entry in 1973 is not dealt with in this paper.)

During the period intervening between the two challenges, 1956–1964, important changes took place in the political system that set the stage for a successful challenge. In the absence of a major "push" from insurgents,<sup>6</sup> issues pertaining to farm labor received a different treatment in the hands of established liberal organizations and government officials. We will argue that these years constituted a period of germination and elite reform that made possible the success of the late 1960s.

From the *New York Times Annual Index*, we have coded the types of groups involved, the direction and form of their activity and the issues involved. The groups are: (1) the farm worker associations and unions that represented farm worker insurgents; (2) federal, state and local governments; (3) the liberal organizations (religious, philanthropic, political action and "public interest" groups); (4) organized labor; (5) agribusiness associations, corporations and individual farmers, referred to collectively as the growers. Of these, the growers have the fewest events reported in the *Times*, probably because fewer of their activities are likely to constitute "notable" events in a journalistic sense—e.g., securing the services

<sup>6</sup> The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AFL-CIO) was chartered in 1959, but never posed a serious threat to growers (London and Anderson 1970: 46–78); the National Farm Worker Association was an independent community organization launched by Cesar Chavez in 1962 and entered the labor question in an offensive way only in 1965 (London and Anderson, 1970: 148–53).

of local police, hiring strikebreakers, rounding up support among legislators. Their views are generally presented quite effectively by the Department of Agriculture so they need do little public relations on their own.

The first step is to break down group activity by direction—into actions favorable, unfavorable, ambiguous, or not relevant to the interests of farm workers. (Only government had significant numbers of both favorable and unfavorable actions. All other groups were either wholly favorable or unfavorable. Government was also the only type with a large number of “ambiguous” or “not relevant” actions. These are excluded from the analysis; they do not depart in terms of issue or type of action from “directed” actions.) We then can estimate the balance of favorable/unfavorable actions in the political system during the course of each challenge, and chart the fluctuations in favorable and unfavorable actions by different types of groups (see Figures 1 and 2).

In addition to group and direction, we are concerned with the form of action adopted. We will distinguish between “symbolic” and “concrete” actions. Purely rhetorical acts which attempt to shape public opinion, e.g., speeches or hearings, are “symbolic”; actions that attempt to directly allocate control over material resources, e.g., court rulings and mass protest, fall under the rubric of “concrete.”

Issue is our final variable: (1) labor supply, which is largely centered around the importation of Mexican labor under the *bracero* and “green card” programs and which was the dominant issue during the NFLU challenge; (2) working and living conditions of farm workers, which dominated the remaining two periods; (3) unionization, i.e., the legality of collective bargaining in agriculture, a question which first appeared in significant measure only during the UFW challenge.

Two types of statistics drawn from this data set will be used. N's, percentages and percent differences set off the rough differences between the three periods of activity. To capture more precisely the divergent patterns of interaction taking

place between insurgents and among various groups in the polity, Pearson product-moment correlations are reported. The scores entering the analysis are counts of actions taken by different groups, on different issues, for conventional calendar years. High  $r$ 's are taken to indicate that considerable concomitant activity took place over the time period between relevant pairs of groups, e.g., insurgents and liberals; low  $r$ 's, the absence of concomitant activity. Bringing this to bear on the environmental thesis, differences in descriptive statistics and  $r$ 's for relevant pairings of groups will reveal any differences that existed in the societal response to the challenges.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Period I: The NFLU Conflict (1946–1955)*

The first period illustrates in classical terms the obstacles to a sustained and successful farm worker challenge. In addition to the structural constraints restricting farm worker activity, the political environment confronting the insurgents was unfavorable. Government officials at all levels and branches came into the conflict predominantly on the side of the growers, despite the mandate of agencies such as the Department of Labor or the Education and Labor Committees in Congress to protect the interests of deprived groups like farm workers. Though external support was decisive in launching the challenge, it was weak and frequently ill-focused, dealing with the consequences rather than the causes of farm worker grievances. When support was withdrawn, the challenge soon collapsed.

Chartered at the 1946 convention of the American Federation of Labor, the Na-

<sup>7</sup> Contrary to most time-series analyses, controls for auto-correlation are inappropriate. The correlation analysis does not causally relate a dependent variable (e.g., level of insurgent activity) to a set of independent variables (e.g., level of liberal activity). Instead, it is designed to reveal whether significant differences exist between time periods in movement-environment interaction. These differences are then held to account for the divergent outcomes. Instead of asking, “Does liberal activity cause insurgency?” we are asking, “Did insurgent and liberal activities co-occur to a different extent during one challenge than another? Did this difference relate to different challenge outcomes?”



tional Farm Labor Union set out to accomplish what predecessors had been unable to do—successfully organize the farm workers of California's "industrialized" agriculture. The leadership cadre was experienced and resourceful. H. L. Mitchell, President of the NFLU, was former head of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union; the Director of Organizations, Henry Hasiwar, had been an effective organizer in several industrial union drives during the 1930s; Ernesto Galarza, who assumed prime responsibility for publicity efforts, had served as political liaison for Latin American unions and had a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University.

Initially, the strategy was quite conventional: enlist as many workers as possible from a single employer, call a strike, demand wage increases and union recognition, and picket to keep "scabs" out of the fields. American Federation of Labor affiliates would then provide strike relief and political support to keep the picket line going. An occasional church or student group would furnish money and boost morale.

But the government-sponsored alien labor or *bracero* program provided growers with an effective strike-breaking weapon. According to provisions of the law, *braceros* were not to be employed except in instances of domestic labor shortage and *never* to be employed in fields where domestic workers had walked out on strike. Yet in the two major tests of union power, the DiGiorgio strike of 1948 and the Imperial Valley strike of 1951, the flood of *braceros* undermined the strike effort of domestic workers (London and Anderson, 1970; Galarza, 1970; Jenkins, 1975: ch. 3). In the Imperial strike, the NFLU used citizen's arrests to enforce statutes prohibiting employment of *braceros* in labor disputed areas. However, local courts ruled against the tactic and the Immigration Service refused to remove alien "scabs" from the fields (Galarza, 1970:78; Jenkins, 1975: ch. 4). Nor were affairs changed when the *bracero* administration was transferred to the U.S. Department of Labor in 1951. Domestic workers were pushed out of crops by *braceros*, and *braceros* reap-

peared in the Los Baños strike of 1952 to break the challenge (Galarza, 1970:79).

In response, the NFLU launched a two-pronged political challenge—a demand for termination of the *bracero* program and, to get around the problem of ineffective strikes, requests for organized labor's support of boycotts. Neither demand found a favorable audience. Lacking strong labor or liberal support, the demand for an end to the *bracero* traffic ended in minor reforms in the *bracero* administration (Galarza, 1970: ch. 4). As for the boycott, despite initial success, it collapsed when a court injunction was issued (improperly) on the grounds that the NFLU was covered by the "hot cargo" provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. The National Labor Relations Board initially concurred and reversed its position over a year later. By then the Union's resources were exhausted and organized-labor support had long since collapsed (Galarza, 1970:73-92).

Figure 1 charts the level of favorable actions by selected groups, allowing us to gauge the societal response to insurgency. The curves delineating government, liberal, and farm worker activities move roughly in concert. (Organized labor, though, played little public role in this or the next period.) Checking these impressions, Table 1 reports Pearson *r*'s on relevant pairs of groups. Largely a reflection of the pressure campaign waged by the NFLU, the strongest correlation is between insurgents and favorable government activity (.63), concrete activities seemingly being more efficacious (.70 versus .49 for symbolic acts). *R* for insurgent/government activity drops only slightly when controls are introduced for liberal activity (.57), indicating that liberal activity was not necessary for this measure of official response.

The main issue for the period was labor supply. Looking at activities concerned with this issue, the correlation between insurgent and pro-farm worker government activities is high (.59); for the issue of living and working conditions, the relation disappears (-.08). The union attempted, through court actions, lobby efforts and public protest, to pressure gov-

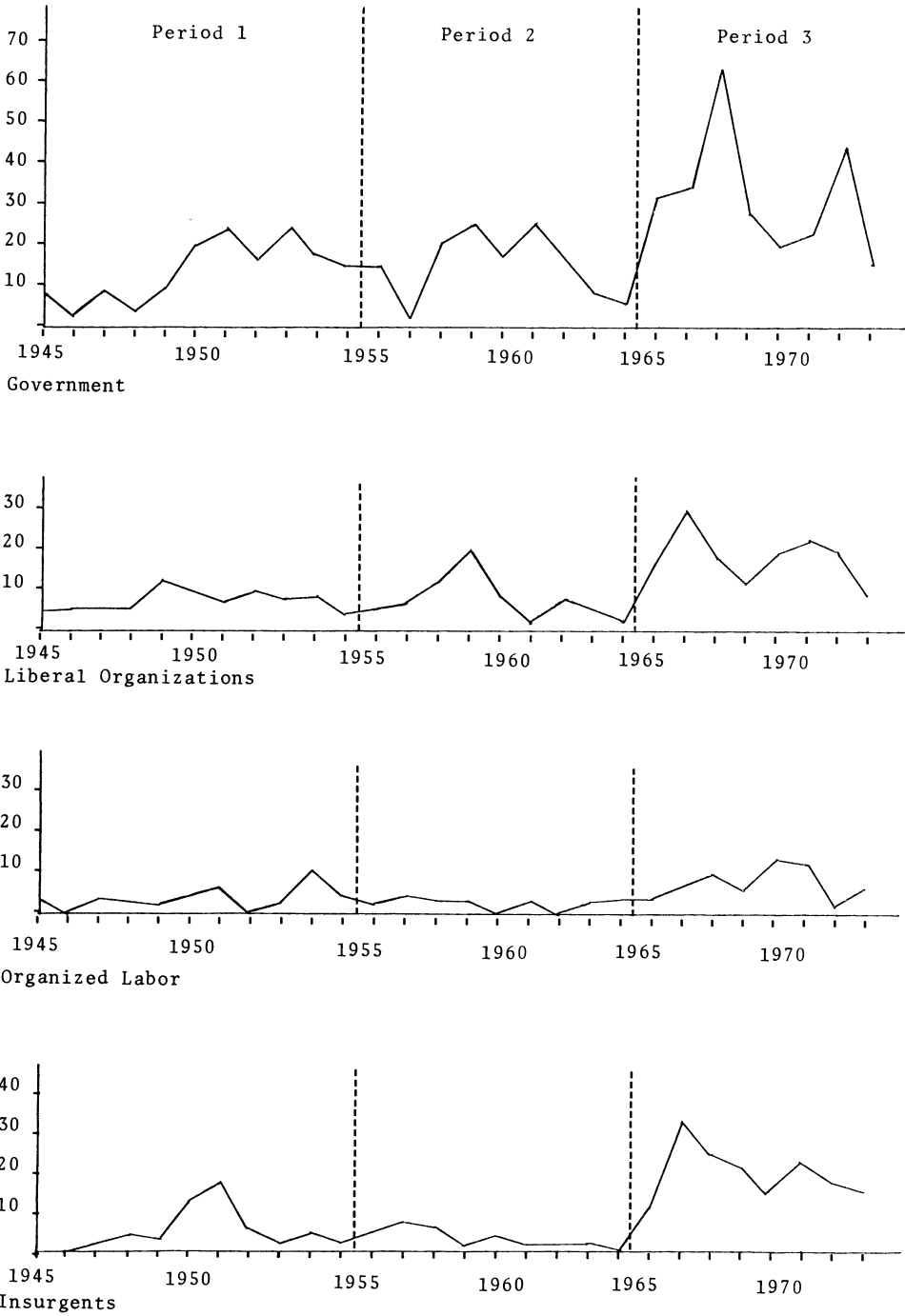


Figure 1. Actions Favorable to Insurgents

ernment to end the *bracero* program since it was so central to the control of the labor supply. The official response, however, was largely symbolic. Though govern-

ment tended to respond to concrete insurgency with favorable concrete actions, the majority of favorable governmental actions were actually symbolic (58%).

Table 1. Extent of Concomitant Activity—Pro Farm Worker (*r*'s)

	All Acts	Symbolic Acts <sup>a</sup>	Concrete Acts <sup>a</sup>
Period I (1946–1955)			
Insurgents and Government	.63	.49	.70
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	.45	.56	-.02
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.08	-.08	— <sup>b</sup>
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.33	.37	-.17
Organized Labor and Government	.36	.35	— <sup>b</sup>
Period II (1956–1964)			
Insurgents and Government	-.26	-.26	-.42
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	-.10	.05	-.13
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.59	.67	-.33
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.50	.53	.25
Organized Labor and Government	.06	-.60	.58
Period III (1965–1972)			
Insurgents and Government	.26	.26	.04
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	.62	.06	.83
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.16	.43	-.01
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.04	.16	-.08
Organized Labor and Government	-.002	.46	-.54

<sup>a</sup> Symbolic or concrete for both types of groups.

<sup>b</sup> N for one group during this period was zero.

Nor did many of these concrete moves decisively aid the farm worker cause. Key actions, such as pulling strikebreaking *braceros* out of the fields, did not occur.

What, then, are we to make of the fact that 50% of reported governmental actions were coded as favorable to the interest of farm workers? Was government responding to the conflict between insurgents and growers in some even-handed "pluralist" way? Here it is necessary to recall that we are using news media reportage on a social problem and efforts to redress that problem. The news media will be more sensitive to efforts attempting to define or solve that problem than to efforts to maintain the *status quo*. Consequently, unfavorable actions by government and growers are underrepresented in our data. If only 50% of news-reported government actions can be coded as favorable, then the full universe of governmental activities should, in the balance, be more favorable to growers.

The strength of this assertion is borne out by information on actions favorable to growers. Figure 2 charts these actions for government and growers. The correlation between pro-grower government activities and grower activities is quite high (.75), actually stronger than the respective *r* for insurgents. In quantitative terms,

government was more responsive to agribusiness interests. Clearly, in critical instances, e.g., leaving *braceros* in struck fields, government policies favored growers over workers.

In addition to the predominantly unfavorable response of government, the NFLU failed to receive sustained, solid support from the liberal community. The major problem was the type of activities in which liberals engaged. When they acted, liberals consistently supported farm workers over growers but they rarely moved beyond symbolic proclamations. Only 24% of liberal actions during the period were concrete. By contrast, 38% during the UFW challenge were so. Even more indicative, though, is the modest level of the correlation between liberal and insurgent activity (.45). What concomitant activity did exist between these two groups involved only symbolic acts (.56 versus -.02 for concrete acts). Looking ahead, the respective *r*'s for the UFW challenge indicate a quite different liberal response. Overall, *r* was .62; for concrete actions, *r* was .83 and, for symbolic acts, .06. Where the UFW experienced consistent and concrete support, the NFLU found itself relatively isolated.

Though liberals did not rush to the side of the NFLU, they did play a role in the

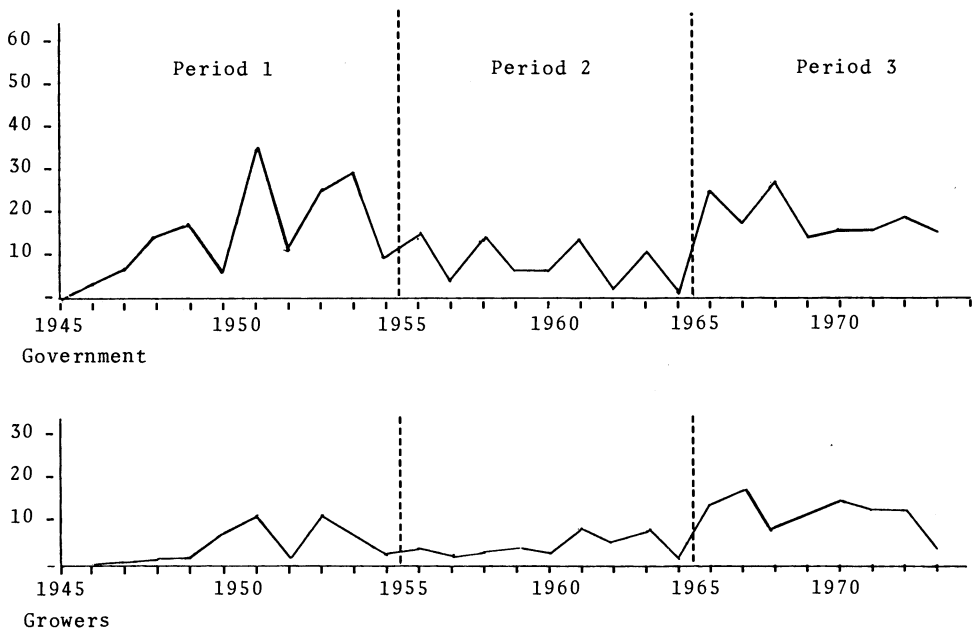


Figure 2. Actions Favorable to Growers

pressure campaign. When controls are introduced for government activity on the relation between insurgents and liberals, the modestly positive relation turns negative ( $-.10$ ). Insofar as liberals did act alongside insurgents, apparently it was in the presence of public officials. But there were problems even with this limited-scale liberal support. Liberals focused almost exclusively on the working and living conditions of farm workers. Following the lead of Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace in 1948, several religious and "public interest" associations sponsored conferences and issued study reports publicizing deplorable camp conditions and child labor. In what might be considered a typical pattern of liberalism of the time, they were concerned with the plight of the workers rather than the fact of their powerlessness or the role of the *bracero* program in underwriting that powerlessness. It was a humanitarian, nonpolitical posture, easily dissipated by "red baiting" in Congressional investigations and "red scare" charges by growers and their political allies throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. The two issues, poverty and the question of labor supply, were not to be linked by the liberal organizations until well into Period II.

#### *Period II: Elite Reform and Realignment (1956-1964)*

The late 1950s and the early 1960s, the second Eisenhower administration and the brief Kennedy period emerge from this and other studies in the larger project as a period of germination. Contrary to some interpretations, the remarkable insurgencies of the late 1960s did not originate with the Kennedy administration, but with developments that initially began to appear during Eisenhower's second term. Nor did the Kennedy years witness a dramatic escalation of insurgent activity. Indeed, in the case of farm workers, insurgency showed a decline (Figure 1). For our purposes, the two presidential administrations can be treated as a single period, one that witnessed important realignments and shifts in political resources in the national polity, culminating in a supportive environment for insurgent activity.

Farm worker insurgency during the reform period was at a low ebb. Actions by farm worker insurgents dropped from 16% to 11% of all pro-worker activity. In 1956-1957 the NFLU, now renamed the National Agricultural Workers Union (NAWU), secured a small grant from the

Table 2. Extent of Concomitant Activity—Pro Grower (*r*'s)

	All Issues	Work-Life Conditions <sup>a</sup>	Labor Shortage <sup>a</sup>	Unionization <sup>a</sup>
Period I (1946–1955)				
Insurgents and Government	.63	-.08	.59	— <sup>b</sup>
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	.45	.21	.76	—
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.08	.17	.08	—
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.33	.02	.40	—
Organized Labor and Government	.36	.18	.37	—
Period II (1956–1964)				
Insurgents and Government	-.26	-.28	-.04	—
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	-.10	-.13	-.04	—
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.59	.20	.58	—
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.50	.50	.23	—
Organized Labor and Government	.06	.21	-.05	—
Period III (1965–1972)				
Insurgents and Government	.26	.74	— <sup>b</sup>	-.21
Insurgents and Liberal Pressure Groups	.62	.84	—	.35
Insurgents and Organized Labor	.16	.57	—	.09
Liberal Pressure Groups and Government	.04	.49	—	-.08
Organized Labor and Government	-.002	.13	—	.36

<sup>a</sup> Work-life for both types of groups; labor shortage for both, unionization for both.

<sup>b</sup> N for one group during this period was zero.

United Auto Workers, enabling it to hang on as a paper organization. Galarza, by then the only full-time cadre member, launched a publicity campaign to reveal maladministration and corruption within the *bracero* administration. Aside from a brief and ineffective organizing drive launched in 1959 by the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), generating only one reported strike (in 1961), this was the sum of insurgent activity for the nine-year Period II (Figure 1). Growers remained publicly inactive and seemingly secure in their position, aroused only at renewal time for the *bracero* program to lobby bills through Congress. Until the insurgency of Period III began, growers retained a low profile in the *Times* (Figure 2).

With the direct adversaries largely retired from the public arena, affairs shifted into the hands of government and the liberals. Despite the absence of significant insurgency, the balance of forces in the national polity had begun to shift. Actions favorable to the interests of farm workers increased from 50% to 73%, remaining on the same plane (75%) throughout the following UFW period. Beginning during the last years of the Eisenhower administration, three interrelated developments brought about this new supportive envi-

ronment: (1) policy conflicts within the political elite that resulted in a more "balanced," neutral stance towards farm workers; (2) the formation of a reform coalition composed of liberal pressure groups and organized labor that, in the midst of elite divisions, was able to exercise greater political influence; (3) the erosion of the Congressional power-base of conservative rural interests, stemming immediately from reapportionment.

The concern of liberal pressure groups initially was focused on the need to improve housing and educational conditions of migrant workers. In 1956, the Democratic National Convention included a plank for increased welfare aid to migrants. The next year, the National Council of Churches, already involved in the early civil rights movement in the South, began a study of migrant camp conditions and child labor. In early 1958, the Council brought public pressure to bear on Secretary of Labor James Mitchell to enforce existing laws regarding migrant camps throughout the nation. In late 1958, several liberal pressure groups were joined by the AFL-CIO in attacking the *bracero* program, scoring administrative laxity, and arguing that federal labor policies were the origin of social problems. The two as yet unrelated issues—poverty and

labor policies—were now firmly linked in the public debate.

The fusion of these two issues was significant. Of course, economic conditions already had been linked with social deprivations in public parlance, but the concern of liberal groups in the past had been with inspection of housing, assurances of educational opportunity, and public health measures. To argue now that a public program of importing foreign labor perpetuated the list of conditions deplored by liberals was a substantial change. As later happened more generally with the New Left (cf. Perrow, 1972), the advocates of reform had begun to look at the source of problems in terms of a system.

About the same time, organized labor took a new interest in farm workers. In 1959, the AFL-CIO Executive Council abolished the NAWU and created the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), headed by Norman Smith, a former UAW organizer. Despite strong financial backing, the AWOC produced little results. Concentrating on 4 A.M. "shake-ups" of day laborers, the AWOC managed to sponsor a number of "job actions" but only one major strike and little solid organization. Like the NFLU, the AWOC had to confront the problem of *braceros*. In the one reported strike, the Imperial Valley strike of February, 1961, the AWOC used violence to intimidate strikebreaking *braceros* and create an international incident over their presence. Officials quickly arrested the cadre, and the AWOC ceased to exist except on paper. Though the AWOC drive consumed over one million dollars of AFL-CIO funds, it produced neither contracts nor stable membership (London and Anderson, 1970:47–50, 77). Yet, and this indicates the shift, this type of financial support had never before been offered by organized labor.

The final element in the formation of a supportive environment was a shift in governmental actions. Actions favorable to farm workers increased from the unfavorable 50% prevailing during Period I to a more "balanced" 68% of all governmental actions. Of these, the portion coded "concrete," and therefore more likely to have impact, increased from 40%

in Period I to 65%. Indicative of the change taking place in official views, the focus of governmental attentions shifted from the labor supply issue (56% of favorable actions during Period I) to the question of farm workers' living and working conditions (73% during Period II).

The change in official actions stemmed, in part, from internal conflicts within the national political elite. Secretary of Labor James Mitchell was a surprise Eisenhower appointee from the Eastern wing of the Republican Party, a former labor consultant for New York department stores and a future protegee of Nelson Rockefeller. Mitchell took the Department of Labor in a more pro-union direction than was thought possible, at the time becoming a "strong man" in the cabinet because of his success in mollifying unions.<sup>8</sup> In 1958, an open fight between the Taft and Eastern wings of the Republican Party developed, with the conservatives favoring a national "right-to-work" law. Mitchell, as an advocate of unionism and apparently jockeying for position for the Republican Vice-Presidential nomination, became a figure of elite reform within Republican circles.

A second factor contributing to the shift in official actions was the pressure campaign launched by the reform coalition. The effects of the campaign can be captured, in part, from the *Times* data. Though the correlation between liberal activity and government activity favorable to farm workers is modest (.50), it is considerably higher than during the other periods (.33 for the first and .04 for the third) and it is independent of insurgent activity.

Tangible effects of the pressure campaign appeared almost immediately. In 1957, under pressure from the liberal reform coalition, the Department of Labor under Mitchell's guidance carried out an internal review of farm labor policies. The upshot was a series of executive orders to tighten up enforcement of regulations covering migrant camps (Craig, 1971: 151–5). When the economic recession of 1958–1959 arrived, sensitivity within the

<sup>8</sup> *New York Times*. October 5, 1958, VI; 9: 2; October 20, 1964: 37:1.

Administration to rising unemployment levels increased. In response, Mitchell vowed to enforce more fully the 1951 statutes requiring farm employment to be offered to domestic workers prior to importation of *braceros*. Growers, long accustomed to having their *bracero* requests met automatically, rebelled when asked to provide more justification (Jacobs, 1963: 183-4). In February, 1959, Mitchell took an even stronger step, joining the liberal reformers in support of legislation to extend minimum-wage laws to agriculture and to impose new restrictions on the use of *braceros*.

The following year, the division within the Eisenhower Administration opened up into a full-scale, cabinet-level battle over renewal of the *bracero* program. The Farm Bureau and the state grower associations engaged that other administration "strong man," Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, to defend the program. In testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture, the White House took a neutral stance; Benson defended the program, while Mitchell argued that the program exerted demonstrable adverse effects upon domestic workers and should be abolished (Craig, 1971: 156-61). Into this breach in the political elite stepped the liberal-labor support coalition. At the same time, the House Committee on Public Welfare opened hearings on health and camp conditions, giving the Cotton Council and the Meatcutters Union a chance to air opposing views.

Initially, the reform effort failed. In March, 1960, Secretary Mitchell withdrew his program, resolving the dispute on the cabinet level. The next month, agribusiness pushed a two-year renewal of the *bracero* program through Congress. But, for the first time, the issue had been debated seriously and a loose coalition of liberal pressure groups (e.g., National Council of Churches, National Advisory Committee of Farm Labor, NAACP) and organized labor had formed. Though the eventual termination of the *bracero* program did not undermine growers' ability to break strikes (there were other substitutes, e.g., "green card" commuters, illegal aliens), the fight against the program

did refocus the concern of liberals and organized labor on the structural problem of farm worker powerlessness.

The reform coalition sustained the campaign over the next three years. In 1960, the Democratic platform condemned the *bracero* program. Once in office, the New Frontiersmen, though demanding no important statutory changes, did vow to enforce fully the laws restricting *bracero* use (Craig, 1971:174). By renewal time in 1963, the Kennedy Administration was in the pursuit of a public issue ("poverty") and courting minority-group votes. For the first time, the White House went formally on record against the program. Only at the last minute was a pressure campaign, mounted by Governor Pat Brown of California and the Department of State, responding to Mexican diplomatic pressure, able to save the program temporarily. Amid promises from Congressional farm bloc leaders that this was the last time the program would be renewed, a one-year extension was granted.

In addition to the efforts of the reform coalition, which played a critical role in other reforms of the same period, and the new elite-level neutrality, the fall of the *bracero* program stemmed from the narrowing power base of the Congressional farm bloc. Congressional reapportionment had visibly shaken the conservative farm bloc leaders. Searching for items in the farm program that could be scuttled without damaging the main planks, the farm bloc leaders fixed on the *bracero* program. The mechanization of the Texas cotton harvest had left California growers of specialty crops the main *bracero* users. When the test came, *bracero* users, as a narrow, special interest, could be sacrificed to keep the main planks of the farm program intact (Hawley, 1966).

Period II, then, emerges from this analysis as a period of reform and political realignment that dramatically altered the prospective fortunes of insurgents. Reforms, stemming from elite-level conflicts and a pressure campaign conducted by liberal public-interest organizations and organized labor, came about in the virtual absence of activity by farm worker insurgents. The activism of several key liberal organizations depended, in turn, upon

broad economic trends, especially the growth of middle-class disposable income that might be invested in worthy causes (McCarthy and Zald, 1973). Insurgents did not stimulate these changes in the national polity. Rather, they were to prove the beneficiaries and, if anything, were stimulated by them.

*Period III: The UFW Success (1965–1972)*

During the NFLU period, the number of insurgent actions reported totalled 44. Most of these were symbolic in character, only 27% being concrete. Insurgency was brief, concentrated in a four-year period (1948–1951). However, in the third period, insurgency became sustained. Insurgent actions reached a new peak and remained at a high level throughout the period. A total of 143 actions conducted by farm worker insurgents were recorded. Significantly, 71% of these were concrete in character. By the end of the period, the success of the United Farm Workers was unmistakable. Over a hundred contracts had been signed; wages had been raised by almost a third; union hiring halls were in operation in every major agricultural area in California; farm workers, acting through ranch committees set up under each contract, were exercising a new set of powers.

The key to this dramatic success was the altered political environment within which the challenge operated. Though the potential for mobilizing a social base was slightly more favorable than before, the UFW never was able to launch effective strikes. Though the UFW cadre was experienced and talented, there is little reason to believe that they were markedly more so than the NFLU leadership; neither did the tactics of the challenge differ. The boycotts that secured success for the UFW also had been tried by the NFLU, but with quite different results. What had changed was the political environment—the liberal community now was willing to provide sustained, massive support for insurgency; the political elite had adopted a neutral stance toward farm workers.

As before, external support played a critical role in launching the challenge.

The initial base for the United Farm Workers was Cesar Chavez's National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and remnants of the AWOC still receiving some support from the AFL-CIO.<sup>9</sup> During the 1950s, Chavez had been director of the Community Service Organization, an Alinsky-styled urban community-organization with strong ties to civil rights groups, liberal churches and foundations. Frustrated by the refusal of the CSO Board of Directors to move beyond issues salient to upwardly-mobile urban Mexican-Americans, Chavez resigned his post in the winter of 1961 and set out to organize a community organization among farm workers in the Central Valley of California. Drawing on his liberal contacts, Chavez was able to secure the backing of several liberal organizations which had developed a new concern with poverty and the problems of minority groups. The main sponsor was the California Migrant Ministry, a domestic mission of the National Council of Churches servicing migrant farm workers. During the late 1950s, the Migrant Ministry followed the prevailing policy change within the National Council, substituting community organization and social action programs for traditional evangelical ones (Pratt, 1972). By 1964, the Migrant Ministry had teamed up with Chavez, merging its own community organization (the FWO) with the NFWA and sponsoring the Chavez-directed effort.<sup>10</sup>

By summer, 1965, NFWA had over 500 active members and began shifting directions, expanding beyond economic benefit programs (e.g., a credit union, cooperative buying, etc.) to unionization. Several small "job actions" were sponsored. Operating nearby, the remaining active group of the AWOC, several Filipino

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Jenkins (1975: chs. 7–8).

<sup>10</sup> There was also a brief challenge launched in 1965 among black tenant farmers in the Mississippi Delta region (the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union). The dynamics of that challenge are virtually identical to the UFW—sponsorship by liberal churches, labor union, etc. (for a history, see Hilton, 1969). Given the low event-count for this challenge, though, the statistics reported pertain to the UFW.



work-crews, hoped to take advantage of grower uncertainty generated by termination of the *bracero* program. The AWOC launched a series of wage strikes, first in the Coachella Valley and then in the Delano-Arvin area of the San Joaquin Valley. With the AWOC out on strike, Chavez pressed the NFWA for a strike vote. On Mexican Independence Day, September 16th, the NFWA joined the picket lines (Chavez, 1966; Dunne, 1967; London and Anderson, 1970).

Though dramatic, the strike soon collapsed. Growers refused to meet with union representatives; a sufficient number of workers crossed the picket lines to prevent a major harvest loss. Over the next six years, the same pattern recurred—a dramatic strike holding for a week, grower intransigence, police intimidation, gradual replacement of the work force by playing upon ethnic rivalries and recruiting illegal aliens (cf. Dunne, 1967; London and Anderson, 1970; Matthiessen, 1969; Kushner, 1975; Taylor, 1975). What proved different from the NFLU experience was the ability of the insurgents, acting in the new political environment, to secure outside support.

Political protest was the mechanism through which much of this support was garnered. By dramatic actions designed to capture the attention of a sympathetic public and highlight the "justice" of their cause, insurgents were able to sustain the movement organization and exercise sufficient indirect leverage against growers to secure contracts. The UFW's use of protest tactics departed from that of rent strikers analyzed by Lipsky (1968; 1970). Though the basic mechanism was the same (namely, securing the sympathy of third parties to the conflict so that they would use their superior resources to intervene in support of the powerless), the commitments of supporting organizations and the uses to which outside support was put differed. Lipsky found that protest provided unreliable resources, that the news media and sympathetic public might ignore protestors' demands (cf. Goldenberg, 1975) and that, even when attentive, they often were easily satisfied with symbolic palliatives. Though the UFW experienced these problems, the presence of

sustained sponsorship on the part of the Migrant Ministry and organized labor guaranteed a stable resource base.

Nor were the uses of protest-acquired resources the same. Lipsky's rent-strikers sought liberal pressure on public officials. For the UFW, protest actions were used to secure contributions and, in the form of a boycott, to exercise power against growers. Marches, symbolic arrests of clergy, and public speeches captured public attention; contributions from labor unions, theater showings and "radical chic" cocktail parties with proceeds to "*La Causa*" supplemented the budget provided by sponsors and membership dues.

Given the failure of strike actions, a successful outcome required indirect means of exercising power against growers. Sympathetic liberal organizations (e.g., churches, universities, etc.) refused to purchase "scab" grapes. More important, though, major grocery chains were pressured into refusing to handle "scab" products. To exercise that pressure, a combination of external resources had to be mobilized. Students had to contribute time to picketing grocery stores and shipping terminals; Catholic churches and labor unions had to donate office space for boycott houses; Railway Union members had to identify "scab" shipments for boycott pickets; Teamsters had to refuse to handle "hot cargo"; Butchers' union members had to call sympathy strikes when grocery managers continued to stock "scab" products; political candidates and elected officials had to endorse the boycott. The effectiveness of the boycott depended little upon the resources of mobilized farm workers; instead, they became a political symbol. It was the massive outpouring of support, especially from liberals and organized labor, that made the boycott effective and, thereby, forced growers to the bargaining table.

The strength of liberal-labor support for the UFW is indicated by the high level of concomitant activity between insurgents and their supporters. While the correlation of insurgent and liberal activities was modest in Period I (.45), it was strong during the third period (.62). More impor-

tant, liberals were far more concrete in their support for insurgents. In the first period, concomitant activities were almost wholly symbolic (.56 versus .02 for concrete activities); during the UFW challenge, it was concrete activities (.81 versus .06 for symbolic activities). Nor do statistical controls for governmental actions favorable to farm workers reduce the correlation ( $r = .64$ ). Given the fact that liberal activities rarely occurred jointly with pro-worker government activities ( $r = .04$ ), it is clear that liberals directed their efforts toward supporting insurgents rather than pressuring government.<sup>11</sup>

The more "balanced," neutral posture of government that was the product of the reform period continued. Sixty-nine percent of all official actions were favorable to farm workers (as against 50% and 68% in Periods I and II). Concretely, this meant that court rulings no longer routinely went against insurgents; federal poverty programs helped to "loosen" small town politics; hearings by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and Congressional committees publicized "injustices" against farm workers; welfare legislation gave farm workers more economic security and afforded insurgents a legal basis to contest grower employment practices. National politicians, such as Senators Kennedy and McGovern, lent their resources to the cause.

The most striking changes in official actions took place on the federal level. Actions favorable to farm workers rose from 46% of federal level activity in the first period, to 63% in the second and 74% in the third. State and local government, more under the control of growers (cf. McConnell, 1953:177; Berger, 1971), followed a different pattern. In Period I, when growers had opposition only from insurgents, only 26% of official actions were judged favorable to workers. In Period II, when farm workers were ac-

quiescent but the liberal-labor coalition was experiencing growing influence in national politics, 67% were favorable, slightly more than on the federal level. But when insurgency reappeared in Period III, the percent favorable dropped to 45%, far lower than the federal level. Government divided on the question, federal actions tending to be neutral, if not supportive, of insurgents while state actions, still under grower dominance, continued to oppose insurgents.

Significantly little of the pro-worker trend in governmental actions during the UFW period is associated with either insurgent or liberal activities. For insurgent and favorable government actions,  $r$  is low (.26 versus .63 during the NFLU period); the correlation between liberal organizations and favorable government actions drops to the lowest point in the study (.04 versus .33 and .50 for Periods I and II, respectively). Only organized labor appeared to be performing a pressure function. There is a modest correlation between symbolic activities by organized labor and government (.46), largely centering around the legitimacy of unionism in agriculture ( $r = .35$ ). Official positions had already undergone important changes during the reform period. The termination of the *bracero* program had left government in a neutralized position. No longer a key player in the conflict, but still under the influence of the reform policies, government preserved its neutral stance despite less visible pressure from any of the partisans.<sup>12</sup>

There was, of course, opposition on the part of growers and allied governmental actors. There were numerous instances of police harassment, large-scale purchases of boycotted products by the Department of Defense, and outspoken opposition

<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that help from organized labor was critical to the boycott's success, our correlations hardly document the point. In the NFLU challenge,  $r$  was .08; in the UFW period, .16. This relation is weaker than that for liberal pressure groups, we would argue, because much of the supportive labor action was "local" in character and often went unreported in the *Times*.

<sup>12</sup> Corroborating this interpretation, the correlation between insurgent/liberal actions and pro-worker government actions is considerably stronger (.74 and .58, respectively) once insurgent and liberal actions are lagged by one year. As a roughly neutral participant, government followed along a year behind the chief partisans, though not responding directly to pressure as before. Though not conclusive, the fact that this was the only instance in the study in which time-lags produced marked increases in  $r$ 's lends the interpretation some plausibility.

from Governor Reagan and President Nixon.

However, growers had lost their entrenched political position. Public officials no longer acted so consistently to enhance grower interests and to contain the challenge. An indication of the sharpness of the displacement of growers is given by the levels of concomitance between grower actions and pro-grower governmental actions. In Period I,  $r$  for grower-government activity was .75; in Period II, .62. But, during the UFW challenge, the correlation dropped to a negligible .05. By the time the United Farm Workers struck in 1965, agricultural employers were no longer able to rely upon government, especially at the federal level, to be fully responsive to their interest in blocking unionization.

### Conclusion

The critical factor separating the National Farm Labor Union failure from the United Farm Worker success was the societal response to insurgent demands. In most respects, the challenges were strikingly similar. In both instances, the leadership cadre came from outside the farm worker community; external sponsorship played a critical role in launching both insurgent organizations; both movements confronted similar obstacles to mobilizing a social base and mounting effective strikes; both resorted to political protest and boycotts. What produced the sharp difference in outcome was the difference in political environment encountered. The NFLU received token contributions, vacillating support for its boycott and confronted major acts of resistance by public authorities. In contrast, the UFW received massive contributions, sustained support for its boycotts and encountered a more "balanced," neutral official response.

The dramatic turnabout in the political environment originated in economic trends and political realignments that took place quite independent of any "push" from insurgents. During the reform period, conflicts erupted within the political elite over policies pertaining to farm workers. Elite divisions provided the

opening for reform measures then being pressed by a newly active coalition of established liberal and labor organizations. Though the reforms did not directly effect success, the process entailed by reform did result in a new political environment, one which made a successful challenge possible.

If this analysis is correct, then several assumptions found in the classic literature are misleading. Rather than focusing on fluctuations in discontent to account for the emergence of insurgency, it seems more fruitful to assume that grievances are relatively constant and pervasive. Especially for deprived groups, lack of collective resources and controls exercised by superiors—not the absence of discontent—account for the relative infrequency of organized demands for change. For several of the movements of the 1960s, it was the interjection of resources from outside, not sharp increases in discontent, that led to insurgent efforts.

Nor does the political process centered around insurgency conform to the rules of a pluralist game. The American polity had not been uniformly permeable to all groups with significant grievances (cf. Gamson, 1975). Government does not act as a neutral agent, serving as umpire over the group contest. Public agencies and officials have interests of their own to protect, interests that often bring them into close alignment with well-organized private-interest groups. When insurgency arises threatening these private interests, public officials react by helping to contain insurgency and preserve the *status quo*. But if an opposing coalition of established organizations decides to sponsor an insurgent challenge, the normal bias in public policy can be checked. Sponsors then serve as protectors, insuring that the political elite remains neutral to the challenge.

The implications for other challenges are rather striking. If the support of the liberal community is necessary for the success of a challenge by a deprived group, then the liberal community is, in effect, able to determine the cutting edge for viable changes that conform to the interests of those groups still excluded from American politics. Moreover, there is the possibility of abandonment. Since

liberal support can fade and political elites shift their stance, as has happened to the UFW since 1972, even the gains of the past may be endangered. The prospects for future insurgency, by this account, are dim. Until another major realignment takes place in American politics, we should not expect to see successful attempts to extend political citizenship to the excluded.

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## SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE FAMILY: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 1850-1870\*

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*Using Marx's description of "the so-called primitive accumulation" which he associates with the development of capitalism in the West, a theoretical formulation is presented which explores the impact on the family of changes in the individual's access to actual and potential wealth. A multivariate analysis, based on the individual census schedules for the city of Los Angeles in 1850 and 1870, is used to explore the changing relationships between economic, demographic and other structural variables on household structure. The findings suggest that a dynamic, Marxian model can help explain the effects of social change on the family.*

Theories of social change in relation to the family have received considerable attention from social scientists. (see, for instance, Parsons, 1959; Linton, 1959; Goode, 1963; Skolnick, 1973: ch. 3; Hareven, 1976). Until recently, however, historical research has been lacking which

would permit an empirical assessment of these theories. This paper, which presents a macro-structural analysis of household organization in a developing nineteenth-century American city, hopes to make a contribution to this assessment and to suggest a new conceptual framework for understanding the family in historical perspective.

Studies of social change can attend not only to outcomes—such as variations in the distribution of family types in different time periods—but also to the processes by which these changes came about. The longitudinal design of the research discussed in this paper provides an opportunity to empirically assess process as well as results. The conclusions of studies of

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