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## STOLEN THUNDER? HUEY LONG'S "SHARE OUR WEALTH," POLITICAL MEDIATION, AND THE SECOND NEW DEAL\*

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*In 1934 Huey Long created "Share Our Wealth," a national challenger that sought economic redistribution. Our study explores the outcomes of this insurgency and the reasons for its successes and failures. We first review perspectives on success for social protest movements and provide a new definition of success, based on securing collective goods for a beneficiary group through movement organization efforts. Next we elaborate a "political mediation" theory of movement success. This theory holds that to be successful a movement organization must do more than just mobilize supporters and engage in collective action—political conditions must also be favorable to winning new advantages. We then examine historical information about national policymaking in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and quantitative data on spending by the Works Progress Administration. To assess the influence of Share Our Wealth, we analyze a secret poll undertaken by the Roosevelt Administration. The historical and quantitative analyses indicate that Share Our Wealth achieved partial success in ways that support the political mediation theory.*

In 1935, the New Deal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was at a crossroads. The programs of his "first 100 days" in 1933 had failed to end the Great Depression, and criticism was mounting. From the left, Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana promoted a plan to "Share Our Wealth"; by February he claimed that 7.7 million had joined more than 27,000 Share Our Wealth societies or clubs.

In April 1935, the Democratic National Committee conducted a secret poll, and, to the Committee's chairman, James Farley (1938), the results suggested that Long might hold the balance of power in the 1936 Presidential contest. The summer of 1935 saw the beginning of Roosevelt's "second hundred days." In June, Roosevelt demanded the passage of four liberal bills and added a "soak-the-rich" tax proposal to his "must" list of indispensable legislation. Could Long have upset Roosevelt's bid for reelection? Was the second New Deal, or parts of it, devised to "steal Long's thunder," as Roosevelt supposedly put it to one of his advisors (Moley 1939:305)?

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These questions engage the wider issues of what success means for such social protest movements and assessing their impacts on social policy and the welfare state (Skocpol and Amenta 1986:138–39; Quadagno 1987; Gamson [1975] 1990; Ragin 1989; Goldfield 1989; Quadagno 1992; Clemens 1993; Hicks and Misra 1993; Jasper and Poulsen 1993). Although movements are animated by the desire for social change, the "outcomes" of social movement activities are so infrequently studied that research on outcomes was recently summarized in just two published pages (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988:

727–28). We are concerned with what we call state-oriented challengers: people or organizations bidding for collective benefits through changes in state policies. If Share Our Wealth influenced the Second New Deal, it would have been an impressive legacy for an organization that died so young, soon after its leader was assassinated in September 1935. Moreover, Long's organization had *displacement* goals—the aspiration to replace its opponents—which typically doom a challenger to failure (Gamson 1990; Goldstone 1980; Ragin 1989; Frey, Dietz, and Kalof 1992). Roosevelt may have offered concessions in the hope of wooing away Long's supporters. However, that an advisor to Roosevelt recalled the President saying that he wanted to "steal Long's thunder" is no smoking gun. For Roosevelt publicly ignored Long's insurgency, and the President's programs may have been ones that he would have proposed anyway. Generally speaking, researchers must consider other plausible paths to changes in policy to avoid overstating the influence of a challenger. Even if Share Our Wealth's impact can be established, questions still remain. What was it about the insurgency or the circumstances surrounding it, or both, that made Share Our Wealth effective or ineffective?

We argue that success for a state-oriented challenger means winning collective benefits for its beneficiary group. We also elaborate a "political mediation" theory, which holds that political openings not only aid the mobilization of challengers, but also influence the relationship between a collective action and its outcomes (Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992). Mobilization and collective action are necessary, but not sufficient for protest groups to win collective benefits by way of the state. Political circumstances must also be auspicious. We compare this theory to two alternatives: (1) the prevailing view in the social movement literature (e.g., Gamson 1990), that the characteristics of challengers determine their fates; and (2) an argument that resonates with the welfare state literature (for reviews see Skocpol and Amenta 1986; Quadagno 1987; Burstein 1991), that economic or political conditions determine policy changes that challengers seek and perhaps also determine the rise of challengers themselves (Smelser 1962; Goldstone 1980;

Kitschelt 1986).

Our investigation focuses on the politics and policies of the Second New Deal and on the Roosevelt Administration's poll (Hurja 1935:boxes 70–72; Lipset and Raab 1970; Snyder 1975; Brinkley 1982). We compare the plans and actions of Share Our Wealth with the plans and policymaking of the Administration, to ascertain the influence of Share Our Wealth. We also compare the consequences of Share Our Wealth with those of Father Charles E. Coughlin's National Union of Social Justice (NUSJ) and Dr. Francis E. Townsend's Old Age and Revolving Pensions (OARP)—the two other principal national challengers in Depression-era "neopopulism," a movement espousing community control and safeguards against capitalism. Similar in ideology, these three organizations differed in their plans, forms of organization, collective actions, and achievements (Holtzman 1963; Brinkley 1982). Finally, we examine national spending in the 48 states by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). We employ this quantitative analysis to ascertain whether Share Our Wealth had an impact on social spending, net of standard determinants—including state-centered, social democratic, and pluralist factors. We also ascertain whether this impact was politically mediated.

#### HUEY LONG'S "SHARE OUR WEALTH" AND DEPRESSION-ERA NEOPOPULISM

Share Our Wealth, the name of the program as well as the organization, had several goals. It would end the Depression by breaking the power of the rich, whose greed, in Long's estimation, caused the slump. The Long Plan (as the program was also known) limited the wealth of individuals to \$3 million through direct taxation (McCoy 1967:122–23; Williams 1969:693; Brinkley 1982:chap. 7; Hair 1991:269–76). At the same time every family would be provided with what Long called a "homestead": \$4,000 or \$5,000 to purchase a house, car, and radio—the necessities of middle-class life as redefined by the 1920s. Long also would guarantee an annual income of \$2,000 to \$3,000. The Long Plan reached out to certain mobilizing groups. Those 65 years and older would receive pensions of \$30 a month or more, and World War I veter-

ans' adjusted compensation certificates (or "bonuses") due in 1945, would be paid immediately. For workers, the Long Plan called for a minimum wage and hours limitations and for the purchase and storage of the agricultural goods produced by farmers. To bring equality of opportunity, educational scholarships would be granted to those scoring well on standardized tests.

Like the "Townsend Plan," an old-age pension program, and the National Union's "16 Principles," which were centered on monetary and banking reforms, Share Our Wealth included measures that benefited some groups and punished others, and in so doing it was supposed to end the Depression. Like the plans of the other neopopulist organizations, the Long Plan was simple and envisioned no need for extensive bureaucracies, such as the National Recovery Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, to bring recovery and relief. Share Our Wealth was more radical in its fiscal program than was Roosevelt's New Deal, but eschewed administrative power for the national state (Brinkley 1982:chap. 7). Politically, Long was to the left of Dr. Townsend, whose expensive \$200 per month pensions would be financed by regressive taxes; Townsend was to the left of Father Coughlin, who attacked private banking, but did not call for fiscal redistribution.

Share Our Wealth, the organization, was dualistic. Its home base was in Louisiana, where Long had gained almost total political control by 1931 promoting a program that favored corporate taxes, free school books, road building, and public works. Share Our Wealth was funded by Long's Louisiana political organization, which relied on "deductions" from state employees' paychecks and kickbacks from contractors. The Louisiana societies constituted perhaps as many as one-fourth of all Share Our Wealth clubs (Williams 1969:701). Outside Louisiana, Share Our Wealth was organized differently. Any two people could begin a Share Our Wealth society, and members were not required to pay dues. Long followed up his speeches on NBC radio with mailings from Capitol Hill, especially with pamphlets on the Long Plan and on how to start a club. Requests for pamphlets were handled by Long's Washington staff, most of whom were on the Louisiana

payroll (Williams 1969:chap. 24). To supplement these efforts, Long, or more often his lieutenant, the Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, would visit a town to drum up support.

Share Our Wealth worked on the fringes of institutional politics, mobilizing those who were economically harmed by the Depression and dissatisfied with the slow pace of the "first" New Deal. Although many of Share Our Wealth's supporters may have voted in the past, the organization urged a somewhat more profound political commitment than casting a vote. The activities of the clubs centered on spreading the Share Our Wealth message and supporting local groups and local leaders who espoused like-minded policies (Carter 1935:chap. 2; Brinkley 1982:191). In cities, clubs were often initiated and run by dissidents who hoped to disrupt normal patterns of local politics by injecting the issue of redistribution or other Share Our Wealth themes. For instance, in California, Share Our Wealth vied with other groups to pick up the pieces of "End Poverty in California" (EPIC) after Upton Sinclair's failed bid for governor in 1934. Clubs mobilized voters to aid such dissident progressives. Members and supporters also wrote to the President and other Administration officials, urging them to line up behind the Long Plan.

The Share Our Wealth organization was also the vehicle for Long's national political ambitions. Although he claimed that if his plan were enacted he would disband Share Our Wealth, Long hoped to ride it to the Presidency. The clubs were centers of protest and potential levers to install Share Our Wealth planks in the Democratic platform, bases to support progressive congressional candidates, or the nucleus of a Presidential campaign (Swing 1935:chap. 3). Long hinted that in 1936 he might enter the Democratic primaries or run at the head of a third party. But many, including Farley (1938), thought Long would support a surrogate that year.

Share Our Wealth had a defiant edge uncharacteristic of "third" or new parties. Roosevelt considered Long one of the two most dangerous men in America and not only because of his electoral menace. Long's unorthodox deployment of the Louisiana National Guard, declaring martial law in New Orleans to rout political enemies (Williams 1969: 723-25), and his restrictions on debate

in the Louisiana legislature (Hair 1991:chap. 16) made many doubt his commitment to democratic principles. What is more, Share Our Wealth allied with and appealed to groups with reputations for unruliness. Notably, Share Our Wealth championed the veterans' bonus and was closely associated with veterans' organizations, which had marched on Washington twice in the 1930s. Long participated in and encouraged demonstrations of veterans and their supporters on behalf of the bonus.

Share Our Wealth was the key organization in a larger neopopulist insurgency in the 1930s. It had a greater following and was better organized than Coughlin's NUSJ, Townsend's OARP, and Sinclair's EPIC, all of which lacked the national reach of Share Our Wealth (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Brinkley 1982). There is no standard definition of a "social movement" or a social movement organization (Marwell and Oliver 1984; Gamson and Meyer 1993). All the same, Share Our Wealth meets most definitions of a social movement organization, whether these definitions are based on political involvement (Gamson 1990), the political standing of the group the organization represents (Tilly 1985), or the organization's means of political action (McAdam 1982). Share Our Wealth mobilized people who were not previously mobilized or were undermobilized around the issue of economic redistribution—an issue that had been "organized out" of politics in the 1920s. Thus, Share Our Wealth fits a participation-based definition (Gamson 1990), which would count as well all third-party challengers. Moreover, Share Our Wealth made claims on behalf of the long-standing poor and Americans who were economically devastated by the Depression—groups with little organized standing in U.S. politics. In addition, Share Our Wealth employed some noninstitutional means, such as boycotts and demonstrations, thus falling under stricter definitions based on political activity (McAdam 1982).

#### THE MEANING OF SUCCESS AND THE SOCIAL POLITICS OF "STEALING THUNDER"

Anyone analyzing movement outcomes must address Gamson's ([1975] 1990) landmark

study of 53 randomly chosen U.S. "challenging groups." He argued that "success" has two dimensions—a movement organization might achieve "acceptance," or it might win "new advantages" for its constituency. Achieving both goals was called a "full response," or what Tilly (1978) has called "membership in the polity." A challenger winning neither movement recognition nor new benefits for its constituency was expected to "collapse." The other two combinations were viewed by Gamson as partly successful.

We contend, however, that Gamson advanced a conceptualization of success that is deficient in three ways. First, his definition is not focused enough on new advantages or, more precisely, collective benefits for beneficiary groups. Second, his definition does not take a broad enough view of these collective benefits. Finally, and most important, Gamson's definition may be too loose (Goldstone 1980), impeding causal analysis by discounting beforehand the potential influences of other actors on the achievement of collective benefits (Snyder and Kelly 1979). In short, we argue that a challenger cannot be considered successful unless it *wins some collective goods that aid its beneficiary group*.

We focus solely on what Gamson (1990) calls "new advantages." Gamson thought political access was as important as winning collective goods, and, though this is partly a matter of differences in interests, other researchers, such as Ragin (1989) and Frey et al. (1992), have converged on new advantages as a more meaningful outcome than acceptance. This emphasis is shared by those who study collective action and collective goods—those benefits that cannot be easily denied to group members regardless of whether they participated in achieving them (e.g., Tilly 1985; Hardin 1982).

More important, our way of assessing new advantages does not rely entirely on the perspective of the movement organization. Although, like Gamson, we start by analyzing the benefits inherent in the organization's program, our criteria oblige us to consider the larger group's interests (see Lukes 1974; Marwell and Oliver 1984). Unlike Gamson, however, we consider outcomes outside the challenger's program that might promote the interests of the beneficiary group in concep-

tualizing success. For example, a social movement organization may be considered at least partly successful if its opponent or the state provided tangible collective benefits not specified by the challenger's program. Indeed, we expect that concessions granted by the state will appear often in forms unanticipated by the challenger (Piven and Cloward 1977:chap. 1).

Our conceptualization of partial success is based on collective goods won by the challenger. In the best case a social movement organization might gain the benefits specified in its program and other unanticipated collective benefits as well—a scenario as happy as it is unlikely. In the worst case, the challenger's agenda and beneficiary group may be completely ignored. More likely, a movement organization will gain some collective goods. We count this situation as a partial success. Following Ragin (1989), we consider acceptance of the organization significant only in that it may increase the chances of a challenger's winning collective benefits. We consider it to be closer to failure than to success when challengers win symbolic victories or token benefits, such as highly publicized benefits to prominent individuals, rather than benefits provided automatically to groups (Lipsky 1968). Although Gamson (1990) conceptualized and coded "partial or peripheral" new advantages, in the end he categorized challengers as either having won new advantages or not. Instead, we conceptualize and analyze collective benefits along a continuum.

Our most important advance beyond Gamson (1990) concerns agency and causality, and, in our view, these issues are central to analyses of social movement outcomes. Unlike Gamson, we are able to investigate whether the organization itself *wins* the benefits. Gamson counted a challenger as having achieved new advantages merely if its agenda was mainly fulfilled (within 15 years of the challenger's demise)—and regardless of whether the movement organization had effected the realization of its goals. Calling a realized agenda a victory without the organization having made it happen, however, overstates the influence of a challenger. Such a premature declaration of success disregards theories that hold that political and economic conditions that influence social protest can

also bring about programs that address protestors' grievances. One needs instead to ascertain the unique influence of the movement organization on changes in policy that yield collective benefits. And determining whether and to what degree a challenger effects policy changes is a necessary step in assessing the conditions behind the successes and failures.

*Theories of Public Spending and Social Movements and the Political Mediation Theory*

For those studying social movements, to explain outcomes of collective action often means to focus on organizations and participants (Gamson 1990; Piven and Cloward 1977; McAdam 1982). In contrast, theorists focusing on "political opportunity structures" see the impact of movement organizations and their collective action on policy outcomes as less significant (Kitschelt 1986); in their view, opportunity structures may determine both challenger formation and policy outcomes. For instance, to augment its coalition a member of the polity may aid movement organizations, perhaps by introducing spending programs favoring the challenger. Some theories of public social provision see matters similarly (Skocpol and Amenta 1986), focusing on the stimulant effects of left or center political regimes (Shalev 1983; Myles 1989), the labor movement (Stephens 1980), or state actors (Orloff and Skocpol 1984; Hage, Hanneman, and Gargan 1989) on the adoption and expansion of state spending policies. Left or center political parties, labor movements (Jenkins 1985), or state actors (Amenta and Zylan 1991; McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson 1991) may also encourage the mobilization of protest groups. Similarly, economic theories of public policy (e.g., Peacock and Wiseman 1961) argue that crises lead to policy change; others (e.g., Smelser 1962) argue that economic crises generate social movements. Because of the similarities in the determinants of social protest movements and in the determinants of public social spending, demonstrating the effectiveness of a state-oriented challenger requires that we show the challenger to be influential beyond the standard economic and political influences on spending policies.

Political mediation theory holds that to achieve gains challengers must be strong organizationally and must also engage in collective action, but all in the context of favorable political circumstances (Amenta, Caruthers, and Zylan 1992). This formulation builds on social science theorizing and research on welfare states and social movements. Research on the determinants of welfare state policies indicates that institutional political activity as well as economic factors have a crucial influence (Skocpol and Amenta 1986; Quadagno 1987; Huber, Ragin, and Stephens 1993). Research on social movement organizations indicates that such organizations emerge out of pre-existing networks and organizations that are not primarily political (Oberschall 1973; McAdam et al. 1988). In short, we expect that state policy changes are often effected by institutional political actors. Yet challengers do not result completely from economic or political conditions, and they have some autonomy in their choice of tactics (Tarrow 1993). Moreover, some studies of the determinants of public policy have found that strikes and protest have an impact (e.g., Goldfield 1989; Quadagno 1992), but other studies have found that such actions have little impact, or worse, result in "backlash" effects (see the review in Skocpol and Amenta 1986:138–39). The uneven results of research on the impact of social protest on public spending suggest that the outcomes of such collective actions are conditional (Hicks and Misra 1993).

According to political mediation theory, the ability of a social movement to win collective benefits depends partly on conditions it can control—its ability to mobilize its membership, its goals and program, its form of organization, its strategies for collective action. However, the success of well mobilized challengers also depends on the political context. This theory holds that political conditions not only influence the mobilization of a protest group, but also the *relationship* between its mobilization and collective actions taken, on the one hand, and policy outcomes, on the other. Unlike standard arguments about the influence of challengers (e.g., Gamson 1990), this mediation thesis holds that mobilization and collective action alone are usually insufficient to effect

changes in public policy. We argue that favorable political conditions are crucial for success, not, however, that political opportunity structures determine both movements and policy outcomes (e.g., Kitschelt 1986).

Two key long-term aspects of the political context are the political system and the party system. First, an undemocratic political system—characterized by restricted voting rights, limited political participation, and a lack of choices among parties—discourages both challenges and public spending policies. Even if challengers do form in such polities, they are unlikely to achieve collective benefits. Second, traditional or patronage-oriented parties regard social movement organizations as menacing contenders and consider programmatic spending policies to be a threat to the individualistic rewards on which such parties thrive. Such structural impediments also thwart the efforts of state actors and insurgents in the party system to enact or enhance programmatic public spending policies.

Medium-range and short-term political conditions can also improve the prospects of mobilized groups that hope to gain leverage in the political system. Two key political actors are favorable regimes in power and sympathetic bureaucrats. A new regime hoping to add to its coalition may aid social movements by proposing spending or other legislation that favors a group. Bureaucrats whose missions are similar to those proposed by challengers may provide favorable administrative rulings, enforce laws favorably, or propose favorable new legislation. These sympathetic regimes and bureaucrats may advance such legislation further than they had intended if a challenger summons a show of strength.

Regardless of the numbers of their supporters and their degree of commitment, challengers are likely to do better in closely contested political situations: that is, when the addition of a new group to existing coalitions members may change the balance of power. Close elections or alignments in a legislature can provide leverage. Newcomers holding the balance of power is a common occurrence in parliamentary systems, where small parties can decide which established party or parties may form a government. Even in the U.S. political system, where third

parties are rare, similar conditions may hold. Political candidates may attempt to appeal to newly mobilized groups with coherent agendas. All the same, the presence of a closely contested polity relies in part on structural conditions. Elections are not likely to be closely contested when few can vote and other democratic rights are restricted. Parties oriented toward patronage may conspire to keep insurgent issues off the political agenda.

### *Success and the "Displacement" Challenger*

One finding stands out in Gamson's (1990) study and in its reanalyses: challengers with displacement goals are destined to fail (Goldstone 1980; Ragin 1989; Frey et al. 1992). Such "displacement" challengers are unlikely to be accepted by members of the polity, and only six of Gamson's challengers gained new advantages without first being accepted—a situation Gamson calls "pre-emption," because the purpose in granting benefits is often to check the insurgency. A benefit without acceptance is more properly considered a "concession," however. This is because the opponent or the state recognizes the need to respond, and protest leaders typically take credit. The social politics of "stealing thunder"—granting a new benefit to a constituency group to stop a challenger from making claims on its own behalf—is always charged, and those attempting to do so can be burned.

We argue that displacement challengers are more likely to be effective when they are electorally oriented or when they call for the replacement of groups that are not extremely powerful. Moreover, the often multi-issue nature of displacement groups should not be defined as being inimical to success. If a movement organization with far-reaching, multiple goals succeeds on some of them, it might be considered as successful as challengers that "thought small" and sought and realized a limited agenda. In addition, a challenger striving unsuccessfully to replace its opponents might bring collective benefits for its supporters, despite its ultimate political failure. Generally speaking, the typical displacement challenger in Gamson's sample wanted to replace *capitalism*. Displacement goals were confounded with what Gamson

refers to as "systemic" goals, and anti-system groups face formidable obstacles in affluent democracies (Goodwin and Skocpol 1989).

Of course, challengers bent on replacement might be ignored or repressed—sometimes this occurs even while politicians are granting concessions. All the same, to win concessions a number of key factors are outside the control of the challenger: that the challenger enjoys basic democratic rights, that its officials are concerned with or are constrained by the potential beneficiaries of the movement, and that its officials are not opposed to the challenger's goals. For instance, in democratic societies officials seeking office typically cannot afford to alienate large groups of people. In democratic political systems challengers with far-reaching goals are likely to be harassed by investigations and campaigns of disinformation aimed at discrediting them.

Analyzing the prospects of "unacceptable" challengers like Share Our Wealth presents certain methodological difficulties. If politicians grant benefits because of the pressure from a protest mobilization, the politicians will be unlikely to admit the benefits are being granted for that reason. For instance, if Roosevelt was making concessions to the constituency of Share Our Wealth to woo away its supporters and keep the allegiance of potential converts to the challenger, he did so without announcing his intentions. Similarly, challenger leaders might claim that changes in policy unprovoked by movement activity are actually concessions, thus gaining new supporters and invigorating the commitment of current ones. These possibilities place a premium on comparing the plans of the Roosevelt Administration with its subsequent actions and on examining the historical evidence and data concerning the Administration's responses to Share Our Wealth.

### DID LONG'S "SHARE OUR WEALTH" INFLUENCE THE SECOND NEW DEAL?

Contemporaries of Long and historians disagree on Share Our Wealth's impact on the Second New Deal, and the short life of the insurgency complicates the issue. Attributing "success" to Share Our Wealth is also complicated by the fact that two key determinants



of social movements—economic grievances and political opportunities—could account for what Share Our Wealth leaders might claim were successes. Economic theories of policy posit that economic decline itself provokes public spending; political theories maintain that powerful state reformers or left-center regimes enact public policies of redistribution (see reviews in Skocpol and Amenta 1986; Quadagno 1987). Either type of theory might predict the emergence of the policies of Second New Deal, even in the absence of Share Our Wealth.

To ascertain the influence of this challenger, we examine outcomes from the perspective of Share Our Wealth's constituency, which might have won new benefits had Long become president. One road was mapped in Sinclair Lewis's ([1935] 1970) novel *It Can't Happen Here*. A character modeled on Long, Senator Buzz Windrip, challenges Roosevelt for the 1936 Democratic nomination and forms an alliance with a character based on Coughlin, the Methodist Bishop Peter Paul Prang, and his "League of Forgotten Men." With the convention deadlocked, Prang (Coughlin) appears at the head of a band of Forgotten Men and stampedes the assembly for Windrip (Long), who goes on to defeat the Republican Walt Trowbridge, a character based on the former President Herbert Hoover. A second scenario in the novel was based on events in 1912, when Theodore Roosevelt, running as a Progressive, induced the defeat of the Republican President, William Taft, and the election of the Democrat Woodrow Wilson. Long might have similarly prevented the reelection of Franklin Roosevelt by leading or backing a left-wing third party (Williams 1969; Snyder 1975). After "throwing" the election to a Republican, Long would, presumably, watch the Depression deepen, bide his time, contest the Democratic nomination in 1940, and then ascend to the Presidency. President Long would then implement his Plan, as he outlined in his fanciful *My First Days in the White House* (Long 1935).

This did not happen, but Share Our Wealth still may have won collective benefits for its supporters. To check the organization, the President may have adopted some parts of the Long Plan or similarly redistributive programs—stiff taxes on income and wealth,

bonuses for veterans, pensions for the aged, aid for farmers, wages and hours legislation for workers. Did the President and Congress act on this agenda, and to what degree were they influenced by Share Our Wealth?

### *Roosevelt's Plans, the Neopopulists, and the Second New Deal*

Many have noted that Roosevelt's "second hundred days"—a wave of reform that began in June 1935—coincided with the crest of Share Our Wealth's mobilization. The four initial measures of the President's "must" legislation included a public utility holding company bill, a banking bill, a bill by Senator Robert Wagner guaranteeing rights of labor, and the bill that became the Social Security Act. A "soak-the-rich" tax bill was soon added to the list. To determine whether Share Our Wealth influenced the construction or adoption of these proposals, we ask: What was the Roosevelt Administration expecting to do, and did it fear Long and alter its goals and priorities to counter him. If the Administration advanced proposals that it had already devised and planned to enact, Share Our Wealth would have to be judged irrelevant. If the Administration, however, went out of its way to appease this challenger, Share Our Wealth may be judged influential. Like Gamson (1990), we rely in part on historians and historiography to answer these questions, but we were also able to examine some primary historical information about Long and the Second New Deal.

All indications are that Share Our Wealth had little influence on the *planning* of bills in the Second New Deal. The Social Security Act and the National Labor Relations Act were laid out before 1935 (Schlesinger 1955: 297–315, 400–406; Orloff 1988). The Social Security Act was designed by experts on the President's Committee on Economic Security (Berkowitz 1991:chap. 1); its social insurance provisions were based on proposals developed by reform organizations inside and outside the state. The National Labor Relations Act was designed mainly by Wagner and his staff and ran somewhat outside the redistributive concerns of Share Our Wealth (Huthmacher 1968:190–98).

Historians disagree as to whether Long and Share Our Wealth helped to put the redis-

tributive programs of the Second New Deal on the political agenda (on the role of worker insurgency on labor policies, see Goldfield 1989 and Skocpol and Finegold 1990). Burns (1956:210–15, 220–26, esp. p. 224) has argued that the Second New Deal was not a result of Long and the neopopulists, but resulted from the fact that Roosevelt's former business allies jumped ship, tipping his Administration to the political left. Leuchtenburg (1963:100) also estimated Long's effect to be minimal. Others, however, including Williams (1969), Long's biographer, Schlesinger (1960), and Brinkley (1982) thought that Long had some influence on the policies of the Administration. Williams and Schlesinger focused on Roosevelt's tax message of June 19, 1935. The President unexpectedly demanded the passage of a Treasury Department proposal to tax extremely high incomes at a stiff rate, to raise inheritance and gift taxes, to tax the undistributed dividends of corporations, and to increase and make more graduated the corporation income tax. The character of the taxes—designed to break up large corporations—owed more to Louis Brandeis than Long, according to Schlesinger (1960:chap. 18). But Schlesinger attributed the introduction of this initiative to Long, invoking the "steal Long's thunder" quotation. Williams (1969:836–37) agreed, noting that Long took credit for the measure.

Winning concessions implies that new programs must confer collective benefits on the challenger's constituents. The tax legislation was expected to yield only about \$400 million in new revenues and may have been partly a symbolic reform (Leff 1984:chap. 3). Although this so-called "soak-the-rich" tax measure did not threaten the truly wealthy and the revenues from it could not finance Long's ambitious program, the measure broke the pattern of regressive New Deal taxation initiatives, such as the payroll taxes for social insurance. And although "broadening the base" of the personal income tax, as championed by Senator Robert LaFollette, Jr., the Wisconsin Progressive, might have resulted in greater redistribution, the soak-the-rich taxation legislation was a good start.

Another plank from the Share Our Wealth platform—the early payment of veterans' bonuses—had to wait. In May 1935, Congress passed such a bill, but Roosevelt took

the unprecedented step of delivering his veto message before Congress and over radio. He apparently felt that keeping the budget closer to balanced mattered more. He allowed the bill to pass, but not until 1936 (Dillingham 1952). To pay for the bonus, Roosevelt called for new taxes: a stiffer corporation income tax and an undistributed corporate profits tax, taxes that provided \$800 million per year, much more than the previous soak-the-rich taxes (Leff 1984:chap. 4). These moves were made after Long's death, but the Roosevelt Administration may have been motivated in part to prevent the regrouping of Long's supporters for a third-party run in 1936 behind a new leader. That summer Coughlin broke with Roosevelt and led a third-party bid against him, joining forces with Townsend and Smith (Bennett 1969).

In summary, then, Share Our Wealth's influence on the Second New Deal was more than negligible. Although none of the Second New Deal legislative proposals resembled closely the Long Plan and most were devised by others, Roosevelt did propose something unexpected—the tax message of June 1935. This tax program was not going to result in the leveling of incomes and wealth envisioned by Long, but the program did break a pattern of regressive taxation. And when the Administration agreed to pay the veterans' bonus in 1936, it also passed a more productive and progressive tax on corporations.

The Roosevelt Administration also attempted to undermine Long and other neopopulist leaders. In Louisiana Roosevelt denied Long federal patronage and used such patronage to promote his enemies (Williams 1969:637–38, 689–92). In 1934, the Administration reopened a Treasury Department investigation into Long's tax returns and those of his political allies (Williams 1969:795–98; McCoy 1967:123). No doubt this harassment would have intensified had Long lived longer. The Administration began investigating Coughlin in 1934 (Brinkley 1982:127), and even the mild-mannered Townsend was the target of an April 1936 congressional investigation.

Share Our Wealth's impact during this period was doubtless greater than that of other neopopulist groups, such as Coughlin's National Union of Social Justice or Townsend's Old Age and Revolving Pensions. Although

the Townsend Movement may have put pressure on politicians to do something to aid the elderly, old-age assistance—the Social Security Act's most significant spending program—had passed Congress the previous year, and the Townsendites opposed old-age insurance, but were powerless to defeat or change it. Western members of Congress avoided voting on the alternative Townsend bill, knowing colleagues from elsewhere would kill it. The banking bill of the second hundred days was dismissed by Coughlin as worthless (Schlesinger 1960:chap. 16), and Coughlin's monetary reforms probably would have done little to reduce unemployment had they been enacted. Share Our Wealth's agenda was advanced further, and the parts of the Long Plan that were enacted conferred some real collective benefits on the organization's constituents. Because the Roosevelt Administration clearly went somewhat out of its way to respond to Long, Share Our Wealth was responsible in part for these advantages. Yet what components of these benefits were due to other influences? And why was this insurgency relatively successful?

*Political Mediation, the Influence of Share Our Wealth, and the Secret Poll*

To analyze outcomes of interest to challengers it is best to start with what they wanted and how they attempted to get it. The three movement organizations of Long, Townsend, and Coughlin had displacement goals, but of different sorts. Of the three, Share Our Wealth's goals were the most profound, as they called for the replacement of the New Deal and of the President. The Townsend Movement mainly wanted to replace the Roosevelt Administration's old-age bureaucracies and programs. In 1935 Coughlin's National Union for Social Justice could not decide whether to influence the President or topple him. In addition, Share Our Wealth was a "multiple-issue" challenger, and Long's influence in 1935 means that displacement goals did not automatically rule out winning policy victories.

More important, Share Our Wealth's mobilization was the largest and most widespread of the three challengers. Share Our Wealth was inaugurated in February 1934, one month after Townsend's organization

was incorporated. According to the incredibly precise Christenberry, Long's secretary, after one year Share Our Wealth had 27,431 clubs with 7,682,768 members, a number that had supposedly doubled since November 1934. And the organization also flourished afterwards, as Smith, Long's lieutenant, visited half the U.S. states, and as Long delivered his message over the radio. In contrast, by February 1935 the Townsend Movement included about 450,000 fee-paying elderly who were mainly located in the West (Holtzman 1935). Both groups had far more members and more extensive operations than Coughlin's National Union, which was inaugurated only in November 1934 and whose organizational efforts in 1935 went little beyond radio broadcasts (Brinkley 1982:chap. 8; McCoy 1967:118; Tull 1965:chap. 4).

Share Our Wealth also had the simplest strategy—to create loosely organized local groups committed to Long's brand of economic democracy and willing to support him against the President. Townsend's strategy was more involved and time-consuming: organize clubs in every Congressional district across the country and induce candidates of both parties to endorse the plan. By 1935 it had only begun. To the extent that Coughlin had a plan of action in 1935, it was to implore his radio listeners to write letters to the President to convince him to back Coughlin's banking reforms. All in all, in 1935 Share Our Wealth had the largest following and a collective action program that had achieved some measurable success. Because of its greater mobilization and the simplicity of its early collective action program, it is not surprising that Long's organization enjoyed the greatest success of the three in 1935.

Long and Share Our Wealth stimulated the first scientific public opinion poll on a Presidential race (Brinkley 1982:207–209, 284–86; Snyder 1975; Lipset and Raab 1970:189–94). Emil Hurja, the chief statistician and an executive director of the Democratic National Committee, mailed straw ballots and a cover letter (see Figure 1) on April 30, 1935 to about 150,000 people in the U.S. states. He made the poll appear as if it were being conducted by a magazine, the nonexistent *National Inquirer*. All the information was to be received from a three-by-five inch card—the two-cents postage was prepaid. (Farley,

*"The Voice of the People Is the Government"*

# The National Inquirer

Washington, D. C.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

April 30, 1935

Dear Voter:

Who would be your choice -- if a President of the United States were being elected today:

Franklin D. Roosevelt?  
A Republican Candidate?  
Huey P. Long? or,  
Another Candidate?

A SECRET BALLOT is enclosed for your personal use. It involves no obligations or conditions. Not even a postage stamp is needed. Just mark the ballot and mail it in the nearest mail box.

Never before has the United States been faced with so many serious and complex problems -- which directly affect your welfare. For instance, do you think the New Deal should stay? Or should we return to the Old Deal? Do you favor a "Share-The-Wealth" program? Should the nation engage in a large Public Works program? Or should Relief and "the dole" be supported by private funds? Should we return to the "gold standard" -- or not? Should business and industry be given a freer hand? Your answer to these and many other pressing questions would have to be decided by you in voting for a President today.

This nation-wide poll -- for which your Secret Ballot is enclosed -- is designed to get an accurate cross-section of just what the voters are thinking today. Such polls in the past have been regarded as indexes of the public's political desires. The results of this poll should tell you and the lawmakers just what the voters want now.

Don't lose this ballot as requests for a duplicate cannot be answered.

Just mark and mail your enclosed secret ballot at once. No stamp is required on it. You entail no obligation whatever. Remember "The Voice of the People Is the Government."

Very truly yours,

*The National Inquirer*

Figure 1. The Cover Letter for the Democratic National Committee's Secret Poll, 1935

the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was also Postmaster General.) Emphasizing that it was a "Secret Ballot," the postcard and letter asked the voter, "If an election were held today, who would be your choice for President of the United States" and encouraged him or her to mark an "X" in one of four boxes: for Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Republican Candidate, Huey P. Long, and a dotted line for a write-in alternative. The ballot also asked for the respondent's state and for whom the respondent voted in 1932.

Hurja (1935) employed a two-tier sampling process. One sample was apparently drawn from telephone owners—a group containing mainly employed people. Exactly 100,000 were polled, with ballots on white cards, in the 48 states. He polled separately people who received unemployment aid, or in common parlance, "relief recipients." They were sent ballots printed on blue cards. Some 49,742 relief recipients in 32 states were sampled. Ballots were sent mainly to men, but also to some women. About 21 percent (30,924 of the 150,000) ballots were returned. Overall Roosevelt was selected by 54.2 percent, the Republican by 29.6 percent, and Long by 10.9 percent. The strongest write-in candidate was Father Coughlin, who received about 1 percent. Other candidates were categorized as "miscellaneous left" and "miscellaneous right." Among the employed, however, the race was close: Roosevelt was selected by 47.2 percent of the telephone-owning respondents, the Republican by about 40 percent, and Long by 7.8 percent. Although Long's best states were Louisiana and ones nearby, his support was nationwide and not limited to the South or rural areas.

In reviewing this polling effort, Farley (1948) wrote that Long might have captured between 3 to 4 million votes—including "100,000 in New York State"—and "his third party movement might constitute a balance of power in the 1936 election" (p. 51). In his final tallies, Hurja (1935) discounted the "blue" ballots from relief recipients and relied on the "white" ballots from telephone owners. To adjust the results for the fact that the white ballot sample did not represent the voting public at large, Hurja relied on information on the candidate for whom the respondent had voted in 1932 and compared

the poll responses to the actual results of the 1932 election. Because the white ballot responses concerning the 1932 Presidential vote matched the actual results, his adjustments were minimal, and the "official" poll results (see Table 1) indicated a tight race: Roosevelt with 49.3 percent of the vote, the Republican 42.5 percent, Long 7.4 percent, and Coughlin .8 percent. Roosevelt would win in 33 states with 305 electoral votes, and the Republican would win in 15 states with 226 electoral votes. (For discussions of other polls for this election, see Crossley 1937; Gosnell 1937; Gallup and Rae 1940.)

The official results in Table 1 show that Long was on the verge of delivering the election to the Republicans. If Long was drawing support only from the left, the poll indicated that he would transfer five states, including New York, and 122 electoral votes to the unknown Republican candidate. According to these results, it would take only the defection of Michigan, Iowa, and Minnesota—where Roosevelt held a lead of 7 percentage points or less—to swing the election. Because the official results indicated that Long might have made the outcome close, it is plausible that Roosevelt would act on the Share Our Wealth agenda. Still, Hurja's (1935) analyses, based greatly on the preferences of Roosevelt's supporters in 1932, found that Roosevelt was losing voters not only to Long and the left, but also to the Republicans and the right. Hurja found only 10 states where Roosevelt's 1932 voters were moving more to the left than to the right. It is possible to infer from this result that Roosevelt should also have been shoring up his right flank—a kind of political tacking.

However one reads the poll results, the desire of Roosevelt to win over the supporters of Share Our Wealth depended on specific political opportunities. The first was the perceived closeness of the contest between the Democratic and the Republican candidates (Key 1949). Roosevelt's chances were expected to be harmed not where Share Our Wealth was strongest, but where the challenger might tip elections in electorally important states. This result depended on the mobilization of voters behind Long and the closeness in support between Roosevelt and the Republican. Long had strong backing in Louisiana and in some of the nearby non-

Table 1. Hurja's Shift Analysis of the Polling Data: Respondents to the "White" Ballots, 1935

State	Percentage Respondents for:			Electoral Votes:	
	Roosevelt	Republican	Long	Roosevelt	Republican
South Carolina	90.20	3.40	6.40	8	—
Mississippi	85.16	4.39	10.45	9	—
Georgia	85.12	13.96	.92	12	—
Alabama	82.03	13.59	4.37	11	—
Texas	77.54	15.14	7.32	23	—
Arkansas	74.58	13.68	11.74	9	—
Louisiana	57.72	6.17	36.11	10	—
North Carolina	69.41	24.16	6.42	13	—
Arizona	70.39	25.42	4.19	3	—
Nevada	61.45	19.28	19.28	3	—
Oklahoma	65.66	25.93	8.41	11	—
Tennessee	65.35	30.62	4.03	11	—
Florida	60.62	29.41	9.97	7	—
Virginia	62.53	31.41	6.05	11	—
Utah	58.84	29.60	11.56	4	—
South Dakota	58.41	30.86	10.73	4	—
North Dakota	59.16	33.55	7.29	4	—
Oregon	56.23	34.05	9.72	5	—
New Mexico	57.00	38.78	4.22	3	—
Kansas	55.94	38.00	6.06	9	—
Wisconsin	54.07	36.52	9.40	12	—
Nebraska	54.63	38.65	6.72	7	—
Missouri	53.64	38.21	8.15	15	—
Kentucky	54.65	39.49	5.85	11	—
California	53.60	38.73	7.68	22	—
Montana	54.89	41.57	3.54	4	—
Idaho	52.32	41.34	6.34	4	—
Wyoming	49.89	39.04	11.06	3	—
Washington	47.44	39.01	13.55	8	—
Minnesota	48.42	41.78	9.80	11	—
Maryland	47.66	41.94	10.39	8	—
Iowa	45.84	42.20	11.95	11	—
Michigan	46.63	45.90	7.47	19	—
Indiana	46.58	47.54	5.88	—	14
Colorado	43.43	44.39	12.19	—	6
New York	45.92	49.12	4.96	—	47
Illinois	44.30	48.85	6.85	—	29
West Virginia	45.08	50.08	4.84	—	8
Ohio	40.96	48.89	10.15	—	26
New Jersey	41.90	51.58	6.51	—	16
Rhode Island	42.59	52.73	4.68	—	4
Pennsylvania	40.82	53.24	5.95	—	36
Connecticut	41.32	55.35	3.33	—	8
Maine	38.78	59.63	1.58	—	5
New Hampshire	37.06	58.30	4.64	—	4
Massachusetts	35.32	57.43	7.25	—	17
Vermont	35.31	57.76	6.93	—	3
Delaware	35.49	60.11	4.40	—	3
Totals	49.29	42.54	7.37	305	226

States expected to be "thrown" by Long to the Republican.

democratic states, but in none of these was he within 20 percentage points of tipping these Democratic bastions to the Republican. In contrast, the five states expected to be "thrown" by Long averaged about 8 percent support for him, his overall average. To have an impact, Share Our Wealth required not only a minimum level of mobilization, but also secure voting rights and tight competition for electoral votes. Had Roosevelt's advisors viewed his lead as more solid, Long would not have seemed as threatening.

Another political precondition of Share Our Wealth's influence was the existence of a reform administration and a left-center coalition in Congress—characteristics often claimed to be important for the passage of programs of economic redistribution. Under most circumstances, the President might have neither the inclination nor the power to preempt a challenger bidding for redistribution. Had a Republican been President, as was the case in 1932 when Long presented his first taxation program to no avail in the Senate, Share Our Wealth would not have affected the Administration's agenda. And without a strongly Democratic Congress, Roosevelt's taxation and other proposals would not have resulted in new laws. The Democratic majority in Congress reached an all-time high after the elections in 1934, during which Democrats benefited from the activism of Roosevelt's first New Deal. Though they might stall or modify legislation, Republicans and southern and conservative Democrats could not veto reforms. Share Our Wealth required an already left-leaning administration and Congress to be able to make an impact, and in 1935 these conditions were met.

The movement organization's form and rhetoric may have limited its support and its possibilities for coalition-building. The apparent impracticality of central elements of the Long Plan alienated many on the left and made cooperation difficult with the Wisconsin Progressives and the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party (Brinkley 1982). Although the Roosevelt Administration was not averse to the skillful use of patronage and ignored the blatant fund-raising tactics of some of its allies (such as the Edward J. Kelly machine of Chicago), the fact that Long so ruthlessly employed patronage made him and Share Our Wealth suspect among the progressive

radical parties of the Midwest and left him open to attack.

Moreover, like these other third parties, the viability of Long's Share Our Wealth was based on controlling politics in one state. When Long was assassinated, Share Our Wealth died with him, only in part because he had embodied the insurgency. It was as crucial that the Louisiana Democratic party no longer backed it. Rev. Smith tried to pick up the pieces, but was exiled by Long's Louisiana successors, who had made peace with Roosevelt in what was soon labeled by Share Our Wealth supporters as the Second Louisiana Purchase.

#### SHARE OUR WEALTH AND THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

A second way to gauge the influence of Share Our Wealth is to examine systematically New Deal relief policy in the states of the Union. Unfortunately, tracking the efforts and fortunes of all the neopopulist challengers aligned with Share Our Wealth is not practicable. Yet Share Our Wealth may have influenced the way that the Roosevelt Administration handled emergency relief—the main way the Administration fought the social repercussions of the Depression. Relief expenditures can be analyzed systematically to appraise different theories of public redistribution.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), a product of Roosevelt's first 100 days, mainly provided outdoor or home relief to the unemployed. In January 1935, Roosevelt proposed to "quit this business" of cash relief without work, by replacing the FERA with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided public employment. Some have argued that federal spending in the states was determined not so much by physical as by political needs (see Charles 1963:chap. 9; Macmahon, Millett, and Ogden 1941:chap. 10). Although these programs were not devised to counter Share Our Wealth, the Roosevelt Administration may have spent more than it had planned in some states to ward off Share Our Wealth's political initiatives.

There are four main political explanations for the federal distribution of relief money, and these are closely associated with theo-

ries of the welfare state (Skocpol and Amenta 1986). Harry Hopkins (1936), who ran both the FERA and the WPA, said he spent money where it did the most good—more perhaps in states with sound administrative practices and minimal political corruption. This structural political reasoning, focusing on the impact of state bureaucracies and state political institutions on social policy, resembles the “state-centered” or institutional theory advanced by Orloff and Skocpol (1984).

In contrast, Wright (1974) argued and partially demonstrated that New Deal spending in the states depended on electoral considerations. He hypothesized that the Roosevelt Administration used relief to buy the allegiances of voters where their votes would do the most electoral good, assuming that only those getting the money would be influenced. To predict spending, he constructed a “political productivity index”—including the state’s value in the electoral college, the perceived closeness of the election, and the likelihood that votes might be shifted. These arguments anticipate those by Tufte (1978), who argued that the electoral needs of incumbents influence social spending (see review in Skocpol and Amenta 1986:137–38). Such electoral concerns are often central to “pluralist” theories and explanations of social spending (Hicks and Misra 1993).

Charles (1963:chaps. 9–10), an historian, has suggested a less narrowly political motivation—relief as a tool to remake social politics. The New Deal meant far-reaching social and economic change, and those in support—especially members of Congress first elected in the 1930s—required special consideration from the Administration through the redirection of relief payments. Congressional representatives from insurgent third parties, such as the Wisconsin Progressive Party and the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, also supported the more radical New Deal initiatives and may have been supported by the Administration in turn. This “New Deal support” argument resembles the “social democratic” model of the welfare state (Myles 1989:chap. 4; Esping-Andersen and van Kersbergen 1992), in which left-of-center governments are viewed as the main forces behind social spending. In this case, northern or non-southern Democrats and third-party repre-

sentatives would constitute the coalition for U.S. spending innovation.

A fourth argument, based mainly on ideas by Piven and Cloward (1977), is that relief payments were likely to be higher in states where protest was more intense. The Roosevelt Administration would deploy relief to appease extra-institutional threats to its power, including those from Share Our Wealth. According to a similar logic, Hopkins might also spend relief money more freely in places where strike activity was acute (Myles 1989:chap 4; Hicks and Misra 1993).

The political mediation theory holds that certain political conditions, in and of themselves, might influence public social spending. It predicts that the political structure and left and center representation in Congress might influence social expenditures. It also predicts that social movement organizations might provoke increased spending, but only where political circumstances are otherwise favorable. Thus it would not be surprising if Share Our Wealth had led to increased spending in states that were politically important for other reasons. Our expectation is *not* that the Roosevelt Administration aided those sympathetic to Share Our Wealth. In Louisiana, Long was removed from the stream of federal patronage. For instance, Hopkins named someone from a different state as director of Louisiana’s Emergency Relief Administration (Williams 1969:638). The same outsider was then appointed to head the WPA in Louisiana (Macmahon et al. 1941:270). We expect instead that the Administration would attempt to aid those who might otherwise join Share Our Wealth by supporting local political leaders friendly to the Roosevelt Administration, making appeals over the heads of Share Our Wealth leaders to win over their followers.

We assess these arguments by analyzing per capita spending during the first year of the *Works Progress Administration*, which began operations in June 1935 (U.S. Federal Works Agency 1943:115). This program provided the bulk of national relief monies from the middle of 1935 through 1943. It is possible that the Roosevelt Administration used this program initially to counter Share Our Wealth, although the influence of Share Our Wealth faded after Long’s death in Septem-



ber 1935. Alternatively, the Administration may have continued to use relief monies through the WPA to quell or appease the remnants of Share Our Wealth left after Long's death, as Coughlin, Smith, and others hoped to pick up the pieces and unseat Roosevelt in the 1936 election.

To appraise the first argument—concerning the Roosevelt Administration's stated goals and the structure of the state and political institutions—we employ three measures. The first, *administrative powers*, relates to the ability of the states to run relief programs. This measure scores one for each year that a state's industrial commission had rule-making authority in safety rules (Brandeis 1935:654). The executive bureaucracies of many states had been revamped during the Progressive era, and we expect that the Administration may have provided funds according to the ability of states to spend them fairly and rationally (Amenta and Carruthers 1988). This measure recapitulates a key goal of reformers concerned with rationalizing state-level bureaucracies. A second measure concerns *voting rights* in 1932. Many states, notably those from the former Confederacy, had restricted voting rights dramatically. Our measure takes the logarithm of voting participation in the 1932 Presidential election (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975:1071–72), because we are more concerned with differences between low and moderate voting levels than between moderate and high levels. A third potential influence comes from *traditional, patronage party organizations*. The political parties of many states, especially in the Northeast, were dominated by such organizations (Shefter 1983), which were generally hostile to creating new programmatic public spending and used public programs to aid party loyalists. These parties may have had a negative effect on the distribution of aid, as the Roosevelt Administration may have worried that monies handled by party leaders would not reach the unemployed. Alternatively, these organizations may have been better situated to capitalize on work relief, because most projects were organized locally, and thus had a positive effect. We use Mayhew's (1986: 196) measure, based on his study of the political parties in each state. This measure is a rating ranging from 1 to 5, accord-

ing to the degree of strength that such patronage parties had achieved over nominating processes. Many western states rated low (such as California with 1), and many northeastern and midwestern states rated higher (such as New Jersey and Indiana, each with scores of 5).

To appraise the second argument—concerning the role of pluralist factors and Roosevelt's reelection concerns—we mainly employ measures suggested by Wright (1974). To capture the electoral "value" of a state, we employed *electoral votes per capita*, which gives higher scores to the less densely populated states (Congressional Quarterly 1985:251; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975; also see Amenta and Carruthers 1988). For the *variability in Democratic support*, we employ the standard deviation of support for Democratic candidates in Presidential elections from 1896 to 1932 (Congressional Quarterly 1985:280–89). Although Wright estimated an "expected" level of Democratic support in 1936 using voting trends from 1896 onward, we find no evidence that any of Roosevelt's political advisors looked that far back. Rather, we find that they were concerned with the previous two elections—hoping to replicate the triumph of 1932, but fearing a repeat of the Democratic debacle of 1928 when Hoover trounced Al Smith. We employ a measure of the *expected closeness of the 1936 Presidential election* based on the absolute value of the difference of the mean of the Democratic vote for President in 1928 and 1932 and 50 percent (Congressional Quarterly 1985:288–89).

To weigh the argument concerning political support for the New Deal, we employ three measures. The first is the *Northern Democratic delegation in the House of Representatives* after the 1934 elections. This election brought into power a number of new legislators who were favorable to the New Deal. Roosevelt and Hopkins, ever hopeful to buttress their congressional coalition, may have moved to aid these new allies. We measure the percentage of the delegation that was Democratic (Congressional Quarterly 1985:776–80). Because "northern" is strictly operationalized as "nonsouthern," all of the states of the former Confederacy score 0 on this measure. A second indicator of political support, measured in a way analogous to the

previous one, is *third party members elected to the House* (Congressional Quarterly 1985:776–80). Finally, the initial emergency relief programs distributed funds in part on a matching basis, and Hopkins lobbied governors to pass *state tax innovations* so the states would be able to pay their fair share of relief, and he may have continued to favor complying states with WPA monies. Our measure scores 1 for those states that passed new corporate income taxes, individual income taxes, or general sales taxes in 1932, 1933, or 1934 (Hansen 1983:149).

To examine the role of extra-institutional politics, we focus on Long's impact, as well as on other potential influences of political protest. One standard measure we employ is the *strike volume*, measured as "mandays" lost, divided by the nonagricultural labor force in 1935 (U.S. Department of Labor 1936:1303–1304; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1937:66–67; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1943:194–97). Although strikes do not summarize all protest, they have been shown to influence public spending (Hicks and Misra 1993), and this is the best indicator concerning protest consistently available for all states. The potential effect of strikes, however, is not explicitly part of political mediation theory. To examine the relevance of political mediation theory, we use measures that capture the support for Long and specific political conditions. The first one is Hurja's (1935) estimation of the *absolute value of Roosevelt's margin*, the closeness of the race with Long in it. This measure is calculated as the absolute value of the difference of the support for Roosevelt and the support for the unnamed Republican in the poll—the measure takes into account the political ramifications of Long's potential entry into the race. A second measure is the *expected electoral value of Long's challenge*. This measure is based on the assumption held by Roosevelt's advisors that Long drew voters that would otherwise be Roosevelt's; it is calculated as follows: Roosevelt's percent support in the poll for any state is his probability of winning that state; this figure is multiplied by the number of electoral votes of that state. Long's influence is the expected number of electoral votes taken from Roosevelt—Long's support (in percent) multiplied by the electoral votes of the state.

Using states as units of analysis, we ran multiple regression analyses, using two control measures: the rate of *unemployment* from 1930 to 1933 (U.S. Social Security Board 1937:58–59), the only measure of unemployment available for the period, and *per capita income* in 1935 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975:243–45). First, we examined separately each of the four arguments explaining WPA spending in 1935. In a second round of analyses, we ran regressions using only those independent measures from the first round that contributed to the explained variance, after adjustments for lost degrees of freedom. This produced a composite model, used to ascertain whether Share Our Wealth had any impact net of standard explanations of social spending. Finally, we ran a number of tests on this composite model.

The initial regression models (employing SPSSPC+ 4.0) yield some positive evidence for each of the four explanations of social spending (see Table 2). The structural political model (Model 1) performed well. Two of the measures proved significant at the .05 level or better: *Administrative powers* and *voting rights in 1932* each had positive effects. All the coefficients are positive, somewhat unexpectedly in the case of traditional party organizations. Model 1, including the measures of administrative powers, voting rights, traditional party organization, and the control measures of unemployment and per capita income, explains approximately 69 percent of the variance in per capita spending for the WPA. This percentage is adjusted for lost degrees of freedom, as there are only 48 cases (states). The measures for Wright's pluralist argument about reelection concerns, Model 2, explain about 52 percent of the variance in WPA spending with the control measures, but only about two percentage points more than do the control measures alone (results not shown, but all such results are available on request). None of the reelection measures prove significant at the .05 level. Unexpectedly, the coefficient for electoral votes per capita is negative, though not significant. Similarly, Model 3 shows that the argument about New Deal supporters has some impact, as the three measures and the control measures explain approximately 58 percent of the variance, with adjustments, and the coefficients for Northern Democrats

Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of Per Capita Works Progress Administration (WPA) Spending by State on Selected Independent Measures, 1935

Independent Measures	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Structural Political Model</i>				
Administrative powers	204.1** (4.89)	—	—	—
Voting rights, 1932	1,273.7* (2.16)	—	—	—
Traditional, patronage party organization	316.4 (1.78)	—	—	—
<i>Reelection Concerns</i>				
Electoral votes per capita	—	-92,786.0 (-1.17)	—	—
Variability in Democratic Party support, 1896-1932	—	138.0 (1.49)	—	—
Expected closeness of 1936 Presidential election	—	-27.5 (-.74)	—	—
<i>New Deal Supporters</i>				
Northern Democratic House members, 1934	—	—	2092.8** (2.55)	—
Third-party House members, 1934	—	—	8,928.4* (1.70)	—
State tax innovations	—	—	409.8 (.53)	—
<i>Extra-Institutional Politics</i>				
Strike volume	—	—	—	6,764.2 (1.06)
Absolute value of Roosevelt margin (poll)	—	—	—	-3,663.7* (-2.09)
Expected electoral value of Long's challenge	—	—	—	724.1* (1.71)
<i>Control Measures</i>				
Unemployment	277.1** (3.39)	275.3** (2.70)	244.0** (2.43)	209.2* (2.03)
Per Capita Income	2.549 (0.83)	11.06** (3.38)	9.712** (3.12)	8.322** (2.51)
Constant	-7300.4** (-3.04)	-4386.3* (-1.74)	-4026.4* (-2.04)	-1181.7 (-0.47)
F	21.99	11.31	13.71	12.75
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.691	.523	.575	.555

\* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$ 

Measures of the political mediation theory.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are  $t$ -statistics. All tests are one-tailed, except for traditional patronage party organization (see text). A two-tailed test was used for this variable, because theories predict both positive and negative effects.  $N = 48$ .

and for third-party members in the House achieve significance at the .05 level.

We also found support for the impact of extra-institutional politics. Model 4, including the measures of the closeness of the election with Long in it, the expected electoral value of Long's support, strike volume, and the control measures, explains about 56 percent of the variance in WPA spending by

state. Only the coefficients for the measures of Long's impact on the race are significant at the .05 level or better (one-tailed tests). In separate trials, we examined the sheer strength of the support for Long (results not shown). This measure had a negative, though insignificant, impact on WPA spending net of the other measures. As compared to the other models as a whole, only the structural poli-

Table 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of Per Capita Works Progress Administration (WPA) Spending by State on Selected Independent Measures: 1935

Independent Measures	Model 1 <sup>a</sup>	Model 2 <sup>a</sup>	Model 3 <sup>b</sup>	Model 4 <sup>b</sup>
<i>Structural Political Model</i>				
Administrative powers	153.8** (3.99)	109.3** (2.58)	141.1** (4.07)	106.3** (2.81)
Voting rights, 1932	—	—	—	—
Traditional, patronage party organization	—	—	—	—
<i>Reelection Concerns</i>				
Electoral votes per capita	—	—	—	—
Variability in Democratic Party vote, 1896–1932	—	—	—	—
Expected closeness of 1936 Presidential election	—	—	—	—
<i>New Deal Supporters</i>				
Northern Democratic House members, 1934	22.45** (3.40)	16.42* (2.37)	15.53* (2.26)	12.00* (1.73)
Third-party House members, 1934	71.96* (1.71)	58.48 (1.43)	68.14* (1.82)	57.38 (1.58)
State tax innovations	—	—	—	—
<i>Extra-Institutional Politics</i>				
Strike volume, 1935	—	—	—	—
Absolute value of Roosevelt margin (poll)	—	—	—	—
Expected electoral value of Long's challenge	680.5* (1.93)	665.4* (1.97)	622.0* (1.98)	622.5* (2.06)
<i>Control Measures</i>				
Unemployment	213.4** (2.56)	184.5* (2.28)	214.4** (2.90)	189.7** (2.62)
Per capita income	5.647* (2.32)	6.457** (2.73)	5.838** (2.69)	6.481** (3.07)
Per capita federal emergency relief	—	0.142* (2.13)	—	0.120* (1.98)
Spatially lagged per capita WPA spending	—	—	0.037* (2.00)	0.029 (1.56)
Constant	-2,898.8* (-1.78)	-3,430.7* (-2.17)	-3,689.1** (-2.43)	-3,960.3** (-2.69)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.721	.744	—	—
LIK	-418.5	-415.9	-416.6	-414.8
AIC <sup>c</sup>	850.9	847.8	849.3	847.5

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (one-tailed tests)

Measures of political mediation theory.

<sup>a</sup> For Models 1 and 2, numbers in parentheses are  $t$ -statistics

<sup>b</sup> For Models 3 and 4, numbers in parentheses are  $z$ -statistics.

<sup>c</sup> "AIC" refers to Akaike Information Criterion (Anselin 1993:chap. 6).

tics model had a significantly better fit. Thus there is some initial support for the influence of extra-institutional politics and in particular for the *politically mediated* impact of the support for Long.

To see whether extra-institutional politics has an impact in addition to the influences of structural and short-term institutional politics, we ran regression analyses using the sig-

nificant measures from the four regressions in Table 2, including the control measures. This larger model included some measures with coefficients that proved to be insignificant. From this we derived a composite model, eliminating in a stepwise procedure measures with insignificant coefficients. The resulting Model 1 in Table 3 includes measures from each theoretical grouping. Spe-

cifically, the model includes the measures of administrative powers, northern Democrats in Congress, the third-party House members, and the expected electoral value of Long's run, as well as the control measures. This model explains a substantial 72 percent of the variance in WPA spending by state once lost degrees of freedom are taken into account.

We ran a number of checks on the robustness of these results. In another trial (Model 2, Table 3), we included as a control measure Federal Emergency Relief Administration spending per capita in 1935 (U.S. Federal Works Agency 1942:300-24). Although this measure had a significant effect and increased the adjusted variance explained to about 74 percent, the coefficients for other measures were basically unchanged. In short, changes in federal relief distributions in 1935 were due in part to the politically mediated support for Long. Next we examined residuals (results not shown). In neither Model 1 nor Model 2 was there a case whose value was greater than three standard deviations from its predicted value. For Model 1, there were only two scores greater than two standard deviations from predicted levels, and only one such "outlier" for Model 2. Removing these cases did not materially change the results (not shown). The same was true when Louisiana was omitted and also when the analysis included only the 37 northern states (results not shown). Moreover, neither Model 1 nor Model 2 suffers from heteroskedasticity problems (results not shown).

A potentially more serious problem is spatial autocorrelation, which can confound geographic analyses (Doreian 1981). Relief expenditures may have been determined not only by internal characteristics of states, but by processes dependent on the geographic location of the state. For instance, the Roosevelt Administration might have set relief policy in Louisiana and treated nearby states similarly, ignoring their political or economic differences from Louisiana. If spatial autocorrelation were a problem, it would make the OLS estimates of Models 1 and 2 less efficient. To examine this matter, we constructed a contiguity or adjacency matrix containing 1s for spatially adjoining states, and 0s otherwise, and employed the SPACESTAT (V1.03, R17) statistical pack-

age (Anselin 1993), which was also employed for OLS Models 1 and 2 in Table 3. The OLS residuals (results not shown) for the models presented conflicting evidence about the presence of significant spatial autocorrelation (see Anselin 1993:chap. 27). Thus, we examined both "spatial effects" and "spatial disturbances" specifications (Doreian 1980). The spatial effects results appear in Models 3 and 4 in Table 3. These models, which include a spatially lagged dependent variable, provided slightly better fits than their OLS counterparts in Models 1 and 2, and the coefficient for the spatially lagged variable was significant in Model 3 (.05 level, one-tailed test). Yet the pattern of results changed very little. Notably, the coefficients for all measures were not significantly different from their OLS counterparts. In the spatial disturbances specification (results not shown), the coefficient for the spatially weighted error term proved insignificant at the .05 level.

In summary, we find that Long's Share Our Wealth organization achieved some successes and accomplished more than the other neopopulist organizations in 1935. That difference in achievement was due in part to the fact that Long's organization had many adherents. All the same, several favorable political circumstances were necessary for Share Our Wealth to influence national policy: the presence of a reform administration and a congressional coalition based on Democrats who were from neither the undemocratic South nor patronage-dominated political parties. Also important was a high degree of electoral competition between Democrats and Republicans. Our quantitative analysis indicates that several structural political and standard New Deal support measures influenced the relative spending by the Works Progress Administration. Extra-institutional politics had an additional impact that was not based on the sheer amount of Share Our Wealth's support or on politically unmediated strikes. Instead Long's support mattered only insofar as it had the potential to harm Roosevelt's prospects in the electoral college. To the extent that initial spending patterns for the WPA influenced later ones, Long's challenge had a long-term impact on social spending policy.

## CONCLUSION

This study's implications range from the methodological to the historical to the theoretical. Our *methodological* suggestions in studying the impact of collective action are for researchers to examine and compare how specific challengers are organized, what they want, how they are trying to get it, with what resources, strategies, and tactics, under what conditions, and to what degree they gain collective benefits. Researchers should go beyond the strategy of Gamson (1990) and others, who focus solely on the agenda of the movement organization's leaders. This is usually possible because most scholars, who examine one or a few movements at a time, are not operating under the same constraints as did Gamson, whose path-breaking research encompassed the gamut of social movement organizations, with their sundry goals, structures, and strategies ranging across the expanse of American history. Other investigators can and should attend to the interests of a movement organization's potential beneficiaries. Protest groups with far-reaching demands that achieve gains on only some demands might actually be more successful than groups that think small and win most of what they request. Moreover, researchers should pay attention to alternative causal routes to what social movement organizations may claim as victories won (Snyder and Kelly 1979). To count favorable outcomes as victories, one needs to build a case that things happened differently from would have occurred in the absence of the challenger. This task can be approached by examining closely the responses to the movement, ranging from historical information on changes in plans by the movement's targets to systematic statistical data about policy outcomes.

As for the *historical* question of influence, Share Our Wealth doubtless had an impact on some policymaking in the Second New Deal. Share Our Wealth pressed the Roosevelt Administration to propose progressive taxation, and partly because of Share Our Wealth the Administration began to change the face of U.S. tax policy. Regression analyses indicate that Share Our Wealth may have also influenced the distribution of unemployment relief. Although other neopopulists, like Town-

send and Coughlin, made bids for influence and for economic redistribution during the mid-1930s, Share Our Wealth had the most immediate effect. This is not to say that standard determinants of public policy had no impact or that Share Our Wealth accounted for the bulk of the Second New Deal.

More important, our results suggest that the impact of the collective action of challengers on policy is conditional. Specifically, this historical episode supports the *political mediation theory*, according to which outcomes depend not only on mobilization and action, but also on political opportunities. It was not merely Share Our Wealth's ability to mobilize supporters around a program of redistribution that led to its influence. The creation and adoption of the soak-the-rich tax plan required other political conditions outside the control of Share Our Wealth. The movement organization had to become a plausible threat to the President's reelection by drawing enough support to give a Republican candidate a chance to win. But this possibility depended crucially on the character of the race between the two major-party candidates. Share Our Wealth had an impact not because of states like Louisiana and its neighbors where Long was strongest, but because of electorally important states where Long's candidacy may have tightened close races. In addition, the influence of the insurgency depended on the existence of a regime and a Congress actually sympathetic to its goals. Without the reformer Roosevelt in office, a program of redistribution might never have been proposed. Without an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, initiatives proposed by the President might not have become laws. The evidence on relief spending suggests that Share Our Wealth had an impact, not where it had the greatest following, but where Long's candidacy had the greatest expected electoral effect on the race. Needless to say, the evidence on WPA spending also supports theories of the welfare state based on institutional politics.

Our study also has implications for understanding the impact of a challenger's goals and structure on outcomes. We find that the displacement goals of Share Our Wealth did not sentence it to failure. A social movement organization, like Share Our Wealth, that seeks to displace established representatives

of political parties or state bureaucrats in charge of policies can win victories. Moreover, Share Our Wealth's kind of insurgency—based both on a program and one person's Presidential ambitions—has certain advantages. One is that the challenger's program can come to the fore quickly, without an extensive collective action program. Share Our Wealth merely had to win a following and wait for the Roosevelt Administration to take note. A personal political challenger that is issue-based may help to put the movement organization's issue on the political agenda (Burstein 1993). The displacement goals of a challenger based simultaneously on leader and program minimizes conflicts of interest between the organization's leadership and its supporters. Share Our Wealth, the program, was unlikely to be bartered for favors from the Administration, as Long had irrevocably broken with Roosevelt. The fact that Share Our Wealth championed so many issues had a double-edged effect, however. Pressing different concerns probably increased the chances that the Administration would take action on *something*, but *which* proposals would be addressed was in the Administration's hands; it chose tax increases rather than veterans' bonuses. Displacement groups and other groups with far-reaching demands might win a lot for their supporters and beneficiaries, even when the target is not replaced.

The anxiety of Roosevelt's men over Long and Share Our Wealth was marked by the Administration's unprecedented polling effort to ascertain Long's strength. Roosevelt also sought to discredit Long, to undermine his organization in Louisiana, and in part to steal his thunder: making appeals over the heads of Share Our Wealth's leaders to win over their followers. All of this probably would have been enough to deflect this challenger in 1936 had Long lived to run for President, but who can say for sure? What seems more certain is that Long's insurgency did have an impact on the New Deal, in part because of the support that Long had accumulated, but also because of other political circumstances that worked to the advantage of Share Our Wealth.

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