Living wage campaigns and community-based labor movements in the twenty-first century

Kwang-sig Lee

Iowa State University

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Living wage campaigns and community-based labor movements in the
twenty-first century

by

Kwang-sig Lee

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Sociology

Program of Study Committee:
Robert Mazur, Major Professor
Tony Smith
Betty Wells

Iowa State University
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Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Kwang-sig Lee

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns in the United States. Continuing shifts in U.S. ethnic politics engender a variety of opportunities for these campaigns to ultimately enhance the welfare of the working class and minorities. Researchers have concluded that living wage campaigns acquire all basic components of social movements, but have not developed a model for explaining variation in the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns. We present a model in which the following are key elements: the strength of both the social movement coalition, the government/business opposition, the mode of coalition-opposition interaction, media portrayal, community support, and the degree of policy and institutional transformation. Analysis of case studies of the living wage campaigns in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami between 1994-1999 is based on information obtained in articles in Labor Notes, Labor Studies Journal, and New Labor Forum. Coalition-opposition interaction was more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when the coalition before the campaign and the opposition before the campaign were both strong or both weak. The degree of policy and institution transformation was greater when there was more support by the community for the social movement. A key recommendation for future research is to incorporate the degree of ongoing activities after a campaign into the model.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The success of labor movements is vital for theory and practice of workplace democracy but these movements have generally failed, perhaps due to their lack of coalition with community-based movements. Several recent trends such as the crisis of the welfare state, the increase of capital mobility, and the emergence of information societies are reported to engender a context less favorable to business unionism and more favorable to community unionism, which closes the gap in the labor-community divide. It has been living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States that have provided a variety of opportunities for enhancing such labor-community coalitions. The living wage campaigns in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami, where minorities account for at least one-third of the residents, have provided the best examples of labor-community coalitions in the United States.

Minorities are a significant part of the population in these metropolitan areas (Pollard & O’Hare 1999). They constituted more than one-third of the residents in several of the largest metropolitan areas in 1997, including New York, Chicago, Washington-Baltimore, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose. They account for more than one-half of the residents in the Los Angeles and Miami-Fort Lauderdale metropolitan areas. These areas are typically characterized by a concentration of minorities and low-salary jobs. Contemporary research on ethnic politics in the United States suggests that these minority groups have played and will continue to play an increasing role in U.S. politics in the 21st century (Menifield & Jones 2001; King-Meadows & Schaller 2001; Menifield 2001). This shift in ethnic politics reflects new opportunities for living wage campaigns in major metropolitan areas as inter-class
coalitions that ultimately secure and enhance the welfare of minorities in the United States. In this context this paper explores two research questions: "Why is one living wage campaign stronger as a labor-community coalition than another?" and "What explains the variations in the causes and consequences of these campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States?"

Discourse on social movements is increasingly characterized by the emphasis on the decline of labor movements and the rise of community-based movements. Union membership has been shrinking: only 14% of workers are currently union members, with only 9% in the private sector, as opposed to 30% a generation ago (Miller & Eisenscher 2001). Several recent trends create a context less favorable to business unionism and more favorable to community unionism, which can bridge the traditional labor-community divide - the crisis of welfare states, the increase of capital mobility, the emergence of information societies (Johnston 1995). Unions have failed to organize large numbers of young and/or female workers in geographically divided workplaces in expanding sectors of the economy such as consumer services and subcontracted goods production (Tufts 1995).

The leadership of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) strives to reverse the decline of labor movements by emphasizing the use of rank-and-file tactics and the coalition with women, minority groups, and other social movements (Clawson & Clawson 1999). These efforts by labor leadership reflect demographic and political shifts in the United States. Minorities are an important portion of the residents in many of the largest metropolitan areas and contemporary research on ethnic politics in the United States suggests that these minority groups have played and will continue to play an increasing role in U.S. politics in the 21st century (Menifield & Jones 2001; King-Meadows & Schaller 2001; Menifield 2001). All these changes explain why
revitalizing labor in the twenty-first century requires an innovative coalition between labor and community.

Several researchers (Juravich & Hilgert 1999; Eimer 1999; Reynolds 1999) provide excellent examples of such multiracial labor-community coalitions. Based on interviews with union staff, community activists, workers, Juravich & Hilgert (1999) present an analysis of the victory of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), a community organization in Everett, Massachusetts for organizing El Salvadoran workers. They showed that in order for a multiracial coalition to be effective, the activists should 1) maintain their presence in the community before their campaigns, 2) develop the rank-and-file leadership, and 3) be flexible in responding to the workers' needs. Eimer (1999) explores activities of the Milwaukee County Labor Council in Wisconsin that successfully created a labor-community coalition that has developed an alternative economic development plan to address the interests of both union and non-union workers. Reynolds (1999) illuminates how labor has used its intensive political action to establish durable coalitions with community, based on the work of the Legislative and Electoral Action Program in Connecticut.

Most of all, living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States have been reported to be the best examples of labor-community coalitions (Nissen 2000; Reynolds 2001). Based on traditional social movement literature on political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing processes, Nissen (2000) shows that the living wage campaign in Miami has acquired basic components of social movements that unite organized labor with community partners. Reynolds (2001) offers one of the most comprehensive accounts of living wage campaigns in the United States that cover nine major cities. Based
on the same frameworks as Nissen's 1999 study of the Miami campaign, he fully demonstrated that living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States have shown all the major components of social movements as well as the strong possibility of representing labor-community coalitions in the twenty-first century.

The organization of the thesis is described here. Presented first in Chapter 2 are the general contexts for the decline of business unionism and the rise of community unionism represented by living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States. This is followed by discussion of the conceptual basis, hypotheses, data, methods, and the model of living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States. Following this are the section of results and discussion that involves specifying the linkages between the components of the model and real experiences in the United States. This is followed by conclusion that summarizes results and discussion. Chapter 3 contains discussion of the future of living wage campaigns in the United States, followed by recommendations for future research.

References


CHAPTER 2. LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNITY-BASED LABOR MOVEMENTS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A paper submitted to Critical Sociology

Kwang-sig Lee and Robert Mazur

Abstract

This thesis explores the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns in the United States. Continuing shifts in U.S. ethnic politics engender a variety of opportunities for these campaigns to ultimately enhance the welfare of the working class and minorities. Researchers have concluded that living wage campaigns acquire all basic components of social movements, but have not developed a model for explaining variation in the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns. We present a model in which the following are key elements: the strength of both the social movement coalition, the government/business opposition, the mode of coalition-opposition interaction, media portrayal, community support, and the degree of policy and institutional transformation. Analysis of case studies of the living wage campaigns in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami between 1994-1999 is based on information obtained in articles in Labor Notes, Labor Studies Journal, and New Labor Forum. Coalition-opposition interaction was more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when the coalition before the campaign and the opposition before the campaign were both strong or both weak. The degree of policy and institution transformation was greater when there was more support by the community for the social
movement. A key recommendation for future research is to incorporate the degree of ongoing activities after a campaign into the model.

Introduction

Critical discourse on capitalism highlights negative features of capitalism that would not be pervasive, if certain structural elements of capitalism were changed, and that such changes would not have other worse consequences. The model of economic democracy, a critique of capitalism, postulates a synthesis of theory and practice. In other words, its elements are based on 1) theoretical debates that have taken place over the past thirty years concerning comparative economic systems, 2) empirical studies of modes of workplace organization, and 3) records of various historical experiments of the 20th century.

Worker self-management, a form of workplace democracy, is the first component of economic democracy. The success of labor movements is very important for the theory and practice of workplace democracy. These movements have failed largely due to the absence of coalitions with community-based movement. The model of economic democracy should address the rationale for, and evidence of, such coalitions (Torres 1995; Gindin 1997; Popple & Shaw 1997; Johnston 2000). Several recent trends - the growth and crisis of welfare states, the increase of capital mobility, and the emergence of the information society – can be viewed as creating a context less favorable to business unionism and more favorable to community unionism; this may help close the labor-community divide (Stone 1995; Eimer 1997; Kelley 1997; Tufts 1998; Miller 2001).

Living wage campaigns in the metropolitan areas in the United States have provided a variety of opportunities for enhancing such labor-community coalitions (Reynolds 1999;
Nissen 2000; Reynolds 2001; Reynolds 2003). Minorities are a significant part of the population in these metropolitan areas (Pollard & O’Hare 1999). They constitute more than one-third of the residents in several largest metropolitan areas in 1997, including New York, Chicago, Washington-Baltimore, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose. They account for more than one-half of the residents in the Los Angeles and Miami-Fort Lauderdale metropolitan areas. In most cases, these areas are characterized by the simultaneous concentration of these minorities and low-salary jobs in specific locations.

Contemporary research on ethnic politics in the United States suggests that these minority groups have played and will continue to play an increasing role in U.S. politics in the 21st century (Menifield & Jones 2001; King-Meadows & Schaller 2001; Menifield 2001). The number of African American elected officials in Congress has increased from 4 in 1960 to 16 in 1980 to 38 in 2000. The Hispanic figure has shown an increase from 3 in 1960 to 7 in 1980 to 18 in 2000 (Menifield & Jones 2001: 14). The ratios of African American and Hispanic representatives in state governments also have shown an upsurge in the past three decades, moving closer to the ratios of African American and Hispanic populations in these states (King-Meadows & Schaller 2001: 163-188; Menifield 2001: 223-246).

This shift in ethnic politics reflects new opportunities for living wage campaigns in major metropolitan areas as inter-class coalitions ultimately secure and enhance the welfare of minorities in the United States. In this context, this paper explores two research questions: “Why is one living wage campaign stronger as a labor-community coalition than another?” and “What explains the variations in the causes and consequences of these campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States?”
Conceptual Basis and Hypotheses

The genesis of the assumptions and hypotheses in this paper involves a pair of propositions in a study on interclass coalitions. The first proposition states that cultural and social relationships determine the framing of interests and goals among social movement organizations (SMOs). The second states that interclass coalitions provide a means for the learning that is necessary for such a fundamental social change as the transformation of policies and institutions for the welfare of the working-class and the poor residents in American metropolitan areas (Rose 2000: 14-15). However, the recent history of living wage campaigns (LWCs) in American metropolitan areas suggests that not only alliances among SMOs but also interests, goals, and interactions among SMOs, government, business, media, and community help explain the variations in the causes and consequences of these social movements.

In this context, it is assumed that 1) SMO coalition (the Coalition; the challenge agent) and government/business opposition (the Opposition; the resistance agent) have their interests and goals that conflict, 2) the Coalition and media can be either in harmony or conflict in terms of their interests and goals (as can the Opposition and media), 3) the Coalition and community can be either in harmony or conflict in their interests and goals (as can the Opposition and community), and 4) the media and the community can be either in harmony or conflict in their interests and goals.

Resource mobilization theory implies that SMOs are institutional actors capable of making decisions and mobilizing resources in a rational manner to achieve their ends (Garner 1996: 49), even when they consist of individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds. A coalition can be evaluated in terms of both the breadth of member
organizations and the degree to which participation in the coalition becomes a core of member organizations’ activities. A coalition of individuals is different from a coalition in which several kinds of member organizations make a joint campaign a central part of their activities. Coalition building involves a framing process in which groups and organizations may define and act on an issue differently - a social movement synthesizes different approaches within a common framework (Reynolds 2001: 33).

In order for a coalition to be effective, its member organizations must contribute a significant part of their resources to the coalition and the coalition should select incentives to encourage such contributions (Fine 1990: 346-347; Garner 1996: 50; Shultz 2002: 105). The staff members are essential to maximize the effectiveness of the coalition and coordinate the participation of member organizations but they cannot substitute for member participation and contributions. Member organizations have to be willing to make a significant part of their resources available to the coalition: their human resources (contributors, experts, fundraisers, organizers, researchers, secretaries, speakers, writers), their financial resources (money and other types of financial assets), and their physical resources (computers, documents, office space, and office supplies).

If resource mobilization theory underscores the strength of the Coalition as an agent for social change, political opportunity structure theory (POS theory) underscores the strength of the Opposition as an agent for resistance. One important issue that POS theory attempts to address is why some social movements are able to succeed at a certain point of time, given a level of social strain and of propensity to form social movements and mobilize resources. Another issue concerns the impact of political opportunity structures on the strategies and tactics of SMOs with emphasis on the level of repression, the degree of centralization and the
weight of different branches of government that characterize the actual behavior of political leaders. In summary, POS theory views government organizations as the key to whether structural problems can be successfully challenged by SMOs (Garner 1996: 50-51).

Specifically, Marx (1997) addresses the strategies and tactics adopted by the U.S. government to facilitate or destroy social movements. Efforts to facilitate a movement include strengthening capacity for corporate action, creating favorable public images, and fostering freedom of movements. Efforts to destroy a movement include inhibiting capacity for corporate action, creating unfavorable public images, and inhibiting the freedom of movements (ibid. 362). Some of the factors that increase the possibility that governmental actions will run into unintended outcomes are secrecy of actions, illegality of actions, and lack of effective intervention techniques (ibid. 377).

Social movements thus have possibilities of achieving victories even under quite unfavorable political opportunity structures. It is expected that interaction between the Coalition and the Opposition is more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when the Coalition and the Opposition are both strong or both weak. In other words, a strong degree of opposition in a certain city is likely to enhance the chance of dialogue and the success of a campaign by compelling social movement activists to mobilize counter-pressure. The political opportunity structure in another city that is quite open to the living wage issue is likely to promote the chance of dialogue as the combined outcome of internal efforts by sympathetic city councilors and external efforts by social movement activists. In sum, literature on Resource Mobilization Theory and POS theory leads to the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Coalition-Opposition interaction is more likely to be characterized by
dialogue than conflict when the strength of the Coalition before the LWC and the strength of the Opposition before the LWC are both strong or both weak.

Increasingly, the print and TV news shows are highly monopolized segments of multinational corporations that are resistant to social movements (Hackett & Adam 1999; Compaine 2000). News Corps., Disney, and Viacom spanned from one into four or five segments of media industry between 1980 and 1998 while Bertelsmann, Cox, Sony, Newhouse, and USA became dominant in three segments during the period (Compaine 2000: 485). Consequently, hyper-commercialism is substituting the public ethos. The general public, in addition to social movement scholars, is considering the prospects for the media supportive over social movements as more unfavorable than ever (Hackett & Adam 1999: 125-126).

Historical records seem to at least partially support this assessment. The U.S. media - from print media to television - has played a significant role in the political disempowerment of minority groups, especially African Americans, whose participation is increasingly vital in the success of social movements in the United States. For centuries before the introduction of digital media, print media served as a means to reinforce American racism and inequality. In Selma and throughout the South, television provided strong evidence of just how far America had drifted from its promises of freedom and justice for all. Newspaper and television images of African Americans as criminals and ‘welfare queens’ have strengthened negative stereotypes of Blacks and of their communities (Nacos & Hritzuk 2000: 165-166).

Despite increasing concentration in ownership of media and the history of media portrayal of minority groups, the media remain as an important tool of social movement
advocates in the United States. Communication by advocates is a necessary element in any
activity; and social movement activists use media to construct public reality, mobilize
members and establish a collective identity, and reach multiple audiences (McHale 2004:
10). A SMO may have to expand the boundary of its frame in order to accommodate the
interests and goals that are incidental to its primary point view but salient to its potential
adherents, including the media (Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford 1997: 217).

Specifically, cultural theory of social movements hypothesizes a close relationship
between the strength of a social movement and the degree of favorable media portrayal
(Garner 1996: 59; Cooper 2002). Variation in the capability of a social movement to
mobilize its resources, which depends significantly on its resource base, can be explained
largely by the degree of congruence between media framing and social movement framing of
the issues involved. In other words, congruence of these two framing processes promotes
resource mobilization while their divergence discourages it. In addition, it is arguable that a
social movement needs the media more than the reverse. The media usually focuses on
sensational elements of the movement to report certain social movement activists as 'leaders'
or 'spokespersons' in contrast to their actual roles in the movements (Garner 1996: 59).

Framing of issues by social movement activists, in turn, consists of strategies and tactics
to achieve their ends. Differences in these strategies and tactics are expected to affect media
coverage for social movements in different cities. Several strategies and tactics are available
to social movement activists who want to obtain media coverage. Sometimes they need to
plan events, also known as media hits, staged solely for the media's benefit. News
conferences are similar to media events except that they rely primarily on "talking heads."
Sometimes the activists send press releases if they have hard news to announce or reports to
issue. Above all, strong mobilization efforts by the activists in downtowns and/or other public places, which depend largely on their resource base, are essential for favorable and significant media courage (Bobo, Kendall & Max 2001: 158-160).

In this context, favorable portrayal of the Coalition by the media can be expected to be proportional to the degree of coincidence among the interests and goals of the Coalition members, which relates to the framing by social movement leaders, and on the resource base of the Coalition. Given that the interaction between the Coalition and the Opposition is likely to be a factor for shaping and being shaped by the media framing, the second hypothesis below is derived from the literature on cultural theory of social movements.

Hypothesis 2: The portrayal of a SM by the media is likely to be more favorable when there is a greater degree of coincidence among the interests and goals of Coalition members before the LWC, the greater the Coalition’s resource base before the LWC, or a predominance of dialogue in Coalition-Opposition interaction

As the global economy creates growing inequality in the labor market and increasing economic and emotional stresses for ordinary family groups, especially female-headed households, many of the policies and actions of the government exacerbate their economic grief. Trade policies promote the pursuit of cheap labor in the global market. Monetary policies raise real interest rates and thereby lower employment rates. Tax policies are revealed as biased against public investment and national health insurance for the sake of the truly wealthy (Wilson 1999: 67). Given these complex national and international economic changes that affect a great part of the American population, more important than ever is the
development of progressive political coalitions in the United States represented by multiracial labor-community coalitions in metropolitan areas.

An urban setting is a unique context for dynamic interaction of ethnicity, class and other forces operative within communities. This convergence of dynamic forces tends to facilitate popular and democratic mobilizations for fundamental changes in social relations. The realization of this potential requires significant foundational work, uncommon leadership, sustained dialogue and interaction between members of these communities (Betancur & Gills 2000: 10). In recent years, new opportunities have risen to directly challenge low wages through labor-community alliances (Bobo, Kendall & Max 2001: 221). There is a renewed interest on the part of unions in organizing low-wage service and production workers. The economic boom has brought an increasing number of people from low-income communities into the workplace. Long-overlooked possibilities for coalition among labor, religious and community organizations are at last being recognized.

The construction of labor-community coalitions has been achieved through ‘action research’ to discover potential bases of cooperation (Brecher & Costello 1990: 334). There are several overlapping foundations for cooperation beyond the fact that all potential partners suffered from policies and practices favored by corporate-right agents. Sometimes the basis of this partnership has been just the recognition of a common enemy. Sometimes it is equivalent to reciprocal exchange of support. An example of this in Massachusetts involved trade unions in the building sector that made a formal agreement on providing job opportunities with minority workers who, in return, would provide the unions with help on a prevailing wage vote. Inter-movement cooperation has often grown out of common or at least overlapping interests. The discussion leads to the third hypothesis.
Hypothesis 3: The support by the community for the SM is stronger when there is a greater degree of coincidence among the interests and goals of the Coalition members before the LWC, the greater the Coalition's resource base before the LWC, a predominance of dialogue in Coalition-Opposition interaction, or more favorable portrayal of SM by the media.

Very little literature has been available on what explains the degree of policy and institution transformation after living wage campaigns. This paper provides as the main factors for the degree of the transformation the modes of Coalition-Opposition interactions, media portrayal of the social movements, and community support for the social movements during the campaigns. Based on this premise, presented below is the fourth hypothesis concerning the degree of policy and institution transformation as a result of a living wage campaign.

Hypothesis 4: The degree of policy and institution transformation after the LWC is greater when dialogue is predominant in Coalition-Opposition interactions, portrayal of the SM by the media is more favorable, or the community provides more support for the SM.

**Data and Methods**

The unit of analysis is living wage campaigns in the United States between 1994 and 1999 and the rationale for that unit as the most appropriate can be found in the fact that the United
States is the leader of the global economy and the success of labor movements in this country is crucial for the success of labor movements in other countries. The principal data sources are *Labor Notes, Labor Studies Journal,* and *New Labor Forum.* The number of journals relevant to living wage campaigns or even to labor movements themselves is relatively small compared to that relevant to other social movements. Presented as Figure 1 is a model for explaining the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns as labor-community coalitions in the United States. Analysis of the viability of the model involves specifying the linkages between several components of the model and data (empirical results represented in the case studies of the living wage campaigns in Baltimore between 1994 and 1996, in Chicago between 1994 and 1996, in Los Angeles between 1994 and 1995, and in Miami between 1998 and 1999).

**Results and Discussions**

The living wage campaigns in the metropolitan areas Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami have provided the best examples of labor-community coalitions in the United States. The dynamic relationships between ethnic demography and political opportunity structures in these areas make political interactions among these minority groups quite complex (Grenier 1992: 133-159). In this regard, Democrats are perceived as being more vulnerable than their Republican counterparts regarding economic justice issues, including living wage ordinances or laws. However, in such areas as Miami-Dade County, the Democrats have as their political basis the business class rather than the working or poor class, which produces some unexpected variations in the process and outcome of living wage campaigns.
Figure 1. Model of Determinants of Living Wage Campaign Success and On-Going Activities

Breath/Depth of SMO Coalition before Campaign
- Coincidence of Interests & Goals
- Resource Base
- Strategies & Tactics

SMO - Opposition Interaction
- Dialogue
- Conflict

Community Support

Transformation of Policies & Institutions

Breath/Strength/Unity of Government/Business Opposition before Campaign
- Coincidence of Interests & Goals
- Resource Base
- Strategies & Tactics

Media Portrayal
Virtually all living wage campaigns grow out of existing organizations (Nissen 1999: 37-38). To date, three types of organizations seem to be the most important anchors for living wage coalitions: organized labor institutions (AFL-CIO, individual unions), religious bodies or faith-based social justice organizations, and poverty or low-income community organizations. These organizations can provide human resources, monetary resources, and/or physical resources such as office space and telephone lines. Labor groups are important in almost all living wage campaigns. An important faith-based example is the church-based BUILD (Baltimoreans United In Leadership Development - a coalition of 50 congregations) while its community-based counterpart is ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now).

In Baltimore, a coalition of two labor organizations - the BUILD and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) - placed organizing low-wage workers in the center of its efforts from the beginning of the living wage campaigns (Reynolds 2001: 45). Through person-to-person contacts, solicitations at neighborhood stores, and other means, the coalition built up a list of 3,000 workers who wanted an organization for low-wage workers. Today, the Solidarity Sponsoring Committee, a community organization for low-wage workers in Baltimore, has grown to a staff of three with 500 dues-paying members.

Since the summer of 1995, living wage movements in Chicago have developed into a broad coalition of more than 60 endorsing organizations with a combined membership of 250,000 including the ACORN, the AFSCME, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (Reynolds 2003: 14; Reynolds 2001: 47). Membership on the steering committee was contingent in part on a contribution of
$1,000 by a member organization and its commitment to deliver a busload of people at the campaigns. Several organizations also contributed their staff members to mobilize hundreds of living wage supporters during the campaigns.

Los Angeles offers another leading example of a labor-community coalition in the United States. The Los Angeles campaign grew out of the broader process of labor revitalization; its specific origin lies in the battle to defend the jobs of 1,000 unionized workers at the main airport of the city, Los Angeles International (Reynolds 2003: 18; Reynolds 2001: 35). The campaign produced a labor-community alliance of more than one hundred endorsing organizations with the activists running contract and financial assistance data base, issuing a yearly report card in addition to the evaluation of living wage enforcement, and training workers and city hall staff (Reynolds 2001: 37).

In Miami, the Community Coalition for a Living Wage (CCLW) was initiated by the South Florida AFL-CIO, the local entity of the central labor body, and the Human Services Coalition (HSC), an organization encompassing all the main providers of services to poor members of the community (Nissen 1999: 39-41). The CCLW had no budget and no treasury. One union paid about $300-400 for an article, Why Miami-Dade County Needs a Living Wage. Beyond that, donations of photocopying and other small in-house costs by the central labor body and the HSC accounted for the rest of any financial support.

As described above, the strength of living wage coalitions varies from place to place. The Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles campaigns all provide examples of labor-community coalitions with extensive labor involvement and a broad agenda involving labor revitalization and community support, even though the Baltimore coalition is much less extensive than its Chicago or Los Angeles counterparts. On the contrary, the Miami
campaign involves a narrow community-based coalition with its narrow agenda (passing a living wage ordinance), little labor involvement, and virtually no human, financial, and physical resources for mobilization. Table 1 provides the summary of the strengths of coalitions by city.

The strength of government/business opposition against social movements varies from locality to locality, too. In some metropolitan areas, the political opportunity structures are very open to the passage of a living wage ordinance or law; the proponents of the labor movement can simply use their insider standing or supportive attitudes by policymakers to achieve the passage. In more extreme cases, a sympathetic lawmaker may initiate living wage legislation in the absence of any social pressure. Such examples are living wage ordinances in Durham (North Carolina), Des Moines (Iowa), and Jersey City (New Jersey) (ibid.).

The Miami experience shows a case of seemingly strong but actually weak opposition against living wage campaigns (ibid. 34-37). Miami-Dade County was characterized by the Cuban Democratic county mayor with six Cuban Republicans, one Cuban Democrat, four African-American Democrats and two non-Hispanic white Democrats. The Cuban county mayor, all seven Cuban county commissioners as well as the Chamber of Commerce were supportive of the living wage campaigns. Only six Non-Cuban commissioners were reluctant or resistant to the passage of the ordinance.

Both the past history and the biased portrayal of Cuban commissioners by the media explain why the social movement leaders adopted inappropriate strategies and tactics for the 1999 campaigns. The commissioners did not show strong support for the 1996 living wage effort in the Miami International Airport, which led to the campaign’s defeat. This history
Table 1. Strength of Social Movement Organization Coalition before Campaign, by City

<table>
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<th>City</th>
<th>Strength of Social Movement Organization Coalition before Campaign</th>
<th>Coincidence of Interests &amp; Goals</th>
<th>Resource Base</th>
<th>Strategies &amp; Tactics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community support with narrow labor-led coalition (significant labor involvement)</td>
<td>A coalition of 50 organizations has built an organization for low-wage workers with 3 staff members &amp; 500 members who pay dues</td>
<td>Passing legislation to increase the minimum wage; securing champions within the administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Labor revitalization with extensive-formalized community-led coalition (significant labor involvement)</td>
<td>More than 60 endorsing organizations with 250,000 members</td>
<td>Passing legislation to increase the minimum wage; building a coalition broad and deep enough to dominate the council and override the mayor’s opposition to the Movement’s goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Labor revitalization with extensive-formalized labor-led coalition (significant labor involvement)</td>
<td>Social Movement activists created a database of contracts and financial assistance, issued yearly report cards evaluating living wage enforcement, train workers and city hall staff</td>
<td>Passing three laws directing public funds to community development; Building a veto-proof majority on the council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Community support with narrow community-led coalition (little labor involvement)</td>
<td>Little human and financial resources</td>
<td>Passing legislation to increase the minimum wage; contacting Cuban commissioners and business leaders to obtain their support</td>
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led to an expectation of conflicts with the Cuban Republicans; the social movement leaders were misguided by media portrayal of Cuban Republicans as conservative politicians who ignore the working class entirely. In fact, it was the Democratic commissioners (whose political basis was almost entirely the business class) that were the least receptive or even resistant to passage of the ordinance. The ethnic politics described above, along with virtual absence of organized business opposition, mean that the coalition-opposition interaction throughout the campaign can be characterized as dialogue.

At the opposite extreme, totally hostile legislative bodies such as the city council in Chicago tend to discourage any attempt to initiate a living wage campaign. The Chicago city council placed the son of the former mayor in the same position as his father in order to dominate city politics with strong support for business efforts and strong opposition to unionization and living wage efforts (Reynolds 2003: 14). In financial assistance alone, the city provides a half billion dollars a year with business, with very few strings attached. For example, the city has offered 10 million dollars for job creation to a food retailer of poverty wages and strong resistance to unionization.

In Chicago, this broad, strong, and unified opposition compelled the movement leaders to build a much broader and deeper coalition than originally planned in order to champion "the machine politics" of the mayor and the city council rather than to stop their attempts (Reynolds 2001: 47-48). On May 1, 1996, more than 500 living wage demonstrators joined a May Day march through downtown with the police - backed by the city council - arresting six movement leaders who attempted to enter the chamber. The majority of the city council (36 out of 50 aldermen) promised to vote for the law but reversed their positions after facing strong opposition by the mayor.
However, the fact that 17 out of 50 aldermen chose to challenge the mayor by supporting the law demonstrated that the campaign had made a significant political impact on the city council. The activists began organizing ward-by-ward accountability sessions with aldermen to account for their ‘change of heart.’ The opposition sought a compromise in the midst of the 1998 election year when the mayor and the council prepared to vote salary increases for themselves. With the false claims made clear, the mayor and his council allies realized that they could not risk a strong adverse reaction from the living wage coalition capable of doing more than making a public issue of the contradictions in their machine politics.

On the one hand, the experiences in Miami and Chicago suggest that Coalition-Opposition interaction is more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when both the strengths of the Coalition before the campaign and of the Opposition before the campaign are either strong or weak. On the other hand, the campaigns in Baltimore and Los Angeles, as described below, suggest that the interaction is more likely to be characterized by conflict than dialogue when either of the strengths of the Coalition and the Opposition is weak and the other is strong. Specifically, while Baltimore’s experience relates to how a relatively broad basis of government/business opposition to the coalition leads to coalition-opposition conflicts during the campaign, its Los Angeles counterpart relates to how a relatively broad basis of the coalition to the opposition leads to coalition-opposition conflicts during the campaign.

In Baltimore, the city council reorganized the school board in order to threaten living wage contracts in schools and the state government initiated their plan to force 14,000 welfare recipients attending community colleges to drop their education to take up low-wage work (Reynolds 2003: 99; Reynolds 2001: 45). Given this opposition, the activists had to
mobilize workers to force the city council to adopt the living wage ordinance and welfare recipients to force the state government to cancel their plan (ibid.). In Los Angeles, the city council was in harmony with the social movement but the mayor and the Chamber of Commerce were in conflict with it, compelling the social movement leaders to build a veto-proof majority of the council (Reynolds 2001: 35). Two top business leaders published an opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times* for defending the campaign and the activists made phone calls and visits, wrote letters, and conducted group representations and processions to the council. These experiences are consistent with the first hypothesis. Table 2 provides the summary of the strengths of oppositions and the natures of coalition-opposition interactions by city.

Both the Chicago and Los Angeles experiences can be considered as evidence that portrayal of a social movement by the media is more favorable when there is the greater coalition strength, the smaller opposition strength, or the predominance of dialogue in coalition-opposition interactions. Differences in the strategies and tactics adopted by a coalition of social movement organizations affected media coverage for social movements in different cities. For example, both Chicago and Los Angeles experiences show that essential for favorable and significant media coverage are strong mobilization efforts in downtowns and public offices during the campaigns. On December 1995, 750 activists packed in a local Chicago Teamster Hall (Reynolds 2003: 14) and, on May 1996, 500 activists marched through Chicago’s downtown (Reynolds 2001: 47). Likewise, during the winter of 1995, more than 100 activists went to the Los Angeles City Hall draped with chains to decry the mayor’s Scrooge-like opposition to the living wage (ibid. 35).
Table 2. Strength of Government/Business Opposition before Campaign and Nature of Social Movement Organization - Opposition Interaction, by City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Strength of Government/Business Opposition before Campaign</th>
<th>Social Movement Organization - Opposition Interaction</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Coincidence of Interests &amp; Goals</td>
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<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Council and businesses in conflict with the Social Movement</td>
<td>The city council established a new school board to undermine living wage contracts in schools; Social Movement activists mobilized 500 workers to force the new board to adopt the living wage ordinance</td>
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<td>Chicago</td>
<td>The council in strong conflict with the Social Movement</td>
<td>The majority of the council promised to vote for the law but reneged after facing strong opposition by the mayor; Social Movement activists began organizing ward-by-ward accountability sessions with aldermen to account for their change of heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>The council in harmony with the Social Movement; The mayor and the Chamber of Commerce in conflict with the Social Movement</td>
<td>Social Movement activists make phone calls and visits, write letters, and conduct group representations and processions to the council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Cuban county mayor and 7 Cuban county commissioners in harmony with the Social Movement; 6 non-Cuban commissioners and the Chamber of Commerce in conflict with the Social Movement</td>
<td>Social Movement activists make phone calls to and hold meetings with county commissioners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategies &amp; Tactics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Board of Estimates denounces the violations by a transportation company of the living wage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>City council helped former mayor's son to become mayor to dominate city politics with strong support for business efforts. It also strongly opposed unionization and living wage efforts (city offers $10M to a food chain for job creation involving poverty wages and strong resistance to unionization)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two top business leaders published an opinion piece in <em>Los Angeles Times</em> defending the campaign</td>
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A broad living wage coalition of more than 60 endorsing organizations with a combined membership of 250,000 faced a totally hostile city council in Chicago that strives to dominate city politics with strong support for business efforts and strong opposition to unionization and living wage efforts responding to these strong mobilization efforts by social movement activists in Chicago. *The Chicago Tribune* published a big story on the march (titled “Wage Warriors”) (Reynolds 2001: 47) from a perspective that living wage efforts should win (Reynolds 2003: 16). In Los Angeles, the activists made a group presentation for their working conditions in front of reporters and city hall staff, and low-wage activists provided their testimony in the city hall, which gained favorable media portrayal (Reynolds 2001: 36).

The Baltimore experience reported in *the Baltimore Sun* on February 4, 2004 (Roche 2004) adds additional possible support to the positive relationship between mobilization efforts and favorable media coverage. The daily newspaper published a story that social movement activists helped their members to report violations of the living wage law by their company. City officials conducted a detailed investigation and the company acknowledged guilt. The violations were first brought to the attention of the wage panel by leaders of Local 7 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union. With the union’s assistance, eight employees filed individual complaints with the city alleging that their pay did not comply with the law. A spokesman for the union said he was pleased that city officials took the complaints seriously and conducted a detailed investigation. The wage agency has a single investigator to handle all complaints. These living wage experiences are consistent with the second hypothesis.
Support by the community for living wage campaigns seems to be stronger when coalition strength is greater, coalition-opposition interactions are predominantly dialogues, or media portrayal of the campaigns is more favorable. For instance, both wealthy and poor communities in Los Angeles showed their strong endeavor for the campaigns (Reynolds 2001: 35-36). Two top executives from Bell Industries and Pioneer Foods wrote an opinion piece published in the Los Angeles Times defending the living wage ordinance. And thirty-three Hollywood film and television producers sent a letter to the city council urging passage of the living wage ordinance. This can be considered as evidence of a correlation between intensive community support and robust labor-community coalition in Los Angeles; the coalition consists of more than one hundred endorsing organizations with the activists running a contract and financial assistance data base, issuing a yearly report card in addition to the evaluation of living wage enforcement, and training workers and city hall staff. These experiences support the third hypothesis.

Among four sample cities of the living wage efforts, Los Angeles and Baltimore experienced both policy and institutional transformations while Chicago and Miami experienced only policy transformations. In Los Angeles, the council passed the law for full-time employees with annual salaries of $25,000 or more and part-time employees with wages of $7.25 per hour or higher plus family health benefits (Reynolds 2001: 36). The passage of the law also involved institutional changes, including provisions that the collective bargaining agreement supersedes any other business contract (ibid. 37) and no county funds are used to inhibit unionization (ibid. 59-61).

The Baltimore city council passed the law for service employees with wages of $7.70 per hour (ibid. 57). The Maryland state government cancelled its plan to force welfare recipients
attending community colleges to drop their education to take up low-wage work, and passed a law banning companies from gaining public subsidies by replacing workers with welfare recipients (Reynolds 2003: 99-100). More important than these policy transformations are legal changes which stipulate that workers have the right to keep their jobs even if their employer loses the contract and the right to organize their unions (any employer caught interfering in a unionization loses its contract) (Reynolds 2001: 57).

If the Baltimore and Los Angeles experiences imply that the degrees of policy and institution transformation seem to be greater when there is the more support by the community for the social movement, then their Chicago and Miami counterparts suggest that the degrees of policy and institution transformation is likely to be independent of whether dialogue predominates in coalition-opposition interactions or whether there is the more favorable portrayal of the social movement by the media. In Chicago, where media portrayal of the movement were favorable, the scope of the law the city council passed was limited to policy implications covering full-time employees on contracts of $5,000 or more and $50,000 financial assistance or more and part-time employees on contracts of $7.60 per hour or higher (ibid. 61). Through consistent dialogue between the coalition and the opposition, the Miami campaign produced only policy transformations for all employees with wages of $8.56 per hour or higher plus health benefits (Nissen 1999: 36). In sum, the fourth hypothesis holds only in part. Table 3 summarizes media portrayal, community support, and transformation of policies and institutions by city.

Conclusion
### Table 3. Media Portrayal, Community Support and Transformation of Policies & Institutions, by City

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Media Portrayal</th>
<th>Community Support</th>
<th>Transformation of Policies &amp; Institutions</th>
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| Baltimore  | *The Baltimore Sun* published a story that Social Movement activists helped their members to report violations of the living wage law by their company; city officials conducted a detailed investigation, and the company acknowledged guilt | Community in conflict with the Social Movement; extensive and even outreach to community (Social Movement activists pulled together a basic benefit package for their members with $10,000 life insurance and health discounts for $10/month with membership dues) | *Policy changes:* Service employees’ contracts at $7.70 per hour  
*Institutional changes:* Workers have the right to 1) keep their jobs even if their employer loses the contract and 2) organize unions (any employer caught interfering in a unionization loses its contract) |
| Chicago    | *The Chicago Tribune* published a big story on the march from the perspective that living wage efforts should win; One retired postal worker got endorsements from *The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Sun Times,* and *The Chicago Defender* | Community in harmony with the Social Movement; extensive & even outreach to community (activists expected strong opposition by the council and build a broad and deep community-based coalition to create new political opportunity structures) | *Policy changes:* Full-time employees on contracts of $5,000 or more and $50,000 financial assistance or more and part-time employees on contracts of $7.60 per hour or higher |
| Los Angeles| Social Movement activists make a group presentation on their working condition in front of reporters and city hall staff; Low-wage activists provided their testimony in the city hall, which gained some favorable media portrayal | Community in harmony with the Social Movement (thirty three film and television producers wrote a letter to the council); Extensive and even outreach to community | *Policy changes:* Full-time employees on contracts of $25,000 or more and part-time employees on contracts of $7.25 per hour or higher plus family health benefits  
*Institutional changes:* Collective bargaining agreement; No county funds used to inhibit unionization |
| Miami      | Social Movement activists attempted very little to get media coverage; media portrayed Cuban Republicans as if they ignored the working class | Community in harmony with the Social Movement; Limited and uneven outreach to community | *Policy changes:* All employees on contracts of $8.56 per hour or higher plus health benefit |
The success of labor movements is very important for the theory and practice of workplace democracy but the movements reportedly failed due to their lack of coalition with community-based movements. Several recent trends such as the crisis of welfare states, the increase of capital mobility, and the emergence of information societies may be responsible for engendering a context less favorable to business-based unionism and more favorable to community-based unionism, which enhances labor-community coalition. It has been living wage campaigns in the metropolitan areas in the United States that have provided a variety of opportunities for enhancing such labor-community coalition. And the living wage campaigns in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami, where minorities account for at least one-third of the residents, have provided the best examples of labor-community coalitions in the United States.

The real experiences in these four metropolitan areas are consistent with all the four hypotheses elaborated in Chapter One. On the one hand, the experiences in Miami and Chicago show that Coalition-Opposition interaction is more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when both the strengths of the Coalition before the campaign and of the Opposition before the campaign are either strong or weak. On the other hand, the campaigns in Baltimore and Los Angeles imply that the interaction is more likely to be characterized by conflict than dialogue when either of the strengths of the Coalition and the Opposition is weak and the other is strong. Specifically, while Baltimore's experience suggests how a relatively broad basis of government/business opposition to the coalition leads to coalition-opposition conflicts during the campaign, its Los Angeles counterpart suggests how a relatively broad basis of the coalition to the opposition leads to coalition-opposition conflicts during the campaign.
Both the Chicago and Los Angeles experiences imply that portrayal of a social movement by the media is likely to be more favorable when there is the greater coalition strength, the smaller opposition strength, or a predominance of dialogue in coalition-opposition interactions. Living wage efforts in these two cities also suggest that support by the community for living wage campaigns seems to be stronger when coalition strength is greater, coalition-opposition interactions is predominantly dialogues, or media portrayal of the campaigns is more favorable. Finally, the Baltimore and Los Angeles experiences relate to the suggestions that the degrees of policy and institution transformation are likely to be greater when there is the more support by the community for the social movement whereas their Chicago and Miami counterparts relates to the suggestions that the degrees of policy and institution transformation are likely to be independent of whether dialogue predominates in coalition-opposition interactions or whether there is the more favorable portrayal of the social movement by the media. The model seems to be viable overall. Two recommendations can be presented for future research. One is measuring the degree of ongoing activities after a living wage campaign and incorporating the results into the model. The other is conducting statistical analysis based on more abundant empirical studies on living wage campaigns in the United States.

**References**


CHAPTER 3 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

General Discussion

This paper explored the cases of variation in the causes and consequences of living wage campaigns in the United States as labor-community coalitions. Addressed first were the crisis of welfare states, the increase of capital mobility, and the emergence of information societies as the major contributions to the decline of business unionism and the rise of community unionism represented by living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States. This discussion was followed by elaboration of hypotheses and the model of living wage campaigns in metropolitan areas in the United States whose components are the strength of social movement organization coalition, the strength of government/business opposition, coalition-opposition interaction, media portrayal, community support, and the degree of policy and institution transformation.

Experiences in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami, supported the four hypotheses and the viability of the model. Coalition-Opposition interaction was more likely to be characterized by dialogue than conflict when the strengths of the Coalition before the campaign and of the Opposition before the campaign are either both strong or both weak. Portrayal of a social movement by the media was more favorable when there was the greater coalition strength, the lesser opposition strength, or a predominance of dialogue in coalition-opposition interactions. Support by the community for the campaign has been stronger when coalition strength was greater, coalition-opposition interaction was predominantly dialogue, or media portrayal of the campaign was more favorable. Finally, the degree of policy and
institution transformation was greater when there was the more support by the community for the social movement.

Living wage campaigns in the metropolitan areas in the United States are expected to continue to provide ample opportunities for enhancing labor-community coalitions in the 21st century. Demographic shifts favorable to the coalitions will continue to take place in the United States. If current fertility, mortality, and immigration patterns continue, the U.S. population is expected to reach 350 million in 2025 and more than 400 million in 2050. Under these assumptions, non-Hispanic whites will consist of 52 percent of the population in 2050, followed by Hispanics (25 percent), African Americans (13 percent), Asians and Pacific Islanders (10 percent), and American Indians, Alaska Natives, and others who will make up less than 1 percent (Martin & Midgley 2003: 24). In this context, it is not an exaggerated projection that minority groups in the United States will become major factors for U.S. politics in the 21st century. This constant shift in ethnic politics will continue to engender new opportunities for living wage campaigns in major metropolitan areas as inter-class coalitions that ultimately secure and enhance the welfare of minorities in the United States.

Recommendations for Future Research

Two recommendations can be presented for future research. The first recommendation involves the measurement of the degree of on-going activities after a living wage campaign. On-going activities after a living wage campaign can be categorized into goal modification, change in strategies or tactics, change in staff, leadership, or organizational arrangements (Fine 1990: 347; Cohen, Vega & Watson 2001: 28), improving resource mobilization,
broadening and deepening alliances (Shultz 2002: 126), improving media portrayal (Fine 1990: 347), and strengthening links to elected officials and representatives (Rose 2000: 118-119). No previous research was available concerning relationships among the strength of coalitions before campaigns, the strength of oppositions before campaigns, and the degrees of on-going activities after campaigns. Measuring the dimensions of on-going activities after the campaign described above and incorporating the results into the model should be considered as an urgent task for social movement researchers. The second recommendation is to conduct statistical analysis based on empirical indicators of key components of living wage campaigns in the United States.

References


