

THE DETERMINANTS OF UNION ATTITUDES AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSORS

GREGORY T. GOLDEY

ERIC SWANK

CONSTANCE HARDESTY

Morehead State University, Kentucky

RANDALL SWAIN

Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond

ABSTRACT

As the growth of faculty unions peaked in the mid and late 1970s, so did the number of studies on professorial union attitudes. With only a handful of studies of faculty union attitudes in the last 20 years, this topic has been seriously overlooked. To counter this problem, this article explores the union attitudes of professors in Kentucky's community college system. After addressing some of the current trends in academic work conditions, this article applies four theoretical models to a sample of 329 community college professors. In using the assertions of C. Wright Mills [1] and more recent studies as a theoretical framework, this work tests the effects of four explanatory models (social demographics, union contacts, political orientations, and perceptions of campus conditions) on union attitudes. After running several multivariate regressions, this work concludes that issues of social backgrounds, everyday teaching complaints, or matters of faculty pay do not govern union sentiments. Instead, pro-union sentiments are influenced by the way administrators share power, belong to union-friendly social networks, perceive union efficacy, and maintain a liberal or progressive social identity.

Although professors receive many perks and privileges, they do not work in an idyllic place that is free from labor problems. Professors often experience prolonged apprenticeships in graduate school before working long hours as adjunct faculty or assistant professors. Moreover, the attainment and retention of these jobs often require a relatively high level of competence. While job requirements differ by institutional type, most faculty members are expected to excel in the competing tasks of publishing books or articles, teaching a wide range of classes, offering substantive expertise, garnering high teaching evaluations, being pleasant to tenured professors and deans, enduring tedious meetings, and displaying proper middle-class etiquette in public, etc. Furthermore, in the last several decades the real incomes and benefits for tenure-track faculty have stagnated, and the proportion of abysmally paid part-time professors has swelled dramatically.¹ Thus, the academic terrain, for these and many other reasons, can be littered with a long list of grievances that professors may want to assuage, eliminate, or prevent.

While workers regularly try to resolve their grievances through individualistic techniques, unions have been a source of empowerment for workers in the United States and worldwide. Due to the voluntary nature of these organizations, unions can survive only when they develop a large base of union sympathizers who are ready to work for the organization (be it paying dues, going to meetings, recruiting new members or helping with contract negotiations, etc.). This recruitment process, however, is far from easy. Potential activists may view unions in a negative manner, and even strong union advocates encounter obstacles to participation. It is within this context that the present study analyzes the union sentiments of Kentucky's community college professors.

Recent studies on attitudes toward faculty unions are rare [2-4] since most research occurred in the late 1970s and 1980s [5-7]. The majority of this older research focuses on professors at large research centers or regional four-year colleges, and the few studies on union attitudes among community college professors have analyzed few predictor variables [8-11].

In addressing these shortcomings, this study contributes to the empirical literature in three ways. First, this study offers updated information on the labor sentiments of faculty in the 1990s. This is necessary since aspects of the

¹ The increased reliance on contingency faculty means the proportion of part-time to full-time faculty rose 22% in the early 1970s to 42% in 1999, according to Toutkoushian and Bellas [37] and Jacobs [38]. The fiscal consequences of these trends are immense for the professoriate. A national study of faculty found that full-time faculty earned an average salary of \$48,000 a year in 1992 while part-time instructors at the same time averaged slightly more than \$10,000 a year [26]. The figures are even starker for community colleges. For example, the average part-time salary in New Jersey's four-year state colleges is \$28,232, while part-timers in community colleges receive \$5,550 annually, according to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, 2002 [34].

socio-political and institutional contexts have changed dramatically since the 1970s. (The nation experienced a wave of anti-union legislation and the decline of industrial unions while professors faced increasing work expectations and shrinking higher education budget.) Second, this study surveys the understudied population of community college professors. This is important since the faculty in two-year colleges may face unique conditions. Lastly, this article has the advantage of an interdisciplinary approach. In synthesizing insights from the sociological, psychological, economic, and political science traditions, this study tests the effects of four types of independent variables (social demographics, union contacts, political orientations, and perceptions of campus conditions). We anticipate that this eclecticism can partially guard against the presence of confounding and extraneous variables.

THEORETICAL BASIS AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

In focusing on the role of political socialization, our theoretical model assumes that professors acquire their perceptions of unions through their interactions with family members, co-workers, employers, media outlets, and other socializing agents. It is our goal to ascertain which of these factors play major and minor roles in fostering a professor's impression of faculty unions.

Class Location, Social Networks, and Union Affinities

In *White Collar*, C. Wright Mills [1] identified three key factors behind white-collar employees' acceptance or rejection of unions. First, Mills argues that white-collar employees reject unions because unions have been associated with less prestigious manual labor. With such an orientation, many professionals distance themselves from unions because they tend to identify with management and the belief that social mobility is based on abilities and merit. Similarly, union tactics are often seen as being too rude or disruptive to fit under proper middle-class ways of solving problems.

While Mills' claims have rarely been applied to samples of professors, some studies confirm that professors who believe that unions are inconsistent with genteel "middle-class values" are generally against union representation for faculty [7, 12-14]. Likewise, other quantitative works contend that professors from upper- and middle-class backgrounds were more likely to consider union membership as a break from proper professorial conduct [2] or that academics with professional fathers were less supportive of unions [5].

As Mills [1] argued that most middle-class suburbanites are taught to reject unionism, he also identified some possible countervailing forces. Mills states that regular contact and interaction with union members can mitigate the general

anti-union inclinations among white-collar workers. In studies of professors, this assertion has mostly been substantiated. For example, college instructors seem more receptive to unions and less likely to cross a picket line when they imagined that most of the professors at their college back unions [4, 7, 12, 15]. In contrast, the role of union contacts in familial networks is not as clear. Klaas and McClendon [4] found that having a union parent or sibling lead to greater union sympathies; another study, however, did not get the same results [3]. Thus, it seems that the union sentiments of academic peers may have a greater bearing than those of family members.

Political Orientations and Union Attitudes

As Mills [1] prioritized the role of union contacts, he also argued that professors who embrace liberal or leftist orientations are more inclined than their right-leaning colleagues to notice workplace inequalities and support progressive social movements. Subsequently, empirical studies agree that professors who prefer liberal or left labels are twice as likely as conservatives to hold pro-union stances [2, 15] or to join the American Federation of Teachers [9].

Economic Concerns and Union Sympathies

Much of this literature centers on the link between union attitudes and workplace problems. Although researchers generally agree that the allure of faculty unions is tied to issues of overall job satisfaction [11, 12, 16, 17], few of these works agree as to what type of university grievances matter the most. (Professors may be bothered by numerous university sub-systems.)

Many empirical works see union impressions in essentially economic terms. When using “objective” measures of actual salaries, some studies insist that the lowest paid professors gravitate earlier to unions [2, 5, 8, 14, 18]. Similarly, professors were less inclined to want a union when they deemed their salaries fair and reasonable [2, 3, 17, 19]; on the other hand, being upset with one’s salary had the opposite effect [7, 12, 13, 17, 20]. Likewise, collective bargaining seems sensible when professors feel their pay raises are inequitable [21] or when their salaries are less than those of professors at equivalent colleges [22].

While most studies connect union support to issues of faculty salaries, some studies prioritize other economic concerns. Mills minimizes the importance of salary disputes as he argues that middle-class workers care more about issues of promotions, upward mobility, and career advancement. In fact, he argues the relative economic security of professionals means that “the feeling that as an individual cannot get ahead in his [or her] work—is the job factor that predisposes the white-collar employee to go pro-union” [1, p. 307]. Moreover, some works confirm that worries of promotion are especially important in academic circles. That is, some studies have concluded that with academic livelihoods being so

closely connected to matters of tenure, worries over biased or misguided tenure decisions are a primary motive behind seeking faculty unions [2, 8, 23].

Though most studies concur that perceptions of economic fairness play a crucial role in the formation of union attitudes, some works have found no connection between economic concerns and union impressions [17, 23]. For example, a study of Ohioan community college professors [10] and another of professors from 200 colleges found no correlation between income and union membership [9]. Thus, there still is some debate as to whether perceptions of unfair salaries inevitably lead to pro-union stances.

Administrative Practices and Union Approval

White-collar grievances often stretch beyond matters of money and financial returns. In expecting higher degrees of respect and deference to their professional judgments, white-collar employers may focus on issues of worker autonomy, democratic processes, and power sharing in the college. Moreover, these concerns may be especially pertinent to academicians. Due to the way professorial roles are constructed, instructors often grow accustomed to the notion that people take their opinions seriously (as compared to people in other jobs that see their judgments regularly disregarded). Furthermore, universities are publicly portrayed as institutions that epitomize the ideals of free speech, rational dialogues, respect for diversity, and the joys of intellectual growth, etc. Hence, when faculty think that campus administrators abandon or show indifference to these lofty principles, unions might become an attractive counterforce to arbitrary, biased, or boorish provosts [2].

In empirical works, many studies suggest that professors often see no need for union representations when they believe their campus presidents and deans were open to input [7, 14], treated faculty with respect [4], and made fair decisions [2, 17]. Conversely, those professors who experience rigid and unreasonable administrators are more likely to want a campus union [5, 22] or vote for a strike [24].

While universal impressions of administrative legitimacy seem tied to union attitudes, issues of shared governance seem to hold even more weight. Some studies suggest that professors who thought university supervisors were autocratic or capricious were decidedly more pro-union [5, 13, 23] as were professors who experienced stunted or feeble faculty senates [7, 8, 12, 16, 25]. Likewise, some studies suggest that the desire for increased participation in governance was the primary motivation for unionization [8, 10, 13, 14, 25].

The absence of inclusive decision-making processes seem especially salient to community college professors. A study of Midwestern community college professors found that complaints over a lack of involvement in policy deliberations were the primary basis for seeking unions [10], moreover, national studies conclude that

community colleges with the weakest governance processes were the most prone to form unions.

While facing undemocratic hierarchies seems crucial to union leanings, other educational impediments might be vital as well. Some studies suggest that unions seem necessary when professors believe that administrations set unrealistic demands on research, teaching, and service productivity [2] or that the university fails to provide adequate facilities and services [14, 20]. Similarly, perceptions of overly burdensome teaching loads [8, 23, 24], excessive class sizes [2, 8, 24], and overly regulated curriculums can foster greater union attachments [16, 17].

Although the aforementioned studies suggest that union sentiments are attached to the routine and daily aspects of teaching, another set of studies cast doubt on these claims. In doing this, other works posit that complaints over daily teaching tasks are not antecedents to union support among academicians [4, 13]. In Canada, objections of overly burdensome teaching loads were not associated with union evaluations [19] while similar U.S. studies concede that union sentiments did not spring from a lack of fulfillment in teaching, perceptions of heavy teaching loads, or limited classroom resources [10, 13].

Union Efficacy

Professors may express a long list of campus complaints and still reject or dismiss the benefits of faculty unions. (Professors may become resigned to colleges inequalities, leave the profession, or try to solve the problem through individual initiatives.) In addressing this scenario, the “sense of efficacy” argument asserts that dominated peoples will not contribute to social movement organizations until they believe that the challengers have a good chance of forcing concessions from their targets.

While unions try to improve workplace conditions, it is never certain as to whether union efforts will improve work conditions. Accordingly, pro-union outlooks arise from the combination of high campus grievances, a fear that conventional power structures will not solve the problem, and that unions are seen as a potent vehicle that offers professors greater leverage vis-à-vis the administration [2].

Many studies concur that professors back union initiatives when they believe that unions could alter campus policies [7, 14] or improve work conditions [2, 3, 19]. Hence, works by Bornheimer [12] and Karim and Rassuli [13] conclude that professors are more likely to vote for a union when they think unions offer greater faculty power, decreased favoritism in promotions, and make salaries more equitable. Conversely, some studies suggest that union inclinations and deliberations on efficacy are unrelated [8]. For instance, crossing a strikers’ picket line at Temple University was not governed by considerations of union strength [4], nor was a vote to strike at a Saskatchewan university [24].

Social Demographics and Unions

One postulate is that sympathizers are most common among the professors with the least job security. In support of this assertion, some have found dramatic rifts between junior and senior faculty on union matters [27, 28]. Other works, however, suggest that untenured faculty are only slightly more approving of union organizing at their campus [2, 5, 8, 9, 14, 19, 23]. Likewise, other works find no statistical connection between rank and opinions of unions [3, 4, 12, 17].

Since a professor's age and faculty rank are often correlated, some works suggest that younger professors are more pro union [2, 5, 20, 23]. Conversely an equal amount of studies suggest that age was not associated with a desire to have collective bargaining [3, 12], vote for campus unions [17, 19], or engage in strike behaviors [24].

In equally conflicted findings, some studies found that professors without doctorates see more advantages in collective bargaining than their colleagues who possess a Ph.D. [8, 9, 12]. However, other works conclude that educational attainment has no bearing on judgments of unions [2, 24].

Similarly, while most studies suggest that there is no "gender gap" in the acceptance or perceived importance of unions [2, 9, 12, 17, 19, 24], a few works conclude that female professors are more likely to prefer unions than their male counterparts [23].

The role of marital status is equally unclear. Some works suggest that married professors are slightly more likely to join a campus union [23], however, other works suggest that unmarried professors are more likely to vote for a strike [24]. Similarly, other works declare that marital status has no bearing on union perceptions [8].

It is clear that this line of inquiry offers a long list of possible predictor factors. In synthesizing these findings into a whole, the ensuing regressions ascertain the links between pro-union sentiments and 14 antecedents. The demographic precursors address a respondent's gender, academic rank, education, age, marital status, and familial social class. Contextual variables focus on the number of union members in one's social networks and how close referents view unions. Ideological aspects cover the topics of political identities and perceptions of union efficacy while interpretations of the workplace highlight job satisfaction, career contentment, perceptions of administration, and sense of power among faculty.

DATA AND METHODS

Sampling Unit

This research explores the perceptions of Kentucky's community college instructors. All of the respondents belong to a statewide community college system that was restructured in the 1990s. At the beginning of that decade, all

public community colleges were under the auspices of the University of Kentucky. By 1998, the year this data was gathered, 13 of Kentucky's of 14 community college districts were placed under the control of an independent statewide system [28].

When our survey was distributed, KCTCS² served 45,000 students and had 937 full-time and 1,039 adjunct professors in 1998. The teaching load for the typical full-time professor was 15 credit hours per semester, and the average 1998 full-time professor salary was \$36,709 a year.³ While the teaching load and proportion of contingent faculty corresponds to trends for community colleges in other states, these average salaries were roughly \$6,000 below the national mean for full-time professors in two-year institutions with academic ranks [29-31].

The arrival of unions to Kentucky's community colleges also came in the 1990s. In March of 1994 several Jefferson Community College professors informally began unionizing activities on their Louisville campus. After embracing the goal of union formation, this cadre began a membership drive. During the next several months their steering committee made several crucial decisions:

1. the professors aligned themselves with the American Federation of Teachers;
2. they decided to organize the entire KCTCS system in order to be legally recognized; and
3. they decided to restrict union membership to only full-time faculty members.

After several months of recruiting, nearly 500 professors signed union pledge cards. By early 1996, a union vote was conducted and KCCFA was ratified and chartered as AFT local 6010.

Sampling Procedures

During the fall semester of 1998, this research team visited every campus in the KCTCS system (13 locations in total). In mirroring the eligibility stipulations of this union, this study limited its population to full-time professors. (Adjuncts were not included in the sample.) While at each site, a survey was placed in the departmental mailbox of every full-time professor at that college ($N = 937$). Attached to the five-page instrument was a cover letter explaining the purpose of this study and a pre-stamped return envelope. In the end, 329 professors returned completed questionnaires (a response rate of 35%).

The sample contains a majority of females (61.5%) with most respondents (52.4%) falling within the 35-to-49 age range (38.7% were 50 or older, while only

² Source: Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Annual Report, 1999

³ Source: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2004.

8.8% were between 20 and 34 years old). Seventy-five percent of the respondents had bachelors or masters degrees, while 4% are A.B.D. and 21% had Ph.D. Along academic ranks, 24% were full professors; 48% associate professors, 22% assistant professors, and 6% instructors.

Measures

In developing a 20-item scale on *pro-union attitudes*, we drew heavily from the work of Rodriguez and Rearden [32]. In responding to a 5-point scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” we asked professors about the need for faculty unions: “Unions are necessary to protect the academic freedom of teachers” or “Public employees should have the same right to bargaining that private sector workers have.” Professors also were asked about their personal reactions to the merits of unions: “Unionization discourages initiative and/or striving for excellence” and “It is unprofessional to join a union” (Cronbach alpha at .949). In summing their answers, all of the respondents scored between a low of 23 to a high of 95 (high scores represent pro-union inclinations).

The demographic variables include gender, age, marital status, highest degree earned, academic rank, and parents' SES (socioeconomic status). *Gender* and *marital status* are a set of a dummy codes (females = 1, males = 0; marriage or marriage-like relationships = 1, others = 0). *Age* consists of a three category variable (people under 35 = 1, 35 to 49 years old = 2, 50 plus = 3). *Highest degree earned* was coded in lowest to highest values (BA or MA = 1, A.B.D. = 2, Ph.D. = 3) as was *Academic rank* (instructor = 1 to full professor = 4). *Parental SES (socio-economic status)* was detected through the Hollingshead Two-Factor SES scale [35] which combines their parent's occupational prestige and education levels into a single composite score (the possible range of values for the SES scale is 11 to 77, while the actual range was 11 to 70).

The variable *Pro-union Networks* came from Deshpande scale [15]. In making a composite score with three prompts, respondents were asked whether their colleagues, relatives, and friends are fond of unions and encourage involvement in such groups. When using a 7-point scale, the high approval netted a 7, while the low approval received a 1 (Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .792).

To address the extent of *union contacts*, respondents were asked three questions. The multi-item scale asked whether spouse, parents, other family members, or close friends were current or former members of a union. Respondents were given a code of 1 for union contact if they knew a union member for any of the relationship types (3 equals most contacts, while 0 suggests none).

Union efficacy consists of a modified version of Deshpande's scale [15]. The accumulative scale asked respondents to appraise the effects of the KCCFA/AFT's efforts regarding 12 job-related items (such as improving job security, salaries, treatment by supervisors, protecting pension funds, voice

with policy makers, tenure decisions, and educational benefits). The possible responses were limited to “improved, no change, gotten worse, and not applicable” (3 = improved, 2 = no change, 1 = gotten worse or not applicable). The Cronbach’s alpha for the *union efficacy scale* was .877.

Political Liberalism was identified through explicit self-characterizations [36]. In reflecting upon political matters, people were asked to rate themselves on a 7-point continuum of extremely liberal to extremely conservative. *Political activity* was traced through an eight-item additive scale on the different dimensions of political participation [33]. Respondents were asked to answer “yes” (1) or “no” (0) to a series of questions related to their political involvement including voting, volunteering for political candidates, donating money to political campaigns, contacting elected officials, and participating in political protests or demonstrations.

Impressions of work conditions came through a mixture of variables. One variable dealt with universal regrets over occupational choice. *Career discontentment* was handled through the single item: “If you were to begin your career again, would you still want to be a college professor?” The next variable dealt with perceptions of campus governance and campus power imbalances. *Low faculty efficacy* was developed from responses to the statement: “Faculty members have too little say in the running of my institution” (strongly agree = 5, strongly disagree = 1). Another variable evaluated the amount of faith in administrative officials. The variable *administrative trust* was an additive scale that asked for impressions system-wide and local campus presidents and provosts (Cronbach’s alpha = .687). One question read: “To what extent do you trust your college administration to promote the interests of faculty?”

The composite *job dissatisfaction scale* dealt with possible grievances of the most immediate kind. On a 4-point Likert scale, respondents were asked if they felt content with: 1) salaries and fringe benefits, 2) opportunities for scholarly pursuits, 3) teaching loads, 4) working conditions, 5) autonomy and independence, 6) professional and cordial relationship with faculty, 7) job security, 8) personal conversations with administrators, and 9) overall job satisfaction (Cronbach’s alpha = .841).

RESULTS

To address our research questions, a series of four stepwise regression models were computed. Sets of similar variables were entered as blocks of variables into the OLS equation (i.e., model 1 contains the demographic variables, model 2 includes demographics + union issues). The stepwise sequential approach is beneficial because it detects the influence of variable groupings as it also controls for the effects of other variable types. Finally, every variable is placed in a last OLS regression that deals with issues of direct associations and spuriousness.

Table 1. Regression of Demographic, Union, Political, and Workplace Variables on Pro-Union Attitudes

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Demographics				
Gender (Female = 1)	-.064	.024	.019	.012
Academic rank	.017	-.039	-.026	-.014
Education	.077	.065	.059	.011
Age	.039	.014	.021	.021
Married	-.203**	-.096*	-.098*	-.095*
Parent's SES	-.016	-.060	-.021	-.021
Union issues				
Union contracts		.107*	.098*	.076
Pro-union network		.425**	.391**	.312**
High union efficacy		.392**	.393**	.361**
Political variables				
Liberal identity			.126**	.128*
Political activity			-.028	-.036
Workplace conditions				
High faculty efficacy				-.161**
Career discontentment				.007
Job satisfaction				.016
Trust in administration				-.145**
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	.036	.056	.580	.635
<i>F</i> -score	2.92**	42.41***	36.29***	33.25
<i>N</i>	315	292	283	279

Note: Coefficients reported are standardized Betas.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 1 displays the outcomes of the stepwise regressions. For model 1 in the second column, the demographic variables alone are entered into formula (the rows are reserved for the variable while the top score in each cell tests for statistical significance and the lower score communicates the beta coefficient). Among the combination of demographics alone, the variable marital status is the sole factor to meet statistical significance. With a negative slope, it seems that married or partnered faculty are less likely to expound pro-union attitudes. With the class factors failing to reach statistical significance, the results challenge the claim that middle-class peoples are more reticent about unions

(at least class as measured by personal education levels and parental SES). Likewise one fails to see schisms of union support between the different genders, academic ranks, and age cohorts. With an absence of many potent variables, the total model has a relatively small R^2 of .036. However, marital status is strong enough to make the entire mix of demographic variables statistically significant ($F = 2.92^{**}$).

In model 2, the union themes are added to the demographic variables. In this second model, marital status remains significant, though its predictive value declines (beta fell from .203 to .096). Conversely, every union contact/efficacy variable presents robust coefficients. As hypothesized, faculty who report having parents, siblings, or friends in unions were more likely to defend unionization. Moreover, the last two variables that gauged union impressions had even stronger associations (betas approximating .40). In effect, professors with pro-union referents were more likely to sanction the presence of faculty unions. Likewise, those who gave their local union credit for instigating meaningful changes were more likely to have upbeat union postures. Subsequently, with union-specific issues such strong associations, the adjusted R^2 jumped from .036 to .561 with an F value of 42.41 ($p < .001$).

In model 3, the overt political variables are combined with the other variables. As expected, self-described liberals are more amenable to faculty unions. However, with a noticeably smaller coefficient than union contacts and pro-union networks, this variable does not appear to have as strong a predictive value as these other factors. On the other hand, political activity does not even reach statistical significance, so the simple act of engaging in politics seems unrelated to union judgments (conservative activists may be the biggest union detractors on campus). Finally, these political variables did not alter the overall effects of the other variables. The demographic and union theme variables including marital status, knowing union members, and pro-union networks experienced only slight changes in their beta weights and there was only a modest improvement in the overall adjusted R^2 (from .561 to .580).

In model 4, the addition of job satisfaction variables allowed for the analysis of the full model. Two of the new workplace variables reached statistical significance. With faculty efficacy achieving significance, it is clear that union supporters were disenchanted with the standard avenues of faculty input. Similarly, faculty who distrusted college and system-wide administrators were more apt to report favorable union attitudes. While conflictual relationships with administrators encouraged unionism, the overall job satisfaction scale and career disappointments were not decisive. In lacking statistical significance it seems that the appreciation of unions is not connected to troubles over salaries, teaching loads, research opportunities, or job security.

In the final analysis, the entire model generated six significant variables. With the highest beta weights, both union efficacy and pro-union networks contributed the greatest effects on union perceptions. In displaying smaller coefficients,

general political liberalism, trust in administrators and a low sense of faculty clout were crucial but slightly less influential factors. In presenting the weakest impact, marital status barely achieved significance. Surprisingly, issues of class background, salary inequalities and daily work constraints failed to reach the significance level. This suggests “bread and butter” financial concerns may be less pivotal to union sentiments among full-time community college professors. Instead, matters of union support seems contingent upon perceptions of undemocratic and recalcitrant hierarchies, the ascribing of positive images to unions, the residing in liberal social circles and maintaining a progressive bent toward politics. Finally, the entire model resulted in an adjusted R^2 of .635. Thus, over 63% of the variance in pro-union attitudes was explained by the combination of demographic, union contact/efficacy, political ideology/activity, and job satisfaction variables.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Before concluding this article, we want to warn about some possible methodological shortcomings. Since this analysis is confined to professors who worked in a unionized campus, it is possible that some of our results may be inapplicable to colleges that are not unionized. For example, the establishment of campus unions probably alters a professor’s access to union networks, opinions of union efficacy, and perceptions of workplace conditions. Moreover, with state laws differing on the rights of professors to unionize or not, some of these results may not reflect the dynamics of community colleges outside of Kentucky (be them public or private). Additionally, the lower salaries, statewide governing structures, and political history of KCTCS may limit the generalizability of our findings. As for measurement errors, every survey has potential problems of item wording, social desirability, and over-demanding recall. For example, respondents may not recognize or remember if their friends or family member belong to unions, we may have ignored some crucial elements of career disenchantment, and distinguishing a person’s social-class is always tricky.

Even with these limitations, this study offers some important insights. Our total model explained almost two-thirds of the variance in union outlooks indicating that our theoretical conceptualizations are useful in analyzing faculty attitudes toward unions. However, there were some surprising and noteworthy conclusions on how specific variables operated. When addressing community college professors in Kentucky, this study shows the futility of linking union perceptions to specific social statuses. Neither men nor women were more sympathetic to unions, and union advocacy was not confined to the strata of younger junior faculty. Likewise, being raised in working-class families did not automatically lead to greater union support, nor were professors from affluent upbringings quicker to chide unionism. Thus, the simple argument of class interests guiding

union sympathies went unsubstantiated. However, it may be foolish to omit this variable from future analysis of faculty unions. On one hand, other class-location measures might generate larger results, while on the other hand, class biases have probably infringed during the earlier stages of academic life. It is likely that class-conscious working-class children have already been directed away from higher education by an insidious mix of hidden curriculums, financial constraints, greater work responsibilities, teacher prejudices, peer snobbery, and a lack of mentors, etc.

With demographics producing such a small impact, the results also underscore the importance of political messages and framing practices. Matters of political identities seem relevant since a comfort with liberal and left perspectives encouraged union admiration. Likewise, a vision of ample union clout and being surrounded by union supporters also augmented union appraisals. Thus, union approval may partially arise from the fusion of a general progressive orientation with the belief that unions evoke change and that one's peers are equally pro-union.

In regard to the issues of job satisfaction and tangible financial rewards, the results are mixed. It appears that an overall frustration with the daily working conditions of teaching does not necessarily translate into pro-union beliefs. This means that distress over salaries, research opportunities, and teaching loads were not the key factors behind pro-union stances of our sample of full-time faculty. However, our sampling technique might underestimate the effects of salary and benefits for all community college professors since these concerns might be more pressing for part-time and adjunct faculty who were excluded from the union.

However, other aspects of the university climate did net significant results. The general distrust of university management stimulated much of the union's appeal. Similarly, perceptions of an oligarchic power structure turned many of the faculty toward union solutions. Hence, questions of democratic university process were paramount to the development of union preferences.

In the end, some of these findings may be applicable to researchers and union organizers. First, few respondents were entrenched union opponents since most professors were at least mildly receptive to faculty unions. Second, union attitudes are somewhat malleable and open for modifications. Potential union recruits can be won when they reside in union friendly milieus, envision union accomplishments, and desire greater voice in shaping campus policies. Thus, recruitment strategies for union activism might want to prioritize issues of improving faculty governance and not focus on issues of salaries or everyday teaching conditions (at least among full-time professors).

The data also alludes to a cruel irony in that some of the reasons for unionization are also some of its greatest obstacles. For example, the campus administrations that deserve the least amount of trust are probably the same ones who would resort to vindictive and unscrupulous union-breaking techniques. Likewise, it is

difficult for skeptics to reconcile the belief that unions are powerful with the recognition that the academic capitalism is encroaching on more campuses (thus the issue of hope in union efficacy may be more crucial than confidence in union efficacy). Finally, numerous professors may be situated in departments that are not conducive to union organizing (i.e., extremely individualistic, competitive, or conservative senior faculty).

REFERENCES

1. C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American middle classes*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.
2. Masoud Hemmasi and Lee Graf, Determinants of faculty voting behavior in representation elections, *Journal of Management*, 19:1, pp. 13-32, 1993.
3. Patricia C. Borstorff, David L. Nye, and Hubert S. Feild, Correlates of collective bargaining support in a right to work state: A study of university professors, *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector*, 23, pp. 15-26, 1994.
4. Brian Klaas and John McClendon, Crossing the line: The determinants of picket line crossing during a faculty strike, *Journal of Labor Research*, 16:3, pp. 331-346, 1995.
5. Carl Everett Ladd and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Professors, unions and higher education*, New York: Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973.
6. A. Ponak, M. Thompson, and W. Zerbe, Collective bargaining goals of university faculty, *Research in Higher Education*, 33:4, pp. 415-431, 1992.
7. Mary Zalesny, Comparison of economic and non-economic factors in predicting faculty vote preferences in a union representative election, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 70:2, pp. 243-256, 1985.
8. James Gress, Predicting faculty attitude toward collective bargaining, *Research in Higher Education*, 4:2, pp. 247-256, 1976.
9. A. Lewis Rhodes, Some characteristics of faculty union membership, *Social Problems*, 24, pp. 463-468, 1977.
10. Charles Finley, The relationship between unionization and job satisfaction among two-year college faculty, *Community College Review*, 2, pp. 53-61, 1991.
11. Consuelo Rey Castro, Community college faculty satisfaction and the faculty union, *New Directions in Institutional Research*, 105, pp. 45-55, 2000.
12. Deane, Bornheimer, Conditions influencing faculty voting in collective bargaining elections, *Research in Higher Education*, 22:3, pp. 291-305, 1985.
13. Ahmad Karim and Ali Rassuli, Attitude of faculty toward unionization, *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector*, 1996.
14. John Magney, Faculty union organizing on the research campus, *Action and Thought*, 15:1, pp. 111-126, 1999.
15. Satish P. Deshpande, Factors influencing employee association members' vote for unionization, *The Journal of Psychology*, 129, pp. 621-628, 1995.
16. Robert E. Allen and Timothy J. Keavney, Correlates of university faculty interest in unionization, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 66, pp. 582-588, 1981.

17. Tove Helland Hammer and Michael Berman, The role of noneconomic factors in faculty union voting, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 66, pp. 415-421, 1981.
18. Ahmad R. Karim and Syed M. Ali, Demographic differences and faculty attitude toward collective bargaining, *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector*, 22, pp. 87-97, 1993.
19. Terry Wagar and Marie Chisholm, Faculty attitudes toward union membership and strike action, *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector*, 24, pp. 325-336, 1995.
20. P. Feuille and J. Blandin, Faculty job satisfaction and bargaining sentiments, *Academy of Management Journal*, 17, pp. 678-692, 1974.
21. Syed M. Ali and Ahmad R. Karim, An empirical examination of determinants of faculty attitude toward collective bargaining, *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector*, 21, pp. 79-91, 1992.
22. Yoram Neumann, Organizational climate and faculty attitudes toward collective bargaining, *Research in Higher Education*, 13:4, pp. 353-369, 1980.
23. Dean Elmuti and Yunus Kathawala, Full-time faculty members' perceptions of unionization impact on overall compensation dimensions, *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 24:2, pp. 9-15, 1991.
24. Ignace Ng, Predictors of strike voting behaviors: The case of university faculty, *Journal of Labor Research*, 12:2, pp. 123-133, 1991.
25. B. Lee, Governance at unionized four-year colleges, *Journal of Higher Education*, 50:5, pp. 565-585, 1979.
26. R. Kirtshstein, N. Matheson, Z. Jing, and L. Zimble, *Instructional faculty and staff in higher education institutions*, Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997.
27. Howard Nixon, Faculty support of traditional labor tactics on campus, *Sociology of Education*, 48:2, pp. 276-286, 1975.
28. A. Ponak and M. Thompson, Faculty attitudes and the scope of bargaining, *Industrial Relations*, 18:1, pp. 97-102, 1979.
29. Larry Mayes, Assessing faculty workload: A review of the University of Kentucky community college system and process and outcomes, *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 22:1, pp. 145-150, 1998.
30. Denise, Magner, AAUP faculty salary survey, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 23:A16, 1999.
31. John Curtis and Monica Jacobe, *AAUP Contingent faculty index*, Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Professors, 2006.
32. Carol Rodriguez and John Rearden, Attitudes of faculty towards unionization, *Psychological Reports*, 65, pp. 995-1000, 1989.
33. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
34. *Part-time instructional staff survey and analysis*, Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, 2002.
35. A. Hollingshead, *Two factor index of social position*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1958.
36. William J. Jacoby, Ideological identification and issue attitudes, *American Journal of Political Science*, 35, pp. 178-205, 1991.

37. Robert Toutkoushian and Marcia Bellas, The effects of part-time employment and gender on faculty earnings and satisfaction, *Journal of Higher Education*, 74:2, pp. 172-195, 2003.
38. Jerry Jacobs, The faculty time divide, *Sociological Forum*, 19:1, pp. 3-27, 2004.

Direct reprint requests to:

Eric Swank
Dept. of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminology
Morehead State University
322 Rader Hall
Morehead, KY 40351
e-mail: e.swank@morehead-st.edu.