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Why Employees Vote to Ratify Union Contracts:

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Abstract

Union members’ decisions in contract ratification voting may be influenced by several motivational processes. Using data from unionized retail employees, the authors examined five models of predictors of a contract ratification vote, including union members’ exchange relationships with their employer, exchange relationships with their union, a joint employer-union attribution exchange model, economic circumstances as explained by Conservation of Resources theory, and union militancy. These models extend prior literature by providing new theoretical perspectives on contract ratification and by identifying new constructs thought to explain ratification behavior. After controlling for several demographic characteristics, all five models explained variance in the employees’ ratification voting behavior, with the economic model explaining the most total variance and the militancy model explaining the most unique variance. Variables from each model significantly predicted ratification voting. Significant antecedents included: company commitment (employer-relations model), union loyalty (union-relations), union-management relations and contract procedural fairness (joint attribution model), pay equity and perceived employment mobility (economic model), and strike instrumentality and strike propensity (militancy model). Implications for bargaining research, theoretical development of social exchange theory, the behavior of the parties during bargaining, and both employee-employer relations and union member-union relations are discussed.

Keywords: Ratification, Strikes, Social Exchange, Unions, Retail Industry
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

Why employees support union contracts:

Motivational antecedents of ratification votes

When unions complete bargaining and reach a settlement with an employer, they usually present a proposed agreement to the membership to vote whether or not to accept it, referred to as a ratification vote. When employees vote yes, the contract typically goes into effect. When they vote no, the union may return to negotiations with the employer or a strike may occur (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). Thus contract ratification is a crucial stage near the end of the collective bargaining process. Even if a separate strike vote is required, not ratifying the contract definitely increases the probability of a strike (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988). Monnot, Wagner, and Beehr (2011) concluded that although strike activity has been dropping in recent years, strikes remain an important tool for unions. For example, in the United States in 2011 and 2012, bargaining disputes have lead to several large and widely publicized labor conflicts including the National Football League umpires, the National Basketball Association, Chicago school teachers, Verizon employees, and Hostess Brands employees.

Most ratification research has been done at the organizational unit- or plant-level, with studies linking unit-level economic antecedents to unit-level voting, such as average pay increases by location, area unemployment rate, and average area wages (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Kaufman & Martinez-Vazquez, 1988; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). This research tells how variables such as unemployment and union behavior might shape the vote, but says little about motivational factors that affect individual employee votes. Knowing the factors that predict individual ratification support could help union officials better understand employees and their needs in bargaining. However, few studies have specifically addressed individual-level predictors of union ratification votes. Thus, our central goal is to test several predictions about
how individual-level motivational constructs predict employee ratification votes.

Our research makes several contributions to prior individual-level research in contract ratification (Martin, 2008) and the related area of strikes and strike propensity (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Buttigieg, Deery, & Iverson, 2008; Cloutier, Denis, & Bilodeau, 2012; Cohen, 1992; Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Schutt, 1982). With regard to theory, we apply exchange theory to ratification and offer two new models of motivational antecedents. The first is a joint attribution model, which emphasizes the concept that in unionized settings, many aspects of working conditions may be attributed to both employers and unions. Thus, employees are viewed as having exchanges with a joint union-management entity. The second is a model of employees’ union militancy which reflects the concept that greater militancy leads to less ratification support; a hypothesis that has not been tested in prior ratification research. Further, we develop a new theoretical interpretation of the role of economic variables in bargaining using the lens of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989; 2001) to explain the predicted effects of several economic variables.

We also made methodological improvements over past ratification research. Whereas most ratification research has relied on proxies to assess militancy, we use direct measures of militancy, something that has not been done previously. We also use a prospective design, where the predictors were assessed prior to the actual ratification vote. Compared to the cross-sectional designs that dominate research on union member behavior, this approach permits stronger causal inferences in regard to any observed relationships. Finally, our measure of ratification vote captured the reports of whether individual employees voted to accept, or not accept, the contract. This approach, when linked to and supported by the actual vote tallies, substantially increases the construct validity of the ratification outcome measure.
Motivational Antecedents of Ratification Voting Support

Though almost no studies have focused specifically on individual-level predictors of contract ratification, research has identified a wide array of motivational antecedents of strike-related attitudes and behavior. Since no strike will occur if a contract settlement is ratified, constructs found positively related to strike votes or strike propensity should be negatively related to ratification voting (Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). Further, corroborating the idea that ratification support is the opposite of strike support, strike researchers (Cloutier et al., 2012) have used arguments from the ratification literature to predict opposite effects for strike voting.

Predictors in strike-related research focus on employee perceptions about various aspects of their employment relationship, their union, and their social background (Cloutier et al., 2012; Cohen, 1992; Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Schutt, 1982). However, each study uses different sets of predictors that are often statistically and conceptually related, leading to interpretational problems when comparing results across studies.

A taxonomic structure of predictors of labor relations phenomena would address several concerns in this literature (Martin & Sinclair, 2001). First, many union-related studies use proxies to assess other constructs (Barling, Fullagar, & Kelloway, 1992), which increases the potential for model specification errors and unwarranted conclusions about constructs. Taxonomies reduce the chance of such errors by providing a heuristic method for identifying predictors (i.e., helping uncover missing predictors) and by focusing on the theoretical mechanism for any specific measure. Second, taxonomies facilitate the use of multivariate research that allows researchers to determine which predictors influence ratification support after controlling for measures of related constructs. This approach should help researchers develop more parsimonious models using empirical data to narrow the potential range of important
predictors and to establish a baseline set of predictors for assessing the incremental contribution of new predictors. Third, a taxonomic structure should help identify gaps in current research and theory. In doing so, it should enhance researchers’ ability to integrate findings from studies using different variables but addressing similar motivational processes.

Despite the potential benefits of a taxonomic approach, only one study by Martin (2008) used this approach to specifically study predictors of ratification voting. Martin organized his predictors into three sets of constructs reflecting economic factors, union relations, and employment (employer) relations. We adopt a similar approach as Martin, but extend his research by testing five models, three that reflect employees’ social exchange relationships, with their employer, union, and jointly, an economic model, and a model of employees’ militancy.

**Exchange-based Models**

Blau’s (1964) social exchange theory and the associated norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) portray the psychological relationship between people and organizations as one in which an employee exchanges obligations to a partner (e.g., the employer, union, or supervisor) in return for good treatment by the other (for a recent review, see Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Many studies have used social exchange theory to explain employee behavior (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). Some research shows that social exchange processes shape member relations with their unions; those who feel well treated by their union feel stronger levels of obligation toward it (e.g., Shore, Tetrick, Sinclair, & Newton, 1994; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Tetrick, 1995). Finally, while most applications of social exchange theory assume that work resources, conditions, etc., are attributable to actions of a distinct other entity (e.g., the employer or the union), in unionized settings, some important facets of the work environment are joint products of, and attributable to, both the union and the employer. Thus, we
describe three exchange-based models thought to be relevant influences on ratification voting, an employer-relations model, a union-relations model, and a joint-attribution model.

**Employer-relations model.** Employees typically perceive strikes as contrary to their employer’s interests (Chamberlain & Kuhn, 1986, p. 180-182). Thus, exchange theory implies that those with better quality exchange relationships with the employer should be less willing to support strikes and more likely to vote for ratification. This proposition is supported by several studies indicating that employees who have more positive attitudes toward their employer are less willing to strike and/or more willing to support ratification (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Martin, 2008; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; McClendon & Klaas, 1993; Ng, 1991).

Organizational applications of social exchange theory note that employees form both global perceptions of their organizational relationship and specific exchange perceptions with regard to particular stakeholders such as one’s team, coworkers, or supervisor. The two most commonly studied forms of organizational exchange relationships are one’s relationship with the employing organization and the exchange relationship with one’s supervisor (Cole, Schaninger, & Harris, 2002; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996).

Organizational behavior scholars frequently use measures of affective organizational commitment to capture the general quality of the exchange relationship between an employee and the organization (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007). Employees with strong affective employer commitment have greater desire to remain a member of, emotional attachments to, perceive their values to be congruent with, and are willing to exert effort on behalf of their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Several studies have shown that affective commitment mediates the effects of other global exchange constructs, such as perceived organizational support, on outcomes (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000; Lew, 2009;
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). Other research shows that employees with higher employer commitment are less likely to support strikes (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; McClendon & Klaas, 1993; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Ng, 1991).

Social exchange theory also holds that because supervisors are key organizational exchange agents (Levinson, 1965), employees who receive more support from their supervisors develop a stronger sense of obligation to their employer (Kidd & Smewing, 2001). As a result, with greater supervisor support, employees are less likely to turnover and more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenbergh, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Settoon et al., 1996). Extending this to contract ratification, one way employees may reciprocate favorable treatment from their employer would be to vote for contract ratification (and not support a strike). Therefore, affective commitment and supervisor support should be positively related to ratification voting.

Hypothesis 1: Ratification support is positively related to (H1a) affective company commitment and (H1b) supervisor support.

Union-relations model. The union relations model includes two constructs similar to those used by Martin and Sinclair (2001) in their study of strike propensity. First is union loyalty, which captures member attachment to the union (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, & Spiller, 1980). Although union commitment is multidimensional, much of the empirical research focuses on union loyalty (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Fullagar & Barling, 1989; Gordon et al., 1980; Magenau, Martin, & Peterson, 1988), which closely parallels affective commitment from the organizational commitment literature. Employees with positive exchange relationships with their union develop stronger relational ties to their union, which in turn should foster their felt obligations to their union (Shore et al., 1994; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Tetrick,
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

1995). Stronger attachments should increase employees' sense of duty to their union and should result in their willingness to support the union leaders’ goals when they call for a vote in favor of ratification. Thus, higher union loyalty also leads to greater backing for the union leaders’ stance in contract negotiations (McClendon and Klaas, 1993; Ng, 1991). Indeed, when Shore and Newton (1995) examined various aspects of employee relations with their union, they found that union loyalty was positively related to voting for the union leaders' goals on contract ratification.

Union participation reflects the extent to which employees are behaviorally involved in the union and, not surprisingly, is associated with both greater strike propensity (Barling, Fullagar, & Kelloway, 1992; Martin & Sinclair, 2001) and ratification support (Shore & Newton, 1995). Employees who participate more, are more likely to be active union members and should be more supportive of the union’s goals and objectives. Consistent with exchange theory, these stronger attachments, represented by high levels of both loyalty and participation, should increase employees' sense of duty to their union and result in a greater support for the positions of the union leaders (Barling, Fullagar, & Kelloway, 1992). Thus, our union-relations model contains two constructs, union loyalty and union participation, leading to the following hypothesis where the leadership wants the successfully negotiated contract ratified.

*Hypothesis 2:* Ratification support is positively related to (H2a) union loyalty and (H2b) union participation.

**Joint attribution model.** Our third exchange-based model arises from an extension of social-exchange theory to the joint relationship between the union and employer. In unionized settings, workers tend to view their work situation "as a unit, rather than sharply differentiating the union role from the management role" (Stagner, 1956, p. 406). Magenau et al. (1988) applied this concept to dual commitment, the positive attachment to both the union and employer. They
classified several constructs as reflecting the general union-management relationship rather than being uniquely attributable to either the employer or union. We focus on four of these constructs that have both theoretical and empirical connections to ratification support and that are attributable to both union and employer efforts.

First, we include employee perceptions of union-management relations. Employee views of the quality of union-management relations play an important role in their perceptions of the quality of their treatment by their employer and by their union (Deery, Erwin, & Iverson, 1999; Gordon & Ladd, 1990), but are not uniquely attributable to either party. The ratification literature suggests that when employees perceive positive union-management relations, they are more likely to vote to ratify a contract (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Kaufman & Martinez-Vazquez, 1988). Cappelli and Sterling also argued that bad labor-relations result in protest votes against ratification. Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway (1992) noted that when union-management relations are hostile, unions can obtain their bargaining goals by striking or by threatening to strike. In contrast, when union-management relations are good, employees are less likely to perceive that a strike is necessary. Therefore, we expected employees who perceived better quality union-management relations would report greater ratification support.

Two constructs in this model reflect employee perceptions of the fairness of the union-management contract. The contract expresses the union’s efforts on behalf of its employees and management’s response. Strauss (1991) argued that the detailed contract and grievance procedure protects individual employees against arbitrary actions by either the employer or union. Employees perceive the contract they vote on to ratify or reject as a joint product of the union and employer (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988). In contrast, a strike is the antithesis of a joint product between the two, and actually is divisive between the two parties. Thus, employees’
perceptions of the union-management contract are an important part of their joint social exchange relationship with the union and management. For example, employees who believe the prior contract meets their needs should feel greater obligation to both the union and employer; they should reciprocate with a greater willingness to vote for ratification. In the present study, we add the procedural and distributive justice aspects of the contract.

Several studies have found that organizational justice perceptions influence individually- and organizationally-valued outcomes (Colquit, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001) including several studies of union member attitudes (Alexander, Sinclair, & Tetrick, 1995; Buttigieg et al., 2008; Cloutier et al., 2012; Fryxell & Gordon, 1989). Further, Cloutier et al. (2012) found that perceived justice perceptions about collective bargaining predicted members’ strike votes. However, little research has focused specifically on justice concerns in relation to the contract. Research has shown that fairness issues are related to employee perceptions of their union-management contract (Martin & Berthiaume, 1995) and Alexander et al. (1995) argued that both employers and unions try to influence employees’ perceptions of fairness during the collective bargaining process. Procedural and distributive justice perceptions are among the two most commonly studied forms of justice, both of which have clear conceptual links to union-management contract issues (Cappelli & Sherer, 1990; Farber & Saks, 1980).

Most distributive justice research stems from equity theory (e.g., Adams, 1965). Contract distributive fairness refers to employee perceptions of the equity of the contract terms for allocating outcomes such as wages and benefits, and determining work schedules. In contrast, contract procedural fairness refers to employees’ perceptions of the processes set forth in the contract for handling grievances, determining wage increases and promotional opportunities, etc. Levanthal and colleagues (Levanthal, 1980; Levanthal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980) described several
rules people apply to evaluate the fairness of organizational procedures, such as freedom from bias, consistency of application across people, and opportunities to address flawed decisions. Negotiated contracts can be viewed as formal articulations of many of these rules. Thus, employees who perceive the resource allocations and work-related processes described in the current contract to be fair should be more willing to vote to ratify their next contract.

Buttigieg et al. (2008) examined procedural and distributive justice in a study of factors shaping union member willingness to take industrial action (strike). While not specifically related to the union-management contract, the Buttigieg et al. justice forms related to the perceived fairness of rewards (distributive fairness) and the process used to determine the rewards (procedural fairness), both of which are important aspects of union contracts. They found that perceptions of justice concerning pay and benefits related to employee attitudes concerning industrial actions and thereby likely how they would vote in a ratification election. When procedures appear fair, labor-relations conflict is less likely (Lind & Tyler, 1988). If procedures are perceived as unfair, workers may respond with hostility and undesirable behaviors, such as organizational withdrawal, less effort, and worse performance (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Injustices can also lead to strikes to correct perceived inequities (Cloutier et al., 2012; Hyman, 1989).

Our final construct in the joint model incorporates Martin and Sinclair’s (2001) extension of Walton and McKersie’s (1965) behavioral theory of bargaining to individual employees. That theory views bargaining as either the belief that both sides can gain from the bargaining process (i.e., integrative), or that bargaining is a win-lose process (i.e., distributive). When employees view bargaining integratively, they would believe that the employer, union, and employees would benefit. Therefore, the more integratively employees view bargaining, the less willing
they would be to strike and the more willing to support ratification.

*Hypothesis 3:* Ratification support is positively related to (H3a) positive union-management relations, (H3b) contract procedural fairness, (H3c) contract distributive fairness, and (H3d) integrative views of bargaining.

**Economic model**

Wages and benefits are almost always a subject of bargaining (Holley, Jennings, & Wolters, 2012, p. 292). Conservation of Resources theory (COR, Hobfoll, 1989; 2001) provides a useful explanation for how economic evaluations may motivate behavior. Although COR deals with more than simply financial resources, it is particularly applicable to how workers evaluate the potential consequences of ratifying or not ratifying a negotiated contract. COR suggests that much of peoples’ behavior is driven by their evaluation of current and future resources. Actions that help protect current resources or acquire new resources (e.g., pay increases, better schedules, or improved working conditions) should be motivating; actions that threaten current or future resources should be stressful. One of the contributions of COR is to highlight the importance of differentiating both potential resource gains and losses in relation to employees’ assessments of the risks and rewards of contract ratification. COR suggests that employees balance the prospect of potential resource gains from ratifying a new contract against the potential losses associated with a strike. Employees who perceive that they have relatively more to gain than lose by striking are likely to support strikes (and oppose ratification); those who perceive that they have little to gain from striking or that they have a great deal to lose should be more likely to vote for ratification (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995; Stagner & Rosen, 1965).

To capture these processes, we studied three aspects of employees’ economic conditions that reflect the balance of gains versus losses and should influence their ratification votes: (1)
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

their current level of rewards, (2) the costs of striking, and (3) their alternative sources of resources. Since current financial rewards reflect resources risked by a potential strike, employees with higher pay and/or more favorable pay attitudes should be more likely to support ratification. Several studies have shown that lower pay and/or less favorable pay attitudes are associated with greater strike propensity and thus less ratification support (Cohen, 1992; Martin, 1986; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995; Martin & Sinclair, 2001). This research suggests that employees compare their pay in the proposed settlement to the pay of others, both internal and external to the organization, when determining how to vote. In relation to the possible costs of striking, past research has shown that workers are less likely to support a strike when they have greater family responsibilities (Ng, 1991) and/or when they expect greater economic hardship from striking (Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001). This literature suggests that employees who earn a greater proportion of their household income from their employer, and thus have more to lose from a strike, should be more likely to support ratification. Finally, COR suggests that workers would evaluate ratification and the opposing risks of a potential strike against the ease of obtaining alternative employment; those who perceive better employment alternatives would be less likely to vote for ratification because they would face fewer resource risks from striking. Several researchers have found that greater perceived employment options or mobility was negatively related to ratification voting (Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Kaufman & Martinez-Vazquez, 1988; Martin, 2008; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). This leads to our next hypothesis.

_Hypothesis 4:_ Ratification support is positively related to greater perceptions of (H4a) pay equity, (H4b) higher earnings, (H4c) greater family employment dependency, and (H4d) lower employment mobility.

_Militancy model_
While militancy models have been used in studies of strike propensity (Martin, 1986; Schutt, 1982), they have not been used in ratification studies. Member militancy is important to union leaders because of the increased bargaining power unions receive when members are willing to strike (Chamberlain & Kuhn, 1986, p. 180; Katz & Kochan, 2000, p. 74). Highly militant employees should be more willing to support the political and bargaining goals of the union leadership (Barling, Fullagar, & Kelloway, 1992). Thus, unions often use strikes, or the threat thereof, as a bargaining strategy. There are, of course, unintended consequences related to high member militancy (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992). A militant membership may be less willing to ratify an acceptable negotiated contact. In any case, this model suggests that the more strongly employees are willing to strike, and the more positively they view strikes, the less likely they will be to vote in favor of ratifying a new contract.

Cohen (1992) described two approaches to the construct of labor militancy. One views it as general attitudes about strike actions (Alutto & Belasco, 1974; Black, 1983), where beliefs about the general value of strikes and strike threats as a bargaining tactic predict worker strike-related beliefs and behavior (Buttigieg et al., 2008; Cohen, 1992; McClendon & Klaas, 1993; Schutt, 1982). The other views it as equal to strike propensity (Martin, 1986; Schutt, 1982). Thus, there are two relevant militancy constructs, strike instrumentality and strike propensity.

McClendon and Klaas (1993) defined strike instrumentality as the extent to which employees believe that a strike would enable them to obtain desired outcomes. They argued that the perceived instrumentality of striking is likely to be an important determinant of strike-related militancy because deciding to engage in militant behavior has a calculative basis. That is, employees are more supportive of striking when they believe a strike would help them obtain desired outcomes. Though research on militancy prior to McClendon and Klaas’s study did not
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

address the impact of perceived strike instrumentality, union instrumentality, or perceived instrumentality of collective bargaining, was found important in both the union organizing (Brett & Hammer, 1982; Fiorito et al. 1986; Heneman & Sandver 1983; O'Reilly, Bloom, & Parlette, 1977; Wheeler & McClendon 1991; Zalesky, 1985) and the union participation literature (Klandermans, 1986; Strauss, 1977). Klandermans concluded that the perception that unions, through militant behavior (e.g., strikes, picketing, or work-to-rule), are instrumental in improving working conditions and can help explain employee voting behavior in organizing elections. In a more recent study, Buttigieg et al. (2008) demonstrated the value of union instrumentality in explaining union employee willingness to participate in industrial actions.

Strike propensity assesses either how long or how willing employees are to strike or participate in a job action (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Buttigieg et al., 2008; Cohen, 1992; Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Schutt, 1982). Buttigieg et al. argued that employee propensity to support strikes or industrial actions is important to the success of a union’s bargaining strategy. A union with strong employee support for collective action will likely have a better chance to achieve its bargaining goals. A strike threat may indeed preclude the need to undertake such industrial action. Several industrial relations scholars argue that such a construct represents a form of individual-level militancy (Chan, Snape, & Redman, 2004; Gallagher & Strauss, 1990; Monnot et al., 2010). This discussion leads to our last hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Ratification support is negatively related to (H5a) strike instrumentality and (H5b) strike propensity.

Method

Setting and Sample

We tested our hypotheses using data from two surveys of union members employed by a
large retailer in a Midwestern American state. In 1998, when the first survey was conducted, there were 60 stores with 29,610 retail members. At the time of the second survey in 2001, there were 71 stores with 36,817 retail members. The first survey was sent to all retail bargaining unit members in September, 1998. In November, 1998, to save money, and because the union was most interested in the views of its more senior members, a reminder survey was sent to those with one year or more of seniority. A total of 7,583 unique surveys were returned, for a response rate of 25.6%. The second survey was mailed in January, 2001 to all retail members in the bargaining unit. A follow-up survey was sent to all members two months later. A total of 6,674 unique surveys were completed; a response rate of 18.1%. These included a measure of how employees voted in the March, 1999 ratification. Over the two times, we had 1,180 surveys with usable data, including the employees who told us how they voted.

Our primary representativeness concern was whether our respondents resembled the cohort of individuals who were union members through the period of interest and who voted in the ratification election. Therefore, we compared our sample to the approximately 13,000 people who were members from September 1998 to January 2001 on five demographic characteristics for which we had data from both the sample and the union records. Gender did not differ between the sample and the population. However, the sample was significantly (all ps < .001) older (43.7 vs. 39.7 years), more senior (11.6 vs. 7.9 years), more highly paid ($9.35/hour vs. $8.29/hour), and included more full-time employees (63% vs. 52%) than the population. Although these were significant, they generally of small magnitude (all eta²s were less than .02), and indicate that participants are not qualitatively different from the population. Longer tenured employees, who are also older and more highly paid, are much more likely to vote in union run elections, such for officers and in ratification (Martin & Berthiaume, 1995; Strauss, 1991, p.
Thus, our sample overrepresented the kinds of employees who actually vote and thus those whom the union officers most wanted to target in the bargaining process.

**Measures**

The predictor variables all came from the 1998 surveys, or for the controls other than education, from union records. All attitude predictors used a 7-point strongly agree/disagree scale unless otherwise noted. For the multi-item predictor variables, the internal consistency reliabilities, all of which were acceptable, are shown along the diagonal of Table 1.

**Employer-relations model.** We assessed the employer-relations model with two measures. The company commitment measure consisted of three items developed by Martin and Peterson (1987) that reflect affective attachments to the employer (e.g., “I am proud to tell others that I am a part of my employer's organization.”). These items closely resemble other affective commitment scales (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), and have been used in other union-related studies (Bemmels, 1995; Martin & Sinclair, 2001). We measured supervisor support with four items adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh’s (1983) supervisor module concerning employees’ perceptions of their relationship with their immediate supervisors (e.g., “My immediate supervisor is always fair with me.”).

**Union-relations model.** We captured union loyalty using a three-item union loyalty scale developed by Martin and Peterson (1987) and used by Bemmels, 1995) and Martin and Sinclair (2001). The items reflect emotional organizational attachment to the union (e.g., “My values and the Union’s values are very similar.”). We also assessed union participation using items developed by and used by others (Gordon et al., 1980; Magenau et al., 1988; Martin & Sinclair, 2001). The items assessed employees’ knowledge of the contract, attendance at union meetings, willingness to file grievances, reading the union newspaper, voting in the last union delegate
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

election, and the number of grievances filed in the prior two years. Because the items used different frequency responses, we standardized them prior to forming the scale.

**Joint attribution model.** This model consisted of four measures. We assessed union-management relations with a four-item scale adapted from Biasatti and Martin (1979). The items concerned employee perceptions of the (1) strength of the union compared to management, and the extent to which employees felt management (2) understood and administered the contract, (3) had a strong, well-organized labor relations program, and (4) recognized common goals with the union. Contract procedural fairness consisted of a six-item scale developed by Sinclair (1995) which assessed how fair the contract procedures were in processing grievances, setting schedules, work assignments, promotions, benefits eligibility, and pay increases. The items used a 5-point scales (1 = *very unfair* and 5 = *very fair*). Contract distributive fairness consisted of three items developed for this study assessing employee views of how equitably the contract provisions treated the workers (1) in the same job class at different stores, (2) between job classes in the same store, and (3) between job classes at different stores. Higher scores reflected greater contract distributive fairness. Finally, we assessed integrative views of bargaining with four of the five items in a scale used by Magenau et al. (1988) assessing both integrative win-win bargaining (e.g., “Collective bargaining can be a problem-solving process for many issues.”) and distributive win-lose bargaining (e.g., “The results of collective bargaining can only benefit one side or the other.”). The items were coded so that higher scores reflected more integrative views.

**Economic model.** This model consisted of four variables. To capture fairness and level of current rewards, we used measures of pay equity and hourly pay rate. For pay equity, we used three items developed by Cammann et al. (1983) (e.g., “My pay is fair compared to the pay of other people doing the same kind of work for other employers.”). Pay rate came from the union
records. We assessed the economic costs of striking, labeled family employment dependency, through self reports of the percent of total family income in the prior year that came from jobs held at the focal employer by the respondent or others in his/her family. Participants selected one of six response options ranging from “less than 10%” to “more than 95%.” Finally, we assessed perceived employment mobility with four items (e.g., "It would be very hard for me to leave this employer, even if I wanted to.”) adapted from Cammann et al. (1983). These items were re-coded so that higher scores reflected better quality employment alternatives and thus, greater employment mobility.

**Militancy model.** The two constructs in this model were union strike instrumentality and strike propensity. Our assessment of strike instrumentality built on the work of McClendon and Klaas (1993), and measured the degree to which employees perceived that strikes are valuable tools for achieving desired outcomes. It consisted of four items about the general value of strikes as a bargaining tactic (e.g., “Striking is an effective way of getting a better contract”).

Strike propensity measures generally take one of two forms; either the number of days respondents are willing to strike (Cohen, 1992; Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001), or reports of how likely they are to strike or participate in a job action (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Buttigieg et al., 2008; Schutt, 1982). We used the first format here, adapting the open ended question Martin (1986) developed in collaboration with a union; “The most days I would be willing to stay out on strike in support of Local XXX’s contract demands is: ______ days.” Since such measures are highly skewed (Martin, 1986), our initial data analysis suggested that the original measure had to be transformed. While the choice of different transformations to deal with the skew (i.e., categories or various log transformations) had little impact on our results, we decided to recode this measure into eight categories. We choose these categories
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

based on natural break points in the frequency distribution of the measure and examinations of how other researchers (Cohen, 1992; Martin & Sinclair, 2001) used such categories from respondents answering how many days they would strike.

Construct validity evidence for the strike propensity measure came from the union tally of the 1999 strike/ratification store-level votes that followed the bargaining which was the focus of the 1998 survey. Its aggregated store-level mean correlated .43 (\( p < .001, n = 59 \)) with the voting odds ratio of the subsequent 1999 actual strike/ratification vote. This ratio is commonly used in predicting voting outcomes in unit-level studies (Kaufman & Martinez-Vazquez, 1988; Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). The test-retest correlation of the 759 members who returned the 1998 surveys from both waves was high (\( r = .82, p < .001 \)), providing evidence for the reliability and stability of the strike propensity measure.

A possible concern with our study is that a single-item measure might not adequately capture the content domain of strike propensity. We investigated this issue with two other data sets based on samples collected at different times from the same employer. One had our single item and two others assessing strike propensity; striking to avoid a 10% wage or benefit cut and striking to achieve a 10% wage increase. With our predictor item, these items represent much of domain of reasons employees strike (Holley et al., 2012, p. 395). Each of these three items used the same response categories as our recoded responses in the current study. Our single-item measure correlated .94 with the three-item strike propensity scale, suggesting that our single item provides similar information as the three-item scale. The other included our item and three others assessing strike propensity; striking to avoid a 10% pay cut; to gain a 10% pay increase; and to gain a 25% pay increase. Our single item measure correlated .86 with the four-item scale. Overall, these correlations lend further support for the validity of our single-item measure.
Control variables. We controlled for four demographic variables identified as important in the union literature: age, education, gender, and full- or part-time status. Education was assessed by asking the highest level of education completed, with five categories, ranging from less than high school to 4 + years of college. These were recoded to the average number of years of education completed in each category. Much literature assumes that demographic variables are proxies for militancy or other constructs (Cohen, 1992; Fox & Wince, 1976; Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Schutt, 1982; Snarr, 1975), but reports mixed results concerning the direction of individual predictors. However, direct measures of militancy and other constructs should be more strongly related to ratification support than demographics. Moreover, if demographic variables predict ratification support when direct measures of motives are included, it suggests the need for alternate theoretical perspectives about their effects.

Ratification voting outcome. The outcome variable consisted of employees’ reports in the 2001 survey of how they voted in the 1999 contract ratification. We only used the two choices, voting in favor or voting against ratification. Employees who reported they did not remember, did not vote, or were not employed there at the time of the vote, were not included in the analyses. Construct validity evidence came from the correlation of the store-level voting odds ratio of the union tally of votes with the proportion of employees who indicated voting in favor of the contract aggregated by store. The correlation was .76 ($p < .01, n = 59$), suggesting that the self-report is a valid measure of their actual ratification vote.

After the 1999 bargaining was completed, the union sent a ballot to each member’s home, with a letter discussing the settlement, how it would benefit the members, and how it met “the three primary goals established by the members and the [union] leadership at the onset of the negotiations;” “wage increases for all members”, “a secure employer-provided pension plan, and
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

the continuation of affordable health care options including a specified employer payment
toward coverage”. Beyond discussing the proposed contract, the letter from the union also stated
“The wording on the enclosed ballot clearly states what we believe to be an essential fact: a ‘yes’
vote approves the proposal [the contract], and a ‘no’ vote authorizes a strike action.” Thus, a ‘no’
vote meant that the union officers could call a strike without a further membership vote and most
members were aware that a ‘no’ vote would greatly increase the probability of a strike, while a
‘yes’ vote meant there would be no chance of a strike.

Results

We conducted three sets of analyses to support our overall approach to prior testing our
hypotheses. First, because many of our scales have not been used together before, we conducted
a factor analysis with maximum likelihood extraction with direct oblimin (correlated) of the 44
separate items in the 11 multi-item scales. The analysis derived 10 factors with initial
eigenvalues above 1. The pattern matrix showed that each of the 38 attitude items loaded highest
on its scale’s factor with the exception of one item. Further, five of the six union participation
behavioral report items loaded highest on union loyalty factor (between -.17 and -.35; while the
union loyalty items loaded between -.61 and -.82), and the remaining one did not load above |.13|
on any factor. These analyses generally support the discriminant validity of our measures.

Second, although the time between the collection of the predictors and the vote is
desirable as reduces the likelihood of some method variance effects, it also raises the possibility
that participants’ standing on the predictors changed over time. To investigate this issue we
correlated measures of the same construct between 1998 and 2001. The constructs that we
measured at both times correlated above .50 (p > .001), except Supervisor support, which
correlated at .43 (p > .001) across both times. These findings show that most of our predictors
were stable over time with the exception of Supervisor support. Perhaps the reason that Supervisor support had a relatively low correlation is because this is most likely to have changed over the intervening period of the study as people change jobs and/or get new supervisors.

Finally, because our participants were nested within in stores, it is possible that store-level clustering of participants would affect our interpretation of the individual-level analyses. To investigate this issue, we calculated the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs(1)) for the independent variables. All of the ICC(1) values were below .10, well below the recommended value of .30 (Bliese, 2000). These findings indicated little evidence of store-level clustering and supported our decision to proceed with individual-level analyses.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, internal reliability estimates, and correlations among the variables. We note initial support for most of our hypotheses at the correlational level, with 11 significant relationships ($p < .05$), all as predicted, including at least one variable from each model. There was little evidence of multicollinearity. Therefore, we proceeded to test our hypotheses by conducting several hierarchical multiple logistic regression analyses. To investigate our proposition that multiple motives account for ratification support, we first, we computed the total variance explained by the variables in each model after entering the control variables. Then, we examined the unique contribution of each model after adjusting for all other predictors and the control variables. The proposition that multiple motives account for ratification support would be supported by evidence that each model accounts for some unique variance. Table 2 shows support for the general proposition that contract ratification votes are influenced by multiple motives. Each model explained at least 10% of the total variance. The unique variance results show that variables from four of the five models, union-relations, the joint model, economic, and militancy models accounted for significant unique variance in
ratification vote. The economic model explained the most unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .047, p < .01$), with the employer-relations model explaining the least.

To test our hypotheses about specific predictors, we ran logistic regression analyses in two steps. In the first step, we entered the controls, which explained only 2.8% ($p < .01$) of the variance; less than any particular model. In step 2, we added the 14 variables from the five models to the logistic regression equation. This enabled us to have a complete test of the variables from each model. Table 3 shows the standardized regression weights derived, with each of the eight significant predictors as hypothesized.

Hypothesis 1 concerned the employer-relations model. Employer commitment (H1a) was a positive predictor of ratification vote ($\beta = .10, p < .05$). Though supervisor support was significantly positively correlated to the ratification vote (Table 1), it was not a significant predictor in the multivariate analysis. Hypothesis 2, concerning the union-relations model, was supported for union loyalty (H2a), a positive predictor of ratification ($\beta = .32, p < .01$).

Hypothesis 3 involved the joint model. Union-management relations (H3a) ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) and contract procedural fairness (H3b) ($\beta = .34, p < .01$) were significant predictors. While contract distributive fairness and integrative bargaining were both significantly correlated to the vote, they were not significant predictors in the logistic regression analysis. Hypothesis 4 concerned the economic model. Following the hypothesis, pay equity (H4a) ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) was a positive predictor and perceived employment mobility (H4d) ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$) a negative predictor of ratification voting. Hypothesis 5 concerned variables from the militancy model. As predicted, both strike instrumentality (H5a) ($\beta = -.15, p < .01$) and strike propensity (H5b) ($\beta = -.25, p < .01$) were negatively related to ratification support.

Discussion
Collective bargaining and the subsequent contract ratification vote represent important events in any union-management relationship. Without ratification, the relationship is not whole, and may be exposed to industrial conflict. Though employees only vote yes or no in ratification, that vote makes public how the employees feel about the agreement and is one of the few times they have to be involved directly in bargaining (Martin & Berthiaume, 1995). Our study suggests that employees’ ratification voting behavior is influenced by several motivational processes acting in concert, including models based on their social exchange relationships with their employer and their union, with exchanges jointly attributed to both parties, economic factors, and by their militancy. Our results further confirm the value of using a comprehensive taxonomy of both models and variables, and our models explained substantially more variance than those of Martin (2008), the only other individual-level study of ratification votes.

Our findings offer both theoretical and methodological contributions to prior research on ratification and strike voting, and on strike propensity. With regard to theory, we argued that Conservation of Resources theory provides a better explanation of how economic factors relate to ratification voting. We also extended social exchange theory by describing the joint union-management relationship as a new target of exchange-related perceptions. Ours is also the first study to our knowledge to examine union militancy in the context of ratification voting. These perspectives offer useful insights into union member behavior, and we encourage their continued and expanded use in the future. Our prospective design also has methodological strengths compared to most past research; increasing our confidence in the causal inferences implied by our findings. Thus, the use of a stronger design and theory, combined with stronger measures, means that our findings both reinforce those in prior literature about some hypothesized antecedents while adding new ones not previously identified, and extending past theorizing about
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

Each model of ratification support explained significant variance in voting behavior, and all but the employer relations model added explained variance after adding the other four models. There were 14 hypothesized predictor relationships. At the correlational level, 11 of these were supported. In the logistic regression, eight variables significantly predicted voting behavior, with at least one from each model. Supervisor support, union participation, distributive fairness, integrative views of bargaining, hourly pay rate, and family employment dependency were not significant predictors. Although these constructs were important in prior literature, our use of a multiple motives approach may have helped isolate constructs that do not significantly contribute once other leading candidates are considered. This pattern of findings highlights the need for researchers in labor relations and organizational psychology to continue to incorporate findings from each others’ research in studies of union member behavior.

In the employer-relations model, company (i.e., organizational) commitment positively predicted ratification voting. Almost every individual-level study of voting in a unionized context, or of strike propensity, has included a measure of employee attitudes toward their employer, although not every study has found company commitment to be a significant predictor of strike propensity (e.g., Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Cohen, 1986; McShane, 1985). We did find support for company commitment, which makes theoretical sense in light of social exchange theory. It is important to note that we used a relatively short measure, perhaps leading us to underestimate its effects. Researchers also could extend this model by investigating other organizational exchange concepts such as perceived organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) or leader-member exchange (Settoon et al., 1996).

In the union-relations model, union loyalty was a significant predictor. Union loyalty and
similar assessments of employees’ attitudes toward their union have been consistently found to be strong predictors of ratification and strike voting, and strike propensity (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992; Cohen, 1986; Martin, 1986; 2008; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; McClendon & Klaas, 1993; Ng, 1991), as well as union officer elections (Martin & Sherman, 2005). Our findings, with a stronger design, replicate and extend prior findings on the role of union loyalty as an important concept for union research (Barling, Fullagar, Kelloway, & McElvie, 1992). Union leaders should focus attention on the antecedents of union loyalty so as to expand political support for the position they want the members to take in relation to the collective bargaining outcomes. Further, research has shown that perceived organizational support generalizes to the union context (e.g., Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Shore et al., 1994), and has established the influence of perceived support from one’s union steward to employees’ union attitudes (Johnson & Johnson, 1992). Therefore, the union-relations model might be enhanced by measures of both perceived union support and union steward–member exchange relationships.

In the joint attribution model, union-management relations was a significant predictor; employees who perceived better union-management relations were more likely to support ratification. Past studies have examined the relationship of perceptions of union-management relations to ratification support and strike propensity (e.g., Cappelli & Sterling, 1988; Kaufman & Martinez-Vazquez, 1988; Martin & Sinclair, 2001). Our primary contribution to this literature is theoretical. Some past research treats perceptions of union-management relations as an element of the employer-relations model (e.g., Martin & Sinclair, 2001; Martin, 2008). We took a different position, arguing that union-management relations is part of a joint attribution model reflecting employees’ perceptions of both their union and their employer. Consistent with this view, and past research (e.g., Angle & Perry, 1986; Magenau et al., 1988; Martin & Sinclair,
2001), we found that union-management relations was positively correlated with both greater union loyalty and greater company commitment. Thus, the relationship of the perceptions of union-management relations to ratification voting and company and union commitment (loyalty) seems strong. Future research should treat union-management relations as a central study variable; developing a model of its antecedents, correlates, and other potential outcomes.

Contract procedural fairness, also in the joint model, predicted ratification voting, similar to what Martin (2008) found. When employees viewed the prior contract as procedurally fair, they were more likely to support ratification of the current contract.

In the economic model, greater pay equity and lower perceived employment mobility predicted greater ratification support. We proposed a COR-based explanation for these effects. Pay equity reflects a perception of greater fairness with one’s current resources; employment mobility perceptions reflect the ease of obtaining financial resources through other jobs in the event they do not like the new contract and have to strike or quit. While COR is increasingly used to account for organizational behavior, no other studies have discussed it in the context of union member behavior, despite fact that resource allocation issues are central to labor relations. We used COR to suggest that employees consider current levels of resources, potential resource losses, and the quality of other alternative sources of resources as part of their decision to support ratification. Consistent with our predictions, pay equity and perceived quality of alternatives were predictors, but not pay level or the objective measure of economic dependency on the job. A strict COR interpretation of these findings suggests that employees consider their current situation and possible alternative resource sources when evaluating a strike but perhaps not the potential losses associated with a strike. However, it is important to note that the measures we found support for are more subjective, while the ones we did not find support for are more
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

objective, and thus may less directly capture employee perceptions about possible resource losses. For example, two employees with similar proportions of income from the job in question may weigh that information differently in their subjective evaluations of the potential risks of voting no on a union contract. Therefore, one useful direction for future research would be to include other measures reflecting possible financial costs and benefits of contract voting, such as the more subjective employee report of the economic hardship a strike would cause them as used by Martin (1986), Martin and Sinclair (2001), or McClendon and Klaas (1993).

Additionally, though not the focus of our research hypotheses, our correlational analyses indicated that employees with lower perceived employment mobility also reported higher company commitment, union loyalty, union management relations, and pay equity. These relationships support Martin and Sinclair’s (2001) argument that perceived mobility has an important influence on employees' frames of reference for interpreting organizational events. Thus, COR helps highlight the kinds of resource perceptions that are relevant to union member behavior; one way these resource perceptions affect behavior may be by shaping employees frames of reference for interpreting events.

Overall, the findings related to the militancy model represent one of our most important contributions. Both variables in the militancy model were significant negative predictors of ratification voting. Further, that model explained more unique variance in the voting than any other model. By asking employees directly about these constructs, rather than using demographic background variables as proxies for them (e.g., Cohen, 1992; Martin & Sinclair, 2001), we believe we were able to more accurately assess them and thus explain more variance. As noted above, while strike propensity has often has been a dependent variable in several studies, no study to our knowledge has used it as an independent variable in any study of ratification voting.
or any other study of union member behavior or attitudes. We also included union strike instrumentality as a predictor in this model. The only study we could find which used such a narrowly defined construct was by McClendon and Klaas (1993). They found it was a significant positive predictor of each of their strike-related militancy dependent variables, including voting for a strike (against ratification). Other studies have focused more broadly on general union instrumentality and also found positive relationships to militant behavior. For example, Buttigieg et al. (2008) found that where an employee believed that the union was effective in improving wages and working conditions (which they labeled extrinsic instrumentality), the employee was more likely to support industrial action. In terms of future research, we believe that researchers should strive to use direct measures of militancy rather than demographic proxies.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

In our opinion, there are four general limitations to our study, each of which offers useful directions for future research. First, our sample consisted of members of a retail union, with over one-third part-time employees. As it is unclear if findings from such samples apply to settings with fewer part-time employees, different job characteristics, working conditions, labor markets, etc., ratification voting needs to be examined in other settings. However, even if the results did not generalize to other contexts, both the union and sector we studied are important by themselves; the union in our study has over one million members and the retail sector now employs about one in seven American workers (Carré & Tilly, 2008).

Second, although our use of a time lagged design represents an improvement over most past research in this area, there are two potential concerns with the time frame we used. First, we measured the vote 22 months after the actual vote. This raises potential concerns about the accuracy of employees’ reports of their vote. We offered unit-level data supporting the accuracy
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

of the vote data, but this certainly is an issue that could be addressed in future research, ideally by obtaining objective voting data closer to the actual vote, but still after the predictors. The time span between our two surveys also meant that we lost some employees who were no longer employed at the time of the second survey, including those with low seniority. On the other hand, the time-lagged design and direct behavioral measure of the ratification outcome vote linked to the actual vote reduce concerns with common method variance (Chang, Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKensie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Spector, 2006).

Third, our analyses excluded some variables identified previously as predictors of ratification voting and strike propensities, such as an employee report of the personal economic hardship a strike would cause as noted above (Martin, 1986; Martin & Sinclair, 2001; McClendon & Klaas, 1993). Our ability to include measures was limited to a degree by the goals of the survey process for the union and survey space. Nonetheless, researchers should consider further development of the models by adding new predictors, examining contextual or personal moderators, and exploring other mechanisms that contribute to ratification voting.

Finally, we relied on a single-item indicator of strike propensity as one of our predictors. While we offered multiple sources of data to support the reliability and validity of this measure, future research could refine both the definition and measurement of strike propensity to include explicit assessment of its affective and cognitive aspects and/or focus on other measures of behavioral intentions. Research also could examine if employees are likely to strike for different goals. For example, some might be more willing to strike to obtain pay increases whereas others might be motivated by improvements to their benefits or their working conditions (Buttigieg et al., 2008; Martin, 1986). Thus, any efforts by researchers to improve the measurement of ratification and strike-related dependent variables would contribute to scholarship in this area.
Practical Implications for Labor-Management Relations

For employers, our findings suggest that efforts to improve workers’ employer commitment may result in greater ratification support, in addition to the other well-documented benefits of higher commitment, such as increased job performance and reduced turnover (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Riketta, 2002). The findings about workers’ views of union-management relations suggest that it is in the employer’s best interest to show that it is engaged in efforts to create positive union-management relations. Employers may not benefit from portraying the negotiation process as hostile. In fact, the correlation between union-management relations and company commitment supports the proposal that when employers are viewed as bargaining in good faith, employees will be more committed.

When unions have a goal of getting a contract ratified, they also appear to be better served by creating perceptions of favorable union-management relations and working with the employer to obtain jointly desirable bargaining outcomes. Though the antecedents of perceived union-management relations were not a focus of our study, the correlation between union loyalty and union-management relations suggest that unions also experience greater member loyalty when members feel the labor relations climate is positive. Emphasizing the poor quality of the current union-management relationship may be a useful strategy when unions seek to galvanize employee support for a strike as part of a collective bargaining process. Here we reach similar conclusions as Buttigieg et al. (2008, p. 261), who found that employees “who rejected a union—management relationship built on co-operation were significantly more likely to indicate a willingness to take industrial action.” The relationship between union loyalty and union-management relations suggests the potential risks of this approach. Though unions may need to encourage employee dissatisfaction with the status quo to maximize their leverage in collective
bargaining (by strike threats), they run the risk of a potential negative effect of this approach on employees’ union loyalty. They could also end up with a contract settlement that is not ratified.

The strong role of the militancy model also has important implications for unions. As noted above, union leaders want employees to be militant and willing to strike in order to increase their bargaining power, but a militant membership may be less willing to ratify an acceptable negotiated contact. Nicholson and Kelly (1980) give examples of where a militant membership may be ahead of the union leaders, as the leaders raced to keep pace with employee demands. A recent example in the United States was when the 2009 changes to the Ford Motor Company contract, supported by the union leadership, were not ratified by the United Automobile Workers members (Snavely, 2009).

Overall, understanding what leads members to support the union in contract ratification is important to achieving union bargaining goals. Unions that survey members in preparation for bargaining are more likely to identify employee desires and needs and make salient the workplace issues that might be bargained. Surveying might also allow unions to better shape settlements to more effectively meet employee needs. Then, unions could publicize the new tentative contract terms to obtain ratification (Dworkin, Feldman, Brown, & Hobson, 1988; Holley et al., 2012). While Buttigieg et al. (2008) argued that strong member support for collective action, such as strikes, will help the union to achieve its bargaining objectives; the employees still need to ratify an agreement to have a continuing employment relationship.
WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

References


WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION


WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

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WHY DO EMPLOYEES SUPPORT RATIFICATION

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables (N = 1,180<sup>ab</sup>)

| Variable                                | Mean  | SD   | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 12   | 13   | 14   | 15   | 16   | 17   | 18   |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ratification Vote (1=no, 2=yes)        | 1.53  | .50  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Gender (1=male, 2=female)              | 1.69  | .46  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Age (years)                            | 43.70 | 1.80 |      |      | .13  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Part-time or Full-time (2)             | 1.63  | .48  | -.06 | -.15 | -01  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Education (years)                      | 13.04 | 1.44 | .02  | -.17 | -.06 | -.02 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Company commitment                     | 3.54  | 1.58 | .33  | .10  | .13  | -.08 | -.07 | .88  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Supervisor support                     | 4.22  | 1.69 | .15  | .03  | .07  | -.04 | -.03 | .42  | .90  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Union loyalty                          | 3.88  | 1.48 | .31  | .08  | .04  | -.03 | -.03 | .40  | .88  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Union participation                    | 1.20  | 3.44 | .01  | -.03 | .10  | .13  | .08  | -.06 | -.15 | .24  | .62  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Union-management relations             | 3.56  | 1.29 | .29  | .05  | -.11 | -.07 | .57  | .58  | .37  | -.11 | .81  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Procedural fairness                    | 3.07  | .68  | .30  | -.02 | .06  | .02  | .05  | .39  | .35  | .41  | .03  | .47  | .77  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Distributive fairness                  | 3.84  | 1.20 | .24  | -.02 | .00  | -.03 | .01  | .29  | .17  | .40  | .05  | .35  | .41  | .83  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Integrative bargaining                 | 4.89  | 8.0  | .08  | .00  | .05  | .01  | .08  | .17  | .12  | .20  | .10  | .22  | .21  | .16  | .72  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Pay equity                             | 3.56  | 1.68 | .30  | -.06 | .00  | -.03 | .08  | .32  | .12  | .27  | .08  | .24  | .36  | .42  | .11  | .84  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Hourly pay rate ($)                    | 9.35  | 2.80 | -.03 | -.18 | .01  | .23  | .11  | -.18 | -.20 | -.10 | .24  | -.25 | -.03 | .08  | -.04 | .36  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Family employment dependency (%)       | 56.32 | 34.0 | .03  | -.15 | -.02 | .33  | .08  | -.04 | -.07 | .02  | .10  | -.07 | .04  | .01  | .02  | .04  | .21  |      |      |      |      |
| Employment mobility                    | 3.64  | 1.50 | -.23 | -.06 | .04  | .17  | -.01 | -.29 | -.05 | -.25 | -.05 | -.17 | -.21 | -.18 | -.10 | -.35 | -.18 | -.24 | .76  |      |
| Strike instrumentality                 | 4.38  | 1.32 | -.24 | -.09 | -.11 | .01  | .00  | -.24 | -.09 | .01  | .12  | -.09 | -.13 | -.09 | .02  | -.11 | .01  | -.06 | .20  | .74  |      |
| Strike propensity                      | 3.32  | 2.23 | -.27 | -.15 | -.07 | -.01 | .00  | -.28 | -.12 | -.04 | .18  | -.20 | -.17 | -.09 | -.03 | -.12 | .10  | -.05 | .26  | .54  |      |

<sup>a</sup>r < .05, p < .05; <sup>b</sup>r < .07, p < .01.
<sup>b</sup>Alphas on diagonal.
Table 2

Ratification Vote Variance Explained by Each Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>After Controls Total Variance Explained</th>
<th>Unique Variance Explained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer relations</td>
<td>.135**</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union relations</td>
<td>.135**</td>
<td>.027**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint model</td>
<td>.163**</td>
<td>.013**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>.174**</td>
<td>.026**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militancy</td>
<td>.109**</td>
<td>.047**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a p < .05; ** p < .01. One-tailed
Table 3
Results of the Logistic Regression Analyses (Ratification Vote)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model and Variable</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Company commitment</td>
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<td>Perceived employment mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$</td>
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<td>.337**</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01. One-tailed test