

**The Gun Behind the Door:
Who put the recall on the ballot?**

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“The recall is sometimes called the ‘gun behind the door’ that keeps officials responsive, yet in practice the gun is heavy, complicated, and requires countless people to aim and fire” (Cronin 1989,155). The 2003 movement to recall California’s incumbent governor Gray Davis represents one of the most significant events in California’s political history, as well as the United States’. The act of recalling an elected official is in every sense a complex matter. The roots of recall lie in the signature gathering petition process. This vital stage of the recall process determines whether a costly recall vote is necessary. Despite its critical importance, there is a shortage of available literature that explores this stage of the recall process. Though a considerable amount of study has been done with regard to recall, in order to adequately investigate the petition stage, it is necessary to look to similar progressive political devices. A good deal of literature pertaining to initiatives can be utilized for the study of recall because work in this field studies the initiative’s very similar pre-ballot petition stage. By analyzing not only the recall mechanism itself, but also this signature gathering stage, it is possible to move towards answering the question: *Why were some counties in California more successful in getting recall petition signatures than others?*

The Roots of Recall

Evidence as to just how important the recall is to modern democracy can be traced back as far as the era of the Greek Polis. The Polis, which was essentially the characteristic political design in ancient Greek society, was an autonomous community with both a deliberative body and general assembly (Aristotle 1986, 1). Between 335 and 322 BC, Aristotle constructed the constitution of Athens. The Athenian government of this period has come to be regarded as the root of modern democracy. In the 59th chapter of this constitution, Aristotle describes the Assembly's power to remove officials from office. Indictments against an incumbent for crimes of "corrupt evasion of foreign origin, blackmailing, bribery, false testimony, conspiracy, corrupt removal from the list of debtors, and adultery" were punishable by removal from office (Adkins 1986, 272). These acts that Aristotle thought were unbecoming of a government official parallel those reasons for which recalls are invoked in modern American democracy. Essentially, the American recall is derived from Aristotelian political theories.

Further tracing the heritage of the recall, Enlightenment thought brought about the American Revolution, which gave way to the formation of the first democratic government. In his book *Direct Democracy*, Thomas E. Cronin discusses the importance of the recall in late eighteenth century America. The Articles of Confederation included within its charter the ability for state legislatures to recall delegates. Later, after the Articles failed to provide an efficient means of governing the American states, the issue of recall was debated in the Constitutional Conventions of 1787 and 1788. The domination of Federalist ideology from such political spokesmen as Alexander Hamilton prevented the conventions from attaining support for recall (Cronin 1989, 129).

It resurfaced at the end of the nineteenth century as a national wave of Progressivism rode through America. By 1905, public discontent in areas like Los Angeles had grown to a level that the states began adopting progressive reforms like the referendum, the initiative, and the recall. Dr. Haynes, the driving force behind Los Angeles' adoption of the recall device told his followers that the recall was not a substitute for representative democracy. Rather, it was an effective means by which the citizenry could efficiently discharge officials who did not adequately serve the needs of the constituents. By 1903, Los Angeles had formally adopted the recall. Viewed as a defense mechanism against a party boss system that answered primarily to business interest, "the recall arose to remedy the worst possible side effects of representative democracy-namely, when so-called representatives sold out to privileged interests at the expense of the public"(Cronin 1989, 131).

Such events were part of a much larger progressive movement whereby other cities in California soon adopted similar recall provision in their own city charters. In 1908, Oregon would adopt a state-wide provision for recall. Subsequently, by 1912, California, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, and Washington would also adopt the recall. "Since this period, nine other states have adopted the recall at the state level, and about a score more permit it for certain local officials "(Cronin 1989, 132). However, since this progressive period, the recall has experienced limited growth in public support.

A Double-Edged Sword

This lukewarm acceptance of the recall in the United States reflects the split in public opinion regarding such progressive measures. Since their inception, the

referendum, initiative, and recall have been discredited by a number of arguments that favor representative government as opposed to such forms of direct democracy.

To understand the recall objectively, it is necessary to investigate both the pro-recall and oppositional dimensions to the debate. Advocates of the recall emphasize a number of tenets that support their opinion. One of these is that the recall promotes continuous accountability rather than sporadic. The early America patriot Patrick Henry endorsed the recall because he believed it would prevent officials from ignoring their constituents while they were in office. Modern advocates of the recall still endorse this view. Public officers are far more likely to serve the interests of voter if threatened with the prospect of removal from office” (Cronin 1989, ch. 6).

Secondly, the recall helps check “undue influence by narrow special interests” (Cronin 1989, 134). Especially within the context of the US political landscape, where such special interest groups are increasingly influential, the recall encourages incumbents to remain loyal to the public above all else. It checks the amount of influence special interest groups can exert in policy-making. The potential of removal from office is enough to hold officeholders faithful to their constituents” (Cronin 1989, ch.6).

Another aspect of the recall that its advocates cite as an advantage is its value as an alternative to impeachment. Impeachment is a long grueling process and also requires a great deal of evidence. In many cases, it is almost impossible to muster sufficient evidence of corruption or incompetence to successfully impeach an individual. The recall, however, provides a means by which officeholders may be removed through a slightly more manageable fashion. The recall provides a way to manage conflict through

due process, and does so in a comparatively quick and efficient manner (Cronin 1989, ch. 6).

There are also pro-recall arguments that state that it ensures longevity for effective administrators and provides adequate incentive for the average voter to stay informed about politics. Therefore, many see the recall as a tool by which the citizenry are directly benefited. However, there are also those who refute the validity of these arguments. Opponents of the recall also assert a number of reasonable grievances against Democratic recall.

Some base their opposition on the premise that elected officials are elected to serve in terms. By Virtue of the fact that they are voted into office, they are granted the chance to govern until their term is up. Recall, in their opinion, diminishes the voice of the minority groups in society. Government is not only supposed to be responsive to the majority, but to the general public. This in mind, the recall places within the hands of the majority the necessary means to evict any official that contradicts their ideology. This, opponents argue, is a violation of fundamental republican ideals (Cronin 1989, ch.6).

A second argument made against recall is that it is “costly, unnecessary, and directed against the wrong target.” There is a lot to be said for this argument because the costs of recall elections are extremely high. The fact is that the same end can be achieved through the more cost effective impeachment process. Also, there have been occasions where local officials were removed from office simply because they implemented policies handed down by the federal government. This wrongful targeting of local officials, recall opponents argue, also violates fundamental republican ideals because it ousts duly elected officials through no fault of their own (Cronin 1989, ch.6).

Besides this, several unintended consequences also result from recalls.

Arguments suggest that recall elections, because they are highly emotional, have a polarizing effect on society. Essentially, recalls do not promote harmony or stability the way less direct forms of democracy do. For this reason, many view such progressive tactics as disruptive to democracy (Cronin 1989, ch. 6).

Clearly, both sides of the recall debate make convincing arguments. By analyzing the arguments from both sides one gets a feel for just how important an issue this is. To study the recall as a machination of democracy is to test the very cornerstones of democratic philosophy. Study of the recall probes essential questions about confidence in the electorate, whom officials are accountable to, and dominance of majorities. These are the same issues that still generate most of the research in this field.

The Mechanism

To probe even further, it is necessary to explore the machinations and processes that allow recalls to occur. Every recall demands that a specific process be followed. While these processes differ slightly between states' and local governments' implementation of recall procedure, there are certain fundamental steps that are accepted unilaterally.

Among these steps is the statement of Intent to Recall. This first step notifies the target of the recall movement that parties within the public have begun an initiative to remove the individual from office. This step represents a "point of no return" for the opposition party. From the day the statement is issued, the group is issued a deadline by which they must prove there is reasonable public acceptance of the grievances cited in the

statement. In California, for instance, there is a 160 day period by which the pro-recall party must show support (League of Women Voters, 2003).

The process of acquiring signatures on the recall petition demonstrates this support. Counting only registered voters, the opposition party must reach a signature quota before their allotted time runs out. Typically, the opposition must rally the support of about 20-25% of the voters from the previous election. However, certain anomalies like California exist, which require a mere 12% of voters from previous election to support the recall movement (Cronin 1989, 114). If the quota is met, the government must set a date for a recall election, and accomodate a substantial period for “sober second thought.” This interim attempts to prevent the heavy emotions of the public from clouding or distorting voter judgment. After these steps are taken, a recall vote can be taken.

In order to study recalls, one must primarily access data about this issue. However, there is a very slim amount of literature on this topic. To further probe recalls it is necessary to seek out information about initiatives, another progressive political device that employs direct democracy. Initiatives are movements of direct democracy.

Simply defined, the initiative is a device whereby a prescribed number or percent of the qualified voters, through the use of a petition, may have an amendment or legislative proposal placed on the ballot for adoption or rejection by the electorate of the state or local community (Price 1975, 244).

While the initiative and recall are certainly distinct in nature, the basic apparatuses and processes by which they become effective are very similar. Therefore, the research done on the petition gathering stage of the initiative process has implications for the study of the recall.

A number of factors can have important effects on the signature gathering process. One of the most substantial of these factors is the size of the electorate. The actual population of a state may very well determine how difficult an initiative is to get on the ballot. Obviously, for grass roots initiatives, population determines not only how many signatures must be attained, but also how much capital and how large the campaign must be to reach its goal (Ellis 2002, 46).

This leads to a second important factor concerning this issue. Basically, when dealing with higher populations like that of California, it is necessary to recruit professionals to conduct the petition movement. Whether or not an initiative movement employs a petitioning firm to get signatures is one of the major indicators as to whether or not an initiative will be successful. Professional groups are highly mobilized, organized, and effective bodies in comparison to volunteer-based initiatives. Using paid petitioners and machine-like efficiency, these groups dominate the ballot and ensure the initiatives meet the thresholds. As one of these professional petitioners, Sherry Bockwinkel says, “You have to pay to play” (Ellis, 50-51).

Finally, the third most important factor, which goes hand in hand with the other two, is the influence of money initiative campaigns. Obviously, reaching signature thresholds incurs great costs. Hiring agencies, staffing campaigns, advertisements and producing other materials necessary to get an initiative on the ballot requires a great deal of capital. In addition, more controversial initiatives cost increasingly large amounts of money to get on the ballot. Finance and expenditures are, therefore, very important factors for initiatives, and often determine the success of a movement (Magleby 1984, ch. 8).

The Study of Progressive Politics: the Recall and Initiative

There has been a vast amount of descriptive research done with regard to the historical origins and functions of progressive reforms like the recall, referendum, and initiative in American politics. However, studies that investigate the actual consequences, benefits and application in empirical studies are far rarer. These studies primarily deal with the initiative's relationship to issues of government responsiveness, the dominance of the majority, voter turnout, and regional acceptance of the initiative as a policy making device.

It is a fact that initiatives are not legal in all 50 US states, and some researchers have attempted to determine why some states accept initiatives, others do not, and still some do so on a limited basis. From a birds' eye view, acceptance of progressive reforms appear to be a regional preference. Many western states employed progressive reforms than the states of the Northeast. However, Martin Shefter took his analysis to the next level. His studies have attempted to explain why the western states accept progressive reforms while others do not.

His analysis shows a correlation between the party organization trends from the states in each region, and whether or not the states chose to accept or reject progressive reforms. His argument states that those states that maintained "old-line party organizations" were better able to fend off reforms of the progressive era because these broadly-based organizations encouraged stability and stifled groups that advocated change. The Northeast states were able to do just this. States from the west, which did not have the proper amount of time to develop such a party system, were divided by movements like socialism and other leftist thought. He writes,

In particular, the Farmers Alliance, the Populist Party, and the Socialist Party were substantially stronger in the West than in the East. And in more recent years, the relatively weak party organizations of the West have been far more vulnerable than those in the East to being taken over by political movements or the supporters of candidates on the left of the political spectrum, in the case of the Democrats, and on the right, in the case of the Republicans. Consequently the level of polarization between the parties characteristically is higher in the western than in the eastern states” (Shefter 1983, 482).

Shefter articulates his study very clearly. At the heart of the difference between states that accept initiatives and those that do not is the issue of party organizations. The evolution of two distinct forms of party organization (one in the West and one in the Northeast) contributed to the divided support of progressive reform.

Other studies pertaining to initiatives have been done in the field of determining how initiatives relate to policy responsiveness. Most experts who conduct this type of research aim to answer the question as to whether initiatives encourage responsiveness in democracy. Elisabeth R. Gerber is one of the most prolific students of this topic. She argues that direct election initiatives encourage policies that are more responsive to the public.

Her first argument in favor of this idea is based on her data which shows that initiative campaigns encourage voter competence and make voters more capable of making informed decisions. She refutes the argument that “serious electoral competition” increases voter responsiveness. Rather, she says, initiative campaigns are far more likely to produce an informed voter.

Responsive policy outcomes require enhanced voter competence. This follows because a ballot measure proposer’s incentive to consider voter interests when drafting a measure depends, in part, on the extent to which voters can credibly threaten to reject unresponsive policy proposals. To make such a threat, voters must have reliable information about the measure that is easy to obtain and simple to use. Competition is neither necessary nor sufficient to provide such information (Gerber 1995, 288).

Competition, in itself is not enough to increase responsiveness. Rather, competition must also cater to the voting majority and be “sufficiently credible” in its availability to influence voter behavior. If these conditions are not met, Gerber argues, competition is unlikely to create more responsive policy outcomes.

Her other argument in favor of initiatives as entities that promote responsiveness pertains to state legislatures and the effects that the threat of an initiative poses to policy makers. Constraint of elected officials encourages them to be more in tune with public opinion. In Gerber’s study entitled “Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives,” she thoroughly examines the way legislatures are affected by initiatives. From this analysis she draws two conclusions. First, she concludes that “interest groups have the ability to challenge legislative policy *ex post*” (1996, 124). This is proven not only through her own empirical analysis, but also through her observation that very few initiatives are actually proposed. Legislative officials for the most part are forced to keep their policies close to the “median voter’s ideal point.” By not diverging from this point, legislatures avoid initiatives and are held more responsive to the voters.

Gerber’s second conclusion is that state legislatures are more or less responsive to their voters based on how the actual initiative process functions and the relative preferences in their state.

The threat of initiatives is less when the process is costly. This implies the very real possibility that interest groups in two states with very similar preference configurations but different initiative features may find different levels of success in influencing legislative policy. Similarly, interest groups in two states with nearly identical provisions for the initiative may be differently able to constrain legislative policy due to differences in relative preferences in their state (1996, 124).

Therefore, if a state has a cumbersome initiative process, it is far less likely that the legislature will be responsive to the public. Responsiveness, as Gerber indicates, is also a function of public preference. This preference varies among states in the same ways that processes do. If a state has a preference that is more in conflict with the legislature, the legislature is more likely to be responsive to this group than if they were oriented closer on an ideological spectrum (1996, 109).

Gerber indicates that while there is sufficient data to accept her findings, the extent to which legislatures must conform to the voters' interests differs across state lines. In other words, it is conceivable that there are instances in which initiatives do not promote enhanced responsiveness. A group of Gerber's critics, Lascher, Hagin and Roslin, argue in favor of this alternate hypothesis and offer their own interpretation of the role initiatives play in state politics.

They argue four basic premises that seem to discredit Gerber's views. First, they credit legislatures as being excellent respondents when there is disagreement over the application of initiatives that pass by narrow margin. Their key goal in such deliberation is to best serve the public interest. Secondly, they argue that initiatives are typically organized and run through wealthy interest groups. Those of higher socioeconomic status control the initiatives and are most likely to reap its benefits. Their third argument is that only organized interest groups are really invited to participate in direct democracy politics (Lascher, 1996, 772).

The concept of the "citizen legislator" is an illusion, they say, and barriers like entrance costs and signature thresholds effectively dissuade citizen participation. Finally, elites, they believe, "have strong incentives to attempt to discern clear messages in

electoral outcomes, and respond to them” (Lascher, 1996, 773). Lescher, Hagin, and Roslin make a strong case for their argument, and pose a viable alternate theory to Gerber’s conceptualization of direct democracy politics.

While the study of responsiveness is one of the most popular topics of discussion when dealing with the issue of the initiative, there are still other areas of study that have been explored by researchers. One of these is the study of the initiative’s effect on marginal or minority groups in society. Barbara S. Gamble has studied the effects of the initiative on civil rights since the civil rights’ movement of the 1960s. Analyzing issues of gay rights, minorities, school desegregation, language laws and AIDS policies, Gamble makes a number of important observations about majority dominance through initiatives.

In her study, she found that “citizens in the political majority have repeatedly used direct democracy to put the right of minorities to vote” (1997, 261). She goes on to explain how civil rights initiatives have an “extraordinary record of success.” Her findings show that three-quarters of anti-civil rights initiatives are approved compared to a mere one-third of all other initiatives put to the ballot. This trend has held constant from the 1960s up to the present (1997, 262). She urges that it is the duty of government to protect minority rights, and the power of the majority can only be curbed through representative government.

Taking a different approach in exploring the issue of the initiative, some researchers have sought to answer the question of whether this device favors one side of the ideological spectrum more than the other. One researcher in this field is Austin Ranney, who, in his work, discusses the lack of evidence to prove this question either

way. His book, *The United States' of America*, looks closely at the relationship between liberal and conservative initiatives passed from 1945-1976. His findings indicate that the electorate was very much split down the middle. Conservatives tended to win on social issues and liberals on economic issues. Thus, according to Ranney's findings there was very little bias with regard to initiatives (Ranney, 1978, 84).

However, David B. Magleby had a somewhat revised perception of this issue. Magleby references the taxpayers' revolt of 1978, and identifies this as a key turning point in the party politics of initiatives. After this revolt, he argues, those who had formerly voted for liberal economic policies began to vote "no" on proposed economic initiatives. Magleby shows a considerable trend of conservative leaning since 1978. The attempt to maintain the status quo has very much been the theme in initiative efforts since then (1984, 191). Thus, he concludes, that if a bias does exist, it favors conservative views on both social issues and economic policy. He also alludes to the fact that, due to barriers put in place like signature thresholds, minority groups who want to change the status quo have a great deal of trouble getting on the ballot. Consequently, there are fewer initiatives that challenge the status quo (1984, 191).

Finally, studies have also been conducted with regard to the effect of initiative movements on voter turnout. David Everson, in his study "Effects of Initiatives on Voter Turnout," attempts to locate a relationship between voter turnout and states' implementation of the initiative. His results show that the differentiation between "initiative states" and "non-initiative states" is negligible. He concludes that voter turnout is not clearly a function of the initiative.

Everson sets three criteria for determining whether an initiative will increase voter turnout. First, the issue must have broad appeal. Second, it must have the absence of a highly visible candidate election. Thirdly, it must be an issue in which voter turnout recently decreased and is due for a return to the norm (Everson, 1981, 424). If these criteria are met, he argues, an initiative may lead to higher turnout. However, if few or none of these criteria are met, it is highly unlikely that voter turnout will be influenced at all (424).

Studies like these help provide a framework for analyzing the research question of why some California counties were more successful at gathering petition signatures. They are part of the much larger theoretical context of representation. The study of representation asks questions about how well certain groups in society are represented by their officials. It also shows the implications of incorporating practices of direct democracy in a representative system, and allows the investigator to evaluate its performance.

The literature done thus far focuses on a number of important facts about recall elections. It does much more than simply explain the way the mechanism itself functions. Studies done on the initiative process indicate how factors such as trends in state party organization, how responsive progressive mechanisms are to the public, whether these mechanisms favor one end of the political spectrum or the other, and voter turnout, are influenced by direct democracy political devices like the initiative and recall. However, there are still a number of variables that are yet to be analyzed.

Research in this field is far from complete. Rather, there are still gaping holes in the knowledge about recalls. First, it is still uncertain how recalls actually affect voter

turnout, minority rights, and who is most likely to invoke them (liberals or conservatives). Up to the present, researchers in this field have relied on data from initiatives to support their theories. However, because of the infrequency of the recall, there is a lack of hard data to corroborate these theories. The second major hole in the literature stems from the first. There almost no dialogue as to how the petition gathering process, used to get a recall on the ballot, is inhibited or helped by variables like party identification, education, ethnicity, etc. This lack of data indicates that this field of research is incomplete, and additional research is indeed necessary to if these holes are to be filled.

Hypothesis

The goal of this study is to determine what factors determined each county's success in the petitioning process. Here, four separate independent variables have been selected as potential explainers of the variance. Each variable represents a time ordered causal relationship, one in which the independent variable invariably causes a resultant effect to occur. In this case, counties that are predominantly Republican, more educated, possess smaller Hispanic populations, and are adversely effected by recent economic downturn contributed the most petition signatures.

In order to understand the hypothesis better, it is necessary to explore each independent variable by itself. The first of these variables is that of party affiliation. Since recalled Governor Gray Davis was a member of the Democratic Party, it is important to consider the fact that those who were members of the opposition party would support the recall for this very reason.

This is also clearly a time-ordered relationship. An individual would be inclined to support the recall because of his party affiliation inclines him to act as such. If one were to interrupt this cause and effect relationship, and say that support for the recall influences party affiliation, it does not make logical sense. There is little evidence to support the premise that an individual would base his political ideology (largely determined by party affiliation) on a single recall vote. Rather, it does make logical sense to say that a member of the Republican Party would be inclined to support a petition for the recall of a Democrat incumbent. Therefore, one can assume that a clear correlation can be drawn from this variable. If a county has per capita more members of its population belonging to the Republican Party, it is increasingly likely that it will support a recall petition. Conversely, in more Democratic counties of California, it is expected that support for recall petitions would decline.

Another potential explanation is education. A vast amount of evidence generated from research in the field of political science indicates that as individuals' education increases, they become more politically active (Bennet, 1970, 358). Therefore, it follows that one would expect a political movement of this nature to be supported by those who are more educated. This relationship is also time-ordered to the extent that one must first become educated to become more politically active and not vice-versa. It is this tendency towards political activism that may indicate why some counties in California had more success in the petitioning process. The hypothesis indicates that a relationship between the level of education and support for recall petitions exist, and as the level of education rises, so do the number of signatures for the recall petition.

The third independent variable used in this study as a potential predictor signature gathering success is ethnicity. Individuals of Mexican heritage represent a group that is extremely important to the character of California politics. Research done with relation to minorities in politics indicates that they overwhelmingly support the Democratic Party, which has been more receptive to social issues like poverty and urban development. In addition, Gamble's article notes how minorities are clearly disadvantaged by progressive politics (Gamble, 1997, 263). Therefore, Mexicans would be expected not to sign recall petitions. Since Davis is a Democrat, and because the recall is an example of the progressive politics Gramble says disadvantages marginal groups, it would be logical to hypothesize that the Mexican population would be less likely to support the recall movement.

In addition, work done in the field of initiatives, reveals that Progressive political mechanisms like the recall and initiative deny minorities in society their due voice in politics. Rather, recalls and initiatives allow the opinions of the majority to dominate governmental policy (Gamble, 1997, 261). Based on this, one would expect the Mexican population to oppose the recall election because they fear the white population in California might vote for a Republican candidate. This also indicates a time-ordered relationship in which the actual population of individuals of Mexican heritage within a county determines how successful that county will be in gathering petitions. Therefore, one would expect a correlation that shows more petitions being signed as the Mexican population of a county decreases.

Finally, the last variable to be considered in this study is that of economic downturn. When people are harmed financially by the government's policies, it seems

they would be less likely to support the officials who are in power during this period. If individuals' were negatively affected by economic downturn immediately prior to the recall movement, this would be a very important indicator of why they chose to support or reject the recall petition. As rates of unemployment rise, peoples' incomes diminish, and the costs of goods and services rise; people begin to respond by ousting their representatives in government.

This is a time-ordered relationship because the individuals must be hurt financially by the economic downturn, and, as result of this condition, decide to support the effort to recall Gray Davis. This relationship also shows covariation because there is substantial evidence that individuals who have received benefits from an incumbent government are less likely to vote these officials out of office. Conversely, officials who are in office when their constituents' financial situations worsen are consistently recalled from office. Therefore, one would expect those who experienced such an economic downturn to support the petition to recall the Governor.

For all these reasons this hypothesis seems to be a reasonable attempt to explain why certain counties in California were more successful in gathering petitions for the recall than others. However, certain extraneous variables must be controlled to be sure that the relationship between the independent variables and the success of the recall petition corroborated by the data indicates a spurious relationship. One of these variables that must be controlled is the organization of the firms that conducted the petitions. For the purpose of this study, it must be assumed that every county had petition drives that were equally well organized and initiated. Discrepancies could create a non-spurious relationship in the data. This would leave the answer to the question of why some

counties fared better than others in gaining signatures inconclusive. In addition, it must be assumed that the same techniques were used unilaterally across all counties in order to gain the signatures. Therefore, the methodology of the petition process conducted by firms like *Gilliard, Blanning, and Wysock* were similar across all counties. Once these variables are counted and controlled, it is reasonable to assume that the independent variables provide the best explanation and have a spurious relationship with the success of the counties' signature gathering.

The hypothesis is a logical assumption as to why some counties were more successful than others in the signature gathering process. It relies on independent variables that provide a means to empirically analyze this trend through the available data. Each independent variable shows a time-ordered relationship. This means that each independent variable is a stimulus enacted prior to the effect, and the relative success levels of each county are the consequence of this. Each independent variable also shows a clear direction of correlation. As the amount people who identify themselves as Republicans increases, so do the success rates of the petitions gatherers. As the education level rises, support for the recall declines. Also predicted, is an inverse relationship that says counties with lower Mexican populations can expect more success in gathering petition signatures. And, finally, as more people are adversely affected by economic downturn, they are more likely to support the recall movement. Each of these is a statement that shows a clear relationship between cause and effect. They are tools to measure empirical data, and synthesize from observation clear conclusions as to the validity of the hypothesis. In doing this, they provide an excellent opportunity for

determining why some counties in California were more successful in gaining recall petition signatures than others

Methodology

The unit of analysis in this study is California counties. Therefore, the dependent variable measures the population in each county divided by the number of signatures acquired by that county. The data for county population was acquired from the California State Association for Counties (CSAC) website¹. The data for the actual number of signatures that came from each county came from California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley's website². There, all the counties are listed and beside them the final counts of how many recall petition signatures were gathered from each.

In order to create independent variables capable of measuring party affiliation, education, ethnicity, and economic downturn, a number of different data sets must be accessed. The data available on Kevin Shelley's homepage³ gives details as to the number of people who registered themselves as either Democrats or Republicans. The variable is therefore expressed at the interval-ratio level. Therefore, the independent variable measures the percentage of registered Republicans from each county.

The second independent variable that must be created is education. To determine this variable, it is necessary to acquire data about the scholastic achievement of each of the 58 counties' citizens. This data can be found at the US Census Bureau's webpage⁴.

¹ California State Association for Counties (CSAC). website. 2003.
http://www.csac.counties.org/counties_close_up/county_web/county_population.html

² California Secretary of State: Kevin Shelley. Website. 2003.
http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/recall_sigs.pdf

³ California Secretary of State: Kevin Shelley. Website. 2003.
http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/ror/county_09-22-03.pdf

⁴ US Census Bureau. Website. 2003.

The site tells what percentage of each county's population who successfully graduated from high school. Since it is a percentage, this variable is also expressed as an interval-ratio level variable.

The third independent variable is that which explores ethnicity as a potential predictor of signature gathering success. The hypothesis predicts that higher Hispanic populations will cause lower rates of success in counties' ability to gain support for the recall. In order to test the prediction, data from the Census Bureau can be used again. The census tells the percentage of each county's population who are Hispanic. This data can be used just as it is without being modified, and it is also an interval-ratio level variable.

Finally, the fourth independent variable to be used in this study is that which explains whether recent economic downturn affects counties' success in gathering signatures for the recall petition. To measure this variable a number of steps must be taken. First, the pertinent economic data has to be gathered from the California Employment Development Department website⁵. The availability of economic data for 2002 and 2003 that has been broken down by county is severely limited. The only data available that is applicable to this study is the unemployment rates from 2002 and 2003. To utilize this data the March 2002 unemployment rates must be collected. These percentages are interval-ratio level variables. Then, the March 2003 unemployment data must also be collected. In order to determine which counties may have suffered economic decline in the year preceding the recall petition movement, the data from March 2003 must be subtracted from that of March 2002. This calculation reveals the

⁵ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html>
 California Employment Development Department. Website. 2003.
<http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/county/coshtm.htm>

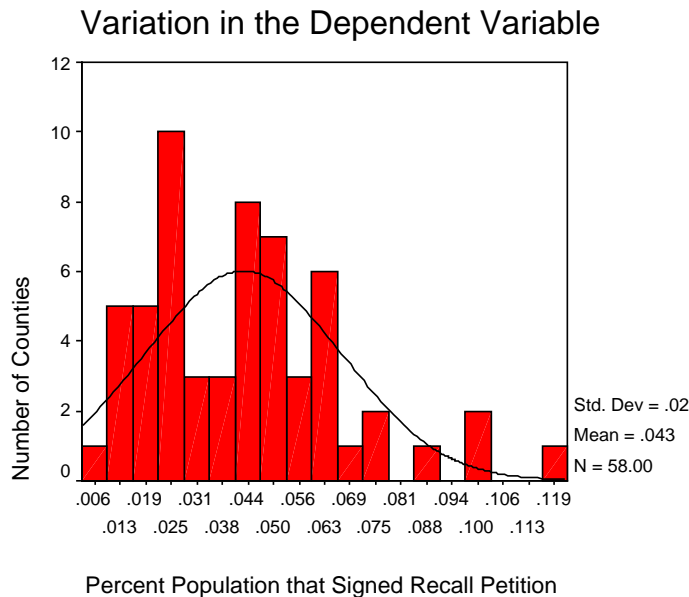
change in unemployment rates. The new variable created is the one used to measure economic downturn with positive values indicating decreases in unemployment and negative values representing increases in unemployment.

By gathering data from these specified websites and manipulating the information, the independent variables of party affiliation, education, Hispanic population, and economic downturn can be extrapolated. Once the data is collected and manipulated into the suitable format for analysis, a regression can be done. The regression technique is a method that allows the investigator to look for association between the dependent variable and independent variables that are of an interval-ratio nature. This is the method that will be used in the analysis for this study. The four independent variables will be used to test the validity of the hypothesis, and measure the influence each of them has on counties' success in gathering signatures for the recall petition.

Analysis

The hypothesis states that counties that are more Republican, more educated, have higher Hispanic populations, and have been affected by recent economic downturn are the most likely to have success in gaining recall petition signatures. In order to conduct an organized analysis of the data, attention must first be paid to the actual distribution of signatures across the 58 counties. Once the dependent variable has been defined, a regression can be conducted. Then, each independent variable can be examined individually. The goal is to produce significant evidence that the hypothesis is valid, and try to ascertain how well the independent variables explain the success the counties had in gaining signatures.

The dependent variable shows a number of interesting characteristics. From the distribution pictured below it is obvious that most of the values range from .01 to .07. The X-axis indicates the proportion of signatures a county can get, while the Y-axis shows how many counties acquired these percentages. As the graph shows, the mean is centered at .043. This is the average percentage of the counties' total population who signed the recall petition. This means that, since all fifty-eight of California's counties are counted, the average number of people per county who signed the recall petition was 4.3%. The distribution seems to be relatively symmetric, and because the standard deviation is .02, it is clear that 95% of the values lie between .023 (2.3%) and .063 (6.3%). These details are significant because it is important to understand the nature of the dependent variable and its variation. Since it is a critical component to the regression analysis that will be conducted in this study, it is very important to carefully acknowledge its characteristics.



To begin the analysis of the independent variables, a regression must be conducted. The regression is useful because it shows the relationship between the interval-ratio level dependent variable and the interval-ratio level independent variables. The regression data measures the association between them and indicates what the relationship is (positive or negative), how plausible the association is (how confident we can be that the null hypothesis is true), and the strength of association. The following regression equation tests the hypothesis:

**Results of Regression Analysis Predicting Signature Gathering Success:
Party Affiliation, Education, Ethnicity and Economic Downturn (Table 1)**

	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	T value	Significance
Constant	-.128		-3.047	.004
Registered Republicans	.178	.760	8.349	.000
High School Graduates	.101	.335	2.352	.022
Ethnicity	.015	.096	.658	.514
Recent Economic Downturn	-.07	-.035	-.372	.711

Adjusted R Square= .580

Regression Equation: $y = .178x_1 + .101x_2 + .015x_3 - .07x_4 - .128$

X_1 =Registered Republicans X_2 =HS Graduates X_3 =Ethnicity X_4 =Economic Downturn

This regression data allows us to conduct an analysis of the independent variables. To begin, it is important to describe the regression equation. Each of the independent variables is incorporated into the regression equation with a corresponding slope, which is denoted by the unstandardized coefficients (B). Also, it is important to note the constant value of -.128. This number indicates that when the independent variables are

held at zero, the regression line crosses the y-axis at $-.128$. Understanding the regression equation is essential to conducting a thorough analysis of the data.

We begin the discussion of the data with the party affiliation variable. The data shows that by increasing a county's percentage of registered Republicans by one percentage point, the percentage of signatures gathered by that county rises by $.178$ when the other independent variables are held constant. This reveals that there is a positive relationship between the number of signatures gathered and the percentage of people within the counties who identify themselves as Republicans.

To test the strength of this relationship, one must look at the T-value and significance of the variable. The null hypothesis for the party affiliation variable states, "there is no association between the percentage of signatures gathered and the percentage of people who identify themselves as Republicans." The T value for this variable is 8.087 . A T-value of more than 1.96 is considered sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis. This value of 8.087 denotes that the slope of $.178$ would be found about eight standard deviations away from the mean if the null hypothesis were true. This means that there is an extremely small probability that the null hypothesis is true. Therefore, the relationship seems to be strong and we can be over 95% certain that there is a positive relationship between a county's percentage of Republicans and their success in gathering signatures for the recall.

Also, the significance value of $.000$ indicates that we would expect this outcome 0% of the time if the null hypothesis were true. This further corroborates the assumption that the null can be rejected and that there is indeed a significant correlation between party identification and signature gathering success. For all these reasons there is strong

reason to assume that the hypothesis was correct in its prediction about the nature of the first independent variable.

The second variable is education. Is there a relationship between the proportion of a county's population who graduated high school and its success in gathering recall petition signatures? To answer this, the same details as before must be drawn out of the regression data table so that an analysis can be conducted. The slope for education is .101, indicating that for every 1% increase in the independent variable (educated population) there is a corresponding .101 change in the dependent variable when all other independent variables are held constant.

To verify the significance of the relationship between education and signature gathering success, we look to the T-value. Since the T-value of 2.352 is greater than 1.96, there is good reason to reject the null hypothesis. The significance measure also corroborates this assumption. It reads .022, which means that if the null hypothesis were true there would be about a 2% chance of getting the same value. Again, the regression table yields convincing evidence that the null hypothesis can be rejected and that a strong relationship between the dependent variable and education variable does in fact exist. The data supports the hypothesis that counties who were the most successful in gaining signatures for the recall petition did in fact have higher percentages of their population who had graduated high school.

The independent variable of ethnicity must also be analyzed. The slope of this independent variable is .015. This means that for every 1% increase in a county's Mexican population, there is a corresponding increase of .015 in the dependent variable when the other independent variables are held constant. The slope seems to indicate a

positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables, but we must look to the T-value and significance value to know whether this relationship is significant. The regression data yields a T-value of .658 for the variable. This value, being less than 1.96 tells us that the null cannot be rejected, and indicates that the slope would be less than one standard deviation from the mean of the distribution of sample slopes if the null were true. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. According to the significance value, which is .514, there is a 51% chance that we would get this same slope if the null hypothesis were true. Therefore, all the evidence in the regression analysis seems to prove the hypothesis wrong. The data suggests that there is no significant relationship between counties' success in signature gathering and the percentage of peoples of Hispanic origin residing there. Thus, the null cannot be rejected.

The fourth independent variable to be analyzed in this study is that of recent economic downturn. The hypothesis purports that counties affected by economic decline were more likely to sign petitions for the recall. However, the data from the regression seems to contradict this idea. The unstandardized coefficient of -.07 shows that there is actually a negative relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This contradicts the hypothesis' assumption that higher Hispanic populations are related to signature gathering success. Therefore, it is clear right from the beginning that there is no evidence to legitimize the belief that a significant relationship exists between the dependent and independent variable. This is confirmed by the T value, which is -.372. This does not warrant a rejection of the null hypothesis. Also, the significance value is .711. This means that if the null hypothesis were true, we would expect to get this same

outcome about 71% of the time. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. As result, the regression analysis seems to indicate that there is no correlation between recent economic downturn and signature gathering success.

When the standardized coefficients are compared, a number of trends become apparent. First, it is clear that the party affiliation variable's slope of .76 shows that this variable had a far greater impact on the dependent variable than any of the other independent variables. However, the education variable also seems to have a strong influence. Its slope of .335 supercedes the other two remaining variables which return significantly smaller coefficients of .096 and -.035. By comparing these slopes it is clear that the party affiliation and education variables had the greatest impact on the dependent variable.

Finally, the R-Square value shows how much of the variation found in the dependent variable is explained by the four independent variables. The Adjusted R Square data shows a value of .580. This means that the four independent variables explain about 58% of the variation in proportion of signatures per county. The rest of this variation is explained by other variables. This regression data shows that the hypothesis is not correct. Rather, only two of the four independent variables show strong evidence that seems to support the hypothesis. In order to show this polarization between the two variables that support the hypothesis and the other two which do not, a second regression can be run. This time the only two independent variables to be counted are the party affiliation and education variables.

**Second Regression Analysis Predicting Signature Gathering Success:
Excluding Ethnicity and Economic Downturn variables (Table 2)**

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T Value	Significance
Constant	-.105		-4.632	.000
Registered Republicans	.173	.740	8.736	.000
High School Graduates	.078	.259	3.062	.003

Adjusted R Square: .592

Regression Equation: $y = .173x_1 + .078x_2 - .105$

x_1 =Registered Republicans x_2 =High School Graduates

This second regression table supports the idea that only the first two variables of the hypothesis are really valid predictors of a county's success in gaining recall petitions. It is important to first note that the significance of the education variable changed from .022 to .003. This means that the second regression for the education variable is better able to reject the null hypothesis. Also, it should be noted that the R-Square did not change significantly when the two variables were removed. In fact, it actually rose from .580 to .592. Had the Hispanic population and economic downturn variables been significant, their absence would have reduced the R-Square value. However, since this did not occur, two important inferences can be made. First, we can infer that the two independent variables excluded from the second regression were not significant indicators. Second, we can also infer that the other two variables are very strong predictors. The fact that these two variables by themselves explain about 60% of the variance in the dependent variable shows that they are indeed good indicators of whether a county was successful in gathering signatures for the recall petition. Therefore, this second regression provides convincing evidence that while the party affiliation and

education variables accurately predict signature gathering success in California counties, it remains inconclusive as to whether the others also do. The regression analyses provide sufficient evidence to infer that a statistically significant association between the dependent variables and these two independent variables does not exist.

Conclusion

Although the analysis showed that the hypothesis was only partly successful in explaining why certain counties were more successful than others in collecting recall petition signatures, the study can largely be considered a success. There is little doubt that the work done in this study has the potential to help other researchers in this field. There are a number of ways in which the findings from this survey can be used to craft more efficient studies in the future.

It is unfortunate that the hypothesis was refuted by the data. Clearly, the Hispanic population and economic downturn variables were problematic in that the evidence strongly contested the association between these variables and the dependent variable. However, while it may seem as if the hypothesis failed, this is not actually the case. From this study, future researchers concentrating on this field will most likely gain a great deal of knowledge as to how to approach a similar question in a more efficient manner. For instance, perhaps the economic downturn data did not come out the way the hypothesis said it would because that particular independent variable was based solely on unemployment percentage. Perhaps this, combined with other data about per capita income, the number of businesses that opened and closed that year, and others could make the variable stronger. In this study, the data was simply not available because it is so recent. However, in three years, this type of information will be available, and such

data will make it possible to create a stronger economic downturn variable. Future researchers can gain knowledge from this study about which approaches did not work, and they can improve upon the methods this one utilizes.

It is important also to mention that two of the independent variables proved to be very significant. The analysis shows that both the party affiliation variable and education variable were very reliable predictors of signature gathering success. This knowledge will also aid future researchers to the extent that, because it was determined that these two values do explain so much of the variance in the dependent variable, they will want to incorporate these variables in their analysis. If what the regression analysis says is true, an individual conducting a similar study would definitely want to include these independent variables in his/her analysis. The data clearly showed a positive relationship between a county's percentage of registered Republicans and signature gathering success. It also showed a similarly strong relationship with regard to education and the dependent variable.

There is little doubt that this study helps add to the body of available literature in this area. In fact, this may be the first concerted effort to explain signature gathering success with regard to the 2003 California Recall. Since the entire recall unfolded within the past year, the information provided by this study could serve as a foundation for future research. At this point, because it is so fresh a topic, there is an extremely wide gap in the literature. After all, recalls are extremely few and very far between. However, the prolific nature of California's 2003 recall is sure to catapult this issue into the public domain. This will undoubtedly lead to further study in the areas of recalls, referendums, and initiatives. Explanations as to how these movements come about and who supports

them will be critical to attaining a better understanding as to how these political mechanisms function. For this reason, the research in this study is very important to the study of political science. It helps to explain what factors influence people to take political action. Based on the data, party affiliation and education are two very significant variables in determining this.

However, it is important to remember that this study raises a number of questions for future researchers. For example, why does the data show the size of a Hispanic population in a county to be an insignificant predictor of signature gathering success? Also, why did the data seem to show an inverse relationship between economic downturn and signature gathering success? These questions and many others will be the challenge of the next wave of researchers to study in this field.

For these reasons, it is difficult to see this study as a failure. While it did not prove all that the hypothesis intended, even the two variables that proved to be insignificant will provide useful data for future students of this field. In a sense, the inconclusive data is just as useful as that which showed a significant relationship between the other two independent variables and the dependent variable. Because of this fact, the research conducted in this study will provide a useful model for future researchers that can be imitated, manipulated and improved upon.

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