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Estimating the Effect of "Change to Win" on Union Organizing

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Abstract

In a 2005 effort to reinvigorate new-member organizing efforts, seven unions split from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to form a new union federation, Change to Win. Using ten years of data from the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board and a difference-in-difference estimator, the author estimates the effect of Change to Win policies on whether a union won its certification election and the number and percentage of workers successfully organized. The results indicate no statistically significant difference in organizing success following Change to Win's implementation of new organizing strategies and practices, relative to the AFL-CIO.

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ESTIMATING THE EFFECT OF "CHANGE TO WIN" ON UNION ORGANIZING

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In a 2005 effort to reinvigorate new-member organizing efforts, seven unions split from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to form a new union federation, Change to Win. Using ten years of data from the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board and a difference-in-difference estimator, the author estimates the effect of Change to Win policies on whether a union won its certification election and the number and percentage of workers successfully organized. The results indicate no statistically significant difference in organizing success following Change to Win's implementation of new organizing strategies and practices, relative to the AFL-CIO.

Labor unions in the United States have a complex history of prioritizing new-member organizing. After a sharp increase in organizing activity following the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, unions' prioritization of organizing began to wane. More notably, unions' financial investment in new-member organizing began to decrease in the 1950s; organizing expenditures per nonunion worker decreased approximately 28% between 1953 and 1971 (Atleson 1994). Accompanying this decreased prioritization of new-member organizing was a decline in union density (Farber and Western 2001).

For decades, academics and unionists have chronicled the decline in union density in the United States; union leaders have begun to see new-member organizing as a potential solution and everyday priority, and academics have begun to study these organizing attempts. Such research has included quantitative assessments of the effect of specific organizing tactics or strategies on union election wins (Reed 1989; Bronfenbrenner 1997; Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 1998; Bronfenbrenner and Hickey 2004), case studies examining organizing models and strategies (Waldinger et al. 1998; Milkman and Wong 2001; Rudy 2004), and questions pertaining to

recent attempts to organize across jurisdictional boundaries (Ferguson 2009).

Evidence from these studies suggests that the success of some individual unions was vastly different from other unions, as was each union's overall commitment to new-member organizing. Although the election of the 1995 American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) executive candidates with the motto "Changing to Organize" was viewed as a potential turning point for organized labor, not all unions changed to organize. Indeed, Bronfenbrenner and Hickey (2004) suggested that major organizing victories were limited to only six unions: the Service Employees International Union (SEIU); the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE); the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE);[1] the Communication Workers of America (CWA); the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Beginning in 2005, with their eye on reinvigorating the labor movement, seven unions split from the AFL-CIO to form a new union federation, Change to Win.[2] The reason for this disaffiliation from the AFL-CIO lay primarily in differences over what steps should be taken to prevent any further decline in union density in the United States. Following the 1995 AFL-CIO executive election, the AFL-CIO pursued a more aggressive political agenda (Katz, Batt, and Keefe 2003) because it emphasized the need for political allies and labor law reform as a precursor to union revitalization (Hurd 2007). In contrast, the Change to Win platform stressed the need for a high degree of centralization as well as highly coordinated and strategic new-member organizing. The strategic differences were clear, yet many unionists and academics remain unconvinced that a split was necessary.

Since the announcement of Change to Win's formation, it has been the topic of numerous investigations by scholars. Based on qualitative research, Masters, Gibney, and Zagenczyk (2006) contrasted Change to Win's vision and strategy with that of the AFL-CIO, concluding that the two federations were, indeed, fundamentally different. Additional qualitative research by Estreicher (2006) and Chaison (2007) delved into the motivations behind the split and the potential obstacles that existed to the new federation's success, including the lack of competition between it and the AFL-CIO. They concluded that Change to Win overstated its abilities to change the landscape of organizing. Based on quantitative research, both Chandler and Gely (2007) and Devinatz (2010) analyzed presplit organizing data of each

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[1] UNITE and HERE later merged together to create UNITE HERE in 2004.

[2] Six of the seven Change to Win unions disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO as a result of their desire to be part of Change to Win, but one union—the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC)—had left the AFL-CIO in 2001. Furthermore, four unions (UBC, UNITE HERE, the Laborers' International Union of North America [LIUNA], and the United Food and Commercial Workers [UFCW]) have since disaffiliated from Change to Win; LIUNA, UFCW, and UNITE HERE rejoined the AFL-CIO, although approximately one-third of UNITE HERE's members remained affiliated with Change to Win as SEIU members.

federation's affiliated unions. Both articles analyzed organizing activity, with a particular emphasis on the industry in which the organizing occurred because Change to Win leaders argued that the future of labor required that more resources be spent on organizing workers in the service sector. Chandler and Gely's (2007) results suggested that much organizing activity was concentrated in manufacturing, although, in fact, unions were not any less effective at organizing in service-related industries than in manufacturing. Devinatz (2010) concluded that Change to Win falls short of constituting labor's third "moment," wherein unions successfully organize workers concentrated in previously unorganized occupations or industries. Finally, in a quantitative study using post-split data, Roof (2007) examined the federations' political spending. Although leaders of the Change to Win unions had stated that the AFL-CIO focused too much on politics at the expense of organizing, Roof found no significant difference in the levels of political spending between Change to Win affiliates and AFL-CIO affiliates in the two years following the split.

Nevertheless, Fiorito and Jarley (2010) noted in their study of national unions' organizing activity that the question of whether the Change to Win split led to any dramatic changes in organizing remained unanswered. To date, no quantitative study has directly estimated the impact of Change to Win's formation and the federation's new policies on its affiliates' organizing success. The recent disaffiliation of several unions from the new federation, as well as the change by Change to Win from a federation of unions to a "strategic organizing center," further motivates the need for a quantitative study of the federation's effectiveness in achieving its original goal of revitalization through new-member organizing.

This article examines the efficacy of America's newest union federation in terms of its impact on new-member organizing. I use data on single-union elections from September 2000 through September 2010 from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) as well as single-union elections[3] run by the National Mediation Board (NMB), which oversees organizing activity under the jurisdiction of the Railway Labor Act, to estimate the effect of the Change to Win initiative on measures of organizing success. I employ a difference-in-difference methodology in which I compare the pre- and post-split organizing outcomes of Change of Win unions with those of AFL-CIO unions.

The Change to Win experience can provide important insights for union leaders and researchers about the effect of centralization of resources and strategy on union organizing. My analysis addresses two key questions. First, are the Change to Win policies and practices associated with a higher probability of winning a union election among its own affiliates? Second, do the new Change to Win policies and practices affect the number of workers successfully organized, both in terms of absolute number relative to the size of

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[3]I included only those elections in which the workers involved were not represented in part or in full by any organization at the time the representation application was filed.

the union and as a percentage of the number of workers for whom bargaining rights were sought, of its affiliate unions? Thus, my second question focuses on the number of workers whose bargaining rights were won through certification elections because this directly affects union density.

Change to Win: A New Labor Federation

The Formation of Change to Win

Historically, the AFL-CIO focused its energies not on new-member organizing but on servicing the needs of the existing membership. AFL-CIO President Meany acknowledged in 1972 after 20 years in office that, "I used to worry about the membership, about the size of the membership. But quite a few years ago, I stopped worrying about it, because to me it doesn't make any difference. . . . The organized fellow is the fellow that counts" (quoted in Schiavone 2008: 16). The AFL-CIO's focus changed, however, in 1995 with the election of the "New Voice" slate, whose motto, "Changing to Organize," suggested the possibility of a major shift toward directly prioritizing organizing activities. Turner, Katz, and Hurd referred to this event as "the most dramatic indication of revitalization" in the labor movement (2001: 2).

In the early years after this election, the AFL-CIO's commitment to union organizing appeared quite strong, but as time went on, this commitment waned. Meanwhile, its focus on developing an agenda for future political and labor law reform increased (Hurd 2007). In response, a group of unions began discussions in 2001 that ultimately led to the formation of the New Unity Partnership. This group included the SEIU, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC), which had already disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO, and other AFL-CIO unions, including the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), UNITE, and HERE. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), the United Farm Workers (UFW), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) later withdrew from the AFL-CIO and joined the five unions of the New Unity Partnership (see Table 1 for more information about these unions). On September 27, 2005, Change to Win was founded. With the disaffiliation of the seven unions[4] of Change to Win, the AFL-CIO's pre-September 2005 total membership decreased by approximately 40%.

A New Path: Change to Win Policies and Practices

Change to Win distinguished itself as the organizing federation; at its founding convention, Teamsters president James Hoffa promised a "lean, mean, organizing machine" (International Brotherhood of Teamsters 2005). The federation's proposed strategy was predicated on an important distinction

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[4]By the time Change to Win was formed, UNITE and HERE had merged to create one union. Thus, the seven unions in Change to Win consisted of SEIU, UNITE HERE, UBC, LIUNA, UFCW, IBT, and UFW.

Table 1. Change to Win Unions

Union name	Acronym	Total membership in 2005	Total assets in 2005 ($)
International Brotherhood of Teamsters	IBT	1,396,174	178,133,890
Laborers' International Union of North America	LIUNA	669,772	97,015,753
Service Employees International Union	SEIU	1,505,100	164,700,021
Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees	UNITE HERE	455,346	227,631,565
United Brotherhood of Carpenters	UBC	522,416	209,024,312
United Farm Workers of America	UFW	5,485	1,944,112
United Food and Commercial Workers	UFCW	1,311,548	127,942,091

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards LM filings.

between the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. The AFL-CIO is constitutionally a voluntary federation of autonomous labor unions and thus has no real power over its affiliated unions with respect to their policies or practices (Milkman 2006). In contrast, Change to Win possesses greater authority over the operation of its member unions, including the allocation of resources to organizing and the coordination of joint campaigns. This federation-level difference is an important one; for example, it allows the federation to ask local unions for additional funding for organizing campaigns and requires unions to submit their organizing plans to the federation for review.

Financial Commitment to Organizing

Allocating resources specifically to organizing is critical for election wins and increasing union density through new-member organizing. Underlying the Change to Win platform was the belief that the AFL-CIO, as a federation, and its individual unions were committing insufficient funds to new-member organizing campaigns. In contrast, Change to Win unions desired more resources for organizing; in the words of James Hoffa, "we are going to put our money into organizing, and we will succeed" (quoted in Dine 2007: 158). Bronfenbrenner and Hickey (2004) found that financial allocation is a significant predictor of union wins; the odds of a union win are 119% greater when the union allocates adequate and appropriate resources than when it does not.[5]

The enhanced financial allocation for organizing made by Change to Win unions signaled a significant shift in policy and in practice. Strong

[5]*Adequate resources*, in this context, is defined as allocating 1 organizer per 100 eligible voters in the unit being unionized, 1 female organizer for units with 25% or more women, and 1 organizer of color for units with 25% or more workers of color.

financial commitments to organizing were established at both the federation and local-union levels. The federation's constitution set monthly per-capita payments at $0.25. The constitution further required that at least 75% of these resources be devoted to new-member organizing efforts and controlled centrally by the federation. A monthly per-capita payment of $0.25 signified an annual individual-member contribution of $3.00 to the federation, of which 75%, or $2.25, would be allocated for organizing. When the constitution was drafted in 2005, this amounted to an unprecedented $13.5 million per year, given the approximately 6 million members in the federation.

Local unions were also expected to experience an important cost savings as a result of the Change to Win split; the AFL-CIO required a $0.65 monthly per-capita payment, whereas Change to Win required only a $0.25 monthly per-capita payment. The $0.40 per member that each union was saving monthly through lower per-capita dues was also to be diverted to organizing in an effort for each affiliated union to devote "maximum" resources to organizing. With 6 million members, this amounted to an additional $28.8 million for organizing at the level of the local union. Although this requirement is not written into the Change to Win constitution, Hurd (2007) suggested that it is followed through a system of mutual accountability by each of the affiliated unions' presidents.

This level of funding stands in sharp contrast to the resources allocated to organizing by the AFL-CIO and its member unions. The AFL-CIO has on several occasions approved substantial one-time investments for organizing efforts (e.g., in 1995 and again in 2005), but no ongoing allocation toward organizing is required by the federation and no minimum level of funding is required of each member union.

Coordination of Campaigns

Coordination in Change to Win is highly centralized, unlike in the AFL-CIO. In addition to the more informal coordination and strategic planning that occurs among the Change to Win unions through regular meetings between organizing and campaign directors (Hurd 2007), 15 sector coordinating committees (SCCs) oversee all organizing and collective bargaining activities in their respective jurisdictions. The constitution of Change to Win establishes that upon a union's affiliation with the federation, the appropriate SCC will review the union's jurisdictional boundaries and organizing plan; all organizing plans must be approved by the SCC, and any of its decisions are binding on the union. Furthermore, large-scale organizing campaigns are developed and implemented by Change to Win's Strategic Organizing Center. Several examples of these coordinated campaigns include the SEIU's and IBT's Driving Up Standards Together campaign to unionize bus drivers employed by First Student, the Warehouse Workers United campaign to improve working conditions for warehouse workers, and the multi-union efforts to unionize Walmart employees. Early in Change

to Win's existence, Hurd concluded that "[t]he depth of strategic coordination that appears to be emerging from the CTW is atypical and has not been seen in the United States since the early years of the CIO in the late 1930s" (2007: 318–19). For these reasons, Masters et al. qualitatively distinguished between the two unions' trajectories when they termed the AFL-CIO trajectory a minimalist "accelerated evolution," in which each individual union decides what organizing to undertake and with what resources, while deeming the trajectory of the Change to Win an "engineered breakthrough," in reference to its strategic changes (2006: 493).

Methodology and Empirical Specifications

I examine whether this change—the new policies and practices of Change to Win—is associated with an improved organizing record for the Change to Win affiliate unions. Organizing success is measured by three alternative outcome measures involving different levels of aggregation: 1) whether the union won the election or not; 2) the number of workers successfully organized by union and year, relative to the national union's size (i.e., the number of workers successfully organized divided by membership[6] in thousands); and 3) the percentage of workers successfully organized by union and year (i.e., the number of workers successfully organized divided by the number of workers for whom bargaining rights were sought). The first measure is based on the micro level of the election: the dependent variable is coded 1 if the union won and 0 otherwise. The next two measures are based on data aggregated to the union and year levels; the dependent variable is a continuous measure involving numbers or percentages.

The first indicator, although not explicitly the focus of Change to Win, is an essential measure of success because certification is a precursor to gaining new members. The rationale for the second measure of success—the relative number of workers successfully organized by the union affiliate in the year—is that this measure most directly impacts union density, and Change to Win cited increasing union density as one of its goals. The third measure of success—the number of workers successfully organized expressed as a percentage of the number of workers for whom bargaining rights were sought—takes into account whether unions are successful in organizing both smaller and larger bargaining units. This number is important because one of the goals of the Change to Win federation was to target larger bargaining units because winning in these units has a greater impact on union density (Chaison 2007).

I use a difference-in-difference methodology to measure the effect of an intervention for a treatment group (before and after) relative to a comparison group (before and after) that was not affected by the intervention. In

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[6]This represents the membership size of the national union (in thousands) in the year the election occurred, as reported in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) LM-2, LM-3, and LM-4 reports.

the present study, the treatment group (those unions that were part of Change to Win) was exposed to a change in policy in the post-split period but not in the presplit period; the comparison group (those unions that were affiliated with the AFL-CIO) was not exposed to this change in either period. More specifically, Change to Win's continuous allocation of substantial resources to new-member organizing and the coordination of joint campaigns represented a distinct shift from the practices and policies of the AFL-CIO. The benefit of the difference-in-difference method is that each federation's pretreatment outcome functions as its own control. Thus, this method controls for observed and unobserved time-invariant characteristics at the federation level.

The key identifying assumption of the difference-in-difference approach is that, in the absence of the policy change, both groups would have experienced the same time trend (Meyer 1995; Galiani, Gertler, and Schargrodsky 2005; Angrist and Pischke 2009). This common-trends assumption allows me to use the change in the dependent variable of the control group as an unbiased estimate of the counterfactual. The common-trends assumption holds for all three outcome measures: the rate of union wins (Figure 1A),[7] the relative number of workers successfully organized (Figure 1B), and the percentage of workers successfully organized (Figure 1C). All three figures illustrate a similar trend during the presplit period for the unions of the two federations. To illustrate that the Change to Win unions were as active in organizing as the much larger group of approximately 50 AFL-CIO unions, Figure A.1 (see the Appendix) plots the number of NLRB elections attempted by the two federations and Figure A.2 plots the number of elections won by the two union federations from September 2000 through September 2010.

I used a linear probability model when the outcome variable was binary[8] and a linear regression model when the outcome variable was continuous. For the union win rate, I ran the following regression:

$$(1) \qquad y_{it} = \alpha + \beta \text{After}_t + \gamma \text{CTW}_i + \delta \text{CTW}_i \times \text{After}_t + x_{it}' \pi + \varepsilon_{it},$$

where the subscript i indexes union certification elections and the subscript t indexes time. For all other regressions, the same equation was used, although data were aggregated to the union and year levels. Thus, i indexes union, t indexes time, and the vector of control variables represents the mean values. My dependent variable in Equation (1), y_{it}, denotes the outcome measure such as having a union win; the relative number of workers successfully organized; or the percentage of workers successfully organized. CTW is a dummy that takes the value of 1 if the union involved in the

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[7]As did Lemieux and Milligan (2008), I used a data-smoothing method to provide a clearer picture of the underlying trends in my figures. Rather than the simple moving average used by Lemieux and Milligan (2008), I used Hann's three-term moving average of unequal weights—0.50 in year t, 0.25 in year $t - 1$, and 0.25 in year $t + 1$, with zero weights at each end value—to emphasize the current year's data.

[8]The linear probability model is generally regarded as an adequate approximation to the underlying nonlinear relationship within the 0.30 to 0.70 range of probabilities (Fitzmaurice, Laird, and Ware 2011), which is the case in my data, where the mean of the dependent variable is 0.56.

Figure 1A. Percentage of Union-Won Elections, by Federation
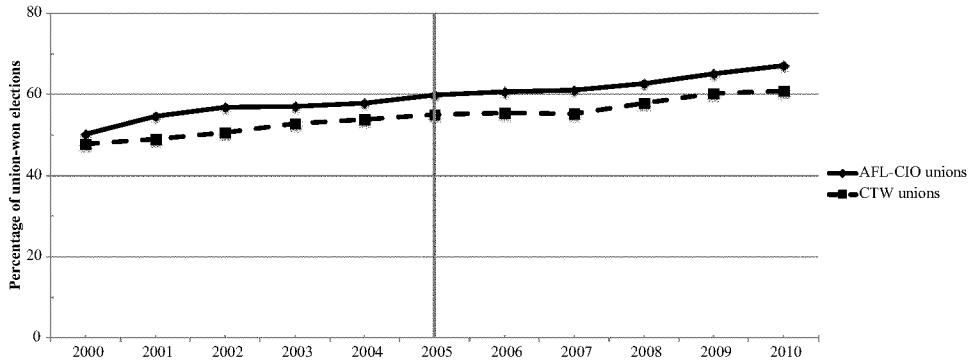
Note: Data from September 2000 through September 2010.

Figure 1B. Relative Number of Workers Successfully Organized, by Federation
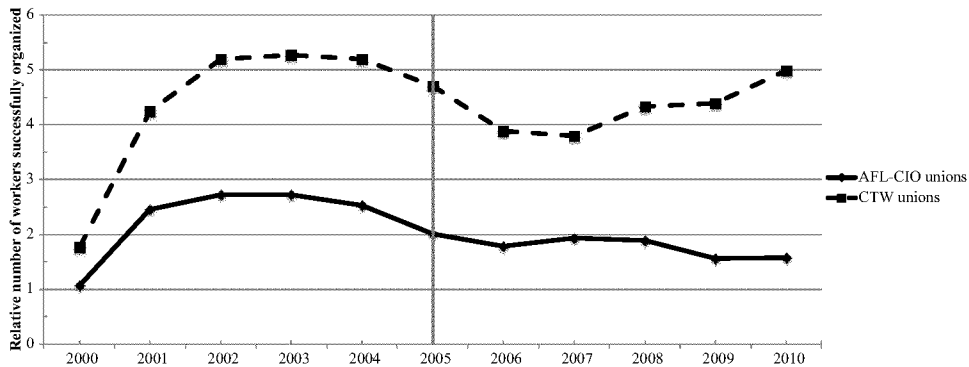
Note: Data from September 2000 through September 2010.

Figure 1C. Percentage of Workers Successfully Organized, by Federation
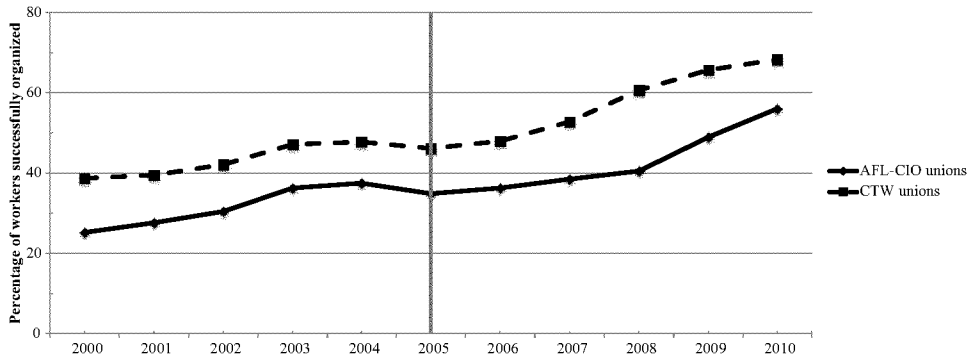
Note: Data from September 2000 through September 2010.

election was affiliated with Change to Win and 0 if it was affiliated with the AFL-CIO; it captures any potential differences between Change to Win (the affected group) and the AFL-CIO (the comparison group) that existed prior to the change in policy. After in Equation (1) is a time-period dummy variable that captures aggregate factors that would have affected y even in

the absence of the Change to Win policy changes; it takes the value 1 if the election occurred after the split and 0 if it occurred before the split. The key term in this analysis, the difference-in-difference estimator (the coefficient on CTW × After), represents the change in the dependent variable for Change to Win affiliates, relative to AFL-CIO affiliates, after the change in organizational strategy. It can be expressed as:

$$(2) \qquad \text{CTW} \times \text{After} = \left(\bar{y}_{\text{CTW,After}} - \bar{y}_{\text{CTW,Before}} \right) - \left(\bar{y}_{\text{AFL-CIO,After}} - \bar{y}_{\text{AFL-CIO,Before}} \right).$$

Finally, x'_{it} in Equation (1) is a vector of control variables that control for a range of observable characteristics that are theorized to affect an election outcome and union fixed effects. The size of the bargaining unit has been found to have an inverse relationship with the probability of winning an election (Farber 2001); in my model, bargaining unit size is expressed in hundreds. Whether the NMB or the NLRB conducted the election, and what type of election the latter conducted, is an important distinction that I controlled for in the model. Whereas the NMB requires a majority of workers in the bargaining unit to vote in favor of unionization to be certified,[9] the NLRB requires only a simple majority of the votes cast to determine the outcome. Furthermore, the model controls for whether the NLRB election was a consent election, in which parties agree to accept the decision of the NLRB regional director regarding all postelection issues, or a stipulated election, in which parties can appeal to the NLRB if they disagree with the director's decisions; workers are more likely to support unionization in a consent election (Cooke 1983). One aim of the Change to Win platform was to become a federation representing those workers in the service sector whose jobs could not be outsourced (Chandler and Gely 2007). Thus, to isolate the effects of the policies of Change to Win from the effects of potential differences in organizing targets between it and the AFL-CIO, I also included in my model controls for various industry measures: a dummy variable indicating whether the election occurred in a service or goods-producing industry; the average employment (in millions) in the year of the election for the industry in which the election occurred, based on two-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) classes; and the industry's average union density during the year of the election, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consistent with previous studies, my model also controls for the economic and union climate (e.g., Bronfenbrenner 1997; Ferguson 2008). The economic variables in my model include both the unemployment rate and a recession indicator. The unemployment rate is the seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment rate by state at the time the election was conducted, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; the recession indicator is a dummy variable that takes the value 1 during the recession (December 2007 to June 2009) and 0 otherwise. To capture and control for the extent to which the election occurred in a union-friendly environment, I included three controls. A dummy variable

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[9]As of September 17, 2010, the NMB amended its voting procedures and rules. A majority of votes cast, similar to the NLRB, now determine the outcome of an NMB certification election. No observations in this data set were affected by this change in policy because they all occurred under the old regime.

captures whether the election occurred in a "Right to Work" state; Right to Work laws are traditionally indicative of an anti-union climate (Farber 1984). A state's union density is included as an indicator of union preference, power, and ability to launch organizing campaigns (Rose and Chaison 1996). In addition, the model includes the degree of Democratic control over the NLRB. I included year dummies for the year in which the election occurred. Finally, my model includes union dummy variables that take into account the fixed effects of the union involved in the election. By employing a fixed-effects model, which is often used in the difference-in-difference literature, I controlled for the fixed unobservable union effects that were nonrandom and may be correlated with other variables in my model.

I used White, or sandwich, standard errors to account for the heteroskedasticity in my linear models. I also clustered the standard errors by year to account for the serial correlation that can arise in difference-in-difference models (Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan 2004). A growing body of literature has questioned the estimation of standard errors and proper statistical inference in difference-in-difference estimates with small numbers of clusters (e.g., Bertrand et al. 2004; Donald and Lang 2007; Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller 2008; Conley and Taber 2011). I employed an approach suggested by Cameron et al. (2008), who showed that bootstrapping the t statistics for the difference-in-difference estimates is more appropriate for inference than is the standard asymptotic normal approximation because the latter does not behave well with a small number of clusters. I chose the Wild cluster bootstrap procedure from Cameron et al. (2008) because it works well with binary dependent variables. All my inferences are based on the critical values obtained from the Wild cluster bootstrap, which are larger than the critical values from a standard normal distribution.[10]

Data

The data include all single-union NLRB and NMB elections that occurred from September 2000 to May 2005 and from January 2006 to September 2010. Union organizing campaigns (beginning with the first contact from a worker and ending with the election) can be lengthy processes; to reduce the potential for contaminated data (i.e., organizing drives that began prior to the split but had elections occurring after the split), I removed three months of data on either side of the event month, September 2005.[11] The

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[10]I obtain these p values using a modified version of a Stata "do file" created by Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller (2008).

[11]Several union mergers and affiliations occurred during the 10-year period covered in the data. In cases in which one union affiliated with another, I treated the two unions as distinct unions until the date of their merger or affiliation. In cases in which unions merged or affiliated before the 10-year period of interest, I treated the two unions as a single union. Finally, data from UNITE HERE and UBC, the two unions that disaffiliated from Change to Win during my time period of interest, were dropped after their disaffiliation to prevent any contamination. This affected 36 elections; my final results are similar whether these observations are included or excluded from the data. LIUNA re-affiliated with the AFL-CIO on October 1, 2010, and UFCW disaffiliated from Change to Win and rejoined the AFL-CIO in late 2013; both of these events fall outside my time period of interest.

data were compiled from monthly NLRB Election Reports, which included information on all elections conducted in the United States by NLRB officials each month, and from annual NMB Determinations. My analyses are restricted to unions affiliated with either the AFL-CIO or Change to Win; I do not consider the election results of unaffiliated unions.[12]

In the United States, union certifications are obtained primarily through one of four processes: NLRB elections, elections conducted under the Railway Labor Act and Agricultural Labor Relations Act,[13] public-sector elections conducted by state labor boards, and voluntary recognition by an employer. Voluntary recognition can occur either through agreements with the employer to recognize the union if a majority of bargaining-unit members sign union authorization cards or through an employer's recognition of an election, often conducted by a neutral body such as the American Arbitration Association or as a consent election held by the NLRB.

Over the last two decades, AFL-CIO and, more commonly, Change to Win unions have turned to organizing outside the NLRB through state labor boards or voluntary-recognition campaigns due to the challenges associated with traditional NLRB or NMB organizing (for a discussion, see Ferguson 2008; Bronfenbrenner 2009). Much academic research in the last decade has focused on these neutrality-based organizing campaigns, which began largely in the early 1990s. In one important study, Eaton and Kriesky (2001) reviewed over 100 organizing drives in which neutrality agreements were in place. In 73% of these agreements, voluntary recognition through card check was also secured in the agreement. The authors found that the rate of success is higher when recognition occurs through card check. Case studies of noteworthy nonboard organizing drives have grown in number (e.g., Waldinger et al. 1998; Milkman and Wong 2001; Benz 2002; Fantasia and Voss 2004). The unions that have been cited most often for their use of nonboard organizing include both AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions: SEIU, UNITE HERE, UAW, and CWA (Brudney 2005; Bronfenbrenner 2008), as well as AFSCME (Bronfenbrenner 2008). Their organizing is largely concentrated in the health-care, wireless communications/information, building services, and hotels and food services industries.

Although no systematic data have been collected of nonboard organizing campaigns, some attempts have been made to quantify the process through which workers are organized. Based on a review of the 1998 to 2005 self-reported data from the publication *Work in Progress* (previously published by

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[12]Although the NLRB election reports classify the Change to Win unions as unaffiliated, for the purpose of this article *unaffiliated unions* are defined as those unions that belong to neither the AFL-CIO nor Change to Win. These unions, in some cases, cannot be identified by name in the NLRB data. More important, the independent, unaffiliated unions are not affected by the policies of either the AFL-CIO or Change to Win, which are at the heart of my examination.

[13]The Agricultural Labor Relations Board, in which the UFW does most of its organizing, held only 40 certification votes between 2000 and 2010. This represents a minute fraction of the total number of certification elections held during this period by other boards. Of these 40 elections, the UFW was involved in 15.

the AFL-CIO), Gely and Chandler (2007) suggested that the number of workers organized through NLRB and NMB elections exceeded the number organized through card-check campaigns. Martin (2008) looked at the organizing activity from 1990 to 2001 of a sample of 70 local unions affiliated with national or international unions known for their innovative organizing. He concluded that, among these local unions, the vast majority (87%) of all union organizing events occurred through NLRB elections; only 13% of organizing events occurred through alternative means.[14] Bargaining units organized through nonboard means are larger on average than those organized through traditional organizing elections. Yet Martin (2008) found that the majority (58%) of all workers organized during this period by highly active unions were organized through NLRB-supervised elections. More recently, Fiorito and Jarley (2010, 2012) found similar results; organizing activity through elections represented approximately 85% of all organizing events in the early 2000s.

The lack of a centralized database of state labor board activity and the fact that no official record is kept of voluntary recognition campaigns hinders our ability to measure or analyze such data. More important, despite an increase in organizing efforts outside traditional board organizing, the evidence suggests that NLRB and NMB organizing remains the vehicle through which most organizing occurs. Elections supervised by the NLRB and NMB are the established legal means by which workers who do not have their employer's neutrality can obtain union certification. Furthermore, in recent years NLRB-supervised consent elections have been used to conclude even neutrality-based organizing campaigns. SEIU is one such union pursuing this option for its campaigns in the health-care division (Estlund, Lobel, Compa, and Scott 2006; Hurd 2008).

Summary statistics of the three outcome measures—union win rate, the relative number of workers successfully organized workers, and the percentage of workers successfully organized—as well as the key explanatory variables for the 9,705 union elections that occurred during the presplit period are provided in Table 2. Summary statistics in the pooled sample column of Table 2 for the presplit period indicate that just over half (53.9%) of the union elections were won by the petitioning union, with the win rate being slightly higher for AFL-CIO unions (56.8%) than for Change to Win unions (51.4%).

Results and Discussion

I computed two difference-in-difference estimates. Table 3 presents the raw estimate of the effect of Change to Win policies and practices as given by the difference-in-difference estimator, CTW × After, for the three measures of success: column (1), whether the union won the certification election; column (2), the relative number of workers successfully organized; and

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[14]Martin (2008) specifically examined organizing through the NLRB and organizing through card-check campaigns. Thus, these percentages do not factor in the certifications of public-sector workers occurring through state labor boards.

Table 2. Summary Statistics before Split, by Federation

Variable	Pooled sample N = 9,705	AFL-CIO unions N = 4,581	CTW unions N = 5,124
Union win rate	0.539	0.568	0.514
	(0.498)	(0.495)	(0.500)
Relative number of unionized workers	2.413	2.171	3.429
	(3.848)	(3.297)	(5.525)
Percentage of successfully unionized workers	0.378	0.326	0.430
	(0.079)	(0.066)	(0.054)
Bargaining-unit size (number of workers)	73	78	69
	(322)	(439)	(153)
NMB election	0.011	0.011	0.010
	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.099)
NLRB consent election	0.009	0.004	0.014
	(0.096)	(0.061)	(0.119)
NLRB directed election	0.137	0.148	0.127
	(0.344)	(0.355)	(0.333)
NLRB stipulated election	0.843	0.837	0.849
	(0.363)	(0.369)	(0.358)
Service industry	0.619	0.491	0.733
	(0.486)	(0.500)	(0.442)
Average industry employment (thousands)	9430.704	8974.740	9838.348
	(5068.717)	(5225.245)	(4889.201)
Industry union density	12.468	13.115	11.891
	(7.380)	(7.041)	(7.625)
Unemployment rate	5.421	5.400	5.439
	(1.043)	(1.047)	(1.040)
Right to Work	0.186	0.217	0.158
	(0.389)	(0.412)	(0.365)
State union density	15.381	14.905	16.092
	(5.670)	(5.833)	(5.572)
Democratic control of NLRB	0.492	0.491	0.492
	(0.178)	(0.177)	(0.178)

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

column (3), the percentage of workers successfully organized. This model includes only the difference-in-difference estimator and the main effects of CTW and After (the time period indicator). Table 3 shows that the estimates for my raw difference-in-difference estimator for any of the three outcome measures are not statistically significant.

Because the models presented in Table 3 do not account for other variables that can affect my outcomes of interest, I ran a second model for each of my three dependent variables. These models, which appear in Table 4, control for the size of the bargaining unit, election type, whether the election involved workers in a service or goods-producing industry, industry employment, industry union density, the state's unemployment rate, whether the election took place during the recession, whether the election occurred in a "Right-to-Work" state, the state's union density, the degree of Democratic control of the NLRB, year, and union fixed effects.

Table 3. Raw Difference-in-Difference Estimates of the Effect of Change to Win
Policies on Union-Organizing Outcomes

Variable	(1) Union win rate	(2) Relative number of workers successfully organized per union	(3) Percentage of workers successfully organized per union
Mean dependent variable	0.562	2.317	0.485
CTW	−0.055***	1.258*	−0.031
	(0.012)	(0.648)	(0.040)
After	0.060***	−0.144	0.084***
	(0.016)	(0.388)	(0.024)
CTW × After [difference-in-difference estimator]	0.005	−0.106	0.075
	(0.017)	(0.766)	(0.057)
Wild cluster bootstrap *p*-value	[0.969]	[0.986]	[0.958]
N	15,280	496	496
R^2	0.007	0.017	0.021
Adjusted R^2	0.006	0.011	0.015

Notes: Three months of data were dropped before and after the event month, as well as the event month
(September 2005). Estimates are from a linear probability or linear regression model. Standard errors,
in parentheses, are robust and clustered by year. Controls are not included in this model.
*Statistically significant at the 0.10 level; ** at the 0.05 level; *** at the 0.01 level. Statistical significance
of the difference-in-difference estimator is based on the *p*-values from 2000 Wild cluster bootstrap
replications.

As indicated in my difference-in-difference estimator in Table 4, the split
of the Change to Win unions from the AFL-CIO does not have a statistically
significant effect on any of the three measures of success. Specifically, the
positive effect that the creation of Change to Win has on the union win rate
and the percentage of workers successfully organized is not significantly dif-
ferent from 0.

With respect to the difference-in-difference estimate for the second
dependent variable—the relative number of workers successfully orga-
nized—a slightly negative effect is shown, although, again, the result is not
statistically significant. This negative result, however, should be interpreted
with caution and in conjunction with the main effect of the time-trend vari-
able After in the third row. The negative and statistically significant result
for the main effect of my time-period dummy (After) shows that relatively
fewer workers were organized in the post-split period than in the presplit
period for the AFL-CIO unions. Thus, both federations did relatively less
organizing in the NLRB and NMB post-split than during the presplit period.
Figures A.1 and A.2 illustrate this downward trend in organizing activity in
terms of elections attempted and elections won. The decrease in the relative
number of workers organized through the NLRB or NMB is consistent with
the belief that unions are doing more organizing outside the traditional
board elections. As previously mentioned, however, no comprehensive data
are available to measure the organizing activity occurring through voluntary
recognition campaigns. The main effect of the After variable and

Table 4. Difference-in-Difference Estimates of the Effect of Change to Win Policies on Union-Organizing Outcomes

Variable	*(1)* Union win rate	*(2)* Relative number of workers successfully organized per union	*(3)* Percentage of workers successfully organized per union
Mean dependent variable	0.562	2.317	0.485
CTW	0.135***	3.831***	0.192*
	(0.022)	(1.137)	(0.091)
After	0.051***	−1.254*	0.089*
	(0.008)	(0.593)	(0.041)
CTW × After [difference-in-difference estimator]	0.009	−0.699	0.076
	(0.013)	(0.917)	(0.065)
Wild cluster bootstrap *p*-value	[0.950]	[0.840]	[0.960]
Bargaining-unit size (hundreds)	−0.011***	−0.042	−0.021***
	(0.002)	(0.054)	(0.004)
NMB election	0.004	1.310	−0.390*
	(0.046)	(2.293)	(0.193)
NLRB consent election	0.182***	3.972***	0.710***
	(0.037)	(0.918)	(0.187)
NLRB stipulated election	0.032	1.505	0.128
	(0.018)	(0.927)	(0.129)
Service industry	0.077***	0.635	0.127
	(0.016)	(0.953)	(0.102)
Average industry employment (millions)	−0.003**	−0.037	−0.005
	(0.001)	(0.071)	(0.006)
Industry union density	0.002**	−0.013	0.003
	(0.001)	(0.035)	(0.006)
Unemployment	0.006**	0.114	0.025
	(0.002)	(0.303)	(0.039)
Recession	0.046***	−2.820	−0.049
	(0.010)	(1.717)	(0.258)
Right to Work	0.035***	−0.782	−0.136
	(0.011)	(1.206)	(0.097)
State union density	0.002**	−0.057	−0.004
	(0.001)	(0.065)	(0.008)
Democratic control of NLRB	−0.162*	−0.264	−0.327
	(0.078)	(2.296)	(0.609)
Year	Yes	Yes	Yes
Union	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	15,280	496	496
R^2	0.066	0.417	0.439
Adjusted R^2	0.061	0.296	0.323

Notes: Three months of data were dropped before and after the event month, as well as the event month (September 2005). Estimates are from a linear probability or linear regression model. Standard errors, in parentheses, are robust and clustered by year.
*Statistically significant at the 0.10 level; ** at the 0.05 level; *** at the 0.01 level. Statistical significance of the difference-in-difference estimator is based on the *p*-values from 2000 Wild cluster bootstrap replications.

the difference-in-difference estimate of the other two outcome variables suggests, as we can see in Figures 1A and 1C, that both federations were having more success in winning certification elections and in organizing a higher proportion of workers for whom bargaining rights were sought.

By examining the main effect in Table 4 of the CTW variable (which captures the differences between the Change to Win and AFL-CIO federations that existed prior to the disaffiliation and creation of Change to Win policies), we can see that the Change to Win unions were more successful in their organizing than the AFL-CIO unions even before the split. In contrast to the negative main effect of Change to Win on whether a union won the election in the raw-estimate models in Table 3, the results of the full model in Table 4 are positive and highly significant. Although the Change to Win unions won a lower percentage of elections than the AFL-CIO unions, the regression results suggest that being affiliated with Change to Win had a large positive effect on the election outcome. This suggests that the Change to Win unions were undertaking more challenging organizing campaigns than the AFL-CIO unions. The results from the second and third dependent variables further confirm the success of the Change to Win unions. Taken together, the results from the difference-in-difference estimator and the main effect of CTW in Table 4 suggest that the Change to Win unions were more successful organizing unions than the AFL-CIO unions but that the split from the AFL-CIO and the new policies and practices of the Change to Win federation (namely, the ongoing allocation of resources to new-member organizing and the coordination of campaigns) did not have a statistically significant beneficial effect on organizing outcomes. Note also the strong, positive, and significant effect of NLRB consent elections on my three outcome measures. Consent elections (in which the employers agree to waive their right to a pre-election hearing as well as their right to appeal to the board if they disagree with the regional director's decisions regarding the vote) usually follow campaigns in which minimal employer opposition or neutrality was achieved.

Because of a possible concern with the equivalence or balance of these two federations on their observables, such as size and relative organizing activity, I repeated my difference-in-difference models on a subset of the data, which included only the largest AFL-CIO unions that were the most active in organizing in terms of three measures—namely, having the highest number of elections run, number of workers attempted, and number of workers successfully organized. The resulting subset was a group of unions that account for approximately two-thirds (65.6%) of all AFL-CIO elections. These unions include AFSCME; CWA; the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW); the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW); the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE); the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW); and UAW. Not surprisingly, many of these unions—CWA, AFSCME, UAW, and USW—have been cited, alongside some Change to Win unions,

Table 5. Difference-in-Difference Estimates of the Effect of Change to Win Policies on Union Organizing Outcomes (AFL-CIO Subgroup)

Variable	*(1)* *Union win rate*	*(2)* *Relative number of workers successfully organized per union*	*(3)* *Percentage of workers successfully organized per union*
Mean dependent variable	0.557	2.999	0.450
CTW	0.142***	1.216	0.471
	(0.024)	(4.214)	(0.330)
After	0.059***	−0.029	0.126**
	(0.014)	(0.993)	(0.056)
CTW × After [difference-in-difference estimator]	0.000	0.150	0.006
	(0.019)	(0.746)	(0.094)
Wild cluster bootstrap *p*-value	0.992	0.949	0.973
N	12,795	161	161
R^2	0.055	0.744	0.642
Adjusted R^2	0.051	0.653	0.514

Notes: Three months of data were dropped before and after the event month, as well as the event month (September 2005). Estimates are from a linear probability or linear regression model. Standard errors, in parentheses, are robust and clustered by year. Controls for the size of the bargaining unit, election type, whether the election involved workers in a service or goods-producing industry, industry employment, industry union density, the state's unemployment rate, whether the election took place during the recession, whether the election occurred in a "Right-to-Work" state, the state's union density, the degree of Democratic control of the NLRB, year, and union fixed effects are included but are not presented in the table (available on request).
***Statistical significance at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level. Statistical significance is based on the *p*-values from 2000 Wild cluster bootstrap replications.

as being those in which most major victories are concentrated (Bronfenbrenner and Hickey 2004) or as being among those unions with the most aggressive and innovative organizing programs (Martin 2008).

When I plotted the win rate, relative number of workers successfully organized, and percentage of workers successfully organized for the Change to Win unions and the subset of larger, more active AFL-CIO unions, similar presplit trends were revealed. Therefore, I ran my difference-in-difference estimates, comparing the Change to Win unions with this subset of AFL-CIO unions during 2000 to 2010. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5. Similar to my previous analyses, the difference-in-difference estimates (CTW × After) across all columns show no statistically significant difference resulting from the Change to Win organizing policies relative to the subset of larger, more active AFL-CIO unions. Overall, the robustness of the results in Table 5 suggests that the AFL-CIO federation, taken as a whole, is a good comparison group.

Concluding Remarks

Many scholars and unionists had their reservations about what the true impact of Change to Win would be for the labor movement, whereas others

have touted the achievements of the new federation. With the disaffiliation of four unions from the original federation of seven, coupled with Change to Win's shift from calling itself a labor federation to referring to itself as a "strategic organizing center," a quantitative study is valuable to address the unanswered questions of whether the policies of Change to Win contributed to more successful organizing outcomes for the Change to Win affiliated unions and why we now see the disintegration of America's newest union federation. Change to Win set out to change the landscape of organizing in the United States by becoming an organizing machine. The results of this study confirm that Change to Win has higher levels of success than the AFL-CIO unions both before and after the split. At the same time, however, the results cannot confirm that the Change to Win policies—the increased financial commitment to new-member organizing at the federation and local levels and the strategic, joint coordination of campaigns—have been additionally beneficial for the federation's unions, as reflected in any of the three measures of success. These results hold whether the Change to Win unions are compared with all AFL-CIO affiliates or with a subset of AFL-CIO unions that are more similar in terms of their size and level of organizing activity.

The results of this 10-year study show that both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions have increased the proportion of elections they have won and, more important, the percentage of workers that they successfully organized. Both are signs of progress, although they should be accepted as such with caution. Unions may simply be getting more strategic in their decision to follow through with an election or pull the representation petition when their ability to win the election is in question. A study similar to Ferguson's (2008) that follows these elections from the first step of filing a representation petition would provide evidence on this. Second, without question the Change to Win unions are more successful, on average, than the AFL-CIO unions in winning elections and adding workers to the ranks of union members. My results suggest, however, that the Change to Win unions were similarly successful during the presplit period, while they were still affiliated with the AFL-CIO, as they were during the post-split period. Thus, the results offer support to the idea that what was really driving the unions' success was not necessarily at the federation level but at a lower level of organization. The policies and practices that defined Change to Win and were written into its constitution pertained to the allocation of resources and strategic coordination at the federation level while the union funding at the national and local levels was left to a system of mutual accountability. More consideration should be given to ensuring that resource allocation and strategic coordination occur at the unions' national and local levels.

Finally, these results suggest that relatively fewer workers were being organized through the NLRB- and NMB-supervised elections in the second half of the 10-year period of interest. For Change to Win to have achieved its own goal of "success" for "working men and women everywhere" (Change to Win 2005), its effect should be seen in this data set because NLRB or

NMB elections are the primary vehicle for private-sector workers to organize when they do not have support or, at minimum, neutrality from their employers. Given the increasing tendency of some unions to organize through voluntary recognition, future research should expand the data set to include organizing certification attempts from sources other than the NLRB and NMB. Efforts to collect data on voluntary recognitions have been undertaken by several scholars; however, a comprehensive national collection of such data is essential for future research.
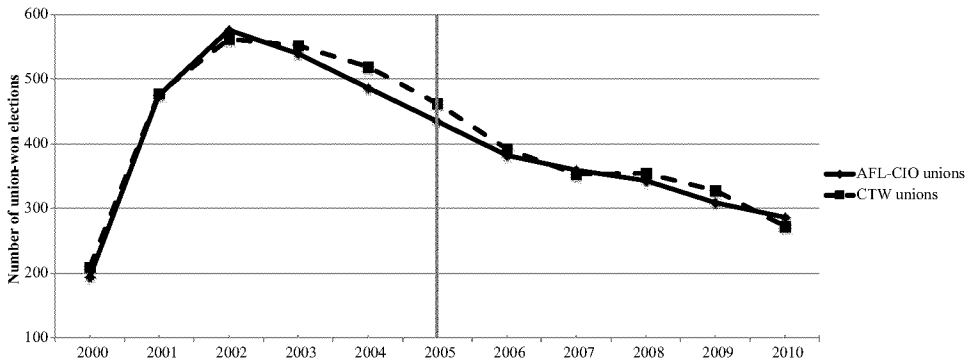
Appendix

Figure A. 1. Number of Elections Attempted, by Federation
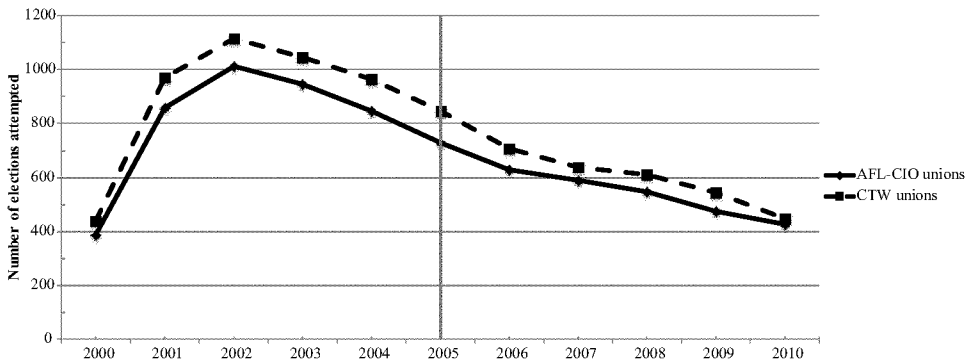
Note: Data from September 2000 through September 2010.

Figure A. 2. Number of Union-Won Elections, by Federation

Note: Data from September 2000 through September 2010.

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