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Beyond the Base:
Republican Party Organizations & Minority Outreach in a Context of Reform

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Following two consecutive presidential defeats and facing rapidly changing racial demographics, the Republican Party has sought to reform its minority outreach strategies. This dissertation looks at how the GOP is making this attempted reform, what the barriers are to doing so, and how successful the national party organization is at gaining compliance across the multiple tiers of the party (i.e. from local party organizations). The Republican National Committee has devoted much attention and significant resources to increasing minority engagement on the state and local level. These outreach efforts are most clearly embodied in the RNC's *Growth and Opportunity Project*. With a mixed method approach including a survey of county chairs, my dissertation speaks to the county-level compliance gained by the RNC, and the attitudes of local leadership regarding the national party and the goal of increased minority outreach and racial inclusion. Additionally, with the use of participation observation fieldwork I illustrate

how calls for change within a party organization characterized by federalism (i.e. existing across state and national planes) may bring about barriers to collective action in one state (Nevada) while garnering coordination and compliance in another (California). I argue that coordination vs. contention across the levels of party organization is not simply a matter of electoral context (e.g. the market explanation of outreach necessitated by voter demographic change), but rather is in large part due to the attitudes of local leadership, state central committees, and county chairpersons. This research also contributes to our understanding of: party organizations and their motivations and capacity to mobilize minorities, intra-party factionalism and internal campaigning, and the reforming of racialized rhetoric in a context of racially conservative currents. I find that most local party organizations lack the capacity to engage voters beyond the English language, internal campaigning can contribute to intra-party factions and collective action problems, and reform strategy involves a focus on the rhetorical and symbolic more than on issue-based/substantive development as a means to go beyond their partisan base.

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CHAPTER 1: The Growth & Opportunity Project - The RNC's Answer to their "Market Problem?"

My dissertation research focuses on Republican Party organizations¹ and their attempts to reach beyond their primarily white base.² Broadly, the purpose of this study is to inform on questions related to political party organizations and how they work to develop rhetoric/discursive appeals, party images, mobilizing tactics, strategy, and policy positions during claimed times of reform. Specifically, I seek to provide insight on: 1) how the Republican Party is working to achieve changes to image and voting coalitions while maintaining their base, and 2) what the local-level response is to these top-down calls for change, i.e. what the state and county parties are doing locally (if anything) to implement RNC recommendations.³

Research focused on the internal dynamics accompanying these attempts to facilitate the coordination, collaboration, and compliance necessary to move this message of inclusion into action provides valuable insight into whether American political parties can reform to become democratic forces for minority mobilization and immigrant incorporation. Fieldwork centered on party events, actions, and discourse, as well as a survey on the attitudes of local leadership, provides a view into how the Republican Party

¹ Party organizations include “the formally chosen” and “informally anointed” leaders, “precinct workers, the members and activities of the party,” those “who give their time, money and skills to the party,” operating mainly “through the formal machinery of committees and conventions set by the laws of the fifty states in and party through its own informal apparatus, “the party bureaucracy” and the “face-to-face relationships that characterize any organization” (Beck & Hershey 2000:10). The bureaucratic arm of parties are important because they are the party actors that are by design most likely to be in contact with the public, the party in the electorate, as well as working as gatekeepers to elected local and state offices, the party in government.

² <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118937/republican-base-heavily-white-conservative-religious.aspx>

³ RNC Report: http://growthopp.gov.com/RNC_Growth_Opportunity_Book_2013.pdf

is seeking to maintain a relatively racially and ideologically homogenous base while also taking action to bring in new (i.e. previously under-mobilized) groups.

In addition to informing on local coordination and level of compliance in increasing minority engagement efforts, this dissertation provides an illustration of the nature of party infighting, showing the characteristics of competing camps, their connection to collective action problems, and how state and national (RNC) leaders design their parties (shape institutions) in attempts to overcome or control these factional conflicts. Secondly, this work speaks to the broad scale of Republican reform, from racialized rhetoric to retooling technology, situating these attempts within the historical context of contemporary conservative currents.

Electoral Context & The Market Problem

The Republican Party faces a dilemma of demographics. The GOP base has been shown to be predominantly white, conservative, and religious.⁴ Both pundits and political scientists (Judis & Teixeira 2004; Bowler & Segura 2012) have recognized that the GOP's increasing reliance on white voters is a "strategy with an impending expiration date."⁵ If voting trends among minority groups hold, it will be the Democrats who benefit by projected demographic trends (Bowler & Segura 2012: 81-82). The racial and ethnic demographics of the market of American voters (i.e. the electorate) increasingly favor its opposition.

⁴ *Republican Base Heavily White, Conservative, Religious:* <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118937/republican-base-heavily-white-conservative-religious.aspx>

⁵ *Romney's Birther Joke Explained:* <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2012/08/romneys-birther-joke-explained-one-number-he-needs-61-white-vote-win/56192/>

The Republican National Committee faced this market problem, and the necessity to engage in outreach to new voters, most clearly in the wake of the 2012 general election. Having to adapt in order to remain competitive in drastically changing “voter markets” has faced states such as California, where the GOP plight has been likened to market failure⁶, and only A-list level name recognition (e.g. Schwarzenegger) has proven successful in overcoming the apparent toxicity of the Republican Party label among key demographics. Still, the California Republican Party (CRP) is reforming in order to recover from its market failure, which may be in part why we see the RNC collaborating extensively with the CRP leadership. While the RNC might not think they can turn California red, they do see lessons to be learned in California, where the RNC chair has called the state a “testing ground” for their efforts to reach out to minority voters.

Beyond the simple and appealing logic of this “market problem,” that parties that do not adapt will die out, there exist several additional drivers (and barriers) to party change/reform. This is to say that simple necessity to change is not enough to bring about change. Parties may not succeed in achieving change because of factors internal to the organization, such as factionalism and disagreement regarding opportunities and the direction of the party. The “market” explanation does not tell the complete story of party change, the GOP attempts at bringing new voters into their tent, broadening their appeal,

⁶ <http://www.campaignsandelections.com/campaign-insider/329/who-s-to-blame-for-the-gop-s-golden-failure> ; <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article11675345.html> ; “a rundown on the sad state of the Republican party in California. Republicans haven’t won a Senate contest since 1990. George H. W. Bush was the last Republican presidential candidate to win here. That was in 1988. Barack Obama was reelected with a larger percentage of the vote in 2012 (59 percent) than Ronald Reagan in 1984 (58 percent). And it was long ago in 1976 when S. I. Hayakawa ousted John Tunney from his Senate seat—the last Republican challenger to knock off an incumbent Democrat in a Senate or governor’s race http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/bottom_796085.html

overcoming a toxic (to some) brand, and reforming their racial rhetoric. When we look to party organizations beyond the national level we see that change is brought about not just from demographic necessity. If this was the case we would have seen attempts at party reform in California much sooner than with the most recent post-2012 efforts (including the stark nomination changes for the most recent gubernatorial race, highlighted later). Instead, the process of party reform is a product of partisan federalism, or the nature of interaction between formal members of the party apparatus across the multiple tiers of the party organization, from those working on the federal level (the national party, the RNC) to state and county-level leadership. Even if market dynamics help explain some of why we are seeing reform efforts on varying levels of the party, to get a complete picture one has to pay attention to dynamics *within* the party organization, dynamics such as intra-party factions, internal campaigning, and institutional design.

While party scholarship appears to favor the market explanation for motivating coalition building (Carmines & Stimson 1989) and “crash party building” (Valelly 2004), the work of Paul Frymer (1999) also stresses the importance of realizing that not all party actors will be driven by simple electoral incentives. Rather, parties hold “many people of influence” of which many may be more ideologically driven than electorally-minded (Ibid. 11). This again speaks to why we should expect variation among state and local party organizations in their willingness to reform the GOP and “get with the program” to reach out to new (primarily minority) voters.

A quote from Representative Steve King (R-IA)⁷ demonstrates clearly the types of variation in views (and outright skepticism) surrounding reform to the GOP:

“we’re broadening the party, and I’m going to presume that was in the aftermath of this election, and they’re [GOP leadership] looking at how they do better with a broader appeal. They want to take some of the sharp edges off. [. . .] Does it change policy and principles? We’ll have to see. That’s part of what goes on inside. When they move some of those things, if they compromise our principles, conservatives will stand up, and I’ll be one of them.”

Representative Steve King’s words illustrate several important sentiments that are common in the contemporary narrative surrounding reform to the Republican Party. First, his remarks imply that reform is starting as an elite-driven “top-down” process. King’s words also illustrate a sentiment that is common among the Republican base: that reform must keep the base happy. Third, King also implies that compromise will not be obtained around what are perceived to be “core principles” of the party. Also of note, King seems to separate himself from both the GOP leadership championing change (“they’re looking,” “they want”), and the “inside” process that he claims reform to be. Lastly, King’s comment of taking “some of the sharp edges off” implies not a substantive change to platform and policy, but rather a change to the “packaging” of the party’s message, or rather more symbolic change.

To provide a more thorough picture how the call for Republican reform was received from Republican elites beyond Representative Steve King, and to include those not part of the formal party organization (e.g. Reince Priebus), I conducted content analysis of editorials following the report’s release. To this end I collected all New York Times and Washington Post articles that directly referenced the *Growth and Opportunity*

⁷ *GOP Quietly Plots Their Future*: <http://mobile.politico.com/iphone/story/0213/87712.html>

Project, from the report's release on March 18th 2013 to four months after this date, July 18th 2013. Though these articles totaled to only ten (five from the Washington Post and five from the New York Times), each featured several quotes that captured the reform-relevant opinions of several Republican elites outside of the official Republican Party organization. This includes elites in Congress (e.g. John Boehner and Eric Cantor), as well as prominent strategists, and the leadership of prominent conservative political organizations (e.g. CPAC, Family Research Council, Tea Party Patriots). The elite opinions within these articles as well as the tone of the overall article were coded as viewing the nationally derived (RNC) project as either: positive, negative, or conflicting.

The results of this content analysis revealed a split of opinion regarding both the necessity of reform as well as what reform should mean. The divide among the party elites seemed to lie primarily along camps with ties to the RNC, "or establishment," feeling more positive about the project, and those with more distance, often representing farther right elements of the party, holding negative views of the document and the recommendations or need for broader appeal.

House Speaker John Boehner and House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, "praised the report."⁸ Speaker Boehner stated, "I'm particularly glad the report makes a strong commitment to digital, data and voter outreach, and I've told the chairman he will have my full support as he moves forward with retooling these strategies and tactics." Jonathan Collegio, a Republican strategist and spokesperson for American Crossroads, Crossroads GPS, and the Conservative Victory Project (all Karl Rove groups), voiced support while

⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/19/us/politics/republicans-plan-overhaul-for-2016-primary-season.html>

implying more support for the symbolic version of change, “We looked at the last two election cycles and came to the conclusion that we lost from four to seven U.S. Senate seats not because of the party message, in those cases, but because of the party's messenger.”⁹ This emphasis on messengers vs. message, or rather packaging vs. platform, was voiced also by authors of the reform document with the New York Times reporting, “Authors of the report on Monday declined to endorse changing the party's platform on key issues as a way of reaching out to a new constituency. On same-sex marriage, for example, they said the party should stick to its opposition even though Mr. Romney lost by wide margins among gay and lesbian voters.”¹⁰ Even the comments of support reveal the territory for potential disagreement. That is, not all Republican elites view favorably substantive policy change and a more moderate platform. Rather their comments reveal support strictly for change to the appearances of the party, supporting diversity in the form of more descriptively representative candidates and party figureheads.

Content analysis of these articles revealed skepticism and dissent to the national project beyond the likes of Representative Steve King, often coming from actors associated with more localized and more conservative activist organizations. Jenny Martin, head of the Tea Party Patriots, stated that the party “[doesn’t] need an 'autopsy' report from RNC to know they failed to promote our principles, and lost because of it.”¹¹ Similarly, the Washington Post reports, “Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan

⁹ <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/20/the-republican-autopsy-report/>

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/19/us/politics/republicans-plan-overhaul-for-2016-primary-season.html>

¹¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2013/03/18/reince-priebus-gives-gop-prescription-for-future/>

B. Anthony List, said that the RNC report draws the wrong lessons from 2012” and that, "Social issues are keys to reaching certain minorities the GOP yearns to attract, as well as to motivate millions of voters who first gravitated to the party as Reagan Democrats"(Ibid.). Even further, the President of the Family Research Council, Tony Perkins, stated, "If the RNC abandons marriage [i.e. changes policy on marriage equality], evangelicals will either sit the elections out completely - or move to create a third party.”¹² Dissenters to the reform project also voiced critique of the recommended institutional changes of shortening the primary and debate season. These moves, as the Washington Post reports, favors more mainstream candidates than those victorious in local caucuses which draw the more conservative and more “devoted partisans.”¹³

Overall, articles in the Washington Post featured more negative and conflicting views on the project, with three of five articles coded as primarily negative, and two articles coded as holding a primarily conflicting view of reform. Articles regarding the RNC project from the New York Times included one article with a tone of primarily negative, two as primarily positive, and two as conflicting. Beyond the differences displayed in these totals, columnists from both the Washington Post and New York Times shared a skepticism on whether the RNC report would be embraced by Republicans outside of the national “establishment.” New York Times columnists Sarah Wheaton and Michael Shear claimed the “debate is already under way, and it is not clear that other Republicans have reached the same conclusions as the authors [of the report].”

¹² <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/08/in-data-we-trust/>

¹³ http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/have-political-parties-lost-their-purpose/2013/03/18/2486608e-8d9f-11e2-9838-d62f083ba93f_story.html

Post columnists Dan Balz and Richard Cohen concluded respectively, “the Priebus-inspired report is far from the last word,” and “the report was written by five important moderate Republicans who like the GOP to be more like themselves. It ain’t going to happen.” With the variation in elite opinion following the initial release of the report there is good reason to believe that localized variation also exists, variation in terms of opinions on reform and variation in terms of compliance with the national outreach project.

Fieldwork observations and survey findings provide further illustrations and insight into the variation in state and local-level response to calls for reforming the Republican Party. The variation in attitudes toward GOP reform is just one piece of the internal dynamics and the struggles facing attempts to facilitate the coordination necessary to move this message of inclusion into action.

Though research on American parties often focuses on either state and local party dynamics (Crotty 1968, 1986), or national level party actors and their interactions in Congress (Aldrich 1995; Cox & McCubbins 2005; Smith 2007), scholars are beginning to note the importance of state parties in developing tactics, strategy, and candidates of national level significance. Perhaps most thoroughly, Bulman-Pozen (2014) makes the case for seeing the play *between the levels* of the party, arguing that states “serve as laboratories of national partisan politics by facilitating competition within each political party” (Ibid. 1078). To realize the challenges of enacting reform across a multi-tiered party we must look to partisan federalism – i.e. not simply the competition between two

parties, but the competition *within* a single party, playing out across multiple levels (national, state, and county) of the organization.

I present an illustration of partisan federalism at work, the Republican Party coordinating on a large-scale project of great importance (minority outreach). To do this I look across the multiple tiers of the Republican Party organization, from the national level (the RNC leadership, its reports, programs, and actions, as well as interactions – or intentional non-interaction with state parties), to the state (fieldwork at meetings) and county level (survey of chairpersons).

In doing so this research contends further that states serve as a place not just of competition of importance but of coordination and collaboration of importance. Whether these relationships and interactions between state and national party actors are constructive largely depends on whether the reform-friendly side of intra-party factions control the local party leadership, and consequently whether we see institutional power used to either compete or coordinate with the national party over the direction of the party. I detail this further with a focus on two state parties of significance to the RNC, California and Nevada. I find that compliance with reform and coordination vs. contention across the levels of party organization is not simply a matter of electoral context (e.g. the market explanation of outreach necessitated by demographic changes), but rather is in large part due to the motivating attitudes and actions of local leadership, state central committees, and local county chairpersons.

Later chapters will analyze the RNC's coordination and collaboration with the California Republican Party (CRP) and its counties, where conventions featured national

level directors presenting new tech software for mobilizing voters, and engaging in discussions of rhetorical strategies and issues to focus on to appeal to minority voters.

It may also be worth noting that while scholars such as Tasha Philpot (2007) have proposed a theory of altering party image, which is in-line with one component of the RNC's *Growth and Opportunity Project*, there are some key distinctions here. Philpot's (2007) research finds that voters respond differently to superficial symbolic alterations than they do to substantive changes to policy or positions (Philpot 2007: 30), with voters "at the margins" being possibly receptive to "cosmetic changes" to the party, and others only responsive to "issue-relevant" change (Ibid.). However, this dissertation is not focused on how voters perceive change/reform, but rather is concerned with how the Republican Party defines reform, accommodating for the possibility of competing definitions across levels of the party organization (county v. state v. national). While Philpot theorizes on the process of party image reform, she does not go further to present illustrations of how party organizations put such reforms into practice across the national, state, and local level.

Furthermore, no matter the content of reform, whether image alteration, minority outreach, updating technology, any change within a large and multifaceted organization is fundamentally an exercise in collective action. Given this, I am particularly interested in *reform as a context* wherein I seek to detail how reform itself contributes to the internal dynamics and operations of a party organization.

The Growth & Opportunity Project: More Than a Document

The RNC's *Growth and Opportunity Project* started as a “post-mortem,” an electoral “autopsy” regarding the 2012 general election, what the national party got wrong, where they can learn and improve, and the extent of their branding/party image problem. Within the report the RNC has provided a critical self assessment, stating that their party needs to “stop talking to itself,” (p. 6¹⁴) should “substantively engage with the APA [Asian Pacific American] community throughout the year [. . .] no longer [with] lip service,” but with an “organized effort within the community,” (Ibid. 17), and on immigration—“needs to carefully craft a tone that takes into consideration the unique perspective of the Hispanic community. Message development is critical to Hispanic voters” (Ibid. 16). Additionally, Texas Governor and prominent Republican Rick Perry echoes the RNC's reform sentiment that the tone of the message matters while also commenting on California as a particular critical case, “The California Republican Party needs to take a look at their policies, the words that they use.”¹⁵

Although it started as a report, the national party has taken actions to translate the report aims into a full-scale program involving re-channeling funds, hiring, re-tooling technology, and developing grassroots strategy in an effort to strengthen the future of the party by broadening their appeal well beyond their comparatively homogenous base. Whether these programs reach the local level and pay off is yet to be seen. Though the RNC sees their 2014 midterm wins as reform starting to pay off, they know the true test

¹⁴ *Growth & Opportunity Project Report:*

http://growthopp.gov.com/RNC_Growth_Opportunity_Book_2013.pdf

¹⁵ <http://voxxi.com/2013/12/03/latinos-doom-gop-in-california/>

is on the national stage with the 2016 presidential election. This is where the party suffers most, and almost paradoxically, to win nationally they need to change local efforts by better connecting to new communities via a more thorough “ground game.”

As evident in the RNC’s post-2012 election report, and my fieldwork with the California and Nevada Republican Parties¹⁶, a key part of the GOP reform strategy involves outreach to racial, ethnic and immigrant communities. Put concisely by Republican Governor Chris Christie, the program entails “showing up” in places that are not traditionally strongholds for Republicans.¹⁷ Which minority communities exactly I will cover more in the proceeding sections and throughout following chapters, focusing here on details that point to the scope and scale of the program and actions taken in its name. These involve actions such the founding of an “Inclusion Council,”¹⁸ hiring localized communications and field directors from the main racial and ethnic communities of interest,¹⁹ supporting policy changes of interest to these communities,²⁰ and other attempts at softening the rhetorical appeals, imagery, and language²¹ that has

¹⁶ The Republican Party has labeled these as key for testing minority outreach, as well as states seen as failing to engage their diverse populations, with California often regarded as the worst-case scenario for the future of the GOP nationally.

¹⁷ <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2013/11/10/christie-gop-needs-to-show-up-for-latino-minority-vote/>

¹⁸ RNC Report p. 76 – see appendix for diagram

¹⁹ <http://nbc-latino.com/2013/10/07/rnc-hires-hispanic-state-and-field-directors-in-7-states/>;
<http://www.gop.com/news/press-releases/rnc-chairman-reince-priebus-announces-new-staff-for-greater-engagement-with-asian-and-pacific-islander-americans/>

²⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/19/us/california-upends-its-image-of-legislative-dysfunction.html?_r=1&

²¹ “This new organization should develop a program designed to educate Republicans on the importance of developing and tailoring a message that is non-inflammatory and inclusive to all.” (RNC report p. 76)

long been at home within the party's embrace of racial conservatism and the "Southern strategy."











Beyond recommendations on how to better engage minority communities, the program includes several organizational changes coupled with a commitment of resources (e.g. funding, staffing, offices) to develop institutions internal to the party in attempts to facilitate the local compliance and coordination necessary to move this message of inclusion into action. The RNC is doing this in an effort to develop a more long-term-minded "ground game" for growth, or as Izzy Santa put it (RNC's Hispanic Media Communications Director) to better the party's "grassroots infrastructure, [...] We are creating a permanent presence in the Hispanic community."²² Similarly Chairman Reince Priebus stated about the African American community in relation to grassroots building in North Carolina, "Developing relationships with black voters means having an active presence in their communities,"²³ rather than as he said at the annual National Association of Black Journalists convention, "show[ing] up once every four years about five months before an election. We've become a national party that really is a U-Haul trailer of cash for a presidential nominee. We have forgotten the mechanics."²⁴

Using Google Alerts I was able to track the program's ongoing development and the specific actions the RNC has undertaken in the aim of reforming minority outreach. Examples of efforts taken to employ the minority engagement goals of the *Growth and Opportunity Project* include the Republican National Committee:

²² <http://nbclatino.com/2013/10/07/rnc-hires-hispanic-state-and-field-directors-in-7-states/>

²³ <http://northdallasgazette.com/2013/10/22/rnc-kicking-off-their-outreach-to-african-american-voters-in-north-carolina/>

²⁴ <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/rnc-chair-black-vote-outreach>

-  Commits \$10 million toward Latino outreach campaign in California and 16 other states.²⁵
-  Spends \$6 million to identify new women and new candidates of diversity.²⁶
-  Hires conservative talk show host Wayne Bradley as the “director of African-American engagement” for the Republican Party in Michigan.²⁷
-  Opens an “African-American engagement office” in Charlotte, NC with three aides for reaching out to black churches and similar organizations.²⁸
-  Hires Hispanic field and state directors in California, Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia.²⁹
-  Spotlights women leaders for “Rising Stars” program for Winter 2014 meeting.³⁰
-  Releases a series of cable ads aimed specifically at women, minorities, and youth voters.³¹
-  Hires Elliot Echols as RNC National Youth Director.³²
-  Hires Jason Chung as RNC National Communications Director for Asian and Pacific Islander.³³
-  Hires Orlando Watson and Tara Wall to work specifically with black media outlets.³⁴

²⁵ <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/10/nation/la-na-1011-gop-latinos-20131010>

²⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/us/gop-gains-by-tapping-democrats-base-for-state-candidates-.html?_r=0

²⁷ <http://thegrio.com/2013/11/15/the-republicans-are-coming-to-your-neighborhood>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ <http://nbc-latino.com/2013/10/07/rnc-hires-hispanic-state-and-field-directors-in-7-states/>





³⁰ <https://gop.com/republican-national-committee-announces-five-new-rising-stars/>

³¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/17/new-rnc-ad-attempts-to-wo_n_4979429.html

³² <http://redaltrtpolitics.com/2013/10/23/rnc-hires-national-youth-director/>

³³ Engagement: <http://www.gop.com/news/press-releases/rnc-chairman-reince-priebus-announces-new-staff-for-greater-engagement-with-asian-and-pacific-islander-americans/> ; <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/09/news/la-pn-republicans-asian-voters-20130408>

³⁴ <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/360696/rnc-makes-two-hires-outreach-black-media-katrina-trinko->

-  RNC Chair Reince Priebus makes first appearance and addresses National Urban League Conference.³⁵
-  Hires Ali Pardo, a press assistant from Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-FL.) office, as their Hispanic press secretary.³⁶
-  Hires Francis Barraza as Hispanic state director and Indio Councilwoman Lupe Ramos Watson to a state advisory council that will engage Latino voters and potential candidates.³⁷
-  Opens permanent office in Detroit and hires Michigan director for African-American outreach.³⁸

These appear to be substantive reforms to the party organization on the national and state levels given they involve funding and a series of new hires to connect to new communities. Further, these efforts of the national party in some cases serve as less of a compliment to lower-level party organizations and more as a failsafe for if state and county level leaders do not follow suit. Though perhaps to make compliance with the project more likely, the national party has also committed considerable resources to “re-tooling” efforts, gaining new technology, staff, and the training necessary to engage voters not only in an evolving racial landscape but in an ever-advancing technological landscape. In California I observed extensive collaboration between RNC directors and the state and county leadership. RNC directors held training sessions on how to use new voter tracking software, and seminars on how to engage different minority communities. This type of coordination and collaboration is not happening across all states, as I will

³⁵ <http://www.gop.com/general/rnc-chairman-reince-priebus-addresses-national-urban-league-conference/>

³⁶ <http://www.gop.com/trending/rnc-hires-hispanic-media-press-secretary-to-expand-hispanic-engagement-efforts/>

³⁷ <http://www.desertsun.com/story/political-insider/2013/10/10/councilwoman-lupe-ramos-watson-named-to-rncs-state-latino-council/2967671/>

³⁸ <http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20131112/POLITICS02/311120109#ixzz2kZtS0iKB>

show further in the Nevada context where the RNC is not working with the state party organization, going as far as developing alternative organizations for running its 2012 campaigns in the state.

The program's reform aims also includes making key hires on the technology front, founding its own "in-house" Silicon-Valley style tech start-up,³⁹ and holding summits focused on field training of staff. For example, the RNC hired Andy Barkett, a former Google and Facebook engineer, as their first ever chief technology officer. As CTO Barkett is set with the task of improving the party's use of data to target voters and tailor messages to specific minority categories.⁴⁰ The RNC spent millions on polling and GOTV data for the 2014 midterm and believe it was key to bettering their "ground game" to take control of Congress.⁴¹ This focus on technology rather than budgeting and advertising is a noted change in strategy.⁴²

States on board with the reform efforts are mirroring these national tech and minority engagement hires, and doing similar training at their state conventions. For example, in California Bryan McPartlan, CRP Statewide Data Director, held a closed-to-press seminar titled "Using Technology in our Ground Game." McPartlan demonstrated how to use their new smartphone mobile-application version of precinct walk lists and

³⁹ <http://townhall.com/tipsheet/danieldoherty/2014/02/04/rnc-launches-its-own-tech-startup-initiative-n1789465>

⁴⁰ <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/joegarofoli/article/GOP-hires-Andy-Barkett-to-leap-into-digital-fray-4848296.php> ; <http://online.wsj.com/articles/gop-works-to-improve-targeting-of-voters-1413936019>

⁴¹ <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2014/10/31/how-the-new-rnc-ground-game-works/>

⁴² <http://www.newser.com/article/ffda0b1777a54c30b1d087fbc9601e2/republicans-to-focus-on-data-to-leave-advertising-and-state-party-budgets-to-others.html> ; <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/campaign-committees/195526-rnc-pushing-to-win-tech-space-race> ; <http://www.seattlepi.com/news/politics/article/RNC-to-leave-state-parties-ads-to-others-5142075.php>

poll watching lists. Similarly, the RNC hosted some 200 staffers for a two-day training conference titled, “The New GOP Model for Campaigns.”⁴³ The conference was tech-centric in its goal to revamp minority outreach, focusing on social media, data mining for voter targeting, and digital event planning.⁴⁴

When one considers the magnitude of these efforts it appears the GOP is very serious about reforming their party. In RNC press releases and in public comment to news outlets the formal members of the national party repeatedly stressed the permanence of these changes to ensure a more consistent and more broad engagement of minority voters, to welcome those largely new to the GOP coalition, and to craft a better and more long-term electoral ground game. Content analysis of the report informs further on which groups are of key focus. The voting groups prioritized by the RNC are not always in-line with those prioritized by state and county leadership, as I show in later chapters.

The RNC Report by the Numbers

Through word frequency analysis I obtain results revealing the RNC report’s degree of focus on specific minority groups (racially, gender and generationally defined), or what they refer to as “demographic partners.” I later compare this national-level analysis with a more thorough priority ranking of groups by county chairpersons.

⁴³ <http://dailycaller.com/2013/12/13/gop-2014-strategy-attract-minority-votes-reinforce-red-state-strongholds/>

⁴⁴ <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/campaign-committees/193107-rnc-hosts-200-staffers-for-field-training>

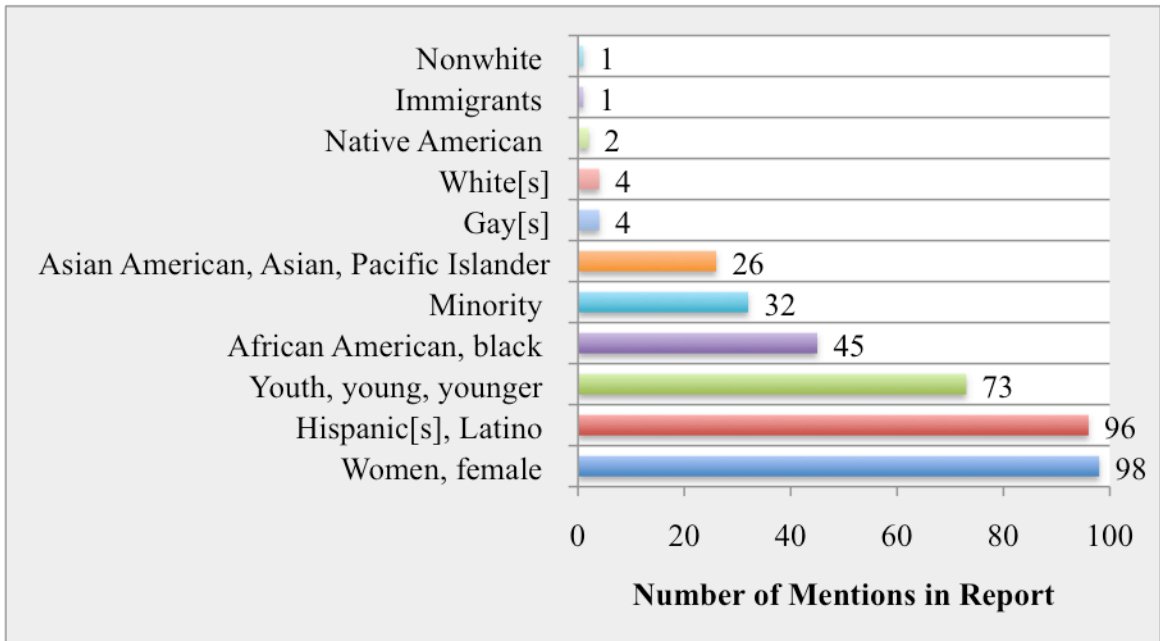


Figure A: *Growth & Opportunity Project Report Group Frequencies*

This report makes clear that GOP reform is to be centralized on reaching out to new voters, defined primarily along racial and ethnic lines outside of the white conservative. In regard to this central aim, it may be telling that the report focuses first on Hispanics, second on Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, followed by African Americans, then Women, and lastly the youth. Though further analysis reveals a slightly different story of where the GOP is focusing its attention and effort (Fig. A). Here the comparison of frequency of mentions roughly correlates to the size of the groups as percent of the overall voting population. That is, women make up the largest grouping of the electorate addressed in the report and also hold the highest number of mentions within the report. Similarly, Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States and hold the highest frequency of mention among the racial and ethnic groups identified in the report.

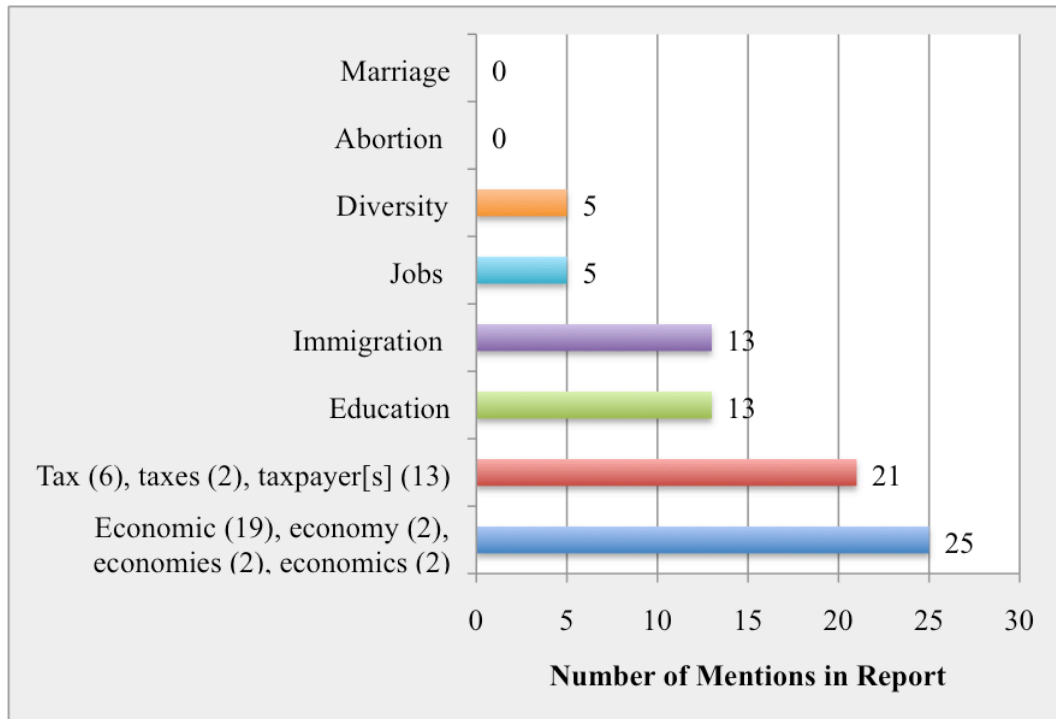


Figure B: *Growth & Opportunity Project Report Issue Frequencies*

The major issues (Fig. B) identified do not amount to a major shift for the Republican Party, though the prominence of immigration reform may speak to the goal of courting Latino voters. Additionally, the absence of social issues where the Republican Party is seen as holding positions that are antithetical to appealing to a large portion of the electorate (e.g. abortion in regard to women voters, or gay marriage in regard to LGBTQ identifying voters), are largely absent in this report. Rather, we see a focus on economic issues, jobs, education, and diversity. Not calling attention to the conservative positions of the party on social issues such as abortion and marriage equality was also common at state party events, though not always apparent in the survey of county chairs. Even further, at conventions seminars on discussions of strategy and race it was often explicitly stated that one should avoid these issues and focus on the economy and family.

Whether this strategy is feasible on the national level and in the long-term is questionable.

Other Frequent Mentions of Note: Areas & Actors

State (337), states (81), statewide (5)	423
National (73), Nationwide (11), Nation (2)	86
Local (55), county (6) locally (3), locals 2(2)	66
Campaign[s] (237), campaigning (1)	238
Fundraising (119), fund(s) (27), funding (12), fundraisers (11), funders (2)	171
Election (58), Elections (47), Electoral (9)	114
Training[s] (67), train (16)	83
Messaging (29), message[s] (43)	72
Technology (39), tech (21), technological (2) ...	62
Recruit (25), recruitment (11), recruiting (10) ...	46
Hire (31) hiring (7)	38
Outreach	18
Voter[s] (267), vote[s] (55), voting (27), voted (6), GOTV (4), Registration (30)	389
Candidate[s]	194
Group[s]	128
Organization(s)	89
Communities (54), community (34)	88
Chairman (18), chair[s] (8), chairmen (7).....	33
Governors	23

Table 1: *Growth & Opportunity Project Report Misc. Mentions*

Lastly, among the highest frequency of mentions are words that speak to a focus on the state, local, and community level, which sets the stage for the discussions that lie ahead (Table 1). The report describes plans to facilitate a better “ground game” to ensure a “bottom-up” vs. a purely “top-down” approach to reforming the party image and engaging in minority outreach.

Some of these findings are not much of a surprise when it comes to what we already know as the broad goals of a party organization. They are primarily vote-motivated, electorally minded, and driven by activities that help them achieve the aims of winning and maintaining elected office (e.g. fundraising, campaigning, and messaging). But the disproportionate mentions of state vs. national contexts, as well as mentions of party chairs vs. governors, do speak to the more specific notions of reform that are at the heart of the RNC's program, notions that are corroborated with significant variation in findings from both fieldwork and survey. This also provides insight on what the RNC sees as the main broad areas for improvement, from messaging and campaigning to training, staffing, and technology.⁴⁵

State Platforms: a Preliminary Search for the Report's Influence

Before a more thorough test of the program's influence in subsequent chapters, I looked at 39 state party platforms to search for direct reference to the program or use of racially inclusive language that is in-line with the program's goals. The calls for change have started at the top with party elites sounding the alarm that the changing demographics of the electorate places a rapidly approaching expiration date on status quo strategies that neglect to sincerely engage groups beyond their base. Although reform may be starting as an elite-driven "top-down" process, lower-level leadership on the state and county context will be key to putting the project into practice.

⁴⁵ See appendix for word cloud illustrating further the broad themes of the report.

The cross-sectional analysis of 39 post-2012 state Republican Party platforms⁴⁶ reveals that the RNC 2012 Report seems to have had little effect on state party platforms. There were no direct references to the RNC or the *Growth and Opportunity Project*, as specific report or broader program. All mentions of “growth” and “opportunity” were not mentions of the report but related to economic growth and opportunity. I also searched for mentions of diversity, race, ethnicity, immigration, and minorities (including variations of, e.g. race, races, racial). I found one mention of diversity and minority, and seven mentions of race. Upon further inspection all mentions of “race” were the result of declarations of non-discrimination; for example, “[we] BELIEVE in equal rights, equal justice and equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed, sex, age or disability.”

Beyond no explicit mentions of the RNC minority outreach program, there were few instances of platforms featuring sections and statements that may be influenced by the program’s goal of reaching out beyond the base to those who typically do not vote Republican. The Indiana Republican Party platform is a noteworthy exception to the otherwise non-influence of the RNC report on state party platforms released post-2012.

The Indiana Republican Party platform stands out in its inclusion of a section focusing on attracting new voters and “new Republicans” with the addition of a page that reads as a concise one-sheet of the *Growth and Opportunity Project*’s plans. The section is titled, “Opportunities and the Future” and features three subsections in order of: millennials, women, and minorities. The latter paragraph on minorities includes a line echoing a fundamental theme of the national report; “Our Republican Party recognizes

⁴⁶ See appendix for links to the state platforms used in this analysis.

the importance of engagement with groups that have not traditionally identified as Republicans.”⁴⁷ The Indiana platform also explains in brief the lengths the state party has gone to reach out beyond their base, and as they say, “we must ensure that it is not only our policy positions looking forward, but our political strategies. We cannot let the media define us as a Party; we must tell our own story.” Here the state platform also recognizes key groups and county chairs as a key part of “expanding engagement”:

“We want to thank and recognize some of the many groups who have expanded our engagement efforts around the state, including the Indiana Federation of Republican Women, the Indiana Federation of Young Republicans, the Indiana Leadership Forum, the Lugar Series and of course our county Republican Parties. Each of these entities fills a different role in attracting new Republicans and involving countless others.”

Several (six) state parties link to the national platform in place of featuring a separate state party platform on their site. This may signal cooperation with the RNC and no dissension with the platform. This rather lackluster non-finding of influence is largely corroborated by the survey of county chairs presented in the next chapter, where I find there is not much work being done directly in the name of the *Growth and Opportunity Project*, with low self-reported compliance and awareness. I find that a majority of Republican chairs report rarely or never following the RNC’s G.O.P. report recommendations for reaching out to new groups. Additionally, an open-ended question regarding the *Growth and Opportunity Project* allowed chairs to note how their activities related to the program and what they have changed over time. Several chairs wrote that they never heard of this project.

⁴⁷ <http://www.indgop.org/sites/default/files/2014%20Platform-%20FINAL.pdf>

Given these findings one might conclude that the report is purely symbolic, but when one looks at the resources committed, the new hires, the new bodies created within the organization, and the extent of coordination and collaboration with state parties not plagued by factionalism at the leadership-level, such as those in California, then the claim of pure symbolism is a more difficult conclusion to reach. Given this, what explains whether the RNC's program is influential in one state versus another? In two words: internal dynamics. I argue and present evidence supporting the answer of a combination of factionalism (whether in or removed from power) and fear of reform leading to institutional designs (e.g. state party bylaws, and informal practices at conventions) that either compliment or combat the goals and primary actors (e.g. RNC officials, and establishment-backed moderate candidates) associated with the national party's program.

The Rest of the Dissertation

Now that I have provided the initial context for the RNC's primary minority outreach program, the context which brought about the reform, and its corresponding report's focus, proceeding chapters will inform further on the reform efforts.

First, I provide insight on the level of compliance with these national calls for reform by surveying the efforts and attitudes of local leadership (county chairs). Of chief importance to reform built on minority outreach, I find that a vast majority of local party organizations (LPOs) lack the capacity to engage key populations of interest, as well as county leadership lacking the motivating attitudes to move the national party's message of increased inclusion into local action.

Second, I model the collective action problems within a party organization that arise from a context of reform marked by real competition for leadership and the direction of the party. Fieldwork including a year's worth of California Republican Conventions and the primary Nevada Republican Central Committee Meeting, reveals that Tea Party elements still constitute an influential force within state and county parties, as well as make up a large part of the most active parts of the GOP base, i.e. those who attend these events. Considering this, calls for reform by national party actors have presented several barriers to collective action for the party, as many local officials and activists in the base view racial inclusion and changes to party messages as a move toward moderation (i.e. "watering down" the party's core conservative principles). Whether this anti-reform sentiment is a significant barrier to the RNC's goals is largely due to whether the leadership uses formal (e.g. party bylaws) and informal institutions (e.g. convention speaking time and access) to decrease the influence of these elements.

In some ways a paradox exists for the GOP. They want to foster collective action but the very nature of the reform they are seeking (increased diversity in party) may in turn make coordination more difficult by generating more conflict. This unity vs. diversity dynamic is a struggle I find repeatedly in the interactions of party organizations competing for control of the future of their party.

Lastly, I provide insight into how the national party is working with the state and county party actors in California, a state case the RNC sees as the primary experiment for their plan, the "testing grounds" for their outreach plans for possible duplication in national elections. Here I focus on how they are working together to reform racialized

rhetoric and mobilization strategies. With reform focused on changing the tone and language embraced by the party, fieldwork that emphasizes discursive data is of use to understanding what rhetorical changes are occurring, and what this means for our understanding of conservative currents within American political discourse. Additionally, I show how California's Republican leadership use their institutional powers to encourage and enforce reform compliance, serving as a case that stands in contrast to the Nevada Republican Party.

CHAPTER 2: The Response of Local GOP Leadership to Reform & The Role of Local Party Organizations in Minority Outreach

Introduction

In an effort to remain electorally competitive in a racial and ethnic demographic context that increasingly favors their opposition, it is clear that the Republican National Committee (RNC) is seeking to change its minority outreach strategy, primarily via their *Growth and Opportunity Project*.⁴⁸ What is unknown is the reach of these reform actions, the response of local leaders to calls for change, and the extent of state and local party organizations working to implement the RNC strategies aimed at going “beyond the base” to new (primarily minority) groups.⁴⁹ For these reform efforts to be effective the Republican Party needs to coordinate across multiple levels of their party organization. The success of minority outreach programs is built, in large part, on gaining the compliance of local party organizations (LPOs) and their leadership (party chairs). The RNC hopes to build a better ground game, meaning “showing up in new places” on the local (i.e. county) level, and not simply a few months before Election Day.

To evaluate the extent of this program’s influence it is important to focus on LPOs and their leadership. As the RNC recognizes, it is this local-level arm of the party apparatus that is most likely to come into contact with voters and therefore the most crucial for reform efforts. Overall, I find little influence of this program on the local level, and point to the areas of capacity and motivation to explain why this is likely the case. In

⁴⁸ “The nation’s demographic changes add to the urgency of recognizing how precarious our position has become. America is changing demographically, and unless Republicans are able to grow our appeal [...]the changes tilt the playing field even more in the Democratic direction.” - RNC’s *Growth & Opportunity Project* - <http://goproject.gop.com/>

⁴⁹ *Growth & Opportunity Project* (linked above)

doing so I compare the survey responses of county chairs across counties and states, and where applicable, across party. The survey questions were designed to gain insight on the views of party chairs regarding their role, motivating attitudes, and outreach actions. Additionally, this work speaks to the capacity of LPOs overall (both parties) to engage diverse communities. That is, while this research informs on the level of coordination, compliance, and local-national tension across the GOP, the use of identical questions across the two party survey allows for comparison of American parties more broadly, including their motivation to mobilize minorities, and their capacity to contribute to immigrant political incorporation.

First, I consider whether LPOs have the *capacity* to engage diverse communities, including those that do not speak English as a first language, an area of fundamental importance to minority outreach. The democratic ideal envisions parties as organizations serving as a bridge connecting the party-in-the-electorate to the democratic process (Key 1964, Schattschneider 1960) – registering voters, educating on how and where to vote, and providing information on county and state-wide issues and initiatives – but are local parties equipped to engage diverse racial and ethnic communities, including a growing non-English speaking population? I find most LPOs (both GOP and Democratic) lack the capacity to engage the non-English speaking voter.

Second, I consider the motivating attitudes of LPO leadership in counties of varying racial demographics and party competition. Taken collectively, this assesses the reform and outreach relevant attitudes of party chairs, including their priorities and concerns. This includes a variety of questions, such as: how do GOP county chairs view

their role in reform? How do chairs overall (both parties) define reform (substantive/issue-relevant vs. symbolic change)? Do chairs overall view prioritizing diversity as compromising unity and cohesion (via party homogeneity)? Do chairs perceive base backlash regarding attempts at increased racial inclusion and issues seen as related (e.g. immigration reform)? Which racial and ethnic groups are prioritized across parties and counties, and how might county context (e.g. racial demographics and party competition) influence these motivations? Does the goal of going “beyond the base” mean moving away from a resource strategy (how best to spend time and money) of prioritizing partisans? I find that the GOP report has not changed the priorities of LPOs greatly. A gap remains between the parties and their motivations to engage particular minority communities via a variety of outreach tactics. Additionally, even in a context of reform built on increased minority outreach, GOP chairs view resources as best spent on partisans, on maintaining the base.

Lastly, I consider the actions LPOs taken to appeal to minority groups. That is, out of the range of possible outreach efforts, what are parties doing to reach out beyond their base? Do local GOP chairs follow RNC directives and suggestions in the *Growth and Opportunity Report*? Additionally, how much coordination exists between national and local parties. I find a lack of coordination and compliance with the RNC and its primary reform program. While this outcome may be expected to be associated with the ideology of the party chair, i.e. more conservative chairs are less likely to be compliant with change, with the RNC’s *Growth and Opportunity Project*, I do not find a statistically significant association between self-reported ideology of the county chair and level of

compliance and coordination. Instead, I believe the findings on LPO capacity and motivations inform on the overall lack of local-level reform action.

Relevant Literature Informing Theory & Hypotheses

Here I cover key theories and concepts from the literature that are of primary importance to the hypotheses tested within this chapter. While I am focused on local party organizations (LPOs), there is the related concept of informal party organization (IPO), which Seth Masket defines as, “political insiders, including legislative leaders, interest groups, activists, and others,” that, “are the heart, soul, and backbone of the contemporary political parties” (2009: 9). Given this chapter’s use of survey data from *formal* members, party chairpersons, I will be using a body of literature that speaks to the operations and motivations of local party organizations, rather than the broader conception developed by Masket. A survey of local party chairs is especially important given not only the RNC goal of developing a better “ground game,” but also given their importance to the organizational/bureaucratic arm of the party organization, and the fact that they are the party actors most likely to be in contact with the public – the party in the electorate – as well as often serving as gatekeepers to state and local elected office – the party in government (Key 1964; Beck & Hershey 2000).

With a focus on party organizations on the local level, the work of William Crotty (1986: 21) will be of particular importance, wherein he identifies three approaches in local political party research, organizational, service, and activist recruitment. This chapter’s research lies at the intersection of the organizational and service (constituency) functional theoretical approach, which asks what does a local party do for its current and

hopeful supporters? In part, this study asks how organizational traits (e.g. formal staff) interact and influence the ability to service communities, especially those of interest to the Republican Party's reform efforts.

Crotty (1986) also discusses the types of questions necessary for research in this area, and the type of data necessary to assess operations, relevance, contributions, and strategy of LPOs. Those of primary importance to this project include questions of *motivations and views*.⁵⁰ This includes the consideration of whether party actors' motivations are primarily electoral, ideological, or community service-connected. The survey developed here addresses motivations and how these motivations relate to a context of Republican reform. Views of interest to scholars of party organizations typically involve campaigns and LPO conduct in elections – including best practices, tactics, and ethics (Ibid. 20). Though many of the questions I asked party chairs relate to these areas, of primary interest to this chapter are the views of local GOP leadership pertaining to reform and actions related to minority outreach. This includes how chairs view their role, their concerns with varying strategies/approaches, and reform issues seen as important to particular minority groups (e.g. immigration).

Crotty (1986) also states those studying party organizations should also assess *how the party is linked to the public* it attempts to mobilize and represent. This chapter informs on the nature of these links to the party-in-the-electorate, particularly the balance

⁵⁰ Additional dimensions of importance to the study of local parties include aspects of: organization (whether decentralized vs. hierarchical), decision-making, membership, activities (year-round, election-centered, wide range vs. limited), and inter-campaign period (service-oriented, constituent based vs. quiescent). While the survey asks questions regarding these areas, such as if activities are year-round vs. election-centered, most of this I will feature in the appendix given my focus on the GOP and their reform efforts.

of maintaining the links to the base during times of party reform built on reaching beyond these core constituencies. This includes the consideration of what groups are prioritized (motivations), and how they are appealed to (actions). With the development of the more “mass-based” national party one might expect the electorate to be at the center of the political party but many do not see it this way. Some view the electorate, even the most die-hard “party loyalists,” as external to the political party with their only critical role being that of “targets” or “consumers” of party activities (Aldrich 1995:21). Informed by this conception, this chapter provides insight on which groups are targeted/appealed to directly, how frequently they are targeted, and how they are targeted (outreach actions).

Previous work provides reason to believe that the Republican Party lacks not only the desire to mobilize beyond their base (Frymer 1999), a base that has been shown to be predominantly white, conservative, and religious,⁵¹ but also that American parties *overall* may lack the capacity to engage immigrant populations that are increasingly identifying as non-partisan/independent (Wong 2006; Hajnal & Lee 2011). Janelle Wong (2006) focuses on Asian and Latino Americans, arguing that a lack of participation is not attributable to individual apathy or non-assimilation, but rather is a result of the shortcomings of American political institutions, such as political party organizations after the dismantling of political machines. Similarly, Zoltan Hajnal and Taeku Lee (2011) research partisan and ideological patterns across minority and immigrant populations in an effort to understand why so few are choosing to join the two longstanding American parties. While works from the perspective of racial and ethnic groups (Wong 2006;

⁵¹ *Republican Base Heavily White, Conservative, Religious:*
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/118937/republican-base-heavily-white-conservative-religious.aspx>

Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad 2008; Hajnal & Lee 2011) are of crucial importance to understanding minority mobilization and incorporation, there is also much to be gained from considering the perspective of party organizations and their local leadership, such as party chairpersons. I included survey questions regarding organizational traits of importance to mobilizing immigrant populations, while developing expectations based off these works.

The claim that the relative low involvement of minority and immigrant groups in party politics may be attributed, at least in part, to the deficiencies of party organizations, informs the expectation that LPOs overall may lack the capacity to engage non-English speaking communities, where I expect to observe:

CAPACITY H₁: A majority of party chairs from both parties will report having no bilingual staff and rarely or never printing party materials beyond the English language.

While the contemporary literature regarding the capacity of LPOs to engage non-English speaking voters is lacking, there is no short of political science scholarship on the fundamental motivations of party actors. Among the most prominent, is John Aldrich (1995), in agreement with many others (Cox & McCubbins 2005; Smith 2007), positing that parties have been the, “creature of the politicians, the ambitious office seeker and officeholder” (Aldrich 1995: 4) and therefore primarily motivated by electoral needs. This is no surprise given the historical accounts of why parties were developed – to aid politicians *electorally* and *legislatively*. Informed by this, I expect:

MOTIVATIONS H₂: More chairs will report being motivated by elections than by a desire to educate the public.

Related to motivating attitudes is the topic of concerns and priorities, particularly priorities of resources and outreach. Previous research shows that *organizational (resource) limitations* will likely influence outreach. While parties may realize the need to appeal to new groups, the motivation to win elections (Aldrich 1995) and maximize the effectiveness of resources remains (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993). Further, though the RNC's reform is built on the notion of using resources to appeal beyond their base, I still expect those who are most likely to be sought out and mobilized by parties are those who are already most likely to participate and those already most likely to vote for the party (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993; Gershtenson 2003). Given this I expect:

PRIORITIES H₃: The resource strategy of local parties will emphasize appeal to the partisan base even in the context of reform/increased outreach.

Additionally, since African Americans are seen as less persuadable than Hispanic and Asian American voters given low non-identification rates, and generally strong Democrat identification to the point of "electoral capture" (Frymer 1999), I expect:

PRIORITIES H₄: Compared to Democratic chairs, GOP chairs will report overall lower levels of priority of appealing to African American voters in their county.

Related, contextual factors such as party competition (Key 1949) and racial concentration (Collingwood 2011) within a county may be found to influence decisions regarding minority mobilization, such as frequency of minority group contact, as well as which groups are seen as most important to appeal to given limited resources and staff. Given this I expect:

CONTEXT H₅: The level of diversity and competition within a county will correlate positively with the self-reported frequency of outreach and the priority of appealing to minority groups in the county.

Recall that current and projected patterns of party loyalty and racial demographics favor Democrats (Bowler & Segura 2012: 81-82). Not only is this likely to result in different levels of outreach/minority group contact across the parties, but more simply, GOP leaders likely realize the electoral need to engage in actions in the name of reforming “party image” – the totality of political symbols, perceptions and stereotypes one associates with a political party (Philpot 2007: 11, 30). Typically change sought in the realm of party image is conceived of as *symbolic* or *substantive change* (Ibid.). Additionally, while racial demographic contexts and competition may incentivize minority outreach, previous research also posits that a fear of disrupting *minimum winning coalitions* may serve as a counter to this motivation (Frymer 1999). Further, this fear/concern has been argued to be a longstanding motivating factor behind mobilization, or rather, for a *lack* of mobilization of particular minority groups (Frymer 1999, Valelly 2004). With these dynamics in mind, I expect GOP chairs will hold distinct concerns regarding substantive change in key issue areas related to reform, and that these concerns will result in distinctions across the two parties in the area of minority outreach actions:

CONCERNS [of Base Backlash] H₆: GOP chairs will report a negative response from their base regarding *substantive change* in the area of immigration policy.

ACTIONS H₇: Compared to GOP chairs, the Democratic chairs will report more frequent outreach to and from ethnic organizations and minority-serving interest groups.

ACTIONS H₈: The outreach actions reported by chairs will emphasize symbolic reform rather than substantive/issue-relevant change on policies of interest to minority and immigrant populations.

Party scholars have yet to research in detail the tension that exists between state and national party beyond brief accounts (see Beck & Hershey 2000: 88), though Mancur Olson's (1965) classic work on collective action provide the expectation that any large organization, and those especially of an ideological nature, are bound to have problems of coordination across its various branches.⁵² Informed by Olson, and my findings from work in the field that many conservative Republicans view reform as either a call for moderating messages or sacrificing conservative ideals, I predict the conservative ideology of Republican chairpersons will associate with lower levels of coordination and compliance with the RNC's reform project.

COORDINATION H₉: Conservative ideology will hold a negative correlation with the level of national party contact, i.e. the more conservative chairs will show signs of less coordination.

COMPLIANCE H₁₀: Conservative ideology will hold a negative correlation with levels of compliance with the G.O.P. report.

Although the hypotheses presented here are multiple and varied, they all are of fundamental importance to both: 1) the particular focus on key dimensions of Republican reform, and 2) the broader focus of collective action across a multiple-tiered organization (i.e. political parties operating in a federalism framework).

⁵² In later chapters I illustrate in detail both tensions within a state Republican Party (Nevada), those a state party organization may hold with the national party and its leadership, and further, how this serves as a barrier to wide scale change requiring collective action. Additionally, I detail the counter case (California) of low tension and high compliance with the national party and its reform recommendations.

Data & Methods

Original survey data was collected through the development and use of a multiple-wave mail survey featuring the option of responding online.⁵³ The survey was designed with the Dillman *Total Design Method*⁵⁴ (Dillman 1978). Much of the reform-specific questions were informed by my fieldwork, the participant observation of party events, meetings and conventions in California and Nevada. Out of 320 counties contacted, 83 county chairs replied (45 GOP; 38 DEM), for an approximate response rate of 26 percent. Purposive sampling of American counties achieved variation in county racial diversity and party competition.

Variation was achieved on both county racial diversity or rather the percent white population, and competition, or the county vote spread in the 2012 presidential election. The average county size was 360 thousand, with variation in county traits such as those that are primarily urban/metropolitan, rural, or mixed. The primary variables of interest for the results presented here include **dependent variables** of: capacity (bilingual staff, bilingual party materials), attitudes (priorities – e.g. level of group priority; concerns – e.g. racial inclusion & immigration support; motivations – e.g. elections vs. educating), and actions (e.g. frequency of outreach and contact), **independent variables**: party identification (party ID), ideology (self-placement on 7-point scale), and county

⁵³ See appendix for the full survey with notes on question variation across party questions, as well as the mailed cover letter and reminders.

⁵⁴ The basics of the design are as follows: 1) Initial contact is made via a postcard notice. 2) Immediately after the survey instrument with cover letter and postage-paid return envelope are sent. 3) One week later a postcard reminder is sent thanking those who have responded and courteously reminding those who have yet to, 4) Three weeks later another letter and replacement questionnaire are sent to only non-respondents. 5) Finally at seven weeks the last mailing is sent to non-respondents, similar to the one preceding it but via certified mail to emphasize its importance (Dillman 1978: 183).

contextual variables of party competition in county (2012 winning percent), and voting age populations (VAP) of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and white in county.

To examine the relationship between categorical variables (e.g. party ID and level of outreach), I use the Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) as measure of association and significance. For tests involving continuous variables (e.g. county voting age population by race and competition) I use an OLS method of estimation, given a non-binary dependent variable and the absence of a theoretical reason to expect a non-linear relationship. Much of the comparative data, for those survey items that do not directly reference the *Growth and Opportunity Project*, I sum responses and compare totals across the parties.

Results

Capacity

Recall the RNC's reform goal of reaching out to new groups, "new groups" as defined by the *Growth and Opportunity Report* wherein the main groups of interest are those that the Republican Party has historically been less successful in garnering support from, e.g. minority, women, and youth voters. Further, among these groups, the report focuses most frequently on Hispanic and Latino voters. With this in mind, it can be said that the GOP's capacity to speak to these voters for the purposes of informing and mobilizing is of prime importance. Survey research shows a large portion of this voting

population speaks Spanish, the growing and longtime “most spoken non-English language in the U.S.” (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera 2013).⁵⁵

Though research shows a trend of increasing use of English in Hispanic households, with projections at 34 percent by 2020 (Ortmon & Shin 2011), it remains that nearly 75 percent of Hispanic and Latino households report primarily Spanish speaking at home (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera 2013). Additionally, the 2012 Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project reports “95% of Hispanic adults—including those born in the U.S.—said it is important that future generations of Hispanics speak Spanish” (Ibid.). As long as this remains, it can be said that it too is important for American political parties to be bilingual and Spanish speaking to appropriately appeal to these voters.

While content analysis of party sites revealed some LPOs are going well beyond English with their party materials,⁵⁶ I find that a majority of all county party chairpersons reported having no bilingual staff (Fig. 2A – totaled in pie graph), and rarely to never printing bilingually. *Affirming H₁*, the majority of Republican and Democratic LPOs surveyed lack the capacity to engage voters in any language beyond English.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ For more data see: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/09/05/what-is-the-future-of-spanish-in-the-united-states/>

⁵⁶ See appendix for example of the San Francisco Republican Party’s website and its featuring of Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin.

⁵⁷ In as much as accessibility relates to capacity, it is worth a distinction found across parties, that of making contact information (addresses, phone, & email) accessible to the public. This was seen clearly in whether party websites had contact info, and whether it was up to date. Error rates for the mailed contact totaled with the Republican contacts having 21 errors (return to sender/undeliverable addresses) and the Democratic contacts having 6 errors. The difference remains even when considering an oversampling of Republican chairs. The differences in accurate addresses/contact info for GOP may reflect lacking technology of the party on the local level, or perhaps reflects more skepticism of “outsiders” to the party, whether reporters or anyone seeking to track party actions, attend meetings and ask critical questions, something I found to be the case with fieldwork. This itself may be a barrier to a goal of inclusion.

Distinctions exist between the two parties with 50 percent of Democratic and 68 percent of GOP chairs reporting no bilingual staff. Those reporting always or often printing party materials bilingually totaled to 17 percent of all chairs surveyed. Additionally, 31 percent of Democratic chairs and 29 percent of GOP chairs reported never printing bilingually, while 27 percent (GOP) and 17 percent (Dem) reported rare bilingual printing. The correlation of the size of the Latino voting age population within a county with either measure of capacity was not significant after including other VAP (white, African American, and Asian American) variables.

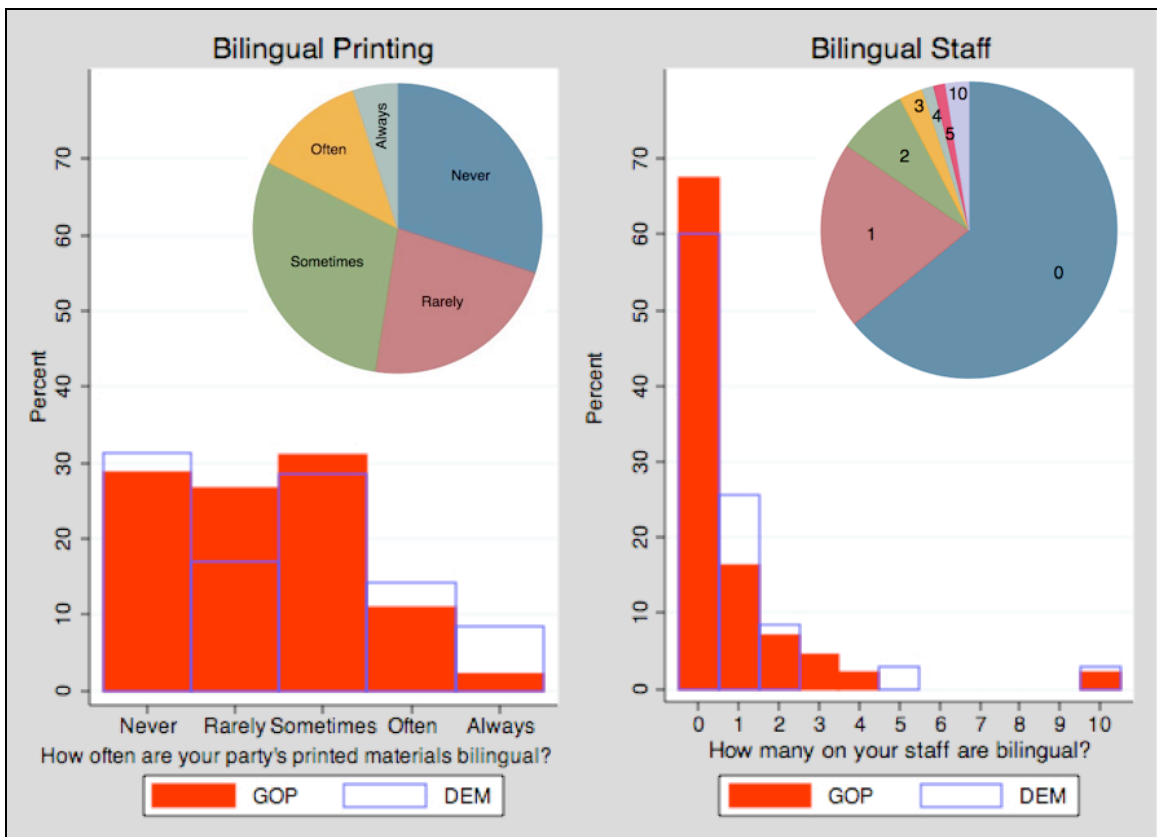


Figure 2A: LPO Capacity

Motivations

Speaking to the fundamental motivations of local party organizations, those previously conceptualized by foundational works (Crotty 1986) on local party actors as primarily electoral, ideological, or community-service/educational, I find little distinction between the two parties (Figure 2B). *Affirming H₂*, these findings reveal the primarily election-minded motivation of LPO leadership. Of less importance but still holding high totals of agreement as important for chairs of both parties, is the ideological component – being motivated by the desire to develop ideological distinctions between the two parties. Lastly, chairpersons being motivated primarily by a desire to educate the general public holds a split response overall from chairs of both parties.

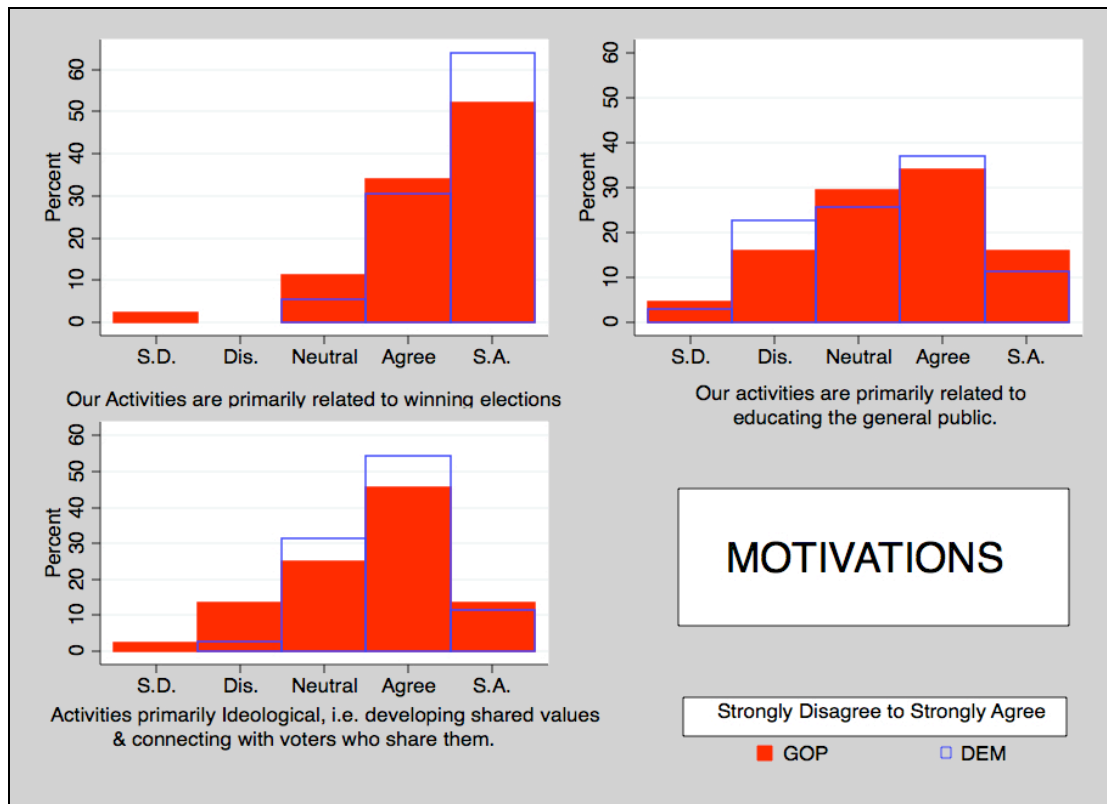


Figure 2B: Motivations of County Chairpersons

Regarding motivating factors of particular importance to GOP reform, while I find there is no statistically significant relationship between party and the importance of party base vs. outreach, there is a statistically significant ($Pr = .001$) relationship and substantive distinction between party and resource strategy (Figure C). *Affirming H₃*, a majority of chairs surveyed see resources best spent on mobilizing the partisan base. Further, the biggest distinction between GOP chairs and Democratic chairs is in how many remain neutral on this question of prioritizing outreach beyond the base. This may speak to skepticisms within the GOP regarding the reform approach of engaging voters from groups that primarily vote Democratic. My time in the field, as well as tracking news coverage⁵⁸ regarding GOP reform, revealed that many within the GOP remain unconvinced that it is a winning strategy to focus energies appealing to voters beyond the base. Further, the motivation of winning elections by this purportedly more efficient use of resources works against the RNC's outreach aim, serving as a potential barrier to reform actions. This demonstrates the difficulty changing strategy that goes against longstanding practices motivated by efficient spending and the desire to maximize the likelihood that the voters mobilized vote the way they want. More broadly, this finding is of importance to both parties as it demonstrates the perceived tradeoffs of outreach to new voters.

⁵⁸ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/30/phyllis-schlafly-hispanic-voters-ignore-white-people_n_3361620.html; <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/03/should-republicans-just-focus-on-white-voters/>; <http://www.rove.com/articles/480>

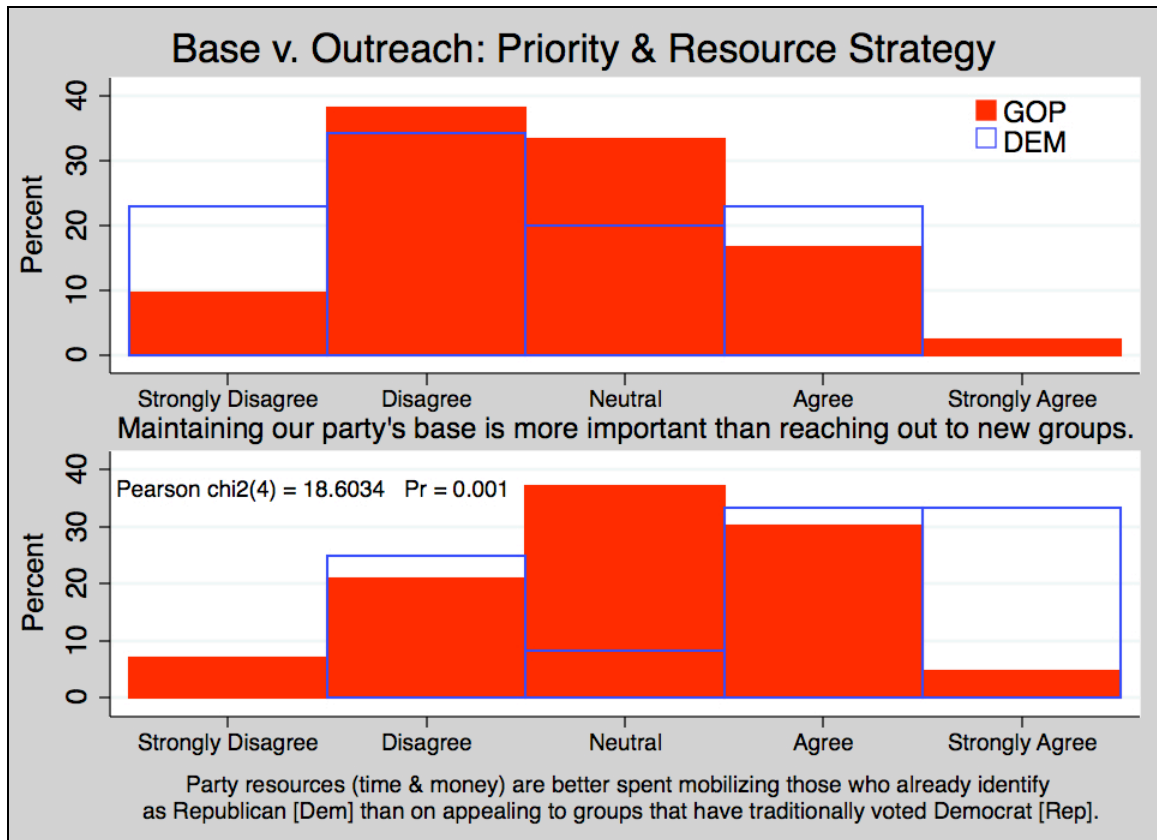


Figure C: Base & Outreach Priority of County Chairpersons

My focus on minority group outreach is limited to the United States' three largest minority groups, in order of size: Latino Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans (Census 2010). On priority of appeals to specific racial groups, the most noticeable and statistically significant (Pr = .00) difference between the parties is in regard to appealing to African Americans (Figure D). While over 20 percent of GOP chairs reported the group as low priority, over 60 percent of Democratic chairs reported them as high priority. *Confirming H₄*, compared to Democratic chairs GOP chairs report overall lower levels of priority of appealing to African American voters in their county. This finding is in-line with past research showing African Americans are seen as less persuadable given low non-identification rates, and generally strong Democrat

identification to the point of “capture” (Frymer 1999). Conversely, Latino and Asian Americans are viewed as similar in that they are viewed as persuadable because they hold higher rates of non-party identification (Hajnal & Lee 2011).

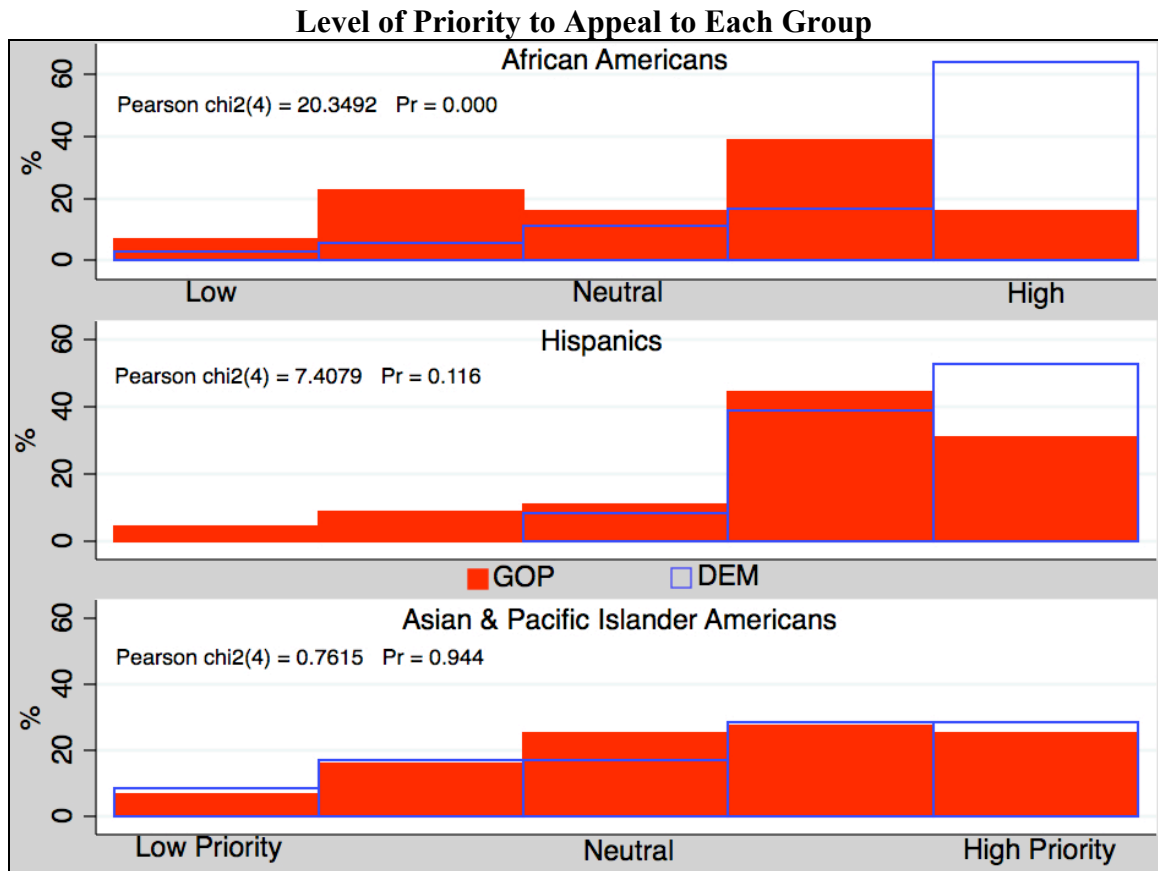


Figure D: County Chairpersons Reported Group Priorities

On contextual effects, while neither competition nor diversity was found to correlate with frequency of minority group contact, I find statistically and substantively significant county-level racial diversity effects for level of priority. That is, the priority of appealing to both African Americans and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans increases with the size of the voting age population of each respective group in the county (Figure E).

The same relationship was not found for Hispanics. Additionally, the competition variable achieved statistical significance only for African Americans, *affirming H₅ only in part*.⁵⁹

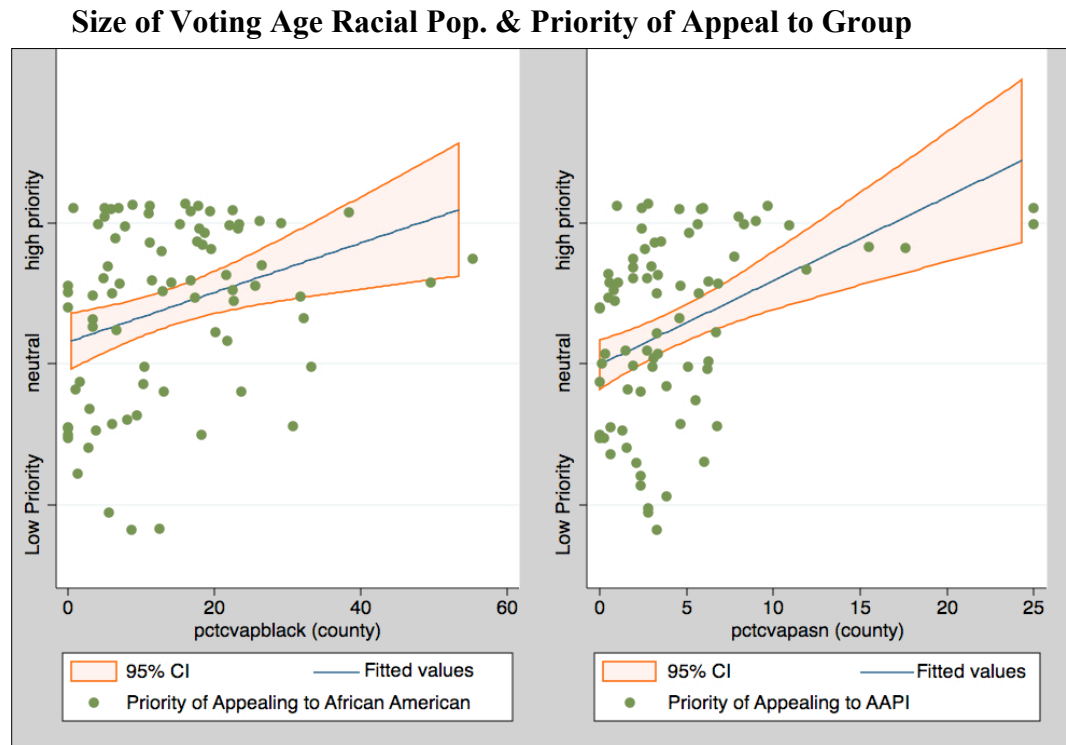


Figure E: VAP & Group Priority

Of likely importance to RNC’s top-down reform efforts is the concern of base backlash given calls for change built on appealing to voting blocks that have loyalties to the oppositional, and decidedly more moderate, party. I asked several questions regarding the concern for base backlash and the perceived tradeoffs of pursuing increased racial diversity. Related to the reform goal of increased minority outreach, I find more Democratic chairs than GOP chairs reported a positive response from their base regarding racial inclusion (Figure F). Further, there is a noticeable difference between the parties in

⁵⁹ See appendix for regression tables.

whether they view diversity as holding potential to hurt party unity. Over 10 percent of GOP chairs surveyed *strongly agreed*, conversely no Democratic chairs did. While 17 percent of Democratic chairs *agreed*, over a third of the GOP *agreed* overall.

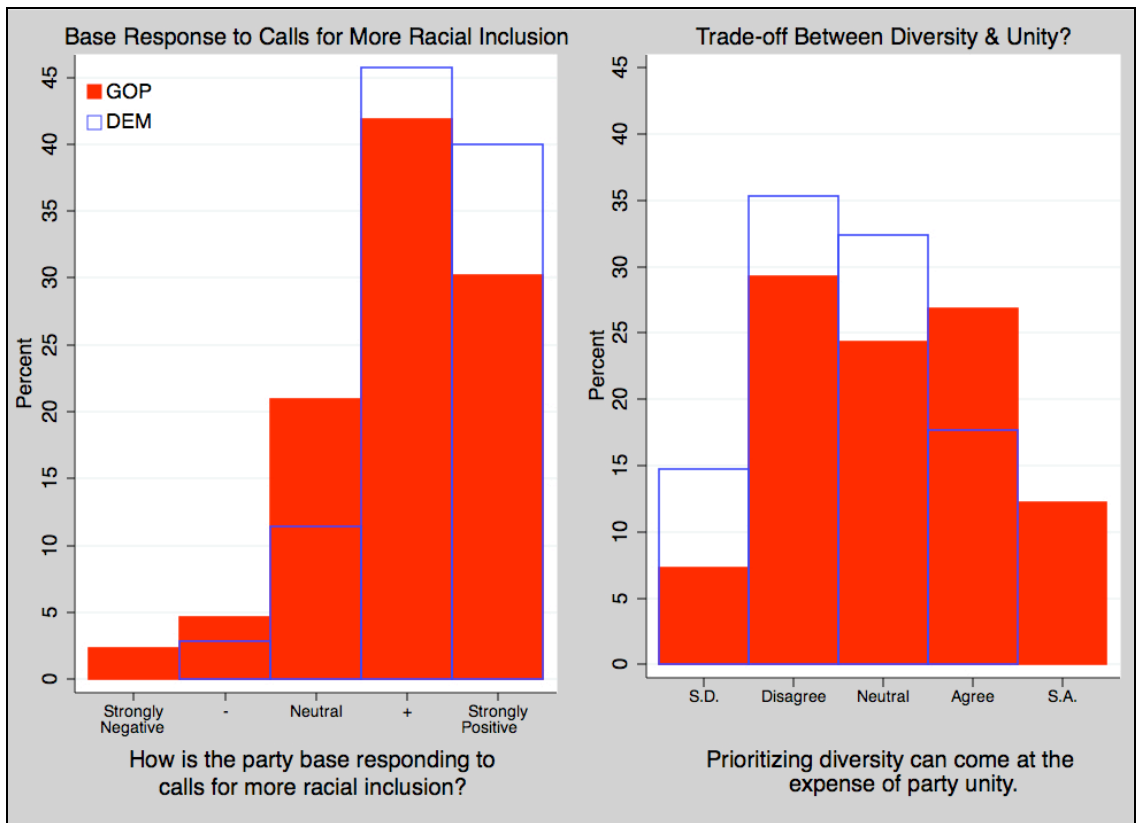


Figure F: Chairpersons Views of Base Backlash & Diversity/Unity

Additionally, I included questions of perceived base backlash on policies of noted importance to Hispanics as a voting block, such as immigration. Speaking to the concerns of local leadership in seeking a more pro-immigrant policy and this change holding potential for base backlash – more GOP chairs reported a *negative* than those reporting a *positive* response from the base regarding calls for immigration reform, *affirming H₆* (Figure G). Conversely, a majority of Democratic chairs reported a *negative* response to *NOT* delivering Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

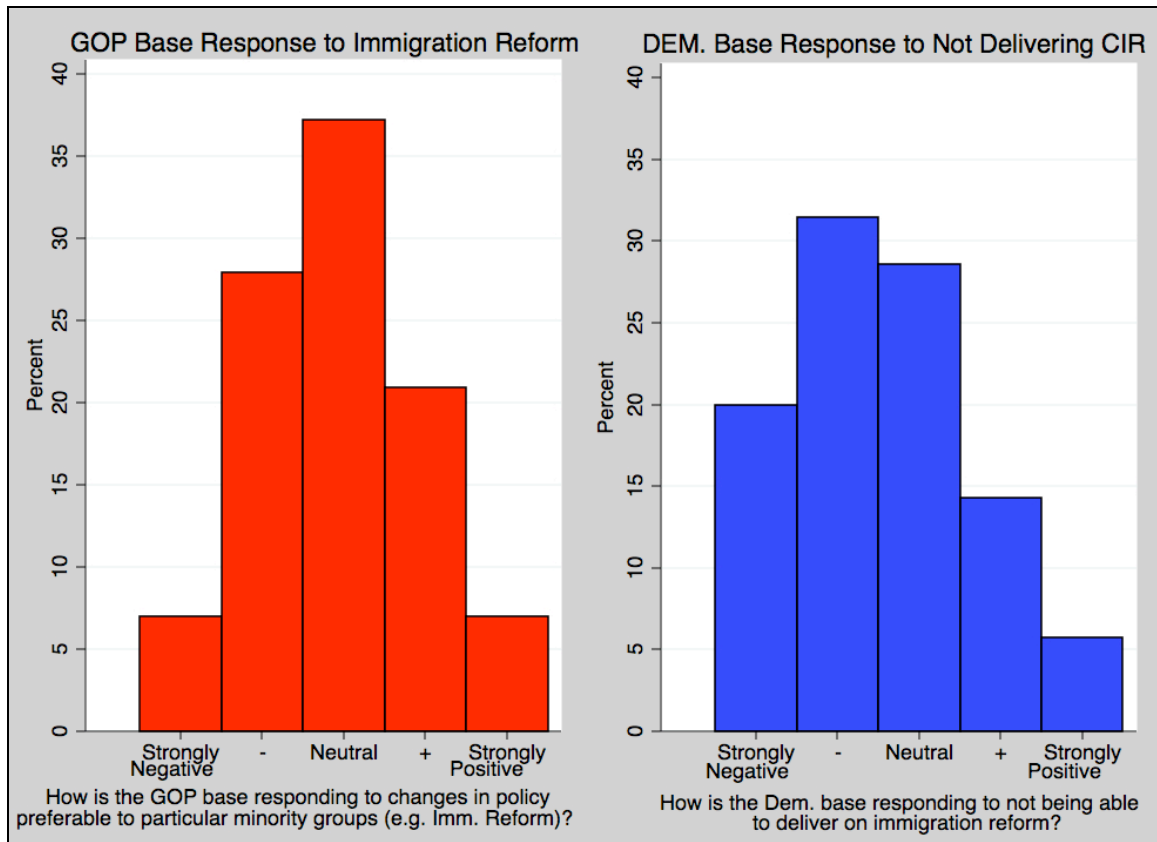


Figure G: Chairperson Reports of Base Response to CIR

Reform-Related Actions

Confirming H₆, Democratic chairs reported more frequent outreach *to* and *from* ethnic organizations and minority-serving interest groups (Figure H). The relationship between party and level/frequency of minority group contact is statistically significant (Pr = .01 level). Additionally, outreach does not correlate with the size of the voting age minority populations in the county.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ See appendix for regression tables.

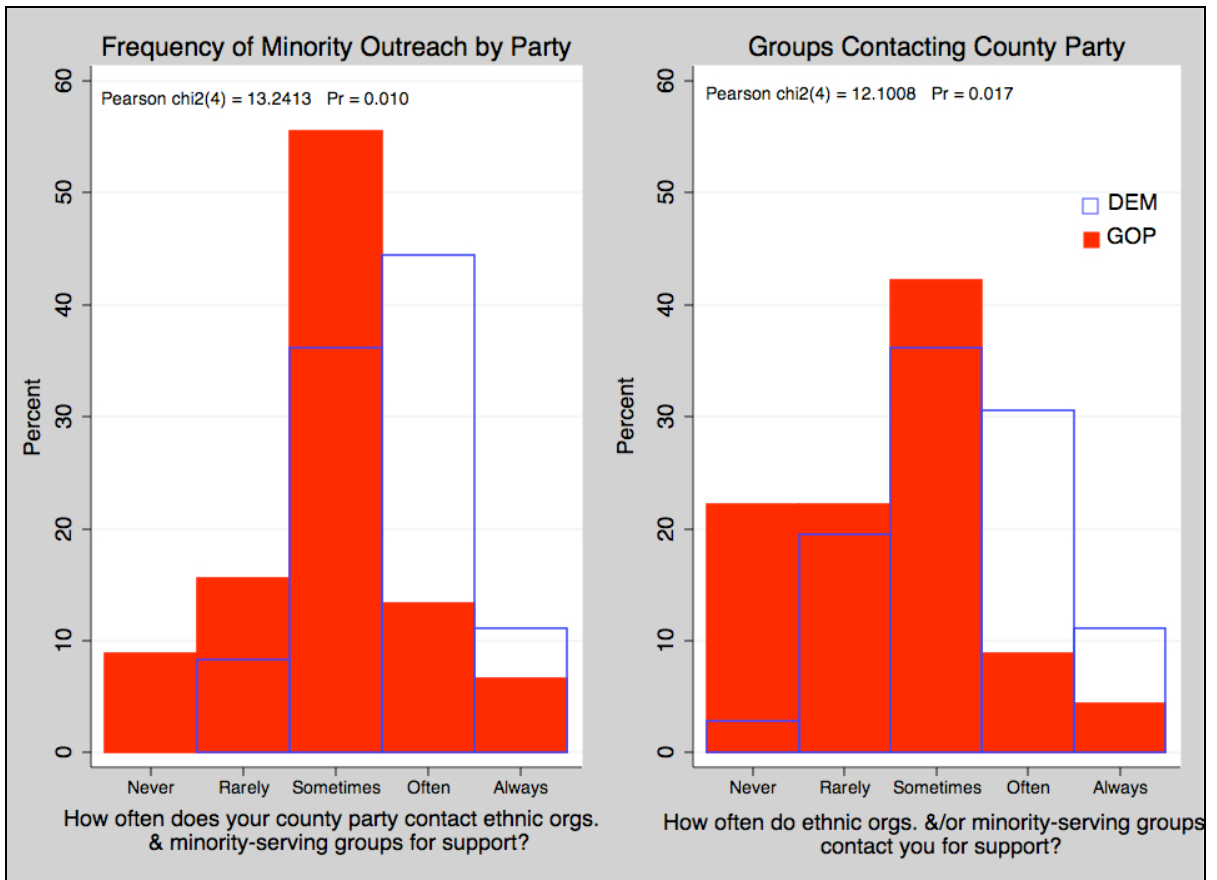


Figure H: LPO Minority Group Contact

Confirming H₈, symbolic vs. substantive/issue-relevant change, issue advocacy and local legislative action as a means of appealing to racial and ethnic groups was reported at nearly half the rate of actions directly related to elections (Figure I and Figure J). Additionally, symbolic actions such as attendance at community events were among the highest reported for each party. Democratic chairs were more likely than their Republican counterparts to report issue advocacy, and staffing and training as a means of minority outreach.

Additionally, I find stressing symbolic vs. substantive change varies greatly across party. Far fewer (only 7 percent) of Republican chairs defined reform as being

primarily about substantive change to party message and policy positions vs. changing the messengers, i.e. diversifying the racial backgrounds of candidates. Further, nearly twice as many GOP chairs (28 vs. 15 percent) view reform as primarily about changing “messengers” vs. policy positions. This informs on GOP strategy overall and is corroborated by fieldwork, where discussions are largely about how to sell the current platform as is, rather than about how the platform can change to attract voters. Similarly, over 50 percent of Republican chairs surveyed disagreed that the party needs to moderate its message to remain competitive, while also simultaneously agreeing that the party has a “messaging problem.”

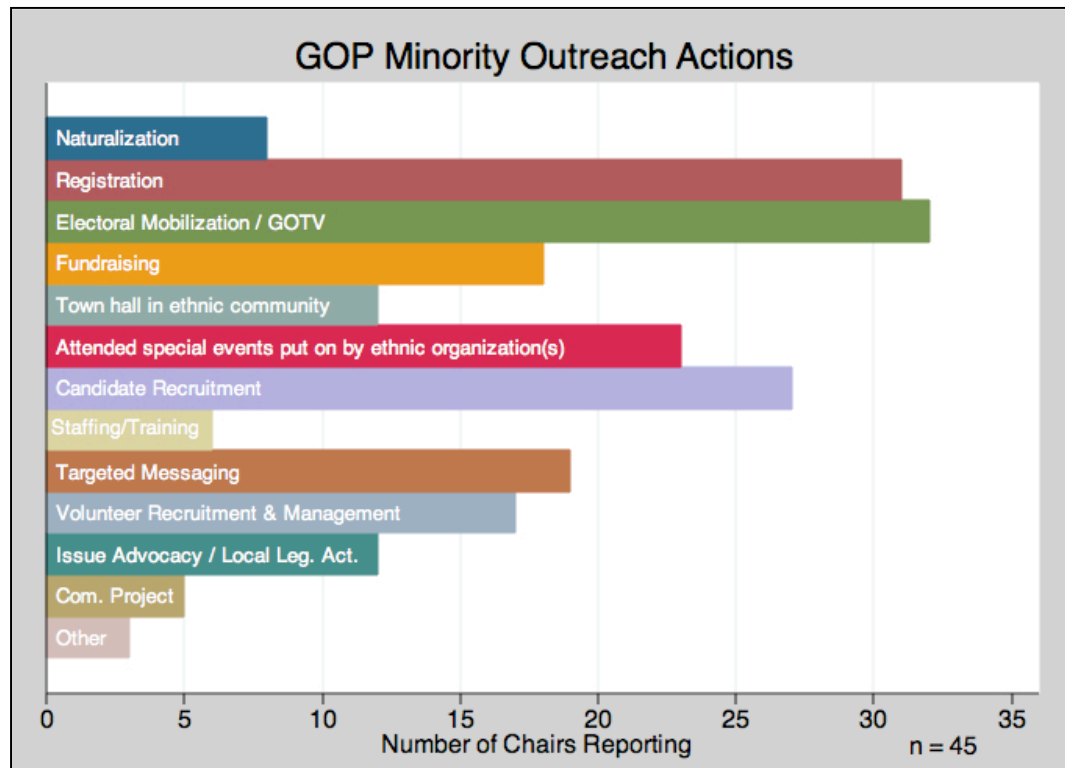


Figure I: Republican Chairpersons Summed Outreach Actions

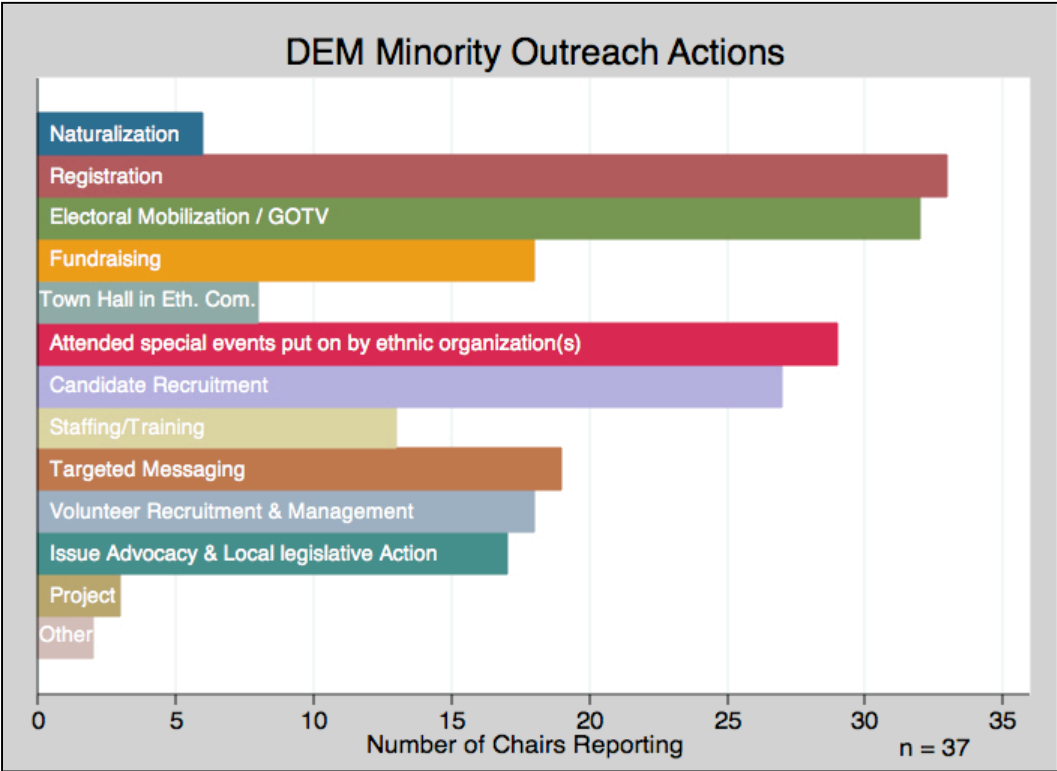


Figure J: Democratic Chairpersons Summed Outreach Actions

The GOP preference for symbolic change, and the tendency of LPOs overall to engage in symbolic vs. substantive action, can also be seen in the varying responses to questions regarding comprehensive immigration reform and whether it is of importance to Hispanic communities. GOP chairs are split on whether they see a lack of support for immigration reform hurting their ability to attract Hispanic voters in the future, with over a third *agreeing* and *disagreeing* with the sentiment. Nearly no Democratic chairs surveyed *disagreed* with this statement on the importance of immigration to Hispanic voters (Figure K).

Though, most chairs from each party surveyed either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that immigration discussions should be informed by the perspective of the Hispanic community, nearly 20 percent of the GOP *disagreed*, while no Democratic chairs *disagreed* to any extent with this statement. Further, the relationship between party and these views on immigration is statistically significant (Pr = .00 level). Given the GOP's decidedly more restrictionist stance on immigration, perhaps this finding of GOP chairs largely seeing CIR as not important for winning the Hispanic vote is wishful thinking, as immigration continues to poll as a key issue for Hispanic registered voters.⁶¹

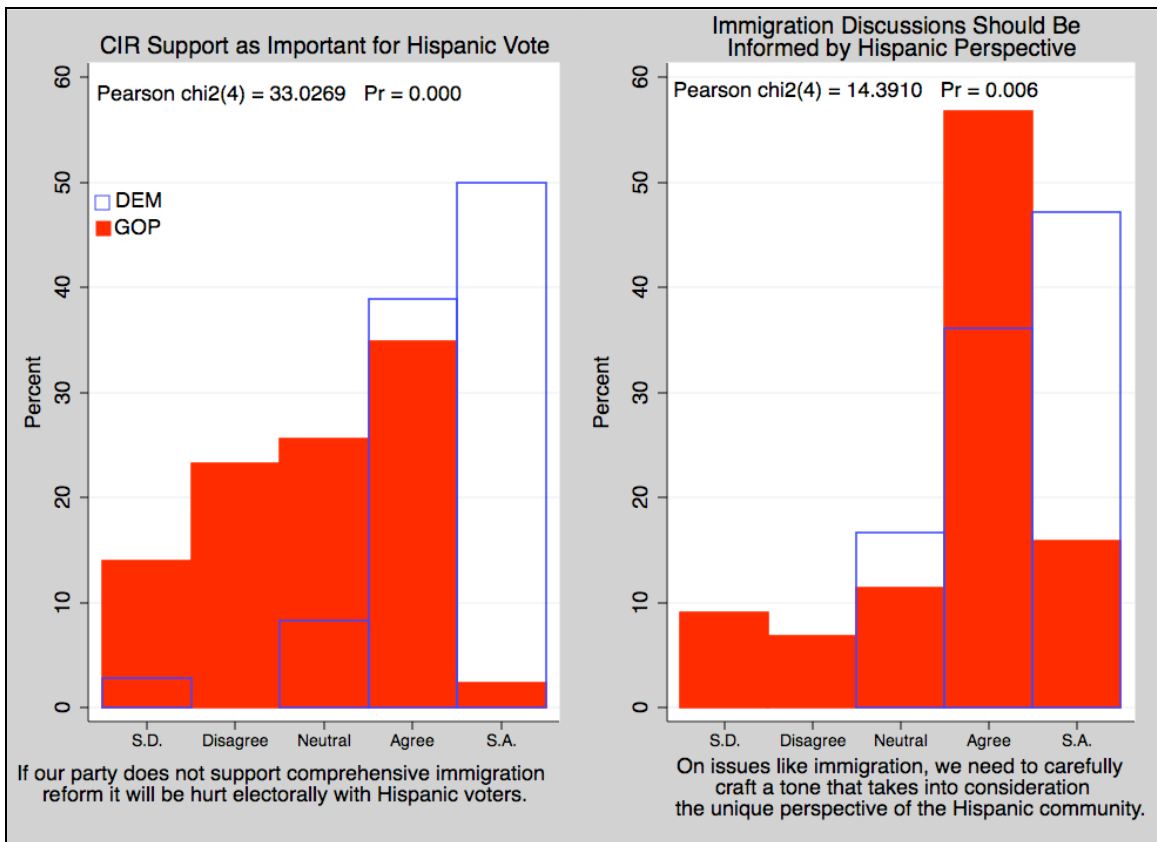


Figure K: Chairpersons Views of Immigration Issues & Hispanic Vote

⁶¹ <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/10/29/chapter-5-hispanics-and-their-views-of-immigration-reform/> A majority view immigration reform as important and blame a lack of new immigration legislation primarily on Republicans in Congress.

Next, I consider the self-reported effect of the RNC reform recommendations and whether county Republican Party organizations are working to implement the RNC strategies, and how much coordination exists in the name of these efforts. Overall, I find there is not much work being done directly in the name of the *Growth and Opportunity Project*, with low self-reported **compliance**. I find that a majority of Republican chairs report rarely or never following the RNC’s G.O.P. Report recommendations for reaching out to new groups (Figure L).

How much is your county party following recommendations from the RNC’s “Growth & Opportunity Report?”

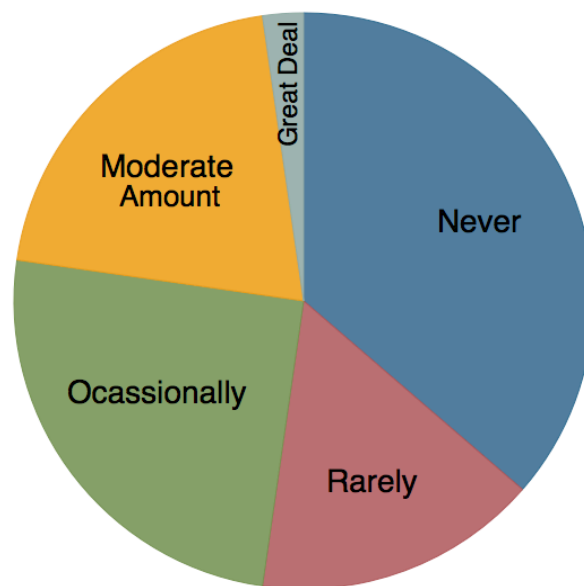


Figure L: RNC Reform Project County Compliance

Additionally, an open-ended question regarding the *Growth and Opportunity Project* allowed chairs to note how their activities related to the program and what they have changed over time. Several chairs wrote that they never heard of this project. Further, several chairs wrote comments that echoed the sentiment of this GOP chair from

Arizona, “[the] RNC is completely out of touch with the grassroots of the GOP in [_____].” This sentiment was not unique to the survey findings. Fieldwork revealed that many county party leaders view their party organization as uniquely different than the national party, often viewing their county party as more “in touch” with the voters, the base of the party, the grassroots. Comments revealing a view of superior distinction often coincided with comments revealing either the chair was unaware of RNC projects, or were aware but non-compliant with the RNC and its outreach goals in and out of the *Growth and Opportunity Report*.

Similarly, as with compliance the level **coordination** between the Republican local leadership and the national party is similarly low. I measure coordination with national and state party in its most minimal form, as frequency of contact with actors of each respective level of the party organization. I find that elected officials are among the most frequently contacted; with 86% of Republican chairs citing them as contacted often. The next most frequently contacted level of the organization include the state central committee with 45 percent of Republican chairs reporting contacting them often, and another 36 percent reporting sometimes contacting individuals from their states party committee. The lowest contact totals included members of the RNC, with state field directors having the highest totals at 18 percent reporting often and 13 percent reporting sometimes, meaning the vast majority (~70 percent) of local GOP leadership reported rarely or never having contact with these individuals or groups. The same holds for other RNC actors, including those of special importance to reform built on the primary aim of minority outreach, for example the RNC Minority Engagement Directors.

I do not find a statistically significant relationship between the ideology of the chair and level of compliance or coordination, *rejecting both H_9 and H_{10}* . Compliance and coordination are low across the conservative ideological spectrum. The lack of variation in ideology may explain some of these accounts, as well as relying on self-reported placement on the 7-point ideological scale. GOP chairs surveyed predominantly (85 percent) self-identified as either conservative or extremely conservative, with fewer identifying as slightly conservative, and even fewer as moderate. Similarly, over 88 percent of Republican chairs surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with, *“I am for reform as long as it means not compromising our party’s core conservatives principles.”* With this in mind, it is not surprising to see those who see reform as moderation going against reform and as a result report less compliance with the RNC’s reform goals. Additionally, one might expect county racial context and competition to be associated with compliance and coordination, i.e. counties with contextual incentive to engage more fully in minority outreach will, but overall I do not find statistically or substantively significant evidence for this connection in the area of coordination and compliance.

The expectation of a link between ideology and compliance and coordination was informed by observation of the state level leadership in California and Nevada, wherein the farther right local leadership have vocalized their fear of reform, their lack of compliance with the RNC, because they see reform as either a moderating force, or from their perspective even worse, as code for outing far right elements such as the Tea Party and libertarian movements. As I will illustrate further in proceeding chapters, these fears

of reform can serve as a barrier to collective action, diminishing the likelihood of coordination and compliance with the national party's efforts.

Regarding the central question of the GOP report and its aims of minority outreach, we see the Republican Party remains relatively low in minority engagement compared to its opposition, the Democratic Party. In addition, the amount of compliance with the report and coordination with the RNC is predominantly low. I have pointed to several traits of Republican county organizations that speak to likely contributing factors, including a lack of capacity to fully engage the key group of interest (Hispanic Americans), and further, that the reform goal of prioritizing those that typically vote for the opposition (Democratic) goes against longstanding motivations of maximizing resources by mobilizing partisans, i.e. maintaining the base.

Conclusion

This chapter informs on why after two years of the RNC pursuing the betterment of their “ground game,” their connection to minority groups on the local level, that the GOP continues to be comparatively (to the Democratic Party) weak in this area. As I have highlighted, the answer is multifaceted. LPOs lack the capacity to fully engage the key group of interest to their reform, reform requires going against longstanding motivations of maximizing resources by mobilizing partisans, i.e. maintaining the base vs. engaging in outreach, and the level of coordination across the national, state, and county party remains low. Secondly, I find mixed evidence for contextual effects and items related to minority outreach, with slight effects of county-level minority populations and priority of appeals to African Americans and Asians. I do not find county

competition or diversity to be associated with compliance with the report or coordination with the RNC.

More broadly, these findings provide several insights into the role of American parties in minority outreach. Taken collectively, these findings speak to the struggle of moving a message of inclusion into action, providing insight into whether American political parties can reform to become democratic forces for minority mobilization and immigrant incorporation. If local party leadership fails to employ staff and methods that can engage diverse communities, continues to see resources as best spent on partisans, fails to prioritize varying racial and ethnic groups, and neglects substantive change for fear of base backlash, then minority and immigrant communities stand to remain marginalized by our party system, as under-prioritized and under-mobilized parts of the voting population.

CHAPTER 3: *Fear & Voting in Las Vegas:* Internal Campaigning & Intra-Party Factions as Barriers to Top-Down Reform

Introduction

I introduced myself to party politics firsthand by going to where the action is, or rather, the interaction. Observing members of a state central committee interacting at their place of official party business allowed me to better understand the internal workings of a local party organization. This work also served to inform much of what I would ask on a survey of a national sample of local party leadership (county chairpersons). Ethnographic fieldwork allowed for generating a theoretical account of the how collective action, particularly in the name of reforming a party's minority outreach, is affected by the existence of factions, internal campaigning, and infighting. With discussion and actions of reform being a reoccurring event after widespread electoral losses, this allows us to speak to what top-down reform looks like on the local organizational level. More broadly, this chapter and state party as case study serves to illustrate the fundamental dilemmas facing a national party seeking to gain compliance of party actors across multiple levels of the party. Given this focus on reform I will be looking solely at the Republican Party in this chapter, with comparative data from Democratic Party organizations used in a proceeding chapter.

Using fieldwork with the Nevada Republican Party, I develop a theoretical account of how the context of top-down reform influences the intra-party dynamics of state party organizations. In this chapter I introduce and illustrate a proximate causal model of how the context of top-down reform can interact with the mechanisms of internal campaigning and institutional change leading to barriers to collective action. In

doing so I first show how two major factions are present in the Nevada Republican Party. Second, I illustrate how these factions in the context of reform influence the tone of internal campaigning in a way that contributes to intra-party conflict and works as a barrier to collective action. Lastly, I show how state party organizations where leadership fear top-down reform are able to set up institutions that serve to pushback national influence, serving as another barrier to collective action, and in turn complicating the RNC's goal of going beyond the base to construct a new, more racially diverse voting coalition.

In proceeding chapters I will show that these factions and their dynamics are not unique to the Nevada GOP.⁶² These dynamics exist to varying degrees across the Republican Party. These barriers and divisions can be seen as affecting interactions on all levels of the party (county, state, and national) and across several states. I will argue that at the heart of the complications arising from factions and internal campaigning is the distinctiveness vs. unity dilemma. This chapter also serves to undermine basic assumptions regarding the relative unity and non-combative bureaucratic nature of party organizations (Schlesinger 1984).⁶³

Literature & Theory

While political parties remain an extensively studied part of political science (Aldrich 1995, Frymer 1999, Beck & Hershey 2000, Cox & McCubbins 2005), parties as organizations, their internal dynamics, actions on the state and local level, and

⁶² I use a survey of county chairmen across the country and additional fieldwork with the California Republican Party, including a year's worth of their conventions and meetings therein.

⁶³ Perhaps especially so for the relatively more ideologically cohesive and racially homogenous Republican Party (Taylor 2005: 160-61).

interactions with those across the multiple tiers of a national party remain the most understudied “face” of American political parties (Key 1964: 163-65). Here I will cover the literature of primary relevance to this research, as well as highlight and explain how key concepts and gaps within it inform the theory building that is taking place within this chapter.

Beck and Hershey (2000) provide perhaps the most comprehensive definition of party organization. They argue *Party organizations* include “the formally chosen” and “informally anointed” leaders, “precinct workers, the members and activities of the party,” those “who give their time, money and skills to the party,” operating mainly “through the formal machinery of committees and conventions set by the laws of the fifty states and in part through its own informal apparatus,” “the party bureaucracy,” and the “face-to-face relationships that characterize any organization” (Beck & Hershey 2000:10). The organizational/bureaucratic arm of parties are important because they are the party actors that are most likely to be in contact with the public – the party in the electorate – as well as often serving as gatekeepers to elected local and state offices – the party in government.

Joseph Schlesinger is critical of what he calls the textbook approach to parties separating the party into three faces or sectors (Schlesinger 1984: 378). His theoretical account emphasized the “unity of party and its organization” while making the case for a Downsian-style team with the shared “market-based goal” of winning office. He concedes, “it is one thing to assert the unity of party and organization, another to demonstrate it” (Ibid.). Writing a few decades after Schlesinger and in a drastically

different demographic, media, and campaign environment, I contend that this task has become even more difficult. Further, this chapter demonstrates the theoretical utility of seeing the formal organization as distinct in its formality of roles, bylaws, and more bureaucratic nature, while also noting the relative disunity of the three faces of the party and the tension existing between state and national party organizations (Beck & Hershey 2000: 51-52; 88).

The concept of *party reform* lacks a discipline-specific definition, though there exists related topics such as the *altering of party image*, which too is in-line with one component of the RNC's *Growth and Opportunity Report*. While previous research (Philpot 2007) informs on the process of party image reform, it does not illustrate how party organizations put such reforms into practice across the local, state, and national level, and the fundamental barriers to doing so. Additionally, this work is concerned with how the Republican Party defines reform, accommodating for the possibility of competing definitions both within state organizations (across counties) and with the national party. No matter the *content* of reform, whether image alteration, minority outreach, updating technology, any change within a large, multifaceted, and ideological organization is fundamentally an exercise in *collective action* (Olson 1965).

Mancur Olson's canonical text focuses on labor lobbies, farm lobbies, pressure groups, and professional lobbies, while briefly touching on parties among "noneconomic lobbies" in the concluding pages (Ibid. 162). Olson argues that political parties are organizationally weak, operating "not as formal organizations" but as "names and categories" with little power (Ibid.). More contemporary work (Cohen et al. 2008)

provides an alternative picture of party organizations holding important formal and informal tools to shape candidate selection, platform, and overall party direction, often at stages in the process preceding the entrance of the party in the electorate with the casting of their primary vote. There is significant room for advancing our understanding of how parties seek to overcome the problems of acting collectively. In part, what I find is the shared goal of ensuring Republicans win office may not serve as an effective incentive, because there is fundamental disagreement on the *type* of Republican desired.

In the case of the Republican Party reform is a top-down call (starting with the RNC) for significant change to the operations of official party actors on all levels, with emphasis on building a better “ground game” via local party organizations. The Republican National Committee made the investment to create and disseminate their post 2012 election “autopsy” – *the Growth and Opportunity Report*⁶⁴ – in an effort to facilitate coordination and increase the likelihood of compliance of party organizations across the country. Given this, I am particularly interested in *reform as context*, a context that I will show holds the potential to bring about conditions that contribute to its own demise. That is to say that the climate of change produced by reform influences a party organization’s internal dynamics in ways that can contribute to barriers to collective action, producing the paradox of reform holding potential to make reform less likely. Following this review I model this process.

A key component of internal dynamics is the election of executive officers. The competition for these offices has yet to be studied. This is likely attributable to two

⁶⁴ <http://goproject.gop.com/>

things, first, a lack of access. These elections are typically closed to media and nonparty members, and are sometimes even closed to *registered* non-committee members. Second, these elections are usually friendly, primarily procedural, and “business as usual,” slight and mild transfers of power wherein members rotate from position to position on the board, or from board back to county-level chair or informal activist. When internal elections become salient is when they do become competitive, significantly affecting intra-party dynamics. I argue that reform makes competition more likely as part of a context of opportunity and uncertainty regarding the direction of the party, including who will lead the organization. In the process I develop a definition and theory of *internal campaigning* – campaigns aimed solely at voting committee members wherein the contest is between two members of the same party and sometimes members of the same committee (e.g. current treasurer vs. current chair rather than incumbent chair vs. an outside Republican challenger).

Here is where I find theoretical utility in applying the concept of the *unity-distinctiveness dilemma*. This dilemma of whether one highlights similarities in the name of unity and acting collectively or works to focus on distinctiveness in the name of defeating a challenger, I argue, exists at the heart of internal campaigning. To date, this concept has been applied to parliamentary systems and coalition governments (Boston & Bullock 2010). Originally defined as the tension existing “in multi-party systems between the need for governmental unity and cohesion (to maximize effectiveness and durability) and the maintenance of the political distinctiveness and policy integrity of the parties involved (to maximize intra-party cohesion and electoral viability)” (Ibid. 351). If its

appropriateness here is not evident as I develop it, the argument can be made that a “single” party moves closer in resemblance to a multi-party when significant factions exist and are vigorously competing against each other for control of the party.

When real competition exists internal campaigning presents challenges that are unique from typical campaigns, as candidates are competing not only against someone from the same party, but often with someone they will be working close with in the future, whether they win or lose. This means that particularly rough *internal campaign tactics* work against the long-term unity of a state party, serving as a barrier to collective action by exposing, if not solidifying, factions within the organization.

Further, when members of factions that are at odds with the national party (or rather “the establishment”) gain leadership roles in the state party organization this serves as an additional barrier to collective action, coordination, and in this case, the RNC’s reform efforts. This can be seen when state parties effectively *institutionalize their fear of top-down reform* by passing resolutions and party bylaws that serve to limit top-down influence, and to protect or expand state party power. Party scholars have not yet detailed the tension that exists between state and national party beyond brief accounts of RNC and DNC efforts to curb “party bashing” or perceived “favoritism” in contested primaries (Beck & Hershey 2000: 88). This also relates to the concept of the *invisible primary*, defined as, “the principal institutional means by which party members decide the person they want to be their nominee—the equivalent of bargaining at party conventions in the old system” (Cohen et al. 2008: 187). This runs counter to both the idea of increasingly candidate-centered campaigns (Arbour 2014) and theories of party decline (Wattenberg

1996). This chapter will show how a state party can take steps to further their influence in this invisible process by formally institutionalizing “pre-primary endorsements,” and further, that this can be a controversial move creating tension between the national and state parties.

Theorizing on factionalism within party organizations has a long history (Duverger 1954), while illustrations of the interactions of factions within parties remains largely nonexistent. A review of studies of *intra-party politics* reveals a debate regarding whether intra-party cleavages reflect *factions* (Gupta 1979) or *tendencies* (Reiter 1981). Factions have been defined simply as “a group within a group [...] whose raison d’être is competition,” and more elaborately as a “clientele grouping centered around a leader” who represents economic and social differences of followers that expect to gain from their support (Gupta 1979: 81). This supports the notion that factions should be expected when real competition exists, which I argue is made more likely in a context of reform. Tendencies on the other hand are said to reflect a stable set of attitudes rather than a stable set of leaders and/or politicians (Reiter 1981: 287). I label what I observed in the NRCC as factions vs. tendencies for two reasons. First, the groups observed held the definitional trait of being represented by leaders, in this case candidates for party chair with clear differences in levels of conservatism, or rather, their level of connection to the perceivably more moderate “establishment.” Second, because of the relatively stable set of actors involved in the local party apparatus, it is reasonable to believe that factions on the state and local level will continue to reflect a relatively stable set of actors, if not the exact representation in internal elections for executive officers. With these points in

mind, I employ the concept of faction instead of tendency in modeling these relationships.

From this literature, and the data I have collected, I have developed a two-prong model of how top-down reform may affect the internal operations of a state party organization. This model incorporates both the pre-existing concepts just reviewed, and those I have developed and seek to illustrate in this chapter. Top-down reform is best conceptualized as a *climate of change* – a context involving both opportunity and uncertainty pertaining to the direction of the party – intensifying competition and debates regarding the party’s future. This can lead to the paradox of reform helping to further the conditions that serve as barriers to the collective action necessary for reform.

Top-Down Reform & Internal Dynamics of a State Party Organization

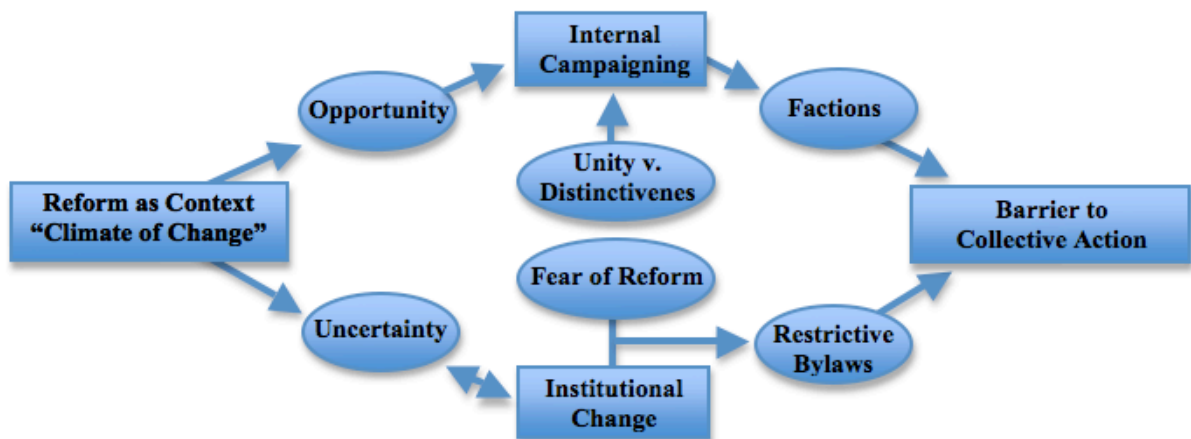


Figure 3A: Model of Context of Reform

Top-down reform brings about opportunity increasing the salience of elections which can turn the tone of internal campaigning from civil to contentious, taking elections from “business as usual” to real competition. Competition brings about the

unity-distinctiveness dilemma for internal campaigning. When distinctiveness is highlighted via competitive campaigning factions and intra-party conflict are exposed further, if not exacerbated or solidified, complicating collective action (i.e. coordinating across counties within the state).

Top-down reform brings about uncertainty wherein state parties may use institutional change to decrease the likelihood of less desirable outcomes regarding power relations (e.g. increased national power/a perceived lack of control). Further, when state party leadership fears reform they are able to effectively institutionalize this fear reform via restrictive bylaws and hostile/threatening resolutions. This serves as a barrier to the national party's efforts to facilitate coordination and compliance from state and county party leadership, limiting the reach of reform efforts and the overall impact/success of the reform project. Put another way, this complicates obtaining the cooperation from state and local parties that is necessary for reaching beyond the base.

Method

Although I have surveyed party actors regarding reform, concerns, strategy and their county party's actions, there are limitations in using self-reported answers on a primarily close-ended questionnaire to *characterize interactions within organizations*. Focusing on California as a case, Seth Masket (2009) notes the importance of fieldwork and qualitative methods in studying and arriving at a proper understanding of how parties operate in local settings: "existing models of political parties miss so much of the party action in California [. . .because] much of this action occurs out of plain sight and leaves

little trace of quantifiable data. It occurs in local communities, at odd hours, behind closed doors, and occasionally outside the law” (Ibid. 14).

Given this, I utilize an ethnographic case study to facilitate descriptive inferences – “an important, if undervalued, trope within the social sciences” – while aiming to model the proximate causal relationships summarized in Fig. 1 (Gerring 2004: 347; 2007). This qualitative approach allows for describing the complex context of reform and its relations to the internal workings of a state party organization. Uwe Flick defines a case study as “the precise description or reconstruction of a case” (2009: 134). Alternatively, John Gerring (2004; 2007) defines the case study as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring 2004: 342), and further that they “rely on the same sort of covariational evidence utilized in non-case study research” (Gerring 2004: 341). Flick also recognizes a similar motivation to engage in case studies stating that they serve as a “typical or particularly instructive example for a more general problem,” here the problem of reforming a multi-tiered ideological organization dealing with factionalism (Flick 2009: 134).

The use of ethnographic observation provides “descriptions of the state of certain life worlds,” here party organizations and members acting in their official capacity as party leadership (Flick 2009: 225). Further, going to the naturalistic setting allowed for collecting “data based on the participants’ own categories of meaning” (Ibid.). Observation focuses on “practices and interaction at a specific moment and thus adds a new perspective” to the proceeding chapters, facilitating a true mixed method approach to studying party organizations and their collective reform efforts (Flick 2009: 448).

Gerring (2007) notes, typically “case studies are fruitfully combined with cross-case studies, either within the same work or within a body of cumulated work on a subject” (Ibid. 249). Similarly, the descriptions in this chapter, while foundational, also serve to set up and compliment the rest of this dissertation. This initial focus on a single case⁶⁵ - one state party with multiple counties and candidates as units of observation – serves to provide the most coherent picture of the dynamics present in a Republican Party organization during times of top-down reform. Over the course of my fieldwork in California and through tracking reform moves by the RNC, I was able to see that the dynamics observed in Nevada represent the fundamental forces that exist in varying degrees across the whole of the Republican Party.⁶⁶

For many political scientists the merits of ethnographic fieldwork for researching phenomena in American Politics was illustrated best by Richard Fenno and his method of “soaking & poking.”⁶⁷ John R. Hibbing in his foreward to *Home Style* states that it is a “remarkably un-influential book,” wondering why “so few heeded Fenno’s call to engage in participant observation?” (Fenno 2003: xi). Hibbing’s answer is that it is due to the

⁶⁵ Even with an initial focus on one state party there is difficulty effectively introducing the main actors and factions of importance to illustrate these dynamics. This is a tradeoff of seeking to describe a complex set of relations with detail.

⁶⁶ Observation of the California Republican Party (CRP) organization reveals the same mechanisms and context but with different outcomes due to state party leadership not fearing reform, but rather embracing it. In this chapter the CRP operates as an informal unit – “Informal units consist of all other units that are brought into the analysis in a peripheral way, typically in an introductory or concluding chapters” (Gerring 2004: 344) – while the last empirical chapter speaks to the CRP with detail and an additional focus on RNC interaction and minority outreach strategies, given the compliance seen there.

⁶⁷ Fenno’s soak and poke was no doubt more rigorous than the account given in the piece this chapter’s title alludes to, *Fear & Loathing on the 72 Campaign Trail* by Hunter S. Thompson. HST’s version of “soaking & poking” was tantamount to soaking in liquor (and drugs) then poking around anywhere he wasn’t yet barred from.

difficulty and time-consuming nature, as well as the common (and perhaps growing) view in political science that it is “inaccurate” or “unscientific.” While Hibbing admits being sympathetic to both contentions he still goes on to state, “I would not want all social scientists to adopt Fenno’s techniques for open-ended participant observation [but] we also lose much when we abide by disciplinary norms that discourage scholars from sticking a toe in the water of qualitative participant observation of the Fenno variety [...] this type of research is a rich source of insights and hypotheses that can be tested in more traditional scientific fashion” (Fenno 2003: xii). Here, I aim to do more than “stick a toe in” the observational waters, rather choosing to jump head first into this observational pool with a similar exploratory aim. Here I go to Gerring once again who puts it best as, “The tradeoff between exploratory and confirmatory research helps us to reconcile the enthusiasm of case study researchers and the skepticism of case study critics. They are both right, for the looseness of case study research is a boon to new conceptualizations just as it is a bane to falsification” (Gerring 2004: 350). With concepts in this area so under-developed this is a necessary first step.

This method is the best fit for developing an understanding the relationships and dynamics of political organizations. How they work, and how they don’t work, to achieve collective aims. With GOP organizations, the aims of reforming outreach efforts to create a more diverse coalition to win elections. Fenno largely opted against straightforward interviews with “pre-set close-ended questions” because he wanted those being observed to not be focused on “the person doing the observing” (Ibid.). Strict non-participant⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Conversely, in my CRP fieldwork I often was a *participant* as a convention volunteer.

observation allowed me to be on the peripheral of official party activity, sitting in the back of the room in the guest seating section⁶⁹, observing interactions between the members and leaders of the organization.

I was able to observe the discussion and debates of bylaws and resolutions, capturing clearly party actors articulating their logic behind support or dissent of party direction. As previously cited, scholars note capturing the internal workings of party organizations can be very difficult to do, and nearly impossible without being in the field. A primary aim of this chapter is to illustrate the value of digging deep into a case for the purposes of description, generating theory and filling deficiencies in current theoretical accounts, and in setting up future tests.

Most of the qualitative data used in this chapter – excerpts from executive officer reports, candidate speeches, county reports, resolution and bylaw debates – are from firsthand observation, field notes, and field audio collected at the Nevada Republican Central Committee (NRCC) meeting wherein over 300 members of the central committee met to elect executive officers for the next two years (2014-2016). The full NRCC meets twice a year beyond conventions, with each meeting lasting a weekend. The meetings differ from conventions in that they focus more on party business, and therefore are often less accessible to the public and media, including party activists and anyone not acting as a formal member of the organizational apparatus (e.g. chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, etc.), or for this meeting those aspiring to become one via the internal election. As noted by Hibbing (as well as Fenno and Flick), access can be difficult to obtain, and

⁶⁹ The main site for meetings was one large room with rear-room seating for guests roped off from the seats of voting members. See appendix for photos.

access to the formal meetings of official party business can be even more difficult to obtain when a party is wary of publicizing infighting. Today I would not be able to sit in on these types of NRCC meetings, since at the meeting I attended they passed a bylaw barring non-committee members, as I will explain further in my findings. This was not due to my presence. The bylaw was introduced before I contacted the party about attending the meeting.

Beyond electing officers there was consideration, debate, and voting on several NRCC bylaws and resolutions put before the body for consideration and adoption. This setting provided for the direct and naturalistic observation of interactions between local party members and formal actors working across multiple levels of the party, from state and local county chairs and vice chairs to state political directors, senators, assemblymen, and party operatives and Republican consultants vying for executive officer positions. Although my presence and intentions were made known to the party beforehand⁷⁰, most everyone else in attendance did not know whom I was or why I was there. This worked to maintain a moderately covert identity, keeping the environment naturalistic. Unlike what I observed at party conventions, party members did not mention caution of media or show any sign of being particularly guarded in speech. The few reporters on site were there only near election results and appeared friendly to the party.

Variation of units within the case were obtained via collection of largely verbal data in the form of speeches from several Republican candidates competing for the same position (variation in candidates choosing to highlight unity vs. distinctiveness in internal

⁷⁰ I emailed the state treasurer and received a response clarifying that I could attend the meetings as a guest.

campaigning), the submitted statements and verbal arguments given during deliberation of proposed party resolutions and bylaws, and with the delivery of county reports from representatives from all of Nevada's counties. This allowed me to observe variation within the state party organization, across county and major factional lines. These materials displayed variation in support for reform, outreach efforts, moderating messages, what individuals perceived as the "ideal" Republican the party should work to elect, the calling out of "RINOs" within the party, and variation in support for the chair candidates representing the clear factional interests of "establishment" and moderation vs. grassroots and the farther Right/Tea Party.

Findings

Disagreement is a natural trait of any organization, and the development of competing ideas and leaders within a group may indicate a healthier, more democratic organization. It is when factions use their leadership to diminish interests within the same party and to work against other sectors of the same party, that disagreement moves from democratic to dysfunction, serving as a barrier to coordinating across multiple levels of a complex organization. It is dysfunction that is largely existent within the Nevada Republican Party.

While those within the Republican Party organization all agree on the end goal of electing Republicans, they do not agree on the fundamental question of what a Republican is. The regular use of the term "R.I.N.O." (Republican In Name Only) at party meetings illustrates this most concisely. Labeling perceived outsiders as RINO (i.e. "not Republican enough") goes against the reform aim of "reaching out" beyond the

conservative base to those who typically vote for the opposition (Democrats). Moreover, this sign of factionalism also manifests itself in the tone of the organization's meetings, internal campaigning, and in debate regarding party resolutions and strategy.

Candidate speeches, opening statements, county reports, comments from standing elected officials, as well as informal side interactions at the party meetings allowed for hearing from members from all counties in Nevada regarding topics as varied as factions, reform, outreach tactics, and electoral opportunities and concerns. I will aim to keep the following sections as separate as possible but there is need for some theoretical and organizational overlap, as internal campaigning tactics reflect the factional narratives, and vice versa. Given this, I am not making a purely causal argument of one variable leading to the other, but rather documenting through observational findings the coexistence of the elements in Fig. 1, and their implications for collective action in party organizations.

Factions: Elephants & RINOS – “the Grassroots vs. the Establishment”

Beck and Hershey (2000: 51) argue that the weakness of American parties (relative to other nations) is due to the “three sectors of any party – its organization its candidates and elected officials and its electorate – compet[ing] for dominance [... and] each have different sets of goals and they each seek control of the party to achieve their ends.” While this may be true, it is also true that considerable competition for dominance may exist within a party's organization, and further, this may weaken their capacity to act collectively.

Schlesinger (1984) stated skeptically that V.O. Key's definition of parties “treats the organization as though it leads a life of its own, independent of officeholders,

candidates, or even campaign specialists.” Fieldwork reflected this notion of the formal “faces of the party” (Key 1964) breaking down at meetings and conventions, where activists, elected officials, local pundits, candidates, and party “bureaucracy” are largely indistinguishable. Instead, the clearest “faces” in the crowd at the NRCC meeting were of two observed factions: the “Establishment” and the “Grassroots.” The dimensions of this division, and the corresponding definitions of these often referenced camps are not as intuitive as one might imagine, with the “Establishment” not (currently) holding the majority of leadership in the state organization. Rather, the tag of “Establishment” was consistently applied to those aligned with powers seen as more moderate, and those with associations larger than the local/county and state level, i.e. governors, large donors, and those in Congress. In Nevada, this meant “Establishment” Republicans like Senator Dean Heller, Governor Brian Sandoval, and Las Vegas billionaire Sheldon Adelson.

The “Grassroots” faction in Nevada had elements of both Tea Party and Libertarianism, with the shared trait of being outwardly more conservative. The leadership of this faction held ties to former Ron Paul presidential campaigns and as a result was often characterized by both local media and those in the meeting as the “the Liberty Movement” or simply “Libertarian.” The booking of “Tea Party favorite Joe Miller” as guest speaker for the “unity dinner” that followed the meeting spoke to who was in control of the state party leadership, as well as highlighted the mutual affinity and overlap between these members of the faction. Additionally, the existence of these Tea Party elements provides evidence that at least remnants of the Tea Party are still a significant force in local Republican politics, at least when aligned with local party

leadership. The notion that reform involved “pushing out” these elements from state party leadership roles via endorsement of more moderate challengers seemed to provide validity to both the factions fear of reform and their viewing of the “Establishment” as the “other team” or “RINO.” Outside of Nevada, these anti-establishment factions might be labeled more solidly as Tea Party, what matters is they see themselves as distinct from national party leadership and those connected to it. Given this, no matter the “flavor” of the fringe (e.g. farther Right elements), the results are still the same – *fear of reform*. This fear coupled with holding leadership of the state party’s executive board can result in further use of the state party to push against reform, what is seen as moderation in the aim of appealing beyond the base.

The existence of factions is not simply observed through infighting – again, all large organizations have this to some degree – rather it is defined as infighting among relatively distinct and consistent members, often represented by leaders (Gupta 1979). Interactions at meetings, verbal statements, and campaign apparel all sought to advertise allegiances, marking the oppositional sides of the same party, sides with clear goals and unique narratives regarding current and prospective party action and strategy.

Signs of the “Liberty Movement” were present as soon as I arrived on site at 8 a.m., an hour before meeting start. While checking in and picking up my badge and credentials I overheard a conversation between a member working as staff for the meeting and hotel security, with the party worker exclaiming, “Ron Paul gave us quite an education!” This same conversation also gave me an early indication of the perceived severity of the party infighting, with the staff informing security: “We have some

infighting going on. We want to keep the peace but if we have any foul language or too much commotion then use a no tolerance rule.” The first “official” remarks made to the entire meeting, the introduction by Chairmen Michael McDonald, also recognized infighting alongside the first explicit mention of unity:

“One thing I’d like to talk about today, was mentioned several times last night at the cocktail party and the poker game. We are Republicans, and at the end of the day when we leave this room we’re on the same team. Know for a fact that the other side wants to see us fight, wants to see the controversy in the newspapers, especially in election season. So always hold your head high. The business we conduct in here will be civil. And we will hold a very stringent, very tight schedule. If you interrupt you will be warned once and then you will be escorted out by the marshals, then off the property by the security force. I know it will never come to that. It’s never come to that the last 16 months I’ve been doing this. This is just for the old days [. . .] we’ve had a problem there before. Though I can tell you, this is going to be a great year for us. This will be a banner year, with the governor and the down tickets. We unite behind after this meeting and start pushing forward.”

The infighting did not come to fisticuffs, but there was no short of heated words, demeaning caricatures, and other clear signs of factionalism, disunity, and distrust of fellow Republicans. In addition, institutional changes were made in an effort to curb influence of *fellow* Republicans and those seen as outsiders. As I will cover in the final section of findings, these bylaws regarded access to meetings, the endorsement process, and funding sources.

Candidate flyers and letters distributed at the meeting for electing officers also noted factionalism:

“I have been distressed by the infighting that has taken place among members of the Party [. . .]and I will serve everyone without regard to ‘which part of the party’ you are affiliated.”

“I will echo Chairmen’s comments earlier, that at the end of the day we are all Republicans (...) so win, lose or draw we are all gonna be pulling the same load.”

The state party secretary and candidate for vice chair noted factions as holding back the party that is already trailing in registration numbers:

“The infighting that we have, back and forth between the factions, we need to understand we are too far behind, in the numbers, to do that. We need to recognize that no matter what all the details are of what we believe, and there are probably no two people in here who agree on 100% on everything. We can all agree on the basics that we want limited, constitutional, and transparent government. Good government is what we want. And IF we can all agree on that and work for that, then we can actually make some gains that we need to make in the legislature. We can actually make things happen and we can get our message heard, and make things go our way.”

Calls for unity and efforts toward uniting were present throughout the meeting, standing as a goal as well as recognition of factionalism. The meeting ticket featured the slogan “Unity starts with U –n –I.”⁷¹, and flyers for the “Unity Dinner” following the meeting were both prominently displayed on walls and within the event packet.⁷² The incumbent State Chairmen noted both the history and the former severity of factional disagreement in his re-election speech:

“Many of you in this room, I said it on TV I said it on the radio, you know it’s true, many of you wouldn’t even talk to each other before I got to you. You wouldn’t even come in the same room. Over that time we’ve hatched away at it. Brought it back together. Made people sit down. Made ‘em see the goal of electing Republicans. We may have different values, we may have different side goals, but at the end of the day if you’re Republican and you’re in this room, you are here together with us. That’s the problem.”

While he situated the worst of the infighting in the past, he also noted its recent continuation with the contested seats for the executive board. I will describe the nature of

⁷¹ See appendix.

⁷² See appendix.

these internal campaigns and the extent to which they reflect and perpetuate factionalism in the party in the next section.

These factions and the narratives they were built on appeared to exist in concert with skepticism of reform. Many talked of reform as “code” for establishment Republicans, such as the Gov. Sandoval & Sen. Heller, trying to rid the state party of the Libertarian grassroots elements and Ron Paul supporters that ran the state party. This meant that high-level endorsements, particularly those given to the challenger for chair (Robert Uithoven), acted more as a toxic branding of “Establishment.” Uithoven, a longtime party operative and political consultant at Sands Corp. (Sheldon Adelson’s firm), had support not only from Gov. Sandoval and Sen. Heller, but from the top Republican leadership within the state legislature – Senate Minority Leader Michael Roberson and Assembly Minority Leader Pat Hickey. Still, Uithoven referenced these endorsements and the fact that these Republican leaders typically did not show up to the state party’s events; perhaps adding to the negative connotation of “Establishment” label:

“I’m honored to have the endorsement of Gov. Sandoval and Dean Heller. I want them here, in this room. I will work hard to get them back involved in the party.”

The party’s state political director also acknowledged the absence of support from top leadership, including the RNC, while noting some progress in working to regain support:

“our friends at the national, they are very interested in supporting us. They’ve already brought *some* manpower to us. They’re on the ground, so in terms of the numbers we need to turn around, in terms of the expertise.”

These comments as well as the recent history of the RNC creating a “shadow group”⁷³ to run Romney’s 2012 campaign in the state, rather than using the state party’s staff and organizational resources, were evidence of the existence of factions within the state party organization, and their lasting effects on relations between state and national party. These accounts of tensions between state and national party are in-line with the “political antagonism” (Kramer 2000) or “partisan federalism” (Bulman-Pozen 2014) said to exist by scholars theorizing the effects of federalism on American political parties.

Though Chairmen McDonald (a former Las Vegas city councilman) claimed to have “a great relationship with the RNC, great relationships with donors,” and great relationships with local legislators, he still saw Uithoven as a challenger and the high-level endorsements he garnered as a surprise, saying they came “out of the blue.”⁷⁴ The surprise nature of this challenger illustrated the lack of communication between these factions of the party, as well as stoked fear of reform as code for a top-down push for moderation. Local media described the event and the challenger’s support at the meeting: “But when it became clear that a move was afoot to oust the conservative McDonald and his Tea Party allies from control of the state party, an interesting thing happened. Hours before the vote, cars and trucks from as far away as Elko and Carson City arrived at the South Point [hotel] loaded with county party members prepared to vote for their man,

⁷³ The NV GOP, “an organization that has been hamstrung by divisions among differing factions of Republicans. Donors and the Republican National Committee lost so much confidence in the ability of the state party to organize a ground game that they created a “shadow party” to help presidential candidate Mitt Romney.” <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/19/nevada-gop-chairman-says-opponent-came-out-blue/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/19/nevada-gop-chairman-says-opponent-came-out-blue/>

McDonald.”⁷⁵ While this description is misleading in that McDonald supporters did not suddenly appear, those with shirts and campaign materials were present from the start of the meeting, not just hours before voting, it does speak to the skepticism regarding Uithoven and the “Establishment” faction he represented.

My fieldwork at a year’s worth of California Republican Party conventions and continuous weekly tracking of Arizona⁷⁶ GOP dynamics via Google alerts⁷⁷ revealed that Nevada is not unique in the Tea Party vs. Establishment dynamics. These factions can be seen in both narrative and action throughout the GOP. Whether and how this serves as a barrier to collective action depends on the competition of internal elections and whether the more conservative faction holds executive leadership roles. In California the reform-friendly leadership used formal and informal powers to curb Tea Party and Libertarian factionalism.⁷⁸

This excerpt from an on-site interview with a committee member voting in the state chair election summed up what many saw as the key distinction and tradeoffs

⁷⁵ <https://www.reviewjournal.com/columns-blogs/john-l-smith/infighting-among-state-republicans-may-lead-trouble-2014>

⁷⁶ For example: <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/mccain-re-election-2016-arizona-tea-party/2014/12/30/id/615598/>, & <http://www.azcentral.com/story/azdc/2015/01/10/arizona-gop-civil-war-mccain-censure-lafaro-1d30/21529207/>

⁷⁷ Tracking online activity also introduced me to the major players involved in the party before arriving on site for fieldwork. I constructed lists of “people of interest,” helping me comment on interactions in a more detailed and knowledgeable manner.

⁷⁸ Tim Donnelly (Tea Party favorite for gubernatorial race) was given less access than Neel Kashkari (the moderate GOP running on reform with endorsement of national Republicans, eventually winning the primary), from the assignment of smaller rooms for events to giving less time to speak, and voting to close rooms to media when speaking. Donnelly still enjoyed the most vocal support from activists at the convention.

between the two candidates and the factions they represent, as well as what they saw as barriers to unity (changes in leadership):

“[the] grassroots don’t respect donors because they don’t show up [to meetings & events]” and “donors know this, so these two forces are working against each other. Mike [current chair] is working to bring them together. This is party politics, uniting local organizations and getting both funds and feet moving. When counties started changing leadership, that hurt the NV GOP at the larger [state] level. [On who he supports] I try to stay in the middle. Though you have Robert who brings in big donors, he has those relationships, BUT, he likely won’t be at as many events as Michael did, at the smaller county events, traveling, just being there.”

This idea that Mike was more not only “less establishment” and closer to the Liberty movement”, but also the grassroots candidate, more personal and present, if not as connected to big donors [e.g. Adelson], was a popular factional narrative surrounding the campaign, both at the meeting and in local news coverage. McDonald built on this idea of being present as key to the Grassroots faction, noted how difficult it is to unite the party, and gave warning to future chairs:

“I want each of you to think about this. You may be sitting in my shoes in the next couple years, two to three years, imagine someone coming up to you, a donor says “you are just not our guy, we don’t like you.” Even though you’re doing a good job. Because you don’t hear anyone from the other team saying you are doing a bad job. Because if you’re I’d like you to crack it up. Chalk up how many times I’ve been to the rurals. Chalk up how many parades I’ve been at. Chalk up how many bar mitzvahs. Chalk up how many raffles I’ve been at. Chalk up how many events I’ve been at. In Washoe, in Lake Tahoe, in Las Vegas, in Laughlin, THAT’S what it’s about! Look ladies & gentlemen, it takes a lot to move this party.”

Though this too relates to the idea of internal campaigning, in the next section I will devote more time to the nature of internal campaigns when real competition is furthered by the context of top-down reform.

County reports also revealed factional elements and variation within the party in the use of anti-establishment rhetoric, and references to the idea that the party had “RINOS.” Amidst the talk of Nevada parade preparation, town halls, new fundraiser ideas and outreach efforts, several counties used the time to explicitly speak to the conservative credentials of both their person (“Life-long Registered Reagan Republican”) and their county. This included reporting of events like the sponsorship of a “2nd Amendment Guns Rights” raffle for the Boys & Girls Club featuring eight guns, including a rifle signed by vocal Tea Party supporter Ted Nugent.⁷⁹ Others made reference to the “type” of Republican and/or conservative they were:

“I’m a strong conservative. I believe in constitutional principles of government. I was appointed by Sandoval to fight Obamacare. We took it all the way to the Supreme Court. Because this country needs to [be] based and thrive on this system of government. This is the greatest country the world has ever known.”

“I vote conservative & that’s what I believe in.”

“I’m a constitutional conservative . . . I believe in the Republican Party and its principles.”

“I’d like to thank Senator from TX for sticking up for us.” (re: Ted Cruz & Obamacare filibuster)

“I’ll continue to represent NV [...] in the most conservative way I know how. Which according to the NPRI is pretty darn conservative.”

“I’m sure that all of you share my frustration with the Republicans In Name Only, The RINOS, in our party.”

Conversely, in near-direct response to these types of comments, the “Establishment”-backed Uithoven broke from this form (in part), stating that varying ideological shades, including moderate Republicans, should have a place in the party and should be tolerated.

⁷⁹ See appendix.

“We all signed up as Republicans. We didn’t sign up as moderate republicans, conservatives. We are what we are. It’s your personal business what kind of Republican you wanna be.” (This notion also stood in stark contrast to the discussion of candidate vetting via pre-primary endorsement, to be discussed later.)

Even though this chair candidate stated that variation in conservatism should be permitted and not attacked, he still followed his ideological-inclusive and uniting language with an anecdote to speak to his conservative credentials:

“I was a Republican before I was of voting age, walking door to door (...) I’ve worked for Republicans the entire time I’ve ever been a consultant and I believe in our Republican party. I believe in the NV Republican Party. I don’t want “shadow groups” funded. I want the NV Republican Party funded. [...] All of you know where I’ve been in this fight for the Republican Party.”

The frequency and apparent need to self-label in order to quell skepticism of being a “RINO,” or to address what type of Republican you are, highlighted the existence of factions, and worked against the larger reform ideal of “widening the tent” and the meetings theme of “unity.” This touting of unity while also trying to speak to differences in the level and character of one’s conservatism displays well the unity-distinctiveness dilemma, a dynamic observed not only in the party’s factionalism but also in the internal campaigns for party officers.

Internal Campaign Tactics

The intensity of internal campaigns may seem counterintuitive since challengers are of the same party, will continue to work in the same local context no matter the outcome, and are often vying for unpaid though challenging positions. At the very least one might expect the tactics to be less aggressive than those used with the more common interparty campaign. I argue that top-down calls for reform and the actions they bring

about, such as the surprise backing of a more moderate challenger by state and federal-level leadership (i.e. the “Establishment”), increases the saliency and competitiveness of internal elections, changing the tone of the internal campaigning and the severity of tactics used. Though tough-tactic internal campaigning was likened to a “circular firing squad,”⁸⁰ and therefore seemingly frowned upon at both the Nevada meeting and the California conventions, it was noted by attendees and candidates as significantly more noticeable in “these times of change,” or rather the context of reform. Here I will detail the internal campaign tactics used at the NRCC meeting, including the use of: smearing, othering (e.g. “RINO”), unflattering visual caricature, and oppositional research.

The day’s elections illustrated the problem inherent to campaigning against members of the same party organization, the problem of balancing the interests of maintaining unity within your party while also highlighting distinctions – displaying how you are different (in a better way) from your challenger – in order to win the intra-party contest/internal election. The incumbent Chair Michael McDonald was vocal about his goal of unity to both the media⁸¹ and the members present at the meeting. The tough campaign he presented to his party, as well as the institutional changes his board proposed and pushed into passage (covered later), resulted in an inconsistent tone, and showed the difficulty of navigating the unity-distinctiveness dilemma.

I was struck by the elaborate details and investments of these internal campaigns. Internal campaigning included everything we think of with larger campaigns aimed at the

⁸⁰ <http://blogs.rgj.com/politics/2013/11/19/hickeys-plea-to-washoe-gop-stop-circular-firing-squad-mentality-that-is-killing-party/>

⁸¹ <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/26/republican-official-accused-using-political-foes-s/>

public (i.e. outside of party organization meetings): high-profile endorsements, speeches, mailings, campaign buttons, t-shirts, sloganeering, and even bottled water featuring a candidate's face.

The shirt⁸² for the incumbent perpetuated the multiple and overlapping factional narratives of “real Republican” vs. “RINO,” Grassroots vs. Establishment, conservative vs. moderate, people vs. donors. Imagery included a red devil cartoon “consultant” mixing a bowl of money reading, “Greed and Power.” Though the shirt did not bear Uithoven's name it was interpreted as such by both the room and Uithoven given the accompanying character/image of an elephant in boxing garb bearing McDonald's name on the shorts, with the added tagline of “Consultants [Uithoven's job] Vs The People” below the two characters. The front of the shirt read, “Fighting For The Soul Of The Party,” while the back of the shirt featured a statement echoing the sentiment I overheard earlier that morning by a staff worker, reading “Our Party Is Not For Sale.” McDonald built on this narrative that while the challenger may be more connected to big Republican donors (namely Sheldon Adelson), that the money would come at the cost of grassroots control of the state party. McDonald's campaign also featured bottles of “Real” brand alkalized water bearing his headshot and the slogan, “THE REAL DEAL! Michael J. McDonald – Chairman.” These items were handed out at the meeting, free of charge, and were worn by many members of the committee.

With all of the talk of the “NRCC not being for sale,” Uithoven's mentioning of either: funding, money, raising money, and budgets ten times in his short 4 minute speech

⁸² See appendix for images.

likely played into this caricature, and perhaps hurt his chances as it fit into the narrative of the “type of Republican” he represents caring more about money than connection. Uithoven’s speech also played on McDonald’s intro to the meeting that highlighted the party’s balanced budget, in contrast to 31 state parties that were currently in debt. Instead of uniting behind this seemingly positive point for the party, Uithoven used it as opportunity to display distinction from his fellow Republican:

“I don’t wanna just be in the black. I don’t want an applause line for saying we are not in debt, and we are one of 31 states not in debt. [misstatement] I don’t care what the other 31 states are doing. I care what the Nevada Democratic Party is doing. They are raising millions of dollars while we are raising tens of thousands. That matters to me.”

McDonald too referenced money in his speech but again as a tradeoff for grassroots control:

“If you want a voice in this party. I’m your man. If you wanna be bought & paid for and told here’s your money, you vote the way we want to. Do it!”

A chair later briefly touched on this idea of a tradeoff in his county report, but in a fashion that left open whether it is possible to garner more funds without giving up principle and control:

“money vs. principle, it’s not money vs. principle, its money AND principle is what is gonna make things work. We gotta figure out a way to marry the two successfully.”

In addition to characterizing the internal campaigning, these quotes illustrate well the ongoing, responsive, conversational nature of much of the discussions and interactions that took place at this meeting.

Beyond the differences in content and factional representation, there were also notable style differences between McDonald and Uithoven’s speech delivery that colored

the tone of the contest for chair. McDonald was significantly louder overall, as well as more dynamic with frequent pitch and volume spikes to emphasize key points and communicate emotion.⁸³ Whether members read the volume as more aggressive or simply more passionate likely depended on factional allegiances, though the results (McDonald winning with 62% of the vote) perhaps point to the overall more positive reception of passion.

The challenger's campaign shirt was also comparatively more moderate and in a toned-down style. The front of the shirt read, "Robert Uithoven for State Chair," next to a stylized outline of Nevada. The back read, "I'm for Uithoven – Ask Me Why." Uithoven noted in his speech these differences in their campaign choices, from shirt designs to speech style, while calling out how these tactics undermine the goals of unity and ultimately hurts the party's efforts to be electorally successful:

"The one thing that I've heard the most as I've been out campaigning and talking to a lot of you [...] is 'what are you going to do to solve the rift in our party?' I see a lot of t-shirts here and on some of those t-shirts they point to an elephant and a devil. I can assure you that as chairmen of this party I will never assign a label as a devil to any of you. I think part of solving the rift within our party is not blaming one faction or another.[...] I'm not running to call anyone in this room a devil."

McDonald later addressed the shirts after they were mentioned by Uithoven, perhaps giving the false impression he was not involved in their creation:

"very cute shirts. Many of you guys know, I started the unity – 'unity starts with U-N-I' [slogan] (...) and I would appreciate you guys wearing the shirts if you could take 'em off. They're great shirts... the consultants the devil, that's really cute but (...) in the show of faith guys. Keep the shirts or whatever, I don't know who's passed them out but you could show a lil' sign of unity, bring us together,

⁸³ See appendix where I include audio splices from both candidates' speeches to illustrate visually the significant decibel differences.

it's a cute shirt, but I'd appreciate you guys taking them off. We are all Republicans when we leave this room, we are gonna be on the same team so, I appreciate it." [applause]

This demonstrates further the efforts to maintain the balance of unity vs. distinctiveness.

McDonald perhaps felt he had gone too far in one direction, emphasizing too much distinction with his fellow Republican, showing that campaigns shift strategically as they interact with the strategy of the competitor. McDonald also went on to elaborate on how he was also submitted to tough campaigning tactics by fellow Republicans.

"It's been a very spirited week, a very spirited week that has ruined every 18 months I worked for to put this thing back together. (...) I was told yesterday, in my face, 'You're not the man for this party. We just don't like your face.' (...) I couldn't believe that. So I want each of you to think about this. You may be sitting in my shoes in the next couple years, two to three years, imagine someone coming up to you, a donor says 'you are just not our guy, we don't like you.' Even though you're doing a good job. Because you don't hear anyone from the other team saying you are doing a bad job"

The referencing of donors of the same party as "the other team" indicated a clear recognition of oppositional factions within the state party. He goes on:

"I heard a speech last night that burned me to the ground. I had a cocktail party right next door, invited my opponent in. It's the right thing to do because we're Republicans. We come together! I go to that party, that guy's [Uithoven?] burning me to the ground! Calling me everything but a devil, calling me everything but a white man. Burn me to the ground because I'm not the face for this party. Well ladies and gentlemen if you think it's just about money and if they threaten you and say you know what we are not gonna fund this party because of this Michael McDonald. At the end of the day I hope I can get your vote. I hope you can go on my success we've had. I hope at the end of the day the threats stop. If you think this face is pretty, cast your vote. Thank you very much." [applause]

The fact that donors signaled their intention not to fund the NRCC unless Uithoven was chairman was also corroborated in a conversation with a member of the Clark County party. After the results of the election came in and McDonald found himself re-elected to

another two year term with 62% of the vote, he continued to comment on the nature of the campaign, again making a reference to race as part of his victory speech which received about an approximate 30 member standing ovation. Conversations afterward revealed that many were impressed with his speech and passion.

“campaigns can get ugly . . .you know it and as Republicans, this isn’t our first rodeo. (...) 18 months of blood, sweat and tears we put into this, while I was chairman, were ripped apart when we had this same kind of uproar [...] we are better than that. (...) There were a lot of inflammatory things that were said, there were racial comments made about my girlfriend. There’s no place in this party for that. There’s no place in this decade for that. That said. You are some of the finest men and women I’ve had the privilege to be associated with.(...) I’d like to thank Robert for the spirited campaign.”

By tracking local newspapers with Google alerts for content related to the Nevada Republican Party and the central committee, I was able to become informed of internal campaigning controversies that preceded the election meeting. One such controversy previewed the non-civil tactics of internal campaigning. The state political director made headlines when he was accused of using his access to the party’s membership information to obtain the security number of a fellow Republican in order to “obtain private information about him amid a contested campaign for the county chairmanship.”⁸⁴ This type of oppositional research is to be expected when campaigning against the other party, but its occurrence within the same state party is notable as well as outside the law. By definition, oppositional research is to be used to “dig up dirt” on the opposition, and in party politics we most often conceive of opposition to mean the other party. The political director briefly acknowledged the scandal in a speech to the committee:

⁸⁴ <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/26/republican-official-accused-using-political-foes-s/>

“What a week! There’s a lot of things that are public right now and I’m humiliated and our chairmen from Clark is humiliated too. And I’d like you to know that while I’m embarrassed I stand tall and I’m willing to look anyone of you in the eye. I believe it was mischaracterized. I think there were accusations against me that were mischaracterized. It’s a very unfortunate situation. I’d prefer to not get into detail or making some sort of speech about any of it. I really don’t wanna see that in the public again, not because it’s about me, but to think about what the agenda out of Jon Ralston (local liberal pundit) would be, is gonna make us look ridiculous. Embarrass us in front of the RNC. I just want to see us work together going forward and truly while I’m humiliated I can stand tall and look you guys in the eye and take any questions. OK! Going forward, ok, the caucus!”

The speech was met with an overall cold response from the room. The feeling in the room was one of skepticism regarding sincerity to unite, and that his brushing over the incident was quick, leaving no time after his call for questions regarding the matter. The incident added to the narrative of a fractured party, running counter to the message of unity promoted throughout the day.

While these descriptions of tactics used within the NRCC illustrate the contentious nature that internal campaigning can take on, the overall totals for the board of director elections (Table 3.1) underscore that elections within party organizations are typically non-contentious and non-competitive, and often a pre-determined rotation of members with predecessors endorsing their successors.

Election Committee Report – Voting Results: <i>311 ballots counted</i>
Treasurer re-elected with 90% of the vote (272 votes)
Secretary elected with 70% of the vote (218 votes)
Vice Chair (former treasurer) elected with 74% of the vote (230 votes)
Chairman re-elected with 62% of the vote (192 votes)

Table 3.1: NV State Party Organization Election Results

I have presented a clear case of the exception to the otherwise “business-as-usual” elections and the internal campaigning that follows. The key mix of contextual variables elevating the unity vs. distinctiveness dilemma is real competition, here, competition introduced by the opportunities associated with top-down reform efforts. Additionally, when these elections turn contentious they expose and solidify factions further as members come to see themselves not as a party but as a *part* of a distinct faction within the party, a faction with differing ideals of reform, conservatism, candidates, agenda, and outreach. Furthermore, internal dynamics of this nature serve as barrier to acting collectively across the multiple tiers of the Republican Party.

Climate of Change: Navigating Opportunity & Uncertainty via Institutional Design

The opportunity and uncertainty of top-down reform efforts introduce unique complications for collective action and the maintenance of unity. Statements made by NRCC members revealed that reform was indeed a contextual variable of significance. Discussions of electoral strategy, and new county-level programs revealed that many members were aware of both the goal of increased minority outreach, as well as its importance for winning national level elections.

It is important to consider the rules of party organizations, as parties are “not composed of only leaders and constituents, but rules and procedures” (Frymer 1999: 11). Institutional arrangements are often conceived of as solutions to collective action problems. What is given considerably less attention is how institutions themselves may serve as barriers to collective action. The complex nature of a large multi-tiered organization means while institutions may serve to help collective action across one plane

(e.g. state level, across counties), they may serve only as a barrier to coordination with actors from another level (e.g. national party actors). Further, this kind of institutional framework may be set up intentionally by an organization as a means to increase influence within the larger group. This is the dynamic of top-down reform within the Republican Party. The RNC seeks to create new opportunities and implement them by way of large-scale projects that require the compliance and coordination of multiple state parties and their respective county parties and leadership. What I observed in Nevada was that in the face of uncertainty regarding what reform means, whether it is desirable, and what it means for state party influence, is the use of institutions to protect or expand state party power, to navigate the context of reform.

Characterizing Reform Opportunity

Regarding national elections, the meeting started with recognizing the comparative disadvantage in registration, with the Nevada GOP trailing the Nevada Democratic Party in registration by about a hundred thousand. To be competitive on the national level in 2016 they need to reform outreach efforts. To do this the RNC needs local parties in large metros to comply with the suggestions within the post-2012 election report. Calls of reform always seem to follow major losses in elections. This shows that parties are still ultimately concerned with gaining access to, and maintaining control of, power within governing institutions. In 2012 it was the Republican Party, in 2014 midterms it was the Democrats, and in 2016 the Republican Party knows they suffer at being a national party, at winning the presidency. A county chair put it simply:

“We see on the national level this division what it does. I think a lot of us Republicans have forgot about Ronald Reagan’s 11th commandment – we don’t

talk bad about fellow Republicans. And if you don't think there are consequences of that. We are suffering now at 8 years. I don't want 8 years of Hillary and that's what's gonna happen if we don't come together."

The reoccurring nature of reform within American political parties speaks to the necessity of change given an electoral context of not only rapidly changing technology, and media, but of the fundamental racial and ethnic makeup of the electorate.

While the context of reform may bring about opportunities for constructive change, it also brings with it uncertainty pertaining to the direction of the party. This change may include new and potentially more moderate leadership, as well as an overall "renegotiating" of what the party stands for. State and local party leadership are using their institutional powers to better the chances of their kind of Republicans making it in primaries and beyond. The Nevada Republican as case illustrates well a common strategy used by factions in power to ward off what is seen as a loss of power to national leadership, again, often viewed as establishment, less conservative/too moderate, more mainstream, or at worst – "R.I.N.O."

Recognition of reform occurred throughout the meeting, with some counties highlighting the need to appeal to new "non-white" communities. During county reports one county reported increased Hispanic outreach as key while highlighting the difficulty in going beyond the base – "They [Hispanic and youth] look at us like a three headed monster." The county chairmen discussed these groups outside of the base as "different cultures" using an "othering" language that I will speak to further in a later chapter regarding changing racialized rhetoric and how it relates to reform efforts.

Clark County (Las Vegas metro) Chair provided a detailed account of their county's outreach efforts and perceived success:

“We did a Hispanic outreach program, minority outreach program, we had about 45-50 Filipinos come through our headquarters, 12 Democrat Filipinos registered Republican right there on the spot. [applause] We are cutting commercials, doing conference calls, reaching out to folks in the Filipino community”

The counties featuring major cities and urban areas were more likely to report minority outreach programs, though in doing so they did not always explicitly refer to racial and ethnic communities. The Washoe chairman (Reno metro) reported of “expansion” and going to places Republicans typically do not go, something the RNC explicitly states as goal in their report:

“We've expanded into and with our community. We've opened up the county party to everybody to come in and participate. We have been at numerous events throughout the county where folks have stopped by and said ‘two thumbs up – Republican table, we haven't seen a Republican table in years. Thank you for being out here.’ Those are the kinds of things when you become a part of your community, your community becomes a part of you, you're going to be able to expand things.”

County chairs from major metros were also more likely to speak to staff training, candidate recruitment, and details of re-tooling and updating their county party's technology:

“We went [from] 15,000 emails to 90,000 emails to Republicans in our county. That's like 30% reach for the party in our county now. We got a new website – Clarkgop.org new site, [it's] more user-friendly. We now have 118 precinct-captains signed up, 80 trained, that's a big number as far as precinct captains go. Our goal is to get 500. I think we can get 800. We now have a cumulative list of over 400 volunteers. Our candidate recruitment's got people running for school boards. We are calling people with a 70% success rate (with getting people involved) Our welcome coordinator has made over 300 calls. We've raised over 8300 dollars, we are receiving 5000 from Sands Corp. (Adelson firm, Uithoven employer; chair was wearing Uithoven shirt)”

The idea that variation in compliance with reform efforts possibly cut along an urban/rural line resulted in the inclusion of questions on the survey of counties speaking to county contextual variables, such as: primarily urban/rural, partisan majority, and racial demographics. This excerpt also speaks to how factions affect funding decisions of large donors. If a donor does not like the leadership of the state party they instead can choose to fund the county party they prefer.

An NRCC member commented on both the necessity of reforming minority outreach and unity in an op-ed, “If the GOP can shed its bipolar love-hate attitude toward Latino voters and present a united front, it can build on that 30-plus percent base Latino support and be competitive in future presidential elections.”⁸⁵ He also echoes a notion that was apparent in the meeting, that the Nevada GOP needs to reach out specifically to Hispanics not African Americans, whom he notes “have historically split their vote 90 percent Democrat and 10 percent Republican; this is likely to continue.” (Ibid.).

Media coverage of racially charged statements made by local Republican Party leaders and the reaction of “Establishment Republicans” to them incited pushback from the more conservative factions of the NRCC.⁸⁶ The frequency of op-eds from outraged conservatives identifying among the party base serve as indicators of the potential base-backlash that follows from efforts to be more racially sensitive in the name of reforming

⁸⁵ <http://www.tahoedailytribune.com/northshore/14529408-113/percent-latino-voters-gop>

⁸⁶ <http://www.mediaite.com/online/nevada-gop-speaker-elect-steps-down-after-racist-homophobic-views-exposed/>; and <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/nevada-lawmaker-says-he-would-never-vote-slavery> - Rep. Wheeler: “A rural Nevada assemblyman said Monday he wasn’t serious when he told a Republican group that he would vote for slavery if that is what his constituents wanted.”

the GOP.⁸⁷ Comments by Republican Nevada Assembly Leader Pat Hickey on minority and youth voters in 2014 also showed that not everyone in the party is seeking to mobilize beyond their base of white voters.⁸⁸

Fear of reform and infighting appeared especially heated when based on substantive change to state party platform. In Nevada this meant the removal of statements explicitly opposing abortion and same sex marriage.⁸⁹ This notion of what is acceptable reform in the eyes of the local party leadership informed survey questions regarding moderating messages and substantive change to policy positions (changing message) rather than changes only to the racial and ethnic background of candidates and leadership (changing messengers).

A large part of the conversation regarding improvement of outreach methods focused on technology, especially when discussing bringing in more youth to the GOP. Here a county chair from a Northern rural county expresses both the recognition of the opportunity new tech presents while also voicing her uncertainty and fear:

“We’re nothing if not able to duplicate and thank you to Carson because we are in the midst of trying to hold our first town hall. Next idea I will pass along is a generational thing, and I’m embarrassed to say I’ve never tweeted. I have no idea. It sounds like it might be fun but it could be disastrous in untrained hands, so we

⁸⁷ <http://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/01/06/letter-naacp-puppet-master-nevada-gop/21361309/> ; http://elkodaily.com/news/opinion/letter-nevada-gop-leaders-acted-like-weenies/article_2dbc6a87-ca5b-566e-92af-ddec3f7c2f96.html ;

⁸⁸ “Pat Hickey, the top Republican in the state’s assembly, said in an interview with the Dan Mason radio show that 2014 will be a great year for the GOP because ‘A lot of minorities, a lot of younger people will not turn out in a non-presidential. It’s a great year for Republicans.’” <http://northdallasgazette.com/2013/09/25/dnc-warns-republicans-to-not-claim-victory-in-2014-yet/>

⁸⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/12/nevada-gop-platform_n_5311969.html ; <http://www.reviewjournal.com/politics/nevada-gop-drops-platforms-against-abortions-gay-marriage-endorses-sandoval>

are gonna put our young Republicans to work, set up a website, get all the latest technology and who knows, maybe eventually we'll get into the current century.”

The idea that the GOP is behind in technology was pervasive throughout the meeting, with numerous counties discussing the need to revamp websites and to put the younger generation to work on this task. Related, in the following chapter I will show how party chairs, especially within the GOP, are mainly within the 50-70 year age range. This too may present a barrier to reform. Though regardless of age many see the necessity of technology and therefore the need to obtain people skilled in its tailored use for elections. While these descriptions help characterize the multifaceted context of reform and its related opportunities within a party organization, I will now move on to how fear of reform coincided with institutional changes by the state party organization.

Institutional Change

Perhaps the biggest pushback against top-down reform by the NRCC was their move to endorse candidates *before* the 2014 primary. This worked to give the party organization more power in the picking of the “right Republicans,” effectively institutionalizing their fear of “RINOS” in the context of reform. The method of pre-primary endorsement was explained and defended as objective in rigor and complexity, stating:

“Over the past year, the Nominating Committee developed an objective process for making recommendations using a combination of surveys, interviews, incumbent voting history data, and other pertinent information provided by the candidates who volunteered to participate. Those recommendations were then provided to the delegates to the biennial Nevada Republican Convention, where they were used to help determine if an endorsement should be granted to a particular candidate.”⁹⁰

⁹⁰ <http://www.nevadagop.org/nevada-gop-endorses-2014-primary-candidates/>

I was able to observe and record the discussion during the meeting in which this item was debated, voted on, and ultimately passed. Several of the party members speaking in favor of the resolution highlighted explicitly the fear of “RINOS” and moderation, while also outlining what they saw as the benefits of this controversial move for the state party.

“One of the most effective tools we have as a party in preventing those RINOS from ending up on the general election ticket, where we are pretty much forced to support them is to ensure that our preferred candidates, the truly conservative candidates make it through the primary process and the best way we can do that is to give them the Republican Party seal of approval. Give them that pre-primary endorsement and say this is our person.”

Statements from county chairmen also explained this move as a means of ongoing influence, as well as a way of garnering more donations from the base. This informed the inclusion of questions regarding whether county chairs and their respective parties sought to influence elected officials within their party, allowing for tests of how representative this goal is among other states and counties:

“If they don’t live up to that endorsement, we then have a piece of leverage to go back to them and say ‘you know what we endorsed you and now you’ve gone against that so don’t expect that same seal of approval and you know we may even have to give that same seal of approval to a different candidate if you don’t come back into the fold.’ Secondly, it’s been shown across the country that there’s a wave of county and state and local parties that are beginning to understand this same logic. [survey speaks to this claim] In order to control or have some input with their elected officials, they have to exercise that ability to endorse or take away that endorsement, and as a result of that, not only do they have more influence and more input in the relationship with those elected officials, but money tends to flow to the party as well, because its understood by donors and understood by the public that the Republican Party actually has some power, has some ability to represent them and that’s what people truly want. They want to be represented. That’s what we are here for, that’s what we are elected to do.”

Other county chairpersons described pre-primary endorsement as not simply a mechanism of vetting, but as a tool to empower the base, the grassroots, and as a way to

combat the increasing influence of money, and their comparative disadvantage in funds

(to NV Dem. Party):

“Endorsement allows people who don’t have extensive financial means to begin a grassroots campaign and to get some momentum, so it allows for broader participation in the process.”

“We are hamstrung enough as it is where our finances are out-raised by our opposition and if nothing else we can provide things such as endorsements to candidates rather than allow everyone to battle it out in the primary and see who we end up with in the general and it can get ugly in the primary. If we are active in helping to recruit and find the proper candidates to run for a particular office we should back them with the full force of the Nevada Republican Party. That’s how we will win specialized and very delicate elections, things we really need to take care of.”

One county chair noted how neighboring states had more control than the NRCC:

“I’m somewhat envious of our compadres next to us in Utah, the central committees PICK the candidates who run for office. [...] They have immense voice in choosing the candidates that run for office.”

Others noted the use of endorsements as a way of cutting back scandal and the potential for bad press, something that has hurt the party’s candidates in past elections:

“There’s another important vetting that we as a body should be doing and that’s of people’s backgrounds. When somebody represents the Republican Party who has a tarnished or amoral past it makes all of us look bad. And by allowing pre-primary endorsements we can prohibit that getting to the point where it becomes a public debacle that smears all of us.”

Although members of the party organization see these pre-primary endorsements as giving the people more voice, this brings in the question of whether the electorate in the primary or the party organization beforehand is the true instrument translating the preferences of constituencies. Scholars (Cohen et al.) will argue that moves like this by the party are “invisible” to most, making it less accessible, if not invisible, to voters and therefore largely out of their control, a process happening before their consideration and

selection of candidates starts. Local media accounts of this move are also worth noting here:

“The insurgent conservatives in the party’s central committee changed the rules to allow endorsing Republican candidates before the primary election. They say the seal of approval should go only to those candidates who submit themselves to the party’s vetting, ostensibly so the ‘real’ Republicans get the nod.”⁹¹

Gov. Sandoval took a vocal and public opposition to this institutional change and refused to take part in the process, solidifying in the eyes of the state party his residence in the decidedly more moderate⁹² “Establishment” wing of the party.⁹³ The media are beginning to take note of the power of parties to shape the outcomes of primaries before they occur, what scholars have referred to as the “invisible primary” (Cohen et al. 2008). Described by media as the, “behind-the-scenes competition for the support of elected officials, donors, party leaders and political operatives.”⁹⁴ and by scholars as “the principal institutional means by which party members decide the person they want to be their nominee—the equivalent of bargaining at party conventions in the old system” (Cohen et al. 2008: 187). This image of a strong and influential party runs counter to the idea of an increasingly candidate-centered campaign environment (Arbour 2014). This chapter

⁹¹ <http://www.reviewjournal.com/columns-blogs/steve-sebelius/fight-heart-republican-party-emerges-endorsements>

⁹² “The Democrats didn’t recruit a substantial candidate against Gov. Brian Sandoval in the last election. It would have been hard to find anyone capable of running to the left of our popular Republican.” <http://www.reviewjournal.com/columns-blogs/john-l-smith/tax-schools-sandoval-republican>

⁹³ “The party’s central committee initiated the unusual move of endorsing Republicans before the June 10 Nevada primary in response to grassroots anger over early candidate endorsements from elected officials, such as Gov. Brian Sandoval [. . .]At least three dozen GOP candidates are seeking primary backing from the state party. Others, including the governor, have shunned the process.” <http://lasvegas.cbslocal.com/2014/04/14/nevada-gop-endorses-candidates-drops-social-issues/>

⁹⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/10/upshot/start-paying-attention-whats-happening-now-in-gop-matters-for-2016.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=0

illustrates that a context of reform may bring about moves by party organizations to protect or expand their role in this “behind-the-scenes” process, and further, describes how they may do it. I was able to observe a similar pattern of party control in California, as well as monitor reports of similar actions in Arizona, and beyond.⁹⁵ My fieldwork supports the idea that whether or not the invisible primary is navigated successfully by one candidate or another depends in large part on which dominant faction (Tea Party-friendly or Reform/Moderate-friendly) holds the power within the state executive board. For example, in California the state party worked in concert with the RNC to ensure more moderate candidates were successful in the primary. Conversely, in Nevada the state party used the pre-primary endorsement to back conservative candidates, many which went on to win in the midterms, introducing infighting to the Republican caucus of the Nevada State Assembly and Senate.⁹⁶

Beyond endorsement, the Nevada GOP and its executive board have moved to control its party members in elected office via the threat of recall. This fear of fellow party members was institutionalized via passage of a resolution at its state convention, sending the message of “Unite, or else!” The bylaw was described as: “admonishing any Assembly Republicans who are working against their own caucus leadership to stop these

⁹⁵ For example, the RNC also reformed their primary process, seeking to increase their control by shortening the process. This served to combat base fatigue, enhance control of the format, and to lessen the opportunity for media scrutiny. I will cover this reform and more in proceeding chapters.

⁹⁶ New members of NV legislature, fellow Republicans, working to block Sandoval’s budget: <http://www.foxreno.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/gop-lawmakers-attack-sandoval-budget-at-reno-event-4524.shtml#.VMVRRmR4pYw>

destructive actions or face their own recall election.”⁹⁷ Further, the state party passed a resolution of symbolic support for the installation of the newly appointed “conservative Republicans,” again reflecting the two factions within the party. This move was owned outright and promoted by the party: “The (NRCC) worked diligently, as did other committees throughout the state, to ensure that conservative Republican candidates would be elected.”⁹⁸ The new leaders resulting from the pre-primary endorsement are seen as so far right that they are seeing pushback from their own party, creating the “nuclear option”⁹⁹ of the more moderate establishment Republicans caucusing with Democrats in the state legislature. This illustrates the far-reaching effects of factions, and the potential power state party organizations hold for shaping institutions to produce their desired outcomes.

An additional barrier to the RNC’s goal of “reaching out,” setting up new avenues to connect locally to diverse communities, is seen in the formal and informal moves of party staff on the local level.¹⁰⁰ From the moment I checked in and signed for my credentials I could see the skepticism of my presence and interest in the meeting. I stuck out as young compared to the party members. I was asked several times who I was “covering” the event for, given my note taking and the fact that the few other non-voting guests in the room were reporters. More formally, the fear of outsiders can be seen in the

⁹⁷ <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/nevada-legislature/nevada-gop-leaders-warn-rebellious-assembly-members-recalls>

⁹⁸ <http://www.recordcourier.com/news/14649612-113/douglas-republicans-support-assembly-leadership>

⁹⁹ <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2015/jan/17/nevada-gop-lacks-leadership/>

¹⁰⁰ In a later chapter I will show other ways the GOP differs from the Democratic Party in how accessible they are to the public. This was seen clearly in websites of parties, whether they had contact information, and whether it was up to date. Return and error rates for the mailed contacts showed a notable difference between the two parties.

passage of bylaws restricting access to meetings for those not registered as Republican, though possibly sympathetic to the party's message and values.

Wary of the perceived influence of those outside of the Republican Party, the NRCC sought to restrict access to the organization's meetings in proposed Resolution B112, putting forth: "*Only those individuals who comprise the current representation from a county on the day of a state central committee meeting are eligible to attend the meeting*" (more in appendix). This meant I was attending a meeting wherein they voted on (and passed) a resolution to ban people like me from attending in the future. In defense of the change one county chair stated:

"We've had three members who have left the Republican Party entirely between the call for the meeting and this meeting. So what's necessary is that any member that changes is that they have to send a notice to the party that they waive the right (to attend)."

During discussion of this bylaw the concern of "unnecessarily restricting [their] talent pool" came up, with the hypothetical example of noted Republican Steve Wynn (hotel mogul) wanting to help the NRCC with fundraising expertise, even though he is not a committee member. Ultimately, the restrictive bylaws passed, limiting access by activists that are not elected or appointed to the committee, and/or not a registered Nevada Republican. This move reflected skepticism of the actions of fellow party leaders and counties.

Taken in total, these findings show how party organizations are able to fight off reform and moderation of candidates and message. There exists significant power available to a local party for signaling their willingness to go along with reform, and conversely, ways to pushback against calls for changes they disagree with, including the

endorsements of state governors and national level actors. Where more conservative, Libertarian or Tea Party factions are in power, we will likely see such employment of state party's resources and institutional power to fight back against what is seen as top-down attempts at "flushing the fringe" from the party.

Conclusion

The evidence presented here serves to describe and illustrate the relationship between a context of reform, the particular opportunities and uncertainties it introduces, and its complicated relationship with the internal dynamics of state and county organizations. I have shown how the nature of internal campaigns can have real effects on factionalism found in party organizations on the local level. Additionally, I have shown how institutional change on the local and state level may come about due to fear of reform and the uncertainty pertaining to the direction of the party and state vs. national power relations. Given this, these variables should not be overlooked when theorizing about party unity and collective action. Notably, the context of reform influences a party organization's internal dynamics in ways that can contribute to barriers to collective action, producing the paradox of reform holding potential to make reform less likely.

As later chapters will show, in places like California where "non-establishment" elements (such as the Tea Party) are not in control of the executive board, we do not see the same restrictive bylaws, the same institutional changes to interfere with top-down influence, and pushback against reform. Rather, we see the opposite, a near full-embrace of RNC reform efforts by leadership, and further, formal and informal power used to marginalize factions and forces that contribute to infighting. While dissenting factions

exist too in California, they do not serve as a barrier to the state party's overall coordination and compliance with the RNC leadership and *the Growth and Opportunity Project*. While modeling top-down reform lays the foundation for understanding the *context* of reform, I will now move to illustrate how these dynamics can be seen in California.

CHAPTER 4: *THE RNC'S CALIFORNIA EXPERIMENT* – State & National Party Collaboration in Reforms to Minority Outreach

Introduction

As covered in previous chapters, national Republican Party leaders have stressed the need to become a more inclusive party. Toward this aim, the Republican National Committee has spent considerable time collaborating and coordinating with the California Republican Party (CRP), testing strategies they hope will work to better their “ground game” both locally and nationally. The RNC leadership have been vocal about their views of California as an ideal testing ground for minority outreach strategies they hope will help them establish a permanent presence in “new communities,” defined primarily along racial and ethnic lines.

California provides not only the diversity necessary for the RNC’s project, but also the worst-case scenario of a party relegated to minority status in the state legislature. This chapter draws on participant observation fieldwork from a year of CRP conventions, revealing how the RNC’s program is playing out on the state and local level. Participant observation included extensive access to formal organizational meetings and training workshops, revealing how this federal-state party coordination is playing out, and the opportunities and barriers in attempting to expand the Republican Party’s base in California. In addition to my field work, I analyze news coverage of the 2014 California gubernatorial election, further illustrating how party actors on both the national and state level use their formal and informal powers to back candidates to signal reform (Neel Kashkari) and marginalizing those who may excite the conservative base (Tim Donnelly) but nevertheless turn off new voters of interest.

RNC & CRP: Shared Dilemmas & Linked Fates

Both the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the California Republican Party (CRP) can no longer rely primarily on white voters to win elections. Leadership at both levels of the Republican Party have acknowledged the perceived power of demographics changes that favor their Democratic opposition. CRP Chairman and former state Senator Jim Brulte spoke to the seemingly rapid racial demographic changes not long after the 2012 general election, recognizing their implications for state and national Republican candidates:

“The issue is demographics. [...] California is a state that is almost totally dominated by Democrats today because Republicans can’t figure out how to get votes from anybody that’s not white. [...] In 1994 82% of the electorate was white [Pete Wilson] carried the white vote, lost the African-American vote, lost the Latino vote, but was reelected. Meg Whitman runs for governor in 2010, 62% of the electorate is white, she overwhelmingly carries that electorate but she still loses by 13 points [...] the electorate changed. Twenty years ago if Mitt Romney had run for president and rolled up the margins he did in the white communities he would've overwhelmingly been elected president but the country's changing and Republicans have not yet reacted to that change.”¹⁰¹

The national party organization and its Chairman Reince Priebus reached a similarly direct and critical conclusion as a result of an extensive study of the 2012 election. Much of this 100-page *Growth and Opportunity Project* report¹⁰² assesses and outlines their plan to reform outreach to voters beyond their base. The report introduces their inclusion council and breaks down the new voters of interest, or rather “demographic partners” (Hispanics, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, African Americans, woman, and

¹⁰¹ SoCal Connected (Nov. 2012), “Republican Strategist Jim Brulte on Rethinking the GOP's Tack”: <https://youtu.be/115ohTBxS4Q>

¹⁰² *Growth & Opportunity Project Report*: http://growthopp.gop.com/RNC_Growth_Opportunity_Book_2013.pdf

youth), and highlights areas for improving “campaign mechanics” to better their “ground game” to remedy their absence from these communities of interest. At the center of the national level program is building a permanent presence in minority communities, or as RNC Chairman Priebus puts it, “showing up.” Speaking at the CRP 2014 spring convention titled, “Rebuild. Renew. Reclaim.,” Reince Priebus drew parallels between the two party organizations and explained the problem with the national party’s old model:

“rebuilding, reclaiming your party [...] that’s the theme we’re adopting at the national level as well. Everything atrophies at the national level if we don’t show up. We are not gonna survive! We have become a U-Haul trailer of cash that simply shows up, hooks up to a presidential nominee, then we show up again in four years. We can’t be successful doing that. [...] We put in a plan that says we’re going to be a year-round party that goes to every single state in America. [...] we are funding a field operation in every single battle ground state for four years straight. We’re gonna be in every single targeted congressional, senate, governor’s race around America, on a year round basis with a massive emphasis in Asian, Hispanic, and African American communities, making a case for what it is to be a Republican.”¹⁰³

The *Growth and Opportunity Project* also reports the extent of the party’s image problem and its negative associations. Similarly, in California the Republican label has worked against candidates seeking election to offices representing increasingly diverse constituencies. Scholars (Pantoja et al. 2001; Ramakrishnan 2005; Bowler et al. 2006) as well as pundits¹⁰⁴ trace the CRP brand’s toxicity to the governorship of Pete Wilson and a

¹⁰³ Author’s field audio

¹⁰⁴ “More than two decades have passed since Republican Gov. Pete Wilson aired a television ad showing Mexicans scurrying across the border as an announcer declared, ‘They keep coming: 2 million illegal immigrants in California.’ Wilson’s short-term gain — he won both reelection and passage of a ballot measure to deny public services to immigrants in the country illegally — was soon outweighed by a devastating Latino backlash that turned California into a Democratic stronghold.”

series of GOP-sponsored racially charged ballot propositions. Propositions that declared undocumented workers ineligible for public services (Prop. 187 in 1994), banned state public affirmative action programs (Prop. 209 in 1996), and effectively ended bilingual education in public schools (Prop. 227 in 1998) (HoSang 2010). This recent history of anti-immigrant policy and catering to a white base via racialized tactics is what led Chairman Brulte to conclude that, “what the national Republican Party should do is take a look at what the California Republican Party has done and do absolutely the opposite.”¹⁰⁵

Thus, California represents many things to the RNC: a cautionary tale of self-inflicted wounds and plummeting fortunes, but also opportunities to grow again with new constituencies. The CRP is a struggling party, one relegated to minority party status in a state legislature characterized by a Democratic supermajority. Indeed, Chairman Brulte has noted that Republicans in Sacramento are “irrelevant in the governing process.”¹⁰⁶ While at the same time the state represents the racial demographic conditions the party faces nationally. Demographics plus a state party organization with leadership that are more than willing to support and test the RNC’s minority outreach strategies makes California a fertile testing ground for the *Growth and Opportunity Project*.

California is far from turning into a red state, but the RNC has made it clear they are playing a new long game, working an offensive strategy in California and hoping to help the state party organization rebuild the party label in lower-level elections. The party

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-0712-trump-california-20150712-story.html>

¹⁰⁵ Brulte interview in footnote 1

¹⁰⁶ Brulte interview in footnote 1

has made notable changes since the era of Pete Wilson, moving from an entirely white and male caucus in the state legislature to having a higher percentage of women in the Assembly than the Democrats, and five minority members of its 28 member caucus.¹⁰⁷ Continued descriptive changes as well as the growing pains of reform are present at CRP conventions. The CRP's Fall 2013 convention featured the party's first ever "Latino Elected Official Roundtable," where both praise for inclusion and critiques of the party's former hesitance to embrace its elected Hispanic members were common.¹⁰⁸

An additional shift for the state party is seen in the CRP leaderships' actions to provide pre-primary support to Kashkari as a gubernatorial candidate. As an Indian American he fulfills both the state and national party goal to "deepen" the diversity of their candidate bench. Kashkari's candidacy also informs on the core strategy of the national reform program, one that features more diverse candidates while keeping much of the same platform and message, working to highlight areas of commonality with new voters on economic issues while downplaying points of contention. A closer look at CRP's Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 conventions illustrates how the RNC's reform program is playing out in California, revealing significant coordination to reform the CRP's operations, strategy, and candidate selection. Given the national party's hopes to replicate a winning model tested in states like California, much of what was observed at these CRP

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.latimes.com/local/politics/la-me-pol-california-politics-trump-20150719-story.html>

¹⁰⁸ Rod Pacheco, who created the Hispanic assembly caucus, said that even after he won his first election many Republicans "wouldn't shake his hand", and was called a "RINO" [Republican in name only] by the OC Register (author's field audio). Additionally, in 1998 he told the party organization they needed more Latinos and he is glad the party is coming around now.

conventions and in Kashkari as a candidate previews what we might expect to see in the Republican candidates and campaigning for the 2016 presidential election.

In the following sections, I first illustrate how the comprehensive elements of the RNC national project relate to its strategic investments in California. This can be seen in the ongoing presence and activity of national party actors at CRP conventions, in the investment of new minority engagement staff and in the development of voter mobilization technology. Second, I focus on the descriptive representation focus of Republican reform by highlighting comments made by both state and national party actors. Lastly, I show how Kashkari represents this descriptive strategy, and detail how he became the Republican nominee for governor even in the face of lacking base support by way of a series of formal and informal moves by party leadership.

The RNC's *Growth & Opportunity Project* in California

I relied on Fenno-style participant observation of CRP conventions to gain access and insights well beyond the campaign “curtain” of convention and press-pass access (Fenno 2003; Flick 2009). As an event volunteer in 2013 and 2014 I gained access to planning sessions, training workshops¹⁰⁹, meetings of county chairs, the board of directors, and general session voting and debate. These arenas provided observation of interactions of RNC actors working to coach state and county level actors on the national

¹⁰⁹ Titles: Women of the Right Unite, Building Persuasive Messages, Party Base Building Committee, Getting Out the Vote in 2014, The Wonderful World of Data, Anatomy of a Win: San Diego Mayor's Race, Everything You Wanted to Know About the CRP (But Were Afraid to Ask) [closed to press], Party Base Building Committee, GROW ELECT: Connecting with the Latino Community, Using Technology in our ground game, New Candidates – New Communities, Practical Tech: Surveying the Landscape of New Innovation.

Growth and Opportunity Project, and insight into the types of discussions taking place between the tiers of the party organization regarding concerns, strategy and other reform-relevant topics. The six convention days offered observation of national, state and local (county chairpersons) leaders discussing the importance of reform, how to go about it, and what they have done to date in the name of outreach, political directors presenting new technology for more effective voter contact, and elected Republican Latino and Asian American roundtables discussing outreach challenges and issues of importance to these communities.

I organize the fieldwork findings in relevance to the re-occurring areas of focus: 1) mechanics of campaigns, and 2) the descriptive representation of staff and candidates. Discussions of reforming mechanics typically dealt with organizational concerns (e.g. events, staffing/new hires), re-tooling technology, and contact strategy (or mobilization). Descriptive representation, while a component of the reforming of mechanics, was also often a topic of distinction, referenced as a strategy in its own right by the RNC and CRP members. As an RNC political director stated in a CRP workshop, these areas are “intermingled” – distinct yet related components of how the RNC aims to better its “ground game” in an effort to be a more racially inclusive party.

Reforming Campaign Mechanics

Party Organization

The RNC’s reform efforts emphasize state and local (county and metro-based) party staff and organizations of permanence. The RNC hired an unprecedented amount of

staff. Their “most diverse staff in party history,”¹¹⁰ staff with specific regional and racial community foci. At the 2014 Spring CRP convention Chris McNulty (RNC Political Director) and Jennifer Korn (Deputy Political Director and National Director for Hispanic Initiatives) hosted a workshop titled, “Getting Out the Vote in 2014.” The workshop was closed to press and featured county chairs and staff from across California. Organizational reforms repeatedly emphasized the local, the long-term, and the racially descriptive. McNulty spoke to this change stating:

“Because of *Growth and Opportunity Project*, we put staff on ground earlier and we find individuals that are from that area. We are not sending a bunch of 20-somethings from DC and dropping them into districts in California. That means showing up early and staying there. [...] we have 173 staffers across the country, right now, working with the campaign, oppose[d] to just dropping them in the Spring of an election year [...] earliest and largest investment in the history of the RNC.”

The RNC’s Director of Hispanic Initiatives for the state of California, Francis Barraza, stated at the CRP’s first Latino Elected Official Roundtable that the RNC was making major investments into the Latino community in California, aiming to bring Latino candidates and voters into the GOP. Of the new hires, “almost all of them, 85% of staff is in the field” (Id.). The RNC Political Director also stated that at the time of this convention the RNC had identified around thirty thousand “targeted precincts,” and had recruited “just under 12 thousand of those precincts,” aiming to have thirty thousand by June or July (Id.). Political Director McNulty noted that while many of these investments of staff and targeted precincts are in California, these are long-term investments as part of the RNC’s “strategic offense,” rather than an RNC “strategic defense” state, such as

¹¹⁰ Author’s field audio

Texas, where they are trying to *maintain* their hold.¹¹¹ McNulty commented, “our strategic plan is investing in states like California, [which] will not be an immediate place where we can compete for presidential elections, but you have to start somewhere” (Id.).

Much of the praise from RNC actors regarded the CRP’s shared emphasis on local organizational action, and matching the national party’s resource commitments with “bottom-up financing.” CRP Chairman Jim Brulte stressed the importance of county parties doing their own fundraising to aid in local and national contests. Brulte compared the state party’s fundraising efforts to “icing on the cake,” with the cake (i.e. bulk of the funds) coming from candidate campaigns. He then went on to us as example the successful election of San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer.

The RNC is further aiding national-state-county coordination and collaboration, as well as seeking to increase local-level compliance with reform, via online discussions boards for exchanging “best practices” in rural, urban, and suburban settings, and by creating and hosting county chair “Nuts & Bolts” training manuals. These were informed by the collective discussion, concerns and feedback of thirty county chairs from around the country. McNulty stated, “We [RNC] hadn’t done one [county manual] in about 12 years. [...] Did 12 phone calls with each group. Talked about our program, talk[ed] about developing county programs” (Id.). The manual is a downloadable pdf so it can be updated frequently. The local fundraising and mobilizing efforts of county parties are

¹¹¹ RNC’s McNulty on the Democratic Party aiming to “flip” Texas to blue: “Demographic trends among Asians, Hispanics, and African Americans are such that support for the Republican Party in the last two elections for sure, is on a such a downward trend [...] if we lose Texas we can’t win a national election” (Author’s field audio).

also aided by the development of a voter information database that county-level leaders and staff can both draw upon and contribute to, as touched on in the next section.

Technology & Data

The RNC Chairman stated at the Spring 2014 CRP convention – “We got about a \$35 million dollar digital and data platform that we need to rebuild for this party. [...] The new [San Diego] mayor [Kevin Faulconer] had a chance to use some of that technology” (Id.). The RNC has tapped into “private sector talent” hiring ex-Google,¹¹² Facebook, and LinkedIn Engineers to develop their nationally-based but locally collaborative and accessible voter “data ecosystem”¹¹³ and “Walk” app (door-to-door mobilization) for smartphone and tablet use. The RNC hired its first ever chief technology officer (CTO), former Google engineer Andy Barkett. The national Political Director stated they needed to hire full-time tech “insiders” because anything developed in 2014 would likely be dated by 2016.

The “Walk” app allows for tracking local level data in real-time. The RNC Political Director at a convention workshop on technology also noted that one of the “Walk” app’s first field tests were with the election of San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer. Both of the CRP conventions featured training sessions on how to use the new software. The field testing of technology and the coordination with the state party in coaching county leaders to contribute data tracking for national party efforts illustrates well the level of

¹¹² <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/joegarofoli/article/GOP-hires-Andy-Barkett-to-leap-into-digital-fray-4848296.php>; Andy Barkett & data-driven method:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/30/andy-barkett-rnc_n_5228921.html

¹¹³ RNC’s Data & Phone App. <http://www.gopvictory365.com/>

collaboration occurring across the tiers of the party, i.e. between the national, state, and county party organizations.

The national party discussed the importance of obtaining more voting data, as well as obtaining more quality data to facilitate better messaging. The data is both structured (e.g. numerical scores for likelihood of voting for candidate) and unstructured (e.g. comments and unique notes entered by the party staff in the field). Previous voter data was largely structured/purely quantifiable. Allowing for unstructured, or rather qualitative data such as comments from voters, allows for more nuanced messaging within a specific precinct. This has implications for quality of contact, especially for minority communities in California that both state and national party organizations are trying to make progress with in 2016.

Community Contact

CRP Chairman Jim Brulte noted with frequency that reform is centered on a call for “Republicans to leave their comfort zones [...] for leaders and volunteers to reach out to voters in communities that tend to vote Democratic.”¹¹⁴ In contacting new communities of interest both the national and California party organizations have organized communities along racial, gender, and generational lines, i.e. minorities, women, and the youth. Much of the reform actions, commitment of resources, and discussions largely reveal that the RNC and CRP are prioritizing communities in that order, though not all racial groups are given as much emphasis as others. Perhaps speaking to Paul Frymer’s (1999) central thesis of African American voters being

¹¹⁴ <http://cagop.org.nerdydata.com/>

“captured” by the Democratic Party, the CRP conventions featured workshops specifically for Hispanic and Asian American voters but not for African Americans.

CRP Chairman Brulte emphasized how long he had wanted to see the CRP embrace reforms such as those within the RNC project. Speaking at the “Latino Elected Official Roundtable,” the CRP chair stated:

“for about 20 years I have argued that this Republican Party must blow its doors off and invite everyone in to participate. (applause) [...] The problem the Republican Party has is we haven’t recognized not only are the neighborhoods of CA changing, they’ve already changed, and we didn’t blow the doors off quick enough. So we are doing it now. Not only do we wanna blow the doors off. We wanna help make you messengers.”¹¹⁵

The idea of more racially diverse “messengers” relates both to quality of contact and the racially descriptive focus of the GOP reform strategy (next section).

RNC leadership presented several examples illustrating the goal of both increasing the *quantity* of contact and the *quality* of contact, while emphasizing the latter. Reaching a lot of people via better technology, more staff, permanent presence and year-round activity are important, as the party’s image problems with these communities are largely due to their historical absence. Given this, the RNC has stressed the goal of having not just more frequent contact but contact that is personable and not always political. RNC Chair speaking at the CRP Spring 2014 convention stated:

“you are gonna get to know these people. And we are not gonna talk about fracking all the time. We are gonna bring in bands. We are gonna have pizza parties. We’re gonna talk about politics, we are gonna bring in a few V.I.P.s, but you are gonna get to know these voters” (Id.).

While emphasizing quality of contact individuals from both the national and state party

¹¹⁵ Author’s field audio

organizations stressed “showing up,” a reoccurring theme of the national project that has found traction in California given its diversity and the CRP’s history of not engaging Hispanic, Asian and African American communities. RNC Political Director stated this in the California context, “One of the things that Mayor Faulconer [San Diego] talked about is the fact that they showed up, [...] organized on the ground in a variety of communities all across San Diego” (Id.).

A noted exception to the embrace “new communities” strategy, and related to the Faulconer campaign, is the national and state parties’ continued struggle to reach out to LGBTQ communities, or rather communities of sexual minorities. When Faulconer as Mayor Elect thanked “LGBT groups” among his coalition that helped get him elected there were visible negative reactions from guests at the CRP dinner (e.g. side remarks, rolling eyes, and shared glances of awkward expressions). An article written by a fellow CRP volunteer noted that the “luau-themed party hosted by the Log Cabin Republican Club, the LGBTQ volunteer arm of the Republican Party [...] certainly generated a buzz among the party faithful.”¹¹⁶ Further discomforts were on display when the Fall 2013 convention was occurring in Anaheim during “Gay Days” at Disney Land where participants were encouraged to “not forget to wear red!” A CRP county chair at the Central Valley regional meeting stated, “I was going to bring family and go to Disney but a friend told me [about the gay pride event]. I didn’t believe him at first [...] it’s unfortunate but it is what it is.”¹¹⁷ The CRP is not alone in its continued practice of

¹¹⁶ <http://www.smdailyjournal.com/articles/opinions/2014-03-22/under-the-radar/1776425120183.html>

¹¹⁷ Author’s field audio

largely leaving LGBTQ groups and individuals out of their reform discussions. The RNC’s project report only mentions “gay” or “gay Americans” four times compared to nearly a hundred (96) mentions of Hispanic or Latino voters. Additionally, there are no LGBTQ groups among the RNC’s list of “Demographic Partners.”

The RNC Political Director explained to CRP chairs and staff how the new “quality of contact” initiative¹¹⁸ compared to the old model of contact, highlighting the old model’s deficiencies in the process:

“Think about how we’ve done this previously. [...] you get a phone bank, and you call the heck out of it. It collects data and when we put that data in the file we get better information about who you are. [...] That’s a very impersonal approach. [one person] comes through one day, and [new] person comes through another you don’t have any quality of contact. It was all about volume. Volume’s important but you lost quality of contact in that interaction, so what if instead [I am] your precinct captain. First of all I was recruited and I live there, so it’s likely our kids go to school together or I’ve seen you at the store. I’m a relatively common face. I start going door-to-door last year. Introducing myself, taking basic information. Maybe the first time you think I’m crazy, but I come back, and you see me more often, there is a greater comfort level.” (Id.).

Much of the logic underlying this new strategy can be corroborated by political science research. The comments from both RNC and CRP leadership about mobilization being more effective when face-to-face, more personable, coming from peers, and taking place within social networks, all have long been known to political scientists studying mobilization and the effectiveness of various forms of contact (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993; Green & Gerber 2000). Overall, the “quality of contact” reforms and the national-state party coaching of county chairs aim to provide 1) better data (structured and

¹¹⁸ For additional comments by the RNC Political Director: <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2014/10/31/how-the-new-rnc-ground-game-works/>

unstructured) made possible by better technology accessible by more staff, 2) better timing – the permanent presence (year-round activity vs. few months before an election), and 3) better recruiting with staff coming from the racial communities of interest and from the neighborhood (i.e. “familiar faces from the block”). Comments from CRP members at the Latino and Asian Pacific American Elected Official Roundtables illustrate further that “familiar” faces implies those of who are perceivably of a similar racial background as the majority of the community (e.g. Asian, Hispanic, and African American).

Descriptive Representation

If the problem is demographics, the answer given by leadership has largely been one of increasing the descriptive representation of both the staff (precinct captains) and the candidate pool. Here I employ Jane Mansbridge’s (1999) definition of the concept: “in descriptive representation, representatives are in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent. Black legislators represent black constituents, women legislators represent women constituents, and so on” (Id. 629). On whether descriptive representation can lead to substantive representation (e.g. result in policy preferred by a group), is a debate with history (Pitkin 1967; Mansbridge 1999; Preuhs 2007; Burden 2007), and one largely beyond this project. From RNC and CRP comments to convention participants and the press, it appears Republicans

believe broadly that they can largely keep the same platform but have the message carried by “new messengers” in order to win elections.¹¹⁹

RNC Committeeman for California Shawn Steel referenced the need for new messengers at the Asian Pacific American Elected Official Roundtable, while also recognizing the party’s lack of support, the aim to change this, and the reason why it is important (elections, and demographics):

“Most of you got elected without any Republican Party help, and yet you’re still Republicans, and I consider that a miracle. We need to learn from you. We want this to become a regular thing. This is something our party is taking seriously on the national level, [and] at the state level, because the demographics are changing and we need a whole new set of warriors in the communities we haven’t had before. In 2010 in CA, 10% of the registered voters were Asian. Asian Americans are rapidly immigrating to America and open minded to our message. Asian Americans have values that are *essentially* Republican: strong families, middle class values, strong schools, respect for elders, in tact multigenerational families, hard work. The kind of things Republicans have been talking about for 150 years. Here’s the key to the party, now takeover, it’s your job. I’d like to see messengers from the Asian American community take over”¹²⁰

This emphasis on messengers was also revealed in a survey of county chairs, where I found of the Republican chairs reporting only 7 percent defined reform as being primarily about substantive change to party message and policy positions vs. changing the messengers, i.e. diversifying the racial backgrounds of candidates and party representatives. Further, 28 percent of GOP chairs reported viewing reform as primarily

¹¹⁹ A stark example of the same message with different messenger mattering – the CRP Fall 2013 Convention featured this video of Louisiana State Senator Elbert Guillory comparing welfare to slavery, a “government plantation” - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_YQ8560E1w - while other Republicans have apologized after being criticized heavily for making similar comparisons (see: http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/03/arizona_republican_jim_brown_apologizes_for_comparing_government_spending.html) this was not commented on by press or those in attendance.

¹²⁰ Author’s field audio

about changing “messengers” vs. policy positions. This informs on GOP strategy overall and is corroborated by the fieldwork in California, where discussions are largely about how to sell the current platform as is, rather than about how the platform can change to attract the new voters to build a more racially diverse coalition.

Whether descriptive representation is enough to reverse minority party identification trends in California and beyond is yet to be seen. What is clear is both the RNC and the CRP leadership appear to believe it is a major part of the solution to once again win national and state elections. The RNC Political Director stated to a room of county chairs that this is the reason they are particularly interested in California, as the racial demographic changes are most significant in terms of rapidity and magnitude:

“We are getting to a point with the growth of certain minority communities, as well as their support of the Republican Party, [it’s] pretty clear stuff. If we don’t improve there, we are gonna have a long-term problem. You won’t be able to win a national election. We wanted to make sure we were not only investing in a new ground game in old places, but a new ground game in new places. So we want to organize into minority communities across the country. It’s the front line! California gives a dramatic example. 14 of the top 20 races picked by the NRCC, 5 are in CA, and the minority population is significant. There is not a way to continually win in these districts over the course of a decade if you’re not engaging these communities.”¹²¹

Additionally, at the CRP’s third Asian Pacific American Elected Roundtable¹²²,

Chairman Brulte thanked the elected officials for representing their communities while also stating that the CRP has not done enough to prop them up as spokespersons for the

¹²¹ Author’s field audio

¹²² Recall this is the CRP’s first Latino roundtable. This is noteworthy given that the Hispanic population is much larger than the AAPI population in California, yet Hispanics received a table of focus much later than the AAPI community. This too is another sign of how recent and significant the shift is from the Pete Wilson antagonism (i.e. using these communities to rouse up a base with anti-immigrant sentiment and policy) to today’s attempts at courting Hispanic voters.

party. Now with the national party reforms focused on building a more racially representative party, the CRP appears more likely to do so:

“Thank you for the work you are doing in your communities, representing citizens of your communities, the Republicans, the Democrats and even the people that are not registered. In the past our party probably hasn’t done enough to reach out to you and help elevate you as speakers for our party . . . with the help of Shawn and Michelle [RNC committee persons] that’s what we intend to do. I look forward to a closer working relationship with you and looking forward to what you have to say” (Id.).

Beyond seeking precinct captains that are “familiar faces” in the minority communities of interest, creating an “inclusion council” and hiring staff of a racially descriptive background to serve as Hispanic, African American, and Asian and Pacific Islander American field directors, the RNC is also looking to have more racially diverse candidates. The CRP Chairman voiced support for this reform to candidate recruitment, and expressed the simple logic behind such a strategy at the Latino Elected Official Roundtable:

“The candidate who most looks like, sounds like, has the shared values and shared experiences of the majority of people in the neighborhood tends to win. Paul Cook, retired Marine Corps colonel got elected to Congress this year from my area. There’s a lot of retired military there. He looked like them. He sounded like him. He had their shared values and experiences. So the military folks there said, ‘he’s our guy.’ [...] We wanna help make you messengers. So now that we are out of debt, now that we are in a position to hire a couple of communication folks. We wanna help make you the spokesmen for our party, our principles, our philosophy. I hope that the next convention won’t be asking me questions, they’ll be asking you questions, because you are the future of this party. I know how hard it is to get elected. I know how hard it is to get elected as a Republican. I look forward to being full partners as we move forward to rebuild this party from the ground up” (Id.).

In a television interview as a Republican strategist and former California State Senator, Jim Brulte spoke even more forthright about needing more racially descriptive candidates, i.e. non-white, non-male candidates:

“Republicans have a growing bench but the bench isn't long enough and it's not deep enough and Republican leadership has to get serious about reaching out to people to run for office people who by the way don't look like me. [...] there's no reason in the world that Republicans can't reach out to people of color. We have to figure out how to talk to them in a language, not one that we're necessarily comfortable with, but one they're comfortable with and Republicans have not yet figured out how to do that.”¹²³

Comments like these may appear to imply changes to the substance of messaging, though the conversations of strategy largely focused on messengers and avoiding areas of conflict. “Don’t offend” – was the answer given at the Grow Elect: “Connecting with the Latino Community” workshop when one elected official was asked how to discuss an affirmative action policy (SCA 5) that many Hispanic voters favored but many Asian Americans were against.

The primary issue areas noted at both the Latino and Asian Pacific American roundtables included jobs, education, and “family values.” Just as there is a risk of tokenism when seeking descriptive representation as strategy, there is also a risk in perpetuating a caricature when seeking to engage communities that are outside of the base. These “growing pains” of reform were present throughout the convention, but were most apparent at the discussions of minority engagement workshops and meetings. Here the comments often illustrated the difficulty in speaking to and about these communities without engaging in essentialist stereotyping and caricature of the traits and concerns of

¹²³ SoCal Connected (Nov. 2012), “Republican Strategist Jim Brulte on Rethinking the GOP's Tack”: <https://youtu.be/115ohTBxS4Q>

these communities. This included the language of “benign racism” or “benevolent prejudice,” such as those outlined by scholars theorizing and describing the relative valorization of Asian Americans (Kim 1990; Chou 2008). For example, holding up Asian Americans as hardworking, perpetuating the “model minority” myth. Recall the comments from RNC’s Shawn Steel introduced earlier on why Asians are “essentially Republican.”

The CRP Spring 2013 convention featured the Lincoln Club and Republican Party of Orange County sponsoring a “Grassroots 101: Latino Engagement” event. This featured a live mariachi band¹²⁴, and posters detailing in both Spanish and English why the Republican Party is better on immigration, jobs, education, and “family values.” These materials featured images of Eisenhower, Reagan, George W. Bush and Marco Rubio, highlighting their work on immigration reform, and asking, “Cuantos Democratas han dirigido o pasado una legislacion sobre la reforma migratoria?” – the “Number of Democrats that have written or passed legislation on immigration reform?” These messages belied an earlier comment made at the Latino Elected Official Roundtable claiming that the Hispanic community does not care “that much” about immigration. Both the pictured materials and the Hispanic engagement conversations often arrived at the topic of immigration, though they stayed on whether to discuss it and how to discuss it, rather than addressing what the appropriate policy stance for the party should be.

The RNC is looking to California to see whether these reforms, including the “change the messengers, keep the message” strategy, will work. If it appears to reverse

¹²⁴ Author’s field video

trends and picks up elections in California, as it did in the election of Andy Vidak and Kevin Faulconer, then the RNC will replicate these field-tested strategies to other diverse communities in the U.S. Further, if successful, these strategies will likely inform the RNC's national strategy aimed at winning presidential elections.

The CRP is signaling change not just with its relatively high compliance with the RNC project and collaboration with the national party organization staff and leadership. The CRP leadership also signaled change both internally (to local party leadership) and externally (to voters) by: 1) embracing more moderate candidates, and 2) by using institutional power to support a most-preferred candidate pre-primary. The 2014 California gubernatorial race illustrate this well.

California's 2014 Gubernatorial Election – CRP Leadership Signals Change

While the RNC is using institutional power to deter infighting and factionalism, for example shortening the primary (“less time to slice and dice”¹²⁵ each other), similarly, the CRP has used institutional power to make undesirable outcomes less likely. Here, the undesirable outcome of an ex-Minuteman, Tea Party favorite, and descriptively status quo (white male) Tim Donnelly becoming the gubernatorial nominee. Rather, the national and state party (though not all county¹²⁶) organizations preferred the candidate that embodied the RNC project of broadening appeal and becoming a more racially representative party. With immigrant parents, a focus on economic vs. social issues, and

¹²⁵ Chairman Reince Priebus at 2014 CRP Spring Convention, author's field audio

¹²⁶ Napa Republican Party chairman defending endorsement of Donnelly over Kashkari:
http://napavalleyregister.com/news/opinion/mailbag/napa-republican-party-defends-tim-donnelly-endorsement/article_7ee6df28-4da6-5bec-9422-4e78c32953d7.html

less polarizing rhetoric, Kashkari represented the Republican reform project operation in California. Prominent Republicans outside of California also saw it as important for a candidate like Kashkari to run even if he lost. This is because he serves as signal that the Republican Party is not hostile to immigrant, minority, and more ideologically moderate populations, i.e. that Republicans are not strictly a party of social conservatives. Karl Rove stated that “if the Republicans have to pick someone to lose to Jerry Brown, they’d be stupid not to pick [Kashkari] [...] The comments that the other guy has made in the past are going to damage the party with Latinos on Election Day.”¹²⁷

Before focusing on the formal and informal powers of party organization at work in the convention setting, it is first necessary to illustrate further how these candidates differed, allowing the labeling of one as “the reform candidate” and the other as more typical of the old CRP form (à la Pete Wilson). This can be seen in comparison of the two candidates’ speeches, their style and substantive areas of focus. This comparison also adds to our understanding of the RNC project and its dissent, as Donnelly voiced critiques similar to those of reform-skeptic activists and county leaders. Conversely, Kashkari’s comments reveal how the reform project translates to campaign strategy.

The Candidates Compared

In comparing the speeches of the two main Republican gubernatorial candidates at CRP conventions as well as statements made to the press preceding the election, it becomes clear the internal campaigning of the two candidates differed significantly in terms of style and substance. Kashkari’s tone in speeches was similar to that of the CRP

¹²⁷ <http://blog.sfgate.com/nov05election/2014/04/07/rove-says-ca-republicans-would-be-stupid-not-to-pick-kashkari/>

leadership, one of positive unity, while Tim Donnelly was not shy to distance himself from the GOP “country club” or “establishment.”¹²⁸ This is perhaps attributable to his Tea Party ties and following. When asked to respond about the high-level endorsements that his opponent was garnering, from Mitt Romney, Jeb Bush, Condoleezza Rice, and Darrell Issa, Donnelly stated that they “represent the party establishment ‘circling the wagons and trying to protect their power.’”¹²⁹ Similarly, at the CRP’s Spring 2014 County Chair Associations meeting, with Chairman Brulte and former county chair and large donor Charles Munger in attendance, Donnelly said he was “not having help from the politically connected, and that’s ok because they really haven’t won anything in 20 years that’s of any significance.”

Donnelly’s comments recalled those described by scholars as constituting the tradition of anti-statism rhetoric at home in contemporary currents of conservatism (Omi & Winant 1994: 126). Further, Donnelly’s comments were notably more polemic and partisan, referring only to Democrats in the negative, e.g. “fascists in Sacramento,” “[Brown is] a Marxist progressive parading as a Democrat.”¹³⁰ Donnelly’s comments revealed a view of government very much in congruence with the Tea Party movement and its limited government message:

“I just want to be left alone. [...]. I loved my life but the government became the greatest threat to my success by regulating me out of business, by driving my customers out of the state. The governor just can’t say no. He [Brown] signed 805 new laws in a state where the greatest complaint is over-regulation.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ <http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/Tim-Donnelly-I-m-a-threat-to-the-GOP-country-5478654.php>

¹²⁹ <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-kashkari-donnelly-20140429-story.html>

¹³⁰ <http://www.mantecabulletin.com/archives/100730/>

¹³¹ Author’s field audio

Conversely, Kashkari not only recognized the good that both federal and state government can achieve, but also talked of the necessity for bipartisan efforts, both in a general sense and for securing the economy during financial crisis:

“I spent 3 years in DC battling a terrible economic crisis, and we got Republicans and Democrats to work together. And we protected the taxpayers. That experience taught me that you can do things in the government for the good of the people if you get everyone focused together” (Id.).

And later at same chair meeting when asked about how to get new voters, Kashkari said, “To me, the issues I’m talking about are not partisan issues. I think every family wants education and jobs” (Id.).

The candidates also varied in how they discussed race. Even when aiming to tailor his message to the RNC’s goals of reforming technology, minority engagement, and bottom-up fundraising, Donnelly employed the use of anecdotes that might turn off minority voters during a time when the party as a whole continues to struggle with talking about race with sincerity and respect:

“The Asian community is up for grabs if you will become their champion. I wrote a letter. I got complete strangers in whose language I can’t say a single word – yet, but I will – They just gave me a Chinese name by the way, they put it on one of my donation envelopes. It’s got a nice sound to it. Don-L-Lee Don-L-Lee. When they say it [laughs]. And they are gonna digitally send it to me and they are gonna completely communicate – because a lot of them [Asians] are in the tech industry on Facebook, Twitter, and all that other stuff. So if you get behind MY campaign. You’re going to reach communities that Republicans have not been able to penetrate, certainly have not been able to win” (Id.).

Comments like this, that may be argued as featuring an “othering” tone and essentialist language, may have made the CRP leadership feel justified with their motion to remove press from the room just before this speech took place. Donnelly was referred to by the

media as a “quotable conservative — who is tone-deaf on race,”¹³² making remarks¹³³ that the CRP know will hurt them in a time of seeking more racial inclusion and broader appeal. Neel Kashkari on the other hand kept his references to minority groups to mentions and expressed the need for changes:

“I’ve traveled all across the state into small businesses, and farms, Latino households, African American households, Asian communities, Caucasian communities, all walks of life. [...] We have to rebuild, re-energize the Republican Party. We have to bring everyone back into the Republican Party. They cast our party as though we are the party of ‘no.’ They cast our party as though we’re the party of hate. They cast our party as though we’re the party of the rich. That’s not why I’m a Republican” (Id.).

In a press interview on the convention floor Kashkari referenced how he viewed his candidacy as a change for the party, and as setting a positive precedent even if he loses the election, as he did:

“I’m a Republican nominee for governor, social libertarian, focused on economic issues. Contrast this to the party four years ago [...] this is a transformational moment for our party. That’s the big picture. [...] I’ve set an example, and if I win in November then of course you know it’s actually solidified but I think I’ve now set an example for other candidates to follow me”¹³⁴

As a Republican reform candidate running not just on change for the state but for the party as a whole, Kashkari made comments revealing that he was aware not everyone was on board with his vision and the top-down calls for change. He started his speech to the California Chair Association with “Ask me your toughest questions” and when

¹³² <http://rightwingnews.com/column-2/what-do-the-california-gop-and-the-alamo-share/>

¹³³ “In 2006, as an unknown California Minuteman, Donnelly went to the border and declared: “I am a descendant of Jim Bowie, who died at the Alamo. It is rumored that he took a dozen Mexican soldiers to their deaths before they finally killed him. How many of you will rise up and take his place on that wall?” (Id.)

¹³⁴ Kashkari interview: <https://youtu.be/Q-3saW5dqxs>

referencing his work on the unpopular TARP “bailout” he worked to preempt skepticism and critique with, “I’ll go through that detail if you have questions” (Id.).

Kashkari was more open about his socially liberal (or as he stated - libertarian) views and more inclusive in his rhetoric (referencing LGBT communities) when speaking to the Log Cabin Republicans, stating, “The new Republican Party that I want to build is the diverse Republican Party. Every ethnicity, every sexual orientation, every lifestyle, everyone is welcome. The biggest tent you’ve ever seen in your life.”¹³⁵ Still, he stayed away from social issues almost entirely in his speeches beyond small gatherings and in convention interviews, likely since he knew they were at odds with many in the county chair meeting and at the convention overall.

While Kashkari stayed away from social issues in his more official speeches at the convention, Donnelly was quick to touch on social issues starting with comments on AB1266 and SCA 5 before getting into more general comments on regulation and water. AB1266 is California’s “School Success and Opportunity Act” which aims to protect transgender individuals by allowing students to use the bathrooms that they view as congruent to their gender identity.¹³⁶ In his speech to the county chairs, Donnelly had this to say about the policy:

“[Brown] signed laws that [are] an affront to our values. Here we are circling the drain in k-12 education [...] and he thinks it’s a good idea to put the boys in girls’ locker rooms. As I travel around the state, I talk about that issue, AB1266, because it is one of the stupidest government overreaches we have ever seen. [...] This law is going to put our kids’ privacy at risk.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/news/california-republican-governor-race>

¹³⁶ AB1266 in full:
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1266

¹³⁷ Author’s field audio and notes

SCA 5¹³⁸ is the California Senate Constitutional Amendment that seeks to effectively repeal a ban on affirmative action in considerations for college admissions. Donnelly discussed not only his opposition to the affirmative action policy, but stated that opposition to this policy was a way to appeal to Asian voters, using an anecdote as evidence of claimed grassroots support spreading via technology:

“I am excited because the Chinese just started a Tea Party but they’re not calling it that. They are calling it ‘NO on SCA 5’ [...] it wants to reintroduce racial preferences into college admissions. That is the most offensive thing I have ever heard! [...] When I wrote a letter demanding that Sen. Hernandez pull this offensive bill – which is state-sponsored discrimination! I got 40 thousand Asians looking at it without sending it to a single one. They just found it. Let me tell you their comments. [...] You have my vote and 11 of my family members. So today when I had lunch I didn’t take a single picture with any of them on my phone. These people are tagging me [in pictures on FB] and they are spreading the word. Laugh a lil’ bit but that’s what Obama did. He organized around issues then he won a race he never should’ve won” (Id).

While Donnelly largely stayed off the topic of immigration, as did most substantive discussions at the convention, his comments revealed that he was not wanting to discuss immigration reform. During his speech to the general session at the Spring 2014 convention he stated, “the only immigration I want to talk about is the U-Hauls leaving [Rick] Perry’s Texas” (Id.).

In speeches, Kashkari stayed on economic issues strictly and did not discuss AB1266 and transgender rights or SCA5 and affirmative action. Kashkari staying on economic issues (his slogan - “Education and Jobs: that’s it!”) aligned with both the RNC’s reform project and the suggestions from the CRP and RNC leadership to not

¹³⁸ SCA 5 in full: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_0001-0050/sca_5_cfa_20130816_110047_sen_comm.html

highlight differences, but rather stay in the areas, largely economic, where common ground can be found with minority communities. Additionally, staying on economic issues worked to remove attention from his stances on social issues being atypical for the Republican Party at large (pro-marriage equality, and pro-choice), and especially so at a convention of the party faithful, i.e. the conservative base. On economic issues too there were observable differences between the two candidates. Kashkari repeatedly recognized class, making repeated use of the “middle class fight,” and noting that encouraging growth was about education rather than just removing regulations, and that California did not need to be the cheapest place to do business as it had “other things to offer” (Id.).

Lastly, a question came up implying that some of the minority communities Kashkari mentioned in his speech had a “culture of dependency.” Kashkari “respectfully disagreed,” while also answering in a way that revealed he caught on to the racial code employed by the county chair. Kashkari followed up with an anecdote about visiting a church in South Central Los Angeles, stating that black communities want to work as much as any other community, showing a willingness to challenge notions regarding minority group culture and welfare.

The Invisible Primary – CRP Leadership Minimize the Tea Party & its Candidate

The dynamics of the gubernatorial campaign at CRP conventions spoke to the larger reform challenge of balancing the preferences of a conservative base with those of new voters. As described, Donnelly primarily focused on the concerns of a white base in an increasingly diverse state, choosing to rile conservative activists by unabashedly showcasing his conservative values and views on social issues. Conversely, Neel

Kashkari often started on the defensive explaining his work with George Bush then with the Obama administration on TARP, an unpopular policy among the base, as well as working against his admission that he voted for Obama in 2008.¹³⁹ This perhaps explains why Kashkari often trailed in polls not only behind Donnelly but also behind Democratic incumbent Jerry Brown.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, several media outlets interpreted the notable differences in the crowd response to the two candidates' speeches at the general sessions and on the convention floor as Donnelly receiving the CRP's "unofficial endorsement."¹⁴¹

Given this, how did Kashkari eventually beat out Donnelly to become the Republican nominee? What reporters ignored were the dynamics present at the convention, dynamics more subtle than the roar of a crowd. This included the actions of the state party organization to support Kashkari while simultaneously marginalizing Donnelly and his Tea Party support. These moves often existed outside of the more public meetings of the convention, such as the general session. While Donnelly was indeed popular at the convention and received a better crowd response than Kashkari at

¹³⁹ "The vast majority of Republicans do not want to be represented by somebody that voted for Obama, who ran TARP instead of a business," Donnelly continued, referring to Kashkari, who cast a vote for Obama in 2008 and ran the taxpayer-funded bank bailout." <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-kashkari-donnelly-20140429-story.html>

¹⁴⁰ http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_25526879/field-poll-gops-hope-california-governors-race-leaning, and http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/survey/S_314MBS.pdf

¹⁴¹ "The audience reaction told the story: For Neel Kashkari, polite applause; for his GOP gubernatorial rival, Tim Donnelly, a prolonged roar of cheers." <http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-pc-tim-donnelly-gets-unofficial-endorsement-at-gop-convention-20140316-story.html> "A conservative state assemblyman and gun rights enthusiast was the crowd favorite among the party faithful on Sunday as the Republican candidates" <http://www.mantecabulletin.com/archives/100730/>; and <http://www.rawstory.com/2014/03/california-republicans-strongly-back-tea-party-candidate-at-state-gop-convention/>

the general session, there were also noticeable differences between the more measured response of top *leadership* and that of activists and county chairs. Beyond the variation in response the CRP leadership showed their preferences by way of institutional power to support one candidate over the other.

The idea that party organizations can hold significant power to effectively pick nominees before voters do in a primary is informed by the work of Cohen et al. (2008). In *The Party Decides* (Cohen et al. 2008), they argue that party organizations hold important formal and informal tools to shape candidate selection, platform, and overall party direction, often at stages in the process preceding the entrance of the party in the electorate with the casting of their primary vote. This has led to the development of the concept of the “invisible primary,” described by media as the, “behind-the-scenes competition for the support of elected officials, donors, party leaders and political operatives,”¹⁴² and by scholars as, “the principal institutional means by which party members decide the person they want to be their nominee—the equivalent of bargaining at party conventions in the old system” (Cohen et al. 2008: 187). This notion of significant party power runs counter to both the idea of increasingly candidate-centered campaigns (Arbour 2014) and theories of party decline (Wattenberg 1996). I argue that Kashkari won the invisible primary long before voters casted their ballot in the open primary. One can see this via a series of formal and informal moves made by CRP leadership.

¹⁴² http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/10/upshot/start-paying-attention-whats-happening-now-in-gop-matters-for-2016.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=0

When asked whether he thought the GOP was hijacked in 2012 by extremists, Chairman Jim Brulte replied:

“I think to a certain extent some elements of the Tea Party have not been helpful [...] but look extremism sometimes grabs political parties. George McGovern grabbed the Democratic Party in 1972 they manage to lose a whole series of elections and when they got tired of losing elections they picked a moderate named Bill Clinton and guess what they happen to win.”¹⁴³

Brulte not only associated the Tea Party with extremism, but also revealed a view that the picking of more moderate candidates may be the solution. These comments bring on new relevance when considering the treatment of both Donnelly and the Tea Party at the CRP conventions. Brulte’s actions and those of other CRP leadership further revealed a view of the Tea Party and Donnelly as representing a more extreme and an increasingly less electable element of the party, and therefore a force that should not be encouraged in the convention setting.

Beyond lackluster enthusiasm for the Tea Party candidate, the Tea Party as an organization was pushed to the literal fringe of the convention. While the Tea Party enjoyed vocal support throughout the convention, the conference room provided for its caucus was not on the main floor and half the size of the ballrooms for the Latino and Asian American roundtables. Further, CRP leadership were nowhere to be seen at Tea Party and Donnelly campaign events at both conventions leading up to the gubernatorial race. Conversely, the highest members of the state party organization could frequently be seen at Kashkari events and in discussion with the reform candidate on the convention floor. This informal support by association represents the more subtle influence of the

¹⁴³ See footnote 1

CRP to endorse their candidate. Treatment of the two candidates at the County Chair Associations meeting illustrates a more direct and blatant use of power to execute preferential treatment for the reform candidate.

At this meeting Kashkari not only received a warmer introduction¹⁴⁴ by the CRP leadership, better placement (middle vs. end of meeting), more time to speak (20 minutes vs. 10 minutes), a call for and time for questions following his speech, and perhaps most importantly – press coverage. Right before Donnelly was to address the room of CRP county chairpersons, the state chairman, and several members of the board of directors, there was a motion by leadership to remove press from the room. The motion received a quick second, and was swiftly voted into passage by way of a room voice vote. One person who voted against it became vocally opposed, asking: “Why?” “Why was it opened for Kashkari and closed for Donnelly?” This was met with an enthusiastic “YEAH!” from another person in the room. At this time, the CRP staff overseeing the meeting replied:

“There’s an answer to that, [name removed]. I can’t discuss it with you now. I’ll have to talk to you about it afterward, but I have to ask you now to believe in that decision of the body. Thank you.”¹⁴⁵

At this point, a Donnelly supporter who had just arrived shortly before Donnelly was to speak, sitting along my side in the non-voting member seating said to me, “WOW. Whoa. It’s because they are threatened by him. That was [them] saying ‘you’re not our guy.’ They don’t want that heard because it was a great speech.” (Id.). Immediately after

¹⁴⁴ “He will tell us who he is. Why he’s running, and why he WILL beat Jerry Brown.” (Brulte and Munger starts applause). Compare to Donnelly’s straightforward introduction, “I believe Mr. Donnelly will now speak.”

¹⁴⁵ Author’s field audio and notes

Donnelly's speech there was a motion to withdraw the motion to remove press, but the following candidate said they would speak more candidly if the press were not in the room, so the motion was kept in place for the remainder of the meeting. Additionally, the leadership did not call for questions to be asked of Donnelly and they quickly moved the meeting along to allow another candidate for another office (lieutenant governor) to speak. This mix of selective use of formal power (procedure to remove press at key times) and informal power (introductions, response, and question-taking) served as a signal from the higher-level CRP leadership (chair and executive board) to lower-level CRP leadership (the room of county chairs) that Kashkari was the preferred candidate.

News coverage following the convention revealed that Donnelly recognized this difference in treatment both at the convention overall and in this meeting in particular:

“Donnelly sat in his RV, smoldering. The Republican candidate for governor had just addressed a group of officials at the California Republican Party's convention outside San Francisco in March. But reporters were excluded from the room, and Donnelly was convinced it was to deprive him of publicity. He [Donnelly] called his wife. Charles Munger Jr., a prominent Republican donor, “was up there in the front row just staring at me, just eyeballing me,” Donnelly told her. “the establishment was preparing for us. They had all their little ducks lined up, and they are going to play games all weekend.”¹⁴⁶

Charles Munger Jr., a former Santa Clara County Republican Party chairman and current chairman of the CRP Initiatives Committee, was similarly active for Kashkari during the convention. More importantly, he contributed \$350,000 to Kashkari's campaign via the creation of an independent political action committee.¹⁴⁷ Though not listed on the

¹⁴⁶ <http://remember1986.com/california-republican-candidate-for-governor-donnelly-gives-voice-to-conservative-anxieties/>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-pc-munger-tries-to-boost-kashkaris-bid-with-350000-effort-20140521-story.html>

conventions' banquet placards, Munger was thanked by Brulte as the top donor at the Spring 2014 convention, outdoing the Gold, Silver, and Bronze sponsors with a \$100,000 donation to the state party organization. This use of donation and fundraising power by CRP leadership to back moderate candidates has been acknowledged and critiqued by those in the lower-levels of the state party organization. An article in the L.A. Times claimed while Munger was being thanked by the highest levels of the state party, he was also making "enemies within his own party too, in part by bankrolling moderates in primaries against conservatives."¹⁴⁸ An editorial by Napa Republican Party chairman defending his support of Donnelly over Kashkari adds validity to this statement, where in the local Republican chairman states, "They [CRP leadership] also like that Neel is wealthy enough to fund his own campaign (with a little help from Silicon Valley power broker Charles Munger)."¹⁴⁹ The state party's leadership and its power can be as simple and subtle as association at conventions (face time with the candidate), or as blatant as large sums of money and the cutting off of access to the press while giving speeches in official meetings.

Conclusion

The national party organization (RNC) has found in the California Republican Party: 1) a state party organization with leadership that wants to embrace the goals of the reform program, and, 2) a party organization in a diverse racial and ethnic demographic

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.latimes.com/local/politics/la-me-adv-munger-20150304-story.html#page=1>, and <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/joegarofoli/article/GOP-infighting-centers-on-anonymous-blog-4937603.php#photo-5387952>

¹⁴⁹ http://napavalleyregister.com/news/opinion/mailbag/napa-republican-party-defends-tim-donnelly-endorsement/article_7ee6df28-4da6-5bec-9422-4e78c32953d7.html

setting that is ideal for putting new minority outreach strategies to the test. The CRP's leadership embrace of reform includes the use of formal and informal power to influence candidates that are more in-line with the reform project. Further, this use of institutional power can be significant for curbing factions, infighting, and extremist elements in an aim to bring about compliance with national party projects.

As illustrated, the RNC is testing significant reforms to technology, data, staff, and minority outreach strategy in California. Through collaboration with the CRP leadership, the RNC is working to increase the likelihood that their reform efforts are taken seriously and carried out on the state and local level, all in an effort to build a long-term "ground game," and to become competitive nationally in the face of changing voter demographics.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

I have sought to answer the question of how party organizations and their makeup of various formal party actors interact across the multiple tiers of the party to secure compliance with a large-scale national project; here, a top-down call to reform minority outreach. In doing so, I aimed to speak to the traits of state and county party organizations that serve as either barriers or backing to the collective action (coordination and collaboration) necessary to foster compliance within the lower (local) levels of the party apparatus (e.g. state and county party organizations). These questions are of crucial importance not only to understanding party operations during a context of reform, but also for informing whether American political parties *can* change to become more inclusive, and reach out to minority and immigrant populations that remain under-mobilized on the periphery of the political process.

Using a mixed method approach I brought original fieldwork and survey data to understand the initial local-level response to these top-down calls for increased inclusion, and how the Republican Party is working to broaden appeal while balancing the goals of creating a more racially diverse coalition with maintaining their current base. This dissertation provides an illustration of the nature of party infighting, showing the characteristics of the major competing camps, their support of significantly different leadership, their connection to collective action problems, and how state and national (RNC) leaders design their parties (i.e. shape institutions) to overcome or control these elements. This account works to alleviate the party literature's lack of attention to state and local party organizations, highlighting the *within* party variation counter to the

common account of parties as relatively homogenous entities competing against *external* factions. Rather, this research shows a major party apparatus may spend a great deal of energy working to combat factions *internal* to its organization, across the multiple tiers of the party (i.e. party federalism), often during times of top-down reform.

A survey of a national sample of party chairs from Republican and Democratic county parties allowed for additional insight into how local leadership views its role in outreach, and particularly for Republican chairpersons, reform – its barriers, and whether and how they support the reform project via local level party actions. This research provides insight into an understudied area of political parties, that of local and state-level party organizations. The collection of the views of local leadership via analysis of survey data and from ethnographic fieldwork allows us to fill in the gaps in our knowledge regarding party organizations operating in the context that voters are most likely to come into contact with them – the local level. Additionally, this research illuminates the gap between party reform rhetoric and localized action, using the GOP’s most recent and largest attempt at broad scale change.

The Capacity, Motivations, and Reform-Related Actions of Local Party Chairs

In Chapter 2 I moved from theory development to the statistical and observational, with much of the survey questions born directly out of the exploratory study of Chapter 3. The surveying of the opinions of local party chairpersons allowed for speaking to the broader motivations, capacity, and tactics of both Republican and Democratic parties taking place on the local level, as well as revealed the more reform-

specific concerns of the Republican Party, and the compliance of local GOP parties with the RNC reform program.

In part, this survey spoke to how well equipped (or rather ill-equipped) most local parties are for engaging their diverse communities, for example by providing materials in languages beyond English, and by employing bilingual staff. Surprisingly, I found no contextual effects on these party traits, e.g. the size of the Latino voting age population within a county did not correlate significantly with these measures of outreach capacity. As the U.S. electorate continues to change, these findings are of concern not only for what they mean for political parties, but what they mean for voters and the larger ideal of equality of political contact and incorporation of politically and economically vulnerable, under-represented, and under-mobilized communities.

Additionally, Chapter 2 speaks to the motivations of party leaders, corroborating what we have long known – they care about winning elections – while also adding detail about what local leaders believe is the best strategy for winning office. Local chairpersons across both parties saw resources as best spent mobilizing their base rather than engaging in outreach to new communities of interest. Here there is evidence for slight contextual effects on the motivation to mobilize new voters, e.g. the county-level minority population did correlate with priority of appeals to African Americans and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans.

The survey also gives an initial impression of whether Republican reform is taking place on the local level. Largely I found the level of coordination across the national, state, and county party remains low. Further, I did not find county competition

or diversity to be associated with compliance with the RNC report or increased coordination with the RNC. This points against a pure market based answer for reform. That is, reform action is not simply born out of a local need to adapt to an evolving “market of voters.” Instead, it is often a product of whether state and local leadership view reform as good strategy, and strategy that does not compromise fundamental values of the GOP, as they define them.

Taken collectively, these findings speak to the struggle of moving a message of inclusion into action. If local party leadership fails to employ staff and methods that can engage diverse communities, continues to focus resources on their base, and focuses on symbolic/descriptive representative change vs. substantive change, then minority and immigrant communities stand to remain marginalized by our party system. Though my survey of 83 county chairs across party and state contexts points to an overall lack of bilingual capacity and outreach motivation, additional research on local party organizations and their willingness and efforts to engage growing non-English speaking communities may attest further to the success or failure of the GOP reform efforts.

Intra-Party Factions & Internal Campaigning

After analyzing the content of the RNC’s *Growth & Opportunity Report* in Chapter 1 and testing several reform-relevant hypotheses in Chapter 2, I set out in Chapter 3 to develop a theoretical account of how top-down calls for change may affect the internal workings of state and local party organizations. Chapter 3 models the relationship between a context of reform, the particular opportunities and uncertainties it introduces for a party, and its complicated relationship with the internal dynamics of state

and county organizations. Further I showed how the nature of internal campaigning works to highlight factionalism found in party organizations on the local level by introducing or exacerbating the unity-distinctiveness dilemma. Campaigning *within* parties remains an understudied political phenomenon and future study of these dynamics should not be ignored. The tone and topics of internal campaigns may result in not only collective action problems for the party organization, but may also produce more polarized candidates. We see this currently on the national level where the racialized rhetoric of presidential candidates like Donald Trump may contribute to the overall tone of the debates as well as the topical focus (e.g. Mexican immigration and economic competition with China).¹⁵⁰

Additionally, Chapter 3 showed how a fear of this context of reform can be institutionalized via the introduction of restrictive bylaws. I theorize that this is in part related to a context where uncertainty pertaining to the direction of the party and the power relations between state and national organizations is unknown or up for “re-negotiation.” The concepts presented in my model provide theoretical utility by providing the conceptualization (i.e. the terminology) for discussing and understanding party unity, intra-party dynamics, and their connections to collective action. While I have proposed a model of how a context of top-down reform introduces dynamics that may affect the operations of party organizations on the state and local level, there is now need for application of this theory to additional state contexts, and possibly alternative national

¹⁵⁰ Trump and immigration: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/19/heres-what-donald-trump-gets-wrong-about-immigration/> and <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/18/how-does-the-republican-party-solve-a-problem-like-donald-trump/>

contexts. In the case of RNC reform project, the multi-state survey indicated the anti-reform sentiment exists beyond the Nevada and California contexts.

Formal and Informal State Party Power

After surveying the views of local party leadership in Chapter 2, and presenting a case of high factionalism and low national-state party coordination in the Nevada Republican Party in Chapter 3, I then presented a case of high coordination and reform compliance with the California Republican Party in Chapter 4. As I showed, it was not the case that factions and anti-reform sentiment were non-existent in the CRP. There exists today a significant Tea Party presence in California, with much overlap between Tea Party conservative activists and the CRP leadership on the county and local level.

Still, in California the factionalism was controlled by the top leadership of the state party via formal and informal moves that were subtle yet clearly present at the CRP's conventions after the 2012 election and leading up to the 2014 midterm featuring the California gubernatorial election. In the CRP "non-establishment" elements (such as the Tea Party) were not in control of the executive board. We did not see the same restrictive bylaws, the same institutional changes to interfere with top-down influence, or leadership-led pushback against reform. Rather, we observed the opposite. A near full-embrace of RNC reform efforts by leadership, and again, formal and informal power used to marginalize candidates with polarizing rhetoric and an anti-inclusive messaging.

The CRP's leadership embraced the language of reform, the recommendations of bottom-up fundraising, and backed candidates that were in-line with the reform project. The backing of candidates and the national party agenda was at times as simple and

subtle as association at conventions (face time with the candidate), or as blatant as large sums of money and the cutting off of access to the press. The future of party politics research would be well served with a similar participant observational look at how the GOP reform project manifests in elections beyond the state and local level, analyzing the pre-primary moves of the RNC and its major candidates heading into the 2016 general election.

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Appendix A: Chapter 1

RNC Inclusion Council Diagram [with additional examples of the RNC’s minority outreach recommendations to state and county party organizations]



IA <http://www.iowagop.org/platform-2014/> -

KS <http://ksgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Kansas-GOP-Platform-2014.pdf>

KY *links to national*

LA *links to national*

ME <http://www.maine.gov/platform/>
<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/massgop/pages/10/attachments/original/1424993715/Final-Platform-Report-Feb-2014.pdf?1424993715>

MI *links to national*

MN http://mngop.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2014-MNGOP-Standing-Platform_4.16.15.pdf

MS <http://www.ms-gop.org/mississippi-republican-party-platform/>
Race mention – “Mississippi Republicans believe in the rule of law, and that all people are created equal and therefore deserve equal opportunity without regard to race, color, gender, creed or age.”

MO <http://www.missouri.gov/state-committee/platform/>

MT <http://www.mtgop.org/index.php/about/party-platform.html>

NE <http://negop.org/about/platform/>
Race mention – “We believe that good government should guarantee to its individuals equality before the law regardless of race, creed, age, gender, [...]”

NV <http://www.nevadagop.org/about-the-gop/2014-platform/>
Race mention [in immigration section] – “We welcome people from all nations, races and cultures who enter our country legally and support the freedoms, principles and language of the United States of America.”

NH <http://nhgop.org/about/statement-of-principles>

NM <http://gopnm.org/>

NC <http://www.ncgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Platform-2014.pdf>
Race mention - “We recognize that abortion egregiously discriminates against the unborn person for reasons of race, gender and disability.”

ND <https://www.ndgop.org/view/home/the-republican-platform/>
Race mention – “I BELIEVE in equal rights, equal justice and equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed, sex, age or disability.”

OK http://www.okgop.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2013-Platform_Final-form.pdf

OR <http://www.oregonrepublicanparty.org/Platform2013>

PA *links to national*

RI <http://ri-ra.org/component/content/article/52-rirscc/320-rigopplatform14>

SC <http://www.scgop.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/SCGOP-Platform-Adopted-2012.pdf> -

SD <http://southdakotagop.com/about-the-party/our-platform/>
Diversity mention – “The South Dakota Republican Party supports and encourages ethnic harmony in our multi-cultural state. The Party reaffirms its support of efforts to increase awareness of the rich and changing cultural diversity of South Dakota's citizens.”

TX <http://www.texasgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-Platform-Final.pdf>

UT <http://westernrepublicans.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Utah-Republican-Party-Platform-2009-1.pdf>

VT <http://vtgop.org/about/platform/>

WA <http://www.wsrp.org/resources/party-documents>
WV <http://wvgop.org/about/platform>
WI <http://www.wisgop.org/republican-party-of-wisconsin-platform/>
WY http://wygop.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2012.platform.and_resolutions.pdf

Appendix B: Chapter 2

Example of an LPO including party materials in languages beyond English:



Mail Survey

Given my focus on the GOP and its reform efforts, and my primary reliance on data from questions featured on their survey, I include the full version of their survey on the proceeding pages, as it was printed. Some notes on process, I tailored both the introduction letter and the survey sent to the Republican Party, varying the overall tone of the GOP version from the Democratic version, in an effort to alleviate some of the Republican Party's skepticism of academia and media. Beyond these slight differences in initial contract, to facilitate comparison the two surveys remained largely the same in the types of questions asked.

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Thank you very much for your participation. With the information provided by you and your counterparts, we can arrive at a fuller and hopefully more accurate account of county political parties. Please return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Please rest assured that your responses will always remain anonymous.

If you have further thoughts on this questionnaire or the topics it covers, we would welcome your comments below, or on a separate sheet.



Thank you for helping us learn about the challenges facing county parties in varied electoral environments. Please complete this brief questionnaire and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. If you are unable to answer certain questions, please answer all the other questions and return the survey.

Alternatively, you can fill this survey online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Thank you. Your insight and informed views are very important to us.

Contact Information:

Nick Boushee
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5200 Canyon Crest Dr. #41
Riverside, CA 92507
Phone: (701) 866-8199
Fax: (951) 827-3933
Email: nbous001@ucr.edu

Code: _____

Note: The individual responses to this survey are confidential. The code is used to track the returning surveys so that we know not to send follow-up inquiries. We will not identify, or reveal the responses of any specific individual or organization.

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Q-1. My primary role within the county party is:

1. County Chair
2. Vice Chair
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. General staff/volunteer
6. Other: please specify title _____

Q-2. How many years have you served in this position? _____ years

In Q-3 to Q-7, we ask some background questions about the county you serve. For each question, please circle the number that most closely represents your opinion.

Q-3. What are the most important issues to your county? [please list up to 3]

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q-4. Overall, I would describe my county as:

1. Rural
2. Urban/metro
3. Mixed
4. Don't Know

Q-5. Overall, I would describe my county as predominantly:

1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent
4. Don't Know

Q-6. How would you describe the following groups in your county?

	<i>very liberal</i>	<i>moderate</i>	<i>very conservative</i>
a. Volunteers for the County party	1	2	3 4 5
b. Voters in Republican primaries	1	2	3 4 5
c. Voters in general elections	1	2	3 4 5

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Q-28. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or have you not thought much about this?

1. Extremely Liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly Liberal
4. Moderate, Middle of Road
5. Slightly Conservative
6. Conservative
7. Extremely Conservative
8. Don't Know
9. Have Not Thought Much About This

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

- Q-23.** Conceptually speaking, I think of reform as primarily about changing:
1. Policy positions [in line with concerns of new voting groups]
 2. Messengers [more diversity in candidates running for office]
 3. Both
 4. Neither
 5. Don't know

Q-24. The next few questions speak to recurring news stories from mainstream media regarding the GOP and its post-2012 election concerns. Please circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). If you don't know the answer to a particular item, leave it blank.

- | | strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| a. "The Republican Party needs to moderate its message to be competitive on the national level." | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| b. "Establishment Republicans are trying to distance the party from Tea Party candidates." | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| c. "The GOP is the party of white people." | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| d. "The GOP has a 'demographic problem,' i.e. the changing racial demography of the American electorate benefits Democrats more than Republicans." | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| e. "The GOP has a 'messaging problem.'" | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

We end the survey with some background questions.

Again, please be assured that your responses will remain anonymous.

Q-25. What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female

Q-26. What is your age? _____ years

Q-27. What is your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

African-American/black Asian Other
 Caucasian/white Hispanic/Latino
 Native American Pacific Islander

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Q-7. Overall, I would describe my county as:

1. predominantly Caucasian
2. predominantly Hispanic
3. about an even mix of Caucasian and Hispanic
4. Other (please specify _____)
5. Don't Know

Political parties serve multiple functions for American democracy, and in the process come into contact with various organizations. *In Q-8 and Q-9 we ask about the types, and frequency of, contact with party and non-party individuals and groups.*

Q-8. How frequently do you have contact with these types of individuals or groups? Please circle a number between 1 (often) and 5 (don't know).

- | | often | some-times | rarely | never | don't know |
|---|-------|------------|--------|-------|------------|
| a. Elected officials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Other GOP county parties | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. State Central Committee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. RNC State Field Directors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. RNC Minority Engagement Directors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Other RNC staff, specify titles(s) _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Other _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Q-9. What are the main organizations in the county that your organization frequently reaches out to? [please list up to 3]:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>
 In Q-10 to Q-12, we ask some questions about your county party's organization, activities, and concerns.

Q-10. Roughly, how many paid staff work for your county party? _____

Q-11. Roughly, how many on your staff are bilingual? _____

Q-12. In the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with respect to your county party's activities:

	<i>strongly disagree</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>strongly agree</i>
a. Our activities are primarily related to winning elections	1	2 3 4	5
b. Our activities are primarily ideological, meaning developing shared values, and connecting with voters who share them	1	2 3 4	5
c. Our activities are primarily related to educating the general public	1	2 3 4	5
d. We are mainly active during elections	1	2 3 4	5
e. We are continuously active	1	2 3 4	5
f. Raising money is an important part of my duties as a county chair	1	2 3 4	5
g. Our county party often tries to influence its candidates and elected officials	1	2 3 4	5
h. It is important for county party organizations to support the major policy moves of Republicans in Congress	1	2 3 4	5
i. It is often necessary to adjust party messages in order to appeal to different racial and ethnic communities	1	2 3 4	5

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>
 Q-19. How often do ethnic organizations and/or minority-serving interest groups (at the local, state or national level) contact you for support?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Always

Q-20. Thinking about the reverse process, how often does your county party contact ethnic organizations and/or minority-serving interest/advocacy groups (at the local, state or national level) for support?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Always

Q-21. What actions has your county party engaged in within the most recent election cycle to appeal to minority voters? Please check all that apply.

- Naturalization
- Registration
- Electoral Mobilization (Get Out The Vote)
- Fundraising
- Town hall meetings in ethnic communities
- Attended special events put on by ethnic organizations
- Candidate recruitment
- Staffing/training
- Targeted Messaging (e.g. mailings, billboards, pamphlets, online communications)
- Volunteer recruitment and management, i.e. hiring field organizers who are a part of the communities of interest
- Issue advocacy & local legislative action
- Community projects (e.g. English classes, youth sports, etc.)
- Other: please specify _____

Q-22. How often are your county party's printed materials bilingual?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Always

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>.

Q-17. From what you have seen, how is the Republican base responding to calls for the following? Please circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). If you don't know the answer to a particular item, leave it blank.

	strongly negative	neu- tral	strongly positive		
a. Reform to the party	1	2	3	4	5
b. More racial inclusion	1	2	3	4	5
c. Moderating stances on hot-button social issues	1	2	3	4	5
d. Focusing less on social issues like abortion & gay marriage	1	2	3	4	5
e. Changes in policy preferable to particular minority groups (e.g. "Immigration Reform")	1	2	3	4	5

Q-18. Considering finite resources and your county's demographics (age, occupation, race, income, etc.), how much of a priority is it to engage in activities that appeal to these communities:

Please circle a number between 1 (low priority) and 5 (high priority).

	low priority	neu- tral	high priority		
a. Women	1	2	3	4	5
b. Youth	1	2	3	4	5
c. Hispanics	1	2	3	4	5
d. African Americans	1	2	3	4	5
e. Asian and Pacific Islander Americans	1	2	3	4	5

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>.

As one of America's most longstanding political parties, one might imagine the ability to adapt as an important part of this success. **In Q-13 to Q17 we ask some questions regarding recent calls for reforming the GOP.**

Q-13. Overall, how much is your county party following recommendations from the RNC's "Growth and Opportunity Project"?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. A moderate amount
5. A great deal

Q-14. In the space below, please indicate if your activities related to the "Growth and Opportunity Project" have changed over time. Please feel free to be as detailed as possible.

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Q-15. Regarding the notion of party reform, please provide your opinion on the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Please circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). If you don't know the answer to a particular item, leave it blank

	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
a. As party chairs we adapt RNC reform recommendations in consideration of county context, local concerns, & demographics.	1	2	3	4	5		
b. County party organizations are key to the RNC's goal of reaching out to minority, women, and youth voters.	1	2	3	4	5		
c. It is important to rebuild the party from the ground up.	1	2	3	4	5		
d. On issues like immigration, we need to carefully craft a tone that takes into consideration the unique perspective of the Hispanic community.	1	2	3	4	5		
e. To remain competitive at the local level our party needs to improve our outreach to minority groups to expand and diversify our base.	1	2	3	4	5		
f. The Republican Party should do more to reach out to women voters.	1	2	3	4	5		
g. The RNC should do more to support Tea Party candidates.	1	2	3	4	5		
h. The Republican Party should do more to reach out to youth voters	1	2	3	4	5		
i. If we want ethnic minority voters to support us, we have to engage them and show our sincerity.	1	2	3	4	5		
j. The Democratic Party in our county is taking the support of minority voters for granted.	1	2	3	4	5		

This survey can be filled out online at <http://tinyurl.com/county-party>

Q-16. The next few questions regard possible concerns related to reforming a political party.

Please circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). If you don't know the answer to a particular item, leave it blank.

	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
a. Coordinating across multiple levels of the party (local, state, and national) is a significant barrier to reform.	1	2	3	4	5		
b. I am for reform as long as it means not compromising our party's core conservative principles.	1	2	3	4	5		
c. Maintaining our party's base is more important than reaching out to new groups.	1	2	3	4	5		
d. Prioritizing diversity can come at the expense of party unity.	1	2	3	4	5		
e. Party resources (time & money) are better spent mobilizing those who already identify as Republican than on appealing to groups that have traditionally voted Democrat.	1	2	3	4	5		
f. Our party's social positions, particularly on abortion and gay marriage, help maintain our party's base.	1	2	3	4	5		
g. If our party does not support gay marriage it will be hurt electorally with young voters.	1	2	3	4	5		
h. If our party does not support comprehensive immigration reform it will be hurt electorally with Hispanic voters.	1	2	3	4	5		

Regression Tables for Partial Confirmation of Contextual Effects

VARIABLES	A.A. Priority
pctcvapblack	0.00634** (0.00269)
pct_wnr2012	-0.00945** (0.00460)
pid2	-0.190*** (0.0636)
Constant	1.455*** (0.277)
Observations	80
R-squared	0.262
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1	

VARIABLES	Hisp. Priority
pctcvaplatino	0.00115 (0.00191)
pct_wnr2012	0.00176 (0.00394)
pid2	-0.146*** (0.0533)
Constant	0.892*** (0.229)
Observations	81
R-squared	0.091

VARIABLES	AAPI Priority
pctcvapasn	0.0315*** (0.00714)
pct_wnr2012	-0.00696 (0.00492)
pid2	0.0106 (0.0658)
Constant	0.880*** (0.285)
Observations	79
R-squared	0.210

VARIABLES	Freq. of Group Outreach
pid2	-0.119** (0.0521)
pct_wnr2012	-0.00306 (0.00382)
pctcvapwhite	0.0157 (0.0148)
pctcvaplatino	0.0168 (0.0146)
pctcvapblack	0.0201 (0.0139)
pctcvapasn	0.0199 (0.0156)
Constant	-0.708 (1.481)
Observations	81
R-squared	0.200

Appendix C: Chapter 3

NRCC Site and seating (guest vs. voting members) photos:

Nevada Republican Party State Central Committee Meeting. Sept. 27th & 28th 2013. South Pointe Casino, Las Vegas, NV. 9am-5pm [adjournment time - “Unity Dinner” followed]



Event Ticket with Unity Slogan

Please print and bring this ticket with you.

 207232245263858341001	Event Nevada Republican State Central Committee September 2013 Meeting	
	Date+Time Saturday, September 28, 2013 at 9:00 AM (PDT)	Name Nicholas Boushee
	Type Meeting \$35.00	Payment Status Eventbrite Completed
	Location South Point Hotel and Casino 9777 South Las Vegas Boulevard Las Vegas, NV 89183	
	Order Info Order #207232245. Ordered by Nicholas Boushee on September 22, 2013 12:39 PM	

Please PRINT and bring this ticket to the event entrance upon registering to ensure an easy and speedy registration.

Thank you,


207232245263858341001

Unity Dinner Flyer



The Nevada Republican Party



is pleased to present

UNITY
STARTS WITH
U·n·i·t·y

Nevada GOP Unity Dinner 2013



Featuring Keynote Speaker

Joe Miller

Candidate for US Senate

Fairbanks, AK

Saturday, September 28, 2013
6:30 pm cocktails
7:00 pm dinner


South Point Hotel – Casino – Spa

Tickets will be available at the door, or see Jim DeGraffenreid during the meeting if you would like to reserve seats.

Limited special VIP Seating at Mr. Miller's table is available!

Gun Raffle Flyer


“Lyon County is exercising our 2nd Amendment rights with a gun raffle.” – County Vice Chair




Lyon County Republican Central Committee

GUN DRAWING

Lincoln Day Dinner
February 1, 2014



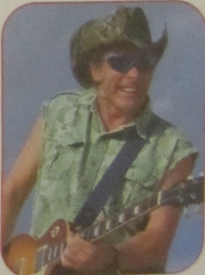
Boys & Girls Club—Yerington, Nevada



**First and second prizes will be awarded.
Free CCW class if hand gun is chosen.**

CHOOSE FROM EIGHT DIFFERENT GUNS:

- GUN #1—HRA Goldenboy 22LR—*Signed by Ted Nugent*
- GUN #2—HER 22/22M 4.75" Blk SATIN
- GUN #3—CZU 612 combo
- GUN #4—WBY Vanguard 22-250
- GUN #5—WBY Vanguard 270
- GUN #6—SR1911 Commander 45 ACP
- GUN #7—Ruger SR1911 45 ACP
- GUN #8—Savage 93R17 17 HMR



Guns provided by Creekside Sports in Yerington.

**Cost: 1 ticket-\$5.00, 5 tickets-\$20,
30 tickets-\$100.00 (best deal)**

For more information about this drawing, contact editor@lyoncountynvgop.org. Winner need not be present to win.

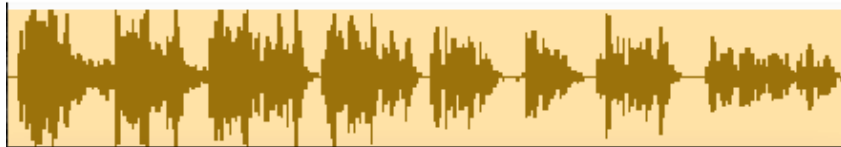
McDonald (Incumbent Chair) Campaign Shirt & Water Bottle



Uithoven (Challenger) Campaign Shirt



Chair vs. Challenger Speech Volume Difference



McDonald [above] v. Uithoven
Speech Volume



Statement on Bylaws Resolution B-112

I asked the Bylaws Committee to draft a bylaws change to clarify who is eligible to attend NRCC meetings. I requested this because at nearly every meeting we find ourselves taking valuable meeting time to consider whether or not to seat particular members at the meeting because of changes to a county's representatives between the time the meeting was called and the meeting itself.

Our current bylaws don't say how these changes are to be handled. Past practice has been to set the membership at the time of the call to the meeting, and those members who were called to the meeting are the ones eligible to attend, even if they are no longer NRCC members at the time of the actual meeting.

It makes no logical sense to lock in the meeting attendees 45 days in advance of the meeting. Membership can change by resignation of a member, regularly scheduled county elections, or any number of other means. We've even had cases where members have resigned, and then re-registered in another party between the call to the meeting and the meeting itself. Clearly, someone who is not even a Republican should not have the right to vote at a Republican Central Committee meeting.

Resolution B-112 has three goals:

- _ To clarify that only current members of the NRCC are eligible to attend NRCC meetings as a voting member.
- _ To clarify that newly elected NRCC members may attend meetings as soon as they are elected by their county
- _ To clarify that merely being called to an NRCC meeting does not grant an individual the right to attend – they must remain a member of the NRCC in order to be eligible.

In order to address the third point more simply, I'll be proposing at the meeting that the added text to Article 5, Section 1, Paragraph G reads as follows:

Each County Central Committee may change the individuals comprising their representation according to their own bylaws and rules at any time up to and including the day of a state central committee meeting. Only those individuals who comprise the current representation from a county on the day of a state central committee meeting are eligible to attend the meeting.

Submitted by Secretary, Nevada Republican Party, Sep 13, 2013