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Hierarchical Structural Organizations of State Political Parties

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Hierarchical Structural Organizations of State Political Parties

By

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A Plan B thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of

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In

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Introduction

From August through November of 2011 I worked as an intern for the Utah Democratic state party at their state party headquarters. I started my internship around the same time as the newly elected chair of the state party, Jim Dabakis, assumed his new role as head of the party. Dabakis did not have the traditional resume of a party chair but rather had his background as an international art dealer and businessman. He had always been politically minded and involved in political causes, but he did not have the extensive partisan politics background that previous chairs had. In anticipation of taking over as chair, Dabakis went on a statewide tour visiting with all of the county party leaders and Utahns from all over the state. When I started my internship Dabakis expressed that he was somewhat perplexed as to why the party was organized in the way that it was. He didn't understand why each of twenty-nine counties needed its own county party with its own executive committee and its own bureaucratic structure. I realized that, despite my background in political science, I had never really thought about this question and had no idea whether there even *were* state parties that were organized in any other way. I began to ask the same questions as Dabakis. Certainly Salt Lake County, with over one million people living within its boundaries, needs its own county party structure but is the same necessarily true for Daggett or Piute counties that each has less than two thousand residents? If Utah has such a great contrast between counties creating confusion in organizational structure, then it is likely that other states have some unique organizational needs as well.

This confusion over the decentralization of party power to the county level rather than some other sub-level spurred several questions. Do parties organize themselves in

any other way below the state level in other states? If so, what is the reasoning behind the model of decentralization chosen in various states? Further, if a party chooses a different model of decentralization of state party organization what impact, if any, does this have on electoral success, candidate recruitment, party organizational strength, registration numbers, and other indicators of party success? These questions not only have theoretical grounding, but the answers to these questions have real life application to partisan politics in modern electoral politics in the United States. This paper will conduct a review of literature relating to party integration, summarize the hierarchical organizational structures of the various state parties, examine potential causes and potential consequences of various structure models, and provide a review of surveys and interviews of local party elites to provide useful insight into the aforementioned questions.

Existing Literature

What are Parties?

Before being able to address the issue of how and why parties choose to organize themselves on multiple levels, it is necessary to understand what parties are and how they are conceptualized. For some, the concept of political parties revolves around the idea that a group of individuals coalesce into a team in order to attain elected office to enjoy the power, prestige, and financial benefits that controlling the government structure can provide to those in charge. Further these individuals within this coalition known as a party behave rationally in order to proceed “toward its goals with a minimal use of scarce resources and undertakes only those actions for which marginal return exceeds marginal cost” (Downs, 1957, p. 137). Somewhat similarly, Cotter, Gibson, Bibby, and

Huckshorn (1989) based their comprehensive study on American parties on the idea that: “political parties may be conceived in terms of symbols...or as cognitions in the minds of voters...or as teams of candidates...but they must also be considered as organizations” (Cotter et al., 1989, p. 3). For Cotter and his associates, parties as organizations work to control the party image and presence on the ballot, to exploit, manipulate, or otherwise engage a portion of the electorate to identify with the party, and elect candidates the party has nominated for electoral office. In order to elect candidates, parties realize they must appeal to political independents and those weakly associated to the other party in order to build large enough coalitions for electoral success. Carty (2004) argues that in order to have the flexibility to build such coalitions in modern campaigns, parties as organizations are now a more flexible and fluid entity rather than a rigid structure of party bosses making top down decisions that they expect all candidates on the ballot at all levels to abide by.

Schlesinger (1984) attempts to define parties by their behavior and by the factors that drive this behavior. Schlesinger notes that parties operate in a political market and their behavior is driven by performing political functions and responding to psychological needs of the electorate and as a result, parties do the things they do “as by-products of the pursuit of their goals” to be successful in that electoral market. The elections as a political market foundation is important for Schlesinger’s examination of parties and he views parties as organizations as any other business operating within the market:

“Just as a business can maintain itself by selling its product at an adequate price, a party able to win office has no difficulty in obtaining all the elements of a vital organization: attractive candidates, willing workers,

and money givers. And, just as the economic market sends clear and unambiguous messages to the business firm concerning the success or failure of its product, the political market evaluates openly, automatically, externally, and with exquisite numerical precision the output of the political party” (Schlesinger, 1984, p.381).

As such, it appears Schlesinger is making an argument to define parties as organizations that behave like any other business or enterprise that operates in a political and electoral marketplace instead of a commodity based market. However, Schlesinger is careful to note that “Students of parties have never even come to an agreement on what a political party is, much less on how to tell whether one is strong or weak, decaying or blossoming” (Schlesinger, 1984, p.371). However, for the purposes for this examination I shall define political parties as organizations with internal rules and structures that aim to promote certain policies, gain power within the government, and inspire loyalty and a party “brand” among voters (Hershey 2011).

Party Success

Since the days of the renowned political scientist V.O. Key, scholars have traditionally evaluated political parties as tripartite entities consisting of the party in the electorate, the party in government, and the party as an organization. The party in the electorate is the party label under which voters identify and view themselves as members of the party in their political and electoral civic activities. The party in government consists of the elected officials in government offices that are members of the party. The party as an organization refers to the party staff, physical facilities, bylaws and rules, and other organizational characteristics (Edwards III, Wattenberg, Lineberry 2005). This section of the paper will examine how the relative success of political parties is measured and analyzed. While all three elements of parties—in the electorate, in government, and

as an organization—can be isolated and studied for a party’s success and efficiency in that particular element, it is important to remember that all elements of the party impact and are themselves impacted by the other elements of the party and any successes or shortfalls in a singular element will likely have a corresponding impact on the other elements and thereby on the party as a whole.

As discussed previously, parties work to achieve some level of electoral success and party identification with a portion of the electorate, but in terms of success some scholars argue that “success” of a party organization is relative to the circumstances and climate in which it operates:

“The ultimate electoral objective of a party is not to maximize the number of people who express an attitudinal preference for it but, rather, to be able to contest elections effectively. Depending on the existing partisan context, this long-range objective may be pursued by different tactical approaches. For example, in areas of one-party dominance the minority party may follow a long-term developmental approach that includes establishing a token presence, developing a cadre of local activists, and gradually recruiting (or converting) credible candidates” (Frendreis et al, 1990, p.227).

Stokes (1999) follows this line of thought in arguing that successful parties are able to fully capitalize on electoral mandates and responsively address the political and psychological needs of the median voter. This is a key component of party success because “party leaders’ policy preferences diverge in the direction of the median voter from the more extreme position of activists from their own party” (Stokes, 1999, p.261); without the ability to capitalize on activist energy and support while maintaining policy positions that appeal to independent voters parties will not meet their maximum electoral potential.

Cotter and his colleagues assess party success through its organizational strength by examining attributes such as budget, professional staff, party officers, institutional support, and candidate directed programs. A sufficient budget and professional, competent staff allows a party the organizational strength and stability to develop and carry out various programs. Institutional support provides durability and continuity which enables the party to court voters, sway public opinions over time, and influence events and interests outside the party organization itself. Cotter and his associates further indicate that a state party's organizational strength is developed through its relations with both the national party above it, and local parties below it. The extent to which the state party coordinates with local parties on tasks ranging from candidate recruitment to fundraising are an indication of the party's strength as an organization, while not necessarily an indicator of electoral success:

“Perhaps the most significant implication of all this is that state party organizations can be maintained and increased in their organizational strength through elements of their association with the national party organization, and in the apparent absence of supporting trends in the other components of party: the party-in-the-electorate and the party-in-government” (Cotter et al., 1989, p.72).

Through organizational strength, Cotter et al. hypothesize that parties achieve greater success in recruiting quality candidates since they “assume party organizations are committed to electoral competition and election winning,” and therefore “the capacity of the party to function in a competitive electoral system is conditioned to a significant degree on the range and quality of candidates running under the party label” (Cotter et al., 1989, p. 7).

Building on the extensive work by Cotter, Gibson, Bibby, and Huckshorn,

Coleman (1996) argues that party organizational strength impacts the linkage between voters and parties and voters' perceptions of parties in the electoral process. When both parties in an area operate somewhat competitively with one another, the organizational strength of the parties strengthens their linkage to voters and voters' opinions of parties in general are more positive. Conversely, Coleman finds that "if one party's organizational presence is far stronger than the other's, the public may perceive a power imbalance, and this imbalance may be viewed negatively" (Coleman, 1996, p.809). When the organizational strength between the parties in an area diverges creating an organizational strength gap, it harms public perception of parties and weakens their impact on, and trust from, the electorate:

"Supportive attitudes will more likely flourish where there is not too great a gap between the organizational condition of the two major parties: if one party alone builds power, critical responses increase. Americans are more approving of parties as institutions when their experience is with competitive party organization" (Coleman, 1996, p.815).

Coleman asserts that Americans are culturally averse to absolute power and power imbalances as seen through the great lengths the framers of the Constitution took to create safeguards through separation of powers and other efforts implemented since the founding era such as the implementation of term limits that seek to prevent power from becoming too concentrated in one group, person, or place.

Thus while a political party is not a governmental entity, Americans hold similar distrust of extreme power imbalances and while they may continue to vote in ways that uphold one party dominance in a state or area, their view of parties generally is more unfavorable which in turn weakens the strength of parties as organizations (Coleman, 1996).

State and Local Party Differences

Just as the state-wide parties differ from the national party, so too do local party units differ from the state party. In order to investigate why parties choose to organize themselves in different ways below the state level, it is useful to provide a foundation of how state and local parties differ in general. State parties are more bureaucratically structured with professional staff and more experienced officers and a full time party chair or executive director while local parties are less bureaucratic and more interpersonal (Cotter et al., 1989). Local parties use their more personal nature to conduct more direct campaign activities such as voter registration efforts and direct involvement in the campaigns of candidates where their involvement “begins with candidate recruitment, extends through the primary, and continues during the general election” (Frendreis et al., 1990, p. 227).

Because local parties operate on a more personal, grassroots type level of political engagement they are more responsive to the local wants and needs and therefore the more local a unit of the party is, the more credibility it generally enjoys from the electorate (Houten, 2009). Further, when the goals of the sub-units of the party diverge from those of the higher levels of the party, it could be that they are responding to pressure from local constituencies that do not align with the desires of the wider party or it could be due to the opportunity to mobilize local interests on issues that are specific to their local sub-unit jurisdiction (Thorlakson, 2010, p. 7).

Party Integration and Interaction

Now that we have an idea of what constitutes political parties, what measures their success and contributes explanation to their behavior, and how they differ at

different sub-national and sub-state levels, we must now address how state-level parties interact and integrate—or don't integrate should that be the case—with the sub-units of their party within their state. Reviewing literature of how parties integrate and interact will provide a foundation for the future exploration of why and how parties choose to decentralize in the manner they do and the impacts this has on their success and organizational strength. In order for scholars to evaluate how various levels of a party interact they must have a framework for analysis:

“What is required is a framework for thinking about party structures that identifies the autonomy of their various parts as a defining feature while recognizing the integral character of the organization as a whole, and allows us to explore how individual parties operationalize and institutionalize the stratarchical imperative in form and practice” (Carty, 2004, p.7).

It is important to remember that parties aren't rigid robotic mechanisms, but rather the various structures within parties are autonomous organizations that piece together to form the party organization as a whole. The more that these autonomous parts within a party work cohesively and function fluidly together, the more the party is said to be an integrated party. Integrated parties share the same party label and therefore “the two levels of the party share a common goal and loyalty to the party as a whole...so that every component part of the party contributes to the party's overall success” (Thorlakson, 2010, p. 3).

In studying how various units of political parties integrate and work around and with one another, scholars have tried to identify various factors that push a party towards or away from more integration with local units. Cotter and his colleagues set out to examine whether party integration between state and local parties impacted the

organizational strength at either level. They initially thought that an integration of state and local units that brought strength to one would result in greater organizational strength at both levels, but instead found that “it generally seems that the factors causing state and local party organizational strength are dissimilar” (Cotter et al, 1989, p.51). Perhaps integration between state and local party units relies upon the strength and stability of the state party before it feels sufficiently secure to integrate:

“For state parties of intermediate strength, increments in strength are not associated with increments in integration, suggesting the diversion of state party resources to other purposes. At relatively high levels of strength the pattern changes again. Perhaps only as state party organizations become secure in their own strength are they willing to siphon off resources and effort towards relating with the local parties” (Cotter et al, 1989, p.75).

The data collected and examined by Cotter and his co-authors found that for the Democrats, increments of integration resulted in increased party organizational strength on the local level, but such a hypothesis was completely unsupported by the data concerning the Republican party and therefore likely had more to do with party culture and the regions of each party’s strongholds rather than some universal truth equating improvements in integration with greater organizational strength for local units.

Roscoe and Jenkins (2009) attempted a brief examination of the impact of inter-party competition on integration between state and local party units. From their sample, the two states with the most balanced party competition showed the largest scores of their party integration index while the two states with the most one sided, one party dominance produced the lowest scores indicating that “party competition clearly seems to be influencing the degree of state and local party coordination on activities” (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2009, p. 13). They note that in states where one political party enjoys electoral

dominance local parties were shown to be less active, less structurally sound, and less integrated with the state party. This is true for both parties—both the majority and minority party in that state—but they do concede that the majority party is more active than the minority party within a particular state. The local parties in states with more balanced party competition are more structurally sound and found to be more integrated with the state party (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2009). This is in line with the earlier findings of Cotter et al. such that when local parties are more structurally vibrant and self supportive, it is less of a burden and drain on state party resources to integrate and involve itself with local parties and therefore state parties feel more “secure in their own strength” and “willing to siphon off resources and effort towards relating with the local parties” (Cotter et al, 1989, p.75). These results support the Downsian argument that parties are a coalition of individuals seeking the power and prestige of elected office and use parties as vehicles to invest scarce resources to maximize returns in order to achieve greater chance of electoral success.

Roscoe and Jenkins (2011) follow up their 2009 work by investigating several hypotheses that work to explain levels of state and local party integration within the context of inter-party electoral competition. They first advance the “good dog” hypothesis which holds that state parties are very strategic in their decisions concerning cooperation and assistance to local party units because the state party has limited resources. This good dog hypothesis argues that in order to best manage these limited resources, state party leaders calculate any assistance or cooperation with local party units as an investment of scarce resources and will evaluate local organizations on the basis of the potential dividends and payoffs of such an investment. This results in a

climate wherein “local committees with mature organizational structures and an already established repertoire of electoral activity will seem like good bets...[l]ike good dogs getting a treat, good local committees are likely to be rewarded by the state committees” (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2011, p. 5). This line of thinking in the good dog hypothesis follows the Downsian thinking about parties that argues that the coalition of individuals that make up party units only behave in a manner that advances their goals of attaining electoral success and will only undertake actions that produce a good “investment” with returns exceeding costs.

A second hypothesis—the “scrappy fighter hypothesis”—evaluates the situation differently. Under this view, those state parties that suffer under unfavorable prevailing political conditions are more likely to fight harder to try and make up the difference through increased effort and will do anything, including assisting and cooperating with local party committees, to scrap and claw its way to electoral relevance. If the scrappy fighter hypothesis were to hold true:

“We [would] expect state parties that are disadvantaged by the political context of the state will act like scrappy fighters and make greater efforts to assist and cooperate with local party committees. Democratic parties in red states, for instance, should be better integrated than those in blue states. Similarly, parties in counties that are unfavorable to their electoral success may also fight like mad using state assistance ” (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2011, p.4).

The results of their study showed that the scrappy fighter hypothesis was supported by the data collected from their sample. A political party’s proportion of the seats within the state legislature has a negative relationship with the party’s level of integration between state and local units of the party. This is consistent with the scrappy fighter hypothesis

where we see that minority parties within the state are working more closely with their county and local party units than the opposition party that enjoys comfortable margins in elected officials in the state legislature: “State ideology is negatively correlated with state party assistance to the county parties, providing support for the scrappy fighter hypothesis. State parties in more hostile environments seem to be working with their county parties more in order to turn the political tide” (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2011, p.16).

The scrappy fighter hypothesis however only relates to electoral competition at the state level as Roscoe and Jenkins found no correlation between integration between state and local units and the level of partisan competition at the county or local level seeming to suggest that the needs of the state party drive the decisions relating to integration regardless of the needs of the local party units. This is intuitive as the state party is more likely to have greater—although they would argue, still limited and scarce—resources to invest in local party units than county or local units would have to invest towards state-level activities. The leadership controlling the resources seeking to maximize their own marginal returns is the leadership that drives the bus on the highway towards, or away from, integration and cooperation with other units of the party.

On the basis of this research by Roscoe and Jenkins, one would expect that if the “good dog” hypothesis is true then state parties will only maintain intermediary party organizations insofar as they are viewed as a valuable electoral investment. Further, while their results on the “scrappy fighter” hypothesis did not hold for county and local electoral success, state parties may still maintain intermediary or other party organizations that may be viewed as organizationally superfluous if the party feels it is at

a political or cultural disadvantage and that these intermediary organizations will help to overcome such a disadvantage.

Summary of Hierarchical Organizational Models

In order to address questions surrounding why parties organize themselves the way they do and what the impacts of these hierarchical organizational structures include it is necessary to outline the various forms of organizations that state parties have chosen to organize below the state level. Using party documents—namely the party bylaws and constitutions—collected from the Democratic and Republican parties from each state I was able to create a breakdown by state and party of how state parties organize themselves below their statewide organizations. I was able to find the necessary information for the Democratic and Republican parties from each state with the exception of the Republican Party of Washington state. After repeated emails, phone calls, and an exhaustive search of their website I was still unable to obtain the necessary information to include them in the sample. I specifically looked to see if any state parties indicated they had changed their structural organization recently in order to see if there were before and after results which we could examine to help determine the electoral impact of hierarchical structural organizational models. I was unable to find an instance of a state party changing models in the last thirty years.

Roughly half (48 out of 99 state parties) of the organizations have a hierarchical structure that decentralizes directly from the state to the county level party organizations—or the parish level in the case of the state of Louisiana. Forty-one state parties have committees and party organizations between the state and county levels which are based on the US House congressional districts within the state. These

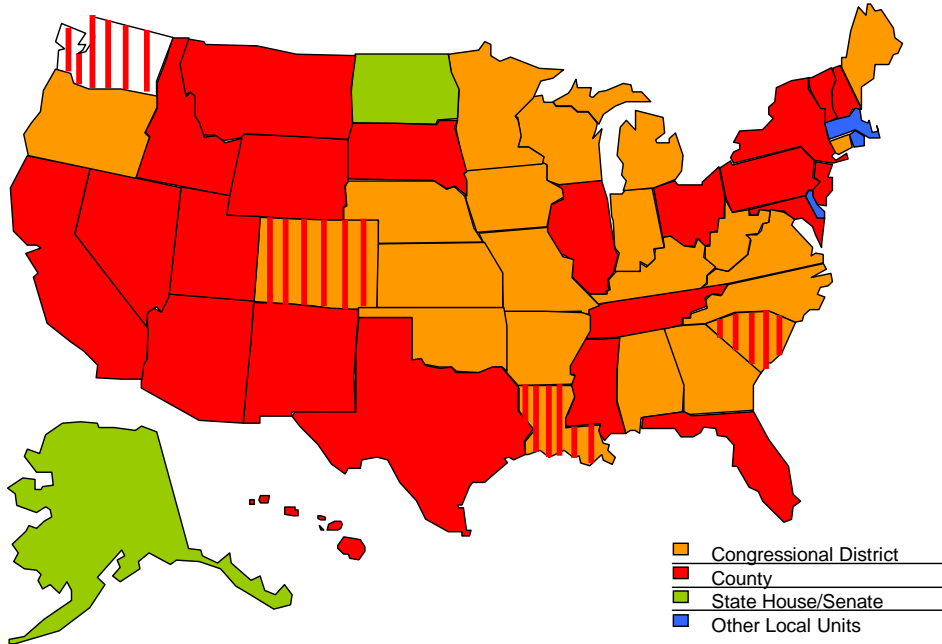
congressional district parties differ across states with some states having active, involved congressional district parties that have officers, offices, websites, and other mechanisms of activity while other states' congressional district parties are merely a committee within the party structure and play much less of an active role.

The handful of remaining state parties each have their own unique structures. The Republican and Democratic parties in Alaska and North Dakota do not organize on the congressional district level (both states only have one US House member and thus a congressional district organization would be the direct overlap of a state organization), and neither do they organize on the county level, but rather these state parties decentralize themselves into party organizations on either the state house or state senate level. The state parties of Delaware, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have their own quirky hierarchical structures. The parties in Delaware operate on a hybrid county and region structure to fully meet the needs of the state's small number of counties with dense populations in certain areas. The Democratic party of Delaware has organizations for City of Wilmington, New Castle County, Kent County, and Sussex County while the Republican party in the state uses organizations in each of the state's three counties as well as a regional organization it created for the Newark region. In Massachusetts both parties skip any intermediary organizations and organize on the town, city, or ward level below the state organization and similarly the parties in Rhode Island operate city and town organizations without organizations on a county or regional level.

There are only three states in which the bylaws and constitutions of the Democratic and Republican parties differ in the required hierarchical structures outlined

in these party documents. In Colorado the Democratic Party uses the congressional district organization model while the Republican Party uses the county organization model. The same thing is seen in Louisiana where the Democrats have a congressional district party organization above the parish (county) level, whereas the Republicans go directly to the parish level. Conversely, it is the Republican Party in South Carolina that uses the congressional district model while the Democrats utilize the county organizational structure. The following figures display visually the type of hierarchical structure chosen by state parties in each state.

Party Hierarchical Organization By State



Congressional District	County	State House/Senate	Other Local Units
Alabama	Arizona	Alaska	Delaware
Arkansas	California	North Dakota	Massachusetts
Colorado (Dem)	Colorado (Rep)		Rhode Island
Connecticut	Florida		
Georgia	Hawaii		
Indiana	Idaho		
Iowa	Illinois		
Kansas	Louisiana (Rep)		
Kentucky	Maryland		
Louisiana (Dem)	Mississippi		
Maine	Montana		
Michigan	Nevada		
Minnesota	New Hampshire		
Missouri	New Jersey		
Nebraska	New Mexico		
North Carolina	New York		
Oklahoma	Ohio		
Oregon	Pennsylvania		
South Carolina (Rep)	South Carolina (Dem)		
Virginia	South Dakota		
West Virginia	Tennessee		
Wisconsin	Texas		
	Utah		
	Vermont		
	Washington (Dem)		
	Wyoming		

Potential Causes

Now that it has been determined how state parties organize themselves below the state level, it is necessary to explore the potential causes that might lead a state party to choose one model of organization over another. This section will cover potential causes such as state size in terms of both population and geography, the number of congressional districts, the number of counties, the urbanization and population density of the state, intra-party homogeneity of the party within the state, and potential geographic regional factors.

Population

The overall population of a state could potentially impact the hierarchical structure chosen by state parties. States with larger populations will have more congressional districts and therefore parties may choose to utilize a congressional district model to decentralize party activity rather than a county model. However, according to the 2010 US Census population numbers, the seven most populous states—and the only seven states in the nation with more than fifteen house districts—all utilize the county model of party organization. When examining the rankings of states by population when we look at roughly the middle third of the states in the rankings—states ranging from four to eight US House districts—it is revealed that 25 of the 36 state parties in these states utilize the congressional district model. This means that 25 of the 41 state parties (roughly 61%) that employ the congressional district model are located in the middle third of states in the population rankings. The following table displays the rankings of states by population according to the 2010 census and their corresponding hierarchical organizational structure:

Rank	State	2010 Census Population	Congressional Districts	Organizational Structure
1	California	37,253,956	53	County
2	Texas	25,145,561	36	County
3	New York	19,378,102	27	County
4	Florida	18,801,310	27	County
5	Illinois	12,830,632	18	County
6	Pennsylvania	12,702,379	18	County
7	Ohio	11,536,504	16	County
8	Michigan	9,883,640	14	Congressional District
9	Georgia	9,687,653	14	Congressional District
10	North Carolina	9,535,483	13	Congressional District
11	New Jersey	8,791,894	12	County
12	Virginia	8,001,024	11	Congressional District
13	Washington	6,724,540	10	County (Dem)
14	Massachusetts	6,547,629	9	Town/Ward/City
15	Indiana	6,483,802	9	Congressional District
16	Arizona	6,392,017	9	County
17	Tennessee	6,346,105	9	County
18	Missouri	5,988,927	8	Congressional District
19	Maryland	5,773,552	8	County
20	Wisconsin	5,686,986	8	Congressional District
21	Minnesota	5,303,925	8	Congressional District
22	Colorado	5,029,196	7	Congressional Dist (Dem), County (Rep)
23	Alabama	4,779,736	7	Congressional District
24	South Carolina	4,625,364	7	County (Dem), Congressional Dist (Rep)
25	Louisiana	4,533,372	6	Congressional Dist (Dem), County (Rep)
26	Kentucky	4,339,367	6	Congressional District
27	Oregon	3,831,074	5	Congressional District
28	Oklahoma	3,751,351	5	Congressional District
29	Connecticut	3,574,097	5	Congressional District
30	Iowa	3,046,355	4	Congressional District
31	Mississippi	2,967,297	4	County
32	Arkansas	2,915,918	4	Congressional District
33	Kansas	2,853,118	4	Congressional District
34	Utah	2,763,885	4	County
35	Nevada	2,700,551	4	County
36	New Mexico	2,059,179	3	County
37	West Virginia	1,852,994	3	Congressional District
38	Nebraska	1,826,341	3	Congressional District
39	Idaho	1,567,582	2	County
40	Hawaii	1,360,301	2	County
41	Maine	1,328,361	2	Congressional District
42	New Hampshire	1,316,470	2	County
43	Rhode Island	1,052,567	2	City/town
44	Montana	989,415	1	County
45	Delaware	897,934	1	County/Region/City hybrid
46	South Dakota	814,180	1	County
47	Alaska	710,231	1	Legislative District
48	North Dakota	672,591	1	Legislative District
49	Vermont	625,741	1	County
50	Wyoming	563,626	1	County

Source: 2010 Census

Geographic Size

If the larger states in terms of population choose to utilize one model of organization more frequently there may also be a trend based on a state's geographic size. Using the census data figures on the area in square miles of each state and then rank ordering the states from largest to smallest we can conduct a cursory assessment of any potential relationship between geographic size of a state and the hierarchical structures the political parties in that state choose to use. Of the top 10 states when ranked by total area, 15 of the 20 state parties in these states utilize the county model of organization—a rate higher than the average across the country but roughly the same as the top 10 largest states in population (only two states are in the top 10 in both categories). In looking at the bottom 10 in the rankings of geographic size we find that 11 of the 20 parties use the county model which is consistent with the 12 out of 20 state parties that use the county model in the bottom 10 in the population rankings—admittedly 5 states are in the bottom 10 in both the population and geographic size rankings and so we should expect this to remain fairly consistent.

Rank	State	Area (sq miles)	Organizational Structure
1	Alaska	663,267.26	Legislative District
2	Texas	268,580.82	County
3	California	163,695.57	County
4	Montana	147,042.40	County
5	New Mexico	121,589.48	County
6	Arizona	113,998.30	County
7	Nevada	110,560.71	County
8	Colorado	104,093.57	Congressional District (Dem), County (Rep)
9	Oregon	98,380.64	Congressional District
10	Wyoming	97,813.56	County
11	Michigan	96,716.11	Congressional District
12	Minnesota	86,938.87	Congressional District
13	Utah	84,898.83	County
14	Idaho	83,570.08	County
15	Kansas	82,276.84	Congressional District
16	Nebraska	77,353.73	Congressional District
17	South Dakota	77,116.49	County
18	Washington	71,299.64	County (Dem)
19	North Dakota	70,699.79	Legislative District
20	Oklahoma	69,898.19	Congressional District
21	Missouri	69,704.31	Congressional District
22	Florida	65,754.59	County
23	Wisconsin	65,497.82	Congressional District
24	Georgia	59,424.77	Congressional District
25	Illinois	57,914.38	County
26	Iowa	56,271.55	Congressional District
27	New York	54,556.00	County
28	North Carolina	53,818.51	Congressional District
29	Arkansas	53,178.62	Congressional District
30	Alabama	52,419.02	Congressional District
31	Louisiana	51,839.70	County
32	Mississippi	48,430.19	County
33	Pennsylvania	46,055.24	County
34	Ohio	44,824.90	County
35	Virginia	42,774.20	Congressional District
36	Tennessee	42,143.27	County
37	Kentucky	40,409.02	Congressional District
38	Indiana	36,417.73	Congressional District
39	Maine	35,384.65	Congressional District
40	South Carolina	32,020.20	County (Dem), Congressional District (Rep)
41	West Virginia	24,229.76	Congressional District
42	Maryland	12,406.68	County
43	Hawaii	10,930.98	County
44	Massachusetts	10,554.57	Town/Ward/City
45	Vermont	9,614.26	County
46	New Hampshire	9,349.94	County
47	New Jersey	8,721.30	County
48	Connecticut	5,543.33	Congressional District
49	Delaware	2,489.27	County/City/Region Hybrid
50	Rhode Island	1,545.05	City/Town

Number of Counties

Perhaps a state party's hierarchical organizational structure isn't impacted by the sheer number of people within a state's boundaries or by the geographic area the state party needs to decentralize to cover. A state's population has a direct link to the number of congressional districts in the state, but the examination of population and geographic area haven't touched on the number of counties within each state. A state party in a state with a large number of counties may feel it to be efficacious to organize on a congressional district level rather than decentralizing directly to the county level—Georgia, for example, is divided into 159 counties but only has 14 congressional districts.

There is a wide range in the number of counties per state; Texas has the largest number of counties with 254 and Delaware has the fewest counties with 3. The median number of counties for a state is 63 (and the average number of counties is roughly the same at 62.6). When rank ordering states by their number of counties we find that of the 41 state parties that organize on the congressional district level, 32 (78%) of these parties are above the median and average number of counties per state. Conversely, 30 of the 48 (63%) state parties that organize on the county level with no congressional district organization are located in the bottom 25 in the ranking of states by number of counties.

Rank	State	Counties	Organizational Structure
1	Texas	254	County
2	Georgia	159	Congressional District
3	Virginia	134	Congressional District
4	Kentucky	120	Congressional District
5	Missouri	114	Congressional District
6	Kansas	105	Congressional District
7	Illinois	102	County
8	North Carolina	100	Congressional District
9	Iowa	99	Congressional District
10	Tennessee	95	County
11	Nebraska	93	Congressional District
12	Indiana	92	Congressional District
13	Ohio	88	County
14	Minnesota	87	Congressional District
15	Michigan	83	Congressional District
16	Mississippi	82	County
17	Oklahoma	77	Congressional District
18	Arkansas	75	Congressional District
19	Wisconsin	72	Congressional District
20	Pennsylvania	67	County
21	Florida	67	County
22	Alabama	67	Congressional District
23	South Dakota	66	County
24	Louisiana	64	Congressional District (Dem), County (Rep)
25	Colorado	64	Congressional District (Dem), County (Rep)
26	New York	62	County
27	California	58	County
28	Montana	56	County
29	West Virginia	55	Congressional District
30	North Dakota	53	Legislative District
31	South Carolina	46	County (Dem), Congressional District (Rep)
32	Idaho	44	County
33	Washington	39	County (Dem)
34	Oregon	36	Congressional District
35	New Mexico	33	County
36	Utah	29	County
37	Maryland	24	County
38	Wyoming	23	County
39	New Jersey	21	County
40	Alaska	18	Legislative District
41	Nevada	17	County
42	Maine	16	Congressional District
43	Arizona	15	County
44	Vermont	14	County
45	Massachusetts	14	Town/Ward/City
46	New Hampshire	10	County
47	Connecticut	8	Congressional District
48	Rhode Island	5	City/Town
49	Hawaii	5	County
50	Delaware	3	County/City/Region Hybrid

source: National Association of Counties

Urban Population

Another characteristic of a state that could impact the organizational model its state political parties utilize relates to the compactness of its population. If a state has a large population but also a large geographic area in which its population is spread out then it stands to reason that state parties in such a state would have different organizational needs than a state party in a state with a large but compact population. Population density is a popular measurement that tries to capture this idea, but when taken across whole states combining dense urban areas and spacious rural areas it can render the measurement meaningless and therefore is best left to smaller units such as cities. Instead of population density I decided to use the census statistics for the percentage of a state's population that lives in urban areas to try and address this potential cause of hierarchical structure model utilized by state parties.

In ranking states in descending order by the percentage of its population that lives in urban areas we find that 8 of the top 10 states use the county organizational model with the other two using a city or town level structure—meaning that none of the states in the top 10 use the congressional district model. Further, 30 of the 48 (63%) state parties using the county model are found in the top half of the urban population rankings while 29 of the 41 (71%) state parties utilizing the congressional district model are found in the bottom half of these rankings.

Rank	State	% pop in urban areas	Organizational Structure
1	New Jersey	94.4	County
2	California	94.4	County
3	Hawaii	91.5	County
4	Nevada	91.5	County
5	Massachusetts	91.4	Town/Ward/City
6	Rhode Island	90.9	City/Town
7	Florida	89.3	County
8	Arizona	88.2	County
9	Utah	88.2	County
10	Illinois	87.8	County
11	Connecticut	87.7	Congressional District
12	New York	87.5	County
13	Maryland	86.1	County
14	Colorado	84.5	Congressional District (Dem), County (Rep)
15	Texas	82.5	County
16	Washington	82.0	County (Dem)
17	Delaware	80.1	County/City/Region hybrid
18	Oregon	78.7	Congressional District
19	Ohio	77.4	County
20	Pennsylvania	77.1	County
21	New Mexico	75.0	County
22	Michigan	74.7	Congressional District
23	Virginia	73.0	Congressional District
24	Louisiana	72.6	Congressional District (Dem), County (Rep)
25	Georgia	71.6	Congressional District
26	Kansas	71.4	Congressional District
27	Minnesota	70.9	Congressional District
28	Indiana	70.8	Congressional District
29	Nebraska	69.8	Congressional District
30	Missouri	69.4	Congressional District
31	Wisconsin	68.3	Congressional District
32	Idaho	66.4	County
33	Alaska	65.6	Legislative District
34	Oklahoma	65.3	Congressional District
35	Wyoming	65.1	County
36	Tennessee	63.6	County
37	Iowa	61.1	Congressional District
38	South Carolina	60.5	County (Dem), Congressional District (Rep)
39	North Carolina	60.2	Congressional District
40	New Hampshire	59.3	County
41	North Dakota	55.9	Legislative District
42	Kentucky	55.8	Congressional District
43	Alabama	55.4	Congressional District
44	Montana	54.1	County
45	Arkansas	52.5	Congressional District
46	South Dakota	51.9	County
47	Mississippi	48.8	County
48	West Virginia	46.1	Congressional District
49	Maine	40.2	Congressional District
50	Vermont	38.2	County

source: US Census Bureau

Intra-party Homogeneity

Given that each state has its own political characteristics and political and electoral characteristics and needs that the political parties in that state aim to meet, state political parties differ—sometimes greatly—from their counterparts in other states and on the national level. However, parties can also vary greatly within states as well. The intra-party homogeneity of a particular political party may influence its use of one hierarchical structure over another as a very homogenous state party may have very different organizational needs than a less homogenous state party. A less homogenous state party likely has various regional, geographic, demographic and other organizational needs which would presumably lead a less homogenous state party to utilize a more local organizational structure.

Starting with their 1984 article *The Polarization of American Politics* Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal have used a scaling method known as NOMINATE (Nominal Three-Step Estimation) to analyze choice and preferential data of members of congress. Through the years they have refined and adapted their methods to allow for comparisons of the ideological scores of members of congress from different time periods. Today, DW-NOMINATE (dynamic, weighted, NOMINATE) scores for members of the US Congress “are widely used measures of legislators’ ideological locations over time” (Poole et al, 2008, 2). Using the DW-NOMINATE scores for each member of the US House and Senate from the 111th Congress I was able to calculate the standard deviation for the DW-NOMINATE scores for the congressional delegation from each party from each state. A lower standard deviation would indicate party caucus

members from the particular state would be clumped more closely together and therefore an indication of greater intra-party homogeneity within the state party.

When comparing the standard deviation of the DW-NOMINATE scores for each state's congressional delegation by party as a measure of intra-party homogeneity, there doesn't appear to be any significant correlation between intra-party homogeneity and the model of hierarchical organizational structure utilized by that state party. This may indicate that intra-party homogeneity does not impact a state party's organizational structure model. However, it may also merely be an indication that the standard deviation of congressional DW-NOMINATE scores is an insufficient measure of intra-party homogeneity as the number of elected members of the House and Senate is relatively. For the standard deviation scores by state for Democrats seven states were unable to produce scores as there were zero or one Democrat members of Congress in that state. For Republicans fifteen states were unable to yield scores for this reason.

With such a large number of state parties excluded from analysis because of insufficient members of Congress, it may prevent the analysis from yielding any significant correlations. Perhaps if a DW-NOMINATE type score were available for state legislatures and governors as well as members of congress we would be able to have a larger sampling of elected officials with which to calculate this measure of intra-party homogeneity. As it stands, using DW-NOMINATE scores and the standard deviation of these for each party in each state produces no indication that intra-party homogeneity leads a state party to favor one model of organizational structure over another.

Rank	State	Democrat Std Deviation	Organizational Structure
1	Louisiana	0.000707107	Congressional District
2	North Dakota	0.021	Legislative District
3	Nevada	0.02532456	County
4	South Dakota	0.033234019	County
5	Montana	0.03959798	County
6	New Hampshire	0.040869712	County
7	Rhode Island	0.049685679	City/Town
8	Arkansas	0.051036262	Congressional District
9	Iowa	0.065895751	Congressional District
10	Connecticut	0.072411785	Congressional District
11	Massachusetts	0.073723223	Town/City/Ward
12	Oregon	0.078874584	Congressional District
13	Vermont	0.089802561	County
14	Kentucky	0.089802561	Congressional District
15	Texas	0.090438787	County
16	Hawaii	0.096384646	County
17	Colorado	0.103745568	Congressional District
18	Pennsylvania	0.107112669	County
19	Tennessee	0.112859647	County
20	California	0.12678248	County
21	Virginia	0.126844956	Congressional District
22	New York	0.127378369	County
23	Florida	0.12762525	County
24	Michigan	0.130640686	Congressional District
25	Wisconsin	0.132686885	Congressional District
26	New Mexico	0.132940588	County
27	Washington	0.133241993	County
28	New Jersey	0.139657745	County
29	Illinois	0.142715135	County
30	North Carolina	0.143954082	Congressional District
31	Ohio	0.145256576	County
32	Maryland	0.152589409	County
33	South Carolina	0.153442172	County
34	Maine	0.154149278	Congressional District
35	Alabama	0.159315201	Congressional District
36	Indiana	0.166495345	Congressional District
37	Missouri	0.16853427	Congressional District
38	Delaware	0.171822583	County/City/Region Hybrid
39	Minnesota	0.179541082	Congressional District
40	Georgia	0.197866369	Congressional District
41	West Virginia	0.211291663	Congressional District
42	Arizona	0.240011458	County
43	Mississippi	0.286087982	County
44	Alaska	*	Legislative District
45	Kansas	*	County
46	Wyoming	*	Congressional District
47	Idaho	*	Congressional District
48	Nebraska	*	Congressional District
49	Oklahoma	*	County
50	Utah	*	County

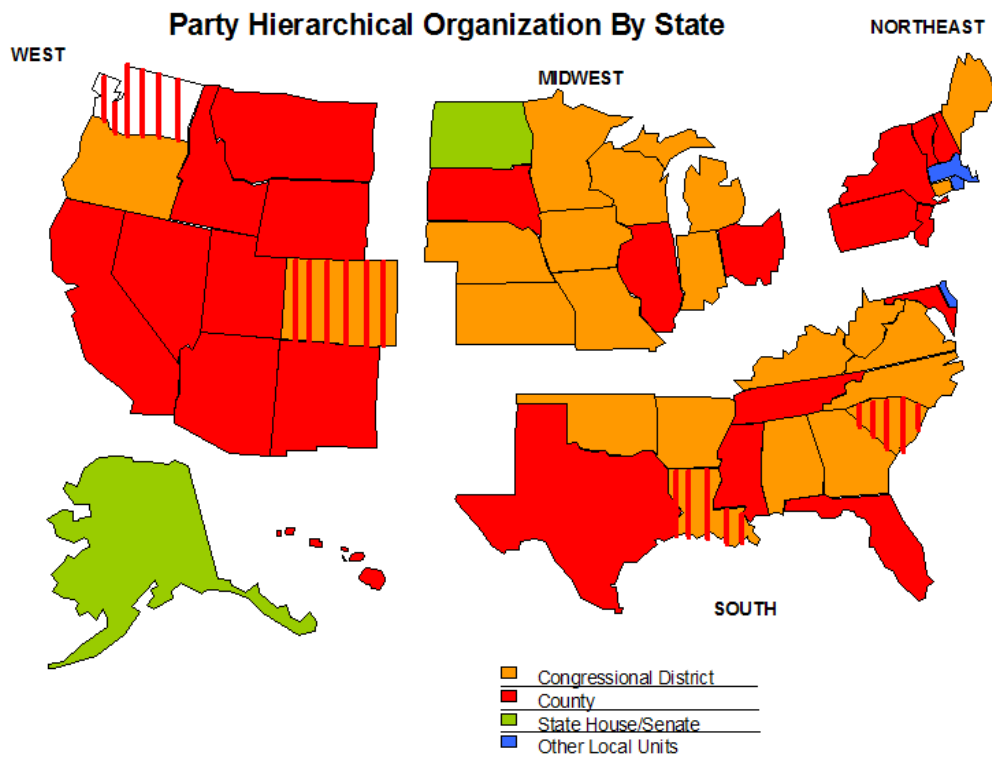
* indicates 0 or 1 members of Congress from party

Rank	State	Republican Std Deviation	Organizational Structure
1	Maine	0.016263456	Congressional District
2	Alaska	0.026162951	Legislative District
3	Kansas	0.040203234	Congressional District
4	Nevada	0.050204581	County
5	Alabama	0.054612052	Congressional District
6	Michigan	0.077789092	Congressional District
7	Kentucky	0.077942073	Congressional District
8	Wyoming	0.082615576	County
9	Idaho	0.08580404	County
10	Mississippi	0.095028066	County
11	Nebraska	0.096410148	Congressional District
12	Virginia	0.102823635	Congressional District
13	Florida	0.111064601	County
14	New York	0.111574713	County
15	South Carolina	0.112119579	Congressional District
16	Tennessee	0.112565388	County
17	Minnesota	0.113465119	Congressional District
18	Illinois	0.113900332	County
19	North Carolina	0.120110643	Congressional District
20	Colorado	0.120208153	County
21	California	0.121764008	County
22	Texas	0.124665379	County
23	Missouri	0.128320562	Congressional District
24	Louisiana	0.146787667	County
25	Washington	0.14762904	
26	Wisconsin	0.148108069	Congressional District
27	Ohio	0.149136682	County
28	Pennsylvania	0.150487244	County
29	Oklahoma	0.151888665	Congressional District
30	Utah	0.164884556	County
31	Georgia	0.165003165	Congressional District
32	Indiana	0.188341622	Congressional District
33	Iowa	0.192546964	Congressional District
34	New Jersey	0.218134591	County
35	Arizona	0.231399438	County
36	Arkansas	*	Congressional District
37	Connecticut	*	Congressional District
38	Delaware	*	County/City/Region Hybrid
39	Hawaii	*	County
40	Maryland	*	County
41	Massachusetts	*	Town/City/Ward
42	Montana	*	County
43	New Hampshire	*	County
44	New Mexico	*	County
45	North Dakota	*	Legislative District
46	Oregon	*	Congressional District
47	Rhode Island	*	City/Town
48	South Dakota	*	County
49	Vermont	*	County
50	West Virginia	*	Congressional District

* indicates 0 or 1 members of Congress from party

Regional Influences

Instead of looking at states singularly based on their characteristics, perhaps there is a regional influence in influencing the model utilized by state parties. Using the standard regions used by the US Census we see that there is a pretty heavy distinction between the Western region's heavy use of the county model and the nearby Midwestern region's popularization of the congressional district model. The South region appears to be the most diverse with both the congressional district and county models being used by multiple states each. The region also contains two states in which the Democratic and Republican parties differ in their organizational models—more than any other region. The Northeast region has five states that use the county model, two that use the congressional district model, and two states that use neither of those models but instead use some other more local units for its decentralization from the state party.



Electoral Success

I have heretofore evaluated some potential causal indicators that might represent particular circumstances in which maintaining an intermediary organization at the congressional district level might make more sense, or less sense, for a given state party organization. The central question boils down to this: why do state parties choose to organize and maintain this intermediary organizational structure? The simple response to this question that is consistent with all of the literature and theory surrounding parties is simply that state parties feel that having an intermediary structure will help them achieve greater electoral success given the limited precious resources state parties have at their disposal.

In order to test this idea that an intermediary organization impacts electoral success I performed a two-stage least squares regression using percent of the two party vote received by the Democratic candidate as the dependent variable. The presence of a Democratic and Republican intermediary structure was coded for each party in each state. I controlled for incumbency, the presence of a quality challenger, candidate spending, and demographic information such as median age, percentage of Black and Hispanic voters, percentage of the population in urban areas, and the unemployment rate using data from the 2002, 2004, and 2006 congressional elections. I obtained most of this data from the data set shared with me by Damon Cann that was used in the Basinger, Cann, and Ensley (2012) paper “Voter Response to Congressional Campaigns: New Techniques for Analyzing Aggregate Electoral Behavior”. At large congressional district states were dropped from the calculations because, while it can be argued that the state party organization is the organization that oversees the entire congressional district, the absence of an intermediary congressional district organization tasked with specific care of the

district itself and not the state as a whole makes these states too difficult to compare to other multi-district states that either do or do not have an intermediary organization.

The results showed no statistically significant impact of an intermediary congressional district organizational structure on a state party's percentage of the two-party vote. If the presence of an intermediary congressional district organization does not have a direct impact on the electoral outcomes for the state party it is necessary to explore why state parties still utilize this congressional district organizational model.

Counteractive Effects

One potential explanation is that an intermediary congressional district organization *does* have an impact on electoral success, but that this impact is not manifest in the statistical examination because of the counteractive effects of the vast majority of state parties utilizing the same organizational model as the opposing party within the same state. Therefore it is possible that an intermediary congressional district organization does indeed facilitate greater electoral outcomes for these state parties but that both parties enjoy these benefits and thus it isn't shown in the two-party vote because any electoral benefit enjoyed from the presence of such an organization would be cancelled out by the benefit also being applied to the opposition party.

Indirect Effects

Another possible explanation is that while the intermediary organization doesn't have a *direct* impact on the electoral outcomes between the two parties, the presence of an intermediary congressional district organization could offer a state party numerous indirect benefits that do not directly impact electoral success but work to otherwise make things easier for the state party itself. Coleman (1996) argues that political parties can

make organizational changes that improve a party's strength in the eyes of scholars but "the final point is that in a democratic polity the status of political parties ultimately boils down to the public" ("Resurgent or Just Busy? Party Organizations in Contemporary America," 1996, p.382). It is possible that if benefits of congressional district level party organizations do provide benefits, that these benefits do not reach voters and therefore don't directly impact electoral outcomes. If it is true that the presence of an intermediary organization has no direct impact on voters and electoral success, perhaps state parties still feel benefits from an alleviated burden and a lessened workload thanks to an intermediary organization providing further organization, logistical support, and division of the party's responsibilities and workload. The added structure within the party framework also provides an additional set of eyes and ears that could help to monitor political sentiments, recognize and recruit talented volunteers and future party candidates, develop relationships with donors, and other beneficial activities. Such indirect benefits would explain why parties go to the effort to maintain this intermediate organization when they provide no direct benefit in electoral competitiveness.

Party Farm Team

In sports a farm team or farm system is a team or organization that is used to develop the talent and to provide experience and training for the young players before they are ready for the "big leagues" or the main team or organization. This structure is often used as a metaphor in business and other organizations that use a similar model to develop young talent into future leaders. Applying this metaphor to political candidates is not new. Herrnson (1994) argues that political parties are increasingly treating congressional staff positions as a farm system for developing individuals for their future

candidate pools. Similarly, Farmer (2002) discusses the impacts of term limits in state legislatures on parties' farming and developing candidates for the increased number of open seats caused by term limits. Perhaps the statistically electorally unnecessary intermediate congressional organization works in the same manner acting as a farm team for the state party as a whole to provide leadership experience and training with party responsibilities for the party's future leaders and candidates for elected office. This intermediary organization provides another level within the party framework for future leaders and candidates to gain experience and maintain involvement within the party and is therefore seen as beneficial to the state party despite its lack of direct electoral impact.

This element of an intermediate congressional district organization ties back into Roscoe and Jenkins' "scrappy fighter hypothesis" wherein disadvantaged parties scrap and claw their way to relevance. The modern Utah Democratic Party perfectly fits the mold of this scrappy fighter and if there were ever a case for a party making changes to give it any greater potential for electoral success it would be the Utah Democratic Party. I argue that for these scrappy fighter state parties, a change to a congressional district organizational model would be of great worth if for no other reason than it increases the scope of the party farm team for grooming party leaders and party candidates. These scrappy fighters need all of the help they can get and this increased opportunity for greater candidate recruitment and experience for party leadership should not be overlooked.

Elite Interviews

In an effort to gain more qualitative information to provide greater understanding to this study of party hierarchical organization below the state level as well as potentially

gain any insight into any chicken-and-egg problems I conducted a survey of local party elites. To begin this process I obtained the email information for all county and congressional district chairs and vice chairs that state parties would provide. Some state parties would only provide telephone and mailing addresses for their local party leaders choosing to keep their email addresses private for internal party communications only. Other parties shared the email addresses of their county committees but not the email addresses of their congressional district committees. Neither party in Louisiana provided information for their parish party chairs while Democrats and Republicans alike in Massachusetts didn't share local town or ward chair email information. The Washington Republican party was, again, absent in providing any information about party officials and was therefore not included in the sample.

After having obtained all email contact information for as many local party chairs as possible it was assembled into a list by party and by state. To minimize bias in selecting a narrow subset of this entire list of contacts, I used a random number generator to select elites for my sample in each state. This process of random selection resulted in a list of 188 email address for local party elites—two from each party from each state that provided email information for its local party leaders. Using this list of 188 I compiled a short email that with the intention of gaining substantive qualitative information—while being short enough that it didn't discourage participation—and also with the aim of identifying local party elites that would be willing to participate in a more lengthy interview regarding party hierarchical structure models and their impacts. Eight of the emails immediately were returned by the mail system as undeliverable—a circumstance I anticipated knowing full well from first hand experience in interning with a state party

that, while parties may have been helpful in providing me this contact information, the parties own records and lists are not always kept up to date and accurate. The eight undeliverable emails left me with a potential pool of 180 local party elites which were asked the following questions:

1) What is the party structure in your state? (is there a Congressional District level committee/party organization or does it break down from state to county?) Also, do you know why your state party chose the structure it chose rather than a different structure?

2) What is the division of work distribution and responsibility between the State, Congressional District, and County/local organizations?

3) In your first hand experience as a local party leader, what benefits did you see as a result of your particular party structure and division of responsibility?

Any disadvantages? (ie competing with another level of the party structure for volunteers, fundraising, etc?)

Having already discussed several potential causes that could have induced a party to organize with one structure or another, I asked local party elites whether they knew why their state party chose the structure that it did. One chair of a congressional district organization responded “I do not know the reason nor history for this structure” and a county chair from a different state echoed that sentiment in responding “I don't know why the state party originally chose the structure”. In total, 8 of the 11 responses I received from local party leaders answered in some variation of “I don't know” why their state party utilizes the organizational model that it does—the remaining three respondents didn't answer that portion of the question at all.

Responses to the remaining questions posed to these local party elites appear to support the indirect benefits explanation of why parties choose to have an intermediary organization to divide up the overall party workload and organizational burden. Numerous respondents mentioned that a congressional district organization focused more on organizational and bureaucratic functions allowing the county level parties to focus more on grassroots movements, voter outreach, and GOTV efforts. Many respondents went to great lengths to indicate that while the congressional district and county organizations often work closely together, they each have their own responsibilities and functions which would support the division of the workload component previously discussed as an indirect benefit of an intermediary organization for a state party.

A party leader from Georgia provided a response that seems to support this “indirect benefits” explanation by dividing up the workload, but also a response that supports the explanation concerning identifying and developing future party candidates and leaders: “County parties are the ‘grass roots’ that get [our party’s] voters involved and, by recruiting and encouraging candidates for local (county and municipal) offices, and together with the Congressional District committees develop the ‘farm team’ for higher offices (state legislature, state-wide offices, U.S. House and Senate).” While previous research by other scholars has clearly shown that local party elites are not always the most informed on issues, and while the sample size and response rate are not of the highest quality, these responses from local party elites at least seem to show that in their real life, first hand experiences within party structures there are at least some non-electorally based indirect benefits of intermediary congressional district organizations.

Conclusion

Despite the increasing influence of Super PACs and other independent organizations the health and vibrancy of our political and electoral system is still greatly affected by the competitiveness and efficiency of the major parties in our two-party system. Therefore the question of whether the hierarchical organizational structures of state political parties influence electoral outcomes is an important topic of study. After summarizing the various ways in which state parties across the country organize themselves hierarchically, I explored several factors that might lead a state party to have an intermediary congressional district organization including state size, population, number of counties, level of urbanization of the population, intraparty homogeneity, and regional trends. The larger a state's geographic size and the larger percentage of its population in urban areas both increase the likelihood that political parties in that state will utilize a county organizational model. State's in the middle third of rankings in both geographic size and population show a strong tendency towards having parties that use the congressional district organizational model. Further, the greater number of counties in a given state the greater the likelihood that the parties in that state will utilize the congressional district model. Intra-party homogeneity calculated using the standard deviation of DW-NOMINATE scores indicated no correlation between organizational structure and a party's intra-party homogeneity.

I then used a two-stage least squares regression to test the impact of the presence of an intermediary congressional district organization on the percentage of the two party vote that the party receives in US House races over three elections. The results showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between organizational structure

model utilized by a state party and that party's percentage of the vote received in House races.

Possible Directions for Future Study

While the statistical analyses didn't show any statistically significant relationship between the presence of an intermediary organization and the percentage of the two party vote in US House races, future study could investigate whether the presence of such an organization has an impact on other factors such as the number of uncontested seats—both in US House races as well as state legislative races as the presence of an intermediary organization has been hypothesized to improve a party's ability to recruit candidates. Future study could also, after controlling for certain factors such as partisanship, competitiveness, and demographic characteristics, examine whether the presence of an intermediary organization has an impact on voter turnout—following the hypothesis that the division of the party workload with a congressional district organization allows a county party to focus even more of its energy on grassroots voter outreach. Another avenue for future study could use the county versus congressional district models as the independent variable rather than the dependent variable to examine how the other electoral factors relate to the models in that way. Including population disparity between counties within the state would be another factor to examine as a potential factor for parties choosing one model over another. This would be interesting analysis for states like Utah where there are counties of only a couple thousand people and other counties with half a million to a million residents.

This further research may, like my examination of the relationship between an intermediary organization and the percentage of the vote in House races, prove to show

nothing statistically significant, but the impact—or irrelevance—of party organizational structures on our electoral system is a relevant and potentially meaningful subject with several possibilities in which it can be examined further.

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Party Document Sources

State	
Alabama	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://aldemocrats.org/images/uploads/SDEC_Bylaws.pdf
Rep	http://algop.org/sites/default/files/Bylaws%208.13.11.pdf
Alaska	State House Districts
Dem	http://www.alaskademocrats.org/images/documents/adpplan2010.pdf
Rep	http://alaskarepublicans.com/about-the-arp/party-rules/
Arizona	County
Dem	http://azdem.org/assets/ADP_Bylaws_10.25.11.pdf
Rep	http://www.azgop.org/azgop-leadership/county-leadership
Arkansas	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://arkdems.integritystl.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2010-2012-Rules-of-the-Party.pdf
Rep	http://www.arkansasgop.org/?a=Files.Serve&File_id=38e6644b-ab94-4492-bb13-b61bb34a0842
California	County
Dem	http://www.cadem.org/admin/miscdocs/files/CDP-BY-LAWS.pdf
Rep	http://www.cagop.org/userfiles/file/Standing%20Rules%20and%20Bylaws%2003-20-2011.pdf
Colorado	Congressional District-->County (Dem), County (Rep)
Dem	http://coloradodems.org/docs/CDPRules.PDF
Rep	Email
Connecticut	Congressional Dist, State Senate
Dem	email
Rep	https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.2&thid=134c449b89dbba4f&mt=application/msword&url=
Delaware	City of Wilmington, New Castle County, Kent County, sussex county
Dem	http://www.deldems.org/about-us/local-party-structure/
Rep	http://www.delawaregop.com/regional.aspx
Florida	County
Dem	http://www.fladems.com/pages/county-organizations
Rep	http://rpof.org/contact-us/find-your-local-rec/
Georgia	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://www.georgiademocrat.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/dpg_operations+organization.pdf
Rep	http://www.gagop.org/local/
Hawaii	County
Dem	http://www.hawaiidemocrats.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115:hawaii-democratic-party-co
Rep	http://www.gophawaii.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/HRP-Rules-2011.pdf
Idaho	County
Dem	http://idahodems.org/about/structure-of-the-idaho-democratic-party/
Rep	http://idgop.org/idgop-rules-4/
Illinois	County
Dem	http://www.ildems.com/Resources.htm
Rep	http://www.weareillinois.org/learn/counties.aspx
Indiana	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://indems.3cdn.net/923e40d47e778c6f35_1ym6i6tin.pdf
Rep	http://www.indgop.org/ContentFiles/80/2011-2012%20State%20Committee%20Rules.pdf
Iowa	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://iowademocrats.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/2010constitution.pdf
Rep	http://iowagop.org/constitution.php

Kansas	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://www.ksdp.org/sites/default/files/KDPBylaws09.pdf
Rep	http://ksgop.org/kansas-republican-party-constitution-2/
Kentucky	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://kydemocrat.com/bylaws.pdf
Rep	http://rpk.org/rpk-rules/
Louisiana	Congressional District-->Parish (Dem), County (Rep)
Dem	http://www.lademo.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/463186
Rep	http://lagop.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/RSCC-bylaws-5-21-111.pdf
Maine	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://www.mainedems.org/assets/files/Rules%20-%207.25.11.pdf
Rep	http://www.mainegop.com/about-2/rules-and-by-laws/
Maryland	County
Dem	http://www.mddems.org/your-party/party-by-laws
Rep	http://www.mdgop.org/local-gop/
Mass	Town/Ward/City
Dem	http://www.massdems.org/your-party/governance/charter/
Rep	http://www.massgop.com/extras/MRSC%20Bylaws%20111708%20_2_.pdf
Michigan	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://www.michigandems.com/page/local-parties.html
Rep	http://www.migop.org/index.php/about/principles/
Minnesota	Congressional District-->local unit
Dem	http://dfi.org/sites/dfi.org/files/Minnesota%20DFL%20Party%20Constitution.pdf
Rep	http://www.mngop.com/pdfs/constitution.pdf
Mississippi	County
Dem	http://www.mississippiDemocrats.org/
Rep	http://msgop.org/
Missouri	Congressional District-->County
Dem	http://missouridems.org/constitution
Rep	http://www.mogop.org/resources/mo-gop/
Montana	County
Dem	http://www.montanademocrats.org/county_committees
Rep	http://www.mtgop.org/rules.aspx
Nebraska	Congressional District-->County
Dem	https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B9SnVd9DaAPFMTNIOU3NWItYzNiY
Rep	http://negop.org/about/constitution/
Nevada	County
Dem	http://nvdems.3cdn.net/30ef8e4d06b9341612_67m6b98x2.pdf
Rep	http://www.nevadagop.org/about-the-gop/by-laws/
New Hampshire	County
Dem	http://www.nhdp.org/free_details.asp?id=71
Rep	http://www.nhgop.org/pages/detail/33
New Jersey	County
Dem	http://njdems.org/index.php/party/
Rep	http://www.njgop.org/about
New Mexico	County
Dem	http://www.nmdemocrats.org/party/rules
Rep	http://gopnm.com/uploads/FileLinks/a693d714db594c2a95c61140fe1bfbdb/RPNM%20Rules.pdf
New York	County
Dem	http://www.nydems.org/local

Rep <http://www.nygop.org/page/our-republican-leadership-team>

North Carolina Congressional District-->County

Dem http://ncdems.3cdn.net/478a1e2aef2c165d30_ohm6i26tg.pdf

Rep <http://03481cf.netsolhost.com/WordPress/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2011-NCGOP-Plan-of-Organization.pdf>

North Dakota Legislative District

Dem http://www.demnp1.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={267E1C81-28FE-4574-B9E2-065A875E7421}

Rep <http://www.northdakotagop.org/about/district-chairs/>

Ohio County

Dem <http://ohiodems.org/about/bylaws/>

Rep <http://www.ohiogop.org/index.php/local/>

Oklahoma Congressional District-->County

Dem <http://www.okdemocrats.org/Websites/okdemocrats/Images/ODP%20Constitution%20and%20By-Laws%20-%20>

Rep <http://www.okgop.com/pdfs/ORP%20RULES%202010.PDF>

Oregon Congressional District-->County

Dem <http://www.dpo.org/party>

Rep http://www.oregonrepublicanparty.org/sites/default/files/ORP_Updated_Bylaws-Adopted_May_21_2011.pdf

Pennsylvania County

Dem <http://www.padems.com/about/bylaws>

Rep <http://www.pagop.org/about/>

Rhode Island City/town

Dem <http://www.ridemocrats.org/about-the-party/party-by-laws.html>

Rep Email

South Carolina County (Dem), Congressional Dist→County (Rep)

Dem <http://www.scdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/PartyRules.pdf>

Rep <http://www.scgop.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/SCGOP-Rules.pdf>

South Dakota County

Dem <http://www.sddp.org/what-we-stand-for/>

Rep http://southdakotagop.com/pdf/SDGOP_BYLAWS.PDF

Tennessee County

Dem <http://www.tndp.org/page/county-party>

Rep <http://www.tngop.org/county.html>

Texas County

Dem <http://www.txdemocrats.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/TDPRules-2010-2012.pdf>

Rep <http://www.texasgop.org/party-structure>

Utah County

Dem <http://www.utahdemocrats.org/documents/usdcbylawsconst.pdf>

Rep <http://www.utgop.org/pdf/Utah%20Republican%20Party%20Constitution.pdf>

Vermont County

Dem <http://www.vtdemocrats.org/our-party/bylaws>

Rep <http://vtgop.org/about-2/>

Virginia Congressional District-->County

Dem <http://www.vademocrats.org/sites/va-dems-v2.vanwebhost.com/files/DPV%20Party%20Plan%202010.pdf>

Rep <http://www.rpv.org/sites/default/files/Party%20Plan%20Amended%20November%202010%20without%20notes.p>

Washington Leg dist/County

Dem <http://www.wa-democrats.org/content/party-structure>

Rep N/A

West Virginia Congressional District-->County

Dem <http://wvdemocrats.com/documents/DemPartyRulesasamended12-8-07.pdf>

Rep <http://wvgop.org/about/wvgop-by-laws/>

Wisconsin Congressional District-->County

Dem http://www.wisdems.org/about/county_parties
Rep <http://www.wisgop.org/constitution-republican-party-wisconsin>
Wyoming County
Dem <http://www.wyomingdemocrats.com/ht/d/Committees/committeeLevel/3/pid/273348>
Rep <http://actnow.gop.com/states/WY/pdf/101617%20BYLAWS.PDF>
