# Party Organizations' Electioneering Arms Race

JOHN H. ALDRICH and JEFFREY D. GRYNAVISKI

## Abstract

Party organizations are the electioneering arms of political parties. In the United States, the Democratic and Republican organizations are constantly changing as they try to one-up each other in a political arms race set against an ever-evolving institutional and technological context. In this essay, we discuss the history of political parties over the past century to illustrate how changes to party organizations set the groundwork for new, cutting-edge contributions to political science with an eye toward teaching young researchers where we think the next big thing might come from. We go on to discuss more recent changes to the environment in which today's party organizations operate and speculate about the kinds of questions that young researchers may want to consider asking.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to identify potentially fruitful avenues for future research on the electioneering arms of American political parties, or what political scientists would call party organizations. Party organizations are intermediary institutions between ordinary American citizens, whose political participation often extends no further than their neighborhood polling station every other November, and elected officials. These organizations include both those individuals holding official party offices (e.g., the chairmen of the parties' national committees), the actors who sometimes call the shots from behind the scenes (e.g., campaign consultants), and ordinary citizens who advance their party's electoral interests beyond the simple act of voting for ideological reasons or material rewards (e.g., amateur activists who register voters on college campuses).

We care about political parties as organizations because, in a meaningful sense, they are what make democracy work. Elections require that someone

take responsibility for fielding candidates, advertising them and their agendas, and getting out the vote. Party organizations, in their electioneering role, may perform each of these functions. As political scientists, we are concerned with whether parties do, at particular places and times, perform these functions, and about how they do so, in the sense that, for example, it arguably makes a great deal of difference for democratic governance whether parties slate "the best person for the job," only support candidates who hold sufficiently compatible policy stances, or back the candidate who happened to cut the biggest check. We are also concerned with whether parties are successful at these and in facilitating representative government.

Our task in this essay is to advise future researchers about how to address questions like these. We think that the natural starting point for such an endeavor is to recognize that party organizations are constantly evolving. The changes that we observe over time are due to several causes, the most important of which is, arguably, the arms race inherent in the competition between parties, as each strives to figure out ways to outperform their opponent. These changes are exacerbated by:

- changes in the rules of the game, often in the name of reform, often done by partisan politicians
- environmental forces, largely outside politicians' influence, such as the emergence of a middle class who finds the promise of material rewards from party officials distasteful
- technological changes (e.g., e-campaigning), a special case of environmental factors.

We believe that it is important for future researchers to recognize that parties are mutable, because each change creates a new gap in the literature that may prove to be worthy of serious attention.

Our approach in this essay is to tell the intellectual history of the study of party organization (and make our projections of its intellectual future) in such a way as to emphasize the importance of historical developments that created space for scholars to make impactful new contributions. We hope that this approach will give young researchers advice that will stand the test of time and do them more good than trying to predict the next fad or gimmick. That said, we think it is important to note that [virtually] all of the work that we present (i) begins from the premise that members of party organizations must be understood as being motivated, to a considerable extent, by the desire to win office, either for themselves or someone else and (ii) party organizations are the creations of politicians and their supporters.

## FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

Our premise is that party organizations are constantly remaking themselves in response to changes in the environment in which they operate. Party organizations at any given moment in American history may be characterized by three main attributes: the principle actors and their places in the organization; the functions the party and hence its organization performs; and the incentives that shape the choices made by its members and contribute to its success.

Serious scholarly attention to party organizations emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At the time, the key actors in the Democratic and Republican organizations were state and local party bosses, whose attention and loyalties were parochial, even if that was to be at the expense of national-level elected politicians, especially in the two Houses of Congress. Party organizations were virtually nonexistent at the national level and their national committees' principle function was to put together presidential nominating conventions every 4 years. Challenges to these actors and their environment set the stage for a second round of reforms in the mid- to late twentieth century that created the contemporary candidate-centered party and then to the polarized parties we observe in Congress and elsewhere.

We begin with foundational research dating back to the past decades of the nineteenth century for two reasons. First, they identified a set of questions that proved to be of enduring consequence to political science, especially with respect to the role that party organizations may play in the United States' system of representative governance. Second, the parties that the scholars observed provided what might usefully be thought of as a benchmark that was used by subsequent generations of researchers to assess whether there was something new or different or that otherwise demanded additional study.

Concerns about the ability of local, state, and perhaps especially the national government to respond to rapid industrialization and urbanization sparked the first scholarship on party organizations in the United States. Seminal research by scholars such as Woodrow Wilson, Henry Jones Ford, and Moisei Ostrogorski (1910) introduced a number of questions that continue to frame research on the subject. They asked questions such as: In what ways do party organizations motivate their members? How do party organizations mobilize the electorate? Do party organizations effectively aggregate and give structure to public opinion? Can party organizations break down the formal separation of powers to obtain something like the cohesive, ideologically unified, and "responsible" parties they observed in countries such as Great Britain? Do party organizations help Americans

hold elected officials accountable for government performance? In short, they asked, what roles do party organizations play, and what roles can they play, to make representative democracy function most effectively in the United States?

The answer arrived at in early work was unequivocal: in "that political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties." (Schattschneider, 1942, p. 1). Although they recognized the importance of parties, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Goodnow, 2003), early political scientists viewed American party organizations as being in need of serious reform. Future president of the American Political Science Association (and of the United States) Woodrow Wilson (2002) led the charge, arguing that the country needed to centralize power in the majority party in the hands of the chief executive. His impetus was the observation that the American system of "congressional government" granted committee chairmen in the Senate and the House of Representatives a great deal of power in the policy-making process. This was problematic because these individuals represented only one state or congressional district and would be reelected only by those constituents, with the consequence that policy would reflect the interests of only the communities that these individuals represented rather than the country as a whole. At the time, the possible sway of parochial interests was especially damning because of the important role often played by local and state party organization bosses in the recruitment and election of candidates to Congress. Consequently, the American public had little recourse if its voice was not heard as a nation in the nation's capital.

These critiques of party organizations were understandable given the times. At this point in American history, a relatively small number of politicians at the state and local levels held the most important resources by virtue of being the boss of their party organizations. These actors largely controlled elections from the nomination process, such as through closed caucuses, to the general election ballots, even including the printing the ballot itself with votes already marked for their party's handpicked nominees. Because localities were responsible for the overwhelming share of spending by government at all levels, local party leaders were able to develop extensive patronage networks, offering public or private sectors jobs and issuing government contracts in exchange for tithing of one's time and money back to the party for electioneering purposes. The archetypal form of big city organization was a political machine that possessed a pyramidal structure, with large numbers of precinct captains serving as its base, a smaller number of ward leaders, and a powerful boss at the top pulling the strings. Operations by party organizations at the national level were virtually nonexistent at this point in American history. Skowronek (1982) describes national politics as a combination of state and local parties

and the court system, a form that was to transform as the twentieth century opened.

Early studies of party organizations disagreed about how to rectify the situation in ways that we think should pique the interest of readers looking for an avenue of future research. One major view was the call for what later became known as the "responsible party system," the idea being that national party leaders ought to be given greater resources to discipline party-backbenchers within the Congress, while giving state and local bosses fewer resources (Lowell, 1919; Wilson, 1879). This approach, modeled after the political parties observed in Great Britain (Bryce & Bradley, 1889; Cox, 2005), would have required the support of party elites. However, in fact, it was difficult to reward them sufficiently to make them hold to the party line rather than escape the bonds of party discipline so as to best appeal to their key constituencies back home. The second view was that greater internal democracy within the political party, down to and including the voting public, would give rise to more disciplined legislative parties at the center (Henry Ford Jones, 1974, 1898). This was the approach ultimately adopted by progressive era reform groups who advocated for the direct primary and related electoral changes and for civil service and other governmental reforms as devices to undercut state and local party bosses and to give partisans in the electorate greater say over the candidates chosen to represent their interests.

The turn-of-the-century institutional reform movement provides our first illustration of how changes in the political context (or, even the possibility of change) create opportunities for innovative new research. Political scientists were given the opportunity to ask questions such as: Where were reform movements successful, and under what conditions? What were the consequences of the adoption of the direct primary or civil service reform? Was it the case that improving intraparty democracy binds its members in Congress more closely together? Do primary elections strengthen a party's prospects for the general election? During the early twentieth century, the scientific study of politics was still in its infancy, but there were a handful of innovative systematic studies of reform, such as Charles Merriam's (1908) *Primary Elections*, which saw these developments as presenting an opportunity for creating a new research agenda.

The scientific study of party organizations began in earnest during the mid-twentieth century, most notably by V.O. Key, Jr. (1949, 1954), whose scholarship confirmed the hope of many reformers that primary elections would undermine the influence of state and local party bosses. However, Key's (1956, 1964) work demonstrated that early twentieth century institutional changes were not an unabashed success and that the benefits of reform must be qualified in three important regards. First, the declining influence

of state and local organizations did not coincide with the development of stronger or more ideologically unified national parties. To the contrary, the congressional parties of the mid-twentieth century were among the least disciplined in American history. Second, although the introduction of the direct primary did seemingly promote greater levels of democracy intraparty, it also appears to have resulted in lower levels of competition between parties in the general election. In particular, in places where public sentiment strongly favored one party, it was difficult for the minority party even to field quality candidates for elected offices. In many places, competition between Democratic and Republican candidates, elections where party symbols or reputations helped to clarify the choices presented to the electorate were replaced by primary elections where voters knew very little about the candidates or the stakes. Third, the results of institutional changes were often perverse and unexpected, as politicians exploited the new rules of the game for personal advantage. For example, the adoption of the direct primary was exploited by politicians in southern states to create a bulwark for Jim Crow, using the "whites only" primary, which combined with no competition from Republicans in most of the South, meant that only the whites who voted in the primary would pick the eventual officeholders.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the emergence of an industrialized nation with a newly acquired empire meant that the federal government grew in importance compared to state and local governments, and amending the constitution to permit an income tax provided the resource base on which the national government could exercise such desired powers. As a result, election to the national government became, for many politicians for the first time, a career ambition. Yet, with the weakening of the state and local party organizations that politicians of a previous generation had relied on, they were forced to build campaign organizations of their very own. The stage was set by progressive reforms for a candidate-centered electoral process and, hence, a candidate-centered government.

The need to respond to the decline of state and local party organizations provides our second illustration of how politicians' responses to changes in the political environment provide a springboard for subsequent path-breaking research. Their challenge involved how to rebuild political parties' electioneering arm after the advent of civil service reforms and other developments that largely prevented them from exploiting government workers for partisan ends—a challenge that was multiplied by the coming of the television age that dramatically increased the cost of running for national office. Part of the answer that they arrived at was the recruitment of amateur activists into, initially, the seats being vacated in the formal local and state party organizations by bosses and their lieutenants. These amateur activists were individuals motivated by the desire to make a difference in

their communities or in the country as a whole and who generally had policy attitudes that were more liberal or conservative than those of their neighbors (Wilson, 1966). Over time, these individuals were increasingly attracted into the personal constituencies of individual politicians (Fenno, 2002) made possible, in part, by the growing advantages of incumbency, especially for members of the House of Representatives, and in so doing created the organizational nuclei of, what Joseph Schlesinger (1985, 1994) coined, "the multinuclear," or "candidate-centered" party.

   While politicians at the state and local levels worked to build the multinuclear party, another group of actors began in earnest to build the first national party organizations of real consequence (Kolodny, 1998). These were organizations whose primary purpose was to help candidates raise the money needed to campaign in the television era and to provide other services that helped its members more effectively contest elections. These efforts eventually included investments in the rebuilding of state and local organizations, thereby reversing their mid-century pattern of decay (Huckshorn, Gibson, Cotter, & Bibby, 1986). Thus, the political party reformed itself from the agency of the state and local party bosses, to the organization for the election and reelection of members of the House and Senate (Aldrich, 1983, 2011).

## CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH

Cutting-edge research on party organizations has been greatly influenced by a series of seemingly interrelated developments in American politics in the past few decades. These developments include the emergence of two major national parties with roughly equal popular support, after an era where the Democrats dominated congressional elections for a half-century or more; the ideological polarization of Democratic and Republican elites and the attendant sorting of liberal voter into the Democratic party and conservative voters into the Republican (Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2005; Levendusky, 2009); and the development of an informal network of political professionals who work alongside the official party and candidate organizations identified by previous generations of researchers (Thurber, 1998). These developments created an opportunity for political scientists to ask and propose answers to the following kinds of questions: What are the consequences of one-party supremacy for party organization? To what extent have party organizations contributed to party elite polarization? In what ways has the emergence of the informal party organization, especially the growing network of paid campaign consultants, fund raisers, and the like, modified our characterization of American party organizations and our theories about the role they play as intermediary institutions between elected officials and ordinary citizens?

To the extent that party organizations are principally concerned with winning elections, the most important of these new developments shaping cutting-edge research is, arguably, the return of competitive congressional elections. The modern, scientific study of politics did not fully begin to emerge until after World War II. Although it was not apparent at the time, the United States was entering a period where the Democratic Party held a seemingly unshakable majority in the public and, for example, used that edge in the public to hold a majority of seats in the House for 40 years. Much of the seminal research on party organizations was, therefore, based on an unprecedentedly long period where there existed a large bias in public opinion toward one party and outright hegemony of that party in Congress. This raises the question as to whether the apparent decline in the strength of party organization during the mid-twentieth century was really due to institutional reforms, like the direct primary or the adoption of a civil service system, or whether it was an artifact of the fact that in many places Democrats did not have to work very hard to win elections. Important studies of party organization, such as Gibson, Cotter, Bibby, & Huckshorn (1985) only hint at the answer in as much as they suggest that Republicans moved first to rebuild national and state party organizations during the 1970s, perhaps because they saw them as the means to a long-wished for end: majority control in Congress. In support of this claim kind of claim, Galvin (2010) has recently offered compelling evidence that Republicans were the party more concerned with building organizational capacity during the period of Democratic congressional majorities. In particular, using an impressive collection of archival evidence, he shows that Republican presidents worked more assiduously to build their organizations loyal to their party than did Democrats, who oftentimes acted to their organizations' detriment, until, that is, the Republican Revolution in 1994 ended Democratic hegemony in Congress, at which point Democratic president Bill Clinton reversed the pattern for his party.

Another major development for students of party organizations has been the polarization of Democratic and Republican elites into liberal and conservative camps. Beginning during the late-1930s, the Democratic majority in Congress was a complex and inconsistent party majority, with conservatives, especially on race, in the South and liberals in the North. The Republican minority was similarly divided and presented a diffuse "platform" to the public. The breaking of the solidly Democratic South in the 1960s and 1970s, however, began to turn things around so that the era of polarized parties emerged. To be elected a Democrat, today one seemingly must be on the left side on the local constituency, and a Republican needs to be on the right. As a result, the parties began to present a more unified face to the public. In fact,

according to some common measures of legislator ideology based on patterns in their roll call votes, in recent years, there have been no Democrats in Congress who are more conservative than the most liberal Republicans.

At least superficially, the ideological polarization of the two parties presents something of a challenge to the foundational work on party organization. It appears that Democrats in conservative districts and Republican in liberal ones are not sufficiently office-motivated to cater their stances to constituents (so that you might have, for example, a left-of-center Republican). Worse still for the notion that party organizations are groups that are in the business of serving the electoral interests of their candidates is the possibility that the parties themselves are coercing candidates into extreme positions. Indeed, Masket (2009) argues in recent work that local party organizations are responsible for partisan polarization because of their tremendous influence on candidate recruitment and primary elections (although, he does not go so far as to suggest that this is to the candidate's detriment). In other cutting-edge work, Grynaviski (2006, 2010) develops a theory that helps to reconcile party elite polarization with the notion that party organizations' main function is to advance their candidates' election and reelection prospects. He contends that as candidates from the two parties began to better-sort themselves along ideological lines, it became increasingly difficult for Republicans, for example, to credibly campaign as liberals unless they had a track record in public service that they might point to in support of that kind of claim. In light of this observation, he argues that candidates for elective offices may actually benefit from efforts to instill party discipline because it (i) strengthens party attachments in the electorate and (ii) counterintuitively, provides politicians who represent districts that might ordinarily favor the other party the opportunity to cultivate voting records that they might use to credibly differentiate themselves from their party's rank-and-file.

Yet another important development for party organization in the United States was the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971 and its subsequent amendments by Congress (and the Supreme Court) at a number of points over the next decade. The immediate consequences of FECA were that it resulted in an increase in the disclosure of information about the identity of campaign donors and the amounts they were giving and it created a formal legal separation between the organizations of specific candidates and political parties. Soon, however, new political actors and groups began to exert an increasingly important influence over partisan campaign organizations. The FECA, for example, created a locus for political action committees (PACs) to provide funding to campaign organizations. By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, these proliferated and, by providing a large new source of campaign funding, began to exert new influences over partisan organizations. In addition to providing regulated "hard money" to

candidates to support their election campaigns, FECA was interpreted so that PACs were also allowed to make unlimited "soft money" contributions to political parties that were, initially, used to support party-building activities, such as voter registration drives, but that eventually were used to fund campaign advertisements for individual candidates under the guise of issue advocacy ads. Alongside this development that greatly increased the possible influence of PAC contributions on formal party organizations was the emergence of the so-called leadership PACs, operated by major players in the Democratic and Republican congressional parties, who redistribute the money that they receive from outside groups to candidates within their own party (see, e.g., Cann, 2008). With that, the question of where to draw the line between the formal party organization and the interest groups that support it, a boundary that had already become a bit cloudy, became downright murky.

The blurring of the boundaries between traditional party organizations and the actors and groups that support them provides our final illustration of how changes in the political environment create new opportunities for scholars to make a cutting-edge tradition. The relatively recent rise in scope and influence of these informal connections, while always a part of the political party in America, has become sufficiently important as to require a new way to think about the organization of the political parties, and a new method to study them. One fruitful approach to the study of party organizations has been the move away from the traditional party pyramid with a single national organization at the top and a large number of local organizations at the bottom toward a model of party organization as a network of interconnected actors that include actors both inside the organization and without. The move created room for political scientists to introduce social network analysis to the study of party organizations, a methodological approach that allows researchers to analyze the ways in which individuals or groups of actors relate directly and indirectly to one another. These provide the vehicle, then for analyzing how PACs, pressure groups, and policy advocates interact with partisan campaign organizations. Recent applications of social network analysis include models of the sharing of donor lists between party organizations and interest groups (Koger, Masket, &, Noel, 2009); of patterns in interest group endorsements of particular candidates and issues (Grossman and Domingues, 2009); of the place that party organizations play in national campaign fundraising networks (Herrnson & Kirkland, 2013); and of how campaign strategies get diffused through networks of consultants and the candidates they work for (Nyhan & Montgomery, 2012).

KEY ISSUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The premise of this piece is that party organizations by their very nature provide researchers with something of a moving target. The next development to have a major impact on the field is, therefore, something that we may not even have on our radar and to make projections about key issues for future research feels like something of a quixotic the exercise. Nevertheless, our task here is to engage in just that sort of task. With the caveat that we do not have a crystal ball at our disposal that we might use to predict the future, we believe that there are three general categories of topics that will provide the basis of fruitful future research:

- recent developments that have not yet been adequately studied
- predictable, long-run demographic changes that are likely to have a substantial effect on party organization in the future and which party organizations may already be anticipating
- inconsistencies that we observe between current thinking about parties and current events.

Perhaps the most important recent development that we do not think has yet been adequately studied has been the changes to the campaign finance system over the past decade or so. One important such change has been the increase in the number of individuals who donated relatively small amounts of money to candidates for national office, especially to Barack Obama in his two bids for the presidency. The expansion of the parties' donor base is noteworthy, in part, because it is one factor that contributed to the dramatic increase in campaign spending over the past decade. To a considerable extent, this development was made possible by technological changes (e.g., social network media and even smart phones) that made it relatively easy for ordinary people to donate and that made it economical for campaign organizations to solicit small donations.

One set of questions that the expansion of the donor base gives rise to concerns how party organizations accomplished the task. Pointing to technological change is really just scratching the surface. Probing deeper into the question offers numerous fascinating questions for researchers to pursue. One launch pad for a research agenda might be the observation that Republicans have higher incomes than Democrats, but Democrats seemingly have the more broad-based donor pool. That is counterintuitive because one might reasonably expect higher income people to be in a better position to part with their money and, because this is a relatively new development, there is nothing inherent in being a liberal rather than a conservative that explains why this is occurring (e.g., it is probably not simply that liberals are more generous than conservatives). Was it just a Barack Obama effect? Are Democrats

in the electorate more likely to use the kinds of social media that make it easier for them to give? What is the psychological model whereby a party gets someone to make several comparatively small donations rather than one large one? Are Democrats winning the arms race between the parties, having identified a better strategy for soliciting campaign donations? There are all kinds of directions one might take such a research program. One might ask questions such as: Do small donors go to a candidate Web site intending to contribute? What features of a Web site make it more likely for an individual to give? Plausibly, visitors to Democratic and Republican Web sites may be equally likely to give on any given visit, but Democrats offer better content to bring visitors back. Taking a step back from the substantive questions, we would advise individuals who tackle questions like these to try to employ, when possible, the kinds of field experiments championed by Gerber and Green over the past decade.

   The substantial expansion of the parties' donor base also raises questions about changes in the nature of party organization. In the past, researchers have generally followed V.O. Key's prescription that it is best to study the party as organization (candidates and activists), the party in the electorate (ordinary voters), and the party in government (legislators) as distinct entities. Meanwhile, they have generally treated individuals who contribute money to parties or electoral campaigns as being activists who are actually part of the multinuclear party organization. In the same way that the emergence of leadership PACS and other developments forced scholars to rethink the boundaries between formal party organizations and their network of supporters, the broadening of the parties' organizational base to include larger numbers of small contributors may force us to rethink the boundaries between the party in the electorate and the party as organization. In future work, we will need to think carefully about lumping the little guy who makes a small campaign contribution with the more important players who may make contribute the maximum amount allowed under the law to multiple candidate or party organizations. It may be fruitful to study questions such as: How big does a contribution need to be to attract a candidates' attention? Do contributors gain more attention if they make one large donation or regular smaller contributions? In what ways do party organizations leverage their donor lists to build their organizations to encourage further participation by the little guy without deep pockets that advance their party's electoral interests?

   Another important development for party organizations that was also related to campaign finance was the passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in 2002 and the subsequent striking down of large parts of the law by the Supreme Court in a series of cases that included *Citizens United v FEC* (2008). Before BCRA, candidate and party organizations kept separate

by campaign finance laws that limited transfers between operations, operated in parallel with one another to advance their shared interest in winning elections. Meanwhile, PACs' electioneering activities were largely restricted to donations to parties or candidates (which were capped by law). After BCRA, new organizations formed—coined super-PACs by the media—that began to engage in electioneering activities alongside those of the candidates and the parties and, unlike traditional members of the multinuclear party, were able to raise money in a manner sorely lacking in transparency about the identity of the donors. The result has been a seeming explosion in the amount spent on campaigns and elections.

The post-BCRA campaign finance environment further challenges the traditional view of the multinuclear, candidate-centered party in ways that are not very well understood by political scientists and that, therefore, provides opportunities for ground-breaking new research. While it is not exactly our focus here, it raises really important questions about the consequences for representation of allowing wealthy donors, even corporations, to make unlimited contributions on candidates' behalf. In addition, the new campaign finance environment raises largely untackled questions such as: How should we reconceptualize party organizations now that their electioneering operations are largely performed by actors who are isolated from candidate and party organizations by campaign finance laws? Can well-bankrolled super-PACs push parties even further toward the ideological poles by financing extremist challengers during primary elections?

The emergence of the super-PAC operating at arm's length from candidate organizations while also electioneering on specific candidates' behalf, therefore, blurs the lines between the formal and the informal party organizations in ways that may, ultimately, fundamentally alter political science's model of party organization. It also rises informally as the electioneering arm of individual candidate organization.

Demography may not be destiny, but it may exert an important influence over developments in party politics.

Consider two examples. One is Hispanics. Over recent presidential elections, their vote has varied from moderately to strongly pro-Democratic. In addition, with an extremely large pool of long time and new Hispanic residents, some newly becoming citizens, their size is rapidly growing. They have become the most populous minority recently. Moreover, in the past few elections, their vote has grown in size and in Democratic polarity. Much of the latter, at least, can be traced to Republican opposition to immigration reform in a form desired by Hispanics. The 2012 presidential election may have brought the question to a head. The Republican problem is just that many of their majority in the House have been elected by constituents who favor tough laws against immigrants. Do current incumbents put their House

seat at risk of a right-side challenge in a primary election for the hope of winning broader support from a group growing in size in the future?

Alternatively, consider the aging of American society not unlike many European and other nations, such as Japan, but unlike them only by virtue of the large numbers of young Hispanics who have immigrated recently. These put similar short-term and long-term pressures on partisan officeholders. That the "baby boom" generation is reaching retirement age and qualifying for Social Security and Medicare, two of the largest entitlement programs in the government's budget, puts great pressure on both parties. Stick with the programs, unwaveringly, as liberal Democrats are wont to do, and does one risk bankrupting the government for one portion of the electorate? Can calls for balanced budgets and deficit reduction from the Republicans be made consonant with maintaining their support, centered among the more senior Americans?

In short, these two steady sources of significant change in the demographic makeup of the citizenry raise interesting questions about how parties in campaigns and in office take set stances on policies to attract a moving target among voters.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in terms of future research, because changes such as these and others accumulate over time, all models of party organizations seemingly get replaced because the difference between party organizations at different moments in history will be so great that a theory that once helped political scientists make sense of what they observed will no longer be useful. While we saw the traditional party as one of three parts, organization, governance, and electoral appeals, we now see the modern party organization as being in service to its candidates, in an era of polarization.

The viewpoint may merit revisiting at some point, perhaps in the not too distant future. The party organization we have discussed is almost entirely the formal organization. The political party has long included a more informal network of major supporting (and constraining) actors and groups. We believe, however, that this informal network is of increasing importance for understanding the contemporary party organization. The dynamism of changing candidates has been the fastest moving aspect of political parties. Except for the 40 year run of Democratic majorities in the US House, changing partisan control over government was slower but also consistently changing—just as today, every election includes the question of whether one party or the other will control the House, the Senate, the presidency, or all three. Here, we focused on the third part of the traditional definition of the party, the party as an organization. It changed historically, but only after quite lengthy intervals largely typified by organizational stability. Yet we see the pace of change from the traditional party to the

candidate-centered party to the increasingly informal-formal network style of structure speeding the pace of even organizational change. For the party leader, rapid organizational change is likely a bad thing. For the young scholar, it provides a splendid set of opportunities.

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## JOHN H. ALDRICH SHORT BIOGRAPHY

**John H. Aldrich** *(PhD, Rochester)*, Pfizer-Pratt University Professor of Political Science, Duke University. He specializes in American and comparative politics and behavior, formal theory, and methodology. Books he has authored or coauthored include *Why Parties*, *Before the Convention*, *Linear Probability*, *Logit and Probit Models*, and a series of books on elections, the most recent of which is *Change and Continuity in the 2012 Elections*. His articles have appeared in many major refereed journals. He has served as

co-editor of the *American Journal of Political Science*. He is past President of the Southern Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, and American Political Science Association. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fellow at the Rockefeller Center, Bellagio, and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

## JEFFREY D. GRYNAVISKI SHORT BIOGRAPHY

**Jeffrey D. Grynaviski** received his BA from the College of William and Mary and his MA and PhD degrees from Duke University. Before joining the faculty at Wayne State University, Professor Grynaviski taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Connecticut. His publications include the book *Partisan Bonds: Political Reputations and Legislative Accountability* and journal articles in *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, and *Political Analysis*. He teaches courses in American politics and institutions, positive political theory, and quantitative methodology.

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