

If it Walks Like a Party...
The Emergence of Unofficial Party Organizations in California

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Abstract

Despite California's longstanding hostility to parties, elites have formed unofficial party networks that impose strong partisan behavior on the state's political system. I examine several of these local organizations through the use of qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis. My findings suggest that candidates, officeholders, and resource donors coordinate to form networks, which exert a great deal of control over party nominations. Although organizers face challenges inherited from Progressive anti-party legislation a century ago, politics in this state is best thought of as party-centered, rather than candidate-centered.

Formal party organizations have been in decline in the U.S. for decades, with nonpartisan local elections, direct primaries and civil service reforms chipping away at the old patronage-based machines. Yet political observers have noted a substantial increase in partisanship among legislators and voters in the past two decades, both at the national level and in many states. What can explain a strengthening of the parties when the institutional structure seems to be against them?

California, long at the forefront of political innovation, has some answers to this puzzle. The decline of formal party organizations came early to this state as Progressive reformers thoroughly gutted the parties back in the 1910s. Over time, however, ambitious politicians developed less formal systems that function very much like parties. They control nominations in many areas and pressure legislators to toe a party line. Today, the California Assembly and Senate are two of the most ideologically polarized legislatures in the country (Wright and Osborn 2002) – surpassing even the U.S. Congress – due in no small part to the work of these informal party organizations.

The first section of this paper is an examination of several of these quasi-partisan structures through the use of interviews with officeholders, consultants, and activists. In these systems – one run out of the Assembly speaker’s office and four based in southern and central California communities – one finds elements of a thriving, if unofficial, party system. These structures vary both in their degree of control over local politics and in their power to reward and punish officeholders. In the second section, I use a series of quantitative approaches to measure the value of belonging to a political organization and the influence of these structures over party nominations. Any test of the strength of a party organization will face an endogeneity problem: since parties prefer to recruit proactive candidates with their own ties to money and/or voters, it is difficult to determine exactly how much influence to attribute to the party organization. I discuss this issue at some length and attempt to deal with its consequences.

Overall, I find the following to be true:

- In locales throughout the state, various small groups have been able to control nominations by gaining informal control over the resources necessary to compete for office.
- Donors of campaign resources (including money, labor, and personnel) have abetted the rise of informal party organizations by following the lead of these quasi-parties when making donations to candidates. Resource donors do this because it is more efficient to be part of a party team than to donate money or labor to individual candidates.
- Quasi-parties have been able to gain control of parts of the political system, if not the entire state. The elements of California politics are more like competing baronies than a unified kingdom, but these organizations, rather than individual politicians, are the building blocks of politics in the Golden State.

Party Organizational Styles

While party organizations may come in all shapes and sizes, the one that often comes first to mind is that which Mayhew (1974) dubbed the “traditional party organization,” or TPO. These are the party machines that once dominated many urban areas and a few states, with hundreds of patronage jobs at the disposal of elected officials, small fortunes in government contracts available to businesses with close ties to party leaders, and favors and cash doled out by party and public officials to citizens in exchange for votes (Dahl 1961; Wolfinger 1972). For Mayhew, an organization must claim five traits that distinguish it as a TPO. It must have substantial autonomy, be long lasting, possess a hierarchical command structure, regularly seek to nominate candidates over a wide range of offices, and rely on “material” (patronage) rather than “purposive” (ideological) incentives for inducing activity from supporters (p. 19-20).

Yet this approach only describes one very specific form of party organization, one that has apparently been in decline for decades (Sorauf 1960; Mansfield 1965; Wolfinger 1972). In fact, even in the strongest organization states (such as Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey,

Illinois, and Pennsylvania), were in a state of decline when Mayhew observed them in the 1960s and continued to decline in the next decade.

Yet despite their decline, parties are in many ways decidedly stronger today than they were at mid-century, commanding almost as much control over voters and legislators as they did 100 years ago. This is the modern party paradox: How can party organization be atrophying while partisanship is on the rise?

One answer is that the TPO doesn't begin to exhaust the range of party activities that can occur in a locality. It is quite possible, for example, for a party organization to motivate members with purposive (ideological) incentives rather than material ones. As Farley (1938: 237) claims, "Untold thousands of loyal soldiers in the Democratic army have been toiling for years without receiving tangible reward for their services and without asking for any such reward." Organizations bound only by ideology are, however, notoriously difficult to control (Clark and Wilson 1961). Yet for groups with poor access to patronage funds (such as minority party members), purposive incentives can be useful for keeping the organization together.

Another solution to the modern party paradox is that the decline in patronage has been much overstated. Defined broadly, patronage is simply "the manipulation of public authority for the special benefit of officeholders, their sponsors, business associates and friends" (Mansfield 1965: 118). Mansfield notes that the modern spoils system may come in a variety of shapes and sizes, including

unduly restrictive specifications for contract bidding, favoritism in contract awards, and preference or discrimination in the inspection of contract performance; special treatment for inmates of institutions; discriminatory enforcement of the criminal law and of building, health, zoning, and other codes; differential tax assessments; tariff, franchise, and license privileges; "honest graft" in the acquisition of real estate; and the like (1965: 118).

So defined, patronage is alive and well, as are the organizations that specialize in dealing in these forms of patronage.

Another problem with the decline-of-patronage argument is its adherents' claim that the conditions that allowed patronage to prosper no longer exist. As Sorauf (1960: 31) argued, "Rising levels of prosperity, higher educational levels, declining numbers of unassimilated groups, and greater concern by government for the unfortunate all point to a decline of the boss and machine and of the patronage they relied on." Residents of East Los Angeles, Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, and Chicago's south side would no doubt take issue with this report. If machines depend on the presence of urban poverty, they would be thriving in all major American cities and many minor ones.

Non-traditional forms of patronage may also allow an organization to cohere. Although the typical view of patronage is one of low-paying spoils jobs and charity payments that can be handed out to regime supporters, officeholders can certainly reward adherents in other ways. Staff positions in the offices of city, county, state, and federal elected officials, while not as numerous as the old bureaucratic positions now in the hands of civil service employees, have grown substantially in number in recent decades and can provide a home to dozens or even hundreds of an urban machine's supporters. These staffers provide vital campaign assistance to their bosses and sometimes – but not always – go off the clock to aid friendly candidates for other offices. As Macartney (1975: 194) found in his survey of Los Angeles area elected officials, "Staff campaigning on government time is both widespread and illegal." Guerra (2002) adds, "In some respects [staff campaigning is] much more effective [than the Chicago machines], politically speaking, not in terms of political patronage, but in terms of delivering the vote. ... These are professional, political, and public servants, who, on a moment's notice, can shift gears from politics to policy, back and forth."

The increasing size of public staffs in recent decades has also allowed for a much more effective caseworking organization. For constituents in need of assistance with Social Security benefits, Medicaid coverage, law enforcement, or land use disputes, their local public officials have staff members who are at the ready. As Wolfinger (1972: 385) notes, the growth of the

welfare state has not lessened the responsibilities of the old political machines. Rather, “continuing growth in the scope, complexity, and impersonality of institutional life [may] produce greater need for politicians to mediate between individuals and their government.” “For holders of local office,” says Macartney (1975: 202), “and increasingly for congressmen and state legislators, the district office is becoming a patronage-dispensing-station, not unlike the clubhouses of the old machines.” Macartney (p. 228) sums up the influence of staffers by noting, “Staffing can and does fulfill... traditional party ‘functions,’ such as political recruitment, tending to the public’s political education and socialization (through the efforts of public relations aides), acting as a linkage between governors and governed, and even dispensing welfare (casework) as the party’s machines used to.”

In short, the decline of traditional forms of patronage since the golden age of the party machines does not mean that other important forms of patronage are unavailable. Nor does it mean that a more general decline has occurred in the incentives of individuals to be active in political parties. Purposive incentives, while carrying their own sets of challenges, can and have been used to sustain political organizations. And other, less traditional forms of patronage – including public staff positions, casework, and public works projects – can substitute for the traditional ones.

A General Description of Party Organization

If the notion of a “traditional party organization” really doesn’t mesh with modern politics, what does? I posit a more general form of party organization: a loose network of political actors. These actors come in three flavors: Officeholders and candidates for office; benefit seekers, including businesses, unions, civic organizations, and ordinary voters who wish to control government output; and political activists. The goal of candidates and elected officials is to win and hold onto office. Influence seekers, on the other hand, seek to obtain legislation or other public benefits that serve their narrow self-interests. Activists have various goals: Some

simply enjoy the camaraderie of political activity; some want to pull the government in some ideological direction; others want to rise in politics, perhaps to the status of officeholder. Individual actors may occupy more than one role (Clark and Wilson 1961). For example, an officeholder may, by involving herself in multiple campaigns, also be an activist. A businessperson may, as a benefit seeker, donate cash or other resources to a campaign, and may also devote time working in that campaign. The network that these different actors form may be large and somewhat loosely defined, but it can usually be identified by the one or two high-profile personalities who lead it.

These networks exist for the sole purpose of controlling government. As such, they fall within E. E. Schattschneider's (1942) classic definition of a political party: an organized attempt to seize power. Participating members may have a variety of reasons for wanting to control the government, including an interest in moving the government in some ideological direction or simply controlling more of the funds that government makes available. The way to control the government, of course, is to win as many elective offices as possible. And to do that, they must agree on good candidates for office. Members of party networks will attempt to find candidates who will work with them rather than competing networks, and will try to create a united front to support these candidates. The nomination is the expression of this united front (Schattschneider 1942).

The methods by which networks coordinate on candidates for office is complicated and not normally directly observable by outsiders. Their aim, however, is always to find candidates who can win and who will cooperate with them while in office. The old conception of a strong party machine picking candidates from obscurity and getting them elected is, for the most part, an unrealistic one. Selecting a candidate with no public reputation, no money, and few personal contacts requires a great deal of work for the organization and only raises the risks that the candidate, once elected, could do something to embarrass the party. It is far safer and more

promising path for the organization is to coordinate on someone with access to campaign funds and who carries some standing with at least a small section of the public.

Because the ultimate aim of the organization is the control of government, it will try to support candidates at the federal, state, county, and municipal level of government. For ideologically motivated members, the commitment to various issues does not end at the state or city border – all levels of government must toe the line. For those with more material motivations, access to many levels of government is important because their supporters regularly have needs at many levels of government. Welfare payments, just to name one particularly rich area of the public sector, often begin with a federal transfer of money to the states, who in turn give funds to the counties to be distributed to individual families. To realize the maximum material benefits of organization, control over a wide range of offices is essential.

Why do political organizations form in the first place? Party organizations can be viewed from both a supply and a demand side. From the supply side, officeholders offer the promise of getting people what they want from government – everything from lost social security checks to special provisions in the law. They offer this help for the same reason that business entrepreneurs offer products to customers: because they expect to profit from meeting a market need. And, as in other market situations, the political entrepreneurs attempt to grow their market share, for the simple reason that greater market share generates greater returns to the entrepreneur. These returns may be material or ideological, or they may simply consist of the personal enjoyment of power. The last is not to be neglected. To no small degree, power is its own reward for many officeholders, and building up an organization allows one to obtain more of it.

There are two main sources of demand for party organizations, donors and candidates. Donors – and here I include not just financial supporters of campaigns, but unions, clubs, and other groups that donate time, labor, and expertise – want various services from government and want to be able to purchase these services reliably and efficiently. This means that they do not want to have to buy services one politician at a time. It is better, if possible, to deal with

networks of established politicians. Networks can deliver votes wholesale, and they may be able to deliver them across levels of government at once. This logic holds especially true when donors are dealing with candidates not yet elected to office: Many have little idea who the most skilled candidates or endangered incumbents are, and they don't want to take the trouble to find out. If they donate to the candidate of an established network, they can be assured the candidate is of high quality. And, perhaps more importantly, they can be assured that their donation will be appreciated by the network even if the particular candidate to whom they donate fails to be elected.

Political activists – that is, donors of political labor – provide additional demand for the creation of party organizations. Many are aspiring politicians who want, more than anything, a defined career path to office. Networks offer that path. Activists who distinguish themselves by their ability and hard work can have confidence that, when their turn comes, they'll have a good shot getting nominated and winning office, and that they'll be able to remain elected officials for many years to come. Only established party organizations can credibly make such a promise.

Party organizations thus arise both because elected officials have an interest in supplying them and because donors and candidates demand them. At the nexus of this supply and demand lies an organizational arrangement that meets the needs of all participants: long, profitable, and influential careers for officeholders, influence and efficiency for donors, and a career ladder for aspiring politicians.

Party-Centered versus Candidate-Centered: How Can We Tell?

As mentioned above, it is not always obvious who is running politics in an age when large, urban, patronage-driven machines like Tammany Hall no longer exist. Today's political organizations select candidates with talent, name recognition, and access to money – candidates who look very likely to win on their own. Selecting such candidates creates much less work and less chance of embarrassment for the party organization. Additionally, depending on the political

culture in a given state, machine politics may be very unpopular, even if widely practiced (Patterson 1968; Wolfinger 1972). In such states, both organizational leaders and candidates recognize the political unpopularity of machines and try to avoid being associated with them in voters' minds. It rarely does a candidate much good to boast of running for office because another local leader said he could win; nor do organizational leaders like to brag that they are limiting the public's choice of candidates for office by clearing a path for their own anointed candidate. Yet we should not let public officials' attempts to downplay organizations blind us to the power of these networks to influence politics.

The notion that organizations pick strong candidates is hardly novel. John Kennedy is widely known to have entered the West Virginia Democratic primary in 1960 to prove to party elites that a Catholic could win in an overwhelmingly Protestant state. His tactful public discussion of the religion issue and his victory in that state gave Democratic delegates some comfort in nominating him. Similarly, Adlai Stevenson entered a number of primaries in 1956 to prove to party elites that he still had some caché among rank and file Democrats despite his loss in 1952. Both Kennedy and Stevenson provide examples of some candidate-initiated activity that made it easier for large party organizations to slate them for office, yet few would place 1956 or 1960 in any weak party era.

Perhaps the best – and certainly the most entertaining – description of candidate activities in a strong party system comes from George Washington Plunkitt, a New York state senator and sachem of the Tammany organization. As Plunkitt (Riordan 1963) describes in his lecture on becoming a statesman, a candidate proves his value to an organization by cultivating “marketable commodities,” such as pledged votes:

I had a cousin, a young man who didn't take any particular interest in politics. I went to him and said: “Tommy, I'm goin' to be a politician, and I want to get a followin'; can I count on you?” He said: “Sure, George.” That's how I started in business. I got a marketable commodity – one vote. Then I went to the district leader and told him I could command two votes on election day, Tommy's and my own. He smiled on me and told me to go ahead.

Plunkitt enjoys the respect the district leader pays to him and he continues to build up his “organization,” asking for pledged votes from friends and neighbors. Soon he reaches a critical mass in his organizational size that demands that local elites take notice:

Before long I had sixty men back of me, and formed the George Washington Plunkitt Association. ¶What did the district leader say then when I called at headquarters? I didn't have to call at headquarters. He came after me and said: “George, what do you want? If you don't see what you want, ask for it. Wouldn't you like to have a job or two in the departments for your friends?” I said: “I'll think it over; I haven't yet decided what the George Washington Plunkitt Association will do in the next campaign.” You ought to have seen how I was courted and petted then by the leaders of the rival organizations. I had marketable goods and there was bids for them from all sides, and I was a risin' man in politics. As time went on, and my association grew, I thought I would like to go to the Assembly. I just had to hint at what I wanted, and three different organizations offered me the nomination. Afterwards, I went to the Board of Aldermen, then to the State Senate, then became leader of the district, and so on up and up till I became a statesman.

Few have accused Tammany Hall of being a weak party organization. It is, of course, the epitome of strong party organization in the United States. Yet here we see evidence – albeit anecdotal – that candidates had to do a considerable amount of organizing on their own before the party came calling for them. Rare indeed is the party organization that will pluck citizens from obscurity and make viable candidates of them. Such behavior consumes precious political resources and exposes the party to greater risk of embarrassment. It is far better to find people with connections of their own to the voters or to resource providers, people who have demonstrated that they can win.

This, of course, makes the job of the political scientist much harder. Let us assume, for example, that three main factors contribute to a candidate's success: candidate quality, campaign spending, and the backing of a party organization. A regression equation including these three variables will face a serious conflation problem. If party organizations slate high quality candidates with access to money, but then provide that candidate with more publicity and funding, how can we determine the effect of the party organization? All three variables are obviously conflated to some extent, and an important variable may appear statistically

insignificant as a result. If the candidate quality and campaign spending variables appear comparatively strong and statistically significant, it might be tempting to dismiss party organizations as irrelevant to elections.

If candidates must commit themselves to building networks, raising money, and impressing voters before an organization will notice them, is it fair to call politics party-centered at all? If not, then there has never been a strong party system in the United States. But we cannot dismiss the role of party because candidates are proactive. Rather, we must acknowledge that many candidates in a given race will be proactive, but only one will get the nomination. Presumably, the one in command of the most resources – endorsements, funding, staff, volunteers – will likely win, but every candidate does not have an equal chance of obtaining those resources. Indeed, the resources *make themselves available* to the candidate of their choosing.

Cohen et al. (2001) establish three critical tests to determine whether the political system is party-centered. First, do the political personnel and campaign backers comprise a small world, requiring all potential candidates to compete among a limited group? Second, do the party leaders form a united front, coordinating on candidates that can unite the party and win in November? Third, is support from this small world of party leaders a decisive influence on nominations? An affirmative result for these three tests suggests the presence of a thriving political party. If these conditions are met, political activists, candidates, and donors will find that being part of a party organization is preferable to going it alone in politics.

In the next section, I offer qualitative evidence of the extent to which different political systems in California meet these conditions.

Qualitative Evidence from California

Much of the literature on California politics describes a system almost totally devoid of party influence (Cresap 1954; Buchanan 1963). According to a popular textbook on the state's politics, "California has a political party system on paper, and that's about it" (Christensen and

Gerston 1984: 37). In his survey of state political party organizations, Mayhew (1986: 185-6) assigns California the lowest possible level of party organization in the nation, citing its lack of patronage, weak precinct and ward organizations, and lack of slates in local elections.

To be sure, much of this reputation for nonpartisanship is well deserved. Progressive reforms in the 1910s – including initiatives, referenda and recall; restrictions on the functions and memberships of formal party organizations; the elimination of most patronage jobs; the creation of nonpartisan local offices; and the establishment of the cross-filing system, by which candidates for partisan office could run in multiple party primaries – substantially reduced the influence of parties in California politics. With poorly organized local party systems and no allegiance to their own party for renomination, incumbents in the first half of the 20th century frequently deviated from the party line on important votes. Speakers of the Assembly were often elected unanimously or by bipartisan coalitions. Well-heeled lobbyists rushed in to provide the legislative leadership that the parties were either unable or unwilling to provide.

The Speaker's Organization

The money-driven system worked smoothly for several decades, but broke down in the early 1950s when famed liquor industry lobbyist Artie Samish – the self-proclaimed “Governor of the Legislature” – was jailed on corruption charges, and a former Speaker of the Assembly and other lobbyists were targeted by prosecutors. The breakdown left business in an awkward and dangerous situation. One member recalls a Southern California lobbyist showing up in Sacramento and asking, “Who do we pay? We have the money” (Reinier 1987: 187).

Into this vacuum stepped Jesse Unruh, a freshman Democrat from Inglewood first elected in 1954. Confident in his own reelection chances, he asked lobbyists interested in winning his favor to make donations to other candidates whose positions were less secure. These politicians returned the favor by supporting Unruh in key situations, which Unruh parlayed into still more influence with lobbyists. “Money is the mother’s milk of politics,” as Unruh famously described

his system. The speaker's organization not only helped Democrats improve their election fortunes over the course of the 1950s, but it also created a contingent of incumbents indebted to Unruh.

While certainly serving Unruh's needs, his system also provided benefits to both voters and to interests seeking influence in the Capitol. To voters, the Unruh system made campaign donations at least somewhat responsible, in the sense that they aided a party whose activities were visible. Voters could reward or punish the party based on what they did with the campaign funds they received. This was a marked improvement over the previous, lobbyist-dominated system, in which only an extremely astute observer of legislative life could keep track of which bipartisan coalition received assistance from which industry.

The system also aided business lobbyists, who could now have some confidence that their contributions were being allocated effectively. Whereas they had once distributed campaign money broadly to essentially all members in the hopes of generating goodwill, they could now donate directly to Unruh, who would make sure that the money went to the Democrats who needed it most. And by aiding a party, the campaign money was more likely to be used in support of a legislative agenda; donors had few ways to measure success in the old system.

Through the effective distribution of campaign funds, Unruh constructed a devoted and partisan coterie and climbed quickly through the ranks, becoming the chair of the powerful Ways and Means committee in 1959 and Speaker in 1961. As speaker, Unruh continued to exert great power over his fellow Democrats by informally controlling the flow of lobbyist money to them. Speakers Leo McCarthy (1974-80) and Willie Brown (1981-95) would expand on this system during their speakerships; McCarthy raised \$500,000 from lobbyists to help candidates in 1978, and Brown doled out \$1.7 million in 1982 and \$5.3 million in 1992 (Rood 1978; Rosenthal 1984; Richardson 1996). This system of a speaker using lobbyist largesse to benefit a party has become standard practice in California – and recently in the U.S. Congress, as well (Cannon 1969; Clucas 1995).

Today, although term limits have reduced the tenure of individual speakers, the system that Unruh developed continues to shape partisan politics in California. Speakers have been routinely active in local nominations, hand-picking candidates they believe will serve the majority party best and sending considerable sums of money in their direction. Often a speaker need only nod towards his preferred candidate; knowing that a candidate has the speaker's backing causes potential donors to either follow suit or to refrain from backing other candidates.

Assessment: At least from these descriptions, the Speaker's Organization can be thought of as a party network. It surely meets the small world condition, since only the speaker and his immediate political staff – a highly visible group – make decisions about which candidates should be supported. Due to the small size of this organization and the power of the speaker, it is easy for the group to form a united front to help its candidates win. There is some question as to whether the Speaker's Organization is a decisive influence in party nominations. Few wish to directly challenge the speaker or his candidates, although that has occurred from time to time. In the 2002 primaries, for example, Speaker Herb Wesson and his immediate predecessor, Bob Hertzberg, both offered strong endorsements for Andrei Cherny for an Assembly seat from the San Fernando Valley. Cherny ended up losing to Lloyd Levine, an Assembly staffer and the son of a prominent local activist. Again, such failures of a speaker endorsement are rare, but they do exist. In short, the Speaker's Organization meets the small world and united front conditions, although its satisfaction of the decisive influence test is fair at best.

Orange County Republicans

Orange County has long been a breeding ground for modern conservatism, having produced many of the activists that gave Barry Goldwater the Republican presidential nomination in 1964 and put Ronald Reagan in the governor's mansion in 1966. In the county's vast, affluent suburbs, activists generally have the money and time to get involved in politics. The most prominent have been wealthy land developers or former officeholders who have used their

political contacts to build successful consulting businesses. Most of these influential conservatives are members of the Lincoln Club, a political organization that collects \$2,000 in annual dues from each member and directs them toward conservative candidates.

For most of the past three decades, these conservatives seem to have maintained a united front in Republican Party nominations. Having identified the right candidates, they give them start-up cash and a nod noticed around the county. Donors pay attention to these nods for two reasons. First, it keeps them from wasting their money on non-credible candidates; anyone with the backing of most Lincoln Club members is probably a good bet. Second, pooling resources with other donors through the prominent leaders can help enhance one's influence over elected officials. As Lincoln Club member Buck Johns explains:

When I'm supporting a candidate, I'll tend to give money to someone who's raising funds for that candidate.... And the reason we do that is, when I need a favor out of a successful candidate, I don't know the guy. I call him, and I gave him a hundred bucks. He got ten thousand. The guy remembers the ten thousand; he doesn't remember the hundred.... So I'm going to give it to the guy who's the fundraiser who gave him the ten thousand. Then... he'll do my bidding.

But the conservatives do more than just back people they like – they actively work against candidates they don't like. Lincoln Club members call other donors and discourage them from donating to certain candidates, usually moderates. According to their opponents, conservative leaders will sometimes resort to less savory means, including making threatening phone calls and trying to hurt people's businesses. As moderate political consultant Eileen Padberg reported, "If you don't walk the line in Orange County Republican politics, they punish you by costing you business.... They try to hurt you in any way they can, demoralize you, talk about you in the newspapers, whatever." Adds Republican consultant Stu Mollrich, "If you are a friend, they will do anything for you, and if you are an enemy, they will destroy you" (Bailey, Warren, and Filkins 1996).

In perhaps their most public display of control, Orange County conservatives led the Assembly recalls of 1995 and 1996. Having just won a narrow 41-39 majority in the Assembly,

Republicans were eager to depose liberal Speaker Willie Brown (D-San Francisco). Yet their plans were thwarted when Orange County Assemblywoman Dorris Allen, angry with her fellow Republicans over a perceived slight in the previous election, ran as the Democrats' candidate for Speaker; she won with all the Democratic votes and exactly one Republican vote – her own. Furious, Orange County conservatives organized a recall and sent a sitting speaker of their own party back home. As Buck Johns explained, such transgressions cannot be tolerated: “You’ve got to shoot the son of a bitch.... She had to go over the side.” The same leaders also successfully recalled another Republican who had crossed party lines to keep Willie Brown in power, and they backed a stealth primary opponent to the moderate, Democrat-backed speaker who succeeded Allen. They finally installed one of their own, Garden Grove’s Curt Pringle, as speaker for the remainder of the GOP’s control of the Assembly in 1996.

The influence of these conservatives in elections is decisive, according to both their supporters and detractors. Respondents made a point of noting that just having money is not enough; you still need the backing of some influential elites in the area if you’re going to win office. As Pringle notes, “If you’re a Republican, there’s a handful of [elites] you certainly want either neutralized or on your side regardless of how much personal money you’re putting into it.... You don’t want to alienate them so they go out to look for candidates to run against you in a primary or otherwise.”

Recently, the Orange County conservatives have been challenged by a group of wealthy moderates calling themselves the New Majority. This group charges \$10,000 annual dues (five times what the Lincoln Club charges) and devotes the money toward electing moderate Republicans, prioritizing the construction of a GOP majority in Sacramento over the maintenance of the minority’s ideological purity. As with the Lincoln Club, the members of the New Majority see the value of centralizing resources to maximize the effectiveness of their donations. Their effectiveness thus far, however, is debatable. Although they take credit for electing two moderates to the Assembly in 2000, they failed spectacularly in a bid to take over the County

Central Committee and threw half a million dollars at former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan's disappointing gubernatorial bid in early 2002. Still, as Lincoln Club member Johns noted, "The fact that the New Majority has more money than the Lincoln Club means it's something to be reckoned with."

Assessment: Respondents in Orange County had no trouble naming a consistent set of fewer than a dozen key elites with influence over the party nomination process. Thus Orange County meets the small world condition. Their satisfaction of the united front test is debatable. Conservatives in this county are clearly not concerned with finding a candidate that can please moderates, and the two factions often fight each other in primaries. But, with very few exceptions, the legislative districts in Orange County are highly skewed in the Republicans' favor; even the most extreme Republican nominee is unlikely to lose to a Democrat in the general election. Thus the united front requirement is relaxed somewhat: A faction needs to be just united enough to beat the other faction. For the most part, the conservatives meet this condition. Finally, judging from the statements of both supporters and detractors of county conservatives, they have certainly satisfied the decisive influence condition. Those not tied to the conservatives are highly fearful of them, and, with very few exceptions, it is the conservative candidates who end up representing Orange County districts.

South Central Los Angeles Democrats

Politics is the same only different in nearby South-Central L.A. The differences are most obvious. While Orange County is notably rich, Republican, and white, South Central is overwhelmingly poor, Democratic, and non-white. South Central consists largely of Los Angeles but also includes Compton and a few other small cities. Although Latinos have begun moving into this historically African American area in large numbers over the past decade, its electorate, and the leaders it chooses, remain predominately black. Another key difference is that the real

bosses of Orange County politics are private citizens. In South Central, they tend to be elected officials and their publicly paid staffers.

What's the same in South Central is that nominations are effectively controlled by a small group of individuals whose influence depends on their control over the resources necessary to run for office. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, who has represented this area for a quarter century in the Assembly and the House, leads one of the major factions in this region. Several prominent state Senators, Assembly members, and city council members regularly line up with her when she makes endorsements. She is also closely tied with the New Frontiers Democratic Club, the oldest African American political club in the state. When candidates seek the Democratic nomination in South Central – the equivalent of election in this overwhelmingly Democratic area – they almost invariably seek Waters' support. Waters organizes an "inner circle" of 15 to 20 influential people, including officeholders and club leaders. This group then decides on its slate of candidates, which Waters publicizes in a sample ballot that she sends out to voters before the primary. In resource-poor South Central, where many church and civic leaders follow Waters' lead, her slate goes a long way toward election.

The faction opposing Waters' is not as well defined. One of its leaders is Congresswoman Diane Watson, who does not have Waters' popular following but does have the support of several prominent city council members, Assembly members, and members of Congress. Mervyn Dymally, a veteran Assemblyman, also usually joins Watson in opposing Waters, and indeed Dymally used to run his own organization in the 1970s in opposition to Mayor Tom Bradley's group, of which Waters was a member (Sonenshein 1993). County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke also manages a campaign organization of her own at times, usually lining up against Waters. Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson is considered a close ally of Burke's and usually follows her lead in endorsements.

Unlike in Orange County, these factions are not separated by ideological concerns. On the contrary, it seems virtually impossible for a moderate or conservative candidate – or anyone

not committed to affirmative action and a few other key liberal issues – to be slated by any of the South Central organizations. As a result, factional candidates are usually separated by personal loyalties, and the feuding can be bitter. People lined up on different sides of a primary race may refuse to be in a room with each other 10 years later. Yet this feuding is also pragmatic: Bobbie Anderson, the president of the New Frontiers Democratic Club and a member of Waters' inner circle, reports, "People say, 'You should support the best candidate.' Not necessarily. You have to look out for who's going to get you access to stuff that's going to help your constituency or your group." Again we see a practical emphasis on using government to obtain some benefit for an interest – an effort that is helped dramatically by having allies at all levels of government.

Respondents here confirmed that the local factions seek a certain level of credibility in the candidates they select. Candidates must demonstrate some support and ability to raise money before they can win the backing of a faction, which will provide them with more support and money. If they do not appear credible, factional leaders will usually try to dissuade them from running. Here, dissuasion is a much softer sell than in Orange County, where it comes with outright threats. In South Central, reports Dymally, "You don't want to [discourage people]. Because when you get ready to run, you don't want anybody to talk you out of it. What I have done, and what a couple of others have done, is you set up some criteria for you to meet. One, give me a checkbook with \$50,000; two, give me a poll; three, let me see your endorsements; and what's your campaign structure? Those are tough criteria."

Although factional politics can appear petty at times, membership in one of these camps is vital for anyone planning a serious run for office. "If you're not in any of those camps," reports Don Stephenson, a local activist and organizer for the NAACP, "you have no chance." Just having money is not enough to win a nomination. Indeed, 1998 gubernatorial candidate Al Checchi spent a small fortune to turn out a sympathetic vote in South Central. Beneficiaries of his largess, reports Bobbie Anderson, simply took his money and voted for his opponent Gray Davis. Like in Orange County, money is important, but how you get the money may be more

important. As Stephenson explains, “Any of the established politicians who are already plugged into the money can be a source of getting you plugged into the money. But just operating cold, you’re spinning your wheels for days, because you don’t know who to call.”

Assessment: South Central respondents could easily list a small group of influential Democrats whose support they considered essential for winning a nomination, thus meeting the small world condition. As in Orange County, the districts of South Central are highly skewed toward one party, thus lessening the burdens of forming a united front. Factions may fight each other in primaries. Since the system has screened out virtually all non-liberal candidates and since any nominee is guaranteed to beat the Republican in the general election, factions need be just united enough to win in the primary. Finally, respondents’ descriptions are consistent with factions that well meet the decisive influence condition. The chosen candidates of Maxine Waters’ inner circle, for example, end up receiving substantial money and the Election Day labor of Democratic clubs and church groups. These candidates almost invariably end up winning.

Eastside Los Angeles County Democrats

To the east of Los Angeles’ downtown is a region consisting of parts of the city, the unincorporated county area known as East L.A., and many small cities that comprise the San Gabriel Valley. This region is overwhelmingly Latino and strongly Democratic. Like South Central L.A., the Eastside is divided up into factions that are led by elected officials.

Perhaps the most influential organization in the Eastside over the past three decades has been the Alatorre-Torres machine, most recently under the leadership of Richard Polanco, who was termed out of the state Senate in 2002. Organized in the 1970s by Assemblyman Walter Karabian and two of his aides – Richard Alatorre (later an Assemblyman and state Senator) and Art Torres (later the state Democratic chair) – this group has produced dozens of young officeholders from its ranks of public staff members.

Although there is an unofficial pecking order for which staffers get to run for public office next, that order was apparently violated in 1982 when Alatorre moved up to the state Senate and his Assembly seat opened up. Gloria Molina was passed over as the organization's anointed candidate for that race in favor of Polanco. Angry at this slight, Molina broke with the organization and ran on her own, defeating Polanco, and in 1991 defeated Art Torres to win a newly created county supervisorial seat. She has served in this seat ever since, and now runs an organization that rivals the Alatorre-Torres group (Skerry 1993: 242-3). Her endorsement is highly coveted.

As in South Central, these factions are not much divided by ideology as by factional loyalty. Moderates and conservatives have largely been selected out of politics here. As campaign veteran Henry Lozano explains, "Most of these candidates running in an area like this, they're basically center to liberal. ...Most of them are almost identical in ideology. ...A right-to-life candidate couldn't win in this area. Same with gun control." Yet the divisions are no less firm for their lack of ideological differences. People stick with their camps, and terms like "whore" are reserved for consultants and politicians who cross over to other camps for a paycheck.

Additionally, these camps seem to form "inner circles" around particular candidates that govern campaigns much more than the candidates do. In 1990, city council candidate Mike Hernandez fired his campaign manager, Tom Griego, for trying to exert too much control. Henry Lozano, a member of Hernandez's inner circle, describes his experience in confronting Hernandez and forcing him to take back the campaign manager:

I said, "Look, here... all these guys, they all want this seat, and you're this close to getting it. That's going from high school to the major leagues... You're this goddamned close to getting it and you're gonna blow it.... [Tom] is doing a damned good job for you. He listened to the folks in our inner circle. And if we don't control you, who the hell is? That was his job... to make sure you do the right thing.... You've got to apologize to Tom and take him back."

Hernandez did take Tom Griego back, won the election, and hired Griego as his chief of staff – hardly a case of candidate-centered politics.

Again, membership in one of these camps is critical for a victory. People who wish to run for office must work their way up within an organization if they're to have a serious chance at winning election. Mike Hernandez reported that he had some respectable endorsements when he ran for Assembly in 1986 but he lost – narrowly – because he wasn't well tied to an established organization. He spent the next four years paying his dues to the Gloria Molina organization by helping to elect people that she supported, and when it was his turn to run for office, the organization helped clear a path for him. "I became very focused on getting people elected to office who ultimately would be able to help me get elected," Hernandez explains, "and that's why when I ran the second time for office, I didn't have any opposition. There [were] four candidates that ran against me, but nobody had the kind of background and support that I had. And so I became the candidate to beat." Once more, we see an ambitious politician investing time and effort in a party-like group in order to derive the benefit of organization: a better shot at winning office.

Again, when organizations are looking to back a candidate, they look for some indications of credibility. Usually, this can be measured in terms of fundraising potential. "When I talk to candidates," says Hernandez, "I always ask them how large their Christmas card list is.... If they tell me 60, they don't have a shot. If they tell me 600, they've got a very good shot. Because those are the people you know will give you money." Consultant Victor Griego described this process as a pre-campaign campaign: candidates try to look like they have the most money and backing so they will be slated by an organization that will provide them with more money and support. As Griego describes it, the factional leaders say, "It will be better for us. We're not going to have to work as hard, so we're going to support you. Because you've got your own business, or you come from a union that would support you.... But then we'll throw all

our support behind you.” Such an arrangement works at well for both parties: the organization gets a likely officeholder at a low cost, while the candidate gets a better chance at election.

Political figures involved in these organizations complain that they have little control over members once they’re elected. “When they’re running, they’ll all listen to you, man. Once they get elected, all of a sudden they know it all,” says Lozano. Yet incumbents who are not good organizational members can be removed. Such was the case of Congressman Matthew “Marty” Martinez (D-El Monte), who was denied re-nomination in 2000. Martinez had slowly lost his support from the West L.A. Waxman-Berman organization that helped him get elected in 1982, and his personality and conservative stances on guns, abortion, and free trade prevented him from building effective alliances with either local activists or within the Democratic or Hispanic caucuses in Congress. Additionally, by the late 1990s, California labor organizers were seeking to raise the bar for Democratic officeholders who sought their support.¹ In 1999, a coalition of state and local officeholders – including Gloria Molina – and labor activists rallied behind state Senator Hilda Solis’ effort to unseat Martinez. Through the support of this coalition, Solis unseated a nine-term member of Congress in the primary by a 69-31 vote.

Assessment: As in other regions, the major players in the Eastside were well known by respondents. All mentioned a small world consisting of Polanco and the Alatorre-Torres machine, Gloria Molina, and the County Federation of Labor. Like elsewhere in the state, redistricting has virtually cleansed this area of Republican officeholders. Democratic factions thus face few risks by publicly battling each other for nominations, and they frequently do so. But within the organizations themselves, particularly the Alatorre-Torres machine, dissent is very rare. The decisive influence condition seems to be met, as respondents are convinced that the backing of one of these major factions will ensure nomination.

¹ Local elites credit labor unions, specifically the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, with a great deal of influence in local elections.

Fresno Democrats and Republicans

Two hundred miles to the north of Los Angeles lay Fresno County, a collection of small cities and vast farmlands in the middle of California's breadbasket, the San Joaquin Valley. There is plenty to distinguish Fresno from the sprawling suburbs of Orange County or the dense urban tracts of Los Angeles, but one of the more interesting differences is that both parties are relatively competitive here: The county's four congressional districts are split between Republicans and Democrats, and Republicans control three of the area's five Assembly districts to the Democrats' two. It would still be fair to call the area conservative, though, and Democrats might hold few or no elected seats were it not for state redistrictings favorable to their party.

Despite these differences, many of the same political patterns found in the other regions can be identified in Fresno. The formal party structures are considered weak on the Republican side and virtually nonexistent on the Democratic side. As with the other areas, networks of officeholders, activists, and wealthy donors have risen to fill this void with structure, striving to influence the party nomination processes. On the Democratic side, prominent leaders are generally to be found in the ranks of elected officials. Moderate Congressman Cal Dooley has earned a reputation as a kingmaker due to his practice of hiring people who might be interested in running some day and grooming them for office. Will Hensley, one of Dooley's staff members, reports, "After a few years in Cal's office, anyone with any skill is ready to run for office, just because he's very good at teaching you." Dooley does this, his staffers say, in part because he believes that people interested in running will represent him well, and in part because he'd rather have politically-minded people on his side than on someone else's. Dooley also regularly donates his staffers' time to other candidates' campaigns as an in-kind contribution. Assemblywoman Sarah Reyes and Fresno County Supervisor Juan Arambula are also widely considered important voices on the Democratic side. Reyes, for example, "has access to contributors statewide. And she is a good sounding board in terms of what to expect and what's required to get into politics,"

says Arambula. As Hensley notes, “If you can walk away with an endorsement from Cal, Sarah, and Juan, then you’re in great shape.”

Labor unions – the Service Employees International Union local 535, in particular – are credited with having a lot of influence in Democratic politics, particularly within Fresno’s city limits. The involvement of labor introduces some degree of in-party factionalism, since unions have traditionally not trusted the pro-trade Cal Dooley. Instead, they often side with Reyes and other somewhat more liberal Democrats.

The Republican side is marked by a bit of factionalism between moderates and conservatives, although the intensity of the rivalry and the ideological differences between the two sides seems much smaller than that found in Orange County. The most energetic leader among the conservatives is Michael Der Manoeul, Jr., a member of the county Republican Central Committee and president of an insurance company. Der Manouel spent several years working in an Indianapolis, Indiana, precinct organization and tried to import some of its structure to Fresno area politics, and he’s widely credited for recent GOP surges in voter registration and for several of the party’s electoral victories. He works closely with many conservative leaders, including Congressman George Radanovich and freshman Assemblyman Steve Samuelian. Although he represents Bakersfield (some 100 miles south of Fresno), Congressman Bill Thomas has become a strong moderate leader whose influence extends throughout the lower San Joaquin Valley, and he credited with getting 28-year old Devin Nunes elected to the Congress from Fresno County in 2002. The divisions within the party are well understood by local politicians. “If I’m going to run for office,” says a Fresno city councilman, “and I go to Devin Nunes for help, well I’m not going to count on Steve Samuelian, or vice versa.... That’s no secret, either.”

Candidates for office traditionally seek the endorsement of firefighter and law enforcement organizations. Candidates across the ideological spectrum appeal for such support, although these organizations seem to get more involved in Republican politics. The

endorsements of the Fresno Deputy Sheriffs' Association and the Fresno Police Officers' Association, in particular, are highly coveted, and when these groups unite on a candidate, their backing is considered very powerful.

Forging an alliance with one of these local leaders or groups is considered a necessity for anyone interested in entering politics. As the 2002 elections made clear, being part of an elected official's office is the most reliable path for winning office someday. Two of Cal Dooley's former district aides – Assemblywoman Nicole Parra and Fresno City Councilman Henry T. Perea – won office that year, as did Assemblyman Samuelian (Congressman Radanovich's former district office director) and City Councilman Mike Dages (who served on the previous councilmember's staff). Elites freely admit that finding high quality candidates is a difficult job. Supervisor Arambula looks for "somebody who has been successful in their field, somebody who has established themselves and doesn't necessarily need to be in politics. I may observe from a distance that somebody has access to money." Since virtually all political staffers seem to have at least considered the prospect of running, and since these people are known commodities to the elites, they certainly make promising protégés.

Fresno leaders speak openly about the importance of building alliances with other officeholders across governmental levels. City Councilman Perea has even assigned each of his staffers specific officeholders with whom to act as liaisons. As Perea explains,

You have to stay in contact with every level of government to really know what's going on, because if you don't, things can get pushed right past you. Yesterday, when I was in Sacramento, I learned that Fresno was number eight on the list of a program to be cut from the state budget. Now, had I not gone, I wouldn't have been able to bring that information back here. When I was calling people on the way back here, they said, "What are you talking about? What do you mean we're going to have X amount of million dollars cut?" So now that gives us the opportunity to work with our lobbyists and start calling our state legislators and saying, "Hey, you got to get us off this list."

But inter-office cooperation is about more than just retaining funding; it's also about securing new funds. Perea continues:

[Most inter-office work consists of] grant-type issues, helping us to identify what funds are available out there. And, of course, when we do apply as a city, it's [state and federal officeholders'] job politically to start getting involved in maneuvering to help us get the money. Because, of course, every city is applying for the same pot of money. So we need to rely on them and their contacts so they're going to work the political end for us, and making sure that we get our fair share.

In working with other officeholders, leaders will frequently cross party lines. There is a recognition among Fresno elites that the agriculture and other issues that affect the region are neither Republican nor Democratic issues, and that "a regional issue demands a regional response." To some extent, this bipartisan tone is set by the area's elite donors (many of whom come from the agriculture industry), who will frequently cross party lines to back candidates they believe will help them advance their interests. The Hallowell family, for example, contributed thousands of dollars to both Democrat Cal Dooley and the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2000. James Hallowell, a Republican and son of a prominent local Chevrolet salesman, his wife Coke, a Democrat, and their children all regularly contribute to city, county, state, and federal candidates. While each claims a certain ideological stance, their contributions appear to be much more pragmatically motivated. Coke Hallowell, for example, is president of a local nonprofit land trust that gets funds from all levels of government, and she wants to remain on good terms with her elected officials. "What we always hoped for is that they would at least respond to phone calls and listen to requests," she explains.

Nonetheless, other contributors can be strictly ideological. Earl Smittcamp, a prominent peach industry lobbyist, has donated generously to Republicans over the years, often following the suggestions of a Sacramento-based professional Republican fundraiser. His reasons for giving appear far more ideologically motivated. "I expect nothing," he says. "In fact, it pisses me off when I read the *Fresno Bee* when I see someone... who contributed wanted something in return.... I sure as hell don't need a job from them, and they don't have any money to give me."

As in other areas, the actions of a prominent donor can trigger the involvement of others. Cattle rancher John Harris, whose endorsement and largess are sought across party lines, was

considered instrumental in Secretary of State Bill Jones' defeat in the 2002 Republican gubernatorial primary. Harris, an old business colleague of Jones', nonetheless refused to donate to him. As Dooley staffer Sarah Woolf explains, "John [Harris] is just very firm in his commitments in politics that 'You go with the winning horse.' And it was clear Bill [Jones] was not going to be able to beat [Governor] Davis at that point in time. And I think everyone in turn followed, and Bill was not able to raise the money that he needed." Harris is also credited for being a key early supporter of Democratic Assemblywoman Parra who encouraged other donors to back her.

Assessment: The small worlds of important elites were easily identifiable on both the Democratic and Republican sides. Once again, the effects of redistricting have relaxed the requirement for the united front: the legislative districts in the area are easily identifiable as Democratic or Republican. Nonetheless, Republicans have clearly made an effort to minimize factionalism. Moderate and conservative groups are identifiable, but they do not spar with each other like they do in Orange County. The Democrats appear disorganized by comparison and frequently have trouble achieving a united front. Thus far, this does not seem to have hurt the party's performance in general elections, although it is possible that more liberal candidates may be suffering in nonpartisan races as a result. While some questioned the value of endorsements, all respondents seemed convinced that a close affiliation to a major officeholder like Cal Dooley or Bill Thomas was decisive in nominations.

Quantitative Results

The qualitative information received from the various California communities strongly suggests the influence of elite party networks. Most respondents initially described party politics in their area as weak and were reticent to bluntly state the existence of elite cadres that conspire to control elections. Yet these same respondents slowly painted a picture of elected officials who coordinate with powerful donors and activists to ensure that certain candidates receive the

resources they need to win nominations and others do not; in short, elite cadres that conspire to control elections.

Addressing these issues quantitatively is somewhat challenging. As mentioned previously, there is the endogeneity problem: Since party organizations prefer high quality candidates with access to money, it is difficult to measure what aid the party organization is providing. More generally, it can be challenging to determine who a network's chosen candidate even is. Despite the influence of these networks, their memberships are not inscribed in stone and are rarely even written in newspapers. Much of this information, however, can be teased out of interviews and campaign documents, although these sources have some liabilities. A candidate, for example, may be reluctant to admit being backed by an elite or having worked for a key officeholder, depending on the political sentiments of the time and region. I have sought to corroborate my findings as much as possible through multiple sources, including elite interviews, newspaper articles, and individual campaign statements.²

My first test of the power of elite networks is simply to look at current incumbents to see where they came from. Weak party states and strong party states, we may assume, will see very different types of candidates winning office. Money is vital to election in both places, but how one gets the money will be determinative. In a weak party system, candidates with their own easy access to money will tend to prevail. Business leaders, in particular, have experience in borrowing, managing, and making money, and these people should tend to do well in a weak party system. Similarly, attorneys, with their deep knowledge of the legal and political system and their familiarity with the wealthy people of a community, should tend to do better than candidates without a legal background.

² The League of Women Voters' Smart Voter web site (<http://www.smartvoter.org/>) provides detailed listings of candidates' biographies, endorsements, and platforms going back to 1998. UCLA's Online Campaign Literature Archive (<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/mgi/campaign/>) was also very helpful in this regard.

In a strong party state, however, candidates will tend to rise from existing political structures. Elected officials tend to know whom to ask for money and how to ask them, and they can make introductions for their protégés. These protégés may include employees and relatives of the elected official or other closely allied politicians. Given their public career paths, few incumbents or protégés are likely to have acquired a great deal of personal wealth over the years. Yet in a system of strong party networks, their access to campaign donors will give them an advantage over those with substantial personal wealth yet little political experience.

As a first attempt to assess the pervasiveness of networks, I simply look at all the incumbent legislators in my areas of study who were in office at the time this paper was written. This dataset consists of all members of Congress, state senators, assembly members, and county supervisors within Fresno, Los Angeles, and Orange counties. I have also included the city councilmembers of each county's largest city (Fresno, Los Angeles, and Santa Ana, respectively). For this approach, I am simply looking at what job each officeholder held prior to running for her current position. I group the results into two categories. The first is organizational routes to office, which includes holding lower office, serving as a political appointee or an aide to an officeholder, working as an activist (such as a union representative or a Chamber of Commerce leader), or being a related to a current officeholder. The second category is individual routes to office, which includes being an attorney, a business leader, or simply pursuing any professional nonpolitical career.³

Figure 1 here

As can be seen in Figure 1, organizational routes far outpace individual routes to office in these areas of California. The difference is most acute in Los Angeles County, but officeholders in every region seem to come from some entrenched political network. Overall, only 21 percent

³ Obviously, there may be some overlap between categories. One can, for example, be a political appointee and a businessperson simultaneously. So that only one response is possible for each incumbent, I have made an attempt to determine which position was held most recently prior to taking office and which was most salient in that person's life. For relatives of officeholders, I have allowed that designation to trump all others, since a such a relationship does not wane with time.

of officeholders have been able to buy their way into politics; through their career paths, the other four-fifths of incumbents have implied that how one gets the money to run for office is even more important than the money itself.

The reader may object at this point that it is unfair to include holding previous elected office as an organizational route. After all, an individual who “bought” an Assembly seat and then, after being term-limited out of office, “bought” a state Senate seat would look like an organizational candidate under this rubric. Yet if it were possible to simply jump into office at any level, surely we would see more candidates doing that in Figure 1. Instead, we see candidates needing to work their way up through a pecking order. The best way to win any office is apparently to have won some other office.

However, to address the concern that the previous officeholder category is misleading, Figure 2 looks at the same categories, but displays which jobs incumbents held just prior to winning their first elective office. Holding previous office is thus erased as a category – this chart simply looks at what route people took to winning office in the first place.

Figure 2 here

Here, some regional variations become immediately obvious. Los Angeles incumbents are somewhat more likely to come from organizational positions than individual ones, while Orange County’s incumbents are overwhelmingly from the private sector. Individual candidates maintain a slight advantage in Fresno, as they do overall. Still, almost half of all current incumbents made their start in politics as staffers, appointees, activists, or relatives of politicians.

This figure of the percentage of incumbents coming from organizational backgrounds is quite likely an understatement. This is so, I argue, for several reasons. First, some elected positions may be so low in stature as to require no organizational network, yet a candidate may need such an affiliation to rise through the ranks. For example, Assemblywoman Lynn Daucher of Orange County was first elected to the Brea Olinda Unified School District. She could have been well tied to a party network but simply not needed their support for such an election.

However, moving from the school district to a position on the Brea City Council and then to an Assembly seat may have well required the assistance of others. Yet my measure would list her as an incumbent who rose through an individual route.

A second difficulty with this method is that it does not account for networks that are not closely affiliated with officeholders. As the qualitative descriptions earlier in this paper suggest, Orange County, in particular, has networks of realtors, club activists, and party officials who do not necessarily hire people as staffers or make formal endorsements. To continue the Lynn Daucher example, she may be supported by an elite network, but not the sort of network that could hire her for a public staff position or political appointment. In Los Angeles, City Councilman Nick Pacheco was widely known as a close ally of Supervisor Gloria Molina's organization before his first run for office. However, he never worked on her staff, and his years of working on the campaigns of Molina candidates do not show up in the dataset.

Finally, this method does not account for candidates who are strongly affiliated with elite networks and have even worked within them, but whose most recent work prior to running for office was in the private sector. Assemblyman Keith Richman, for example, is classified as one who took an individual route to office because he was working as a physician immediately prior to running for office. Richman, however, was no stranger to politics. He had previously testified before the U.S. Congress about Medicare, and he had been an appointee of Mayor Riordan to the Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency. Similarly, L.A. City Councilmember Wendy Greuel, who was an employee of Dreamworks SKG prior to running for office, worked for Mayor Tom Bradley previously and was also a local representative for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. And Fresno City Councilman Jerry Duncan, who ran a printing company prior to running for office, was earlier a member of the Fresno County Republican Central Committee, as well as a local activist with the Republican National Committee and the National Rifle Association. Surely he had some ties to local elite political networks, although it doesn't appear that way in the dataset.

Generally speaking, it is difficult to account for those candidates who have been loyal organizational members for years and gained political caché through the network, but nonetheless pull down a paycheck from a private sector source. Even allowing for such limitations, though, the fact that nearly half of all the incumbents studied appear to have risen to politics with the aid of elite networks suggest that such networks are pervasive and important for study.

To get a better sense of how determinative these networks are in local elections, I have assembled a dataset consisting of every local election within Fresno County, Orange County, and the south central and eastern portions of Los Angeles County since 1998. These elections include primary contests for congressional, Assembly, and state Senate nominations, and both primary and general races in nonpartisan contests, including races for mayor, city council, county supervisor, and other county offices. While I have excluded partisan general elections, I do include several special elections (usually called after the death or retirement of an elected official), since multiple candidates within the same party can run against each other. I have excluded uncontested races and most races with an incumbent, except those in which the incumbent received less than 70 percent of the vote.

Here I am grouping candidates into two main categories with five sub-categories. Individual route candidates may be attorneys or businesspeople. Organizational route candidates may be staffers, relatives of officeholders, or officeholders themselves. Candidates may appear in more than one category; this analysis simply seeks to determine how successful one group is compared to another. If strong party structures are present, we would expect to see organizational candidates do better than those who follow the individual route. On the other hand, individual route candidates, with healthy sums of money or access to them, should prevail if parties are weak.

Table 1 uses the percent of candidates who won their election as its dependent variable. In the upper left entry of the table, for example, we can see that 36.4 percent of candidates with business experience won their races, while 39.4 percent of those with no business experience won

their races. Where the differences between the two success rates are statistically significant (using a simple difference of means test), I have marked that with asterisks.

Table 1 here

The evidence from this table strongly suggests that the weak party theory holds little water. Candidates with business experience appear no more successful as candidates than those without. Indeed, they are disadvantaged as a group, although the gap between business and non-business candidates' success rates does not reach statistical significance. This business disadvantage spans all the regions under study. Surprisingly, strongly Republican Orange County, with its adulation for private sector experience, appears to be one of the worst regions for business candidates, who have a victory rate 18.4 points lower than those with no business experience. In all regions, business candidates win at a rate 7.7 points below the rate of non-business candidates.

Attorneys appear to do slightly better than businesspeople. In Fresno and L.A. counties, attorneys' success rates exceed those of non-attorneys by 8.1 and 15.8 points, respectively, although these differences never achieve statistical significance. Lawyers appear to be at a disadvantage in Orange County, although the pooled results show a respectable – if statistically insignificant – 8.4 percent advantage for them overall.

The indicators of strong party networks, however, show much higher success rates for organizational candidates. Those who have previously held office apparently were able to take advantage of their name identification and previously established ties to donors and activists – they prevailed over inexperienced candidates by statistically significant margins in every region except Fresno. Having worked for an officeholder was also a useful exercise for those considering a public career. Fresno staffers won nearly 70 percent of the time, and L.A. staffers had an 8.9-point margin over those who hadn't worked on a political staff. In Orange County, where elections often turn on disparagement of government service, it is not surprising to find that staff work is unhelpful. It is possible that some successful candidates declined to mention

their public service experience in this region. Nonetheless, in the pooled results, staffers won 42.6 percent of the time, a statistically significant advantage over the non-staffers' 31 percent success rate.

Finally, candidates who are immediate relatives or officeholders tended to do rather well in elections. Eighty percent of such candidates won in Fresno, as did 60 percent in Los Angeles. Although the one instance of an immediate family member running for office in Orange County was unsuccessful (an attempt by Representative Bob Dornan's son Mark to win a congressional seat in 2000), the pooled results still show a statistically significant 31.6-point advantage for relatives of politicians seeking to win office.

Table 2 uses the share of the popular vote as its dependent variable, and its findings echo those of the Table 1. Again, candidates with business experience and legal training did no better than those without such backgrounds. Business candidates from Los Angeles actually received 11.4 percent fewer votes than non-business candidates, a statistically significant figure. When pooled, the vote shares for businesspeople and attorneys were statistically indistinguishable from those without such experience.

Table 2 here

Those who had previously held elective office appeared to be at a substantial advantage, receiving a statistically significant additional 11.2 percent of the vote overall and healthy margins in all regions except Fresno. Working for an officeholder also proved to be good way to strengthen one's electoral margin, as staffers from Fresno and L.A. won statistically significant advantages in the popular vote. Staffers won a significant 8.4 additional points in the pooled results. Finally, family connections were also helpful, particularly for Fresno candidates. L.A. candidates received a healthy, though statistically significant, 11.2-point bump for having relatives in office. Again, the one Orange County case went against the trend, although candidates with political relatives overall won a significant 11.8 point bump over those without family connections.

In both tables 1 and 2, the pooled results showed that all groups of organizational candidates received significant advantages from their affiliations, while neither group of individual route candidates did significantly better than other candidates. Membership in a party network, it would seem, is of great value to candidates, and that those who choose to go it alone in politics tend to be at a significant disadvantage. These results are inconsistent with the descriptions of California as a weak party, candidate-centered state. Rather, they imply that there are strong party networks whose influence candidates ignore at their peril.

But what exactly can one of these networks do for a candidate? As suggested in the qualitative section above, a great deal, including introducing her to possible funders, producing precinct walkers, providing office space, etc. But first and foremost, a candidate affiliated with a network should tend to do better than one unaffiliated, all else being equal. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrated this. Yet a fair test of network effects requires something more sophisticated than a simple means test. After all, as established earlier, networks will tend to recruit candidates who have already made names for themselves or raised money on their own. How can we determine what networks provide on top of that?

First, there is a widely held assumption that a party organization, once selecting a candidate, will bestow upon that candidate additional funding by connecting her with wealthy donors or by contributing directly to her campaign. This assumption is empirically testable. For this test, I simply regress each candidate's proportion of expenditures in a given race (measured 0 to 1) on the number of major elite endorsements and a candidate quality variable. (Major elites consist of those key influential people named by multiple respondents in each of my regions of study.) The more major endorsements a candidate has, the greater support she has within a party organization. Most candidates have no major endorsements, although many have between one and three, and a few have up to five. The candidate quality variable is a simple dummy that equals one if the candidate has held elective office before and zero otherwise (Jacobson and Kernell 1983).

Table 3 here

The results, depicted in Table 3, are broken down by region. Across regions, the lesson is the same: controlling for candidate quality, being slated by a party organization gives one greater access to campaign funding. Each major endorsement brings with it, on average, an additional 10 percent of the campaign expenditures in that race. What's more, in both Orange County and Fresno, the candidate quality variable is reduced to insignificance in the presence of the endorsement variable, suggesting that even the better known candidates need the backing of an established organization to gain access to campaign funds.

Having established the importance of endorsements to campaign funding, we can now attempt to measure the impact of elite backing on the actual vote. The basic test is an ordinary least squares equation:

$$\text{Vote share} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Share of expenditures} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{Candidate quality} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{Elite endorsement} + \varepsilon$$

Using this specification, I can measure the influence of an elite's endorsement independent of other dominant factors, such as campaign spending and name recognition, which can affect a local election. The key limitation of this specification, however, is the enormous endogeneity problem. As mentioned previously, elites choose candidates that look very promising, and a good way to look promising is to have a lot of money or be well known. So my elite endorsement variable may, if anything, have inflated standard errors as a result of conflation with other variables. The endorsement variable may therefore appear statistically insignificant at times even when it is large and important.

Although the regression model is straightforward, the causal interpretation of the elite endorsement coefficient is not. Indeed, this test is not a confirmatory test of my theory about elite networks. Figures 1 and 2 and Tables 1 and 2 provided evidence for the existence of such networks. This regression approach, rather, allows us to examine the style and motivations of

elite networks in the different areas I have examined and to see whether the patterns described my respondents in the qualitative section can be picked up quantitatively.

Table 4 displays the various scenarios that could bring rise to different elite endorsement coefficients. I simplify the universe of scenarios greatly by breaking down elite endorsements into two types of styles and two types of motivations. The endorsement style, first of all, may be active or passive.⁴ In an active endorsement, elites do not just lend their name, but also actively campaign for a candidate, using their contacts with activist clubs or unions to deploy precinct walkers on election day, cajoling newspapers to print positive news stories and make endorsements, and calling donors to ask them to contribute to the candidate. Such active endorsers may also have high name recognition and respect among the voters, and their backing can cause some of their popularity to rub off on the endorsee. Active endorsers will, on balance, aid a candidate even controlling for candidate quality and fundraising – the endorsement has some additional vote value.

Table 4 here

The other type of endorsement style is passive. In this case, elites simply lend their name to a campaign. This is usually not an irrelevant act; the endorsement may add to the candidate's credibility in the eyes of prospective donors, boosting the candidate's fundraising abilities. However, the effect of such an endorsement is likely to be felt only through campaign spending. Controlling for spending, the endorsement is not likely to add much vote value on its own.

The motivation for making an endorsement may also come in two flavors. The first is ideological. In this case, an elite will back the candidate whom she earnestly believes in, regardless of that candidate's likelihood of winning. Such candidates may be ideologically extreme, inarticulate, unattractive, abrasive, or otherwise likely to be found undesirable by many

⁴ Admittedly, I have constrained these categories such that that the endorser's contribution to a campaign can only be zero or positive. I have excluded cases in which an endorsement may harm a campaign. (Imagine a candidate for the Berkeley City Council declaring himself Richard Nixon's chosen candidate.) However, since I only asked respondents which elites were influential in getting people elected, I do not believe that this constraint eliminates any important cases.

voters. Regardless of the candidate's particular shortcomings, she has been chosen by the elite for her ideological agenda. The endorser wants to shake up the status quo, electing a person who is unlikely to win without her heavy support but will induce important changes in the way the government functions once elected.

A strategic endorsement, however, reflects the thinking of a savvy elite who wants to back the candidates who are likely to win anyway. This is not to suggest that such an elite wouldn't have some ideological motivations to her choices. Indeed, in an ideologically extreme district, a strategic endorser doesn't have to compromise her ideological fervor to back a successful candidate. Nonetheless, for strategic endorsers, the ability to win will be the paramount concern. The two types of motivations can be boiled down as follows: an ideological elite would rather be right than be in power, while a strategic elite would accept ideological impurity in order to govern.

These two types of styles and motivations produce the two-by-two grid in Figure 4. The top left box (active-ideological), consists of active endorsers who are energetically trying to elect an imperfect candidate for purposive ends. Such a candidate, even if well-funded, is not likely to win without serious help. On average, these candidates will do poorly when controlling for other variables, but the active role of the endorser will help the candidate at least slightly. Thus we would expect the elite endorsement variable to be negative or zero, at best. The passive-ideological elite, on the top right, provides only nominal help to a candidate who is unlikely to win. This may aid the candidate's fundraising efforts, although any positive effect of the endorsement would be captured by the spending variable. The elite endorsement coefficient is likely to be negative here, since the candidate should do poorly holding other variables constant.

The bottom left box (active-strategic) concerns elites who select a candidate for her likelihood of winning and provide active support for her. Such an endorsement would take a good thing and make it better, producing an electoral boost for the candidate that would enable her to outperform what her résumé and money would lead us to expect. In this case, the elite

endorsement coefficient will be positive. Finally, on the bottom right is the passive-strategic endorser, who provides only nominal support for a good candidate. Here, most of the effect of the endorsement is likely captured in the spending variable. However, because of the candidate's fitness for the district, she may do slightly better than expected. Her elite endorsement variable will thus be zero or slightly positive.

Vote share, once again, is measured as the percent of the vote received by the candidate, measured from 0 to 100. Share of expenditures is the candidate's proportion of the expenditures made by all candidates in the race, running from 0 to 1. Candidate quality equals one if the candidate has held elective office before and zero otherwise. The elite endorsement variable equals one when the particular elite has publicly supported the candidate and zero if the elite has chosen to endorse one of the candidate's opponents. For each region, I have run the above regression equation for each key elite who was named by multiple respondents in my surveys. Those who were considered important to elections but did not make enough formal endorsements to include in this equation were omitted. Campaign finance data was collected from the Federal Elections Commission, the California Secretary of State, the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, the Orange County Clerk-Recorder, the Fresno County Clerk/Registrar of Voters, and the Fresno City Clerk.

Table 5 shows the regression results for Los Angeles County, including South Central and the Eastside. I have also included the Speaker's Organization in this table since the last three Assembly speakers have represented Los Angeles districts. The first thing one may notice is that campaign spending explains the overwhelming amount of variance in election results.⁵ Also, the candidate quality variable is almost always positive and occasionally statistically significant, confirming that those candidates with some name recognition tend to do better in low information elections.

⁵ A bivariate regression of vote share on spending yields an R-squared of .73.

Table 5 here

The endorsement variable tends to support many of the claims made by interview respondents about the relative power of various elites. The backing of Maxine Waters, for example, makes a real difference in the fortunes of her chosen candidates, who received a statistically significant 8.6 additional percent of the vote. Although she has only lent her endorsement in a few races, Diane Watson seems to be a very important backer, giving candidates a statistically significant 20.5-point boost. Supervisor Burke's backing, on the other hand, provided only a small and marginally significant ($p=.066$) bump. Over in L.A.'s Eastside, meanwhile, all three elites I examined provided statistically significant boosts for their chosen candidates. Supervisor Molina's endorsement provided 11.1 additional percentage points, and former state Senator Polanco's endorsement, backed by the legendary Alatorre-Torres machine, gave anointed candidates an extra 7.5 percent of the vote. The Election Day labor provided by its affiliated union members allowed the County Federation of Labor to give its candidates an extra 8.8 percent of the vote.

The results from South Central and the Eastside suggest an elite structure run by strategic principals. The endorsement variables are all positive and, with the marginal exception of Supervisor Burke's, statistically significant. This suggests a pragmatic motivation by elites; they are picking the sorts of candidates who are likely to win. And given the large presence of unions, Democratic clubs, and churches in politics in these areas, it would not be surprising to find that the coefficients are consistent with an active endorsement style. Elites do not merely lend their names. They provide the labor necessary to produce a respectable Election Day showing for their chosen candidates. The results from these regions thus seem most consistent with an active-strategic elite system.

The results for the Speaker's Organization, seen on the right of Table 5, suggest a very different form of elite organization. The two most recent speakers – Bob Hertzberg and Herb Wesson – each have endorsement coefficients near zero, and Antonio Villaraigosa's is large (-

9.75), negative, and statistically significant. These results suggest an ideologically motivated speaker, which is surprising, given the history of the office. Speakers Jesse Unruh and Willie Brown, for example, while certainly liberal in their voting behavior, were well known for their pragmatic and energetic approaches to electioneering. Today's speakers, by contrast, are probably reduced to a passive role in elections by the amount of legislative work they must do in Sacramento. Additionally, term limits may have had a detrimental effect on the speaker's power in elections. With Assembly members limited to six years in office and leaders rarely serving more than two years, speakers may simply not have enough time to learn who the important players and credible candidates are. With a paucity of information, speakers may draw upon ideological predilections to make their decisions about candidates. Judging from his coefficient (and reputation), Villaraigosa seems very likely to be ideologically motivated.

The Orange County findings, depicted in Table 6, all have low endorsement coefficients that are statistically indistinguishable from zero. Although conservatives Buck Johns, Ross Johnson, and John Lewis all seem to provide respectable five to seven-point boosts for the candidates they support, none of these figures are statistically significant. And Tom Fuentes, widely feared and revered in county Republican circles, actually seems to have a negative impact on the candidates he backs, although this figure is statistically insignificant and based on very few observations. No positive vote value associated with the backing of Senator Ackerman or former Speaker Pringle can be demonstrated, either.

These findings are not surprising. Many of the key elites named by respondents are business leaders, not public officeholders, and thus aren't well known by rank-and-file voters, even solid Republicans. These elites often work behind the scenes to help their candidates without even making a formal endorsement. Tom Fuentes, for example, is widely known to work this way (Pringle 2002). And unlike the Los Angeles groups, Orange County organizations do not seem particularly focused on labor-intensive activities like voter turnout or registration efforts. Rather, conservative elites in this county, judging from the qualitative data, are focused

on channeling money toward some candidates and away from others. Endorsements certainly translate into funding here, as Table 3 indicated, but the networks do not seem to provide much beyond that. The elite style here is best described as passive; the funding advantage they provide may be enough.

In terms of elite incentives, the qualitative evidence strongly suggested that most of the area's elites are ideologically motivated. To be sure, given the way that Orange County districts have been drawn, far right candidates are not necessarily out of step with their districts. Yet, at least among the county's conservatives, it seems fair to say that they would prefer to maintain an elected contingent that "stands for something" than to moderate their leaders in the struggle for a majority. This observation, combined with the low or negative values of the endorsement coefficients, strongly suggests that the elites of Orange County should be categorized as passive-ideological.

Table 6 here

Finally, we turn to the results for Fresno, seen in Table 7. Interestingly, the only positive and statistically significant endorsement coefficients in this area come from organizations rather than individuals. The Fresno Police Officers' Association aids its chosen candidates with an average of 12.3 additional percentage points, and the local chapter of the Service Employees International Union offers a whopping 19.5 percentage points with its backing. These results indicate the presence of at least one active-strategic organization on each side of the partisan divide capable of turning out Election Day volunteers who can mobilize voters. None of the other endorsement coefficients are distinguishable from zero. Congressman Dooley's backing appears conspicuously powerful, associated with a (statistically insignificant) 31.7-point boost, but given the small number of observations in this and several other regressions, the results are highly questionable. As further results become available, these patterns may become clearer. Supervisor Arambula and Assemblywoman Reyes, for example, have only begun their involvement in local politics over the past two election cycles. As they cement their power bases

and make more endorsements, perhaps we will find that their endorsement comes with considerable activity on the part of the principals. On the other hand, perhaps the rural setting is not well suited to the labor-intensive style of an active endorser, but is tailor made for a passive endorser who can help raise money. For the present, we can only describe the Fresno elite network as strategic in its motivations and either active or passive in its style.

Table 7 here

Discussion and Conclusions

Discerning the structure of party networks in a region both known for and defensive of its nonpartisan legacy is no small task. Mindful of Einstein's warning that "not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts," I have pursued a variety of methodological approaches in this project. Each method obviously has its advantages and limitations. However, there is a marked degree of consistency across methods, providing strong support for several conclusions:

- *Party networks exist in California and are highly influential in elections.* In each region, respondents mentioned a similar set of individuals – officeholders, donors, and activists – whose influence they felt was determinative in party nominations. All these organizations thus meet the small world condition. Due to redistricting, the united front condition is often less stringent, but most organizations are at least united enough to prevail in the primaries, which is almost always sufficient for election. Finally, the influence of these networks is decisive in nominations: More endorsements bring more funding, which is highly correlated with vote share. A regression analysis also showed many of these elites to have a significant impact in contested elections, even controlling for funding and candidate quality. Furthermore, some four-fifths of today's incumbents at all levels of government can be shown to have reached their current jobs through such networks.

- *There are significant advantages to working within a group compared to going it alone.* Candidates and would-be candidates recognize the difficulties of running for office – the time commitment, the money, the expertise required, etc. – and seek to reduce the costs by working within an organization. By working for or otherwise becoming attached to an important officeholder, candidates gain entrée to a group of resource donors and other backers who would otherwise be inaccessible. There is a tradeoff, though. These organizations exert a lot of influence over the would-be candidate's career, deciding when she is ready to run and what she will say and do on the campaign trail. Additionally, officeholders see the value of coordinating with colleagues across different levels of government, as it gives them greater opportunities to secure public funds for their supporters.
- *There are substantial regional differences in organizational styles.* Politics within Los Angeles seems to most closely match the party model I originally postulated, with identifiable organizational leaders whose public endorsements have a measurable impact in elections, even controlling for money, and a group of incumbents who overwhelmingly owe their successes to these networks. Judging from the descriptions of both adherents and detractors, Orange County conservatives have a very strong organization, but it would seem to be of a less observable form. Business leaders and land developers – not officeholders – do a lot of the coordination, fundraising, and hard work on behalf of candidates, and often manage to keep their names off the campaign literature. The Fresno style is more of a blend: many candidates rise through the ranks as protégés of local officeholders, although it is organizations like labor and law enforcement that seem to have the resources and name recognition to mobilize voters on Election Day. Given that Los Angeles – with its large concentrations of poor, unassimilated voters dependent on government largesse – most closely matches the conditions in which the traditional party

machines once thrived, it is unsurprising that we would find the strongest evidence of organizational activity there.

- *When recruitment is good, persuasion is unnecessary.* Many who are interested in influencing public policy complain that officeholders, once elected, don't pay attention to them. But that is beside the point. Organizational leaders are clearly concerned about recruiting the sort of leaders who are loyal to ideology and faction and will not need to be told what to do once in office. In rare circumstances, such as the Dorris Allen debacle in 1995, incumbents need to be disciplined or even removed for failing to behave as their backers desire. But when recruitment is done correctly, such brute tactics needn't be used.

I am still hoping to expand on this research, both deepening my knowledge of the regions under study and attempting further quantitative methods to tease out the underlying organizational structure within party politics. An analysis of campaign contribution patterns, for example, may provide some hints about the organizational leaders and their influence over donors.

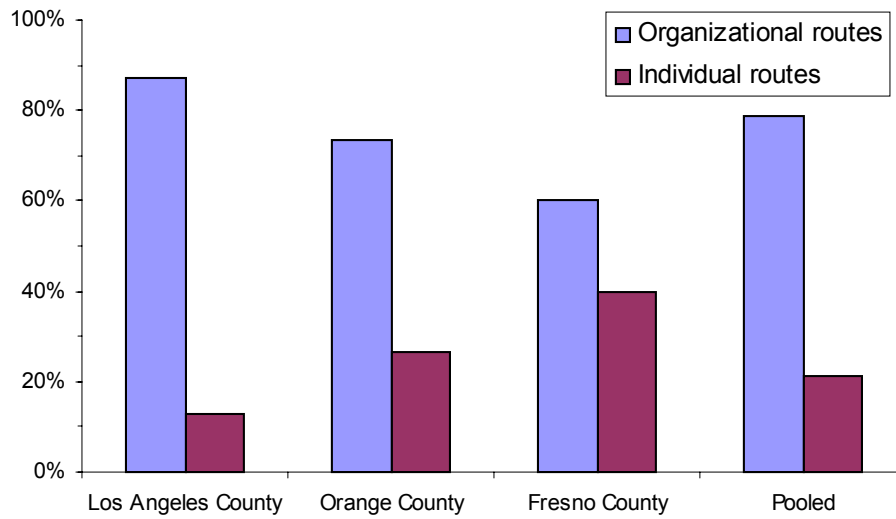
I have also hardly studied the entire state, and other areas may warrant attention. Although some areas of the state could be relatively unorganized politically, there are suggestions of quasi-party organizations all over the state, including Berkeley Citizens Action and the Burton machine in the San Francisco Bay Area and Santa Monica's for Renters' Rights and the Berman-Waxman machine in western L.A. County. Despite the general impression of Californian – and American – politics as candidate-centered, my research finds numerous examples of organizations finding and grooming candidates for office, and other examples of unaffiliated politicians trying to buy their way into office and failing miserably. The Progressives who sought to drive parties out of the business of politics seem to have failed in the long run. Politics in this weak party state is sounding suspiciously party-centered.

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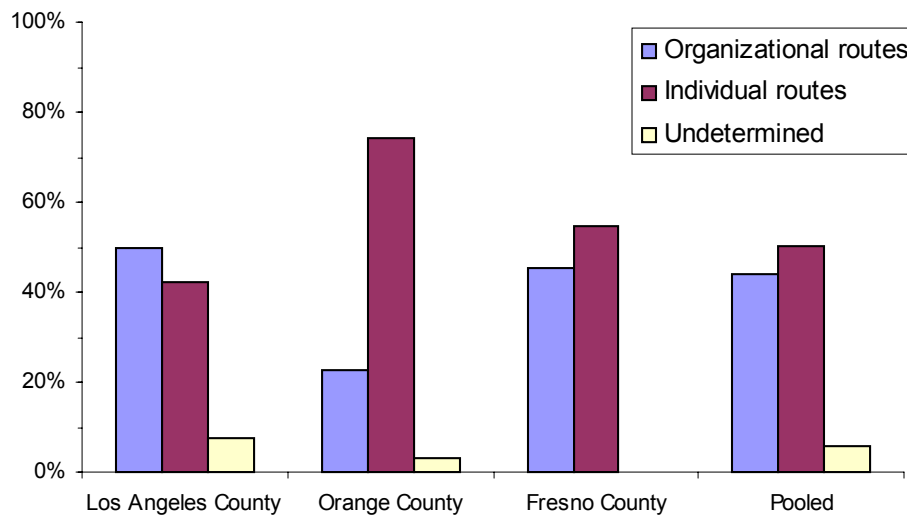
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**Figure 1: Positions Held by Current Officeholders
Immediately Prior to Taking Current Office**



Organizational routes: Activist, political appointee, relative of officeholder, political staff, other elected office
Individual routes: Professional, attorney

**Figure 2: Positions Held by Current Officeholders
Immediately Prior to Taking First Elected Position**



Organizational routes: Activist, political appointee, relative of officeholder, political staff
Individual routes: Professional, attorney

Table 1: Percent of Candidates in Each Category who Won Election

	Fresno		Orange County		LA (South Central and Eastside)		Pooled	
<i>Candidate has ...</i>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
experience in business	36.4	39.4	20.8	39.2	16.7	31.6	27.2	34.9
experience as an attorney	45.5	37.4	28.6	33.8	43.5	27.7	40.5	32.1
previously held elective office	34.5	39.5	48.5**	21.4	44.6**	23.0	43.7***	27.8
worked for an elected officeholder	69.2**	34.0	28.6	33.8	36.6	27.7	42.6*	31.0
a relative who is an elected officeholder	80.0**	36.2	0.0	33.8	60.0	28.8	63.6**	32.0

Asterisks indicate the difference between the “yes” and “no” positions is statistically significant.

*p≤.10, **p≤.05, ***p≤.01

Table 2: Average Popular Vote Advantage for Candidates in Each Category

<i>Candidate has ...</i>	Fresno	Orange County	LA (South Central and Eastside)	Pooled
experience in business	0.1	-4.7	-11.4**	-2.7
experience as an attorney	6.1	-12.6	3.0	2.0
previously held elective office	2.3	13.8***	15.4***	11.2***
worked for an elected officeholder	15.9***	2.3	9.0**	8.4***
a relative who is an elected officeholder	19.3**	-23.1	11.2	11.8*

Asterisks indicate the vote difference is statistically significant.

*p≤.10, **p≤.05, ***p≤.01

Table 3: Variables Predicting Candidate's Share of Expenditures in Campaign

<i>Variable</i>	Fresno	Orange County	Los Angeles (South Central and Eastside)	Pooled
Constant	.22*** (.03)	.17*** (.04)	.12*** (.02)	.16*** (.02)
Number of Endorsements	.10*** (.02)	.10*** (.02)	.11*** (.01)	.10*** (.01)
High quality candidate	.02 (.07)	.09 (.06)	.09** (.03)	.08** (.03)
Adjusted R ²	.195	.235	.346	.281
N	82	75	177	334

Dependent variable is each candidate's expenditures as a proportion of all the candidate expenditures in that race, ranging between 0 and 1. Cell entries are ordinary least squares coefficients. Standard errors appear in parentheses beneath coefficients. Asterisks indicate statistical significance: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 4: Expected value of elite endorsement coefficient based on style and motivation of endorser

		Endorsement style	
		Active	Passive
Endorsement motivation	Ideological	0 or –	–
	Strategic	+	0 or +

Table 5: Variables Predicting Candidate Vote Share by Elite Endorser, Los Angeles County

	South Central L.A.			Eastside L.A.			Speaker's Organization		
<i>Elite Endorser:</i>	Maxine Waters ⁶	Diane Watson ⁷	Yvonne B. Burke ⁸	Gloria Molina ⁹	Richard Polanco ¹⁰	LA County Federation of Labor ¹¹	Robert Hertzberg ¹²	Antonio Villaraigosa ¹³	Herb Wesson ¹⁴
Constant	4.14** (1.51)	0.52 (2.53)	2.70 (1.50)	2.91 (1.49)	3.08** (1.16)	6.01*** (1.43)	9.43** (2.65)	6.30** (1.83)	7.61*** (2.15)
Share of expenditures	67.19*** (5.47)	58.59*** (12.68)	78.74*** (5.85)	68.58*** (5.93)	78.33*** (3.96)	62.17*** (4.95)	68.15*** (7.70)	80.29*** (7.49)	66.11*** (8.31)
High quality candidate	2.44 (2.65)	12.10* (4.60)	2.73 (2.30)	3.60 (2.84)	0.02 (1.99)	2.31 (2.14)	2.12 (3.53)	10.92** (3.93)	-1.05 (3.31)
Elite endorsement	8.58** (3.08)	20.48** (6.31)	5.66 [†] (3.01)	11.10** (3.32)	6.69** (2.13)	8.76** (3.06)	-2.84 (4.26)	-9.75* (4.49)	2.81 (4.77)
Adjusted R ²	.797	.808	.857	.795	.899	.801	.756	.896	.727
N	71	24	55	76	64	98	36	32	55

Cell entries are ordinary least squares coefficients. Standard errors appear in parentheses beneath coefficients. Asterisks indicate statistical significance: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$. [†] $p = .066$

⁶ Member of Congress, 35th district. Coefficients based on 15 elections between 1998 and 2003.

⁷ Member of Congress, 32nd district. Coefficients based on 4 elections from 2001 and 2003.

⁸ L.A. County Supervisor, 2nd district. Coefficients based on 12 elections between 2000 and 2003.

⁹ L.A. County Supervisor, 1st district. Coefficients based on 15 elections between 1999 and 2003.

¹⁰ Former state Senator, 22nd district. Coefficients based on 12 elections between 1998 and 2003.

¹¹ Coefficients based on 23 elections between 1999 and 2003.

¹² Former Assembly Speaker (2000-02). Coefficients based on 11 elections between 2000 and 2003.

¹³ Former Assembly Speaker (1998-2000). Coefficients based on 9 elections between 1998 and 2002.

¹⁴ Speaker of the California Assembly. Coefficients based on 13 elections between 2000 and 2003.

Table 6: Variables Predicting Candidate Vote Share by Elite Endorser, Orange County

<i>Elite Endorser:</i>	Dick Ackerman ¹⁵	Tom Fuentes ¹⁶	Buck Johns ¹⁷	Ross Johnson ¹⁸	John Lewis ¹⁹	Curt Pringle ²⁰
Constant	17.44*** (4.27)	17.48* (5.25)	6.68* (2.76)	9.06** (2.68)	7.31** (2.55)	8.42** (2.56)
Share of expenditures	59.94*** (11.73)	66.50** (13.91)	55.94*** (8.48)	56.37*** (7.25)	51.75*** (7.07)	55.63*** (7.78)
High quality candidate	-4.13 (4.66)	-10.48 (6.20)	1.94 (4.40)	4.81 (3.52)	5.49 (3.52)	4.50 (3.40)
Elite endorsement	-4.73 (7.22)	-9.87 (9.15)	5.43 (5.97)	5.44 (4.64)	6.94 (4.34)	0.55 (5.23)
Adjusted R ²	.673	.752	.765	.786	.762	.731
N	24	11	21	34	33	37

Cell entries are ordinary least squares coefficients. Standard errors appear in parentheses beneath coefficients. Asterisks indicate statistical significance: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

¹⁵ State Senator, 33rd district. Coefficients based on 8 races between 1998 and 2002.

¹⁶ President of the Lincoln Club and Chairman of the County Republican Central Committee. Coefficients based on 3 races between 1998 and 2000.

¹⁷ Land developer. Coefficients based on 4 races between 1998 and 2000.

¹⁸ State Senator, 35th district. Coefficients based on 10 races between 1998 and 2002.

¹⁹ Former State Senator. Coefficients based on 8 races between 1998 and 2002.

²⁰ Former Speaker of the State Assembly (1996). Coefficients based on 9 races between 1998 and 2002.

Table 7: Variables Predicting Candidate Vote Share by Elite Endorser, Fresno

<i>Elite Endorser:</i>	Democratic-leaning elites				Republican-leaning elites		
	SEIU Local 535 ²¹	Juan Arambula ²²	Sarah Reyes ²³	Cal Dooley ²⁴	Fresno Deputy Sheriffs', Assn. ²⁵	Fresno Police Officers', Assn. ²⁶	Earl Smittcamp ²⁷
Constant	5.56 (4.05)	10.65* (4.39)	38.09 (27.65)	33.99 (11.80)	9.53** (3.21)	7.91* (2.94)	2.51 (2.30)
Share of expenditures	50.53** (11.33)	69.25*** (10.43)	21.15 (56.26)	-8.84 (45.91)	66.47*** (8.99)	61.40*** (8.43)	92.95*** (7.98)
High quality candidate	8.36 (4.78)	-1.50 (8.59)	-25.49 (28.35)	-24.84 (12.66)	3.41 (4.98)	.10 (4.18)	4.62 (3.31)
Elite endorsement	19.48* (6.38)	-2.40 (5.00)	-3.78 (6.47)	31.70 (25.04)	1.52 (4.48)	12.33** (4.47)	-7.71 (4.22)
Adjusted R ²	.860	.713	.842	.918	.666	.766	.944
N	14	22	5	6	38	33	12

²¹ Service Employees International Union, Local 535. Coefficients based on 6 elections between 1998 and 2002.

²² Fresno County Supervisor, 3rd district. Coefficients based on 8 elections between 1998 and 2002.

²³ Member of the state Assembly, 31st district. Coefficients based on 2 elections from 2002.

²⁴ Member of Congress, 20th district. Coefficients based on 2 elections from 1998 and 2002.

²⁵ Coefficients based on 14 elections between 1998 and 2002.

²⁶ Coefficients based on 13 elections between 1998 and 2002.

²⁷ Peach grower and industry lobbyist. Coefficients based on 3 elections between 1998 and 2002.