Parties and Campaigns in Contemporary Arkansas Politics

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Thirty-five years ago, V. O. Key (1949: 183-204) ably surveyed the Arkansas political landscape. Since then, a number of observers have assessed subsequent developments (see Drummond, 1957; Yates, 1972; Ranchino, 1972; Bonds, 1974; Bass & DeVries, 1976: 87-106; Johnston, 1981; Johnston, 1983; and Lamis, forthcoming). This present consideration of parties and campaigns in contemporary Arkansas politics approaches the subject from three perspectives. The first associates shifting statewide electoral patterns since Key wrote with changes in the character of the state political party organizations he described. The second details the selection, tenure, and activity of the leaders of these organizations since 1970. The third addresses modern directions in campaign style and practice, with special reference to the role and status of party organization in the conduct of election campaigns. Major data sources include the above-mentioned analyses, contemporaneous journalistic accounts, and personal interviews with several party and campaign organization notables.

The Electoral Environment of Party Organization

Key (1949: 183) encountered "pure one-party politics" in Arkansas. "Policy consensus and factional fluidity" (p. 184) and "a politics of personal organization and maneuver" (p. 195) characterized the scene. The dominant Democratic party embraced ephemeral electoral coalitions. In the absence of party competition, its institutional identity and status were nominal. At the state level, the organization passively acknowledged and adapted to inconsistent personalistic leadership provided by successive governors. In turn, the electorally quiescent Republicans largely restricted their organizational activity to building and maintaining relationships outside the state with the national party leadership (Key: 292-97).

During the succeeding fifteen years, electoral developments did not alter this organizational status. Democratic hegemony was not subject to serious challenge. Incumbents generally prevailed in intra-party contests, though two governors were denied renomination. The most prominent figure on the state political scene was Orval Faubus, who was elected governor six consecutive times. Meanwhile, John McClellan and J. William Fulbright remained ensconced in their senatorial bailiwicks in Washington.

By the mid-1960's, both the organizational vitality and electoral prospects of the Republican party had become invigorated, owing to the

formidable presence of Winthrop Rockefeller as first its generous financial patron and then its standard bearer for governor in four consecutive campaigns beginning in 1964 (Yates, 1972; Bass & DeVries, 1976: 93-94). Conversely, increasing factional disarray among the Democrats both heightened their electoral vulnerability and deteriorated such organizational cohesion as existed. Indeed, according to Jim Ranchino (1972: 90),

> Strange as it seems, Arkansas had no Democratic party organization that functioned effectively at all levels of state and local government after 1964. ... The Democratic party had neither the talent nor the finances, nor the insights for that matter, to develop a unified, consistent organization with strength to control its own affairs.

Republican momentum, such as it was, gave out in 1970. Making a bid for a third term, Rockefeller suffered defeat at the hands of Dale Bumpers, who had come out of obscurity to capture the Democratic party nomination against noteworthy opposition that included the legendary Faubus (Yates, 1972; Bass & DeVries, 1976: 94).

In the 1970's, the Republicans experienced a return to normalcy in terms of poor performances in statewide electoral competition. Factional rivalry emerged within the state organization among the rapidly diminishing pre-Rockefeller old guard, the Rockefeller lieutenants, and a new breed of ideologically conservative Democratic converts. However, the organization did not revert to its pre-Rockefeller character. Bass and DeVries (1976: 104) write,

> By the mid-1970's, the Republican party was a faction-ridded organization that still maintained a large state headquarters in downtown Little Rock, published a monthly party newsletter, supported a paid staff, and could claim one congressman and a quartet of state legislators as their major officeholders.

Their competition, the again dominant Democrats, presented a different organizational appearance than had been the case in the Faubus era. Longtime national committeeman James Blair (1983) recalls that 1968 was a pivotal transitional year for the state party organization. Prior to that time, the state party had been "tightly held and closely guarded." However, the disruptive loss of the governorship, coupled with the tumultuous events occurring at the party's national convention, encouraged "a lot of politically interested types who hadn't been leaders ... to go to a coalition-type party" patterned after the national organization. "They decided to staff the party structure with liberals, conservatives, union members, blacks, and just open the party up." Similarly, Ranchino (1972: 68) observes that by 1970, "the Democratic party, in ten years, had moved from a conservative, closed, tightly-knit operation, to a moderate, decentralized, fragmented, independent and open political organization."

This significant reorientation notwithstanding, Bass and DeVries (1976: 105) could still observe, "In terms of party organization and structure, the Democratic party is perhaps the weakest in the South. ... one top party official said he would oppose building a strong party organization as long as the Republicans were so weak."

In the decade of the 1970's, young moderates in the Democratic party began to challenge some influential incumbents. Congressman David Pryor opposed the state's senior Senator, John McClellan, in 1972 and narrowly lost in a runoff. Pryor subsequently was elected governor twice. In 1974, Governor Bumpers successfully challenged Senator Fulbright. McClellan died in 1977. The next year, in a heated contest for his seat, Governor Pryor emerged victorious over two moderate congressmen, Ray Thornton and Jim Guy Tucker, defeating the latter in a runoff and easily subduing his Republican opponent in November. Bill Clinton, another new face in the party, was elected to his first term as governor at the same time.

No Republican gubernatorial nominee in the 1970's even approached the forty percent plateau. However, Governor Clinton's surprisingly lackluster performance in winning the 1980 Democratic primary, in the wake of some controversial policy decisions, signaled his vulnerbility. Republican prospects revived under the leadership of newcomer Frank White, and the party returned to the governor's office after a decade in limbo.

White's victory heated up smoldering ideological conflict within the Republican ranks (Hamburger, 1981). Meanwhile, electoral rejection and the dawning recognition of significant long term Republican party strength in the state spurred the Democrats on to an intense period of party building focused at the county level (Can't ignore 2-party shift, 1981; Carlisle, 1983; Wallace, 1983). This effort quickly bore fruit in 1982 when Clinton overcame heated primary opposition and went on to defeat White in the general election rematch.

The past thirty-five years of electoral rivalry between the Arkansas parties thus divides into four distinct eras. The first fifteen years, 1949-1964, were a continuation of the unquestioned Democratic dominance delineated by Key. For a brief interregnum in the middle to late 1960's, the GOP savored electoral success under Rockefeller's banner. In 1970, the Republicans began a decade of decline; and the Democrats were clearly in command throughout. The inconclusive record of the 1980's to date suggests that the Republican base of electoral support may have become sufficiently sizable and stable to make genuine two-party competition the pattern of the future (see Lamis, forthcoming, ch. 9).

Corresponding to these ebbs and flows of the electoral tides, the state political party organizations have experienced substantial changes. Winthrop Rockefeller was the catalytic agent who brought to life the virtually moribund Republican party. In turn, the long complacent Democrats responded to internal turmoil and a viable Republican alternative by opening up their organization to here-to-fore unrepresented groups and forces. However, no sooner had they

done so than the competitive threat subsided, and with it a major incentive for party building efforts. Through the 1970's downturn in Republican electoral fortunes, the state organization sought to develop its identity apart from Rockefeller's diminishing shadow. Meanwhile, another defeat at the polls was necessary to make the Democrats aware that success in the contemporary electoral environment would require significant organizational adaptation. Such traditional legacies and developing trends provide the framework for the following discussion of state party organization structure and leadership.

Party Organization Structure and Leadership

The organizational structures of Arkansas political parties closely resemble each other and political parties in general (Jewell & Olson, 1982: 76-77, 86). According to party rules, state conventions meet biennially and authorize activity in the interim by state committees, each numbering in the low hundreds, and executive committees with about fifty members. In turn, the day-to-day direction of the state parties generally devolves on part-time, unsalaried chairmen, named by the parent bodies for two year terms, and headquarters staff operations located in the state capital and managed by full-time, salaried executive directors. A brief recounting of the procession of chairmen and executive directors in both political parties since 1970 will provide the bases for placing Arkansas state party leadership in comparative perspective and for pointing out noteworthy variations between the two parties, owing to the distinctly separate electoral environments within which they have operated.

After his runoff primary victory over Orval Faubus for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1970, Dale Bumpers made it known to the state convention that his erstwhile rival Joe Purcell was his choice to succeed the departing Charles Matthews in the party chairmanship. The incumbent Attorney General with serveral months remaining in his term, Purcell had been a contender in the first gubernatorial primary, running third behind Bumpers and Faubus, and then endorsing Bumpers. Party unity, factional and geographical, loomed as the major reason for his selection (Jones, 1970). Matthews had been a catalyst for organizational reform in the late 1960's; and during those years, the state party had expanded its headquarters staff and scope of operations and had become debt-ridden. Purcell is a self-described conservative with regard to spending. He cut back on the headquarters staff and "ran the party on a shoestring" to get it out of debt. While he was chairman, no one held the title of executive director. Mildred Cunningham was the office manager at party headquarters; and on the eve of the 1972 state convention, her son Bryan B. Cunningham was hired as administrative director to handle convention arrangements. In advance of Cunningham's arrival, however, Purcell announced that he would not seek another term, in anticipation of another office seeking endeavor on his own behalf (Purcell will give up, 1972; Purcell, 1983; Wallace 1984).

Governor Bumpers, seeking re-election, indicated to the state convention that his choice to replace Purcell was his old friend, Bradley D. Jesson, a Sebastian County party leader and a former gubernatorial staff assistant (Choice to head party, 1972; Robertson, 1972). Residing in Fort Smith, Jesson relied heavily on the executive director at party headquarters to handle the "nuts and bolts" of party maintenance. Cunningham stayed on functioning in that capacity until his resignation in October, 1973. At that point, Jesson endorsed the controversial candidacy of Craig Campbell for the post, and the state committee narrowly approved his hiring. Many party regulars took offense over Campbell's support for Richard Nixon in the 1972 presidential election (Dumas, 1973). When Governor Bumpers decided to challenge incumbent J. William Fulbright for the party's senatorial nomination in 1974, Jesson resigned to accept a campaign assignment on behalf of his sponsor. To have done so as chairman would have violated the prescribed norm of neutrality. Nancy Balton of Oceola, the first vice chair since 1968, succeeded him for the remainder of his term (Jesson resigns, 1974).

Bumpers' successful campaign created a vacancy in the governor's office. David Pryor captured the Democratic nomination. Pryor informally made it known to the state committee that his candidate for the chairmanship was his campaign treasurer, Mack McLarty, who was elected unanimously (New chairman elected, 1974). Craig Campbell remained the executive director until February, 1976, when he announced his resignation (Party official resigns, 1976). Craig Douglas succeeded him (New executive gets approval, 1976).

McLarty chose to conclude his noncontroversial chairmanship after a single term, and Herby Branscum was Governor Pryor's choice as his successor (Democratic chairman to resign, 1976; Branscum is selected, 1976). Elected in 1976, Branscum served three consecutive full terms. He endured through a change in the party nominee in the governor's office when Bill Clinton succeeded David Pryor and the party's subsequent loss of the governorship under Clinton to Frank White in 1980. He presided over the departure of executive director Douglas in 1977, the coming and going of Douglas' successor, executive secretary Vaughn McQuary, and the hiring of Doug Wallace as executive director in 1979 (Democrats select, 1977; Wallace, 1983). To replace Branscum, gubernatorial aspirant Bill Clinton recommended Lilburn Carlisle of Benton, the home town of Joe Purcell, Clinton's chief rival for the nomination. A long time party activist in Saline County, Carlisle brought to the chairmanship a proven record as a county level organizer (Businessman from Benton, 1982; Carlisle, 1983; Wright, 1983). Wallace stayed on until August, 1984 (Party official resigns, 1984). Sandy Ledbetter was designated as his interim replacement (Hall, 1984).

The Republicans began the decade of the 1970's in control of the governorship in the person of Winthrop Rockefeller, who unsuccessfully sought re-election for a third term. The state committee had its customary meeting after the general election to choose its chairman. Charles Bernard of Earle, a former office seeker and an

ideological conservative, easily defeated Rockefeller's candidate, William T. Kelly, in a two-man race (Bernard seeking support, 1970; Dumas, 1970).

Party headquarters had been under the management of executive director Neil (Sox) Johnson since January, 1970. Johnson resigned in December, 1972, to take a position in the federal government (State Republican director resigns, 1972). Chairman Bernard, preparing himself to leave the following April, consulted with most of the executive committee and received strong endorsement prior to announcing the hiring of Ken Coon, also a former office seeker, as the new executive director. Bernard made it clear that in so choosing, he was not seeking to impose Coon on the next chairman (State Republicans consider three, 1972; Jaycee leader named, 1972). However, Bernard's sucessor, State Senator Jim Caldwell of Rogers, kept Coon on until 1974, when Coon secured the party nomination for governor and met defeat at the hands of David Pryor. Bill Valentine replaced Coon temporarily at party headquarters.

Caldwell had been chosen as chairman by the executive committee in a three-person contest in which no marked ideological divisions appeared among the candidates (Arkansas Republicans elect chairman, 1973). He served through the November, 1974, general election and declined to seek another term. He departed with the party owing him a $12,500 debt for personal funds he had put forward to keep the party headquarters open throughout the election campaign (Outgoing chairman neutral, 1974).

Former executive director Coon emerged as a prominent contender for the chairmanship (Battle developing, 1974). However, Coon's proposal to serve as a full-time, salaried chairman proved to be a stumbling block, despite a new party rule allowing the chairman to do so (Coon withdraws, 1974). After Coon's withdrawal, the state committee selected Lynn Lowe of Texarkana over three opponents. Lowe brought Coon back to party headquarters in his previous capacity, where he remained for about a year (Smith, 1974; GOP leader is resigning, 1975). On Coon's resignation, that position was assumed by Dr. Robert Luther, who had been one of Lowe's rivals for the chairmanship (Henderson dean selected, 1976).

Lowe subsequently was elected to two additional terms as chairman. Luther left in 1978 to manage an out-of-state campaign; and Delia Combs, a long-time party activist, was chosen by the executive committee as his successor (Woman named, 1978). In that year, Chairman Lowe was the party's unsuccessful nominee for governor against the Democrats' Bill Clinton. In early 1980, well into his third term, Lowe determined that five years was long enough to serve as chairman. He resigned, announcing his intention to seek the party post of national committeeman. According to party rules, the vice chair, Jerri Pruden of Hope, succeeded him (Lowe to resign, 1980).

Later on that year, the GOP's nominee for governor, Frank White upset the Democratic incumbent, Bill Clinton. After the surprising victory, the state committee convened to select its chairman. Harlon (Bo) Holleman of Wynne defeated Sharon Shipley of Fort Smith, his

co-chairman in the Reagan for President campaign in the state, in a contest that apparently did not feature a clear statement from the incoming governor regarding his preference (GOP committee elects Holleman, 1980). Holleman died in March, 1982. The vice chair, Bob Cohee of Little Rock, finished out the remainder of the term. Shortly after Cohee's accession, Delia Combs resigned as executive director (Combs resigns, 1982). June Grayson returned to her former headquarters assignment as executive secretary (Wiles, 1982b) and has since handled the responsibilities of the executive director's position.

After Governor White's re-election defeat in 1982, the state committee rejected Cohee's candidacy for a full term in favor of Morris (Buzz) Arnold, who had the support of White and the state's two Republican congressmen, John Paul Hammerschmidt and Ed Bethune (Top GOP officeholders endorse, 1982; Wiles, 1982a). When Arnold resigned and left the state after a year in office, Bob Leslie of Redfield, the vice chair, became chairman.

This array of party chairmen generally conforms to the demographic and socioeconomic composites drawn in more general studies by Wiggins and Turk (1970) and Huckshorn (1976: 23-36): predominantly white males of early middle age, having a college education, a business-professional background, and previous political experience. The two females were "accidental" vice chairs elevated to fill vacancies. McLarty at twenty-eight was the youngest selected; Holleman at fifty-three the oldest.

These common features notwithstanding, the distinctive environments within which the two party organizations operate produce some noteworthy disparities between them and occasional departures from national norms. For example, the timing of the election of the chairman differs. The Democratic chairman is chosen in September before the general election; the Republican in December after the general election. The difference can be accounted for with reference to the longstanding Democratic electoral dominance. Anticipating electoral victory, and in an effort to facilitate cooperation between the party in office and the party organization, the Democrats have customarily allowed their gubernatorial nominee to recommend his choice for the chairmanship, and that choice has then been ratified. In contrast, the Republicans' long legacy of electoral impotence has inclined them against offering their titular leader such a commanding role in chairman selection; so they await his customary defeat before making the decision. At such time, the views of party office holders, including the governor, may well be solicited, but they are not controlling (Grayson, 1983).

In turn, the one-party heritage and the timing of the selection process have combined to effect different role orientations for chairmen in the two parties. Huckshorn (1976: 72) has observed that party chairmen can be differentiated into three groups, with reference to their relationships with state governors. Political agents of the governors serve by the choice and at the pleasure of their sponsors,

focusing their attentions on such activities as are thus delegated to them. In-party independent chairmen occupy their offices and have party standings and responsibilities apart from their governors. Out-party independents hold office while the other party controls the governorship.

Arkansas Democratic chairmen have typically taken on the political agent role orientation. Jesson and McLarty clearly adopted this perspective, as did Branscum at the outset of his tenure. A distinctive feature of the latter's extended chairmanship was his successive transition from political agent under Pryor, to in-party independent with Clinton, to out-party independent with White. While Purcell and Carlisle could with considerable justice also be classified as political agents, both demonstrated aspects of the in-party independent orientation, owing to Purcell's separate electoral identity and base of support, and Carlisle's record as a party builder. Virtually all the Republican chairmen have functioned as out-party independents, with the exceptions during the White years tending to act more as in-party independents than political agents.

Recruitment patterns for the chairmanship also differ by party. The Republicans have been much more likely to choose chairmen with records of or orientations toward office seeking. Bernard had run unsuccessfully for the U. S. Senate. Caldwell was an incumbent state senator. Lowe remained in the chairmanship during his race for governor. Arnold contemplated a candidacy for that office. Leslie had secured the party nomination and campaigned without success for the fourth district congressional seat. In contrast, in the Democratic ranks, only Purcell stands out as an office seeker type, though McLarty did serve one term in the state legislature prior to being named chairman. Again, the legacy of non-competition appears to furnish the basis for an explanation. The small size of the Republican party has limited the number of potential office seekers, created the need for "ticket-fillers," and inhibited the development of a separation between office seekers and organizers. The larger Democratic party has featured more division of labor and specialization. Further, its selection process encourages such a separation to the extent that office seekers might prefer to recommend the selection of their organizers as opposed to electoral rivals. Wiggins and Turk (1970) and Huckshorn (1976: 39-42) found to the contrary nationally.

Within the Democratic party, acceptance of the gubernatorial nominee's prerogative of chairman selection has forestalled contests for that office. The absence of this tradition for the Republicans has left the way open for regular intra-party contests in which ideological orientations have sometimes been at issue and concerns for party unity expressed. Ideology does not appear to have been a relevant factor in the choices of Democratic chairmen.

Formal authority for chairman selection has been exercised somewhat inconsistently over the years. Through 1972, the Democratic gubernatorial nominee's recommendation for the chairmanship was

ratified by the state convention. Since then, the state committee has done so. The Republican state committee's responsibility for naming its chairman was discharged by the executive committee in the 1973 designation of Caldwell. In the event of a vacancy within a term, each party's rules provide that the first vice chair automatically succeeds to the chairmanship until the state committee meets to fill the vacancy. In every case, elevated vice chairs have served the remainders of the terms.

The average tenure for party chairmen since 1970 has been approximately two years. Huckshorn (1976: 46) reports similar findings. Indeed, only Branscum and Lowe have been re-elected. The Republicans have experienced more vacancies. Departures of incumbents have not been accompanied by controversies. Among Democratic chairmen, only Branscum sought re-election; and only Jesson did not fill out his term. Political opportunities prompted Purcell and Jesson to leave; the others simply retired. In the camp of the Republican chairmen, Bernard and Caldwell served single terms, with the former's extending slightly beyond the stipulated two years, thus shortening the latter's. Lowe, re-elected twice and having run for governor while retaining the chairmanship, resigned midway through his term to run for national committeeman. Holleman died; and his successor Cohee campaigned for a term on his own. He met defeat at the hands of Arnold, who resigned after a year's service to pursue a professional opportunity out of state.

Most of the executive directors herein mentioned have been formally hired by executive committees, with party chairmen exercising considerable influence. As in the case of chairmen selections, some inconsistencies have occurred; and chairmen or state committees have from time to time assumed responsibilities for hirings. This selection process has also occasionally attracted the attention of party office holders. Bass and DeVries (1976: 98) assert that Campbell's 1973 candidacy was strongly supported by Governor Bumpers and Senator McClellan, in whose senatorial re-election campaign Campbell had worked. Prior to being hired in 1979 by Chairman Branscum and the executive committee, Wallace had been employed by both Clinton and Bumpers (Wallace, 1983). While all those chosen for these positions have been experienced political activists, the Democrats have generally been younger, while the Republicans have had a longer record of organizational service. Two Republicans and one Democrat have been females, with females currently occupying these positions in both parties.

Like party chairmen, executive directors have occupied their offices on the average about two years, with Combs and Wallace staying the longest. Interestingly, the tenure of executive directors tends to overlap, rather than coincide with, the terms of party chairmen. In other words, the arrival of a new party chairman does not ordinarily precipitate a housecleaning at the party headquarters.[1]

[1]The clearest exception to this generalization was the departure of Combs shortly after the arrival of Cohee. Lowe did bring back Coon.

Rather, it appears that the part-time chairmen enter office needing instruction and advice in the ways and means of party maintenance, and disposed to rely on the experienced staff assistants.

These staff politions tend to be viewed by aspirants and incumbents as temporary steppingstones rather than careers. Political prospects explain the resignations of Democrats Douglas, to seek without success a staff assignment at the state Election Commission (Democrats select part-time teacher, 1977), and McQuary, to take an assignment with the Carter presidential re-election campaign in the state (Wallace, 1983). Similarly, Republicans Johnson received a federal level political appointment (State Republican director resigns, 1972), and Luther left to manage a congressional campaign out-of-state (Woman named, 1978). In addition, Coon took a leave of absence of sorts to run for governor. The other abandoned, at least for the time being, the arena of party politics.

Hints of conflict did appear in press accounts of the resignations of Republicans Johnson and Combs. Johnson observed that he was "not under any fire that I know of," and that he had not had "any great difficulty with the party membership" (State Republican director resigns, 1972). In announcing Combs' resignation, Chairman Cohee responded to a question of whether a personality clash was involved with "no, not necessarily" (Combs resigns, 1982). Democrat Wallace departed in the wake of reports of financial irregularities (Party official resigns, 1984). When vacancies have occurred, they have usually been filled without delay.

Turning from issues of selection and tenure, we will now consider the activities of these state party leaders. Our focus is on campaign-related activities, but previous research on state chairmen suggests several peripheral arenas of responsibility, such as organization building, fundraising, image making, policy promotion, and candidate recruitment (Wiggins & Turk, 1970; Wiggins, 1973; Huckshorn, 1976: 100). We found Arkansas chairmen anticipating and reporting virtually all these endeavors. Notwithstanding the alternative role orientations that the electoral environment and the selection process impose on chairmen, it is difficult to ascertain differences in tasks and functions on a partisan basis, with the conspicuous exception of candidate recruitment. In this area, Republican leaders appear far more occupied than their Democratic counterparts. Jewell and Olson (1982: 102) suggest as an explanation that electorally combative, minority parties must actively recruit in order to attract candidates (also see Huckshorn, 1976: 100).

Among the Democrats, Purcell travelled the state making speeches, attempted to organize the public on group bases, and sought to get the party out of debt (Purcell, 1983; Purcell will give up, 1972). Jesson noted the need of fundraising and assisting the county level organizations, and he bemoaned the extremely small headquarters staff situation he inherited (Robertson, 1972). On assuming office, Branscum announced his intention to "continue to make the party accessible to everyone who wants to participate in it" (Branscum is selected, 1976). After the Democrats' 1980 loss of the governorship,

he encouraged party activists to emphasize the general election campaign over the primary campaign. He presented a "Blueprint Commission" report calling for organizational revitalization and enumerating a long list of recommended reforms (Can't ignore 2-party shift, 1981). Carlisle has followed through on the Branscum-initiated commitment to reinvigorate the county level organizations. He has sought to expand the financial base of the state party. Further, he orchestrated the move of the state party into a new headquarters office that houses and integrates the state party with the Pulaski County Central Committee and the party support groups: Young Democrats, Democratic Women, Black Caucus, and Senior Democrats (Carlisle, 1983; Democrats schedule open house, 1983).

Similar accounts emanate from the Republican camp. Caldwell expressed as his objectives to link the state party leadership more closely with the local level organizations, and to make the party's candidates competitive in statewide elections. He estimated that four to six years of intense party building efforts would have to occur before the party would be in a position to capture the governorship (Arkansas Republicans elect chairman, 1973). At his departure, he asserted the need of the chairman to act as party spokesman (Outgoing chairman neutral, 1974). Lowe observed that the party had to get its financial house in order. He took the position that Arkansas Republicans could not afford a huge state level operation and should instead concentrate their limited resources at the county level (Smith, 1974). Arnold openly assumed the role of party spokesman, one eschewed by his predecessor Cohee in deference to the presence of Governor White. Arnold undertook to expand the party membership, to raise funds, and to put the party in the "information business" (Wiles, 1982a; Hoffman, 1983; Arnold, 1983).

While part-time chairmen are occupied thusly, the full-time executive directors, in Caldwell's words, "tend to the technical aspects of the party machinery" (Outgoing chairman neutral, 1974). Administrative tasks center on headquarters management. A small office staff, consisting of about two paid employees and some volunteers, must be supervised. Additional responsibilities include making arrangements for various and sundry party gatherings, from conventions and committee meetings to rallies to fundraising dinners, developing and executing a budget, and publication of a monthly newsletter. The state headquarters plays a two-way linkage role, connecting with both the national party and the county organizations. This task has become increasingly important as it pertains to delegate selection procedures for the quadrennial national nominating conventions, where in recent years the national Democrats especially are closely mointoring the process (Grayson, 1983; Wallace, 1983). While chairmen vary in their attention to such details, they appear generally content to allow executive directors considerable latitude in these endeavors.

Thus, the chief party differences we find regarding state party organization leadership pertain to the selection of party chairmen.

Tenure considerations and activities of chairmen and executive directors alike are not all that dissimilar. The state offices of Arkansas' political parties are no longer the empty shells Key found them to be, lending credence to his suggestion that genuine party organization is associated with genuine two-party competition (Key, 1949: 387-89). Indeed, our findings, seen in conjunction with the more general surveys cited, appear to reinforce Charles Wiggins' (1973) negative answer to the question, "Are southern party leaders really different?" We now turn to the question of campaign style and the contemporary role of the party in Arkansas campaigns.

Campaign Style and Practice

Traditionally, Arkansas campaigns featured sound trucks rolling down the streets of local communities, announcing the forthcoming appearance of yet another candidate at the Fourth of July picnic on the courthouse lawn. The summers were hot, the speeches were dry, but the barbecue provided by the campaign organization always brought out the crowds (Yates, 1972). Behind closed doors, candidate managers vied for the support of and cut deals with local leaders who could deliver the votes (Key, 1949: 195-200).

Vestiges of this campaign style continue to permeate Arkansas campaigns. However, superimposed on it has been the introduction of the new politics, a nationwide phenomenon featuring reliance on revolutionary transportation and communications technology mastered by a modern breed of political professionals: consultants, pollsters, direct mail experts, media wizards, and the like (Agranoff, 1976a). One important vehicle through which modern campaign management techniques were introduced into the state was the Institute for Politics and Government. For several years beginning in 1972, the institute sponsored intensive training sessions to acquaint state political elites with the new developments (Nunn, 1983). Well before this, however, Arkansas office seekers were proving themselves willing to call on and able to pay for the valuable services of these experts and their newfangled techniques.

Interestingly, both the traditional Arkansas campaign and the stereotypical new campaign had a significant common feature: disengagement from the political party organization. Key (1949: 400) attributed party organization noninvolvement throughout the South in the late 1940's to the absence of party competition, which kept party organization in a state of perpetual weakness. Prescribed norms of neutrality precluded the organization's involvement in the nominating primary, and then made virtually meaningless the following general election campaign against the impotent Republicans. In contrast, the new candidate and issue, rather than party oriented, campaign emerged in reciprocal relationship to the decline of party organizations becoming less able to mobilize voters less inclined to vote straight party tickets (Agranoff, 1976a).

The relevant point is that in Arkansas the advent of the new politics has coincided with the invigoration of the party organization. Indeed, the two have grown up together in the state. Thus, Arkansas parties appear to have been more helped than hurt by the new politics. They have seized on this approach as part of their party building efforts (see Agranoff, 1976b; Huckshorn, 1976: 129-168). Some of the sophisticated new style candidate services the state parties have developed and are making available include polling, direct mail activities, donor lists, media campaigns, telephone banks, and targeting programs. At the same time, they are not disregarding such old style, labor intensive efforts as voter registration, get-out-the-vote drives, speakers' bureaus, and opposition research (Carlisle, 1983; Wallace, 1983; Arnold, 1983).

The presence of the primary continues to complicate relationships between parties and candidates, forcing on the latter at the outset "the necessity of creating an entire campaign engine de novo" (Key, 1949: 401). Jewell and Olson (1982: 162) have observed that three alternative models can characterize relationships between campaign staffs and party organization: complete integration of the campaign into the pre-existing party apparatus, virtually complete separation of the candidate's effort from that of the party, and an intermediate position of structurally separated organizations cooperating extensively. This middle position appears best to fit the Arkansas situation. We see state party leaders actively involved on behalf of the entire party ticket both as a party building exercise and to bring the meaningful resources of the party to bear on behalf of its candidates.

Let us now review some of the stylistic and organizational features of several prominent Arkansas campaigns in recent years. While the primary races are, of course, beyond the pale for party organization involvement, note the nature and extent of its participation in general elections.

Democratic campaigns began in the 1970's with the emergence of a political novice who was to become the most influential party figure throughout the decade. The fledgling campaign organization of Dale Bumpers conducted three efforts in 1970. Deloss Walker, a media specialist from West Memphis, was hired to manage a now classic new style Arkansas campaign. Trying to establish his candidacy as a clear alternative to the opposition, Bumpers made extensive use of low key personal appearances and mastered the powerful medium of television. A typical television advertisement had him looking directly into the camera's eye while speaking extemporaneously from a few scribbled notes on a legal pad. Bumpers' manner was straightforward and convincing; and this, along with his fresh approach to "high road" politics, helped him toward victory (Lewis, 1970b).

Bumpers' runoff victory over Faubus brought with it the prospect of the return of the moderate voters to the Democratic camp (Bass & DeVries, 1976: 95). A wave of enthusiasm swept the party as the scent of victory prompted what appears to have been unusually great

party activity in the general election. One significant event was a party-sponsored rally, held in Little Rock's Robinson Auditorium, to generate electoral support for the ticket. The public was invited to attend and hear the nominees for statewide office (Lewis, 1970a).

The Arkansas Republican party sought to demonstrate greater stability in 1970 by fielding a number of candidates in the races for statewide constitutional office. Winthrop Rockefeller, acknowledged as having brought modern campaign techniques to the state, sought a third term and spent more than $1.3 million in his losing effort (WR's losing race, 1971). The Rockefeller organization, like that of Bumpers, spent large sums of money on television in the campaign, but they also invested heavily in telephone banks and direct mail, using lists that the organization had been compiling since its first run for governor in 1964 (Campaign guide, 1970). In November, however, Rockefeller was left with only two counties to show for his efforts.

The last electoral stand of Senator John L. McClellan dominated the Arkansas campaign scene of 1972. A United States Senator since 1942, McClellan was challenged by David Pryor, the young congressman from the fourth district. Following a primary campaign that a contemporary pollster described as "hambone, 1930's, Neanderthal," (Secret polls, 1972) McClellan and Pryor confronted each other in a runoff that summer. McClellan went on the offensive, furnishing lists to the news media of Pryor's campaign contributions from national labor unions, further proof, McClellan charged, that the unions were still fuming from the Senator's labor racketeer investigations in the 1950's (Dumas, 1972). The high point of the campaign was a debate between the two men, in which McClellan continued his attacks. McClellan's overall strategy was to undertake an intense schedule of personal campaign appearances throughout the state to demonstrate his energy and enthusiasm. In addition, the McClellan forces poured large sums of money into innovative mailouts and telephone banks. The strategy worked, McClellan's voters turned out, and the old man of Arkansas politics had his last hurrah.

The chief task of the Democratic party in 1972 was to attempt to hold its rank-and-file voters in the column of the national party's nominee for president, George McGovern. In a year in which McGovern's opponent, Richard Nixon, was to sweep the states of the old Confederacy, this was to prove an impossible task. Nevertheless, the state party did stage a rally for McGovern in Little Rock near the end of the campaign, a rally notable for the absence of Arkansas' senior senator (Steinmetz, 1972). It was not the first time in Arkansas history that a state politician had declined to become identified with the presidential nominee of the national party. In 1964, for instance, Orval Faubus had refused to even allow his picture to appear with that of Lyndon Johnson on the same billboard in Washington County (Blair, 1983).

The central contest of 1974 featured Dale Bumpers, with a formidable political base developed in his two terms as governor,

challenging the incumbent J. William Fulbright for his senate seat. Characteristic of the now familiar Bumpers' campaign style, he refused to attack Senator Fulbright throughout the primary campaign, a tactic which the Fulbright strategists found difficult to successfully counteract (Lewis, 1974). The governor's race of that year marked the reappearance, after only a two year absence, of David Pryor. Orval Faubus loomed as the apparent chief obstacle to Pryor's nomination, but Bass and DeVries (1976: 97) report that he had come to be viewed as an anachronism a decade after his last electoral victory. Many of his influential old friends and supporters lined up on the side of Pryor, who won the race without a runoff.

Southerner Jimmy Carter's presidential candidacy stimulated regional pride and unified Arkansas Democrats in the bicentennial year. The political highlight of that year came when Carter addressed the state convention, assembled in Hot Springs that fall ('Drum of discord', 1976). With no Senate race and an uneventful gubernatorial re-election bid by David Pryor, the most noteworthy development was the electorate's support for Carter. This reversion to the traditional practice of voting a straight Democratic party ticket in statewide races in presidential election years was quite atypical. Not since Lyndon Johnson in 1964 had a Democratic presidential nominee captured Arkansas' electoral vote, and Carter himself was to lose the state in his 1980 re-election bid.

Heated contests characterized Senate races in Arkansas during the 1970's, and the race in 1978 was no exception, featuring a trio of young, moderate Arkansas politicians: David Pryor, Jim Guy Tucker, and Ray Thornton. In campaign tactics reminiscent of John McClellan in 1972, Pryor now attacked his runoff rival, Tucker, for the latter's ties to organized labor (Dumas, 1978).

Bill Clinton's inaugural campaign for the governor's office that year ran smoothly and successfully. This was not to be the case in his 1980 re-election bid. In the party primary he faced Monroe Schwarzlose, a retired turkey farmer who ran a campaign that was the antithesis of the new politics. With practically no money and even less organization, Schwarzlose polled an amazing thirty-one percent of the vote, a figure which signified that larger problems awaited Clinton in the general election. There he faced a more serious challenge from Republican Frank White.

The race in 1980 developed to some extent into a referendum on some of the more unpopular events that occurred during Clinton's first term, notably the increases in vehicle registration fees and the housing of Cuban refugees in the state, and White successfully exploited the issues available to him (Johnson, 1981). In addition, White probably profited from the Republican tide that swept Ronald Reagan into office. Admitting his limited experience in organizing a campaign, White contacted the National Republican Committee for assistance. They advised him to attend a workshop for Republican congressional candidates, and he came back to Arkansas with an idea of what he needed to do to win. White has said that, outside of

northern Arkansas, the organization of the Republican party in the state is "very limited," so he realized that it would be difficult to achieve victory if he relied completely on the party (White, 1981). Consequently, he began to organize his own coalition, ideological conservatives committed to him personally, without reference to his previous Republican credentials.

White's strategy was a somewhat curious mixture of the old and the new of Arkansas politics. While calling on the professional advice of a pollster to give him accurate data on the electorate, White also spent three hours early in the campaign talking with Orval Faubus about how to meet the voters "face to face" (White, 1981).

The Clinton supporters realized that White benefited from a strong organization that was, in turn, assisted by the national Republican party. Mrs. Clinton commented that the campaign assistance provided by the opposition party was "far more effective nationally and certainly of much greater benefit to local candidates than the Democratic organization" (Clinton, 1981). In addition, White effectively utilized campaign professionals, brought in from out of the state. The result for Clinton was a surprising loss in November, only the third time in the history of the state that an incumbent governor had been defeated for the customary second term.

Reeling from that defeat in 1980, Clinton began to reorganize for an anticipated rematch in 1982. Before he could meet White again, however, he had to regain the nomination of his own party against a stiff challenge from Jim Guy Tucker and Joe Purcell. Clinton's triumph over Purcell in the runoff left the party divided and wounded. It was probably not coincidental that Clinton turned to Lilburn Carlisle, a native of Joe Purcell's home county, to serve as chairman of the state party. After his appointment, Carlisle began an active role, campaigning on behalf of the ticket in the fall elections. "Clinton's defeat in 1980 woke up the Democratic party," Carlisle (1983) said, and it appears that he and a number of others determined that the party needed major rebuilding. The 1982 elections served as a springboard for reorganization, and much rhetoric has been devoted to "grass roots" involvement by Arkansans in today's Democratic party (Carlisle, 1983; Wallace, 1983; Wright, 1983; Blair, 1983). Betsey Wright (1983), Clinton's 1982 campaign coordinator, pointed to the party as "an integral part of the general election campaign." She said that the Clinton people attempted to integrate their campaign with the local party leadership and that "in almost every instance" Clinton received the support that he requested.

As this review indicates, individual candidates brought Arkansas into the era of direct mail and political polling. In the aftermath, parties are now actively expanding their knowledge and skill in using these modern techniques. The Democrats point with pride to their new headquarters facility, equipped with telephone lines to launch a statewide system of calls (Glover, 1983). The Republicans speak with enthusiasm of "targeting" races, or sponsoring campaign schools for

potential candidates, of having sent out 110,000 letters from their headquarters in the past year, and of putting the party firmly in "information business" (Arnold, 1983). Both parties are obviously trying to place themselves in a position so that they can not be discarded for the sake of a tube of pancake makeup and a computer printout.

And yet, even with parties and candidates racing full tilt toward the new politics, there lingers in the Arkansas political culture a resentment of these trends. Hillary Clinton (1981) addressed this sentiment in referring to her husband's unsuccessful candidacy in 1980: "I did think that if Bill Clinton had brought in a campaign manager, press secretary, a consultant, fundraiser, and a pollster from out-of-state, it would never have gotten off the front page of the newspaper." Betsey Wright (1983), commenting on communicating with Arkansas voter, has said that radio, not television, is still the most effective medium, and the personal touch is absolutely vital in the search for votes. "A lot of politics still occurs on Main Street, at the Post Office, and at church," she says. Agranoff (1976a) has written that the new technicians, for all their magic, "have yet to develop a chemistry of campaigning." It may be that some of the "hambone, 1930's, Neanderthal" style that remains in Arkansas politics is there because it still occasionally works.

As such, Arkansas party leaders and candidates may be looking for a hybrid approach to campaigns in the future. Doug Wallace (1983) has suggested that the high tech campaigning is not a replacement for grass roots politics, but instead a more efficient way of doing what has always been done. The candidate services, such as donor lists, opposition research, and issue profiles that the parties will be making efforts to provide, will be designed to enhance the endeavors of the candidates as they continue to meet the voters face to face, and to ensure for the parties a prominent place in the conduct of increasingly competitive campaigns.

Conclusion

The advent of sporadic competition between Arkansas political parties over the past two decades has been accompanied by the evolvement of visible and active state party machinery in both parties. For the Republicans, organizational development began prior to the achievement of short-lived electoral success in the mid-1960's; it has since continued through a drastic downturn in the party's electoral fortunes in the 1970's and a subsequent 1980's revival. The Democrats' perception of these genuine Republican threats clearly occasioned corresponding organizational enhancements in the late 1960's and early 1980's. The upshot is that both state party organizations have become institutionalized. They have attained a raison d'etre transcending personalistic leadership within the organization or from the statehouse. Today, Arkansas parties

bear little resemblance to their moribund 1940's incarnations. Moreover, they no longer manifest a distinctively regional character. Looking to the future, their emphasis on developing and providing sophisticated new-style campaign services anticipates their increasing significance in campaign politics.

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