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Leadership Issues and Organizational Dynamics That Shaped the 2016 Republican Primaries

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2019

Abstract

Leadership Issues and Organizational Dynamics That Shaped the 2016 Republican

Primaries

by

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MA, Oklahoma University, 2014

BS, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Importance of leadership in fostering cohesion within organizations has received increased scholarly attention. Researchers have shown that leadership can lose its legitimacy by pursuing unpopular policies or negating the common interest of the group. However, researchers have not yet been able to establish the leadership issues that shaped the 2016 Republican primaries as President Trump's victory (despite not having the support of any living past United States president both Republican and Democrat), was indicative of masses' frustration with the political establishment, and desire for change. Using complex leadership theory as a focal lens, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of members of the Republican Party pertaining to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 12 registered members of the Dallas Texas Republican Party who supported President Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries. Data emanated from the central research question of what leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries, and were transcribed verbatim, inductively coded, and thematically analyzed. Key findings suggest that disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party, ineffective leadership, and lack of effective communication strategies, were some of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. The implication for social change for this study is that the Republican Party may benefit from the results of this study by highlighting the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by the party.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God almighty for his grace with which he sustained me. This dissertation is also dedicated to my lovely wife, beautiful kids, and family who inspired me to remain steadfast.

Acknowledgments

I first appreciate my family, who supported me through this process. Their sacrifices, understanding, and encouragements helped me to obtain this degree in hopes of positively impacting future generations. Thank you to my dissertation chair Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, and committee member Dr. Susan Baer for guiding me, and drawing out the best in me, which helped me to accomplish this academic milestone.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Despite variations in conceptualizing and defining leadership by various scholars, the key element in the definition of leadership is the ability of leaders to influence followers to achieve common goals. This implies that for leadership to occur, there must be influence, a group where leadership occurs, and a common goal that the group aspires to achieve that will in turn be the yardstick to measure success (Northouse, 2016).

Various scholars have persistently proven the importance of leadership in effective management of people and organizations. Although leadership and management are synonymous, the study of leadership has been traced to the mediaeval age as humans sought to control and dominate one another while the study of management could be traced to the 20th century (Northouse, 2016; Rumley, 2011).

Notwithstanding various leadership studies in public administration discipline, leadership of the public sector organizations remains understudied. Also, literature in public administration is insufficient when compared to related disciplines like business management and psychology (see Jacobsen & Andersen, 2015; Tummers & Knies, 2015). In a correlational study aimed at developing reliable instruments for measuring public leadership roles, Tummers and Knies (2015) found psychometrically sound and validated scales to measure leadership roles useful in improving research quality.

Tummers and Knies identified accountability leadership, network governance, rule-following, and political loyalty as four key leadership roles and noted that leadership remains the most interesting and sophisticated aspect of public administration; they also suggested that publicness deserves the focus of leadership.

Hitherto, the leadership of the Republican Party had enjoyed the ability to influence the outcomes of the Republican primaries (Bluestone, 2017). However, the results of the 2016 United States presidential elections stunned political pundits, policy watchers, and analysts. It would have been impossible to predict such outcome as Donald Trump was largely seen as a frivolous and disrespectful candidate. But, Donald Trump's campaign continued to surge in momentum even as the candidates favored to win the Republican presidential primaries, especially those seen as establishment candidates, dropped out of the race one after another (see Carmines, Ensley, & Wagner, 2016; Formisano, 2016).

Leadership issues, as evidenced in the erosion of cohesion within the party structures, may result in incohesive policies and a potential national leadership crisis. Thus, I focused on the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. Other studies including a phenomenological study aimed at understanding political leadership and political parties in the age of Trump by Kane (2017) highlighted increasing disconnects between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party, and this disconnect impacted the 2016 Republican primaries. Also, Bluestone's (2017) expressed that the leadership of political parties in the United States could influence the presidential primaries through the use of some techniques as superdelegates to boost the chances of candidate(s) believed to better advance the policies of their party. However, this was not the case with the 2016 Republican primaries. An exploratory study of contemporary reinvention of nationalist sentiments based on the fundamentals of

nationalist ideology by De Matas (2017) detailed how Donald Trump presented himself as a contrast to political establishment candidates.

Carmines et al., (2016) and Meinke (2014) offered various explanations for the inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to determine the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. One of the reasons was the gradual ineffective and irrelevance of the leadership's use of whip organizations to facilitate cohesion due to weakening unity and polarization within the Republican Party, and Donald Trump's identification of the frustrations of rural voters who felt neglected and abandoned by successive administrations (Carmines et al., 2016; Meinke, 2014). Also, Donald Trump's message of making America great again and cleaning up America's seat of power resonated with these rural voters. Another reason offered for the Republican leadership's inability to control the primaries was Trump's reliance on populist ideology by tapping into internal polarities within the Republican Party to launch a vigorous overthrow of the Republican brand (see Giovanni, 2016; Meinke, 2014).

Additionally, Trump was in sync with contemporary social realities and invigorated the campaign process by his hybrid mode of communication. Trump effectively used the conventional media campaign, especially Twitter, to reach out to numerous supporters and even struck personal connections with most of them, which the leadership of the Republican Party failed to do (see Carmines et al., 2016). Therefore, Trump in defiance to the traditions of the Republican Party, launched himself as a better alternative leader to the party. In an earlier study to determine the effects of leadership coordination on party cohesion, Forgette (2004) noted that traditionally, increased

coordination often resulted in better bonding between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party and greater party unity.

However, this was not the case with 2016 Republican primaries in which the membership rather than leadership of the party shaped the outcome of the primaries. Thus, in this phenomenological study, I relied on complex leadership theoretical framework to seek to understand the perceptions of Republican Party members regarding how party leadership issues led the membership, rather than leadership of the Republican Party, to determine the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Notwithstanding the limited literature on leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries, theoretical foundations, which guided the understanding of these leadership issues, are discussed in Chapter 2.

The leadership of private sectors and public organizations can gain from this study as the findings of the study indicate the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions. This study, therefore, contributes to positive social change by presenting the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions. This research also contributes to the existing body of literature on leadership issues.

In this chapter, I present and establish the procedure for the study, which includes study background, which established a gap in the current literature, the statement of problem, and the purpose of the study. I state the overarching research question that

guided the study, expound on the theoretical framework, outline the nature of the study, define key concepts, disclose assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and offer relevance of the study and its implications for social change.

Background of the Problem

The literature that shaped this study includes four major areas: (a) overview of historical perspective of leadership, (b) ineffective leadership, (c) Republican leadership's inability to foster cohesion and shrink widening polarization between the leadership and membership of the party, and (d) Republican leadership's loss of the command and control of the party to Trump due to ineffective leadership. In this section, I offer an outline of the related literature and provide an in-depth synthesis of the relevant literature on the four major areas in Chapter 2.

Sufficient literature abounds on leadership with scholastic interest traced to the mediaeval age as humans sought to control and dominate one another (Rumley, 2011). Variations in the definition of leadership has been attributed to attempts by scholars to define leadership in many ways, thereby making it difficult for scholars to arrive at a consensus on the definition of leadership (Northouse, 2016).

According to Beck (2014) servant leadership, which is one of the leadership styles discussed under the overview of historical perspective of leadership, is strategic to fostering cohesion within organizations by emphasizing comprehensive organizational well-being through service (Beck, 2014). Contrastingly, Hyson (2016) found that ineffective or destructive leadership attitudes impact employee turnover by depleting followers' motivation (Hyson, 2016).

A critical evaluation of the Republican Policy Committee (PC) by Forgette (2004) revealed that gradual changes have been made by the party to its extended leadership structures from the reform period of 1970 until now. These changes within the leadership structures of the Republican Party reflected the overall strengthening of the party's leadership. Also, increased polarization and a lack of a united organizational front within the party witnessed increased reposition of greater resources and stronger powers on the leadership of the party by the members with the expectations that the party's leadership will often wield these increased powers (Forgette, 2004).

On the contrary, in a case study of the involvement of Republican leadership organizations conducted by Meinke (2014), which was mainly focused on examining the trajectory of the PC as a linkage into leadership organizations within the Republican Party, the author noted that the Republican leadership used its PC more emphatically to articulate policy differences and enhance intraparty synchronization. Meinke called for the provision of consensus mechanism by party organizations based on an upward flow of information from membership to the leadership and noted that the flexible "nature of extended leadership structures" implies that personal policy priorities of junior party leaders may potentially prove strategic in determining the nature and form of changes in organizational roles (p. 194).

Accordingly, Meinke (2014) found that the evolution of party institutions was based on the essentials of virile and coherent party leadership which is on a collision path with the current demand by the ordinary members of the party for greater access to party power. Meinke pointed out that the Republican leadership's use of "whip organization",

which eliminates the “intermediate-level participation” often provided by the PC, was an effective organizational framework during the era of a unified Republican Party but may not be as effective in the current strongly polarized Republican Party (p. 216). Meinke stated that it was unclear whether the unlikely restoration of a robust internal organizational framework based on “participation and coordination” could quell the current pressure by the ordinary members of the party for greater control and access to party power. Besides Meinke’s statement that it is not clear whether the restoration of a robust internal organization would counter the pressure by members of the Republican Party to seek greater access and control of the party, the research did not address the current Republican Party’s leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries, which I sought to understand in the current study.

In view of the uniqueness of the 2016 United States presidential election season and the inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to determine the standard bearer of the party, there has been a renewed focus on the need to review the organizational and leadership structures and harmonize the policy process of the party to ensure that the policy goals of the leadership of the party reflect the needs, goals, and yearnings of the ordinary members of the party. Bluestone (2017) noted that the complexities of the rules governing the conduct of American presidential election primaries allow for the ability of the leadership of the parties to influence the outcomes of presidential primaries by using the votes of superdelegates to boost the chances of a candidate the party’s leadership considers as best to advance the policy goals and

objectives of the party. It, therefore, becomes pertinent for the party's goals and objectives to align with the needs of the masses to facilitate cohesion.

Hence, this study was necessary to understand and highlight the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions by highlighting the leadership issues that led to the rejection of the leadership of the Republican Party by the ordinary members of the party expressed through the rejection of the candidates perceived by members to be establishment candidates during the 2016 Republican primaries. The study built upon the findings of Meinke (2014) in understanding the leadership issues and processes within the Republican Party that shaped the internal dynamism of the Republican Party.

Statement of the Problem

The phenomenon of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election primaries has received scholarly attention as Carmines et al. (2016) tried to ascertain why and how the leadership of the Republican Party failed in its effort to determine the outcome of the Republican National Convention. Carmines et al. found that Trump's appeal to the often neglected and forgotten poor members of society helped him in challenging the leadership of the party during the 2016 Republican primaries. The 2016 American election season witnessed widespread inability of the leadership of political parties to fully control the outcomes of their presidential primaries and massive support for candidates viewed as nonestablishment candidates, especially within the Republican Party. Scholars such as Bluestone (2017), Carmines et al. (2016),

Eastman and Gilder (2017), Lee (2013), Manza and Crowley (2017), Meineke (2014), and White (2016) attributed this trend to widening polarization and the disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party.

The entrance of Donald Trump into the 2016 presidential election race shattered all the known rules governing the United States' political process. During the 2016 election, what the masses were made to believe to be true mattered more than social realities, and this helped Donald Trump to create his own realities and preach the populist message that helped in shaping the election process, sustained his momentum, and guaranteed his eventual victory, which was viewed by many political pundits as a wild ride. Political elites habitually become too powerful and often corrupt the fundamental operations of American democracy, thereby providing a strong platform for such populist candidates as Donald Trump to challenge the status quo (see Eastman & Gilder, 2017; Eiermann, 2016; Manza & Crowley, 2017).

As discussed earlier, Meinke (2014) found that the Republican Party's institutions sprouted from strong and coherent party leadership and that the effectiveness of the whip organizations was due to the strong unity of the Republican Party. However, Meinke highlighted that it will be a challenge for the leadership of the Republican Party to continue relying on the use of whip organization as a tool for coordination and cohesion in an era of a polarized Republican Party. This position was given further credence by the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. Thus, this study built upon the findings of Meinke (2014) to understand the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries.

In this study, I highlight the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions. Thus, effective leadership stimulates positive change, which helps organizations to progress and remain competitive as every organization that wants to survive requires effective leadership (see Dike, Odiwe, & Ehujor, 2015; Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

While Meinke (2014) found that the reliance on whip organizations by leadership of the Republican Party will be less effective in the current polarized Republican Party, the author did not address the leadership issues that influenced the Republican Party's policy and leadership selection processes as was seen during the 2016 Republican primaries. Because the United States is the beacon of Western democracies, the importance of strengthening the institutional backbone of United States government by strengthening political parties cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, understanding the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries will further underscore the need to strengthen the democratic foundations of the United States because, if not addressed, they may potentially decrease cohesion within political party structures, which may result in incohesive policies and a potential national leadership crisis.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I sought to advance scholarly knowledge in understanding the perception of the members of the Republican Party regarding the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries and ultimately determined the

party's choice of a standard bearer. Also, the findings of this study indicate the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions by examining the leadership issues that influence the policy and leadership selection processes within the Republican Party. It was observed during the 2016 election that rather than the leadership of the Republican Party, the disgruntled members of the party overwhelmingly guaranteed Trump's continuous victory throughout the Republican primaries because these disgruntled members saw Trump as a nonestablishment candidate.

Meinke (2014) observed that the use of whip organizations by the leadership of the Republican Party will continue to face serious challenges in the current era of polarized Republican Party with internal divisions. Therefore, in this study, I also sought to understand how the organizational dynamics within the Republican Party boosted the disconnect between the members and leadership of the party. Understanding the leadership issues that led to the abandonment of the leadership of the Republican Party by the members of the party during the 2016 primaries can help leaders of both private and public organizations address those issues and focus on masses-oriented policies that will guarantee the inclusion of the voices of the masses and strengthen organizational cohesion.

Research Question

The inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to steer the members of the party and ultimately influence the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries reflected

the leadership issues inherent in the party and the need to address them to form a stronger and more cohesive party. Hence, in this study, I indicated the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions. The overarching question that guided this study focused on seeking answers for the leadership issues that influenced the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries.

Research Question - What leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework has been described as the blueprint that guides a study by providing structure that defines the study approach (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Hence, Complex Leadership Theory (CLT) was used to facilitate the understanding of the organizational factors and leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the Republican primaries during the 2016 election season. CLT sprouted from system and complexity theories and examines how leadership harmonizes and influences the evolution of ideas within dynamic but interreliant elements of a sociopolitical system. The leading proponent of CLT was von Bertalanffy and later given credence in the 1999 works of Anderson (see Bertalanffy, 1968; Anderson, 1999).

Similarly, complex adaptive systems were championed in the work of Cowan, Pines, and Meltzer (1994). CLT is imbedded in the context of the role played by leadership in a complex system and is premised on complexity theory, which is a science of growing dynamics in collaborating, adaptive networks (see Bertalanffy, 1968; Marion

& McGee, 2006). The activities of catalysts inherent in complex systems help in boosting the dynamics of the system, and notwithstanding that the leader is identified as a strategic agent of change in a complex system, complex system is energized by the dynamics of followers rather than leadership control (Marion & McGee, 2006).

During the 2016 Republican primaries, it was the followers (masses) of the Republican Party rather than the leadership and elites of the party that determined the standard bearer of the party for the 2016 U.S. presidential elections by overwhelmingly supporting the candidacy of Trump whom they viewed as a political outsider or nonestablishment candidate. This affirms that in complex systems new structures emerge through bottom-top actions as against top-bottom actions (see Marion & McGee, 2006). CLT was traditionally designed for educational organizations but was used for public organizations in this context and emphasized the intertwined roles of leadership, such as enabling leadership role, administrative leadership, and adaptive leadership. These intertwined leadership roles enhance interdependency of the various elements of the sociopolitical system (Marion & McGee, 2006).

Nature of Study

The nature of this study was qualitative because qualitative research is consistent with exploring and seeking in-depth understanding of the leadership issues within the Republican Party that influence the party's policy and leadership choice processes as was witnessed during the 2016 Republican primaries. Qualitative research provides the means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (see Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research entails looking at people or

engaging with people in such a manner that accords them expertise in their own experiences and worldview. Also, qualitative research methods are not ideally designed to either test or prove a theory but to understand why and how a phenomenon occurred (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

The rationale for choosing qualitative approach for this study is embedded in the fact that Creswell (2013) noted that qualitative research approach is ideally used when a study requires the exploration of an issue or a problem such as studying a group or population that needs the identification of variables that otherwise would be difficult to measure. Creswell also noted that qualitative research is an ideal fit when the researcher wants to empower concerned individuals to share their own stories and let their voices be heard in so doing. For this study, the phenomenological approach was used because phenomenology is best suited for studies intended to explore an understanding of a phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced the phenomenon (see Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Phenomenologists make a case for the variance between the scientific world and the lived world because pure science fails to capture people as they engage in their daily activities and experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Accordingly, I relied on interviewing registered members of the Republican Party within Dallas, Texas using semistructured, open ended questions to explore their lived experience of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. The choice of Dallas metropolitan city is because I live and work in Dallas, and the choice of Dallas was cost and time effective relational to if the research was to be

conducted elsewhere. The data collected were analyzed in accordance with the phenomenological approach, which entailed verbatim transcription of interviews to ensure that participants' views were truly captured.

Operational Definitions

Leadership: The process through which leaders influence their followers to strive to achieve the common goals of both leaders and members of a group (Burns, 1978).

Leadership issues: The challenges and shortcomings that inhibit the ability of the leadership of the party to effectively coordinate the affairs of the Republican Party and impose discipline on members of the party (Meinke, 2014).

Organizational dynamics: The transformation of the Republican Party from a once internally unified party to a more internally weak and divided party (Meinke, 2014).

Organizational factors: Factors that contribute to the interplay of objectives and variations in leadership structures of the Republican Party (Meinke, 2014).

Whip organizations: Those organizations charged with the responsibility of enforcing discipline and standard within the Republican Party (Meinke, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Under Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations, I explain my expectations, and factors that could potentially influence my study.

Assumptions

In carrying out this research, I assumed that the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries was shaped by some leadership issues. I also assumed that participants would be easily accessible and available for the interview session, and that respondents would

answer the interview questions honestly and provide the needed insight into the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Scope and Delimitations

Because I focused on understanding the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries, I eliminated the 2016 Democratic primaries from the scope of my study. Also, the results of this study may not be generalized to the Democratic Party because the nature of caucusing, leadership styles, and organizational structures of the Democratic Party uniquely differ from those of the Republican Party.

Limitations

My study was limited to understanding perceptions of the members of the Republican Party regarding the organizational factors and leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Owing to the constraints of resources and time, I was not able to interview members of the Republican Party from all United States but limited my study site to Dallas, Texas where I live and work. Also, a phenomenological inquiry may not provide the quantitative descriptions pertaining to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of 2016 Republican primaries. Thus, the findings from this study are limited to interpretation rather than quantitative analysis.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to an existing body of literature on leadership issues within public institutions, especially Forgette (2004) and Meinke (2014) who described leadership challenges within the Republican Party, and these leadership issues may have shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. I examined Republican leadership issues,

emerging roles of the Republican leadership organizations, and polarization between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party, as was found by Meinke, and how these factors contributed towards shaping the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. This study is unique because I looked at the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries from the perspective of leadership issues and organizational dynamics that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries and addressed the gap in Meinke's study by providing the platform to understand the disconnect between the membership and leadership of the Republican Party.

Meinke (2014) found that emergence of Republican Party institutions was based on the essentials of strong and coherent party leadership, which is on a collision path with the present demand for greater access to party power by the ordinary members of the party. Meinke noted that the reliance on whip organization by the leadership of the Republican Party was effective during the period the Republican Party was strong and united but may not be as effective in the currently polarized Republican Party. Thus, in this study, I examined the need for improved access between leadership and the followership and highlighted the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions.

Summary

The result of the 2016 Republican primaries was unprecedented as not even the winner himself could have predicted it. Some researchers and analysts such as Bluestone (2017), Carmines et al. (2016), De Matas (2017), Drezner (2017), Eastman and Gilder

(2017), Eiermann (2016), Formisano (2016), Giovanni (2016), Lee (2013), Manza and Crowley (2017), Meinke (2014), and White (2016) have attributed this unique outcome to various factors, especially leadership issues and internal polarization within the Republican Party, and the systematic exclusion of the voices of the masses from the process of leadership selection, which led to the surge in support of the masses for candidates viewed as nonestablishment candidates. In this chapter, the need to understand the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries to better inform the understanding of how such leadership issues shape the nature of organizations such as political parties and interest groups was discussed. Also, the theoretical framework that guided this study, which is CLT was established. In Chapter 2, I further expound on theoretical framework and offer a synthesis of relevant literature on leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Historically, leadership has been responsible for the ability of people to pilot their affairs by providing guidance and direction and influencing group members to accomplish collective goals (Northouse, 2016). The leadership of the Republican Party had hitherto enjoyed the prerogative of influencing the outcomes of presidential primaries and determining which candidate the party rallies behind during national elections who will be able to better propagate the interest of the party (see Bluestone, 2017). However, the membership of the Republican Party has continued to push for greater power and control of the party, which makes it harder for top-to-bottom type of control using whip organizations by the leadership of the party (see Meinke, 2014).

Studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the Republican leadership's use of whip organization for coordination and achieving consensus, but the phenomenon of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican Party primaries has received minimal scholastic attention due mainly to the phenomenon being nascent. However, I reviewed relevant studies pertaining the leadership issues that shaped the 2016 Republican primaries. Meinke (2014), in a case study of the evolving roles of Republican leadership organizations that relied on documentary analysis as its data source, found that the effectiveness of the use of whip organizations by the leadership of the Republican Party to build consensus is threatened by the current polarization of the membership of the party and noted that other leadership issues and organizational factors

will continue to present leadership challenges and make it more difficult for the leadership to achieve consensus as was witnessed during the 2016 Republican primaries.

To begin, a review of research strategies used for this literature review is presented to facilitate locating relevant articles for future reference. In the rest of this chapter, I touch on relevant studies capturing the leadership issues that influenced the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. This provides a better understanding of pertinent themes that guided the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries such as (a) overview of historical perspective of leadership, (b) ineffective leadership, (c) Republican leadership's inability to foster cohesion and shrink widening polarization between the leadership and membership of the party, and (d) Republican leadership's loss of the command and control of the party to Trump due to ineffective leadership.

Literature Search Strategy

This review was conducted searching the Walden online library database as the main database. Other databases such as Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Political Science Complete, and ProQuest Central were also searched, and they offered all the relevant materials for this review. Literature research was conducted using the general search terms *leadership issues* as the base of all inquiries. Other search words such as *Republican Party primaries*, *Republican Party leadership issues**, *leadership issues of advocacy groups**, *leadership issues within special interest groups**, *organizational dynamics within the Republican Party**, *effects of leadership on political parties**, *presidential election*, *Donald Trump*, and *populism* were used to narrow the

search. Based on articles found using this search criterion, I reviewed references used by previous authors to find additional relevant sources that were not accessed through the initial general search. Though the literature search was mainly focused from 2013 through 2018, I reviewed some prior relevant articles. I did not find any research literature that directly referred to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Thus, the content of this review was limited to the relevant themes previously highlighted during the introduction to literature review.

Theoretical Base

I adopted CLT to facilitate the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the Republican primaries during the 2016 election season. In a case study that addressed the leadership characteristics inherent in the implementation of innovations, Weberg (2013) found that CLT enhances the ability of scholars to understand and describe the intertwined human relationships and how this interface influences organizational results in relation to innovations implementation. CLT studies the role of leadership in the evolution of ideas within dynamic and interrelated elements of a sociopolitical system (Marion & McGee, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007).

The leading proponent of CLT is von Bertalanffy and later given credence in the 1999 work of Anderson. CLT is embedded in the context of the role played by leadership in a complex system and is premised on complexity theory, which is a science of emergent dynamics in interactive, adaptive networks (see Marion & McGee, 2006). The activities of catalysts inherent in complex systems help in boosting the dynamics of the system and notwithstanding that the leader is identified as a strategic agent of change in a

complex system, complex system is energized by the dynamics of followers rather than leadership control (Marion & McGee, 2006).

As I noted earlier, Meinke (2014) observed that the membership of the Republican Party has continued to push for greater power and control of the party, and this push for greater power and control makes it harder for a top-to-bottom type of control using whip organizations by the leadership of the party. This gives credence to the notion that in complex systems, new structures emerge through bottom-top actions as against top-bottom actions (see Marion & McGee, 2006).

CLT was traditionally designed for educational organizations but was used for public organizations in this context and emphasizes the intertwined roles of leadership such as enabling leadership role, administrative leadership, and adaptive leadership. These intertwined leadership roles enhance interdependency of the various elements of the sociopolitical system (see Marion & McGee, 2006). CLT changed the focus of leadership by highlighting the dynamic relationships between every individual within the network, and how those relationships lead to emergent results under given conditions (see Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). I selected CLT as the theoretical framework for this study because CLT addresses both complex adaptive systems and bureaucracy in their distinctive features from traditional leadership by emphasizing interactions and adaptability rather than control and alignment, and change is emergent rather than top to down (see Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007).

This study is based on the literature gap created by the study of Meinke (2014) in which Meinke examined the emergence of the roles of Republican Party's leadership

organizations based on aspects of extended leadership. Meinke relied on leadership theories, especially goals and choices over leadership structures, as the theoretical base for his study, but I relied more on CLT because CLT is best suited to understand the phenomenon under study because it facilitates the conception of leadership as network of adaptive, complex, nonlinear feedback (see Marion & McGee, 2006).

Also, CLT can help to better understand the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of Republican primaries during the 2016 election because CLT studies the role of leadership in the evolution of ideas within dynamic and interreliant elements of a sociopolitical system (see Marion & McGee, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). CLT, therefore, provided the best framework for understanding the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries.

Literature Review

The 2016 U.S. election season was unprecedented in its outcomes, which surprised political theorists, analysts, and pundits both locally and internationally. The following literature review provides insight into the internal leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries under these themes: overview of historical perspective of leadership, ineffective leadership, Republican leadership's inability to foster cohesion and shrink widening polarization between the leadership and membership of the party, and Republican leadership's loss of control of the party to Trump due to ineffective leadership.

Overview of Historical Perspective of Leadership

The scholastic interest in leadership could be traced to the mediaeval age as humans sought to control and dominate one another (Rumley, 2011). There are variations in the definition of leadership as scholars have attempted to define leadership in many ways, thereby making it difficult for scholars to arrive at a consensus definition of the term (Northouse, 2016). Northouse (2016) noted that leadership shares similar characteristics with management because both processes entail collaborating with and influencing people to accomplish set goals. However, leadership has been defined as the process through which leaders influence their followers to strive to achieve the common goals of both leadership and followership (Burns, 1978).

Another author who defined leadership from the perspective of process is Kent (2006), who defined leadership as a goal-oriented process through the development of people's reasoning and values, and ultimately creating direction for the organization. Rather than viewing leadership as a process, other scholars have based their definitions of leadership on the outcomes or functions of leadership. Some of these authors include Summerfield (2014), who conceptualized leadership based on its ability to make improvements and defined some characteristics to evaluate leadership occurrence as transformational, emergent, goal oriented, and pursuit of personal contentment. However, Summerfield's vague approach to leadership only highlighted the functions of leadership and failed to offer an actual definition of leadership.

Notwithstanding the wide-ranging scholastic view of leadership as the ability to inspire followers to meet set goals, some scholars have argued that motivation alone is

not an encompassing function or aspect of leadership. For instance, Hay and Hodgkinson (2006), in their descriptive quantitative study on rethinking leadership using empirical evidence and interviews from contemporary leadership studies, found that motivating followers to accomplish set objectives accounts for only one aspect of leadership and that typical leadership theories are structured from the perspective of system-control. Hay and Hodgkinson argued that a process relational approach to understanding leadership is more encompassing than the system-control leadership thought (Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006).

The intent of this literature review was not to offer an elaborate discussion of leadership theories but a synopsis of major leadership theories to facilitate better understanding of the rationale for choosing complexity leadership as the theoretical base for this study. Thus, in an epistemological study aimed at examining the broader framework of leadership and its efficiency in bettering the administration of schools, Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015) found that broad but appropriate application of leadership techniques and principles guarantees successful management. Amanchukwu et al. in their theoretical debate, outlined various leadership theories and highlighted factors that determine the appropriateness of leadership style to be adopted (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

Accordingly, one of the foremost views of leadership contended that leadership entailed the control and concentration of power with the intent to dominate subordinates and induce compliance and obedience (Northouse, 2016). This view of leadership is known as the Great Man Theories (GMT). Great Man theorists argue that leadership

comes naturally to great men because of either their intelligence, knowledge, charisma, or wisdom; and therefore, opined that leadership is inherent and leaders are born (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Organ, 1996; Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003). Organ (1996) went further to highlight the long-held assertion of the GMT that fate through circumstances pushes leaders to emerge and assume their natural roles and that leaders differ significantly from followers. Organ noted that this belief of the GMT remained undisputable until the mid-twentieth century when scholars began to categorize the core characteristics of great leaders (Organ, 1996).

Furthermore, the Trait Leadership Theories (TLT) progressed out of growing scholastic efforts and attempts at determining the core characteristics that distinguish great leaders. The central argument of TLT is that behind successful leaders are key leadership characteristics and identification of these core leadership characteristics will facilitate the identification and recruitment of people into critical positions of leadership (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bolden et al., 2003). However, the shortcomings of TLT include the inability of scholars to identify consistent common leadership characteristics unique to successful leaders despite the length of their studies. Also, inherent in TLT was the prevalence of numerous leadership traits or characteristics to be identified (see Bolden et al., 2003).

Contrarily, another school of thought opposed the position of both GMT and TLT that successful leaders are born with inherent characteristics and that great leaders naturally rise to the occasion of leadership when nature calls due to their personal qualities. The proponents of this school of thought argued that successful leaders are made not born.

This is the main idea of Behavioral Theories (BT). The proponents of BT contended that rather than the assumption that great leaders are naturally born with leadership traits; leaders are produced through coaching, training, and mentorship which prepares and equips great leaders with proper behavioral skills to deal with various situations and occasions as they arise (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bolden et al., 2003; Wagner, 2008).

Relative to BT are Situational Leadership Theories (SLT) which highlight the flexibility of leaders to apply applicable leadership skills and action to specific situations. The central argument for the proponents of SLT is that leadership situations and challenges vary, and there is no one leadership style that fits all situations, and so leaders' choice of best course of action is consequent upon the uniqueness of any given situation. SLT advocates for pragmatic approach to leadership because subordinates and circumstances vary; therefore, leadership styles should vary according to specific situations and leaders should be accorded the flexibility to choose appropriate leadership style for specific followers and situations (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2010; Wagner, 2008).

Further, Contingency Theories (CT) evolved from the improvement of SLT. The proponents of CT maintained that the effectiveness of leadership is consequent upon the qualities and leadership style of a leader and the unique leadership qualities and styles demanded by a specific situation. Therefore, the ability of a leader to adopt appropriate leadership style for specific situation or changing the situation to fit the leadership style

will determine the success of the leader (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2010; Krause & Rossberger, 2015).

Additionally, Participative Leadership Theories (PLT) argued that an ideal leadership style ought to accommodate the input of followers in leadership process. PLT made a case for the relevance of group members in decision-making and leadership processes of their group and encourage group members' participation and contributions in the management of the affairs of their group since followers are likely to be more enthused and motivated to work for the success of decisions that they are part of the processes (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Wagner, 2008).

More so, Transactional/Management Theories (T/M T) highlighted the significance of relationship between leadership and followership and emphasized the importance of supervision and evaluating group performance as key to successful leadership. T/M T is predicated upon the system of rewards and sanction. Thus, according to T/M T, a leader has the duty of setting clear guidelines and expectations for subordinates which will form the basis of performance evaluations so that success is rewarded while failure is corrected (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bolden et al., 2003; Wagner, 2008).

Transformational/Relationship Theories (T/R T) emphasized the importance of leaders motivating followers to accomplish set objectives by creating personal connections with followers. T/R T conceptualized leadership as the process through which leaders engage with followers in personal ways and creates personal connections that elicit motivation. T/R T are often related to charismatic leadership theories in which

leaders with distinguished traits and clear standards motivate their followers (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Wagner, 2008).

Skills Theories (ST) espoused the notion that acquired skills and knowledge play significant roles in the effectiveness of leadership and denied the existence of relationship between natural trait and leadership effectiveness. ST related to behavioral theories (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Wagner, 2008).

Likewise, CLT which is the theoretical base of this study conceptualized leadership roles in the evolution of ideas within dynamic and interreliant elements of a socio-political system (see Marion & McGee, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). CLT highlighted the dynamic interactions that occur within organizations as the organizations evolve with an emphasis on network interactions and complex relationships (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). CLT is imbedded in the context of the role played by leadership in a complex system and is premised on complexity theory which is a science of emergent dynamics in interactive, adaptive networks (see Marion & McGee, 2006).

In an exploratory research to set a universal outline of the basic dynamic forces of leadership perspective that focused on complexity leadership within the framework of the complexity leadership theory, Baltacı and Balcı (2017) found that adaptive leadership shapes complex adaptive systems and that expertise and creativity not only propel structural resonant frequency of leadership but form necessary condition for effective leadership to occur. Baltacı and Balcı posited that complex systems as structures, survive on expertise and creativity. Also, Baltacı and Balcı defined complex systems as social

networks of collaborative personnel unified in purpose by their perspectives, shared goals and needs (Baltaci & Balci, 2017).

The intricacies inherent in complex systems highlight the need for complexity leadership for proper management of the complexities and dynamisms of complex systems. This is because complexity leadership is embedded in three leadership styles such as adaptive, administrative, and action-oriented leadership. Therefore, complexity leadership may be looked as adaptive coping skills and ability of complex organizations to navigate the dynamic challenges of the information age (Baltacı & Balcı, 2017).

In the new century of information technology, organizations need to adopt knowledge-based strategies born out of innovative data for prompt decision making, improvement and change in their traditional organizational structure into modern models by resonating with new technologies and flexible leadership styles embraced by critical decision makers if they intend to survive (see Adams & Stewart, 2015; Byrne & Callaghan, 2013).

The challenges and hardships of the information age will be better navigated through complexity leadership because classical leadership models are static and not flexible enough to effectively remedy contemporary organizational dynamic challenges. Hence, complexity leadership offers an alternative leadership approach for modern organizations striving to survive and meet the challenges of the information technology era which entails unpredictable, volatile, chaotic and competitive operational environment. Consequently, contemporary organizations could become adaptive and competitive through scientific or knowledge-based complexity leadership models (Northouse, 2016).

More so, in an analytical study to determine how leadership decisions impact job insecurity and organizational shortfalls based on Deming's theory of profound knowledge, Lawton Jr, Taye, and Ivanov (2014) found that notwithstanding the size and complex nature of contemporary organizations, they are all faced with complex challenges such as instability, motivation, inability to adapt and preempt changes due to organizational leaders' lack of adequate knowledge and capacity to provide systematic guidance and direction anchored upon goals and values. Lawton Jr et al. argued that the decisions and actions of organizational leaders can positively or negatively impact their various organizations and attributed most of the challenges and leadership issues of contemporary organizations to faulty management practices (Lawton Jr et al., 2014). Thus, it becomes imperative for organizations that want to survive and remain competitive to embrace complexity leadership to better equip leaders with necessary tools to confront dynamic and complex challenges faced by these contemporary organizations.

In a 15-year correlational study of complex adaptive leadership involving 1,500 executives from 40 countries, Obolensky (2017) found that increased organizational complexity and dynamism decreases the requirement for traditional directive leadership. Obolensky noted that the fundamental argument of complex adaptive leadership is that exercising leadership is not mutually exclusive to designated leaders rather a complex ongoing procedure that requires the participation of everybody involved in the enterprise (Obolensky, 2017).

Also, in an exploratory study to determine the complexities inherent in CLT, Tourish (2018) found that complexity leadership theory shifted emphasis from the heroic

individual actions of leaders and focused more on the social contexts in which leadership occurs, and the complexities inherent in those social contexts. Tourish noted that scholars are progressively attempting to develop theories to elucidate the contexts in which leadership occurs. While some complexity leadership theorists embraced the unpredictability and dynamic nature of contemporary organizational leadership, others still portray leadership in non-complex terms. However, Tourish opined that effective communication and procedural viewpoints are helpful tools in navigating the complexities and dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations (Tourish, 2018).

The central focus of complexity theory is to arm modern leaders and public administrators with the necessary skills and competencies to deal with the uncertainties and complexities of modern organizations by embedding new conditions triggered by chaos inherent in bureaucracies in modern management and organizational competencies (see Waldman & Bowen, 2016). This becomes necessary because the flexibility, interactive and social nature of complex adaptive systems require complexity leadership rather than traditional leadership models that are bureaucratically hierarchical and juristically dependent (see Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007).

Modern organizations need to evolve creative and innovative solutions and build structural adaptive capacities to successfully navigate complex and dynamic challenges. To be able to realize this objective, modern organizations require complexity leadership model. This is because complexity leadership theory offers a leadership framework that strengthens organizational resonance capacity and builds organizations into formidable

adaptive systems with disposition to learning. Also, complexity leadership theory guarantees organizational control and coordination mechanisms whose results resonate with the vision and mission of complex adaptive systems (see Smits & Bowden, 2015; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007; Waldman & Bowen, 2015).

Conclusively, I highlighted the evolution of various leadership theories and elaborated on complexity leadership theory which is the base of this study. The synopsis of leadership theories will facilitate better understanding of the choice of complexity leadership theory over other leadership models as more ideal in understanding the complex nature of modern organizational leadership.

Ineffective Leadership

To facilitate better appreciation of the impacts of ineffective leadership on the Republican Party during the 2016 Republican primaries, I reviewed some literature on effective leadership within sociopolitical organizations and contrasted them with literature on ineffective / toxic leadership. In their descriptive quantitative research on the impact of effective Leadership on organizations, Hao and Yazdanifard (2015) found that effective leadership is a catalyst for positive change which enables the organization to progress and remain competitive. Hao and Yazdanifard discussed effective leadership and dynamic organizational management and their positive impacts on building trust, clear vision, and positive organizational culture necessary to guide the evolution of the organization (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

In emphasizing the strategic importance of effective leadership within an organization, Hao and Yazdanifard posited that effective leadership is the key factor that

determines whether organizational change becomes progressive or retrogressive.

Effective Leaders control the operational dynamism of their various organizations through their ability to set goals and effective strategies for attaining those goals. Also, effective leaders influence and motivate followers by promoting positive organizational culture through the implementation of people-oriented programs and policies (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Furthermore, Dike et al. (2015) in their exploratory research on Leadership dilemma in the 21st Century found that effective leaders in modern organizations are determined by their values, personality, passion, leadership style, expectations (goals), relationship with followers, decision making and problem-solving skills. Dike et al. noted that effective leaders harness the talents and skills of their followers to foster positive results and argued that every organization that wants to succeed and survive in the contemporary time requires effective leaders to remain competitive (Dike et al., 2015).

Contrastingly, in a correlational study to examine whether a connection exists between ineffective or destructive leadership attitudes and employee turnover, Hyson (2016) relied on an online survey of randomly sampled 96 Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) manufacturing business organizations; and multiple regression analyses and found that ineffective or destructive leadership styles impacted employee turnover. Hyson noted that ineffective or destructive leaders often create or facilitate enabling environment that kills the motivation of their followers or members of the organizations they lead. Hyson also pointed out that there is sufficient literature on ineffective or destructive leaders and

that the common effect ineffective or destructive leadership is leaving their followers devastated (Hyson, 2016).

Also, in a philosophical analytic study of virtuous and non-virtuous leaders, Bauman (2018) highlighted Plato's leadership account based on two conceptual cornerstones. The first conceptual anchor was that virtue is a function of the character and knowledge of the leader more than it is a function of principles. The second conceptual anchor was that ineffective or destructive leaders lack wisdom and understanding and rely on smooth talking to their followers to achieve their selfish and unjust ends. Bauman noted that virtuous leaders always maintain ethical standards in their actions and interactions with others and contrasted that with ineffective or destructive leaders who lead by mere flattery and rhetoric. Bauman identified justice as the guiding virtue that compels people to treat others fairly (Bauman, 2018).

Hence, the drifting of the leadership of the Republican Party from people-oriented policies, alienated the membership of the party. Also, the observed ineffective leadership inherent in the Republican Party during the 2016 Republican primaries eroded trust between the leadership of and members of the Republican party. Thus, Trump became the manifestation of the anger and frustration of the masses with establishment politicians, who used Trump to send a message the elite class that the masses are not happy with elite (see White, 2016).

In a case study of the evolving roles of Republican leadership organizations ss earlier noted, Meinke (2014) found that the effectiveness of the use of whip organizations by the leadership of the Republican Party to build consensus is threatened by the current

polarization of the membership of the party and noted that other leadership issues will continue to present leadership challenges and make it more difficult for the leadership to achieve cohesion and consensus as was witnessed during the 2016 Republican primaries.

However, in a correlational study aimed at providing a systematic analysis for the development of future theory on the relationship between creativity and effective leadership within organizations. Guo, Gonzales and Dilley (2016) found conflicting conceptualization of the connection between creativity and organizational leadership. Guo et al. argued that organizational dynamics and change have remained major challenges to traditional leadership roles within organizations as leaders are often confronted by dynamic and intricate challenges which require effective leadership enabled by creativity (Guo et al., 2016).

This section deals with the effectiveness or otherwise of leadership and the impacts on organizations which forms the basis of this study by highlighting the importance of effective, responsive and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups and public institutions.

Republican Leadership's Inability to Foster Cohesion Within the Party

The previous section highlighted leadership in the context of effectiveness and ineffectiveness. This section will focus on the inability of Republican leadership to foster cohesion within the party and how this further polarized the party and impacted the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. Accordingly, in a mixed method study to measure the antecedent and impact of servant leader's behavior in relation to organizational cohesion, Beck (2014) found that organizational stewardship through the

promotion of mass-oriented policies accounts for the comprehensive organizational well-being through service as against through command and control. Beck also noted that servant and ethical leadership facilitate organizational cohesion and outcomes through the promotion of enabling climates for ethical and procedural justice (Beck, 2014).

Hence, in a phenomenological study aimed at understanding Political Leadership and Political Parties in the Age of Trump, Kane (2017) observed that the Republican Party had a tradition of claiming a divine right to power and always portray the Democratic Party as the party that destroyed America and found that the increasing disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party owing largely to lack of faith in traditional leadership paved the way for nonestablishment candidates like Donald Trump to challenge the legitimacy of the Republican Leadership and successfully stage an overthrow of the Republican Party by appealing to the alienated members of the party (Kane, 2017).

Equally, Kane (2017) highlighted the importance of understanding the rise of Donald Trump in the context of understanding the chronic challenges faced by the leadership of political parties in dealing with economic challenges and drew a distinction between political leadership within complex democratic organizations such as the Republican Party and Trump's type of business leadership. Kane found that political and economic changes of the 1970s and 1980s led to disenchantment and loss of faith with political elites and leadership of political parties due to increasing economic disparity. Kane further argued that the members of the Republican Party organized themselves into a movement to protest the long derision and neglect they suffered from the elites of the

Republican Party by supporting Trump who the disillusioned members of the Republican Party saw as a non-traditional candidate. Kane also highlighted ineffective leadership and lack of control of the Republican members of the House of Representatives by the Republican leadership as a bane on Republican Party's internal cohesion (Kane, 2017).

Meinke (2014) examined the path of PC as an insight into leadership organizations within the Republican Party and how the PC was affected by the organizational dynamics of the Republican Party. The author found that the weakening of the PC did not necessarily impact the ability of internal institutions such as the use of whip organizations to build consensus around policy directions, strategies, and choice of standard bearers. Meinke noted that the continued polarization of the party and internal disunity posed serious challenges for the ability of the leadership to provide guidance and direction and ensure strict enforcement of disciplines (Meinke, 2014). Similarly, Forgette (2004) relied on roll-call data to investigate whether the attendance of party caucuses by members before voting on any key congressional issues forces party cohesion and found that coordination emerged as an integral aspect of leadership activity during stronger and unified Republican but as the base of the party continue to be weakened by polarization and internal ideological and policy divisions, the leadership continues to face difficulty in trying to coordinate the activities of the party.

Meinke (2014) sought to elaborate the emergence of the roles of the Republican Party's leadership organizations by highlighting various evidence on PC which the author described as an important aspect of the party's extended leadership that has received less scholarly attention. Meinke also found that the leadership's reliance on PC proved

strategic in policy and strategy coordination but some factors such as organizational dynamics and polarization within the party account for why leadership continues to rely less on the organizational role of the PC thereby compelling the PC to remain a wider Republican Party network linkage. Meinke also observed that the shift from the use of PC as a major coordination tool to just a means of information dissemination further boosted erosion of cohesion within the Republican Party with special emphasis on policy objectives of the Republican Party which increased competition for party's control, and emerging external network (Meinke, 2014).

In a phenomenological study aimed at identifying the contributive factors to the effectiveness of Servant Leadership (SL) style, Tanno (2017) relied on semistructured interviews of purposively sampled 18 senior managers of SL organizations and found that ethical selfless service to others, effective communication, collaboration, and team spirit building are key to the success of SL. Tanno noted that the key elements of SL make SL an ideal leadership style in polarized organization since a culture of service and stewardship facilitate the decisions to create and implement positive organizational cultures because organizational culture facilitates improved alliance performance (Tanno, 2017).

Accordingly, the inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to implement policies to shrink widening internal polarization led Meinke (2014) to express concerns over the growing polarization within the Republican Party and noted that this polarization can potentially impact the effectiveness of the use of whip organization by the leadership of the Republican Party to coordinate the activities of the party, formulate policies, and

instill discipline. The inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to curtail growing disparity between the leadership and membership of the party is affecting the ability of the party to advance its policy agenda despite controlling both Congress and the Senate. While this situation continues to frustrate public administrators from reaching their full potentials in service delivery, the masses have continued to suffer the shrinking government services due to political gridlock in Washington DC. Neberai (2017) identified the 2016 US election season as the most polarizing because during this election period, racial and religious biases were reverberated. Trump energized this polarization through his inciting campaign rhetoric of building a border wall, deriding immigrants especially Mexican immigrants, and reinvigorating islamophobia (Neberai, 2017).

It does not matter whether Trump's inciting campaign rhetoric was aimed at causing violence or not, its impact was largely felt within American society. Despite Trump's announced victory and the concession speech by Hilary Clinton, opposition protests continued across major US cities for weeks, and there has been increased racially motivated bullying and hate crimes against Muslims and people of color (Nebrai, 2017).

Lee (2013) highlighted the discrepancies and contradictions in the positions of previous literature on the effects of the rising masses-elite polarization. Lee noted that elite polarization boosted public awareness and stimulated more engagement through the clarification of policy ambiguity since polarization and engagement are influenced by the level of information available to the masses (Lee, 2013). Similarly, researchers attempted to understand the various elements that boosted surge in masses' support for candidates seen as political outsiders. One of the elements is that American citizens

expressed low trust in their government and were also angry with their party establishments and political elites (see White, 2016). Both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump began their Presidential campaigns with a promise to restore voice to the oppressed and downtrodden and tapped into the frustrations of American masses and their lack of trust in their government to enjoy overwhelming support from the masses during the campaign (see Formisiano, 2016; Giovanni, 2016; White, 2016).

Scholars have focused their efforts in evolving ways of shrinking the political polarization especially between the elites and the masses. Benet (2013) in his theoretical research on managing the polarities of democracy, tried to determine the likelihood of evolving a unifying democratic theory with the capacity of becoming a driving force for positive social change. Benet found that the application of democracy in workplaces and social dealings will provide the solution to historic oppression and argued that the effectiveness of democracy as a tool for positive social change will hinge upon a unifying theory that will shrink the polarities and identified positive social change as a necessity towards the sustenance of democracy (Benet, 2013). Whether the polarity is between the political elites and the masses, the Republicans and Democrats, or polarities of democracy, there is need for effective management of these polarities in the interest of sustaining democracy and good governance.

Furthermore, Bidegain, Monestier, Rosenblatt, and Rodríguez (2015) in an ethnographic study centered on a natural experiment in political decentralization in local institutions and citizens' political engagement in Uruguay found that the creation of representative democratic structures at the local level positively impacted the political

attitudes of previously alienated residents of smaller towns in Uruguay. Bidegain et al. examined the impact of bridging political polarization on grassroots mobilization and found that grassroots mobilization and engagement between the leadership and the masses increased participation of the masses (Bidegain et al., 2015). Bidegain et al offered credence to the fact that leadership's responsiveness to the yearnings and needs of the members of an organization shrinks polarization between the leadership and members of such organization.

Finally, I espoused how the inability of the leadership of the Republican Party to foster cohesion widened the polarization within the party and further alienated the members of the party from the party's leadership.

Republican Leadership's Loss of the Control of the Party to Trump Due to Ineffective Leadership

In the previous section, I elucidated how the inability of the Republican Party's leadership to foster cohesion aggravated internal polarization within the party. This section will progress to evaluate how ineffective leadership boosted the hijacking of the Republican leadership by Trump. As previously noted, Hyson (2016) in a correlational study aimed at examining the linkage between ineffective or destructive leadership attitudes and employee turnover found that relationships existed between destructive leadership styles such as derailed, laissez faire, supportive-disloyal, and tyrannical individually tested on one hand, and employee turnover on the other hand. Hyson noted that these destructive or ineffective leadership styles negatively impacted the motivation of employees or followers (Hyson, 2016). Accordingly, the inability of the leadership of

the Republican Party to shrink the widening polarity between the leadership and membership of the party discussed above facilitated the gradual erosion of the authority and control of the leadership of the Republican Party.

In an observational study to measure American electorate's ideological heterogeneity, Carmines et al. (2016) relied on confirmatory factor analysis of questions on issue positions of Americans between 1972 and 2016 from national election studies of America and found that Trump relied on the disaffection of white demographic and less educated members whom the authors described as economically liberal but culturally conservatively oriented, to seize the control of the Republican brand. Carmines et al. pointed that Trump remained adamant on the call of his critics who were predominantly the leadership of the Republican Party and the elites to drop out of the crowded Republican primaries especially as Trump continued his divisive campaign rhetoric (Carmines et al., 2016). More so, Carmines et al. showed various reasons for Trump's successful takeover of the Republican Party and highlighted Trump's capturing of the interest and attention of the rural voters who felt neglected and abandoned by the party's leadership and elites (Carmines et al., 2016).

Donald Trump tapped into the frustrations and anger of most members of the Republican Party who felt alienated and abandoned by the leadership of the party. Because the leadership of the Republican Party failed to provide effective leadership and rally the members of the party together by effectively promoting mass-oriented policies; and by so doing, the leadership created the loophole for Trump to present himself as a credible alternative to the Republican leadership and outlasted all the political

establishment candidates. Also, Trump's message of making America great again reverberated with the demography that felt the need to reclaim America especially in terms of job and economic opportunities from immigrants. Thus, Trump became the index of people's anger with the leadership of the Republican Party and the political establishment (see Allin, 2016; Carmines et al., 2016; Neberai, 2017; White, 2016).

Furthermore, in an ethnographic study on the historic perspective of Donald Trump's Hijacking of the Republican Party, Ware (2016) found that it was more difficult to manage the Republican Party from 1970 to 2016 due to broader coalitions. Ware noted that Trump defiled oppositions from the leadership of the Republican Party to launch himself as a foremost candidate and that Trump's insurgency was quite distinct from the 1964 hijack of the Republican Party by Barry Goldwater in the sense that Goldwater was a political insider who wanted to salvage the Republican Party from moderate conservatism while Trump was a political outsider and nonestablishment candidate. Ware further observed that the Republican Party became less cohesive and wracked by internal party wrangling which was intensified by a deeply polarized government that inhibited the ability of the leadership of the Republican Party to champion truly conservative government policies, and because of the dwindling economic growth of the middle class (Ware, 2016).

Likewise, in his analysis of how Donald Trump fits into the history of populism in America, Eiermann (2016) while relying on the declaration of John Dewey that democracy is synonymous with the ethical ideal of humanity, found that most famous American populists rose to power and popularity by deriding the existing elites of their

times and changed politics from an issue of civic engagement to rational administration. Eiermann observed that American political elites often become too powerful and habitually corrupt the fundamental operations of American democracy thereby providing a strong platform for such populist candidates as Trump to challenge the status quo. (Eiermann, 2016).

Researchers have viewed populism as a destabilizing force that surmounts and replaces an existing political order. In an analytic study aimed at putting Trump in comparative perspective of populism and the sociocultural low members of the society, Ostiguy and Roberts (2016) found that the campaign of Trump on the trajectory of political outsider, polarized the Republican Party into free market right on one side, and anti-establishment who are sociocultural low on the other side. Trump portrayed the populists' notion that populists are in a divine mission of wresting power from the elites who are the societal ills and returning power to the people where power authentically belonged to thereby presenting themselves as true representatives of the people (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2016).

Similarly, on one hand, in a study aimed at interpreting both the personal and political domain of Trump's supporters in relation to accuracy in predicting the outcomes of the 2016 US presidential elections, Eastman and Gilder (2017) while drawing from the models of Kenneth Boulding pertaining the production of social good and evil in the context of either a deteriorating or appreciating social systems noted that Trump's entrance into the 2016 Presidential election race shattered all known rules of the political process both projected and implied. The authors observed that during 2016 election,

social realities mattered less about policies, people, and politics. Rather, what the masses believed to be true mattered more which enabled Trump to create his own realities.

On the other hand, Trump was described by Jacobson (2017) as infamously indifferent to truth and clinging to his phony claims even long after the claims were meticulously discredited by fact checkers, had dubious business dealings, bankruptcies, dubious university, and a charitable foundation that he used to get money from donors and redistribute without committing his personal money into it. Despite these negativisms that made a Trump's victory improbable, Trump clung unto his populist message to deride the leadership of the Republican Party and surmount their opposition (see Eastman & Gilder, 2017; Jacobson, 2017).

Thus, Donald Trump blamed the elites, leadership of the Republican Party, and his opponents for all the socioeconomic problems of America and presented himself as the perfect elixir with unrealistic promises of how to fix the problems. Trump was an abnormal politician whose campaign was ran on a trajectory and platform that defiled known political realities, rationalities, and processes and eventually launched a successful hostile hijacking of the Republican brand. Some political pundits maintained that the unexpected victory of Trump during the 2016 U.S. elections could signal the demise of the Republican establishment and further the erosion of the global political ideology (see Eastman & Gilder, 2017; Formisano, 2016; Usul, 2017).

In a study on the legitimacy crisis of U.S. elites, Parmar (2017) argued that the rise of Trump by challenging Wall Street and the leadership of the Republican Party and even Democratic Party was indicative of the legitimacy crisis of American political elite.

Parmar posited that the legitimacy crisis of America elites may linger and even degenerate to serious political and leadership crisis unless elite supports a reform of the system to curtail influence of big corporations on American political economy (Parmar, 2017). Thus, the rise of Donald Trump was made possible by the passionate support of the middle class despite every effort of the leadership of the Republican Party and the elite to stop him (Maddox, 2017). This was the way the middleclass sent a message to the leadership of the Republican and Democratic parties and indeed the political elite to reform internal process of leadership selection in America. The 2016 U.S. election season therefore, highlighted the need to reform the process of presidential nominations (see Bluestone, 2017; Eiermann, 2016; Parmar, 2017).

Also, reliance on the use of conventional and unconventional media paid off for Trump during the 2016 election season and helped him in winning the support and votes of younger voters and struck a personal connection with them which resulted in the passion with which Trump supporters expressed their support for his candidacy and were willing to engage in physical brawl with protesters and oppositions (see Wodak & Krzyżanowski, 2017). The above notion was collaborated by Kreis (2017) in an exploratory study of President Trump's politics of tweet in which the author examines how Trump engages the use of Twitter as an effective tool of power politics and found that reliance in both conventional and unconventional media such as Twitter helped Trump in striking connection with the base of the Republican Party and Trump's ability to leverage this connection in taking over the leadership of the party (Kreis, 2017).

Contrastingly, in another exploratory study of how the communication strategies and victory of Trump compromised the concept of truth, Lakoff (2017) began by defining a populist as a person who sympathizes politically with the marginalized. The author challenged Trump's assumption of populist leader as not enough to label Trump as a populist and described Trump as an elite who went up against fellow elites. Lakoff argued that mere claiming to be a populist does not make Trump a populist and rather described Trump as narcissist whose type of political communication was based on self-created realities and empty promises. He posed two assumptions that Trump's supporters could either be remarkably stupid or evasive (Lakoff, 2017). Thus, Montgomery (2017) stressed that the appeal of Trump's message was based on perceived authenticity rather than facts. Montgomery highlighted three styles of persuasion as reliance upon the speaker's character, putting the mental or emotional attitude of the audience into perspective, and the facts of the speech (Montgomery, 2017).

Also, Kardas (2017) in an analysis of the factors and intricacies that guaranteed the improbable victory of Trump, noted that the media played strategic role especially new media platforms and observed that neither truth nor factchecking of Trump's unrealistic campaign promises mattered to Trump and his supporters. The author highlighted that the deductions Trump expected his audience to draw from his statements and bogus claims was inconsistent with facts. Thus, Trump's expressions and symbols of communication are inconsistent with the facts and creates the standards for informal political discussions based on Trump's campaign rhetoric (Kardas, 2017).

One major issue that create the opportunity for the surge in populist candidates is failure of past and incumbent leaders to remain committed to the needs of the members of their society. Hudson (2006) in his analysis of the eight impediments to the future of American democracy highlighted the essence of the state fulfilling its obligation under the social contract theory and stressed need for citizens' participation in the process of governance through both governmental and nongovernmental institutions. Hudson noted that this citizens' participation is essential for boosting public trust in government and drawing masses' support for the government which is necessary for the survivability of government.

Referencing the underlying argument of the social contract theorists, which is that the citizens voluntarily agreed to surrender their inalienable rights to the state in exchange for the state's protection of these inalienable rights and providing basic amenities for the citizens; Hudson observed that leaders should get followers involved in the process of leadership (Hudson, 2006). Equally, Wodak and Krzyżanowski (2017) in their empirical analysis of the current unexpected surge of conservative populism in Europe and America noted that in furtherance to ethnic nationalism, free market fundamentalism is one of the main ideological leaning for contemporary populists. This point raised by the authors was also identified as one of the strong issues that helped Trump win the support of the middle-class when he alleged that bad trade deals was responsible for the dwindling state of manufacturing in the U.S., and for facilitating loss of manufacturing jobs to foreign countries (Wodak and Krzyżanowski, 2017).

In a study on examining the angry populist as foreign policy leader, (Drezner, 2017) noted that researchers have offered various descriptions of populists including describing populists as leaders who attain leadership by setting themselves aside through proffering commonsense solutions that resonate with less informed members of the society, such as fixing the economy by repealing unfair trade deals, and dealing with domestic terrorism by banning Muslims from their societies. Another description of populists was that populists are partially defined by what they oppose by portraying the elites as the problem of the society who have swindled the people out of their true preferences. However, populists have been criticized for making idealistic campaign promises aimed at deceiving the voters (Drezner, 2017).

The exclusion of the voices of the masses in the process of leadership selection within an organization such as the Republican Party has always come with a price. White (2016) observed that during the 2016 Republican primaries, the Republican Party enmeshed itself in the turbulence of a populist revolution rooted in the acrimony by the white working class against bad trade deals. This demography of white working class boosted by the Alt-Right movement (which is a loose group of white conservatives that believe in the supremacy of the white in America) blamed bad trade agreements for the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs to other countries; and groused against immigrants for contravening the law, stealing American citizens' jobs, and resenting the American way of life (White, 2016). Trump exploited this opportunity in assuming the cloak of populism by describing this demography as hardworking Americans who have long been forgotten and no longer

have a voice; and promised that soon they will be remembered and that he (Donald Trump) will be their voice (White, 2016).

Yet in his study on the Legitimacy crisis of the United States' elite and the rise to power of Donald Trump, Parmar (2017) found that the ascension of Trump to U.S. presidency was indicative of the rejection of the political elite and its economy driven globalism which has resulted in gross income inequalities. The detachment of the leadership of the Republican Party from the members of the party led to the legitimacy crisis of the leadership of the Republican Party and its rejection by the members of the party who identified with the populist message of Trump.

More so, in an analysis of the improbable nature of Trump's victory relational to divided partisanship during the 2016 election season, Jacobson (2017) reiterated the stunning effect of Trump's victory during the 2016 election season which beat all polls and observed that the candidacy of Trump challenged all precedents, expectations and primary understanding of politics. Jacobson reviewed the many reasons why Trump should not have won, the reasons responsible for Trump's victory, and the implications of Trump's victory for the future of America's national elections (Jacobson, 2017).

Finally, De Matas (2017) in an exploratory study of contemporary reinvention of nationalist sentiments based on the fundamentals of nationalist ideology detailed how Trump presented himself as a contrast to political establishment candidates. De Matas pointed out that Trump's essentially uncharacteristic, polarizing rhetoric inspired a neo-American isolationism ideology and described Trump's campaign promise to make

America great again as fundamentally problematic albeit the platform upon which Trump wrestled power from Republican leadership and political elite (De Matas, 2017).

To conclude, this section facilitated the understanding of the role of ineffective leadership in negating cohesion within the Republican Party and how the inability of Republican leadership to foster cohesion within the party subsequently widened internal polarization and created an atmosphere that boosted the abandonment of the party's establishment and forceful hijack of the Republican leadership by Trump. This will further buttress the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the 2016 Republican primaries.

Summary

In this chapter, I focused on synthesizing literature that defined the concepts and facilitate the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. I also highlighted the theoretical framework that facilitate the current study in one of the sections as well as detailed the research strategy and criteria for literature search and selection. In chapter three, I expound the methodology for the study by arguing the logic for participant selection, describe the instrumentation, and elucidate my plan for data analysis. I also expound issues of trustworthiness and procedures to address ethical concerns pertaining to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The essence of this study was to advance scholarly knowledge in understanding the perception of the members of the Republican Party pertaining to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. It was the disgruntled members of the Republican Party who elected Trump against the wish of the leadership of the party who preferred an establishment candidate. What was not known, however, were the leadership issues inherent in the Republican Party that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Meinke (2014) pointed out that the Republican leadership's reliance on whip organizations will continue to wane in efficacy in the current era of internally divided party. I also sought to understand how the disconnect between the members and leadership of Republican Party contributed in shaping the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. Thus, I highlight the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions.

Consequently, in this chapter, I outline the qualitative method employed to help in understanding the lived experiences of members of the Republican Party with regards to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. This includes research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The overarching research question guiding this study was, what leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries? Accordingly, the central phenomenon of this study addressed the leadership issues inherent in the Republican Party and how they shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. These factors potentially impact cohesiveness within the Republican Party and its ability to articulate and set policy agenda, which may by inference impact American democracy and public administration.

I adopted phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of members of the Republican Party with regards to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries because a phenomenological approach is best suited for studies intended to explore an understanding of a phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced the phenomenon (see Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Therefore, phenomenological approach is ideal for the present study which encompasses an in-depth understanding of the perception of the members of the Republican Party regarding the leadership issues that led to the abandonment of the party's establishment candidates by the members of the party during the 2016 Republican primaries.

Other methods of qualitative inquiry have been considered but may be less effective in offering the required insight for understanding the experiences of these people. For instance, a case study is an empirical investigation of a current phenomenon within its realistic context and entails observing a bounded system over a period to gather information (see Patton, 2015). This method would have been ideal if I sought to

establish a relationship between leadership issues and members' loyalty or voting pattern or what has been occurring over time within the group under study. Equally, ethnographic method ideally seeks to explain the behaviors and experiences of a cultural or social group (see Patton, 2015) and would have been ideal if the current study addressed leadership culture or choice pattern of the group under study.

Also, grounded theory focuses on the development of a theory and would have suited the current study if CLT and other leadership theories were inadequate in understanding the lived experiences of the group under study. Hence, phenomenology was chosen because I focused on the lived experiences of the group under study. Rudestam and Newton (2015) noted that a phenomenological approach is best suited for studies intended to explore an understanding of a phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced the phenomenon.

Role of the Researcher

Interest in phenomenon to be investigated through a research question should form the basis for a qualitative study. Also, reflexivity is the central aspect of a qualitative study because it helps the researcher to engage in a systematic evaluation of his or her personality, positionality, and personal biases (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I am a Walden PhD student of Public Policy and Administration and embarked on this research purely as an academic requirement. Also, I am not a registered member of any political party but served as an election clerk during the 2016 elections. Hence, my role in this study was an observer.

Therefore, I have no political or professional affiliations with participants. With regards to managing bias and the power relationship between the researcher and participants in this study, I am not a registered member of a political party. Although not completely apolitical, I am a Catholic Knight and share some values with members of the Republican Party, as well as like some policy issues of the Democrats. However, through reflective memo, I continued assessing my limited personal bias and ensured my bias was kept from interfering with the study.

I also followed the advice of Rubin and Rubin (2012) by sticking with the guidelines of the institutional review board (IRB) and ensured that the study was objective and conformed with the standards of scholarly writing. Finally, there were no ethical issues regarding my role in the study because I have neither conflict of interest nor conducting the study within my work environment and so no issues of power differentials. The participants in this study were adult male and female volunteers who had the freewill to choose whether to participate in the study and were not pressured into answering any question or give any information that they were not comfortable with. There was no known harm associated with participating in this study.

Accordingly, no participant experienced harm or difficulty due to participating in this study. Each participant completed a consent form and his or her confidentiality was protected. Files, audiotapes, and transcripts were stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Identifying information was removed from transcripts prior to data validation.

Research Methodology

I selected qualitative methodology for this study because qualitative research is consistent with exploring and understanding how the leadership of the Republican Party ensures that party policies reflect the cravings of the masses, and how leadership issues led the members of the Republican Party to abandon the party's establishment candidates during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. Qualitative research provides the means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (see Creswell, 2014).

Again, Rudestam and Newton (2007) stated that qualitative research methods are not ideally designed to either test or prove a theory but to give voice to the participants in relation to the participants' lived experiences. Furthermore, in this study, I dealt with variables that may not be subjected to concise measurement such as the lived experiences of members of the Republican Party and how they perceive their realities. For instance, previous researchers such as Forgette (2004) and Meinke (2014) determined the effectiveness of whip organizations during the era of strong party unity. However, in this study, measuring of relationships between variables was not possible because the leadership issues and other factors that influenced the choices and decisions of the members of the Republican Party were not yet ascertained and this study helps to fill that gap.

Participants Selection Logic

Since the current study focused on understanding the perception of the members of the Republican Party pertaining to the organizational factors and leadership issues inherent in

the Republican Party which shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries, the population studied was the members of the Republican Party within the metropolitan city of Dallas Texas. I relied on purposeful random sampling of 12 participants because the study is a phenomenology and Walden University recommends minimum of ten participants. Patton (2015) argued that homogeneous sampling does not abhor random sampling. Rather, random sampling potentially boosts the credibility of findings.

I also used snowball sampling which has been extensively used in qualitative sociological studies to recruit participants through referrals by previously identified participants. This sampling method is ideal for studies that concerns privately related matter such as voter's preference that typical requires insiders to identify participants for study. Therefore, snowball sampling was an ideal sampling method for overcoming inherent challenges in studying concealed populations such as those Republicans who voted for Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries (see Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). While it is easy to identify members of the Republican Party, identifying those who voted for Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries was cumbersome.

The participants were selected from registered members of the Republican Party in Dallas Texas who supported then candidate Trump at any point during the 2016 Republican primaries. This is because Trump's supporters were passionate and unwavering about their support even in the face of scandalous accusations against Trump, and strong opposition to Trump's candidacy by the Republican elites. Thus, participants of the current study consisted of 12 people which is ideal sample size for a

phenomenology and saturation was achieved after one interview because no new themes emerged that required further interviews (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Participants were recruited through the office of the Republican Party in Dallas, Kaufman, and surrounding counties within Dallas metropolitan city. I sought the advance consent of participants by contacting the chairman of Dallas Republican Party and provided information pertaining to the nature of the intended study and the request for assistance in recruiting participants for the study. The recruitment arrangement entailed the officials arranging a meeting with me and potential volunteers to discuss the nature of the study. The letter of cooperation is marked Appendix A while the reply to the letter of cooperation is marked Appendix B.

The relationship between saturation and sample size is important in a qualitative study because it helps in determining how much data are needed to achieve saturation. In a phenomenology, a researcher is required to continue collecting data until saturation is achieved because the emergence of new phenomenon or themes will require further data collection for validation purposes to guarantee credibility and transferability of the study (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Instrumentation

Data were collected through semistructured in-depth interviews. During the interviews, I ensured that participants are with the right experience and background by interviewing only registered members of the Republican Party who supported Trump at any point during the 2016 Republican primaries to put participants' experiences in context. I began by building rapport, reassured participants of the protection of

participants' identities, signed consent forms, described the nature of the study and discussed the details of participants' experiences by asking focused questions that emanated from the research question and literature review in this study.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) pointed out that naturalistic researchers typically approach data collection in their studies using variety of techniques such as “in-depth interviews”, “participant observation”, and “documentary and conventional analysis” (p. 26). The authors explained that most times researchers combine these techniques if necessary (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Walking through the lived experiences of participants helps in giving voice to the participant (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The overarching research question is, what leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries? To address the research question, each participant was asked interview questions one through eight concerning his or her lived experience regarding the phenomenon under study. All interview questions are listed in Appendix D. Although Patton (2015) noted that the researcher can conduct one or more interviews in phenomenology until saturation is achieved, in current study, saturation was achieved after the first interview.

The interviews took place at different locations of participant's choice that were distraction proof and guaranteed privacy such as participants' home offices and meeting rooms of public restaurants. All interview sessions were typically between 38 mins and one hour and were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Furthermore, notes were taken to document nonverbal communication and details of the environment.

Data organization was done by creating and naming files of the transcribed interviews. The creation, labelling, and arrangement of files for easy access is the initial step in data analysis (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Files and recordings are maintained in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. The process of analyzing the information obtained from the interviews was preceded by data transcription. Creswell (2013) highlighted that the process of data collection entails seeking and obtaining permissions, robust sampling strategy, means of recording data both digitally and manually, data storage, and anticipation of ethical issues arising from the process (Creswell, 2013). Creswell summed up data collection process as a “circle of interrelated activities” (p. 145). From “Locating site / Individual” – “Gaining Access and Making Rapport” - “Purposefully Random Sampling” - “Collecting Data” - “Recording Information” – “Resolving Field Issues” – “Storing Data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 146).

Upon completion of data transcription, I emailed transcripts to participants for member checking to ensure that transcribed data truly reflect participants’ experiences and served as a debriefing for participants.

Data Analysis Plan

After organizing data, I began to make meaning out of the data collected. Patton (2015) described data analysis as the transformation of data into findings. However, the challenge with this process is trying to make sense out of massive data (Patton, 2015). I began the process of data analysis by describing my personal experience of the phenomenon to set aside or keep in check personal bias. I meticulously read interview transcripts and field notes to obtain a general sense of the information provided by

participants (see Creswell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The objective of the first step is to identify and keep researcher's bias in check and start appreciating the type of information inherent in the data from the perspective of participants.

The second step was to identify and highlight statements in the transcripts that are relevant to the phenomenon under study. In this instance, the focus was to identify statements that will enhance the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Creswell (2013) advised that researchers create a list of "significant statements" relating to participant's personal experience of the phenomenon and treat all statements equally in relevance (p. 193). This step is aimed at identifying the important themes or codes that will facilitate better understanding of the phenomenon under study and this process was also described by Maxwell (2013) as categorization of what captures the researcher's interest in the data. Coding is an analytical process of organizing and sorting data which helps the researcher to summarize and synthesize what is happening in his or her data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I relied on descriptive coding which helps readers to hear and visualize what the researcher heard and visualized from the data (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Also, I used NVivo 12 as Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) because of NVivo's requirement of careful review and self-categorization.

The third step was the grouping of relevant statements identified in step two above into themes which is followed by writing a "textural description" of participant's

experience of the phenomenon under study and a” structural description” of how the experience occurred (see Creswell, 2013, pp. 193-194).

The last step entailed constructing the meaning each participant ascribed to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. I wrote a comprehensive description of the phenomenon with both textural and structural descriptions integrated at this last step. This step is described as the concluding segment of a phenomenological study. I continued the data process until triangulation was achieved (see Creswell, 2013).

Issue of Trustworthiness

Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that validity denotes the quality and rigor of a qualitative study and the several ways that qualitative researchers could attest that their results were accurate reflections of participants’ experiences. As earlier discussed, qualitative research entails a rigorous process and painstaking efforts in data collection and analysis.

1. Credibility implies the ability of the researcher to account for all the complexities encountered during the study and to deal with unexplainable patterns (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I documented all challenges including personal biases encountered during the processes of this study and how those challenges were overcome. Also, I relied on rich, thick description and triangulation to ensure that data saturation is achieved.
2. Transferability which may also be described as external validity entails the development of descriptive context-relevant statements rather than the

development of true statements that are generalizable in the context of other people or settings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To achieve generalizability, I ensured that interview questions emanated from research question and literature review, documented my interview guides and questions, as well as the responses of participants so that the study could be replicated if need be.

3. Dependability relies on the consistency of a qualitative research which is based on a rational argument for data collection and process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Thus, I based my data collection method on research question, literature review, and appropriate method consistent with the nature of phenomenology which guides this study. Data collection, size, and nature are consistent with this methodology.
4. Confirmability entails that qualitative researchers do not seek to be objective but strive to collect data that are confirmable and seek relative neutrality in the process of data collection, transcription, coding, and data analysis as well as ensure that study findings are confirmable (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In the earlier discussion on reflexivity, I noted that I am not a member of any political party and therefore free from explicit bias. Hence, I maintained neutrality and transparency in the entire process of data collection, transcription, coding, and data analysis to allow for concepts and themes to emanate from the responses of participants.

Ethical Procedures

It is pertinent that researchers respect their boundaries with participants to mitigate the likelihood of bias and skewed data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Also, researchers have an ethical responsibility to respect participants and never be deceitful. Researchers should exhibit high level of moral standard and integrity by honoring their commitments to the participants, and never pressure participants or interviewees to participate in the study or answer questions that they are not willing to answer. Researchers should also never leave participants or interviewees worse than they were prior to the study and must ensure they obtain informed consent from participants / interviewees prior to the interviews or focus groups (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This research was conducted with strict adherence to the guidelines of IRB.

I wrote a letter to the Dallas Republican Party, and Dallas Trump Support Group and sought their willingness to participate in the study as a research partner as well as obtained a letter of cooperation copy of which is marked Appendix B. Subsequently, I sought and obtained IRB consent and approval prior to embarking on data collection. This study did not require data from protected or vulnerable population. Therefore, the participants in this study were adult male and female volunteers who have the freewill to choose whether to participate in the study or not; and were not pressured into answering any question or give any information that they were not comfortable with. The sample letter for participants' recruitment is marked Appendix C. Participants completed the consent form and participants responses and information are kept confidential.

Files, audiotapes, and transcripts are stored in a locked cabinet in my home office and will be destroyed not more than five years after the study is completed. The other ethical issue with this study is the protection of the anonymity of participants. Ravitch and Carl (2016) highlighted the importance of researchers safeguarding the identity of participants as well as preserving the integrity of data. However, the authors pointed out that through the process of deductive disclosure, the identification of some participants due to definite traits, capabilities, experiences, and circumstances can potentially cause the erosion of confidentiality and anonymity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Summary

In this chapter the qualitative method that furthered the understanding of the lived experiences of members of the Republican Party relating to the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries was mapped out. The methods discussed under this chapter are research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. In the next chapter, I expound the setting of the study, participants' demographics, data collection and analysis, results and issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The essence of this study was to understand perceptions of Republican Party members regarding how party leadership issues helped shape the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. I also sought to understand if there was a disconnect between the members and leadership of the Republican Party and how the disconnect and other leadership issues contributed in shaping the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. The findings of this study indicate the importance of effective, responsive, and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups, and public institutions. I relied on in-depth semistructured interviews of registered members of the Republican Party who supported president Trump to explore their perception of how leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. The interviews contained in the interview protocol (Appendix D) were designed to address the overarching research question: What leadership issues shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries?

In this chapter, I describe personal or organizational conditions that shaped data collection and results interpretation. I also present the demographics and other pertinent characteristics of participants, my data collection process and variations from previously outlined plan, and the data analysis process, including any discrepancies into analysis. Finally, I discuss evidence of trustworthiness and results of the study.

Setting of the Study

I recruited participants from registered members of the Republican Party who supported President Trump during the 2016 election season to explore their perspectives on why they supported Trump. I sought to better understand why voters supported a nonestablishment candidate instead of working with the leadership of the party to support the party's establishment candidates. The participant recruitment criteria were specified in the participant recruitment letter marked appendix C. Hence, participants were drawn from members of the Republican Party who supported Trump during the 2016 primaries. Individuals who did not meet these criteria were not included in the final sample. Though 10 participants supported Trump's candidacy from the outset, two participants expressed that they did not initially support President Trump during the Republican primaries but supported him immediately after their first candidate of choice dropped out of the race during the primaries. Another participant had unpleasant personal encounter with the Trump administration over her request for the White House to send her dad a customized birthday message but got a solicitation for financial support instead. This experience made the participant angry with President Trump, and she could not hold back her outbursts against the President; she continuously referred to him as a bully during the interview. My initial fear was that the perception of the participant who had unpleasant encounter with the White House may have been influenced by her unique situation, but when I interviewed her, participant demonstrated relevant experience and perception that addressed the interview questions. All 12 participants noted that they supported president

Trump at one point or another during the 2016 election season and participants expressed a resolve to support him again in future.

Demographics

Though participants did not complete a demographic survey before the interview, based on my personal observation of the physical appearance of participants, out of 12 participants, seven were White males, two were Black males, and three were White females. One participant became actively involved in the Republican elections in early 2016, while the rest of the participants' years of experience ranged from 6 to 40 years. Most participants had served in one position or the other within the Republican Party at various levels. Table 1 shows the demographics of participants who, as earlier stated, were recruited from registered members of the Republican Party and who supported President Trump during the 2016 election season.

Although the study did not require the disclosure of the ages of participants, deducing from participants' statements about how old participants were when they got involved in politics and how long they have been involved, participants' ages ranged from 45 to 70 years. All participants noted that the values of the Republican Party aligned with their values as Christians and they saw the Republican Party as best platform to express and advance their values. I considered it important to report this factor because the religious background of participants may have somewhat influenced their perception about the emergence of President Trump as the leader of the party despite not having the support of the leadership of the party as divine intervention.

Table 1

Participant Demographics (N = 12)

Identifier	Race	Gender	Years as a Republican
Participant 1	White	Female	22
Participant 2	White	Male	39
Participant 3	White	Male	33
Participant 4	White	Female	3
Participant 5	White	Female	27
Participant 6	White	Male	18
Participant 7	White	Male	11
Participant 8	White	Male	19
Participant 9	Black	Male	13
Participant 10	White	Male	32
Participant 11	White	Male	9
Participant 12	Black	Male	41

Data Collection

Upon the approval of Walden University's IRB with approval number 02-12-19-0630233, I commenced participant recruitment by obtaining the contact information of members of the Dallas Republican Party from their website <https://dallasgop.org>. I was also invited to Dallas Republican New Friends and Family Picnic where I met with potential participants and explained the purpose of my study to them. I emailed 84 participant letters to the members of the Republican Party and got 16 responses. Two intending participants later declined participation, one intending participant did not meet the criteria for inclusion and was excluded, and another intending participant was going on vacation and could not be available until September 2019 and was therefore excluded. After screening, I interviewed 12 participants.

I met with participants three times; two meetings were in person and one was over the phone. The first in-person meeting was to explain the purpose of my study to intending participants at a Republican New Friends and Family Picnic where I scheduled interview dates and times with participants. I could not conduct interviews right there and then because participants were still engaged in the picnic and the location was not conducive to an interview. The second meeting was over the phone to confirm the interview date, time, and venue; and the third meeting was to conduct the interview. The interviews took place at different locations determined by participant's choice. Seven interviews took place at participants' private offices, two interviews took place at participants' home offices, and three interviews took place at secluded corners of public

restaurants. The interviews conducted in public were not fully conducive as noises filtered through the recording, thereby making transcription more difficult.

Saturation is strategic to the validity of research, and rich and thick data that resulted from asking the same interview questions to multiple participants without any new emergent themes is a sign of saturation (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The duration of the interviews ranged from 28 minutes to 58 minutes. The interviews occurred between February 26, 2019 and April 10, 2019. I mostly conducted no more than one interview a day. However, three interviews occurred on February 26, 2019 and two interviews occurred on April 7, 2019. There were days that no interviews occurred.

I recorded the interviews with the consent of participants using my personal cell phone that was password protected to ensure the confidentiality of participants. I also took notes during the interviews to capture participants' expressions and gestures, which otherwise would not have been captured by recording the interview alone.

There was no variation in my participant selection logic, instrumentation, and data collection as previously outlined. I collected the data using semistructured interview questions outlined in my interview protocol. I started by asking participants to describe their experiences as members of the Republican Party to ensure that participants met the criteria for inclusion. The rest of the questions and follow-up questions were as outlined in the interview protocol in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stressed the importance of transparency in research especially during data analysis because “transparency helps to establish rigor and

validity” which facilitates the understanding of how the researcher arrived at his or her findings (p. 215). Data analysis entails making meaning out of massive data by coding the data and constructing analytical themes which are eventually transformed into findings that facilitate the answering of the research question (see Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I followed the steps that I detailed in chapter 3 to confront data analysis and allowed the data to lead me in the process. I relied on thematic data analysis which according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017) can either be theory (deductive) or data driven (inductive) which emphasizes flexibility with coding, categorizing and theming (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). However, I relied on inductive analysis; although the emergent themes and results conformed with literature review and theoretical framework with two new themes. Thus, I began data analysis by transcribing data using Descript software and going through each transcript to ensure that it matches the audiotapes. Then I read the transcripts six times to familiarize myself with the data. I also listened to the audiotapes eight times until I became familiar with the data to begin analysis.

The second step was to start identifying and highlighting statements in the transcripts that are relevant to the phenomenon of my study. I used NVivo 12 software to run a text search query to generate word cluster, and word tree. The results which are labelled Figures 2 and 4 helped me to determine the codes which are referred to as nodes in NVivo as well as the categorizations. The coding resulted in 22 codes. I critically reread the codes with a view of identifying similarities and regrouped codes with similar characteristics into one. For instance, I merged the code integrating members’ voices and

influencing leadership into one category which is integrating members voice & influencing leadership; negativism, and dislikes were equally merged into one category which is negatives because participants expressed negative views about the leadership of the party and the President. I also merged the codes frustrations, improvements, desire for change, and government direction into one category of change. These codes were merged together due to the similarities of the experiences they described and the issues the codes addressed.

Finally, the regrouping process resulted into nine categories. I then studied the nine categories critically to arrive at five themes. For instance, when I further reviewed the categories of relationship between leadership and grassroots, integrating members' voices & influencing leadership, I discovered the pattern that resulted in the theme disconnect between the grassroots and leadership which highlighted the disconnect between the members and leadership. I repeated the process and arrived at five themes namely: disconnect between the grassroots and leadership, ineffective leadership, imminent change, power of communication, and divine leadership. Another theme that emerged was justice and immigration. This theme was dominant and very important to all the 12 participants as one of their reasons for supporting President Trump. However, I could not move forward with analyzing it because it falls outside the scope of this study. I also ran a hierarchy chart using NVivo 12 software which generated a graphic presentation of the percentage of frequencies of categories in relation to interview questions labelled Figure 3. This was done to establishment the relationship amongst the nine categories and the

interview questions and the frequency of such relationship. I will elaborate on the themes in results.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Validity stresses the need for researcher(s) to transparently lead readers through the rigorous processes of data collection and analysis; and walk readers through how researchers arrived at their results (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). To ensure the trustworthiness of the current study, I followed the procedures that I outlined in chapter 3.

With regards to credibility, I noted in chapter 3 that I would document all challenges including personal biases I came across during data collection, transcription, and analysis; and how I overcame those challenges. As I observed previously under the setting of the study, there were two participants who did not initially support Trump during the primaries but supported him after their initial candidates dropped out of the race. However, the two participants had relevant experience and provided enough data to answer the research question. There was another participant disgruntled over the failure of Trump's administration to send her father a personalized birthday message. She expressed a lot of negative emotions about Trump, but the negative emotions did not in any way interfere with the quality of the data she provided because she objectively responded to the interview questions.

The interviews were conducted in accordance with the interview protocol, I recorded the interviews with my phone which is passworded to protect the data. I used Descript software to transcribe the recorded interviews verbatim and crosschecked the transcript to make corrections where the software did not capture the proper word or sentence due to individual accent. This was necessary to ensure that the transcripts were true reflection of

participants' views and when someone follows the same steps, the person will likely arrive at same or similar results.

Regarding dependability, I ensured my interview protocol resulted from my research question and reviewed literature. I also ensured that the size and nature of collected data were consistent with phenomenology by interviewing 12 participants through semistructured interviews.

Finally, when I described the position of the researcher earlier, I stated that I am not a member of the Republican Party and served as an election clerk during the 2016 elections. Therefore, I do not have intrinsic bias. Notwithstanding, I maintained neutrality and transparency throughout the entire process of data collection, data transcription, coding, and data analysis. I did a word and text search with NVivo software to determine the relevant nodes and allowed the data to lead the results by ensuring that codes, concepts, and themes stemmed from participants' responses. I verified my findings to ensure conformity with data and did not find any discrepancy with the evidence of trustworthiness that I outlined in chapter 3.

Results

My focus with this study is to shine light on the importance of effective, responsive and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges confronted by today's organizations, interest groups and public institutions. To achieve this objective, I sought to understand the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. I also sought to understand how disconnect between the membership and

leadership of the Republican Party was contributory to shaping the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries.

I relied on semistructured interviews of members of the Republican Party who supported President Trump to explore their perceptions of the overarching research question: What leadership issues shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries? The interview protocol was designed from the overarching research question and literature review. The data collected resulted into five themes as shown in Figure 1.

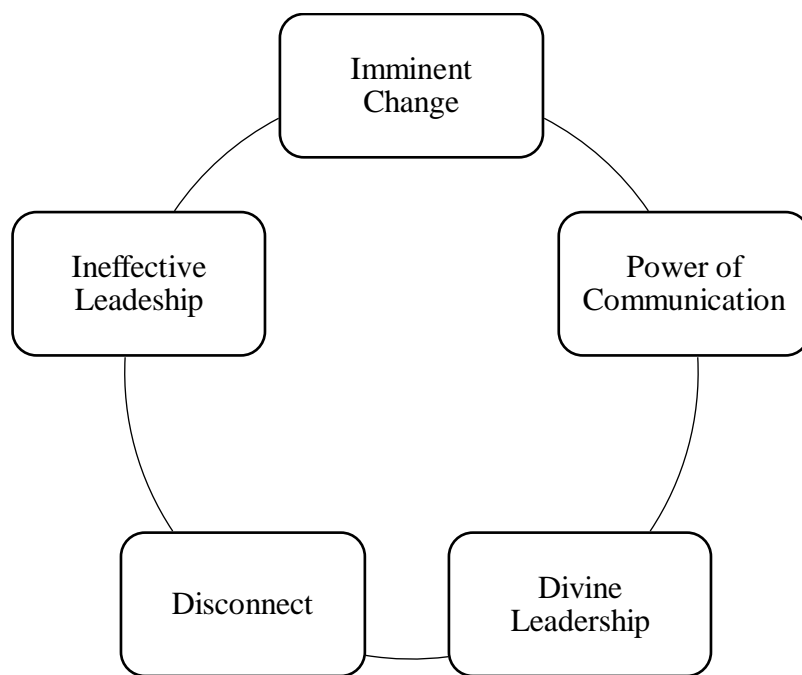


Figure1. *The five themes that resulted from dataset.*

Under the theme of disconnect between the grassroots and leadership, participants highlighted how the leadership of the Republican Party is out of touch with the feelings, needs, desires, and aspirations of the grassroots or members of the party and

how Republican elected officials abandon the cause and policies supported by the grassroots in pursuance of their reelection bids. Most respondents accused elected officials of visiting the grassroots only to seek their votes and abandon them afterwards. Regarding theme two, ineffective leadership, participants emphasized the inability of the leadership of the party to offer purposeful leadership to the members. Most of the respondents deprecated the inability of elected officials especially congress members to do the jobs that they were elected to do rather than drinking coffee in their offices and seeking reelections. Under the third theme, imminent change, respondents discussed that the masses were discontented with the gridlock at Washington especially as the party's leadership abandoned the cause of grassroots to their quest for reelection thus the grassroots desired to change their situation. On one hand, participants had a consensus that the fourth theme, the power of effective communication, played a significant role in the emergence of President Trump as American leader. On the other hand, participants expressed the importance of the party developing an effective communication strategy to target the younger American voters. Lastly, participants expressed a belief in divine leadership, the fifth theme, by noting that power comes from God and sometimes leaders emerge through divine calling.

In this section, I discuss each theme in relation to the interview question(s) and the theme addressed. To begin I present a table containing data set of the codes, categories, and emerged themes. Followed by detailed discussion of the themes and presenting data from the 12 participants. I will first present the word cluster, percentage of frequencies of categories in relation to themes, word tree generated through text search query of

leadership issues from NVivo 12 software, and a list view of the codes, categories, references, and themes to help buttress my discussion. Next page are figures 2 through 4, and Table 2 which offer visual presentation of the data and how the data transitioned from codes, to categories, and finally to themes.

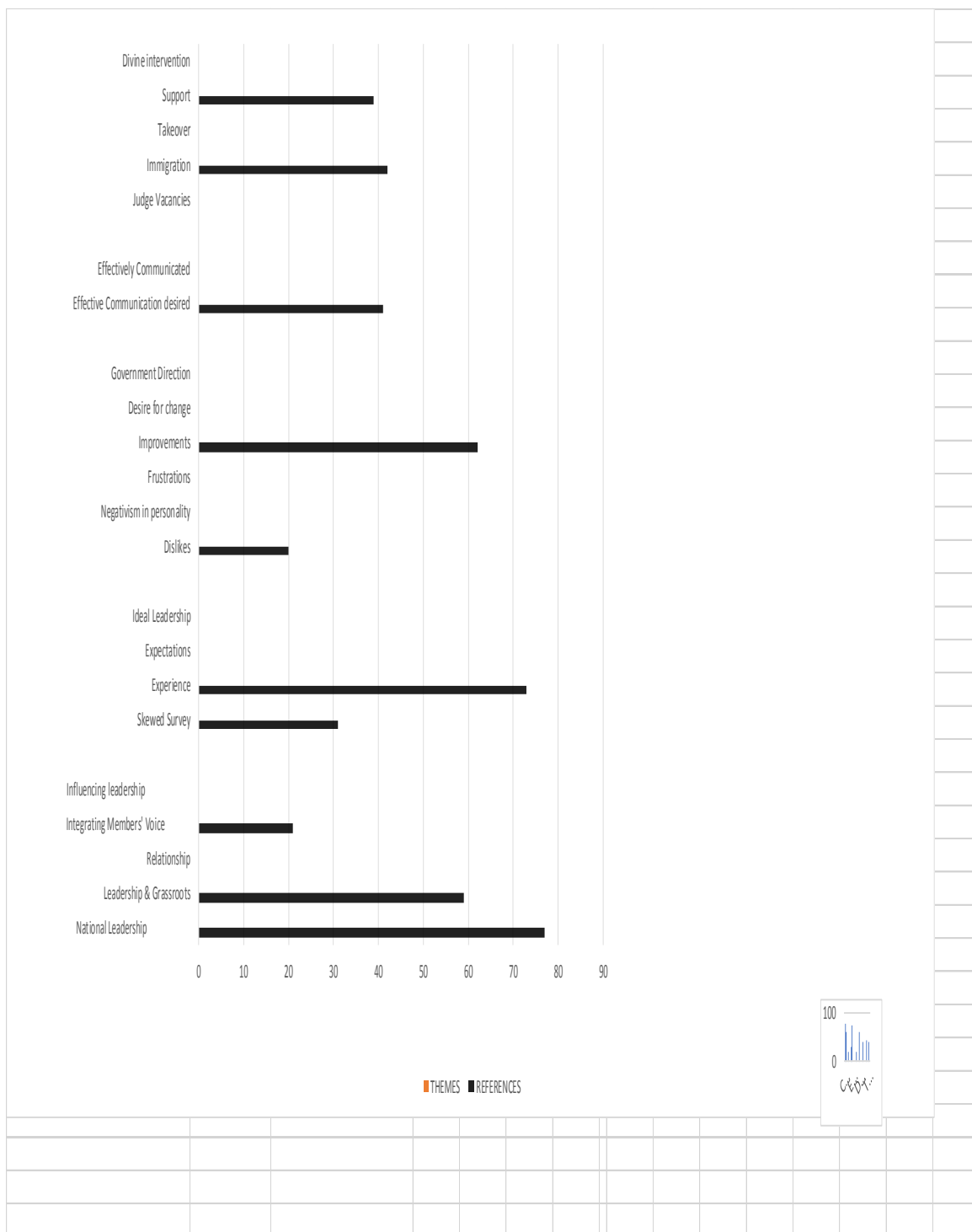


Figure 3. *Graphic presentation of the percentage of frequencies of codes in relation to themes.*

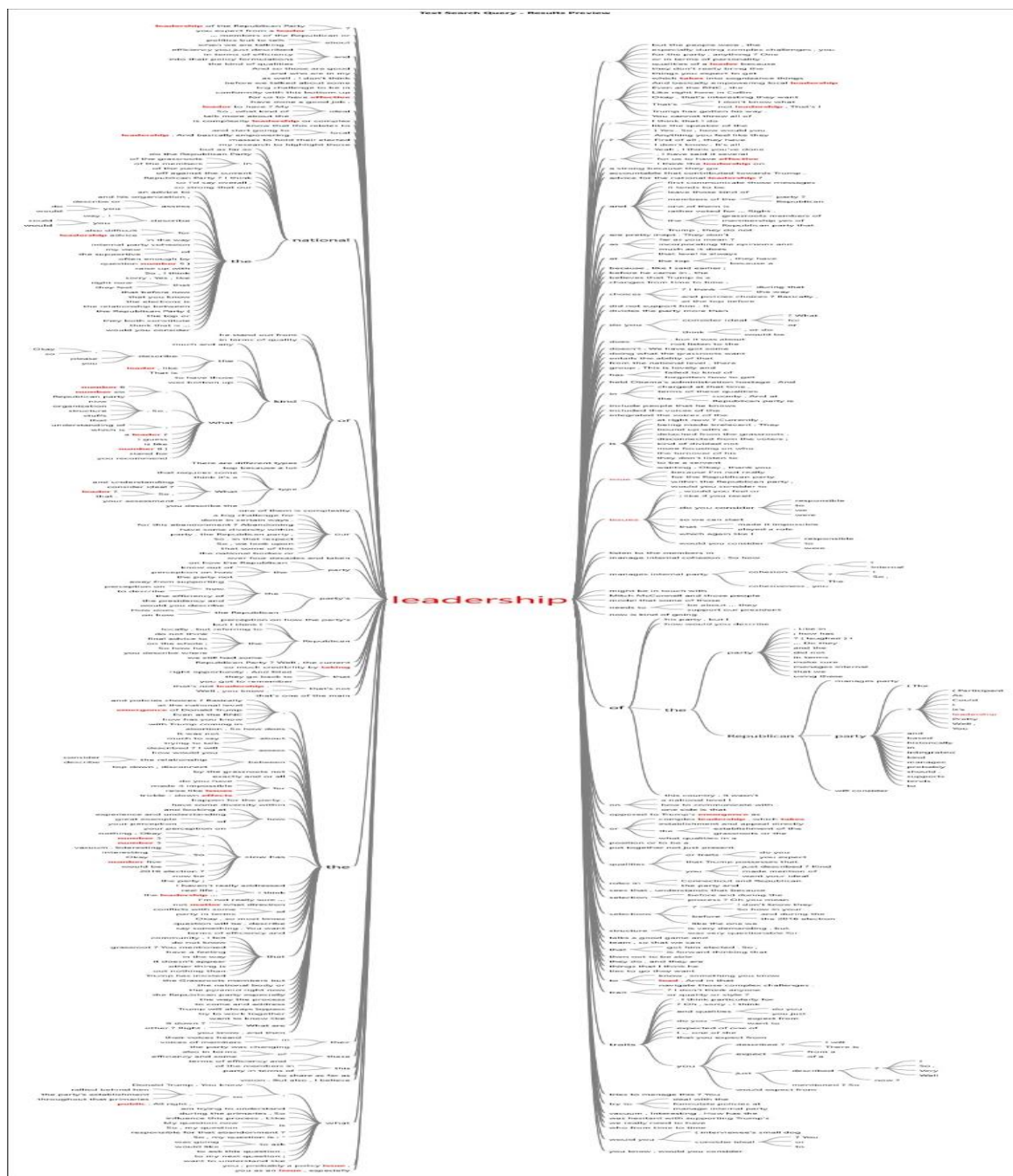


Figure 4. Word tree of leadership issues from NVivo 12.

Table 2

Codes, Categories, References, and Themes

Code	Categories	References	Themes
National leadership Leadership & grassroots Relationship	Relationship between grassroots & leadership	77	Disconnect
Integrating members' voice	Integrating members' voices & influencing Leadership	59	
Influencing leadership		21	
Skewed Survey Skewed Survey Experience Expectations Ideal Leadership	Ideal leadership	31	Ineffective leadership
		73	
Dislikes Negativism in personality Frustrations Improvements Desire for change Government direction	Negatives Change	20 62	Imminent change
Effective communication desired Effectively communicated	Communication and Outreach	41	
Judge vacancies Immigration Takeover Support Divine intervention	Justice Divine calling	42 83 39	Power of communication Justice system Divine leadership

Table 2 above presented lists of 22 codes from the data, nine categories from the codes and five themes that emerged. I will like to account for the code, media bias in which participants talked about how the main stream media were biased against the Republican and Trump, as well as judge vacancies, and immigration that resulted into the theme of justice system which I excluded because they fell outside the scope of this study. When presented with question number eight of the interview protocol, what made you support then candidate Trump; his message, personality, campaign strategy, just being an alternative candidate to the party's establishment candidates, or a combination of factors? All 12 participants responded that one of the reasons for supporting then candidate Trump was that his message on immigration reforms especially his promise to build a border wall resonated with them.

Also, all 12 participants expressed concern about American justice system becoming too liberal and how important filling the supreme and federal court vacancies was to them. Therefore, when President Trump released a list of possible candidates to fill the supreme court and federal court vacancies. They felt that he would strengthen the conservative posture of the justice system for a long time. However, I excluded this theme because it was outside the scope of this study because while the party's leadership should be concerned about immigration and justice system, those are not partisan but national issues.

Thematic Presentation

The overarching question of this study revolves around the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. One of such leadership issues is

whether there is a disconnect between the membership and leadership of the Republican Party and how the disconnect if exists impacts the ability of leadership to navigate the complex challenges faced by the party. Accordingly, the five themes that emerged from the data set addressed the overarching research question. I will discuss the five themes in the context of the research question.

Disconnect

This first theme highlights the disparity between the membership and leadership of the Republican Party in terms of policy goals and objectives as well as national agenda. This theme addresses interview question one through five and partly question six, and the responses by the participants resulted in five codes and two categories from where the theme emerged. This theme scored the highest number of frequencies or occurrences from participants as national leadership / leadership and grassroots were talked about 77 times; the frequencies of relationship between the membership and leadership were 59; and integrating members' voices / influencing leadership were talked about 21 times by all 12 participants.

The above breakdown of the frequencies of the five codes and two categories that metamorphosed into the theme of disconnect showed how passionate and concerned participants were about disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party. Consequently, as participants talked about the national leadership of the party, relationship between the leadership and grassroots, how the leadership integrates the voices of grassroots and efforts of the grassroots to influence the leadership

of the party, the consensus was that there is disconnect between the leadership and grassroots of the party.

All 12 participants described the leadership of the party as out of touch with the grassroots and expressed that the elected officials do not listen to their constituents as much as they should do. Participants expressed disappointments over leadership's abandonment of the Republican Party's national agendas and policies (which would reflect and promote the aspirations of the grassroots) in pursuance of the agenda and reelection bids of leadership. Another common ground shared by participants is that there is little or no relationship existing between the national leadership and grassroots of the party. The consequences were erosion of trust and confidence in the ability of leadership to do the job for which they were elected to do which is projecting truly conservative policies in national agendas.

Also, participants had consensus view that the national leadership cares less about the feelings of the grassroots regarding their policy goals and objectives rather the national leadership is concerned about how to manipulate the grassroots to vote in certain ways. P.2, P.4, P.7, P. 8, and P. 10. shared that the feelings the grassroots get from the leadership is that the leadership only wants the votes of the grassroots to remain in power, but do not want the opinion of the grassroots. P. 8 observed that "I have confidence in our state leaders. We have some good leaders locally, but referring to national Republican leadership, there is no relationship there. There is no trust and no confidence in them being able to get anything done."

Hence, the leadership procures the services of consultants to engage in skewed surveys to ascertain how the grassroots will vote on issues and elections rather than to understand the aspirations of the grassroots. The above perception came from participants' response to interview question number four, what leadership issues do you consider to be responsible for the abandonment of the party's establishment candidates by the members of the party during the 2016 Republican presidential primaries? Participants noted that the national leadership shows little or no interest in real grassroots and conservative issues.

Although the leadership conducts surveys, but the surveys do not reveal much about the true perspective of grassroots because of how these surveys are conducted. As P10 explained,

All the survey is telling them is how folks are going to vote on a particular issue, but those don't address fundamental values and those don't even address fundamental sources of anger and sources of powerlessness and sources of feeling like things are out of control and that they are being lied to. They don't do surveys on stuff like that because they are not interested in knowing what the people think; they are interested in knowing how to manipulate them. What words to use that can bring them to the table, and to vote a particular way at a particular point in time and I think quite frankly the people are fed up with it.

Thus, the perception of participants that the leadership of the party is out of touch with the grassroots triggered feelings of frustrations and anger against the party's establishment and propelled the grassroots to seek for an alternative to the choice of the

establishment during the 2016 election season and President Trump happened to fill that vacuum. As P. 2 noted “I don't think they listen to their constituents as much as they should have. I think they had their own agendas and following those rather than listening to constituents and what they really wanted for our country.” In the perception of P.2, P.5, and P.8, contacting their leadership to express their views as grassroots may not yield any results. P. 2 expressed that

I never contacted any of my Senators or Congressmen, personally, and maybe I should have. Maybe I should have voiced my opinion, but I felt that it would be a waste of my time because they had their own agendas and they were already going down the road with what they had in mind.

Furthermore, P.1 observed that national leadership’s reliance on consultants to conduct surveys and disseminate information to the grassroots results in skewed data as the outcomes are predetermined and often manipulated to yield desired results. P.1 noted that “But most of the surveys are much aligned to what they are already considering for their best benefits but not for the best benefit of their constituents. They have pre-planned agenda. They don't want to listen to deviating views”.

Eight out of the 12 participants stressed the importance of the party’s leadership to urgently address this issue of disconnect between the leadership and members of the party. P.2 also expressed hope that the leadership soon realizes the need to listen to the grassroots and translate the inputs of the grassroots into action. P.2 noted “That they might be able to listen to their constituents and convey the majority of what their constituents are saying to the laws and regulations that they have authority over.”

Likewise, P.10 expressed that if the only thing that the current study achieves is highlighting the issue of disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party, then the study would have achieved so much as he noted “If this points out nothing than that the leadership is disconnected from the voters; then that is worth pointing out if anybody pays attention to it.”

Ineffective Leadership

The second theme from the data set is ineffective leadership. This theme stemmed from four codes – skewed survey, experience, expectations, and ideal leadership as well as one category – ideal leadership. The codes resulted as participants talked about how the leadership of the party consistently neglected the grassroots and do not care about the sources of anger and frustrations against the leadership by the grassroots. Participants noted that leadership hires consultants to engage in manipulative surveys that produce skewed data. Participants also talked about the qualities they expect of their leadership and described the national leadership of the party as ineffective. The frequencies of the codes for this theme are 104. The theme addresses interview question number one, let us begin with you introducing yourself, describe your experience as a member of the Republican Party, and what does this experience mean for you? The theme also addresses the B part of interview question number two, describe the kind of leadership traits you expect from a leader, and how would you assess the National leadership of the party in terms of efficiency and the leadership traits you described? The theme equally touched upon interview question number six, what kind of leadership do you consider ideal for navigating complex challenges faced by the party?

In discussing the ideal leadership for navigating complex challenges faced by organizations and describing the leadership traits expected from a leader, the common leadership traits and values that emanated from participants' responses were vision, good communication, ability to inspire others, commitment and passion, confidence, prudence with spending, efficiency in running the government, God-fearing, bottom-up, good understanding of the situation and the people, someone who keeps his/her promises, someone firm, leads by example, a fighter, result-oriented, authentic, experience, a unifier, a deal maker, servant-leader, who listens, and integrity. As P.1 puts it "I would like someone strong that's able to vocalize what their goals are and where they are going."

However, when asked to assess the leadership of the party in terms of efficiency and the leadership traits and qualities described, all participants expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership of the party. Participants noted that most elected officials do not do the jobs for which they were elected and instead concern themselves more with reelections. For instance, when I asked P.2 his expectations from the leadership of the party, he pointed that "As I said before, that they might be able to listen to their constituents and convey the majority of what their constituents are saying to laws and regulations."

More so, P.5 observed that the party is in chaos due to the inability of leadership to promote cohesiveness within the party. Participant observed that the grassroots have no trust in the leadership because of history of broken promises and neglecting of the needs of grassroots by leadership and elected officials.

According to P.3, the leadership of the party should have a coherent vision and capable team to guide and monitor implementation. The leadership of the party should be able to understand the needs of the grassroots and articulate policies that will address those needs which the current party's leadership is not doing. Also, P.5 expressed frustration over the inefficiency of the party's national leadership in terms of service delivery and noted that "the current leadership on a national level I think is not doing the job that they were elected to do I am very disheartened."

Equally P.12 expressed that the elected officials and the leaders in the party are so much about getting re-elected and so, as soon as they get elected, they start focusing on how to get reelected and they focus a lot on that and that takes their preference over serving people. They give the people lip service, but they are not really addressing the issues. P. 12 ascribed the emergence of President Trump as Republican candidate during the 2016 primaries as an expression of frustration by the grassroots over decades of neglect when he noted that

The reason the grassroots revolted against the establishment and party's leadership with the election of President Trump was because issues of concern to the grassroots have been ignored for so long. The problem is that people keep getting reelected, but they are not fixing any of our issues, because the problem is that the elected officials get so focused on polls and that kind of thing. They do not deal with the hard issues such as the need to come to communities like the African American community and deal with the hard issues of jobs, hard issues of housing, hard issues of you know, that too many abortions going on, too many

unmarried people in the black community and then the other important part about it is that the Republican Party has not been involved in the black communities.

They get intimidated when people they trying to help call them racist, they kind of shut down; because they do not have an answer or know how to respond; they do not want to say the wrong thing. So, they do not say anything.

Besides the above perspective, participants highlighted the frustrations of the grassroots over constant excuses by the leadership of the party on why something could not be done. P. 6 captured this frustration by noting that “One thing that I understand in the system and having been doing this so long is that a lot of people are concerned on why some things can’t get done?” Also, P.1 observed that “The biggest problem is that they weren't willing to follow through on their promises.”

Imminent Change

The third theme that emerged from the data set is imminent change which emanated from six codes – dislikes, negativisms in personality, frustrations, improvements, desire for change, and government direction; and one category – change. These codes emanated as participants explained the qualities and characteristics they dislike about their leadership, some of the personality traits participants abhor in their leadership; areas participants expect their leadership to improve upon, and participants’ concern over the direction of the country with all issues discussed in the codes. This theme ranked fourth in frequencies (references) with a cumulative total of 82 frequencies. As the codes denote, it was the perspective of participants that one of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries was that people were frustrated by years of

neglect and being taken for granted by the leadership. The members were fed up and desired something different and Trump who was perceived as a nonestablishment candidate tapped into this frustration to launch himself as an alternative to the establishment candidates and the grassroots of the party embraced and supported him (Trump).

Another issue which participants mostly talked about under this theme was that the members of the party continuously yearned for improvement regarding disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party. Grassroots wanted their leadership and elected officials to do the job they were elected to do, rather than making excuses and abandoning grassroots' issues and concerns in pursuance of their reelection bids. The craving and hope for improvements in the relationships between the leadership and membership of the party had been dashed one election-year after another and the grassroots were fed up with one unfulfilled campaign promise after another.

Participants expressed consensus view in their displeasure over the direction of American government and desired a real change. This is because the national debt kept mounting, the immigration crisis worsened, elected officials indulged more in politics rather than getting things done. The influence of lobbyists aggregated to the detriment of the masses and America was cheated out of deals with other countries, while government overreached with regulations. Participants observed that there is no significant difference between the Republican establishment candidates and the alternative (Democratic) party in terms of policies. Therefore, Trump who was not a career politician and who had a business background was considered as the best option (despite Trump's not so appealing

personality) to introduce efficiency in U.S. national administration by running U.S. government as a business.

With all the issues mentioned above, the desire for change heightened. Participants expressed that the election of President Trump was a referendum on the party's leadership. It was a clear sign that the grassroots were fed up with politics as usual and wanted something different. As P. 11 shared that "I am not sure any established politician could have ever won that election. I think the people of this country made a statement that they are tired of what was going on at the national level."

Also, P. 6 described the change that brought in a nonestablishment as Republican presidential candidate and later American president as

Something that needed to happen long ago. Yeah, so I think he's kind of shaking things up and has shown the grassroots that there is somebody that believe in them and sent a message to the establishment that if they are not going to get anything done, they are going to get replaced and pushed off to the side and they will become irrelevant like they are now.

Participants unanimously expressed that the grassroots felt marginalized and ignored for so long and their votes were considered as something to be bought and not earned. Hence, P. 5 observed that "the grassroots felt like nobody was representing them and in a very real sense nobody was representing them." Likewise, P. 11 noted that the emergence of Trump as the leader of the free nation is because of a movement to return to what America was founded upon which is grassroots' base level of politics where the people, not the corporations choose American leaders.

The continuous suppression of the voices of the grassroots by the leadership of the party by abandoning issues of interests to the grassroots and pursuing reelection bids generated feelings of anger and frustrations against the leadership by the grassroots. Participants opined that the leadership continued to ignore or failed to address core grassroots' issues and this further widened disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party. Thus, the membership desired something different. Then came Trump as a nonestablishment candidate and the grassroots saw in Trump the long-desired opportunity to tell the party's leadership that the people are fed up with things not getting done and business as usual. Furthermore, P.8 stated that "Trump is a businessman and he is about results and they put him in there to stir things up (change things) and that is what he is doing and that is what I like."

Participants noted that grassroots were fed up with the establishment candidates constantly lying to them to get into offices and then abandon them to seek reelection instead of working for them. Thus, the emergence of Trump represents change. Change in the sense that the grassroots were fed up with business as usual and being taken for granted and therefore supported a non-politician and someone who did not represent decades of frustration. Change in another sense that rather than the party's leadership imposing an establishment candidate on the party, the grassroots chose President Trump despite not having the support of any living U.S. President Democrat or Republican.

Power of Communication

The fourth theme that emerged was power of communication. This fourth theme resulted from two codes - effective communication desired and effectively

communicated, and one category – communication and outreach. This theme scored lowest in frequencies (references) with a total of 41 frequencies. There are two aspects to this theme. The first aspect which is participants' expression of their desire for the leadership of the party to evolve better ways of communicating with their constituencies especially the current generation of voters emanated from interview question number two, describe the kind of leadership traits you expect from a leader and the follow-up to question number two, how would you assess the National leadership of the party in terms of efficiency and the leadership traits you described? Also, question number six, what kind of leadership do you consider ideal for navigating complex challenges faced by the party?

The second aspect which was participants' validation of the effectiveness of communication as key to the success of then candidate Trump during the 2016 primaries stemmed from interview question number seven, describe your perception of Trump's takeover of the Republican Party and interview question number eight, what made you support then candidate Trump; his message, personality, campaign strategy, just being an alternative candidate to the party's establishment candidates, or a combination of factors?

Regarding the first aspect of the fourth theme, participants were particularly concerned about the ability of the Republican Party to remain relevant and competitive with the Democratic Party by ascertaining better ways of communicating their message to the younger generation of voters. Participants recognized the challenge with trying to convince the younger generation to work for something when the democrats are offering same thing for free. P. 11 shared that

I think a lot of people have tried but I think that there is an opposition against them, and it is hard to fight against another group that is possibly promising a bunch of free stuff. It is hard to convince the younger generation to work for something when another group is offering the same thing for free. I think there is a big challenge and I am not sure what the answer is. There is a big challenge for our leadership on how to communicate with this younger generation and getting them on board to come to terms with; it is okay to have to work for something, but I think we are losing the fight there from the Republican perspective.

According to P.1, most people become Republicans or conservatives due to their religious backgrounds and beliefs, or because their parents were Republicans or conservatives, but they do not actually understand what it means or takes to be a true conservative. She highlighted the need to do more in effectively communicating the conservative message to the grassroots. Furthermore, P. 3 observed that most conservatives “know what they believe but they don't necessarily know why they believe it and as a result, they are not good because they can't promote the message all the time in a positive way.”

Likewise, P.10 expressed the need for the party to do a better job in expressing not just what they believe in but why they hold such beliefs when he noted that

Number one, they have got to get a great deal more in-depth and consistent at preaching the message of why we believe what we believe and not just what we believe. And create a communication mechanism to be able to deliver that consistently to everybody in the Republican.

Participants equally proffered solutions on how the leadership can overcome the challenges of evolving effective means of communicating Republican message to the younger generation of voters. P. 3 admonished the leadership to be proactive in communicating the message of the party rather than being reactive to the labels against the party. P. 12 expressed the need to invest in training people that will assist in developing regular communication strategy and highlighted the need for national leadership to work with local elected officials to consistently communicate the direction of the party to the grassroots. P. 12 also stressed the importance of cordiality between the national leadership and local officials regarding the development of an effective communication strategy and “you got to do it in a way that you are trying to bring people in rather than trying to beat people off.”

Also, P. 11 noted that there is no reason for the leadership not to have better communication with the grassroots given that this a modern communication era. P. 11 urged the leadership to bypass professional politicians and consultants to communicate directly and effectively with the grassroots. He encouraged the leadership to be more communicative with grassroots in terms of sending messages and receiving feedbacks from the grassroots.

Again, P. 12 observed that there has been much misinformation about the Republican Party and to build the party, leadership must be ready to embrace diversity and commit more resources in such projects like conservative talk shows in every metropolitan to correct the misinformation against the party, and project conservative agenda and market what the Republicans stand for.

Regarding the second aspect of the fourth theme, participants emphasized how effective, communicating directly to the grassroots helped President Trump to make personal connections with his base which in turn helped him to become the presidential candidate of the Republican Party despite not having the support of the party's leadership and establishment. President Trump effectively used his Twitter handle to reach far more members of the grassroots of the party and was effective in communicating his message to them. Participants noted that President Trump tapped into the frustrations created by the disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party and reached out to the grassroots through his message of making America great again and remembering the forgotten which resonated with most grassroots.

All 12 participants noted that President Trump was very direct with his communication and truthfully answered all questions during the debates and campaigns. Participants emphasized that Trump was direct in communicating and providing specifics of what needed to be done to address national issues. Trump was not evasive like most other establishment candidates who would rather tell stories to evade answering questions. According to P. 7 Trump's ability to communicate solutions rather than just campaign talks like his messages of "make America great again, drain the swamp, and build the wall" resonated with grassroots.

P. 2, P. 3, P.4, P. 8, and P. 9 shared that Trump's communication strategy was direct, controversial and confrontational. This strategy kept him on the news all the time and drove his message home to the grassroots who believed that it was okay to be different. The participants noted that Trump effectively used the social media especially Twitter to

communicate with grassroots and strike personal connection with them and this strategy worked very well for and helped him (Trump) to win despite lacking the support of the leadership of the party because in the perspective of participants, Trump would speak the truth to the grassroots all the time as he saw it. P. 4 emphasized that “It would not necessarily be the truth, but it would be the truth as he saw it unvarnished and quite frankly.”

The above position was also captured by P. 12 when he noted that

The masses were focusing on his message. He was saying things that people thought were impossible to do or say. Well, he said he would do them. And that was good enough for people. But he would say he would do it; now whether he accomplish them or not, that is what he said and that is what people wanted to hear. Message of hope... a message that we could differ. We do not have to go along to get along and that is the outside. He was working outside the line. He was working outside the norm with his message and what he was saying and so that captivated the masses.

Collaboratively, P. 9 observed that Trump bypassed the conventional media with their censorship to communicate directly to the masses through his Twitter handle. Trump even ramped up his attacks on conventional media by tagging them “fake news”. This strategy helped Trump in rallying the grassroots behind his campaign. P. 9 observed that “Another thing that is even pronounced in his campaign and even administration is the way he tweets. Communication is very important. Through his tweets he is able to set the talking points rather than let the media do it”.

Divine Leadership

The fifth theme that emanated from the dataset is divine leadership. This theme resulted from participants' responses to interview question number seven, describe your perception of Trump's takeover of the Republican Party. Also, question eight, what made you support then candidate Trump; his message, personality, campaign strategy, just being an alternative candidate to the party's establishment candidates, or a combination of factors? Finally, is there anything more you would like to share prior to the close of the interview? Thus, the theme transformed from three codes – takeover, support, and divine intervention into two categories – support and divine calling with cumulative frequencies of 122. The codes emanated as participants discussed their reasons for supporting then candidate Trump and participant's perception of Trump's takeover of the Republican brand and the factors that contributed towards the takeover.

Participants held majority view but not consensus with the assumption in question number seven that Trump took over the Republican brand. 10 participants supported this view while two participants did not fully support the view. The reasons participants gave for Trump's takeover of the Republican brand were largely synonymous with participants' reasons for supporting Trump. Thus, dominant among the reasons for Trump's takeover of the Republican brand was Trump's dependence on the grassroots of the party and ability to bypass the party's establishment and leadership and communicate directly to the grassroots.

Notwithstanding majority views that Trump has taken over the Republican brand, P. 3 opined that it was the masses and grassroots of the party that took over the party and

not Trump as Trump was only a manifestation of grassroots' takeover. Equally, P. 7 noted that he could only go as far as stating that President Trump has semi-taken over the party when he shared that

But as far as taking over the party, I don't think he has really taken over. There is still a lot of establishment people that don't like the fact that he is not doing stuff the way it has always been done and I find them on certain issues and things like for instance the border wall.

Another code under this fifth theme is support resulting from participants' response on why they supported then candidate Trump. Most of the reasons given for supporting Trump include that Trump was not a career politician and had strong business background. Hence, from the perspective of participants, grassroots supported Trump with the hope that Trump will bring his business skills to efficiently run government and eliminate unnecessary wastages. Likewise, Trump's message of making America great again especially his stance on immigration, building border wall, and promise to drain the swamp resonated with grassroots and earned Trump more grassroots' support. Although participants did not like Trump's personality, participants described Trump as a fighter who never gives up but always fights back and they liked that about him. From participants' perspective, the masses needed a strong fighter who will be willing to stand up for them and project the strength of America to the world when necessary and keep Americans safe and they saw Trump as that strong candidate, and they rallied behind him.

Accordingly, P.11 captured the above participants' perspective when he expressed that

But I think overall, I think that Trump is just a strong figure. I think he just presented himself as more of a fighter willing to fight for the country. I think he proved that he was more dedicated to the people of this country and that he was in it for them and not for himself. I think his whole attitude... he proved he was willing to go fight till the bitter end.

Finally, the last code from this final theme is divine intervention. Before discussing the theme divine leadership under divine intervention, it will be important to point out that most participants expressed the importance of believe in God. According to P.4

This nation was founded under God. And you know Christian and their beliefs, is a big thing for me. Also, God-fearing is important to me and good business sense and that goes back to me expecting to have a God-fearing president leading my country. I like him (Trump) because he is a Christian. He is not afraid to talk about God and to hold strong to his faith in God and I think that has a lot to do with basically everything with me.

Likewise, P.10 expressed that a good leader must have some sort of believe in God and shared that

I think a good leader must be grounded in belief structure because you cannot lead without a belief in God at least at the minimum and very firm idea of what you believe in and why you believe it.

Participants shared the view that the emergence of President Trump not just as a Republican presidential candidate, but American president was divine. Participants expressed that neither the leadership of the party nor the political elites supported Trump's candidacy. The only support Trump got was that of the grassroots who looked upon Trump as messiah sent to fight for them. P. 9 captured the above view thus

Trump is very up and doing. He considered the cry of the masses, of the grassroots and became our spokesperson; we think that he is a God sent Messiah. Well, he is our Messiah and is God sent Messiah to do what he is now doing for America.

Similarly, P.2, P.4, P.6, P.7, P. 8, P.9, and P.12 aligned with the perspective of divine leadership and expressed concern over constant attacks on conservative Christian values, and nobody was standing up for the Christians. Thus, majority of the Christian conservatives felt abandoned until Trump showed up to fight their cause. P. 8 further emphasized that

There have been assaults on second amendment right and Christian values and we needed someone to defend those values and if you talk to the grassroots. People like me and most of them think the country has been heading in the wrong direction for the last few decades. So, you know Trump at least represents hope for the people. He had a divine calling to do what he is doing, and this is the big thing with me.

Additionally, P. 12 gave more credence to the above view when he stated that

As a Christian person in this country and as a believer, Trump was a divine more relational. Something the Lord has said “I decide who gets”. You go out there and have elections, but I decide who leads us. And because of that, I think Trump was you know, whether he is not a stronger Christian, but the Lord has appointed him. He had a Divine calling for this work, and nothing showed that he could win. All the people have lot of theories now why he won; but the other part was that this is a God calling on his life and those of us who are Christians and people of faith believe that it is the Divine hand of the Lord. And sometimes, you know, we do not always understand that but, we know that a lot said hey, you know, He (God) said he is still in charge. And he wants the best for us and sometimes we do not understand how He gets the best. But anyway, so that is why I think we have people say all dumb things that they are theorizing. But anyway, it is the Lord calling.

Moreover, P.6 aligned with the above views on divine leadership and expressed that as a Christian, he believes that power comes from God and that God ordains who becomes a leader. He observed that during the election, the polls and survey did not support or predict Trump’s victory. For him, Trump’s victory appeared impossible from human perspective but with God all things are possible. P.6. stated that

You look at the attacks on Christian values around the country. You look at what has happened to private businesses in Oregon and Colorado where Christians who have stood up for their beliefs, and their businesses have been sued by the state and driven out of business. See all these attacks on our values. We see attacks on

the second amendment rights to own firearms. We see a lot of our heritage, the things that made America great; Our values are just under attack right now. And we need somebody who will defend those values and Trump represents the answer to those prayers. He is God sent.

P.11 added a different perspective when he stated that Trump had no business being in politics if not for the sake of the grassroots. For him, people get into politics for either power or money and Trump had both power and money. Therefore, he went into politics to be a voice for the neglected grassroots. P.11 stated that

I saw in Trump somebody that really cares for this country, who loves this country. Someone who is willing to give up earthly pleasures and billionaire lifestyle and the luxuries just to take on that job, said a lot to me. I am not sure I have seen any politician that showed any more love for this country than he has. I think there was some divine intervention right there.

From the perspectives of the participants regarding the theme of divine leadership, majority of the conservative Christians were concerned that some of the fundamental Christian values have been under attack for decades and because of what participants described as “political correctness”, establishment Republican candidates have consistently failed to stand up for these traditional Christian values. Participants described these establishment candidates as Republican in Name Only (RINO) Republicans who share same values as the “radical left” rather than propagate true conservative values.

Summary

For the overarching research question predicated upon understanding the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries, participants offered the following perspectives and recommendations. All participants observed that there was disconnect between the leadership and members of the party. Participants stressed that the grassroots and leadership of the party at the local level are more conservative than the national leadership of the party. Participants went further and described the disparity between the national leadership of the party and the grassroots as inflaming anger and frustrations among the grassroots who view the national leadership as not interested in fighting for their cause.

Furthermore, participants highlighted ineffectiveness of party's leadership and establishment as the catalyst for imminent change. Participants attributed the emergence of Trump both as Republican candidate and president of the U.S. during the 2016 elections, as a divine act and noted that Trump's effective communication strategy was key to his victory. Participants equally expressed that if the Republican Party will remain competitive, the organization has to device more effective communication strategy especially with younger American voters whom participants described as the "millennial".

In this chapter, I described the procedure for data collection and data analysis which conformed to outlined plan in chapter 3. Thus, the issues of trustworthiness are reassured. I also presented the data and data analysis. In the following chapter, I discuss my interpretation of the findings and offer my recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The essence of this study as previously stated was to understand perceptions of Republican Party members regarding how party leadership issues helped shape the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. I also sought to understand if there was a disconnect between the members and leadership of the Republican Party and how the disconnect, if any, and other leadership issues contributed in shaping the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries. During the 2016 Republican primaries, Trump emerged as the Republican candidate for the general elections despite not having the support of any establishment or leadership of the Republican Party. It was the grassroots of the party that supported Trump. The outcome of this election was a referendum on the leadership of the Republican Party by the grassroots. At the 2016 Republican National Convention, it was difficult for the leadership and establishment of the party to endorse Trump even after he became the frontrunner with a clear lead in the primary votes. This was indication of disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party as was confirmed by the data.

The critical findings that resulted from the interview transformed from 22 codes, to nine categories, and finally to five themes as depicted in Table 2. The perception of interviewed members of the Republican Party, especially those who supported President Trump regarding the leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Republican primaries, were generated from the interview dataset. The first theme that emerged was disconnect between the leadership and members of the Republican Party.

According to participants, the leadership of the party was less conservative and cared less about the core conservative issues and principles that the grassroots hold so dear. The findings indicated that the disparity in values and principles between the leadership and grassroots of the party was responsible for the seeming insensitivity to core grassroots' issues by the leadership, which in turn incensed and frustrated the grassroots and further widened the disconnect between the leadership and membership of the organization. From the perspective of participants, the leadership of the party cared less about the grassroots and cared more about being reelected, which is worrisome to the grassroots.

Equally, participants described the national leadership and establishment of the party as ineffective. Participants decried the failure of national leadership and elected officials to perform the duties for which they were elected to perform instead of pursuing their personal agenda. The finding was that members of the Republican Party had lost faith in their leadership due to ineffective leadership on the part of their leadership and elected officials.

Correspondingly, participants under the theme of imminent change expressed that decades of neglect, anger, and frustrations experienced by grassroots compelled the grassroots to seek for alternatives to the leadership and establishments of the party. The finding was that the grassroots lost trust and confidence in their leadership because leadership lost focus in protecting and propagating the interests of the membership - the grassroots. According to participants, the leadership of the party does not care about the grassroots; the leadership only cared to know how grassroots would vote on certain issues

and elections but not deep-rooted sources of anger and frustrations among the grassroots. Therefore, the grassroots saw the emergence of Trump as an opportunity to tell the leadership that enough is enough.

Another theme that emanated from the dataset was the power of communication. The findings here are dual-faceted. According to participants, on one hand, the party needs to devise more effective communication strategies to reach out to younger American voters - millennial, and, on the other hand, effective communication strategies, especially using tweets to bypass the leadership of the party and communicate directly to the grassroots, helped in rallying the grassroots behind Trump, which eventually helped to secure Trump's victory during the 2016 election period. The finding here is that effective communication is essential to successful leadership.

Finally, divine leadership emanated from participants' perspective that the victory of President Trump in an election in which Trump was not supported by the leadership and establishment of the party was divine. The finding from this theme lies in participants' expression that from time to time, some divine leaders emerge to lead the people out of certain perilous situations. Participants shared that the Christians, especially Evangelicals, who constitute an integral part of the grassroots, have been worried about decades of attacks on certain fundamental Christian principles and conservative values. Hence, participants saw the emergence of Trump as a leader who would defend those values and principles as divine intervention.

Accordingly, participants highlighted the disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party, ineffective leadership, and lack of effective communication

strategies as some of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interview data produced results that are consistent for the most part with reviewed literature in Chapter 2. The emergent themes indicated that the perceptions of the 12 members of the Republican Party that I interviewed corresponded with reviewed literature. Nevertheless, a few unique occurrences call for further study. They were the themes divine leadership, which was an aftermath of the leadership issues, and justice system, which was excluded from the study because it fell outside the scope of this study. I will discuss them later in this chapter.

The theme most relevant to the overarching research question was disconnect between the leadership and grassroots of the party and was unanimously affirmed by all participants. Disconnect emerged from two subthemes or categories – relationship between grassroots and leadership and integrating members' voices and influencing leadership. Participants deprecated the seeming lack of relationship between the grassroots and leadership, and leadership's insensitivity to the real conservative issues that are dear to the grassroots. According to participants, national leadership only comes to the grassroots to seek their votes, and once election is over, the national leadership in Washington DC becomes preoccupied with the bidding of corporate lobbyists and raising more money for reelections. Participants also noted with dismay that leadership turned deaf ears to their voices.

Most participants described calling their elected officials and representatives to voice their opinion or concerns regarding issues as a worthless venture because “the national leadership always has their predetermined agenda.” Participants observed that rather than listen to the grassroots, leadership devised means of manipulating the grassroots to vote for them or vote in support of certain issues. Thus, decades of neglecting the grassroots resulted in the feelings of anger, frustrations, and powerlessness among the grassroots and increased the desire to change the system.

From participants’ perspectives, the reason for disconnect is that party leadership and elected officials often pursue agendas that will guarantee their reelection by securing support of the corporate lobbyists who fund their campaigns. By doing so, leadership sacrifices the interests of grassroots and their campaign promises for promoting corporate interests. Because corporate interests often conflict with the interest of the masses, leadership always stands with and votes to protect corporate interests rather than defend the interests of the people who elected them into offices, to the irritation of the grassroots. This divergent interest between the leadership and grassroots constantly exacerbates disconnect between grassroots and leadership and leaves disgruntled grassroots and membership.

Consequently, this theme is consistent with reviewed literature. For instance, earlier reviewed literature revealed growing disconnect between leadership and membership of the party due to faithlessness in traditional leadership that paved way for nonestablishment candidates like Trump to challenge the legitimacy of the leadership and launched himself as leader of the party by appealing to the alienated members of the

party. Also, the party became less cohesive from successive internal party wrangling, intensified by inability of the leadership of the party to champion truly conservative government policies (see Kane, 2017; Ware, 2016). Similarly, Meinke (2014) noted that the current polarization within the party has challenged the effective use of whip organizations by the leadership of the Republican Party to foster consensus, and that other leadership issues will continue to pose leadership challenges and make it more difficult for the leadership to foster cohesion and consensus within the party as was witnessed during the 2016 Republican primaries.

The second theme, which is also relevant to the overarching research question, is ineffective leadership. Participants described their ideal leadership styles and qualities, but when asked to evaluate their party's leadership in terms of their described leadership traits, qualities, and efficiency, all participants noted that one of the challenges facing the party was inefficient leadership. Participants viewed the party's leadership as consistently failing to lead and unite the party.

Participants expressed that the way grassroots of the party turned their backs to the establishment candidates and supported Trump who was not a career politician during 2016 Republican primaries was an indication that grassroots are fed-up with decades of failed promises and ineffective leadership. This finding was consistent with reviewed literature as Bauman (2018) and Hyson (2016) expressed that ineffective or destructive leadership creates enabling grounds that kills the motivation of their members or followers and leaves the membership of the organization devastated (Bauman, 2018; Hyson, 2016).

Another notion was ineffective or destructive leadership due to inherent lack of understanding of the members' needs. Hence, reliance in smooth-talking and cajoling of members to always do their bidding (see Bauman, 2018; Hyson, 2016). Corroboratively, participants noted that the leadership of the party was not interested in ascertaining the sources of angers and frustrations of the grassroots but only interested in knowing how the grassroots would vote on certain issues and elections and what to say to the grassroots to get them out to vote at elections and on issues.

Another issue that participants raised was that their leadership cares more about being reelected into office rather than focusing on delivering the services for which they were elected to do. Participants decried the fact that leadership and elected officials always abandon grassroots issues that they campaigned on while promoting the interests of big corporations and lobbyists to the chagrin of grassroots.

The third theme from this study is imminent change. According to participants, the grassroots expressed anger and frustrations over certain issues such as decades of neglect, ineffective leadership, direction of the country, and constant attacks on core conservative Christian values and principles. These anger and frustrations further depended the desire for change amongst grassroots. So, when President Trump presented himself as an alternative to what the leadership and establishment have been offering, the grassroots embraced Trump wholeheartedly and holistically.

Thus, the grassroots saw Trump as the harbinger of the long-awaited change who was willing to stand up for conservative and Christian values perceived by participants and grassroots of the party as being under attack. Hence, Trump appealed to the

grassroots of the Republican Party with his promise to “drain the swamp”, “build the wall”, and be a voice to the forgotten Americans. This finding was consistent with reviewed literature that stated that the rise of Trump was enabled by the ardent support of the middle class notwithstanding every efforts of the leadership of the party and elites to stop him (see Maddox, 2017). Donald Trump’s Presidential campaign was launched with a promise to restore voice to the oppressed and downtrodden, and tapped into the frustrations of American masses and their lack of trust in their government to enjoy overwhelming support from the masses (see Formisiano, 2016; Giovanni, 2016; White, 2016). Trump became the expression of people’s anger with the leadership of the party and political establishment (see Allin, 2016; Carmines et al., 2016; Neberai, 2017; White, 2016).

Thus the 2016 U.S. election season highlighted the need to reform the process of leadership selections and presidential nominations in America as President Trump who was a nonestablishment candidate captured the interest and attention of the rural voters who felt neglected and abandoned by the party’s leadership and elites (see Bluestone, 2017; Carmines et al., 2016; Eiermann, 2016; Parmar, 2017).

The fourth finding is effective communication. This finding had two angles to it. The first angle was that participants acknowledged need for the leadership of the party to evolve effective communication strategy to reach younger generation of voters whom participants described as the “millennials”. Participants noted that the development of an effective communication strategy to convince the younger generation of American voters that it is better to work and earn a living rather than hope on handouts from the

government is strategic to the continuous survival of the party. The second angle to the fourth finding was participants' expression that President Trump's effective communication strategy set him apart from the rest of the candidates and earned him his core supporters. Participants observed that Trump's effective use of social media to bypass the leadership and establishment of the party, and communicate directly to the grassroots who formed core of Trump's support base, helped Trump in striking personal connection with his support base and made his support base stick with him no matter what.

Participants also noted that Trump's message of "make America great again", "drain the swamp", and "build the wall" resonated with majority of the party's grassroots who became Trump's support base. Equally, participants noted that Trump answered all questions during the debates and proffered solutions. "You may not like his answers, but he always answered the questions truthfully. May not necessarily be the truth but was the truth as he saw it". The finding is consistent with reviewed literature that effective communication, collaboration, and team spirit building are strategic to the success of leadership (see Tanno, 2017). Thus, the survival and competitiveness of the Republican Party as an organization will be dependent upon the development of effective communication strategy.

Furthermore, Trump's message of making America great again resonated with rural voters and middle class who felt the need to regain America from immigrants and radical left (see Allin, 2016; Carmines et al., 2016; Neberai, 2017; White, 2016). Also, Trump's use of conventional and unconventional media paid off during the 2016 election season

and helped him win the support and votes of younger voters as well as struck a personal connection with them. This connection is evidenced by the passion with which Trump's supporters supported him and were willing to engage in fistfights with protesters and oppositions (see Kreis, 2017; Wodak & Krzyżanowski, 2017).

The fifth finding is divine leadership. All participants expressed believe in God and strong conservative values and noted the importance of their ideal leader to be someone with some sort of believe in God. Participants attributed the emergence of President Trump to divine intervention as Trump won both 2016 Republican primaries and general elections without the support of his party's leadership and elites. Participants also described President Trump as a divine leader or messiah sent by God to defend the core conservative Christian values and principles such as right to life with reference to abortion and Planned Parenthood, second amendment right, and conservative businesses that have been under attacks in some states for standing up for their beliefs.

From participants' perspectives, for long, the Christians especially the Evangelicals who are core of the Republican grassroots have been feeling alienated from the party because of the perceived attacks on their core values and successive Republican leadership has failed to stand up and defend them. Therefore, these Evangelicals saw President Trump as God sent messiah to salvage their situation and become a voice for the voiceless.

This finding though unintended, is consistent with the reviewed literature as Organ (1996) highlighted the long-held assertion of the GMT that fate through circumstances pushes leaders to emerge (Organ, 1996). GMT contend that leadership naturally comes to

great men because of either their intelligence, knowledge, charisma, or wisdom; and therefore, opined that leadership is inherent and leaders are born to deal with current but extraordinary circumstances (see Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Organ, 1996; Bolden et al., 2003).

Thus, participants held that fate brought President Trump to be the leader of the Republican Party and America at a time most grassroots of the party lost faith in the ability of the leadership of the party to offer them purposeful leadership and protect the interests of the grassroots and defend the nation.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings in the Context of the Theoretical Framework

I used the CLT as the focal lens for this study. As earlier discussed in literature review, CLT is a science of emergent dynamics in interactive, adaptive networks and imbedded in the context of the role played by leadership in a complex system (see Marion & McGee, 2006). In this section, I discuss the perspective of participants within the context of literature which will facilitate the identification of connections between findings and theory.

CLT provides better understanding of leadership issues that shaped the outcomes of the Republican primaries during the 2016 election because CLT studies the role of leadership in the evolution of ideas within dynamic and interreliant elements of a socio-political and complex system (see Marion & McGee, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007). The focal point of CLT is equipping contemporary leaders and public administrators with required skills and competencies to navigate the uncertainties and complexities of

modern organizations by embedding new conditions triggered by intrinsic chaos in modern management and organizational competencies (see Waldman & Bowen, 2016).

Accordingly, the first finding is disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party. Participants decried leadership's neglect of the core issues that are dear to the grassroots in pursuance of reelections by promoting the interests of big corporations and their lobbyists. Therefore, complex leadership will be strategic in building cohesion within the party and help in shrinking disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party. Because complex systems are social networks of collaborative personnel unified in purpose by their perspectives, shared goals and needs (see Baltaci & Balci, 2017). Aligning the goals, perspectives, and needs of the grassroots and leadership will diminish disconnect between the leadership and membership (grassroots) of the party.

The second finding is ineffective leadership. Participants scored the national leadership of the party low in terms of efficiency and described the national leadership of the party as ineffective. Thus, complex or adaptive leadership shapes complex systems because expertise and creativity propel operational resonant frequency of leadership and form necessary conditions for effective leadership to occur (see Baltaci & Balci, 2017).

Participants noted that the National leadership of the party was preoccupied with reelection, raising funds for reelection. In turn, leadership does the bidding of large corporations that make huge campaign donations to the leadership and elected officials, rather than focusing on providing purposeful leadership to the membership of the party. Participants also expressed convictions that the leadership does not bother to understand

the impact of leadership's abandonment of the core grassroots issues for corporate interests on the party's grassroots. The leadership conducts polls to only ascertain how the grassroots would vote on certain issues and elections than to understand the hard issues and main sources of grassroots' anger and frustrations. Leadership often invents the right words to sweet-talk the grassroots into voting for certain issues and to support certain agendas.

Also, CLT enhances the ability of scholars to understand and describe the intertwined human relationships and how this interface influences organizational results in relation to implementation of innovations, and facilitates the conception of leadership as network of adaptive, complex, nonlinear feedbacks (see Marion & McGee, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007; Weberg, 2013).

The third finding is imminent change in which participants shared that grassroots became frustrated and desired change due to disconnect between the leadership and grassroots of the party, inefficient leadership, decades of neglecting the interests of grassroots in national policy agenda setting, and abandoning the grassroots to their fate as the grassroots watched helplessly while core conservative Christian values so dear to them are being assaulted for decades. So, when Donald Trump ran the election as a nonestablishment candidate, the grassroots saw in Trump, the opportunity to express their anger and frustrations with the leadership of the party by overwhelmingly supporting and voting for Donald Trump against the establishment candidates.

Correspondingly, in CLT, the activities of catalysts inherent in complex systems help in boosting the dynamics of the system and notwithstanding that the leader is

identified as a strategic agent of change in a complex system, complex system is energized by the dynamics of followers rather than leadership control (see Marion & McGee, 2006). Thus, the membership of the Republican Party has persistently pushed for greater power and control of the party which makes it more difficult for top-to-bottom type of control by the leadership of the party using whip organizations (see Meinke, 2014).

Accordingly, during the 2016 Republican primaries, it was the grassroots of the party rather than the leadership and elites of the party that overwhelmingly supported and elected Trump whom they viewed as a nonestablishment candidate. This affirms the assumption that in complex systems new structures emerge through bottom-top actions as against top-bottom actions (see Marion & McGee, 2006).

More so, CLT changed the focus of leadership by highlighting the dynamic relationships between every individual within the network and how those relationships lead to emergent results under given conditions (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). CLT distinctively addresses both complex administrative systems and bureaucracy from traditional leadership by emphasizing interactions and adaptability rather than control and alignment; and change is emergent rather than top to down (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2007).

The fourth finding is the power of communication. This finding is of two aspects- first, participants highlighted the importance of the party developing effective communication strategy to better communicate with the “millennial” if the party must survive and remain competitive. Second, participants stated that Trump’s effective communication strategy and effective use of the social media especially Twitter, helped

Trump in directly communicating with his support base that are predominantly the grassroots and struck strong personal connections with them.

As I earlier noted, the intrinsic characteristics of complex systems underscore the need for complexity leadership to properly manage the complexities and dynamisms of complex systems because complexity leadership is embedded in three leadership styles such as adaptive, administrative, and action-oriented leadership. Hence, complexity leadership may facilitate adaptive coping skills and ability of complex organizations to navigate the dynamic challenges of the information age (see Baltacı & Balcı, 2017).

The challenges and hardships of the information age will be better navigated through complexity leadership because classical leadership models are static and not flexible enough to effectively remedy contemporary organizational dynamic challenges. Hence, complexity leadership offers an alternative leadership approach for modern organizations striving to survive and meet the challenges of the information technology era which entails unpredictable, volatile, chaotic and competitive operational environment. Consequently, contemporary organizations could become adaptive and competitive through scientific or knowledge-based complexity leadership models (see Northouse, 2016).

The fifth finding from this study is divine leadership. Participants attributed the victory of President Trump despite not having the support of any living American past president as well as the leadership of the Republican Party as an act of God. From participants' perspective, the emergence of President Trump to defend the conservative

Christian values that have been under decades of attacks was indicative of answered prayers.

As I stated previously, CLT emphasizes the intertwined roles of leadership such as enabling leadership role, administrative leadership, and adaptive leadership. These intertwined leadership roles enhance interdependency of the various elements of the sociopolitical system. Also, CLT shifted emphasis from the heroic individual actions of leaders and focused more on the social contexts in which leadership occurs and the complexities inherent in those social contexts (see Marion & McGee, 2006; Tourish, 2018).

Hence, the overwhelming support given to President Trump by the grassroots of the party during the 2016 Republican primaries was also viewed in the context of the decades of concern by the Christian evangelicals who felt that their values have been under attacks; their members are being punished for their faith and believe while the party's leadership and establishment always looked the other way. When candidate Trump came and promised to fight for and defend those values, Trump's emergence was therefore seen as a divine intervention and his becoming the party's nominee and of American president seen as a divine act.

Conclusively, I ensured that I limited my interpretation of the findings within the data, findings, and scope of the study. The findings also corroborated the reviewed literature and synced with the theoretical framework.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to trustworthiness that I highlighted in chapter 1 remained mostly the same throughout the execution of the study. However, during the study, I observed the following limitations that need to be noted. In my previous discussion on the setting of the study, I noted that two participants did not initially support President Trump during the primaries until their first candidates dropped out of the race. But they supported Trump from that point against other Republican candidates. However, the participants had the relevant experiences required for my study and were not excluded because my targeted participants were members of the Republican Party who supported President Trump at any point during the primaries.

Therefore, whether participants supported Trump immediately he began his campaign or when participants became convinced as the primaries progressed, the key consideration is that participants supported Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries. Also, another participant became angry with Trump after her request for a personalized birthday message for her dad was not granted and she received solicitation for donation instead. Though, her anger resulted in some negative views about the candidate she supported, her experience was equally relevant for the study.

Additionally, it is my view that the fifth finding which is divine leadership may have emanated because coincidentally all participants expressed strong Christian backgrounds. This was revealed as participants answered interview question number one, describe your experience as a member of the Republican Party, and what does the experience mean for

you? The essence was to put participants' experiences in perspective to ensure that participants are with the right experiences.

Recommendations

Based on reviewed literature and findings from the data, I have a conviction that there is need to seek further understanding of the following five issues. The first issue is that the current study focuses on the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries from the perspective of those Republicans who supported president Trump during the primaries. Thus, it will be necessary to equally seek the understanding of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries from the perspective of those Republicans who did not support President Trump during the primaries but supported other establishment candidates all through the primaries. Thereby replicating the study with demography of Republican who did not support Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries.

Similarly, it will also be important to seek the understanding of the leadership issues and organizational dynamics that resulted in low mobilization and poor turnout of democrats during the 2016 general elections. It was noted that during the 2016 election season, nonestablishment candidates such as Trump on the Republican side and Bernie Sanders on the Democratic side witnessed surge in momentum. While the Republican Party could not derail Trump's campaign, the Democratic Party used superdelegate votes to put Hilary Clinton ahead of Bernie Sanders (see Benet, 2013; Bluestone, 2017; Lee, 2013; White, 2016).

My third recommendation is based on the first and major finding from the current study and reviewed literature which is disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party. Participants unanimously deprecated of the leadership of the party's insensitivity and out of touch with the grassroots. Thus, I recommend further study on how to shrink disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party as well as contemporary organizations.

My fourth recommendation is based on the fifth theme of divine leadership. Judging from the experiences and background of participants, all 12 participants expressed having strong Christian background and believe in God. Therefore, I will recommend further study to determine if this view is universally acknowledged by members of the Republican Party across all faiths or unique to the Evangelical Christian members of the Republican Party alone.

Lastly, the first aspect of the fourth finding which is power of communication highlighted the importance of effective strategic communication and the need for the Republican Party to develop effective communication strategy to be able to connect with the younger American voters. Therefore, I recommend further study on how the Republican Party can best communicate the party's message especially visions, missions, values and ideals of the party to the younger generation of Americans.

Implications for Social Change

The emergence of Donald Trump as both the candidate of the Republican Party and American President despite not having the support of any known living American presidents both Republican and Democrat, save for the support of the grassroots during

the 2016 election; and the rejection of establishment candidates by the grassroots during that election season was a referendum on the leadership, and political establishments of the party.

Despite all oppositions and resistance from the leadership and political establishment of the Republican Party against Trump's candidacy, Trump continued to surge in momentum until he became the substantive candidate of the Republican Party and eventually the 45th U.S. president. His victories at both the 2016 Republican primaries and American general elections were unprecedented. The dataset validated reviewed literature that Trump's victory was an expression of the anger and frustrations of the grassroots against the party's leadership. One of the major reasons for the abandonment of the party's leadership and establishment by the grassroots during the 2016 election season was disconnect between the leadership and membership (grassroots) of the party as affirmed by participants. The importance of shining light on this disconnect was expressed by participants.

Thus, implication for positive social change for this study is highlighting the importance of shrinking disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party and contemporary organizations seeking to remain alive and active. Because cohesiveness between leadership and membership of organizations will facilitate effective leadership as common organizational goals become the focal point of both leadership and membership. Thus, participants highlighted disconnect between the leadership and membership of the party, ineffective leadership, and lack of effective communication strategy, as some of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the

2016 Republican primaries. Also, highlighted is the importance of effective, responsive and inclusive leadership in navigating the dynamic challenges faced by contemporary organizations, interest groups and public institutions.

Conclusion

The focal point of this study was to seek understanding of the leadership issues and organizational dynamics that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. From the foremost finding of the study based on participants' perspectives and reviewed literature, there is disconnect between the members and leadership of the Republican Party which preceded the 2016 election season. The leadership of the party failed to foster cohesiveness amongst the membership by uniting the various interests within the party. Participants observed that most leadership and elected officials are not interested in fulfilling their campaign promises and leadership obligations to their members rather leadership is interested in seeking reelections and promoting the interests of the big corporations that finance their campaigns.

Thus, the grassroots of the party used the 2016 election season to express decades of anger and frustrations resulting from feelings of neglect and lack sense of belonging as grassroots bemoaned the abandonment of core conservative values and issues so dear to them by the party's leadership and elected officials. Hence, the emergence of Donald Trump gave these alienated members a sense of belonging and hope as well as became the vessel with which the grassroots expressed their frustrations and rejection of the party's leadership.

Conclusively, the findings of this study implied that disconnect between the leadership and membership of the Republican Party, ineffective leadership, and lack of effective communication strategy were some of the leadership issues that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. Participants expressed concerns, and their expectation is that something should be done to ameliorate these leadership issues. Also, members expressed concern about the need for the leadership of the party to evolve effective communication strategy targeted at the younger generation of American voters as a matter of urgency. The importance and urgency of drawing the attention of leadership of the Republican Party to these issues was captured by one of the participants thus “If this (referring to my study) points out nothing than that the leadership is disconnected from the voters; then that is worth pointing out if anybody pays attention to it.”

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

Date:

Name of Official

Address

Dear (Name),

My name is XXXX XXXX and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research on the leadership issues and organizational factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. There are a vast number of studies detailing elite-mass political polarization, the predominance of populism, and impact of political engineering on political mobilization. What is not known, however, are the leadership issues and organization factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. This research will provide insight into those leadership issues and organizational factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries.

Your assistance in conducting this much needed research is important. If willing, I need for you to identify members of your party who were also strong supporters of Donald Trump during the 2016 Republican primaries. Once identified, I would like to meet with

them to discuss the nature of this study. The participants of this study need to be registered members of the Republican Party and supporters of Donald Trump during the 2016 election season. The participants are free to choose whether or not to participate and can discontinue participation at any time. Information provided by the participants will be kept strictly confidential.

I would welcome a telephone call from you to discuss any questions you may have concerning this study and your role in identifying research participants. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or emailed at name@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

XXX XXXXXX

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

Appendix B: Reply to Letter of Cooperation

RE: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Reply all

Thu 10/4, 7:34 PM

Dear XXXX,

I will be more than willing to assist you with your participant recruitment. However, most of my members here voted Ted Cruz and some voted Donald Trump. I will assist with advertising your study to my members but will not guarantee how many that will be interested.

Thanks.

XXXXXX

Chairperson

Appendix C: Letter to Participant

Date:

Name of Participant

Address

Dear (Name),

My name is XXXX XXXXXX and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research on the leadership issues and organizational factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. There are vast number of studies detailing elite-mass political polarization, the predominance of populism, and impact of political engineering on political mobilization. What is not known, however, are the leadership issues and organization factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries. This research will provide insight into those leadership issues and organizational factors that shaped the outcome of the 2016 Republican primaries.

I realize that your time is important to you and I appreciate your consideration to participate in this study. To fully understand your experience, we need to meet on two separate occasions for approximately one hour each meeting. Meetings can be held at a location of your choice and will not require you to do or say anything you don't feel

comfortable with doing or saying. The meetings are designed to simply get to know you and learn about your experience of being a member of the Republican Party and Supporter of Donald Trump in 2016. All information gathered during our meetings will be kept strictly confidential.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule a date and time that we can meet. My telephone number is (XXX) XXX-XXXX. You can also email me at name@waldenu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

XXXX XXXXXX

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name of

Interviewer: _____

Name of

Interviewee: _____

Initial Interview

1. Let us begin with you introducing yourself and describing your experience as a member of the Republican Party.

Follow-up: What does this experience mean for you?

2. How would you describe the national leadership of the Republican Party?

Describe the kind of leadership traits you expect from a leader

Follow-up: How would you assess the National leadership of the party in terms of efficiency and the leadership traits you described?

3. How would you describe the relationship between the national leadership and members of the Republican Party?

Follow-up: Describe your perception on how the party's leadership manage internal party cohesion

4. What leadership issues do you consider to be responsible for the abandonment of the party's establishment candidates by the members of the party during the 2016 Republican presidential primaries?

5. How has the leadership of the Republican Party integrated the voices of the members in national leadership selections before and during the 2016 election season?

Follow-up: Can you elaborate more on perceived changes?

6. What kind of leadership do you consider ideal for navigating complex challenges faced by the party?

7. Describe your perception of Trump's takeover of the Republican Party?

Follow-up: Tell me about your view on the factors that contributed towards this.

8. What made you support then candidate Trump; his message, personality, campaign strategy, just being an alternative candidate to the party's establishment candidates, or a combination of factors?

Follow-up: Can you explain more?

Finally, is there anything more that you would like to share with me prior to the close of the interview?