

State Delegate Selection Rules for Presidential Nominations, 1972–2000

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Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the consequences of delegate selection rules for presidential nominations, yet few have sought an explanation for the variance in these rules across the states and over time. In this article, we ask why state party elites would open their processes of delegate selection to a large and potentially ideologically diverse constituency by holding primary elections rather than caucuses. We develop an account of endogenous institutional choice that suggests elites ought to be increasingly likely to open their delegate selection rules as the ideological nature of the party and the state's electorate converge. We test this claim using a new data set on Democratic Party selection rules between 1972 and 2000 and find that the degree of ideological convergence is a strong predictor of state party choices to open the process of delegate selection. These results provide additional support for general theoretical claims that characterize political institutions as fundamentally endogenous to the politics they regulate.

Students of comparative and American politics alike have long recognized that political institutions are endogenous to the politics they regulate (Calvert 1995; Riker 1980; Tsebelis 1995). In the electoral arena, we have seen evidence that partisan interests shape how electoral districts are drawn (Cox and Katz 2002) and that governing parties adjust the proportionality of electoral systems to best ensure their continued dominance in changing political environments (Bawn 1993; Boix 1999; Rokkan 1970). Legislative research on the conditional party government thesis suggests that the authority delegated to partisan leadership varies according to the partisan interests (e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Rohde 1991), and investigations of majoritarianism and minority rights over time have shown that institutional change is connected to the goals of those with power in Congress (Binder 1995; Gamm and Shepsle 1989). We also know that institutional choices about bureaucratic structure are connected to strategic calculations concerning both the delegation of political authority (e.g., McNollgast 1999) and the utility of the bureaucracy as a source of patronage (e.g., Geddes 1991). The endogeneity argument even arises in judicial scholarship, where rules governing judicial independence are

influenced by partisan calculations over future electoral success (Ramseyer 1994) and where judicial review itself is characterized as a potential solution to the fundamental uncertainty associated with policy-making (Rogers 2001).

Yet when it comes to a crucial set of institutions in American politics—the state-level delegate selection rules for presidential nominations—scholars have had virtually nothing to say about the endogeneity of institutional choice. This omission is especially striking for three reasons. First, presidential selection research has regularly treated most actors in the nomination arena as strategic decision makers. Both voters and presidential candidates, we know, make decisions rationally in the context of the delegate selection rules (Abramson et al. 1992; Aldrich 1980). Second, the presidential nomination system has been examined in great detail, with heavy emphasis on how the rules affect outcomes (Norlander 1996). But aside from discussion of the parties' important 1970s-era changes to the delegate selection system at the national level (Crotty 1983; Polsby 1983; Shafer 1983) and national party responses to those changes (Cohen et al. n.d.; Cohen et al. 2003), scholars have exhibited little interest in explaining the

varied and potentially strategic decisions that state parties make about presidential selection rules. Third, the variance in these rules across the states and over time presents scholars with an intriguing puzzle. Presidential candidate recruitment may be the most significant avenue of party influence on national public policy, and as such, we might expect state party leaders to jealously guard the power to select delegates to national conventions. Instead, many state parties have entrusted voters with this power, moving away from the party controlled caucus-convention system used universally during the nineteenth century toward some form of primary election (DiClerico 2000; Reiter 1985). That delegate selection would appear to be such a fundamental power makes it extremely curious that some state parties open their selection processes to voters who are at best marginally concerned with party interests, and at worst, members of opposing parties.

We begin to confront the puzzle of state party choices over nomination rules by focusing on the openness of the delegate selection procedure.¹ Specifically, we ask *why state party elites would open their processes of delegate selection to an increasingly large and ideologically diverse constituency*. We suggest that the choice to open delegate selection rules presents party leaders with an unenviable trade-off between two sets of competing goals. We propose that leaders have electoral objectives, including selecting electable candidates and mobilizing voters, but that they also have organizational goals, such as safeguarding the party's ideological program and their own political influence. While opening the selection process offers party leaders electoral benefits like increased voter turnout at the general election, open rules may also result in a loss of party influence over delegate selection. The central theoretical claim we test is that the loss of party influence over delegate selection induced by open selection rules ought to be increasingly costly as the preferences of party leaders diverge from those of their state's voting population. When leaders and voters share similar positions, there is little cost associated with letting the public decide. This is not the case when party leaders and voters hold divergent preferences. We expect parties to be decreasingly likely to open delegate selection rules, and in fact likely to adopt more closed rules, as the preferences of party leaders diverge from those of the state's voting population, in spite of potential electoral losses. In the

process of developing this argument and providing empirical evidence for it, we show that these arrangements are outstanding examples of endogenous electoral institutions.

Although we believe that all political parties face a trade-off of the sort analyzed here, we test our theoretical claim against data on rules governing who can participate in the selection of delegates for the Democratic National Convention across the states and over time. In what follows, we first characterize the delegate selection rule trade-off in more detail. We then explain the practical and historical reasons for our focus on the Democratic Party. We then describe our data, address alternative explanations for which we control, and discuss the empirical results. We leave a final section for concluding remarks.

Delegate Selection Rule Choice in the Democratic Party

Scholars have generated innumerable definitions of the political party, virtually all of which share an emphasis on their office-seeking goals (e.g., Downs 1957, 25; Sartori 1976, 64; Schattschneider 1959, ix; Schlesinger 1991, 6). According to narrow conceptualizations of parties, party leaders are oriented solely toward enabling ambitious office seekers to gain power through elections, and so focus on electoral tasks such as nominating candidates for office, mobilizing voters, and performing other candidate-service activities. However, many authors also attribute additional "organizational" goals and tasks to parties and their leaders, including the formulation of party programs and government policies and the preservation of their own political influence (Key 1949; Panebianco 1988; Sartori 1976).

Like other dimensions of party organization, candidate and delegate selection rules reflect party goals. They are clearly central to parties' electoral tasks; party leaders' ability to achieve those goals may best be served by open rules (like primaries) that maximize the participatory element of selection processes. Selection rules can also be constructed to protect party programs and the influence of partisan elites; caucus-conventions and similarly closed models of candidate selection empower incumbent party leaders and activists. That is, a specific set of selection rules may reflect party leaders' weighing of competing goals. While delegate selection rules can be used to advance either type of goal, it is not clear that leaders

¹On the consequences of these rules, see Adamany 1976; Gurian 1993; Polsby 1983; Southwell 1988; and Wekkin 1988.

can simultaneously maximize both goals through the choice of a particular rule. In fact, delegate selection rules present parties with a general choice between fully advancing their electoral goals and their organizational goals.

The use of primary elections delivers significant electoral benefits to parties and party leaders. They significantly increase voter participation over local party caucuses (Mayer 1996, 124–27). Not only is participation in the delegate selection process far higher in primaries than it is in caucuses, but primaries actually boost voter turnout in November (Buell 1986; Jewell 1984; Kanthak and Morton 2003). While these increases raise a number of normative questions concerning the representativeness of American candidate recruitment, the positive implication for partisan leadership is compelling. Whether party leaders and the campaigns they support are better able to get out the general election vote because of the enlarged voter rolls primaries generate or because spring elections prime voters for the fall's main event, the increase in turnout is a benefit that all parties ought to welcome. Even if leaders place more weight on the outcomes of state and local elections than they do on the presidential race, primaries appear to manufacture a set of voters that leaders can mobilize as they see fit.²

Primaries have important secondary effects that dovetail with their more straightforward electoral benefits. One well-articulated advantage of adopting a primary concerns party leaders' ability to ensure compliance with the Democratic National Committee's guidelines for delegate selection established through the McGovern-Fraser reforms. According to this argument, the more transparent primaries enable party leaders to comply with those standards regarding equal access and representation more easily than do caucus-conventions (Crotty 1977; Kirkpatrick 1978). A refusal by the DNC to seat a state's delegation obviously deprives those delegates and state party leaders of their ability to influence electoral outcomes at the

presidential level; it may also generate challenges in state and local politics for incumbent party leaders.³

Given the electoral advantages of opening the delegate selection process, we might expect all states to run primary elections. But despite the well-documented trend toward primaries, nearly 25% of the states ran caucuses during the 2000 election season. We believe that by focusing on the overall trend toward openness, scholars have failed to consider a fascinating problem state party leaders likely face when considering their delegate selection rule. In short, the electoral benefits of opening must be traded off against the corresponding loss of control over presidential candidate recruitment—a power that primary elections delegate to various pieces of the electorate, and in some cases, the state's entire voting public. Although party leaders, even those who run caucuses, no longer possess the vice grip on delegate selection that they enjoyed prior to the party reform movement of the 1970s, they have not lost all control. Indeed, electoral scholarship finds that caucus attendees are stronger party identifiers and more committed to party activism than primary voters (Mayer 1996; McCann 1996). These are precisely the individuals whom we might expect would be receptive to the party leadership's appeals to support one candidate or another and to advance the ideological goals of the party.

Thus, the choice over delegate selection rules presents leaders with an intriguing political dilemma: open the process and gain access to an increased set of voters (among other benefits) yet lose control over the ultimate selection, or close the process and maintain stronger party influence yet give up the benefits primaries offer. Given this model of delegate selection rule choice, the question is how party leaders might evaluate the trade-off. The central theoretical claim we wish to examine in this project is that the loss in control over delegate selection ought to be increasingly relevant as the ideological preferences of the party leadership diverge from those of the electorate.

²The work of Cohen et al. (n.d., 2003) complements our analytic approach. Like us, they posit that while the 1970s-era reforms to delegate selection transferred decision-making authority to a voting public, party leaders have uncovered ways of guarding their institutional power. However, they are principally oriented toward explaining national party effects on selection outcomes rather than state party influence over institutional variance. Cohen et al. also conceive of party goals as exclusively electoral rather than encompassing broader organizational goals as well. Under this assumption, the choice to open the selection rules poses no trade-off; it is virtually costless. It is only if party leaders care about both recruiting electable candidates and influencing the nature of those candidates that the choice to open or close the process becomes challenging.

³Primaries are also believed to provide states with economic and informational benefits derived from an increase in national media attention. Iowa's experience notwithstanding, scholars have suggested that primaries, which take place on one day and are run in relatively similar ways across the states, are easier to cover than the multitiered caucus-convention model (Polsby 1983, 57). As a result, the national media are more likely to cover primaries than caucuses, and local economies benefit from the increased media traffic. More important, local matters of consequence will be more likely to receive national coverage, a beneficial effect of holding a primary in so far as the federal structure of American government makes state interests dependent on some degree of national attention.

As the policy interests of party elites and voters diverge, the possibility of a loss in influence and control should be more relevant and the choice of whether to open will come to be an even more challenging dilemma. When ideological divergence is high, leaders should be less likely to open the process. In contrast, as mass and elite preferences converge, the choice to open no longer presents leaders with a significant cost—voters and elites will likely support similar candidates.

We believe that our argument about selection rules has broad application; however, our analysis focuses on delegate selection rules in the Democratic Party between 1972 and 2000. We limit ourselves in this fashion for both practical and historical reasons. Practically, state law regulates all elections, including primaries, and most legislative changes from caucus-convention models to some form of primary election have affected the rules of both national parties. Since the Democratic Party dominated state politics during much of the twentieth century, many changes in Republican delegate selection rules were not Republican choices at all, but were forced on them by Democratic majorities (Epstein 1986, 215). The cleanest test of our theoretical model, which focuses attention on the choices individual party leaders make, thus requires unified control of state government, which allows party elites to adopt whatever delegate selection rule they desire. While unified Republican government was extremely rare at the state level during the twentieth century, unified Democratic government was not. Thus, focusing on the Democratic Party affords a number of observations sufficient to generate reasonably precise statistical inferences.

There are good historical reasons for selecting the Democratic Party in the period following the 1968 convention, as well. Our design captures the entire period of delegate selection following the McGovern-Fraser reforms of 1970. By requiring state parties to satisfy a list of demanding and, by some accounts, unclear standards concerning the transparency and representativeness of their delegate selection rules as a precondition for having their delegations seated at the national convention, the McGovern-Fraser reforms sought to undercut the ability of local party bosses to maintain severely unrepresentative nomination processes (Shafer 1983, 197–235). If McGovern-Fraser is responsible for the trend toward greater openness, it is because state party leaders were responding rationally to the national party's threat to ignore delegations that failed to satisfy the new standards, a threat rendered all the more credible by the Supreme Court's *Cousins v. Wigoda* decision affirming the

constitutionality of the national Democratic Party's decision not to seat a 1972 Illinois delegation (Walz and Comer 1999).⁴ While it was not impossible for a caucus-convention model to satisfy the national standards, adopting a primary system was the easiest way to ensure that a state's delegation would be seated (Hagan and Mayer 2000, 10; Polsby 1983, 56).⁵ By limiting ourselves to post-reform elections we control for a major determinant of the incentive to produce more inclusive methods for selecting delegates—national party rules. We now turn to the data.

Measurement

Our central theoretical argument—that state party elites will prefer more closed delegate selection procedures when ideological divergence between the state's mass public and party elites is high—can be tested empirically using existing time-series, cross-sectional data on state ideology and delegate selection rules. We conduct a series of tests, outlined later, to explore this expected relationship in the context of other possible influences. First, we describe the measurement of the delegate selection rules themselves, elite-mass ideological divergence, and various control variables suggested in the presidential selection literature.

Delegate Selection Rules

Scholars have typically viewed the choice state parties face as binary—between a caucus-convention system and a primary (Mayer 1996; Walz and Comer 1999). This view of delegate selection usually involves two additional assumptions: that change over time involves only a caucus-to-primary shift and, consequently, that once a state makes such a change, it does not contemplate a shift back in the other direction (Walz and Comer 1999). When we look at the real-world variation in delegate selection rules, however, the types of rules and the patterns of change observed seem more complex. Even within the confines of the DNC's restrictions, state parties choose from a multi-category menu of rules that grows increasingly less restrictive. Moreover, party choices are fluid—state parties can and do change their rules repeatedly over time, often moving from a more open to a more closed rule (or vice versa) and then back again.

⁴*Cousins v. Wigoda*, 419 U.S. 477 (1975).

⁵While not denying the increase in primaries following McGovern-Fraser, other scholars discount the independent effect of national party reform (Reiter 1985).

TABLE 1 Six-Category Ordinal Measure of Delegate Selection Rules

Selection Rule	Description	Code	N
Caucus-convention	Delegates chosen by state and local caucuses and conventions.	0	131
Caucus-convention with nonbinding primary	Delegates chosen by party caucus and conventions, with nonbonding preference primaries.	1	15
Direct Delegate Primary	Delegates chosen directly by voters in primaries with nonbinding preference poll.	2	13
Closed Primary	Delegates chosen or bound by presidential preference primaries open only to voters preregistered as members of the particular parties.	3	102
Semi-Closed Primary	Delegates chosen or bound by presidential preference primaries open only to voters preregistered as members of the particular parties or as independents.	4	41
Open Primary	Delegates chosen or bound by presidential preference primaries open to all registered voters with no regard to party preregistration.	5	76

Several examples illustrate the considerable variance in direction, type, and frequency of rule change across five states. On one hand, Iowa and Colorado represent states with rules that follow the binary, caucus-or-primary conception. In the wake of the McGovern-Fraser reforms, Iowa has never changed its caucus-convention model, while Colorado adopted an open primary system in 1992 and has not returned to a closed procedure since. But rule change can be much more complex. Nevada adopted a closed primary for the 1976 election, yet returned to a caucus-convention model in 1984. Ohio has never run a caucus-based system, but it has cycled between more and less open forms of primaries. And Michigan began the post-reform era with an open primary, changed to a caucus-convention model for the 1980 election, adopted a closed primary for the 1992 election, and finally returned to the caucus-convention model in 1996.

Recognizing that delegate selection rules can be classified in many ways (Carr and Scott 1984) but wanting to capture as much variation as possible in rule types, we estimate models with two different dependent variables. We use a dichotomous, caucus v. primary indicator first to test our argument, in keeping with the typical conception of state rule choices.⁶ To capture the more complex types of variation, we then conduct similar analysis on a six-

category variable ordered on the openness of participation. It is important to note that our analyses on *both* operationalizations of selection rules allow for the kind of over-time fluidity in those rules that can be observed in the real world. Our measures are based on data collected from *Vital Statistics in American Politics 2001–2002* (Stanley and Niemi 2003). Table 1 displays the closed-to-open range of rules used by state Democratic Parties in the 1972–2000 period.⁷

Ideological Divergence

Measuring our core conceptual argument requires indicators of state Democratic Party elite ideology and state mass ideology across the 1972–2000 time period. We rely on the measures developed by Berry et al. (1998). In response to several requests, we have extended Berry et al.'s validity analysis, and find further strong evidence for the measure's validity. The results of this analysis are included in the supplemental materials for this article, housed at the journal's website (<http://www.journalofpolitics.org>).

The widely used Berry data offer a yearly measure of citizen ideology for all 50 states. A state's citizen ideology score is constructed by first estimating citizen ideology at the congressional district level and then averaging across all of a state's districts. District ideology is estimated by averaging the ideologies of the two major party congressional candidates, weighted by voter support, where candidate ideology is measured by traditional interest group scores. Berry et al. also provide measures of state government ideology, which

⁶This is also the dependent variable operationalization used in the only published quantitative study of state choices over delegate selection rules (Walz and Comer 1999). However, our dichotomous analysis, as will be described below, differs from the Walz and Comer approach in that we allow states to move in either direction (i.e., caucus-to-primary or primary-to-caucus) and to do so more than once.

⁷The dichotomous indicator simply divides the six categories into caucus-convention (codes 0 and 1) and primary (codes 2 through 5) modes of selection based on the same data.

consist of state-official ideological scores derived from measures of state congressional delegation ideology. Our measure of state Democratic elite ideology follows the Berry assumptions and reflects the mean ideological score of the Democratic congressional delegation (using the procedures Berry et al. outline for estimating ideology when there is no Democratic delegation). For each state-year in the study, then, our measure of ideological divergence takes the absolute value of the difference between the Berry state citizen ideology score and the Berry-based Democratic elite ideology score.⁸

Other Factors

State parties' choices over delegate selection procedures may be shaped by other influences, which we measure and test in our empirical analysis of Democratic rules. Walz and Comer (1999, 194) identify weak state party organization as a possible factor in the choice of more open selection rules (primaries, in their analysis), arguing that "weaker parties are more likely to succumb to external pressures" represented by Democratic National Committee preferences about rule selection and that states with "volunteer" parties are more likely to adopt open rules than are "organized" parties (1999, 194; see also Shafer 1983, chapter 10). Goldstein (2002) offers additional support for this view by demonstrating that higher levels of organization predicted state-level resistance to the democratizing reforms of McGovern-Fraser. It is also possible that weaker state parties are more sensitive to the bureaucratic difficulties of managing a caucus-convention process and tend toward state-administered primaries. Because of these potential connections, we include a measure of state Democratic Party organizational strength in our analysis. The specific measure is based on Cotter et al.'s (1989) measure (which incorporates party organizational complexity and programmatic capacity), updated with data collected by Ray LaRaja to allow for multiple data points across the 1972–2000 period.⁹

⁸The data used to construct the distance measure is lagged one year for each of the election years in the data set. For instance, the state and elite ideology for the year 1975 are used for the 1976 state-years in the analysis. This lag captures the fact that decisions on selection rules are made in advance of the selection process.

⁹We employ the Cotter data for state-years through 1984 and the LaRaja-based measure for post-1984 state-years. A limited number of data points missing in the available data were collected through author interviews with state party organizations in Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, and Vermont. This variable is coded from 1 to 4, where "1" refers to weak party organizations, "2" to moderately weak party organizations, "3" to moderately strong parties, and

As noted earlier, open selection processes offer a number of possible benefits to party leaders, including the potential to increase turnout among the rank-and-file for general election contests. Most state party leaders would likely favor any effort to increase general election turnout among their partisans, but the relative strength of that priority may vary across states—this benefit could be more valuable in highly competitive state party systems, where party leaders have more to gain or lose in the general election. In other words, the importance of increasing turnout in high party-competition states could cause state party leaders to favor more open modes of delegate selection, other things being equal. To account for this potential effect, we incorporate into the empirical analyses a standard measure of state party competition, the folded Ranney index (see Bibby and Holbrook 2004 for a description).¹⁰

The political calculus of state party leaders may also be influenced by the candidate pool for their party. Walz and Comer cite the conventional wisdom that home-state candidates favor primaries because of the exposure those contests afford them (1999, 195). While there are some reasons to be suspicious of this argument—in particular, it requires accepting the assumption that home-state candidates have influence in the development of selection rules—we include a measure to control for this potential effect since party leaders may recognize the publicity benefits in turnout for home-state candidates, and those leaders may seek to capitalize on those political opportunities. At the same time, in their own career self-interest, party elites may be concerned about exhibiting loyalty to a potentially successful presidential candidate. To measure any home-state effect, we include a dummy variable that is coded as "1" whenever a figure from that state, in that year, was a candidate for the Democratic nomination.¹¹ Finally, since the state politics literature gen-

"4" to strong parties. Because of missing data that could not be reconstructed from the Cotter measure, the following states are excluded from the data set for the 1972–84 period: Alabama, Hawaii, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

¹⁰For 1972, 1976, and 1980 state-years, data is from the 1970–80 period and is taken from Patterson and Caldeira (1984, 693). 1984 and 1988 cases use data for the 1981–88 period, taken from Bibby et al. (1990, 92). 1992 data is from the 1989–94 period (Bibby and Holbrook 1996, 105); 1996 data is from the 1995–98 period (Bibby and Holbrook 1999, 95); and 2000 data is from the 1999–2003 period (Bibby and Holbrook 2004, 88).

¹¹Recognizing that a candidacy must be declared far enough in advance to affect the state party's choices, we code this variable as "1" only when the candidacy was declared before January of the election year. Thus, the variable equals "1" in the following state-years: 1972: IN, NY, MN, OK, SD, WA; 1976: AL, AZ, GA, IN, MD,

erally recognizes contrasts between party politics in north and south, particularly in this era, we include an indicator variable for southern states to control for the decision environment of Southern parties.¹²

Analysis

Since delegate selection rules are a function of both state statutes and state party choices (e.g., Epstein 1986), we focus our analysis of state Democratic Party choices on those states in which Democrats could effectively control both aspects of this decision—in other words, those states in which Democrats could, if necessary, shape state law to facilitate their preferred delegate selection rules. The states in which this condition is unquestionably met are states with unified Democratic government.¹³ Since these unified Democratic states provide the purest test of our hypotheses, we focus the core of our analysis on these cases. Democrats may, however, be able to influence the statutory framework to accommodate their goals under less favorable circumstances. Since including all states (regardless of partisan control) increases our *n* significantly and allows us to observe how partisan control conditions the strategic choice of rules, we have created parallel statistical models using this inclusive case selection rule. These models include a dummy variable that equals 1 when unified Democratic government is in place and 0 when the Republicans control at least one veto point; they also incorporate interaction terms to capture the conditioning effect of unified Democratic government on each of our key independent variables. In particular, we expect to find the strongest relationship between ideological distance and delegate selection rules when unified Democratic government is in place. The results section below offers brief discussion of the limited but more straightforward model followed by interpretation of the conditional effects in the fully specified model.

The cases we analyze cover the presidential election cycles from 1972 through 2000. We begin the

NC, PA, OK, TX, WA; 1980: CA, GA, MA; 1984: CA, CO, FL, MN, OH, SC, SD; 1988: AZ, CO, DE, IL, MA, MO, TN; 1992: AR, CA, IA, MA, NE, VA; 1996: AR; 2000: NJ, TN.

¹²The southern variable follows the Key (1949) classification of southern states.

¹³We treat North Carolina as an exception to this standard. Since the North Carolina governor has no veto power, we treat North Carolina as a unified Democratic state whenever its legislature is controlled by Democrats.

analysis with 1972 to correspond with the national Democratic Party's adoption of the McGovern-Fraser constraints on state party processes, and we extend the analysis through the most recent completed cycle to pick up on the considerable quadrennial variation in selection rules that has continued throughout the post-1968 period. Our data set includes one observation for each state Democratic Party in each election cycle; the unit of analysis, then, is the state-year.

Results

To explore state party choices empirically, we use two analytical approaches: pooled logit with a binary dependent variable (caucus versus primary) and ordered probit, using the ordered dependent variable described above. Table 2 displays the binary models, which are time-series cross-sectional logit models with corrections for duration dependence in the data. Specifically, we employ the cubic spline procedure recommended by Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998) for incorporating time into logit analysis of grouped duration data. In addition to the independent variables described above, then, the logit models in Table 2 include the cubic spline of a "caucus years" variable, which represents the number of calendar years that a state has sustained a caucus selection procedure (i.e., a zero on the dependent variable).¹⁴ Estimating the logit models with the cubic spline involves an additional coefficient, which defines segments of the spline. The logit model includes an additional time variable, a counter for calendar time, to account for arguments supporting an evolutionary trend from caucuses to primaries (e.g., Polsby 1983, chapter 2).

The logit results provide clear support for our argument that delegate selection rules are in part a function of party elites' strategic calculations. The first model, including only cases with unified Democratic government, shows this support quite clearly: the ideological distance coefficient is negatively signed, as our hypothesis predicts, and statistically significant. This effect persists in the second model, with all state-years included, but it is conditional on unified Democratic government. When Democrats control state government, the interacted coefficient for ideological distance takes a value of $-.082$ with a standard error of $.037$, a statistically significant effect.¹⁵ In other words,

¹⁴Our "caucus years" variable is analogous to the "peace years" variable in the Beck et al. analysis (1998, 1274–78) and is implemented using their routines (Tucker 1999).

¹⁵Throughout this discussion, the effect of the independent variable of interest is calculated conditional on the unified-Democratic dummy equaling 1. For example, where β_d is the

TABLE 2 Determinants of Primary Election as Democratic Delegate Selection System, 1972–2000

	Unified Democratic States		All States	
	β	RSE (p)	β	RSE (p)
Ideological Distance	-.097	.037 (.009)	-.025	.018 (.165)
Party Organization	.737	.399 (.065)	.205	.260 (.430)
Party Competition	-.522	3.431 (.879)	-.581	2.278 (.799)
Home-state Candidate	.982	.703 (.162)	.590	.605 (.329)
South	-.354	.749 (.637)	.058	.851 (.946)
Unified Democratic			-.321	2.634 (.903)
Unified Dem. * Ideological Distance			-.057	.038 (.135)
Unified Dem. * Party Organization			.524	.329 (.111)
Unified Dem. * Party Competition			.800	3.250 (.806)
Unified Dem. * Home-state Candidate			.378	1.069 (.724)
Unified Dem. * South			-.459	.884 (.604)
Time Counter	.647	.187 (.001)	.438	.081 (<.001)
Caucus Years	-.888	.362 (.014)	-.342	.043 (<.001)
Spline ^a	-.006	.009 (.501)	-.0003	.00006 (<.001)
Constant	.227	2.754 (.934)	.632	2.090 (.762)
	N = 119		N = 379	
	$\chi^2 = 21.07$		$\chi^2 = 109.36$	
	(p = .007)		(p < .001)	

Notes: Pooled logit results displayed; dependent variable = 1 if state Democratic Party uses primary election system for delegate selection, 0 otherwise. Robust standard errors reported, clustering on state id number.

^aCubic spline segments of caucus years variable. Spline generated using the *btscs* routine for Stata (Tucker 1999).

when the distance is greater between the mass and state's Democratic elite, the state government is less likely to choose a primary for delegate selection.

Substantively, the impact of ideological distance is significant, as the predicted probabilities in Table 3

estimated coefficient of the ideological distance variable and β_x is the coefficient of the distance*unified-Democratic interaction term, the interactive coefficient of ideological distance equals $\beta_d + \beta_x$. The standard error for this interactive effect is $\sqrt{\text{var}(\beta_d) + \text{var}(\beta_x) + 2 \text{cov}(\beta_d, \beta_x)}$. See Friedrich (1982, especially 804–10).

illustrate. With other factors held constant at typical levels, the predicted probability of a primary in a unified Democratic state moves from about .70 to about .34 as ideological distance ranges from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above. Meanwhile, party organization holds a positive and statistically significant influence on rule choice in unified Democratic states.¹⁶ More organized state parties are more likely to choose a primary when

¹⁶The conditional effect's coefficient equals .729 with a standard error of .304.

TABLE 3 Predicted Probabilities of Democratic Delegate Selection by Primary Election in Unified Democratic States

	Pr(Primary)	95% Confidence Interval
Base prediction ^a	.522	(.313, .719)
Maximum ideological distance	.173	(.078, .535)
High ideological distance ^b	.339	(.122, .618)
Low ideological distance ^c	.704	(.475, .866)
Minimum ideological distance	.807	(.565, .950)

Note: Based on full model in second column of Table 2. All predicted probabilities and confidence intervals generated using the Clarify program (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003).

^aFor the base prediction, ideological distance is set at the mean for unified Democratic states, party competition is set at the median for unified Democratic states, count is set at 1, caucus years is set to 4, and the spline segments are set to -64. Other variables set at their medians.

^bIdeological distance is set to mean + 1 s.d.; other variables are held at the values in the base prediction.

^cIdeological distance is set to mean - 1 s.d.; other variables are held at the values in the base prediction.

other factors are taken into account. This positive relationship runs counter to the negative relationship expected by some authors, though Walz and Comer found no statistically significant effect for this variable at all (1999, 201). Our finding of a positive relationship can be easily reconciled with a strategic interpretation of selection rule adoption: leaders of stronger state parties may be more willing to open their selection process in response to pro-primary considerations because they remain confident that they can mitigate the potential consequences of an ideologically diverse selectorate through voter mobilization and education efforts as well as other party programs. This interpretation is potentially consistent with Cohen et al.'s claims that the national party has used endorsements in order to maintain an influence over candidate selection, though the argument must be reoriented to the state level. In short, if strong state parties are better able to manage endorsements than weak parties, they may be more willing to open their processes and capture the gains of greater inclusiveness without losing significant control over outcomes.¹⁷ Finally, as would be expected, the positive

¹⁷The group of political insiders on which Cohen et al. (n.d., 2003) focus likely includes (or overlaps significantly with) the state party elites who are the central actors in our framework. Our finding

coefficient on the time counter variable shows that states are more likely to use primaries as the post-McGovern-Fraser era progresses.

In Table 4, we present a similar analysis but capture more of the real-world variation in delegate selection rules by using ordered probit and a six-category dependent variable ranging from most closed to most open procedures. In these models, we again account for temporal dependence in the data, incorporating a variable ("stable years") for the number of calendar years since the last change on the six-category dependent variable.¹⁸ With only unified Democratic cases, the limited first model shows a negative and statistically significant effect for ideological distance, as well as a statistically significant positive relationship between party organization levels and open selection rules. The home-state candidate control variable also has a positive relationship with the openness of the selection process in this model.

We gain better purchase on the conditional nature of these effects in the full ordered probit model, in the second column. Here, the relationship between ideological distance and selection rules is shown to be conditional on Democratic control of all veto points. Greater ideological distance is associated with more closed selection procedures ($\beta = -.027$, $se = .011$), and this effect is statistically significant. We can again see

that strong parties have a decisive influence on selection rule choice might support their contention about insider power, so long as bureaucratically strong parties are also characterized by the presence of powerful leaders. However, there are clear limits to this interpretation (beyond the assumption of the coupling of powerful leaders and strong parties), because Cohen et al. conceptualize parties at the national level. The direction of the preferences of national party insiders (i.e., whether they would favor opening or closing selection rules in particular states) is unknown, as is the logic that would underpin those preferences. Also unclear is how Cohen et al.'s national network of party insiders could both shape the preferences of state party leaders and the actions of state legislatures.

¹⁸The Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998) approach correcting for duration dependence in time-series, cross-sectional data is limited to cases in which the dependent variable is binary. We are aware of no analogous treatment for duration dependence in TSCS data when the dependent variable is ordered. Absent a known, elegant solution to this problem we control for duration dependence via the "stable years" variable, which measures the time of institutional stability for each observation in years. As before, we continue to estimate White/Huber errors to account for heterogeneity in the error structure across the states. Unfortunately, our efforts to find an event history model that addresses repeated events with multiple origin and transition states suggest that we lack sufficient data to generate efficient parameter estimates (for a comparison, see analysis in Steele and Curtis 2003). While we recognize that ours is not a perfect estimation strategy we believe it is a reasonable kludge; our confidence in this strategy is reinforced by the similarity in our key findings across the binary and ordered models.

TABLE 4 Determinants of Democratic Delegate Selection Rules, 1972–2000

	Unified Democratic States		All States	
	β	RSE (p)	β	RSE (p)
Ideological Distance	-.032	.013 (.011)	-.004	.010 (.652)
Party Organization	.344	.175 (.050)	.053	.139 (.705)
Party Competition	1.085	1.687 (.520)	-.057	1.033 (.956)
Home-state Candidate	.528	.264 (.046)	-.023	.243 (.925)
South	.447	.306 (.145)	.648	.469 (.166)
Unified Democratic			-1.112	1.235 (.368)
Unified Dem. * Ideological Distance			-.023	.011 (.036)
Unified Dem. * Party Organization			.277	.179 (.122)
Unified Dem. * Party Competition			1.157	1.505 (.442)
Unified Dem. * Home-state Candidate			.510	.343 (.137)
Unified Dem. * South			-.218	.377 (.563)
Time Counter	.171	.078 (.029)	.139	.051 (.006)
Stable Years	-.011	.016 (.496)	-.018	.010 (.077)
τ_1	1.158	1.320	.013	.858
τ_2	1.185	1.322	.128	.864
τ_3	1.239	1.311	.224	.870
τ_4	2.317	1.276	.968	.846
τ_5	2.613	1.228	1.335	.798
	N = 119		N = 378	
	$\chi^2 = 15.05$		$\chi^2 = 21.49$	
	(p = .035)		(p = .064)	

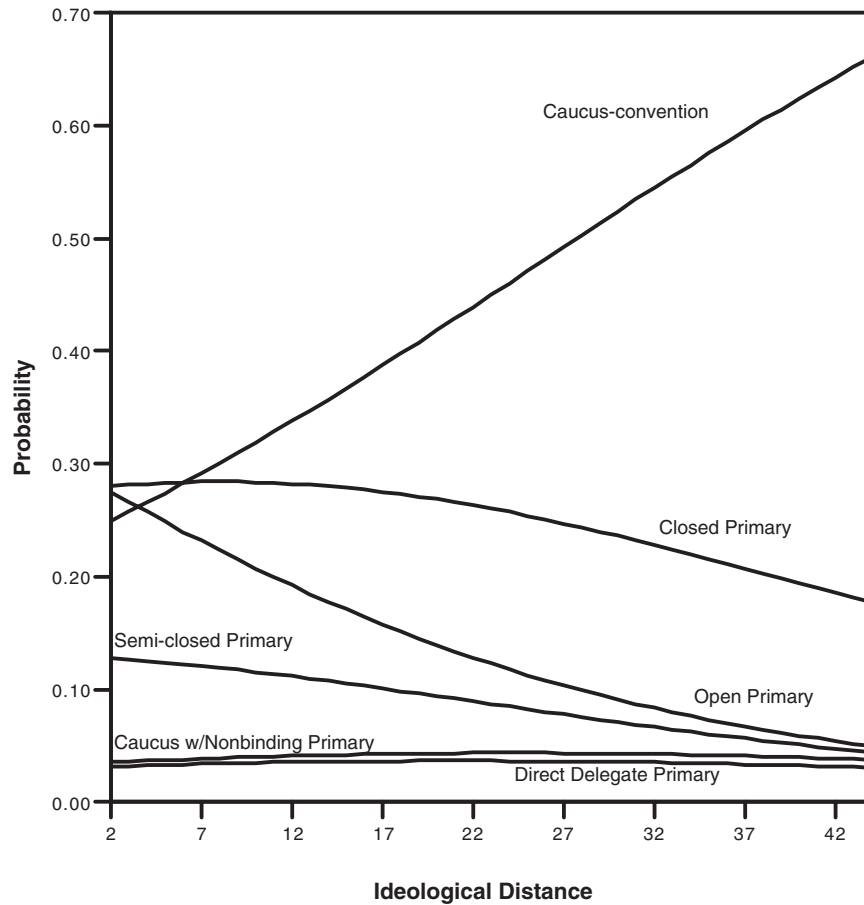
Notes: Ordered probit results displayed. Higher values of the six-category dependent variable indicate more open delegate selection rules. Robust standard errors reported, clustering on state id number. τ_x are ancillary parameters for threshold locations of dependent variable categories.

the strong substantive impact of this relationship by looking at predicted probabilities from the ordered probit models. Figure 1 shows the increasing and decreasing probabilities in each of the six categories across the full range of the ideology measure in unified Democratic states. Most notably, the probability of using a closed or open primary drops as the distance between the parties and their electorates increases. Meanwhile, the probability of using a caucus increases from around .20 to greater than .60 as distance moves

from the lowest to highest values for unified Democratic cases.¹⁹

¹⁹Two of the selection rule categories—caucus-convention with nonbinding primary and direct-delegate-election primary—have relatively few cases and, thus, low probabilities across all values of the key independent variables. Our ordered probit results are robust to alternative choices about categorizing these two systems. Ordered probit models on a four-category dependent variable—combining the two low-N systems with the straight caucus-convention cases in the lowest category—produce very similar results.

FIGURE 1 Predicted Probabilities of Democratic Delegate Selection Rules in Unified Democratic States, by Ideological Distance



Note: Predicted probability values generated using the Clarify program (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000; Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) based on the model in the second column of Table 4. For constant values the unified-Democratic dummy is set to 1, count is set at 1, and stable years is set to 4. All other variables are set to their median value, and the ideological distance variable is varied across its unified-Democratic-case range.

Several of the other variables show statistically significant effects as well. The counter for calendar time is positively signed and significant, suggesting a trend in the direction of more open procedures in the post-McGovern-Fraser era. The home-state variable has the expected conditional effect, with more open procedures becoming more likely when a local candidate is in the race ($\beta = .487$, $se = .248$). And the conditional effect of party organization ($\beta = .330$, $se = .166$) shows, again, that more organized state parties choose more open selection rules.

Summary of Analysis

Our central argument is strongly supported by this series of empirical tests: the ideological gap between

state party elites and the electorate is a strong predictor of delegate selection rule choices. This finding, which we have shown to be robust across two different conceptions of delegate selection, is a strong clue that state Democratic Parties behave as strategic actors, shaping the rules of delegate selection in order to affect electoral outcomes within the state, as long as they have control over the lawmaking process. More open processes pose too great a trade-off when the distance between the party elite and the electorate is great, and the party then chooses to limit the scope of participation. In short, state delegate selection rules for presidential nominations appear to be endogenous to the party politics that they regulate.

Conclusion

We argue that, like other political institutions, delegate selection rules are endogenous to the politics that they govern. We center our analysis on state party leaders, who face a decision as they consider opening or closing delegate selection processes. If they open them to greater popular participation, they may aid the party's long-term electoral goals. Doing so, however, reduces their own potential influence over selection outcomes. Our empirical analysis found significant support for this theoretical claim. In fact, as the preferences of state party leaders and the voting public diverge, party leaders do become less willing to open their selection processes.

The logical extension of our empirical analysis is to additional cases of delegate and candidate selection; the state Republican Parties represent the clearest opportunity. While they have faced fewer national-level restrictions on their delegate selection procedures (Jackson and Crotty 2001, chapter 4), they have been forced to contend with statutory changes in primary election laws that, in many cases during the 1972–2000 period, were enacted at the behest of state Democratic Parties but had spillover effects on Republicans (Huckshorn and Bibby 1983). Our analysis also offers concrete hypotheses that may structure comparative efforts at understanding candidate selection, pushing that growing field (Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Lundell 2004; Norris 1997; Rahat and Hazan 2001) to consider these institutions as the result of efforts by politicians and party leaders working to meet their political goals.

Beyond endogenizing delegate selection rules and offering an explanation of their development, we offer two important insights into the dynamics of delegate selection processes in the United States. First, it appears that while McGovern-Fraser may have impelled state parties to reconsider their delegate selection procedures and structured the choice sets of party leaders, in fact states (and state party leaders) maintain significant latitude in how open or closed their rules are. This is one avenue through which state party leaders have defended their influence over candidate selection processes and outcomes. Second, and relatedly, delegate selection rules have not evolved in the unidirectional fashion most often assumed; as demonstrated here, state party leaders are quite willing to open and close their rules as they see fit. Taken together, they suggest that analysts must reckon more seriously with the complexity and the flexibility of these rules and the centrality of actors and their interests in processes of institutional design.

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