PRIMARY AND GENERAL
ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
IN THE UNITED STATES

November 5, 2012
Hans Noel
Georgetown University
PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN THE UNITED STATES

NOMINATIONS
- Origins of U.S. Primaries
- The Invisible Primary

GENERAL ELECTION
- The Fundamentals Shape the Election
- The Electoral College
STATES FORM THE UNION
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE STATES

State parties choose delegates to conventions, which choose candidates, who compete in the Electoral College for the presidency.
NOMINATIONS
- Origins of U.S. Primaries
- The Invisible Primary

GENERAL ELECTION
- The Fundamentals Shape the Election
- The Electoral College
Election of 1824:

- Democrat-Republican (J.Q. Adams) 31% 84
- Democrat-Republican (Jackson) 41% 99
- Democrat-Republican (Crawford) 11.2% 41
- Democrat-Republican (Clay) 13% 37

Election of 1828:

- Democrat Jackson vs. National Republican Adams

COORDINATING VOTERS
### SOLUTION I: CONVENTIONS

#### How it might work:
- Party delegates arrive.
- They deliberate.
- Name the candidate.

#### How it came to work:
- Pre-convention coordination
- Campaigning among future delegates
- Then delegates arrive...
Roughly 1928, Parties began increasingly to settle on their nominee before the convention.
Primaries begin in early 1900s, progressive reform.

For president, primarily used to demonstrate appeal, not to actually win delegates.

e.g. John F. Kennedy in West Virginia
1968-1972

MCGOVERN-FRASER
COMMISSION

- 1968: Democrats Hubert H. Humphrey
- Supporters of McCarthy (and RFK) unhappy with 1968 outcome. Commission to evaluate delegate selection
- Delegates must be chosen in a manner open to rank-and-file party members.
- Not primaries, necessarily. Expected more caucuses.
- Democratic state legislatures impose on both parties.
1972 and 1976

**MCGOVERN AND CARTER**

- 1972, McGovern wins the system he designed.
- 1976, Carter comes to Iowa early. Momentum.
- The only candidate to campaign in every primary.
- Carter is not viewed as a successful president.
- Why not? Not able to work with own party.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Carter</th>
<th>Udall</th>
<th>Jackson</th>
<th>Wallace</th>
<th>Brown</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Bayh</th>
<th>Bentsen</th>
<th>Shriver</th>
<th>Harris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>N.H.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Fla.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>N.C.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Wis.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ala.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ga.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Neb.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Md.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mich.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Ark.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ky.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nev.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ore.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Mont.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R.I.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Calif.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOLUTION II: PRIMARIES

How it might work:

- Party delegates chosen by party voters.
- Delegates deliberate, name candidate.

How it worked:

- Delegates pledged to candidates, but not chosen by party leaders.
- No deliberation

The party’s solution:

- Get involved sooner
- The Invisible Primary
FIGURE 6-1: Distribution of Endorsements by Contest

Distribution of politically weighted endorsements before the Iowa caucus for presidential nominations, 1972 to 2004. Eventually nominee in black.
PARTY VOTERS ARE LOYAL

- Voters who self-identify as partisan vote much the same way as political endorsers.
- Independent voters are less persuaded.

Endorsements is the percent of all politically weighted endorsements for each candidate in the year prior to the primaries, up to the day before the Iowa caucuses. Primary election vote shares are from Mayer 2007.

Solid circles are Democrats. Open circles are Republicans.
Romney emerges as most broadly acceptable. But not broadly enough.

Series of “anti-Romney” candidates also not broadly acceptable enough. Not electable enough.

Failure to coordinate early on Romney could have led to unexpected outcomes.
THE ECONOMY

Incumbent's Share of Two-Party Vote

% Change in RDI

0.40 0.45 0.50 0.55 0.60 0.65

-1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
PARTY IDENTIFICATION

A stable orientation (attachment, predisposition) toward a political party

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

(IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT) Would you call yourself a strong (REP/DEM) or a not very strong (REP/DEM)?

(IF INDEPENDENT, OTHER NO PREFERENCE:) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?
PARTY ID IN THE U.S. 1952 TO 2004
PARTY LOYALTY IN 2004

Bush Vote in 2004

Str. D  Wk. D  Lean D  Ind.  Lean R  Wk. R  Str. R
PARTY LOYALTY IN 2008

McCain Vote in 2008

- Strict R
- Weak R
- Lean R
- Ind.
- Lean D
- Weak D
- Strict D

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
PARTY LOYALTY 1952-2008

Coefficient from logit model predicting presidential vote choice with party identification.
2008 SPREAD: **OBAMA VS. MCCAIN**

Source: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/polls/
LESS VOLATILE POLLS

2012 SPREAD: OBAMA VS. ROMNEY

Source: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/polls/
THE ROAD TO 270

BARACK OBAMA
253
Electoral Votes

Mitt Romney
191
Electoral Votes

237 Strong Obama  16 Leans Obama  94 Tossup  0 Leans Romney  191 Strong Romney
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
<th>Candidate 3</th>
<th>Candidate 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>McCain</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Gore</td>
<td>Dole</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Dole</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Dukakis</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Mondale</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YEAR TO YEAR STABILITY
THANK YOU