

Following the Rules? Candidate Strategy in Presidential Primaries*

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Objectives. The competitiveness of the 2008 presidential primaries in both the Republican and Democratic parties has prompted a reconsideration of the role of delegate-selection rules in influencing the strategic behavior of presidential candidates. Using advertising and candidate state-visit data from the 2004 and 2008 presidential nominating campaigns, we reexamine the strategies presidential candidates use when competing for the nomination of their party. *Methods.* Using the Wisconsin Advertising Project Data from 2004 and 2008, we estimate several multiple regressions designed to analyze the factors predicting candidate visits and advertising. *Results.* We find that, to a large extent, the rules of the game help predict where candidates allocate their political advertising and campaign stops; candidates consider whether a contest is a primary or caucus, they pay attention to how many delegates are at stake, and they consider whether a state's delegate-allocation method is largely proportional or winner take all. Yet we also find some differences in how the rules influence frontrunners and long-shot candidates, and we discover how other factors, including a candidate's access to financial resources, influence the allocation of ads and visits. *Conclusion.* Our findings offer some of the first empirical evidence for the idea that a state's delegate-allocation method influences candidates' resource-allocation behavior. That these rules matter at all is somewhat of a surprise given that the delegate-allocation methods used by states have become more homogenous within each party.

Rules make strategy. Aldrich notes that “the institution of party nominations—the rules, laws, procedures, and norms that describe how presidential hopefuls become party nominees—plays a major role in structuring the politics of nominations and, consequently, in the behavior of candidates and the outcome of their campaigns” (1980:2). Yet, the rules are constantly changing. In particular, the impact of the McGovern-Fraser Commission rule changes in the 1970s dramatically affected the way both parties selected

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primary delegates (Busch, 1997). The goal of reform (first emanating from the Democratic Party) was to “diminish the power of the regulars and to enhance that of the amateurs” (Ceaser, 1979). These reforms did ultimately succeed in opening up the political system (Crotty, 1983). Although designed to broaden the base of representation of the parties and encourage more grassroots participation, these rule changes have also extended the nomination process. Today’s candidates require vastly greater sums of money for victory, party organizations have withered in favor of candidate-based organizations, and party unity has declined, an effect possibly present in the 2008 campaign season (Polsby, 1983; Wayne, 2008).

Of course, presidential candidates in all nomination fights are rational actors who seek victory, but they also are limited in winning the nomination because of scarce resources (Aldrich, 1980:13). Indeed, several structural factors come into play when candidates make decisions as to how many resources to invest in winning a nomination, including the number of delegates available, how many states are holding simultaneous nomination events, and a state’s delegate-allocation rules. These rules have both “normative and strategic implications” (Aldrich, 1980:176). These rules also have a powerful effect on the responsiveness (or nonresponsiveness) of parties to voters (Schier, 1980; Ansolabehere and King, 1990; Busch, 1992) and even the probability of a party nominee winning in the general election (Lengle, Owen, and Sonner, 1995). Long-shot candidates are found to succeed more under proportional rules (Hammond, 1980), but frontrunners are more likely to seek out big winner-take-all states to maximize delegates (Wayne, 2008). Sour feelings have prompted calls for reform (Traugott and Petrella, 1989), especially in the 2008 race where these rules created intraparty conflict on the Democratic side between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton (J. M. Broder, 2008).

Indeed, this fundamental selection issue spawned new life in the 2008 presidential primary season because of a discussion about the nature of the delegate-allocation process and the effect of these rules on candidate behavior and nominee selection. The competitiveness of the Republican and Democratic races in 2008 “has forced the campaigns to master complex delegate-allocation rules as they make a series of critical decisions about how best to allocate campaign resources to produce the greatest return of delegates” (Nagourney, 2008). The Democrats, who traditionally allocate delegates proportionally, not surprisingly had a more protracted race to nomination, while the Republicans, who are more likely to award delegates in a winner-take-all fashion, functionally selected their nominee earlier. Champions of the Democrats’ proportional delegate-selection method point to its inclusiveness (Wolfe, 2008), but some detractors argue that the outcome of the party’s 2008 race would have been different with winner-take-all rules (specifically that Hillary Clinton would have won more delegates by virtue of winning majorities in several large states) (D. S. Broder, 2008; Marcus, 2008).

Several studies have addressed the relationship between the rules and candidate behavior, and yet there are ample reasons to pursue more research

in this area. First, much of this literature is now dated, with the bulk of this work conducted on nomination contests in the late 1970s and early 1980s, following the rule changes after the McGovern Fraser Commission recommendations (Gurian, 1986, 1990). The most recent work on presidential nomination strategy was conducted in the 1988 election campaign (Gurian and Haynes, 1993). Importantly, however, in the 20 years that have passed since the last time such a study was conducted, rules have changed, candidate resources have changed, and parties have changed. These changes dictate that we reassess candidate resource-allocation strategies in presidential primaries. The fervor over the state primary rules in the 2008 presidential nomination campaign gives us added incentive to specifically understand whether and how delegate strategies have changed.

Second, the measurement of several variables can be improved. The measurement of attention in this article is much more precise than previous definitions of resource allocation, which often only included expenditures (Gurian, 1986, 1990; Gurian and Haynes, 1993). The amount of spending for a particular state is difficult to determine from Federal Election Commission reports, as money spent on consultants, media budgets, and organizations is not always broken down by particular states. Our measure of candidate attention to a state includes political advertisements aired in that state and visits to that state, both of which are direct and clear measures of attention to a nomination contest in a state. Similarly, other studies focus on binary differences between caucuses and primaries (Gurian, 1993a) or proportional versus nonproportional systems (Gurian, 1986; Geer, 1986; Ansolabehere and King, 1990). However, because of additions to delegate-selection rules over the past few decades, the present data can capture recent nuances of delegate-selection mechanisms involving differences between state and district winner-take-all or proportional allocation, bonus delegates for statewide victories, the availability of at-large delegates, and delegates determined at state party conventions.

To reexamine candidate strategies and bring up to date the study of rules guiding strategic behavior, we ask two questions: (1) Where do candidates allocate the televised advertisements and state visits? and (2) How do these two attention strategies depend on the differences in delegate-selection rules by state? These questions frame an updated study of the structural dimension of the politics of resource allocation, consistent with other studies that examine how candidates allocate their resources during elections (Brams, 1976; Shaw, 1999, 2006). In the end, we find that the rules do matter for campaign behavior, though their impact can depend on whether the candidate is a frontrunner or a long shot.

Hypotheses

Evidence indicates that an increased investment by a candidate into a state during the presidential nominating process increases the vote share earned

TABLE 1
Hypotheses

| | Frontrunners | Long Shots |
|--|--|---|
| Hypothesis 1: Delegate totals | The numbers of ads that candidates place in a state and the number of visits that candidates make to a state will increase as the number of delegates available in that state increases. | The number of ads that candidates place in a state and the number of visits that candidates make to a state will be unrelated to delegate totals. |
| Hypothesis 2: Proportional allocation | Placement of advertising and visits by candidates will be greater in winner-take-all states. | Placement of advertising and visits by candidates should be greater in proportional allocation states. |
| Hypothesis 3: Primaries and caucuses | Candidates will place more advertising and make more visits to states that use primaries to select delegates rather than caucuses. | Candidates will place more advertising and make more visits to states that use caucuses to select delegates rather than primaries. |

by that candidate (Haynes, Gurian, and Nichols, 1997). It would make sense, therefore, for candidates to invest heavily in all states. However, because money and time are limited, candidates are forced to be strategic as they campaign from state to state. This is especially true given the dramatic variations that exist in the nominating processes between the states. Candidates must take into consideration things such as the state's size, the timing of its primary or caucus, and its delegate-allocation rules (Brams, 1976). Of course, just as states vary in terms of their attributes, candidates do as well. These differences can affect the approaches that candidates use to pursue their party's nomination. One of the key distinctions made between candidates, especially early in the race when the winnowing process has yet to narrow down the candidates that remain in the field, is between those who would fall into the category of leaders of the pack and those who have only an outside chance of winning the nomination. As a result, we enumerate each of our hypotheses separately (see Table 1) for those candidates who are frontrunners and those who are long shots to comport with this literature (Gurian, 1986; Steger, Dowdle, and Adkins, 2004). An established candidate is one who has a reasonable level of name recognition and resources. Those candidates who are "long shots" do not have the same type of resources as the higher-tier candidates, nor do they receive the same level of media attention, and therefore must focus on changing these deficiencies before anything else (Gurian, 1986). Because the candidates have essentially different starting points, their goals vary, and so we separate out these strategies in our hypotheses.

The first hypothesis, listed in Table 1, is that *candidates who are considered frontrunners (in this case, the top three candidates in precontest polling) will place more advertising in and visit more often states that have a greater number of delegates available*. Gurian argues that in predicting candidate resource allocation to a state nominating process, “the most influential rule relates to the distribution of delegates across states” (1990:684). Gurian (1986) also finds that established candidates try to maximize delegates by allocating resources to delegate-rich states. Simply put, the more delegates available in a contest, the more likely an established candidate will compete in that state (Gurian and Haynes, 1993). Racking up delegates is a good way for more established candidates to verify that they are indeed viable candidates for November, and establishing viability is a major key to fundraising (Brams, 1976; Damore, 1997). Frontrunners can jump in immediately to go after the delegates needed to secure the nomination. Thus, these candidates will focus their resources on those states that have the largest number of delegates.

On the other hand, also as indicated in Table 1, *those candidates who are in the rear of the candidate parade are more likely to invest their time or advertising dollars in states in which they are more likely to gain “momentum” through media attention* (Gurian, 1986; Gurian and Haynes, 1993). Long-shot candidates who focus on bringing in delegates when they lack the resources and name recognition to do so face a tremendous risk (Gurian, 1986). So these candidates generally pursue an alternative strategy—attempting to place well in one of the earliest nomination events, which are always heavily covered by the news media. Winning, or at least doing better than expected, in a highly visible primary helps to raise the profile of a lower-tier candidate, which can be helpful not only for future fundraising but also in terms of future success with the voters (Gurian and Haynes, 1993; Damore, 1997).

Another way states vary in the nominating process is in the rules that they use to select delegates. One of the main distinctions is whether the candidate who wins the state (or a subunit of the state) claims all the delegates (winner take all), or if a proportional system is used to divide the delegates among those receiving votes. Our second hypothesis is that placement of advertising and visits by candidates will vary depending on whether a state has proportional or winner-take-all allocation of delegates, and it should vary depending on whether the candidate is a frontrunner or a long shot. Our argument is that *front-running candidates should focus more on winner-take-all states*, as these candidates have a legitimate shot of winning the state, and thus all the delegates, while *long-shot candidates should put their efforts into proportional states* where they have the best chance of winning at least some piece of the pie (Aldrich, 1980; David and Cesar, 1980:68; Wayne, 2008). Given that frontrunners have a higher probability of winning, they would be strategically smart to enter contests in states where they can use their status to collect comparatively more delegates than in a state where they would have to share delegates among those who did not win the contest. On the

other hand, long-shot candidates have fewer resources and would be more likely to enter contests where they might secure at least a few delegates and where they could incrementally collect delegates rather than lose them all to the frontrunners (as would occur under a winner-take-all rule).

Our final hypothesis is that *frontrunners will place more advertising and make more visits to states that use primaries to select delegates rather than caucuses, while long shots will place more advertising and make more visits to states that use caucuses to select delegates rather than primaries*. First, states with primaries typically involve more delegates, while caucus states tend to be smaller states with fewer delegates. According to our first hypothesis, front-running candidates will seek to go after larger pools of delegates, while long shots will largely ignore the delegate count of a state and instead strategically choose to maximize momentum (Gurian, 1993a). Because primaries are primarily viewed as delegate-acquisition targets, established candidates tend to spend more money per delegate in primary states (Gurian, 1990). Indeed, between 1976 and 1988, candidates spent more than three times more per primary than they did in caucuses (Gurian, 1993a). Second, advertising is more cost effective in primary states because primaries typically attract a much larger cross-section of the electorate than do primaries. In short, if one has the money to advertise, then it makes sense to do that advertising in primary states.

However, long-shot candidates, who are typically underfunded (Steger, Dowdle, and Adkins, 2004), may pursue a different strategy than front-runners, one that relies on organizational strength and grass-roots support. Because they cannot afford to compete over the airwaves in primary states, long-shot candidates will likely focus their efforts in caucus states, which can more easily be won through organization—getting one's supporters to the polls—than through a mass media campaign (Marshall, 1978; Gurian, 1993b). As a result, long-shot candidates should focus their campaign efforts, especially their appearances, in caucus states, while frontrunners will be more likely to concentrate their efforts in primary states.

Data and Modeling

We investigate the impact of the parties' rules on candidate behavior in the 2004 and 2008 presidential nomination races. Because the 2004 Republican race was effectively uncontested (incumbent George W. Bush was a shoo-in for the nomination), we focus only on the Democratic candidates in 2004. The dependent variable in our analysis is candidate attention to a state. We measure this concept through both (1) the number of candidate ads aired (per media market)¹ and (2) the number of appearances candidates

¹This was an important rescaling because different states have different numbers of media markets. Using the total number of ads aired in a state, without taking into account the varying number of media markets, might bias our conclusions.

made to each state. Advertising data come from the Wisconsin Advertising Project at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. These data, processed and coded by students at the university, were collected originally by TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG, a commercial firm. The company employs advertising detectors in the largest media markets in the United States, which record the time, date, and station of airing of each political ad. Although TNSMI/CMAG tracked advertising in all the country's 200-plus media markets in the 2008 nomination season, the company tracked advertising in only the 100 largest in 2004, which represent about 86 percent of the country's homes with television.²

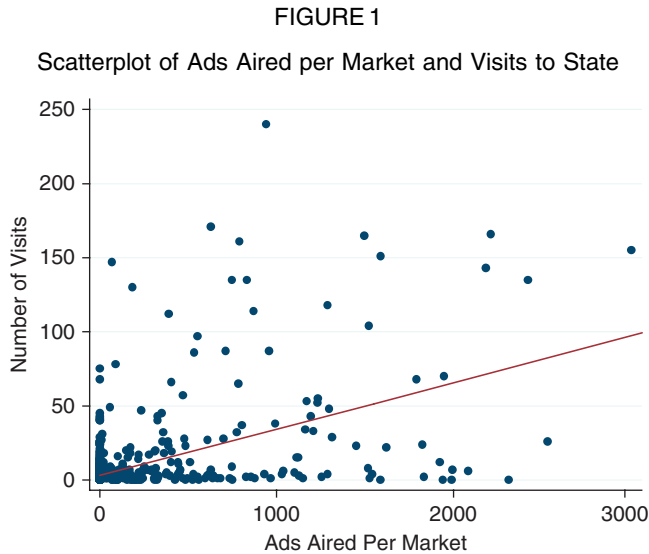
A first-brush examination of these data reveals that there was a lot of advertising activity. A total of 83,947 candidate-sponsored political ads aired in the top-100 media markets during the 2004 nomination campaign, the first ad of which aired on June 17, 2003. During the 2008 nomination season, over 326,000 spots aired across the country between February 21, 2007 and June 3, 2008, the day after the last primary. The increase in advertising between 2004 and 2008 is striking, though it is important to note that figures from 2008 include many more media markets and include ads from both the Republican and Democratic campaigns. Table 2 provides some summary data, including the number of ads aired (per media market) and the number of candidate visits during each campaign in each state. Clearly, there was much variation in the amount of attention that the candidates paid to each state. While media markets in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina were inundated with advertising, other states saw no advertising at all. The same variation is true for candidate visits. Republican and Democratic candidates made around 1,400 appearances in Iowa leading up to the state's 2008 presidential caucuses, but some states saw fewer than five total candidate visits, including Alaska, Nebraska, and North Dakota.

Data on candidate travel come from a couple of different sources. The data on visits in 2004 come from *National Journal's Hotline*, a political "gossip sheet" that is published each day and reports on the campaign schedule of each candidate. For 2008, the data come from the *Washington Post's* website, which maintained a detailed travel schedule for each candidate. In both years, a coder noted each mention of a candidate on the campaign trail and recorded the state the candidate was visiting. Any visits that were dedicated to fundraising were eliminated from the visit counts. Given that many of the same factors should drive the allocation of ads and candidate visits, we expected that they would be positively correlated. In-

²Because of this we were forced to eliminate analysis of campaign advertising in 2004 in Alaska, Hawaii, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, states that contain none of the top 100 media markets. We also exclude New Jersey and Delaware in both years as both states receive almost all their broadcast television from neighboring states. We assigned ads airing in Omaha, Nebraska, before the Iowa caucuses to Iowa. We also assigned ads airing before the New Hampshire primary in Boston, Burlington, Vermont, and Portland, Maine, to New Hampshire.

TABLE 2
Ads and Visits by State

| State | Ads per Market | | | Visits | | |
|-------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Dem 04 | Rep 08 | Dem 08 | Dem 04 | Rep 08 | Dem 08 |
| AK | | 231 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| AL | 0 | 172 | 420 | 5 | 12 | 5 |
| AR | 0 | 176 | 304 | 10 | 12 | 7 |
| AZ | 2,770 | 0 | 1,980 | 57 | 12 | 10 |
| CA | 2 | 161 | 888 | 109 | 66 | 114 |
| CO | 0 | 116 | 65 | 9 | 13 | 7 |
| CT | 0 | 0 | 1,567 | 30 | 2 | 12 |
| DE | | | | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| FL | 0 | 1,704 | 0 | 87 | 210 | 50 |
| GA | 255 | 206 | 554 | 20 | 19 | 14 |
| HI | 0 | 177 | 426 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| IA | 6,568 | 3,515 | 9,132 | 557 | 458 | 966 |
| ID | | 0 | 72 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| IL | | 0 | 0 | 42 | 21 | 52 |
| IN | 0 | 0 | 3,018 | 5 | 7 | 67 |
| KS | 0 | 225 | 104 | 0 | 7 | 1 |
| KY | 0 | 0 | 1,212 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| LA | 0 | 0 | 367 | 1 | 7 | 24 |
| MA | 0 | 1 | 512 | 21 | 15 | 16 |
| MD | 0 | 0 | 484 | 42 | 12 | 11 |
| ME | 4 | 2,792 | 2,279 | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| MI | 265 | 1175 | 5 | 40 | 77 | 28 |
| MN | 0 | 0 | 735 | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| MO | 101 | 171 | 742 | 20 | 25 | 18 |
| MS | 0 | 0 | 357 | 1 | 3 | 13 |
| MT | | 0 | 2,217 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| NC | 136 | 0 | 3,156 | 19 | 6 | 74 |
| ND | | 182 | 507 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| NE | 1 | 0 | 286 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| NH | 6,809 | 5,249 | 5,351 | 590 | 475 | 474 |
| NJ | | | | 6 | 8 | 16 |
| NM | 3,127 | 0 | 1,815 | 30 | 0 | 4 |
| NV | 0 | 316 | 2,522 | 6 | 43 | 149 |
| NY | 351 | 0 | 234 | 103 | 28 | 49 |
| OH | 382 | 0 | 2,614 | 15 | 19 | 70 |
| OK | 2,810 | 35 | 520 | 48 | 12 | 3 |
| OR | 0 | 0 | 2,347 | 5 | 3 | 14 |
| PA | 1 | 0 | 3,705 | 24 | 11 | 93 |
| RI | 0 | 1 | 2,472 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| SC | 1,491 | 2,830 | 3,232 | 131 | 249 | 151 |
| SD | | 0 | 2,703 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| TN | 827 | 74 | 434 | 40 | 15 | 5 |
| TX | 23 | 13 | 2,257 | 59 | 69 | 66 |
| UT | 0 | 0 | 1,077 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| VA | 1,201 | 222 | 558 | 37 | 19 | 28 |
| VT | 0 | 3,032 | 2,833 | 27 | 2 | 0 |
| WA | 66 | 145 | 348 | 14 | 9 | 12 |
| WI | 792 | 292 | 1,358 | 51 | 12 | 22 |
| WV | 0 | 0 | 913 | 1 | 5 | 11 |
| WY | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 9 |



deed, that is the case, with the number of ads per media market in each state correlated with the number of visits to each state at 0.52. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the relationship between the two. As the number of ads per market that a candidate airs in each state increases, the number of candidate visits appears to increase as well, but, obviously, there is considerable scatter around the regression line shown in the figure.

Do the party's rules help explain this variation in candidate attention across states? To predict the number of political spots aired in each state and the number of candidate visits, we considered several possible explanatory factors.

Type of Nomination Event

Traditionally, campaigns have perceived primaries as more important than caucuses or party conventions because the news media give them more coverage. This is a result of (1) the greater number of citizens who generally participate and (2) the easier task reporters have in explaining the results of primaries (Castle, 1991). Yet, as we noted above, long-shot candidates might actually prefer caucuses over primaries because caucuses are more about organizing, which can be done at a lower cost. Thus, we created a dummy variable indicating that a state held a primary as opposed to a caucus or party convention.

Number of Delegates Offered by State

Because the candidate with the most delegates pledged to him or her wins the presidential nomination, one might expect candidates to devote more of

their attention to states with a large proportion of available delegates.³ We thus include in our models the number of total delegates (excluding superdelegates) offered by a state in each party's race.

Number of Bonus Delegates

In several states, the winner of the state receives an additional number of "bonus" delegates. These should act as an incentive for candidates to campaign in the state.

Convention State

This dummy variable indicates whether or not any of the delegates are determined at a state convention. Candidates might want to avoid states in which they cannot guarantee their delegates before the convention.

Iowa and New Hampshire

Given the traditional place of Iowa and New Hampshire as the first caucus and primary state, respectively, they receive an inordinate amount of media attention, which candidates desire, and so we include an Iowa indicator variable and a New Hampshire indicator variable in our models.

Punished State

Michigan and Florida earned this designation on the Democratic side in 2008 as both states held their primaries earlier than allowed by the Democratic National Committee, resulting in the states' delegates being stripped.⁴

Method of Delegate Allocation

We also created a series of indicator variables to distinguish states by their method of delegate allocation. These methods included winner take all at the state level, winner take all at the district level, and proportional allocation at the state level. Proportional allocation at the district level serves as our omitted category. This latter method was the delegate-allocation method used in all Democratic races, and thus we interacted these delegate-allocation method indicators with a Republican indicator variable.

³Our source for the information on delegate counts and allocation methods was (<http://www.thegreenpapers.com>).

⁴Although both states were punished by the Republican Party as well, losing half their delegates, Republican candidates did not avoid campaigning in these states.

Cash on Hand

How much advertising candidates purchase should depend on their financial resources, and so we include their cash on hand in these models. We collected this figure from the candidates' reports filed with the Federal Election Commission at the end of each month of the campaign. We then assigned the amount of cash on hand possessed by each candidate to the closest primary date. Thus, for example, Hillary Clinton's cash on hand at the end of March 2008 would be assigned to the observation for Pennsylvania's April 22, 2008, primary.

Competing Candidate Activity

If one's opponents are contesting a state heavily, that may drive a candidate to devote resources to that state as well. We thus included in our model the number of ads per market aired in a state by all other same-party candidates in the race.

Number of Simultaneous Nomination Events

There should be greater competition for candidates' financial resources and time on days on which there are multiple nomination events. Therefore, we included in our models the number of same-day nomination events.

Republican Indicator

Although we had no expectations that Republicans would allocate their resources differently than Democrats after controlling for the above factors, we nevertheless included this indicator variable to ensure that our expectations were correct.

Active Candidate

Throughout the course of the campaign, candidates are winnowed out of the race, and thus some do not spend much time or many resources in those states whose nomination events are scheduled toward the end of the nomination season. We thus created an indicator of whether a candidate was active in a state, determined by whether the state held its primary before the candidate officially dropped out of the race.

Day Counter

Because candidates might run out of resources over the course of the campaign, we expected that they might devote their time and money to

states earlier in the primary season. Our models therefore contain a counter variable that takes the value of 1 for all states holding their nomination events on the first day on which such events are held, a 2 for those states holding their nomination events on the second day on which such events are held, and so on.

Frontrunner

We chose three candidates in each race as frontrunners based on their having the most campaign resources at the beginning of each election year (these were the candidates that led in the national polls in almost all instances). In 2004, they were Howard Dean, John Edwards, and John Kerry; in 2008 on the Republican side they were Rudy Giuliani, John McCain, and Mitt Romney; and on the Democratic side in 2008 the candidates were Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, and Barack Obama. Long-shot candidates were Democrats Wesley Clark, Richard Gephardt, Dennis Kucinich, and Joe Lieberman in 2004; Republicans Mike Huckabee, Duncan Hunter, Ron Paul, and Fred Thompson in 2008; and Democrats Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich, and Bill Richardson in 2008.⁵ The frontrunner–long-shot distinction is somewhat arbitrary but we feel this “top three” measure corresponds reasonably closely to the greater likelihood of success in a nomination event.⁶

To test our hypotheses about differences in behavior between frontrunners and long-shot candidates, we also included in our models the interaction of frontrunner status with the caucus indicator, the indicators of delegate-selection method, and the number of delegates offered by the state.

To estimate the number of ads aired per market in each state and the number of candidate visits in each state, we employed ordinary least squares regression. Importantly, because the dependent variable in both instances was skewed, we took the natural log of both ads per market and visits. This helped eliminate the heteroskedasticity observed in plots of the model residuals. We also estimated standard errors clustering on the contest (defined by the state, party, and year), given that observations within each contest are not completely independent.

⁵We eliminated from our analysis those candidates who exited the race prior to the Iowa caucuses, such as Sam Brownback, Tom Tancredo, Tom Vilsack, and Carol Mosely-Braun. We also eliminated Mike Gravel; even though he campaigned past Iowa in 2008, he aired no ads and made only about a dozen campaign appearances.

⁶We estimated our two main models with an alternative definition of frontrunner, one that considered just the top two candidates to be frontrunners. By and large, the substantive impacts of all the variables remained the same with this alternative operationalization. The exceptions are that in the visits model, the delegate total by frontrunner interaction becomes marginally significant when one uses the alternative definition of frontrunner. In the ads model, the caucus by frontrunner interaction becomes marginally insignificant using the alternative measure.

⁷We estimated all the models that follow by including candidate fixed effects as well, but there were no real substantive differences in the results.

Results

We begin by considering the impact of the rules on the volume of political advertising. Table 3 shows the results of our model predicting the number of ads aired (logged) by each candidate.⁸ First, the number of delegates available in a state had no impact on how much advertising candidates did in the state, nor was the interaction of frontrunner status with delegate totals a significant predictor. Thus, these findings are contrary to our first main hypothesis. We did, however, find more support for our second hypothesis, which was that frontrunner candidates would concentrate their resources in states with winner-take-all delegate allocation and that long-shot candidates would focus on proportional allocation states. Although there were no significant differences between frontrunners and long shots in their allocation of advertising to winner-take-all states, we did find that frontrunners were less likely than long shots to place advertising in proportional allocation states (as evidenced by the significant negative coefficient on the proportional state by Republican by frontrunner interaction). We also found support for our third central hypothesis, as frontrunners were less likely than long shots to air advertising in caucus states, all else equal.

In sum, then, candidates do appear to be “following the rules” when it comes to their allocation of advertising, though we did fail to find support for the idea that a state’s delegate total influenced the behavior of candidates—or that it influenced frontrunners and long shots differently.

Our model also points to some other factors that influence the ad-allocation behavior of candidates. First, and unsurprisingly, frontrunners air more ads than their long-shot opponents. Second, New Hampshire is special, garnering more advertising than its size and position on the nomination calendar would predict (though this is not quite so for Iowa). Third, those states that were punished by the Democratic National Committee for breaking the rules in 2008 by holding early primaries saw less advertising than other states. Moreover, cash on hand was a strongly positive predictor of how much advertising candidates aired. How much advertising one’s opponents aired also boosted advertising volume, while increasing the number of simultaneous nomination events on a day resulted in less candidate advertising. Finally, the counter variable indicates that the further past the Iowa caucus, the less advertising that took place. Thus, ad-allocation behavior of candidates is quite predictable, depending not only on a state’s delegate-allocation method and type of nomination event but on the timing

⁸The delegate-allocation method by party by frontrunner is a triple interaction term. Typically, one might include all subordinate interactions and main effects in the model as well, but we decided to eliminate two of these. One was the Republican by frontrunner interaction as we have no theoretical reason to believe that Republican frontrunners would act any differently than Democratic frontrunners once one controls for the respective parties’ rules. Second, we eliminate the delegate-allocation method indicators as they make little sense by themselves given that there is variation in allocation methods only among Republicans.

TABLE 3
Predictors of Logged Number of Ads Aired

| | Coef. | S.E. | <i>p</i> Value |
|---|--------|-------|----------------|
| Caucus | -0.184 | 0.214 | 0.393 |
| Caucus × Frontrunner | -0.815 | 0.405 | 0.047 |
| Total delegates | -0.001 | 0.002 | 0.796 |
| Total delegates × Frontrunner | -0.002 | 0.002 | 0.471 |
| Winner bonus | 0.003 | 0.007 | 0.658 |
| Winner-take-all state × Rep | 0.285 | 0.414 | 0.493 |
| Winner-take-all dist. × Rep | 0.075 | 0.353 | 0.832 |
| Proportional state × Rep | 0.197 | 0.336 | 0.559 |
| Winner-take-all state × Rep × Frontrunner | -0.527 | 0.677 | 0.438 |
| Winner-take-all dist. × Rep × Frontrunner | -0.626 | 0.457 | 0.174 |
| Proportional state × Rep × Frontrunner | -1.287 | 0.424 | 0.003 |
| Frontrunner | 0.989 | 0.339 | 0.004 |
| Convention | -0.068 | 0.157 | 0.665 |
| Iowa | 0.961 | 0.641 | 0.137 |
| New Hampshire | 1.628 | 0.695 | 0.021 |
| Punished state | -2.261 | 0.241 | 0.000 |
| Cash on hand | 0.115 | 0.011 | 0.000 |
| Other ads (1,000s) | 0.327 | 0.099 | 0.001 |
| Simultaneous events | -0.029 | 0.009 | 0.002 |
| Republican | -0.038 | 0.241 | 0.876 |
| Active candidate | 0.824 | 0.246 | 0.001 |
| Counter | -0.114 | 0.019 | 0.000 |
| Constant | 1.461 | 0.328 | 0.000 |
| <i>N</i> | 966 | | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.47 | | |

NOTE: Standard errors estimated clustering on contest.

of the nomination event, the candidate's access to resources, and how much advertising the candidate's opponents are airing as well.

Do the rules of the game have an impact on how many visits candidates make to each state as well? Estimates from a model predicting the (logged) number of candidate visits to each state are shown in Table 4. Here, we find that delegate totals predict candidate visits to a state, with increasing numbers of delegates leading to increasing visits, as was our expectation for frontrunners. However, the delegate total by frontrunner interaction term is not statistically significant, which indicates that the impact of delegate totals on frontrunners and long-shot candidates is effectively the same. Thus, our hypothesis that frontrunners are more responsive to state delegate totals than are long-shot candidates goes unsupported.

There is some evidence, however, in keeping with our second expectation, which suggests that frontrunners make more visits, all else equal, to winner-take-all states than do long-shot candidates. The positive and significant coefficient on the winner-take-all district by Republican by frontrunner

TABLE 4
Predictors of Logged Number of Candidate Visits

| | Coef. | S.E. | <i>p</i> Value |
|---|--------|-------|----------------|
| Caucus | -0.176 | 0.107 | 0.102 |
| Caucus × Frontrunner | -0.293 | 0.125 | 0.021 |
| Total delegates | 0.005 | 0.001 | 0.000 |
| Total delegates × Frontrunner | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.347 |
| Winner bonus | 0.001 | 0.005 | 0.867 |
| Winner-take-all state × Rep | 0.145 | 0.243 | 0.551 |
| Winner-take-all dist. × Rep | -0.028 | 0.173 | 0.874 |
| Proportional state × Rep | -0.140 | 0.176 | 0.428 |
| Winner-take-all state × Rep × Frontrunner | 0.212 | 0.136 | 0.122 |
| Winner-take-all dist. × Rep × Frontrunner | 0.381 | 0.208 | 0.070 |
| Proportional state × Rep × Frontrunner | 0.061 | 0.151 | 0.688 |
| Frontrunner | 0.222 | 0.113 | 0.053 |
| Convention | 0.008 | 0.078 | 0.923 |
| Iowa | 1.887 | 0.506 | 0.000 |
| New Hampshire | 2.108 | 0.339 | 0.000 |
| Punished state | 0.195 | 0.323 | 0.547 |
| Cash on hand | 0.023 | 0.004 | 0.000 |
| Other ads (1,000s) | 0.146 | 0.061 | 0.020 |
| Simultaneous events | -0.024 | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Republican | 0.212 | 0.155 | 0.175 |
| Active candidate | 0.232 | 0.101 | 0.023 |
| Counter | -0.070 | 0.013 | 0.000 |
| Constant | 0.980 | 0.222 | 0.000 |
| <i>N</i> | 966 | | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.57 | | |

NOTE: Standard errors estimated clustering on contest.

interaction suggests that frontrunners are more likely than long shots to visit states with winner-take-all allocation at the district level (the corresponding variable for winner take all at the state level is also close to being statistically significant ($p = 0.122$)). We also have evidence in favor of our third main hypothesis that frontrunners favor primaries over caucuses. The sign on the caucus variable is negative and (marginally) significant, indicating that candidates prefer caucus to primary states, but this preference is more pronounced for frontrunners, as the caucus by frontrunner interaction is both negatively signed and statistically significant. All told, two of our three main hypotheses are supported with regard to candidates' allocations of campaign visits.

As far as other predictors of candidate visits, candidates are more likely to visit both New Hampshire and Iowa than the average state, suggesting a desire for media-driven momentum. Although candidates did not advertise much in Michigan and Florida in 2008, they did continue to visit these states, as these states punished by the Democratic National Committee were

no less likely to be visited than others. As with the allocation of advertising, frontrunners made more visits than long shots, and more cash on hand led to more visits. An increase in the number of ads aired by opponents (a good indicator of how much attention candidates in general were giving to a state) led to more visits, while an increase in the number of same-day primaries led to fewer visits. Finally, the negative sign on the counter variable indicates that states that held nomination events further past Iowa's were less likely to be visited than states closer to the front of the nomination season.

By and large, our findings suggest that the rules of the game do matter for the behavior of candidates, affecting frontrunners and long shots differently in some cases, but the factors that influenced the volume of ad airings in a state were largely the same factors that influenced the number of visits that candidates made to a state.

Discussion

Our expectations about where strategic candidates place their resources are largely confirmed by the analyses here. The rules do tend to structure how candidates spend their money and time. Increased delegate totals lead to increased candidate visits, though this is true not just for frontrunners, which we expected, but for long shots as well. Delegate totals do not, however, influence the allocation of candidate advertisements. This discrepancy between advertising and campaign visits may make sense when one considers that a campaign visit to a larger, delegate-rich state would seem to garner a candidate more in terms of media coverage that is seen by voters than would a candidate visit to a small, delegate-poor state (Shaw, 2006). By contrast, the cost of advertising is scaled to the size of the audience, and so while airing an ad in a large media market in a large state may be expensive, it will also be seen by more potential voters.

We also found that candidates make fewer visits to caucus states than to primary states (though they do not air any less advertising), and long-shot candidates are more likely than frontrunners to compete in caucus states. This fits with our expectation that long-shot candidates, who lack the financial resources necessary to launch a large-scale media campaign, will focus their energies on caucus states in which victory depends more on effective organizing than it does in primary states.

These results generate some of the first empirical evidence that a state's delegate-allocation method matters for how candidates distribute their resources. We found that frontrunners are more likely to visit winner-take-all (at the district level) states than are long shots, and long shots are more likely to advertise in states with proportional allocation at the state level than are frontrunners. These findings speak to the theoretical arguments of several scholars who have argued that candidates (disregarding their status as a frontrunner or not) should allocate resources more heavily in proportional

states (Aldrich, 1980; David and Ceasar, 1980:68; Wayne, 2008). Our findings also offer some of the first empirical evidence for the idea that a state's delegate-allocation method influences candidates' resource-allocation behavior. This contradicts several existing studies that have been unable to find an effect of a state's delegate-allocation method on candidate behavior (Gurian, 1990; Gurian and Haynes, 1993). That these rules matter at all is somewhat of a surprise given that the delegate-allocation methods used by states have become more homogenous within party, as Republicans have moved toward "winner-take-all" contests and Democrats have embraced the proportional allocation method. There is not as much variation to explain nowadays as there was in the past.

Although our focus has been on the rules, we have shown that other factors help explain patterns of candidate resource allocation as well. First, we have shown that how much money a candidate has plays an important role in explaining the volume of advertising and visits. Not surprisingly, candidates with more cash on hand make more visits and air more advertising. Moreover, the behavior of other candidates matters for resource allocation. Candidates make more visits to and advertise more in states in which the other candidates are airing more advertising. Finally, a state's place in the nomination calendar influences candidate behavior. The earlier the nomination event, the more attention it will receive, and as the number of same-day nomination events increases, attention to a state will decrease.

In sum, our findings point to the important role of the rules in explaining how candidates for their parties' nominations allocate their resources, and in doing so, we have extended to other resources (visits and advertising) work that has examined only candidate spending.

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