

**Barriers to Participation?
Factors Associated with the Choice of Presidential Selection Processes**

Abstract

This project investigates the Presidential selection process in the United States. Through our analysis of the selection processes used in the 2008 election, we find that that the percent of minorities, citizen ideology, and professionalization of the legislature lead to a closed selection processes. Further, we find that Southern states are more likely to have open selection processes. The results of this study demonstrate how important it is to study these factors as they can have such a significant impact on the electoral outcomes.

The 2008 Presidential primary process demonstrated that there are significant differences across states in the selection process, both in selection methods but also in results. We explore these factors to determine what differences lead to the establishment of open or closed primaries and caucuses across the United States.

It is clear that the primary and caucus process of deciding who will eligible to stand for election in the general election has a significant influence on who is selected by the electoral process as the winner. (Gerber and Morton 1998) Further it is clear that barriers to participation in the selection of candidates for the general election impact the election results by limiting the choice set of voters to only those who survive a preliminary electoral process. We seek to understand what influences the openness of the selection process using the primary's and caucus's that were held in the 2008 election we evaluate how minority population, legislative professionalism, and citizen ideology affect the openness of a particular states preliminary election process. We further control for the cultural explanations proposed by Elazar (1972) as well as the political (Gerber and Morton 2005; Carey and Shugart 1995; Hedlund et al 1982) and institutional explanations (Oak 2006). (

Selection Processes and Democracy

The process of selecting eligible candidates is an important component of electoral engineering. Selection methods influence the outcome of elections and the democratic nature of those elections, and, the study of selection methods is important to understanding elections, electoral engineering as well as citizens' trust, feelings of efficacy and support for governmental processes. The effects of the selection process have been well documented and but the development of those processes have been largely overlooked in the current literature. Understanding the factors that contribute to the

development of these processes is likely to explain why processes that limit choice and participation are often selected. We consider the selection processes of each political party across the fifty states to determine what influences the choice of selection process. .

The foundation of democracy is the engagement of citizens in the process of choosing elected representatives and participating in elections, be they preliminary (primary¹) or general. The chief purpose of elections are to provide information about the policy preferences of the electorate (Powell 2000) and to select representatives that citizens believe will best implement those preferences. When voters are not allowed to contribute to the selection of candidates who participate in elections or where the process is systematically biases the results of such elections are democratically suspect. . In short the selection processes are the place where decisions are made about who will represent possibly conflicting interests on the ballot. Consequently, the choice of selection process can influence whose voices are heard at the polls, whose voices are silenced, and these elections are likely to shape the electoral results and ultimately the policies enacted.

One limitation to studying selection process is classification. Scholars, at times, have had difficulty in discerning what category selection processes fall into (Rahat and Hazan 2001). Thus, outlining our definition of these terms is imperative. There are two main types of selection processes: primaries or caucuses. These are further classified as either open or closed. There are also mixed types of selection processes and a blanket primary. Open selection processes allow participants to choose which preliminary election to participate in without having any formal membership in a political party. Closed selection

¹ The terms “preliminary election” “selection process”, “primaries”, and “caucuses” all indicate an election that occurs prior to a general election where candidates are chosen to run in the general election. They are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

requires the individuals participating in the selection process be a member of that political party. Blanket systems allow participants to vote for all parties and for all institutions in the same primary. Mixed systems are a combination of open and closed systems. Mixed systems, for this analysis, will also include systems that have more than one type of selection processes or that are not classifiable as one of the other three types. These processes vary state by state and at times party by party; so very rarely do scholars comparatively study these selection processes. Nonetheless, they are a necessary object of study to understand the implications on electoral engineering and democracy as a whole.

In studying selection methods the repercussions of these decisions are what drive the significance of our endeavor. These repercussions focus on the candidates and the electoral outcomes. Primaries have a significant role in the outcome of elections by controlling not only who can vote but also who can run. Gerber and Morton find that challengers will enter in an open primary more often than in a closed primary (2005). This is because they perceive open primaries to be more inclusive and provide better opportunities than closed primaries. Challengers have a better chance of being elected in open preliminary elections where the party has less control over the process and therefore the electoral result (Gerber and Morton 2005). Rational challengers do not want to enter into a race that is difficult for them to win and it is clear that the selection process can affect their entrance into an electoral race (Gerber and Morton 2005; Cox 1997). Thus, they are more likely to enter races that are more open and more amenable to external candidates.

The consequences of open primaries on candidates and campaigns are relatively clear. Open primaries force the party to adapt diverse interest and non-incumbent candidates anticipate open primaries because it will increase their political base and

improve the chances of winning the final election. (Mazmanian 1974; Epstein 1986; Cox 1997; Gerber and Morton 2005). Further, it is not in their interest to run outside of the party because of the possible awards that can come from being selected – party support and funding (Cox 1997).

The primary system's impact on the selection of candidates depends on three factors: first, the number of independent vis-à-vis partisan voters; second, the amount of noise in the electoral outcomes; and third, the strength of extremists and moderates within the party (Oak 2006: 171). This means that the selection process can limit the impact of the party members –through moderation or further extremism. The political party itself has a stake in maintaining a closed selection process because the party wants the most influence on deciding who will represent them on the ballot. There is evidence of strong electoral effects through candidate selection from the various types of selection processes (Gerber and Morton 1998). However, the state and individual party jointly dictate these selection processes (for the most part and it is expected that some state and some party factors that contribute to the development of these rules.

One of the reasons parties choose to close their preliminary elections is the fear of crossover voting. Cross over voting is voting in the primary by members of some other political party. The effects of this phenomenon have been demonstrated for example by Hedlund et al. who find that crossover voting influences the outcome of the election because crossover voters and independents vote differently than party loyalists. This phenomenon is best illustrated in open elections where crossover voters are quite common (1982). This crossover voting changes the composition of the electorate and creates the selection of a candidate that is not representative of the party. The results of this cross over

may result in a candidate that may be more electable in a general election, but may strategic crossover voting could result in the selection of an unelectable candidate by those outside the party. . By limiting crossover voters parties create barriers to participation in the electoral process and can sometimes elect a candidate that is less appealing to the general population.

Understanding the choice of selection processes

The extant literature on selection processes has focused on two main areas; the influence the selection process on political parties and its impact on individual candidate's decisions to enter electoral races. These important questions fail to address what drives the selection of one selection process over another.

When discussing the choice of selection methods, there are two main actors in this process: the political party and the state. The political party itself has a stake in maintaining a closed selection process because the party wants the most influence on deciding who will represent them on the ballot. In a representative democracy parties have become a critical component through their nomination of candidates as they pare down the number of candidates (Oak 2006). The primary role of political parties is to select candidates for election (Key 1946), and achieve a majority, or at least a standing in the legislative body in order to influence governmental policy. Thus, the means of selecting candidates is of significant importance to the political party. Parties are particularly helpful in organizing the ballot and providing cues to the electorate for voting decisions. The choice of selection process is influenced by the strength of party leadership and party size (Carey and Shugart 1995). The stronger the leadership the greater the impact they will

have on the selection of candidates – thus, strong leaders desire a closed selection process where the party elite have more control over the process (Carey and Shugart 1995).

Whether selecting a slate of candidates or an individual candidate for election, political parties have a stake in the outcome. Once a candidate wins the primary, the party attaches itself to that candidate until the election (Seligman 1961: 85), making the selection of the candidate very important to the party. If the party is going to support a candidate, do they want to put their support behind someone that represents the interests of the political party or just someone who can win? There is an obvious tension between openness and party control of these processes. Candidates are needed to fill positions and provide options for voters on Election Day. However, how do elites choose a selection process? Certainly different methods can have different results. Closed primaries provide an opportunity for the political party membership to select their candidate for the election (Tsebelis 1990), whereas open primaries allow anyone in the electoral district to participate in the process of selection. Accordingly, closed primaries result in the candidates with the most party support and an open primary produces a candidate that is more reflective of the community's desires, not the party's (Tsebelis 1990). This reduces the power of the party and suggests that the candidate is more moderate than the party is (Oak 2006).

Open, mixed and blanket primaries limit the power of parties by accepting crossover voting and declining party labels. The “potential of strategic voting by cross-over voters” may lead to fewer candidates who support the party ideals and results in more diverse candidates (Gerber and Morton 2005: 4). This openness means that parties can no

longer control the outcomes of the primary and the candidates are more likely to represent the median voter than the median party member (Tsebelis 1990).

Parties use selection methods in two main ways to run in general elections and the selection of leaders for the party. Leaders of political parties are typically elected by political conventions (Key 1946; Erickson and Carty 1991). Party leader selection falls outside the general selection of candidates and is always closed. Therefore, our focus is on the general election process. In this system, national parties can set out quotas for minorities and women to fill a specific number of seats. This limits the choice for the rank-and-file members (Erickson and Carty 1991, Norris 1997) and provides evidence of a connection and preference by parties to have closed primaries.

Another area of research that has contributed to the literature on selection methods is the size of individual political parties. Scholars have found that the size of the political party influences its preference for the type of selection processes. Larger parties tend to prefer more centralized (closed) processes, while smaller parties prefer decentralized or open processes (Lundell 2004). Smaller parties will want to create larger appeal and will do so by opening the process. This publicity may generate more publicity for the party and it moderates the positions of the party (Lundell 2004). Larger parties already have a strong support base and want to offer benefits to their members and maintain their party base with closed selection processes. We discuss this in terms of citizen ideology, expecting that there are party components to the choice of selection processes.

Factors that Affect the Choice of Electoral Systems

There are also implications for each choice of selection system. These implications have mainly focused on the differences between electoral systems (Norris 2004). Norris'

demonstrates that different electoral systems have different impacts on the political representation and voting behavior (Norris 2004), these same factors lead to the choice of selection processes.

Similar to the choice of selection process is the design of the electoral system; here elites make the decisions. According to the literature, many countries choose which electoral system they want based on the results they hope to acquire (Katz 1980; Merrill 1988; Powell 2000; Norris 2004). Electoral engineers in new democracies or in countries desiring electoral overhaul will weigh the costs and benefits of each electoral system before making a choice (similar to the selection system). Countries that want fewer wasted votes and elected members who are more representative of the population are going to choose electoral systems that are more proportional in nature (Powell 2000). These consequences of electoral systems lead to the choice. Thus, those making the choice of selection process also must consider the costs and benefits.

There are connections between the type of electoral system and the selection system; parties have different goals under each system. The type of electoral system affects the selection of candidates for election, not only because of the difference in the numbers of candidates required but also because of the goals of the electoral system. Proportional systems, which strive for more representative systems and utility for each voter, are going to lead a more closed system because there are multiple parties in proportional systems (Powell 2000) and these parties represent different interests in the electorate. They do not need to moderate their appeals because they are not trying to appeal to the entire electorate. In proportional systems, where parties select a slate of candidates (list systems) or multiple members, parties will be open to more diversity in order to get more

votes during the election (Cox 1997). However, in a majoritarian, single-member system, parties want specific interests represented and will prefer a closed system (Cox 1997).

The literature leads us to several unanswered questions. Why do different states/parties decide on different selection methods? What factors affect those choices? We put forth four different explanations: population, historical, cultural and institutional.

Population explanations

The state wants a much more open system to limit those who are disenfranchised. An example of this in the United States is the elimination of the White Primary, which only allowed Caucasians to participate in the selection process. This process was brought to the United States Supreme Court in a case *Smith v. Allwright (1944)* where the Court ruled that prohibiting people from participating in a primary was tantamount to prohibiting them from participating in the election (Texas Politics). Moreover, because one party dominated the American South (at the time of the court case), the primary had a significant impact on the outcome of the election. Meaning that by limiting participation in a primary a party is limiting participation in the election itself. It is paramount to understand that if the selection of an open or closed system results in similar limitations on participation then it is possible the party is targeting a specific group for exclusion from the election. This led us to consider whether the percent of minority populations could lead to the exclusion of particular groups.

Historical Explanations

Looking at the country specific analyses—done by many scholars—the focus of their analysis has been the historical evolution, the cultural factors and how they have led to the type of selection method found in their country (Martz 1999; Erikson and Carty 1991;

Gallagher 1980; Norris 1997). The use of history to determine the decisions of the future is important. Closed systems encourage elites to mandate the selection of candidates and limit the influence of the public. The literature explains that countries that have experienced substantial conflict or have recovered from past tyrannical leadership are more likely to have a decentralized system in order to eliminate strong power bases (Norris 1997; Gallagher 1980). The selection process plays an important role in the outcomes of the election; consequently, the connections between the selection process, political conflict and history are an important consideration. We investigate this by analyzing if Southern States experience different choices of selection methods.

Southern states, historically, have been less open to the democratic process and more willing to limit the participation of some citizens (as demonstrated through Jim Crow laws and other obstacles to voting). We conjecture that because of the South's experience with slavery and civil rights the primary elections should be more open than other states because they want to prevent against civil rights abuses and the government has mandates to follow. This is evident by *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) and other court cases that advanced the ability to participate. This history of the country can lead to the desire to protect against tyrannical leadership or political conflict (Martz 1999; Norris 1997; Erikson and Carty 1991; Gallagher 1980; Czudnowski 1970). The Voting Rights Act of 1965 also requires judicial oversight on changes in elections in many southern states, as seen in redistricting plans; therefore, changes such as closing a primary would require judicial approval.

These historical influences can also be aligned with political culture. Elazar (1972) developed a typology of state political cultures as a way of explaining political activities

across states. He classifies states into three categories: 'moralistic', 'individualistic' and 'traditionalistic' to differentiate between different cultures among the states. Each state has a dominant political culture that explains citizen attitudes and participation in government; this is used to explain not only the use of direct democracy but also the participation in these types of elections. This is particularly evident in two of Elazar's political cultures. Moralistic cultures emphasize the common good and politics is expected to revolve around issues (Elazar 1972; Gray 2004). These expectations have an impact on citizens, as citizens are expected to participate in elections (Gray 2004). Elazar's traditionalist culture, on the other hand, focuses on the governmental role to maintain social and economic hierarchy (Elazar 1972; Gray 2004). In this culture, politicians are elites and ordinary citizens are not expected to participate in politics (Gray 2004). These cultures are at complete disagreement over the role of citizens in politics.

Institutional Explanations

The state legislature has no direct control of the selection method; instead the power lies with the political party. However, there are numerous factors at the state level that can contribute to what the state political party wants when looking to nominate a candidate. The professionalization of the legislature encapsulates a substantial component of these state level factors, as it demonstrates the type of leadership in the state as well as demonstrating institutional components of the state.

We include this component in our analysis to demonstrate how the state legislature can influence selection processes. We expect that the more professionalized the state legislature is the more likely it is to have a closed selection process. This is because when there is a professional legislature, there are more qualifications required for candidates.

WORKING DRAFT

Often, the party will institutionalize the selection process more in order to put forth more qualified (and loyal) candidates rather than just the most popular. The closed process allows the party to have more influence over the outcome and suggest the best candidate for the position. This also eliminates the possibility of crossover voters who could dilute the desired qualifications for the position.

Theory

Primaries are the first step of the electoral process; influence on who participates at these levels can certainly affect the outcomes. The selection of a primary or caucus influences the participation levels in each state. By choosing a form of primary, the state and the parties, influence who is able to participate in selecting candidates. Primaries, historically, as part of the Jim Crow laws were used to prevent African Americans among others from participating in the electoral process. While Whites Only Primaries and literacy tests were eliminated, the differences in the choice of primaries and caucuses across the states illustrates that they are still being used as a modern day barriers to participation. While some states choose to use different methods, meaning that different forms of primaries encourage participation from among different groups. Open primaries allow for participation on a grander scale, however closed primaries means that only those who identify with the party and those who pay attention to the issues of political representation. This distinction means that those who have been previously been excluded from the political system are more likely to be targets of closed primaries, so that only the party elite can participate, except where the federal government has mandated the states to facilitate participation of minority populations. The role that primaries play in narrowing down the candidate field means that there are specific interests that are being excluded from the

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electoral system in states where closed primaries are used and interests that have a higher chance of being included in an open primary system.

We expect to find a significant relationship between the use of different types of primaries based on the levels of education and the number of minorities in each state. We expect that states mandated by the Federal Government under the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to make their electoral systems more accessible will use open primaries to achieve their goals. This means that voters will have more opportunities to become involved in the electoral process and influence electoral outcomes.

When looking at the racial components of the state, we expect that the higher the population of minorities the more likely the state is to utilize open primaries. Open primaries are a way of overcoming historical issues in the electoral process, such as the all white primary and other old Jim Crow laws. This will mean that a public policy objective is achieved that not only are Southern and states with higher populations of minorities are more likely to utilize open primary systems. We expect that states that have historically had difficulty accepting and allowing portions of their populations to participate will be more likely to use open primaries; thus, states with high minority populations are more likely to reverse this trend and comply with federal laws and court decisions by utilizing more open formats of selecting candidates.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The higher the percentage of minority population in the state will lead to a more closed primary system.

Parties and states will work to close the process when there are more minorities in the state as part of the continuing decrease in representation for these groups. We hypothesize that when there are higher percentages of minorities, the party and state will insulate the process from more varieties of interests and maintain the selection process as

a function of party loyalty. While this may not be a conscious choice, it continues to limit the influence of these minorities.

Hypothesis 2: A history of civil rights abuses and the resulting federal control of election in Southern states lead to more open selection processes.

As noted earlier, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the judicial ruling in *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) demonstrate the limitations on these states. Further, consistent with the literature on preventing a dominant group from taking over the elections, we expect that this history of civil rights abuses/limitations have led to a more open selection process in southern States.

Hypothesis 3: The citizen state legislatures will be more likely that state is to have a closed selection process.

We hypothesize that the less professionalized the state legislature is, the more the party and state will want to insulate the process from the public to encourage higher quality candidates and to prevent against crossover voting and non-party members.

Methods and Data

This paper looks at the selection processes of the two major parties (Republican and Democrats) in the fifty states, providing a data set of 100. While acknowledging changes in the process over time; we focus on what primary processes were used in the 2008 election to determine the current influences on the selection process. To test the hypotheses we present two statistical models. We created a dataset containing information about the type of candidate selection mechanism each party in each state uses.² The unit of analysis is the state party. Our dependent variable is whether a preliminary election is closed or not closed primary. This formulation of the dependent variable led us to use logit modeling

² Information used to create the data set was taken from Fair Vote (fairvote.org) and Congressional Quarterly and regards the 2008 elections.

throughout this analysis. The first regression identifies the determinates of closed preliminary elections and does not differentiate between primaries or caucuses. The second regression tests only the likelihood of primary elections being closed serves two purposes; first it is robustness test of our earlier results in the full model, second it allows to address whether primary elections are fundamentally different than caucuses in how decisions are made about their openness. We report the results of both regressions in Table 1.

To test our hypotheses we use several independent variables that are the hypothesized factors that could lead state parties to implementing certain candidate selection mechanisms. We control for party by implementing a dummy for democrats and include controls for several demographic characteristics of the states. The demographic characteristics are controlled for by what the percentage of the population that is male, the median age of the population, the percent of the population with a high school diploma, the unemployment rate, the median income, We also use a dummy to control for Elazar's (1972) state characteristics: *moralistic*, *traditionalistic*, and *individualistic*.³ The ideology of the state is also controlled for. This measure comes from Fording et al.'s (1998) *citizen ideology* measure.

To test H1 we include the percent of the population that is African-American, and the percent of the population that is of Hispanic descent.⁴ These two ethnic groups represent the majority of the minority populations across the United States, and our expectation if we are to reject the null hypothesis of no racial effect is that as the percent of

³ Note that the traditionalistic category was removed from the regressions.

⁵ Heavily professional is a base category and not included in the regressions.

the populations who belongs to these groups rises, the likelihood of a primary being closed will increase.

To test H2 we include a dummy variable for the former confederate states who were the primary recipients of federal oversight due to the voting rights act, to test whether that oversight has led to a significantly different likelihood of closed selections relative to the non-south.

To test H3 we included dummy variables that represent the professionalization of the state legislature operationalized according to Squires' (1993) typology: *citizen legislature, marginally professional, semi professional, and heavily professional*.⁵ Again our hypothesis suggests that the citizen legislature will be more likely than the professional legislature to engage in closed preliminary elections.

Discussion and Findings

The results of both regressions are presented in Table 1. Six variables are significant predictors of closed preliminary electoral candidate selection processes. This model finds that as percentage of minority's rises in a state the likelihood of having a closed system increases, confirming our first hypothesis. Further states designated as being part of the "south" have a lower likelihood of having a closed system than non-southern states, providing confirmation of our second hypothesis, suggesting that the Voting Rights Act and *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) have influenced the selection processes in the South. Our third hypothesis proposes that states that utilize citizen legislatures will have a tendency toward closed systems. The results from first regression confirm this hypothesis as well. States with citizen legislature are more likely than states with professional legislatures to close

⁵ Heavily professional is a base category and not included in the regressions.

their preliminary elections. As indicated earlier, we hypothesize that the closed systems occur to prevent the inclusion of a variety of interests instead focusing on the preferences of the party loyal and the evidence we find for each of our hypotheses certainly bear this notion out. Two other variables are also significant in our closed system regression. First Median Age returns a positive coefficient meaning that as the median age increase the likelihood of having a closed system increases. The implication seems suggest that states with older populations tend to insulate their selection processes than do states with younger populations. Second, citizen ideology is also significant indicating that as citizens become more conservative, the parties in that state will more likely be closed.

Table 1: Predicting Closed Selection Systems -Logit

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Closed Preliminary Election</i>		<i>Closed Primary Election</i>	
	Logit Coefficient	Standard Error	Logit Coefficient	Standard Error
Percent Black	0.20***	0.07	0.14**	0.07
Percent Hispanic	0.23***	0.08	0.29***	0.09
South+	-5.45***	1.73	-4.68***	1.77
Marginal Professional+	2.25	1.46	2.09	1.93
Semi Professional+	1.85	1.32	3.01*	1.74
Citizen Legislature+	3.64**	1.83	4.94**	1.77
Democrat+	-0.66	0.52	-0.32	0.57
Percent Male	0.94	0.66	-3.12***	1.15
Median Age	0.61***	0.21	0.20	0.19
Percent High School	0.20	0.19	0.16	0.16
Unemployment Rate	-0.26	0.28	-0.52	0.37
Median Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Moralist Culture+	-1.62	1.36	-0.72	1.56
Individualist Culture+	0.13	1.34	-1.51	1.29
Citizen Ideology	-0.65**	0.03	-0.08**	0.04
Constant	100		100	
Pseudo R2	0.398		0.369	
Log Likelihood	-39.28		-38.54	

*p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01,+ Dummy Variable

Our second regression serves two purposes, first it is a robustness test of the results of our first, and it tests whether there are significant differences between the choice to close a caucus and a primary. We find evidence for each of our hypotheses in the second regression. The coefficients change neither direction nor significance. However, we do find that two additional variables are significant predictors of closed primaries. The first is a bit perplexing, percent male. The coefficient indicates that as the percent of males in a state increase the likelihood of a party having a closed primary decreases considerably. The second, semi-professional legislature is consistent with our expectation that professional legislatures will be more likely to engage in open preliminary selection mechanisms. In this case like the citizen legislature the semi-professional legislature is more likely than the professional legislature to close the primary process.

Overall, these results suggest that our hypotheses are confirmed by the data on system selection from the fifty states, and that the decision to close those elections are tied both to the demographic realities of the state and the institutional arrangement of the legislature. Our findings indicate that in some cases state parties are working to eliminate the ability of individuals to participate in party preliminary elections if they are not formally affiliated with the sponsoring political party.

We find that even when controlling for preliminary elections held by the Democratic Party, an increased percentage of minorities in the state dramatically increases the likelihood that the selection mechanism will be closed to non-party members. Our findings seem to illustrate that in the presence of high minority population shares political parties make an effort to restrict who participates in their selection process by closing

those processes to non-members. The practical result of this policy is the suppression of the interests of those not directly associated with the party.

Despite the evidence we find for our first hypothesis that the presence greater minority populations is correlated with closed electoral processes, we also find strong evidence that our second hypothesis of greater openness in the 'south' is confirmed. Working from an understanding of the long history of issues with voting rights in the south and the subsequent litigation and regulation on the subject the relative openness of the preliminary election processes in the 'south' is not unexpected. Indeed the goal of much of the voting rights legislation was to ensure that minority voters were participants in the political process and party affiliation was periodically used to prevent minority voters from accessing the political process. In fact, Section Two of the Voting Rights Act is focused on regulating the preliminary electoral processes in states under the purview of the federal oversight due to voting irregularities. Our findings indicate that the 'south' variable is a proxy for the application of federal oversight over the electoral system of the state rather than some unique geographic or socio-cultural reality.

We find support that legislature professionalization appears to have a great impact on the closing of preliminary electoral systems. When professionalization is lower, selection mechanisms are more likely be closed, indicating that the party wants more control when selecting candidates who will engage in policy making as a part time activity. Indeed citizen legislators are often more conflicted on substantive issues than professional legislators because they face influences during the majority of the year. It is paramount in these cases that parties ensure that those who are eligible for competing in the general

election are in fact ideologically aligned with the party because they will have less influence once a member is ensconced in the legislature.

Our control variables also provide some interesting insight into the decision to close preliminary elections. First, age seems to matter to the mechanisms states use to select candidates. This result demonstrates the influence of socioeconomic variables in the selection process. Further it seems to indicate that older populations may be more interested in ensuring that those who represent a party in the general election reflect the status quo. Second, citizen ideology is also significant, indicating that ideology is linked to preferences of citizens when selection mechanisms are chosen, and is illustrative of Lundell's (2004) research on party size and closed primaries. Third, Elazar's typology does not appear to matter possibly showing the need to reconsider this typology or that political culture does not affect state selection mechanisms. Fourth, economic factors are not significant predictors of closed systems. Neither unemployment nor median income is significant indicating that economic conditions do not appear to affect selection processes.

Conclusions and Implications

All of our hypotheses were confirmed. The increase in minority populations indicates that states are more likely to use closed systems and southern states are more likely to utilize open primary systems. This is a surprisingly conflicting result. Southern states tend to have higher minority populations, so it is expected that at least one of our first two hypotheses would be null. The fact that they are both supported, demonstrates that states are responding to the Voting Rights Act, and in the absence of this Act, they would most likely continue to utilize efforts to marginalize portions of the population. The support of these two hypotheses indicates that the South is not the only area of the country

that wants to maintain obstacles in the voting process. While the South has been the focus of the majority of civil rights discussion, there are states with high minority populations who continue to limit full participation in elections.

The selection of a primary process, at first glance, seems like a small part of the overarching electoral process. Participation at every level of democracy is essential to a well functioning democracy. The implications of this research illustrates that while the Voting Rights Act has made changes in how elections are run in the United States, we still have obstacles and variations in voting rights. One option that has been bandied about has been the Federal Government regulating elections, from ballot selection, voting machines and electoral system. This is perhaps an extreme approach to the problems of electoral reform. Not every state needs to have the neither same electoral rules nor do they all require open processes. However, the differences between these two processes need to be acknowledged: from their impact on participation and why they are chosen. States have autonomy in primary and electoral process selection and the influences on those that selection are very much a reflection of the desires and expectations of the state. Thus, it is not surprising that citizen legislatures, racial composition and region influence these selection choices.

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