The Dynamics Of Compression On Presidential Nominations

Samuel Raymond Gedman

University of Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd

Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation


https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/786

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.
THE DYNAMICS OF COMPRESSION ON PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS

A Dissertation Presented
For the Partial Fulfillment of the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in
Political Science The University of Mississippi

by

SAMUEL RAYMOND GEDMAN

December 2015
ABSTRACT

The way in which political parties in the United States choose to nominate presidential candidates is a dynamic process. States operate with a great deal of autonomy as to when and what type of contest to hold, strategic candidates seek to enter the race at an advantageous time, and voters adjust to the electoral environment. The movement of state contests earlier in the calendar and the quick conclusion that is often reached before the official nominating convention has lead to a compression of the nomination contest. This compression of the presidential nomination contest has altered the dynamic structure that underlies the decisions made by states in terms of scheduling their contests.

I utilize compression as a chief independent variable in three empirical analyses, assessing its impact over time to the key actors in a nomination campaign. Using data compiled from FEC candidate filling, I use a robust regression model to demonstrate a correlation between state movement of contests and candidate disbursements in that state. Next I explore the impact of compression on candidate entry into the nomination race using a log-logistical model of duration to test a unique data set of political, environmental and candidate qualities. I demonstrate the viability of these findings in a case study analysis of the 1984 Democratic and 2008 Republican nomination campaigns, before presenting a logit analysis gauging the familiarity with challengers that front-runner supporters demonstrate in those same contests in the final empirical chapter.
DEDICATION

To the memory of Raymond Gedman (1938-2011). To my wife Amanda Larson Gedman, my son Eli Gedman and my mother Evelyn Gedman, whose love and support make all of my endeavors possible and fulfilling.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude and appreciation to my committee, Professors John Bruce, Michael Henderson, Marvin King and Jeffrey Jackson, for all of their efforts on my behalf. I would especially like to thank Dr. Bruce for the guidance and support on this project and during my entire tenure as a graduate student at the University of Mississippi. I could not have asked for more patient and dedicated support than what I received at this university. To the people of Mississippi whose tax dollars support this institution and who have shown such generosity and hospitality to my family, I will always be grateful. Finally, this work would not have been possible without great friends, good dogs, and decent bourbon. A special thank you for the collegial and personal support offered from Dr. Leah Wells Windsor, Dr. Matthew Placek and Dr. Salvatore Russo, and the faithful companionship of Waldo and Bates.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.................................................................................................................. ii

DEDICATION................................................................................................................ iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.............................................................................................. iv

LIST OF TABLES.......................................................................................................... vi

LIST OF FIGURES......................................................................................................... vii

I. INTRODUCTION....................................................................................................... 1

II. COMPRESSION AND THE STATES........................................................................... 23

III. STRATEGIC CANDIDATE ENTRY......................................................................... 46

IV. THE COMPRESSED CAMPAIGN IN ACTION......................................................... 70

V. CANDIDATE FAMILIARITY IN A COMPRESSED CAMPAIGN.............................. 91

VI. CONCLUSION......................................................................................................... 116

LIST OF REFERENCES................................................................................................. 123

APPENDIX.................................................................................................................. 131

VITA............................................................................................................................... 134
LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Compression of the Nomination Calendar ......................................................... 3
1.2 Clinching the Nomination Since 1980 ................................................................. 5
1.3 Front-Runner Strength in Iowa ............................................................................. 17
2.1 Effect of Compression on Total Spending in All Presidential Nomination Contests 1976-2008 ................................................................. 40
2.2 Effect of Compression on Total Spending in Primary or Caucus/Convention Contests 1976-2008 ................................................................. 42
3.1 Candidate Entry by Era ....................................................................................... 64
3.2 Model of Expected Duration Before Becoming a Presidential Candidate Parameterized as Log-Logistical ......................................................... 67
4.1 1984 Democratic Candidate Timeline .............................................................. 76
4.2 2008 Republican Nomination Calendar ............................................................. 81
4.3 2008 Republican Candidate Timeline .............................................................. 83
5.1 1984 Democratic Nomination Mondale Supporters Familiarity with Challenger … 106
5.2 2008 Republican Nomination McCain Supporters Familiarity with Challenger … 112
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Delegations Decided by Super Tuesday .................................................. 4
1.2 Frontloading Primaries: Primaries Contested by Month 1980-2008 ................. 7
1.3 Winning Nomination Candidate Receipts 1980-2012 ..................................... 18
2.1 Leverage and Squared Residuals of Spending on State Compression ............. 38
3.1 Comparison of Hazards for Log-Logistical Model of Duration Before Becoming a
    Presidential Candidate from Midterm to Filing with the FEC ........................... 65
5.1 1984 Democratic Candidate Familiarity Amongst the Remaining Electorate ....... 103
5.2 2008 Republican Candidate Familiarity Amongst the Remaining Electorate ....... 109
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recent presidential nomination campaigns have looked different than those preceding them. Voting takes place earlier, states compete with one another for influence, and candidates raise and spend money at previously unheard of levels. This dissertation is an effort to better understand how these changes have an impact. As the statewide contests that compose the race for the presidential nomination cluster earlier in the process, I seek to more fully understand how this evolutionary change has affected the most pivotal actors in the system. Norrander (2000) suggests that we must frequently update our understanding of presidential nominations, as it is a dynamic process in which candidates and states seek to gain an advantage by making persistent changes to it. It is therefore incumbent upon scholars to attempt and explain how the changes in the structure of electoral competition and the timing of contests have altered our understanding of this process.

In the contemporary era\(^1\) of presidential nomination campaigns, we have seen the timing and the structure of competition change substantially between the early post-reform period of 1972-1984 and the more frontloaded era of 1988-2008. The movement

\(^1\) The contemporary era begins with the 1972 Democratic Nomination, the first in which the majority of the delegates to the national convention were selected through primary elections and open caucuses.
of state contests earlier in the nomination calendar\(^2\) and the quick conclusion that is often reached before the official nominating convention has lead to a compression of the nomination contest. In the following pages, I test the effects of this compression on the behavior of the states and the candidates seeking their party’s nomination. These are the two actors who under the relative restriction of party rules, can be most influential in making the structural changes to the nomination system (Kamarck 2009).

Unlike the general election, the system of nominating presidential candidates in the United States has not remained stable over time. While the general election campaign may look very different throughout the years, the basic structure of the Electoral College is rooted in the constitution (Roche 1961). Controlled by political parties and without a constitutional foundation, nominations utilize processes reflective of the political context for the times in which they take place, thereby changing to serve the interests of key actors. Most significant of these changes to the nomination system occurred in the aftermath of the turbulent 1968 Democratic National Convention\(^3\), after which time the selection of presidential candidates has moved away from the convention or mixed systems into one of open elections\(^4\) at the state level. This decentralized appeal to the electorate in its contemporary incarnation has seen many minor revisions and alterations since the first primary-centered nomination campaign of 1972. This shifting dynamic requires modern scholars to seek insight into the system, as it exists contemporarily, as

---

\(^2\) The nomination calendar describes the time of the year in which states are allowed under party rules to hold a primary or caucus to select delegates to the party’s national convention.

\(^3\) The Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection was created to study creating a more inclusive process of selecting delegates and thus candidates to the Democratic National Convention. The recommendations of what came to be known as the McGovern-Fraser Commission after its chairs, serve as the basis for reforms in both parties that lead to a process by which voter preference leads convention delegate selection. These reforms began in earnest with the 1972 contest.

\(^4\) Party caucuses vary in the method in which they are conducted and as such are not technically elections. They are however governed by rules in both parties that require them to public events.
political actors bend the system for their own strategic and self-interested purposes. The central query of this research is discerning if the growing compression of statewide contests from 1980-2008 and the emphasis of events at the front of the nomination campaign, has resulted in a demonstrably altered electoral environment. In order to effectively pursue this end, it is necessary to examine how the voters’ perceptions of candidates have changed as the nomination campaign has become further compressed.

There are three distinct phases of a nomination campaign, all of which occur before the parties gather for their official nominating conventions (Norrander 2000). The first is the invisible primary, where potential candidates compile resources both political and financial, which are necessary for sustaining a campaign. Second is the competitive phase, in which multiple candidates are engaged in active campaigning and participating in statewide contests. Third is when the last remaining candidate secures delegates in non-competitive contests in which he or she is the only one still actively engaged in running for the party’s nomination. The third phase is contingent upon the candidates who are behind in pledged delegates suspending campaign activities prior to the nominating convention and is referred to as the “mop-up phase”(Adkins and Dowdle 2001). While not a given, the nominee of both major parties has been known prior to the nominating convention in every nomination campaign after 19845.

In order to best understand the changes that fall under the scope of “compression” let us start with a discussion of the competitive portion of contemporary nomination campaign. This period is shorter in duration than those of the early post-reform period as illustrated in Table1.1. Concurrently, there has been a strong and persistent movement of

---

5 The 2008 Democratic contest between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama officially ended with a floor vote at the Democratic National Convention however that vote was symbolic in nature and Clinton had agreed to endorse Obama prior to the convention (Southwell 2010)
states holding their contests closer to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary, which are granted the exclusive right to go first by party rule. Iowa and New Hampshire, respectively, have moved their contests earlier and earlier in the nomination campaign in order to maintain a near exclusive hold on the media coverage, candidate attention and perhaps policy concessions that come with that position (Adams 1987). Statewide contests around the early portion of the nomination calendar have become more frequent as the first in the nation caucus and primary have become an entrenched part of nomination campaigns.

Table 1.1
Compression of the Nomination Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iowa Caucuses</th>
<th>Days from NH</th>
<th>Days From Super Tuesday</th>
<th>Super Tuesday Contests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 (D) &amp; (R)</td>
<td>1/21/80</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984 (D)</td>
<td>2/20/84</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 (D)</td>
<td>2/8/88</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 (R)</td>
<td>2/8/88</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 (D)</td>
<td>2/10/92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 (R)</td>
<td>2/12/96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (D)</td>
<td>1/24/00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (R)</td>
<td>1/24/00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 (D)</td>
<td>1/19/04</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (D)</td>
<td>1/3/08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (R)</td>
<td>1/3/08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 5 states clustered together early expressed no formal intent to do so
Subsequent to the shortening of the period between the first in the nation caucus and primary there is also considerably less time until the contests in each subsequent nomination campaign cycle. Where there were once weeks for the results of Iowa and New Hampshire to reverberate through the political world, there are now merely a few days. In the winter of 1968, Eugene McCarty used the well-placed first in the nation New Hampshire primary to hurtle his antiwar candidacy into the mainstream of American politics. This was an instrumental moment in that nomination campaign, in part because it was the only primary held on or before March of that year. Contrast this with the protracted struggle waged by Senators Clinton and Obama in 2008, where more than half the states had weighed in with their contests by Valentine’s Day. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the quantity of races that encompass the early portion of the calendar now account for a majority of the delegations needed to win the nomination. The last of the office-seeking candidates is routinely out of the race by early March, leaving only the front-runner to mop up the remaining delegates. In Table 1.2 we observe the length of the competitive phase of each nomination contest since 1980 and the number of non-competitive contests in the mop-up phase. The frequent presence of relatively large numbers of contests that
fall within the mop-up phase of the nomination campaign presents an inherent dilemma for states that schedule contests later in the process. A statewide contest conducted late in the nomination calendar, especially in a delegate rich state, could prove potentially decisive and as such receive the undivided attention of the candidates for a period of time. However, it is more likely than not that the race will already be decided on or shortly after Super Tuesday. Over the years many states have chosen instead to move their contests forward in the calendar, to ensure participation in the competitive phase of the nomination campaign.

Table 1.2
Clinching the Nomination since 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Nominee</th>
<th>Clinched</th>
<th>Remaining Primaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Mondale</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>3/19/1992</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Dole</td>
<td>3/13/1996</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>McCain</td>
<td>3/4/2008</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Romney</td>
<td>4/7/2012</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compression of the nomination campaign does not allow for extended periods of campaigning between contests early in the calendar (Figure 1.2). Even as candidates pursue early state success, they must focus on running what they hope will be a nationwide effort concurrent with their early state strategy, or at least shortly there after. Once the voting commences, the nomination campaign moves very quickly to a conclusion and with rare exception, it reaches one before the formal roll is taken at the
party’s nominating convention. The competitive phase of the nomination contest will not routinely reach every state.

Candidates have to employ their resources strategically and cannot always compete in with equal vigor in every statewide contest. Political factors, scarce financial resources and a lack of available time require candidates to make choices as to where their efforts are best spent. Choices that have become more difficult in recent cycles as more states have moved their contests closer to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. States that have not moved their contests forward and sit at or near the back of the nomination calendar, risk falling into the nomination campaign’s mop-up phase. Voters in mop-up states do not see a campaign and are not privy to the same mobilization efforts as their peers in the pivotal battleground states. These factors place those states that are not advantaged like Iowa and New Hampshire, in a precarious position if they wish to impact the nomination of the major party candidates. They may move forward and further compress the nomination calendar or risk falling into irrelevancy for that nomination campaign cycle and not see an active campaign within their state.
Just as some states are more advantaged than others when it comes to choosing a nominee, nomination campaigns are rarely if ever contested by candidates who are on equal footing. Front-runners\(^6\), often advantaged over their counterparts in terms of funding, experience, endorsements, and proliferation of staffing talent, are better positioned to navigate the system regardless of how it might be structured. Non-front-runner candidates who are not sufficiently advantaged in these areas are trying desperately to catch up over the course of the nomination campaign. The compression of the calendar would seemingly makes this a more difficult undertaking, as there are results from statewide contests that are being interpreted by the media and potential donors, and

\(^6\) During the invisible primary a front-runner is considered the candidate leading in the major national polls and having a fundraising advantage of any kind over the nearest competitor. During the competitive phase of the nomination campaign it is the candidate leading in pledged delegates.
delegates awarded that move some candidates closer to their goal of the nomination in a shorter amount of time.

The heightened uneven competition in the sequential statewide contests post New Hampshire, has the potential to negate any gain that a state might make by moving its contest forward in the nomination calendar. Candidates with ample resources are able to compete in a wide range of contests. Those candidates with limited resources are left to make difficult decisions as to where they are able to most effectively compete. With a large number of contests moved earlier in the calendar, and in some instances occurring simultaneous to those in other states, it creates a difficult challenge for candidates that lack adequate financial resources, a network of surrogates, and full delegate slates. When there are so many states holding contests on the same day or in rapid succession, candidates must decide where to strategically employ their resources in order to best compete. As a result, the context of the campaign varies from state to state as the candidates court different constituencies and ignore others (Gurian and Haynes 1993).

Strategically, as candidates employ their resources in advantageous ways within the context of the nomination campaign, their decisions shape the potential electorate in a state through a mobilization or demobilization of potential voters. The opportunity of voting for a candidate and the information presented to voters differs substantially depending on where a voter lives and the decision her state and others have made in scheduling their contests, in addition to the aforementioned strategic approach that the candidates have employed. The context of the campaign matters when determining the structure of electoral competition.
In Iowa and New Hampshire, voters are presented with a full slate of candidates who aggressively seek their vote and encourage their participation. Candidate’s campaign activities are varied and personal communication from their campaign to potential voters is not only commonplace but also an expected norm. This style of electioneering has been described as “retail” politics. It is a very labor-intensive process that takes up a large portion of a candidate’s time and efforts during the invisible primary. As there is no limit to when a candidates campaign for the nomination can begin, candidates are able to employ a retail political strategy in these states months and sometimes more than a year before any vote is cast. Early states are privy to campaign activities from a full slate of candidates for a lengthy period of time, and then privileged to receive a disproportionate amount of attention from the press that diligently covers the start of this process (Bartels 1988). The media attention is intense and constant early in the process and then falls off as the presumptive nominee becomes more certain and latter contests no longer substantially threaten to change this outcome (Sheehan 1983). It falls off in the most pronounced fashion for those candidates who fail to make significant progress towards the nomination by securing delegates in the states where contests have occurred.

While New Hampshire has a long tradition of early presidential politicking, candidates for the nomination now spend a good deal of time in the first caucus state as well. In 1972, of the six declared Democratic candidates only three campaigned in Iowa and for a total of seven days between them. In 2008, the seven Democratic candidates averaged more than thirty-two days in the state beginning the year prior. This active and concentrated campaign in both Iowa and New Hampshire concurrently are distinct from the other 48 state contests in that they are open-ended and institutionalized. Candidates
who are considering their party’s nomination for the presidency are aware that whatever political maneuvering occurs between the national party committees and other states has had no affect on the positioning of those first two states on the nomination calendar. Thus when they ultimately decide to launch even a preliminary campaign organization, they are able to do so in those states with little fear of sunk cost and, more importantly, as early as they see fit. Being that there is no formal or legal beginning to the nomination campaign, strategic candidates understand that many key activists and party officials in Iowa and New Hampshire commit early to candidates and rarely sit out a nomination cycle (Redlawsk et al. 2009). Campaign dynamics in these pivotal states favor early and persistent attention from candidates.

Early contests shape momentum. Candidates who defy expectations receive praise from the media and party activists that they can translate into future support both financially and in terms of votes in subsequent statewide contests (Bartels 1985 and 1988; Hagen and Mayer 2000). Serious office seeking candidates without front-runner advantages have little choice but to engage in a strategy placing a heavy emphasis on early success. The experience of past nomination campaigns offers only a momentum-based strategy as a potential route to the nomination for such candidates (Norrander 1996).

Historically some candidates have chosen to forego a momentum-based strategy and campaign in states that are rich in delegates, or in some measure more favorable to their candidacy. On the surface such a strategy of delegate seeking seems strategically optimal as New Hampshire and Iowa have relatively few of the delegates required to win

---

7 New Hampshire supplied neither party with even 1% of the total delegates to their convention in 2008 and the largest delegation sent in the post-reform era was 1.1% of the delegates to the Republican National
the nomination. Experience has shown that such a strategy is folly, with the media spotlight on the successful candidates in New Hampshire and Iowa the dynamics change rapidly and overtake even the strongest candidates. Morris Udall in 1976, and Rudolph Giuliani in 2008, two one time party front-runners, both attempted to forgo the retail politicking of the early states and instead campaign in larger states with later primaries. The idea of pressing their financial advantages and downplaying the significance of the results of Iowa and New Hampshire, would make sense if not for the importance placed on the states from other sources. Congressman Morris Udall felt the New Hampshire primary “no more important than that of any other state” and spent little time there, instead choosing to travel to the more populous states of Illinois and Florida (Udall 2001). Despite favorable prospects in those states prior to the initial contests, and the fact that Iowa and later New Hampshire surprise winner Jimmy Carter had spent no time in either place, Carter riding a wave of good press from his early success carried both. A frustrated Udall left the race soon after (Ibid).

A similar experience befell former New York City Mayor and Republican front-runner Rudolph Giuliani in 2008, when he suspended campaign activities in both Iowa and New Hampshire weeks before those contests took place and began campaigning full time in Florida. Despite at one time leading the field in that state by 26 points Giuliani suffered a substantial defeat and withdrew from the race without earning a single delegate. Both of these party heavyweights failed to achieve the nomination and were left frustrated with the way in which the media portrayed the race after the early state contests

---

8 CNN/Gallup Poll of likely Republican voters in the Florida Presidential Primary 9/25/2007
(Ceaser 1979; Belt et al. 2012). Without a successful example of a nominee that has been able to bypass the early states, strategic candidates must seek the path to the nomination through those pivotal contests, with front-runners trying to meet expectations and challengers seeking to capture momentum.

A failure to achieve momentum leads to further winnowing of the field, as serious office-seeking candidates have no realistic path to the nomination. Each statewide contest subsequent to those initial results, further alters the dynamic of the campaign rewarding winners or perceived winners with momentum, and punishing losers with less attention from party activists and the media when they fail to achieve it. As the field is winnowed and a narrative set into place, it is difficult, if not impossible, for a deviant outcome in one state to become an influential cue to future states or to the political press covering the race (Haynes and Murray 1998; Norrander 2000).

The results of elections occurring in sequence alter the nomination campaign as they occur. One of the key functions of a nomination campaign is to demonstrate to the party base that the candidate who emerges the winner, is viable to win the general election (Ceaser 1979; Aldrich 1980). As candidates face diverse electorates in various states, their viability can be demonstrated or brought into question. In an earlier era, this was the sole function of a presidential primary. To contest a primary in a geographical region or where certain demographic groups, or political factor are present that might be underrepresented in that candidate’s home state. A candidate could demonstrate to the party officials and voting delegates at the convention that they are electable by succeeding in these more challenging contests. This was an important feature during the “mixed system” of primaries and convention deliberation. The most famous case
occurred when Massachusetts Catholic John Kennedy defeated establishment favorite Hubert Humphrey in the heavily protestant 1960 West Virginia primary (White 1961). In the contemporary era, the demonstration effect is not for the delegates at the convention but rather for the news media and electorates in subsequent states. Candidates seek to establish their positive momentum with the results from the first contests. The self-reinforcing notion of momentum accelerates the exit of candidates without the resources and name recognition to compete with better-financed opponents. There are few if any opportunities for insurgent candidates to capture momentum outside of those initial contests, and most candidates are not able to sustain their campaigns financially without the boost of an early victory (Hinckley and Green 1996; Mutz 1995: Knight and Schiff 2010).

The early states in the process benefit greatly from the contemporary dynamics discussed previously, where as the states that go later in the sequence could be harmed by them. Fewer candidates, less time for a campaign and subsequently receiving less attention from the news media make the prospect of holding a contest later in the nomination campaign a far less attractive proposition for states. Being that states have wide autonomy in selecting when they can hold their nomination contests, there has been a tendency to move earlier in the process, creating the compressed calendar that serves as the point of inquiry here. Since the 1988 campaign, “frontloading” has become more pervasive. Concurrent to this, there have been advances in communications technology, a fragmentation of the media environment, increasing polarization between the parties, regulation and deregulation of campaign finance and an increasingly nationalized political environment that have placed new pressures on presidential candidates (Aldrich
and Alvarez 1994; Claibourn 2008; Kendell 2000; Morris and Francia 2010; Rothenberg and Brady 1988; Thompson 2010).

The need to capture momentum in early contests is an established norm adhered to by serious office seeking candidates, regardless of their initial status. In recent nomination campaign cycles, the period of time in which momentum might take hold with voters and the media has shrunk. The compression of the nomination campaign has placed a great premium on early victory and increased the pressure on states to hold their contests during this pivotal time. Does this pressure for early success impact the decision of candidates outside the front-runner to enter the nomination race? Do states really benefit? Are voters full aware of alternatives to the front-runner by the time they are required to make a choice?

**Shifting Dynamics of Competition**

Much scholarly work on the subject of presidential nomination campaigns in the post-reform period focuses on the invisible primary, and the determinative strengths of candidates preceding any voting taking place. Sterger (2008) and Aldrich (2009) have demonstrated that no single variable is ultimately predictive of candidate success. Rather factors such as campaign organization, fundraising and fundraising potential, showing in national and state level public opinion polls as well as elite endorsements are all important indicators of how a candidate will perform. From this perspective, the nomination campaigns themselves are not determinative, but rather the affirmation of strong and strategically successful politicians who created the factors that lead to their successful pursuit of the nomination over the course of their careers generally and in the run up to the nomination campaign that cycle specifically.
If the candidates' fundamental strengths entering the nomination campaign are of principal importance, then that leaves little room for a lesser-known candidate to win the nomination. Yet time and again we have witnessed “dark horse” candidates emerge and capture if not the nomination, the attention of the party faithful. Momentum is a very real phenomenon, that is key for candidates to emerge from the pack and compete for the nomination. Winning in New Hampshire, for instance, allows the victorious candidate to demonstrate his or her viability through increased fundraising, larger campaign staffs, increased name recognition, and better subsequent performance in public opinion polling (Gurian 1990; Jackson and Crotty 1996; Mutz 1995). Media coverage after winning unexpectedly or over-performing expectations in a statewide contest has a demonstrable positive impact on candidate resources (Aldrich 1980; Brady 1983).

Over the course of the nomination campaign, candidates find their resources increase after victories, as do their chances of securing the nomination. Voters in subsequent statewide contests are more receptive to previous winners, and they gain greater support as a result (Bartels 1988; Popkin 1991; Kenny and Rice 1994; Mutz 1997). Momentum is the only proven way for a candidate without the structural advantages of a front-runner to hope to win the nomination. Momentum candidates are able to stay in the race and compete independent of how poorly they matched up to the front-runner during the invisible primary period (Gurian 1986; Bartels 1988; Damore 1997).

There has been a litany of different measures used to gauge candidate strength, though the greatest predictive power is found with national polling numbers and total fundraising prior to the first vote cast. As the McGovern-Frasier era reforms have become institutionalized, this has proven the most successful set of measures in predicting the
eventual nominee, in no small part because each in some way represent establishment preference. The invisible primary front-runner has come to be defined as the candidate who is leading in both the final national Gallup poll of party identifiers’ preferences for their nominee, and in total fundraising prior to the election year. On ten occasions from 1980-2000, the same candidate led both indicators and went on to win his party’s nomination (Mayer 1996, 2003). Twice those predictive indicators diverged and a candidate ahead in one of them won their party’s nomination in both instances. Though Carter’s 1976 insurgency campaign for the Democratic Party’s nomination has served as the model for many a lesser-known candidate since, there is little to suggest that momentum candidates actually win elections. Even the 2008 victory of Barack Obama would be difficult to classify as momentum based given the candidate’s invisible primary fundraising performance relative to past challengers.

The frontloading that began in 1988 did not appear to alter this dynamic. In fact, frontloading did not affect the outcome of any nomination contest between 1980 and 2004, the factors having created front-running candidates during the invisible primary were what ultimately proved determinative (Wattier 2005). While the compression of the nomination campaign at the front of the calendar shortens the amount of time in which a nominee is chosen, there appears to be no difference in who secures the nomination. The party front-runner who is well known and financed better, relative to his or her competition is as successful in a back-loaded contest (1972 and 1984) as they are in the frontloaded contests (1988-2004).

In both the 2008 Republican and Democratic nomination campaigns, the most compressed and expensive ever recorded, those previously important indicators of front-
runner strength failed to predict the nominee. In 2008 and more recently in the 2012 Republican contest, the front-runner was defeated in the all-important Iowa caucuses.

Despite the presence of strong candidates with identifiable advantages in national preference and financial resources, the beginning of the compressed nomination race is becoming less predictable.

Table 1.3
Front-Runner Strength in Iowa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Front-runner</th>
<th>Iowa Winner</th>
<th>National Gallup</th>
<th>Total Fundraising</th>
<th>Iowa Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Rudolph Giuliani</td>
<td>Mike Huckabee</td>
<td>1st (27%)</td>
<td>$80,000,000</td>
<td>6th (3.44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd (16%)</td>
<td>$9,544,003</td>
<td>1st (34.36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>1st (45%)</td>
<td>$166,007,122</td>
<td>3rd (29.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd (27%)</td>
<td>$129,101,004</td>
<td>1st (37.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Mitt Romney</td>
<td>Rick Santorum</td>
<td>1st (29%)</td>
<td>$38,935,469</td>
<td>2nd (24.53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd (16%)</td>
<td>$916,905</td>
<td>1st (24.56%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fundraising totals are as reported to the Federal Elections Commission as of Q4 the year previous (2011 and 2007). Polling numbers are from the last national Gallup tracker preceding the Iowa caucuses (1/6/12 and 12/13/07).

While frontloading by the states has been an ongoing phenomenon since the 1988 nomination campaign, there has been a substantial increase in the amount of money involved in the process in more recent cycles. The taxpayer-funded presidential campaign fund that was established in 1971 allowed candidates who had cleared a minimum threshold in fundraising to accept a matching amount from the federal government (Federal Elections Commission 1971). Since then Texas Governor George W. Bush decided to opt out of public funding in pursuit of the 2000 Republican nomination, the
amount of money that candidates have raised independently has increased exponentially and serious contenders from both parties have “opted out” of public financing with regularity, rather than be constrained by the spending limits imposed with the acceptance of matching funds.

The ability for candidates to identify and reach a broad cross-section of interested partisans and activists through the internet has made it possible to raise prodigious sums of money without dedicating large tracts of the candidates public schedule in that pursuit (Trippi 2005; Teachout and Stetter et al. 2008). Concurrently, the Supreme Court⁹ has removed or invalidated previous statutes limiting the financial contributions that individuals, organizations and corporations can make on behalf of campaigns, and appropriate for electioneering purposes.

**Figure 1.3**
**Winning Nomination Candidate Receipts 1980-2012**

---

The cost of campaigning for the nomination has reached unprecedented levels. Successful candidates ability to raise sums of money that dwarf previous election cycles is clearly evident (see Figure 1.3). Successful candidates are able to utilize the invisible primary period to build an increasingly daunting financial war chest. The inclusion of Super PACs to the money race can accentuate this financial boom as well. Consider that Mitt Romney, the Republican front-runner and eventual 2012 nominee, had fewer total campaign receipts than Democratic nominee Barack Obama had in 2008. In the deregulated campaign finance environment that came into existence just prior to the 2012 campaign, a Super PAC known as Restore Our Future Inc. whose principal purpose was the election of Governor Romney to the White House raised a sum of $23,622,109.63 prior to the campaign, to spend for that purpose. When considering the sums from the campaign and various Super PACs in totality, there is a clear and profound trend towards nominees and now their allies being very successful in establishing fundraising receipts that continue to exceed previous nomination cycles.

The rapid increase in receipts and expenditures forces a reexamination as to the nature of electoral competition within this dynamic. Candidates seeking to capitalize on early state momentum predicated on sequential voting, the demonstration of viability to future voters and to potential donors, face serious challenges moving forward. The amount of money needed to effectively wage a campaign for the nomination of either of America’s political parties has grown to unprecedented levels, and requires foresight and determined behavior from candidates months and sometimes years before any election takes place. States are pressing their way to the front of the nomination calendar,  

---

10 FEC Form 3x Report of Receipts and Disbursements For Other Than an Authorized Committee: Restore Our Future Inc. 1/31/2012
accelerating the conclusion of the campaign for the nomination. There is less time for candidates to take advantage of the positive press coverage and demonstrated viability that comes from early success. Potential voters in later states can be left out of the process entirely, while voters in some states can see statewide campaigns that last scarcely a few days as candidates rush into and out of states for multiple elections compressed into a few short weeks. Due in no small part to the proliferation of active coordination online and the use of the internet in fundraising, immense opportunities now exist for nationally well-known candidates, like the party front-runner to amass a network of interested donors (Baum and Groeling 2008). Post Iowa and New Hampshire, the better-known and better-financed candidates are not as bound to geography as their counterparts.

While these developments seem detrimental to a competitive nomination campaign, that has not necessarily been the case. During the invisible primary period the active campaigning that does take place, occurs largely in the early states of Iowa and New Hampshire. Structurally the campaign still allows the institutionalized first in the nation states to afford lesser-known challengers an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a momentum-based strategy. Front-runners as defined by their success during the invisible primary period have previously been successful in capturing the nomination. The 2008 primary season occurred in the most compressed timeframe of any race for the nomination before or since, and despite the advantageous conditions offered by this, both front-runners were ultimately unsuccessful. This presents an intriguing puzzle, as we must decide if the structure of the competition is determinative or rather if there are contextual elements unique to those races that proved the difference. Does our
understanding of concepts such as momentum, participation and learning through sequence still serve to explain the conduct and results of contemporary presidential nomination contests? Or rather do we need to update how these relate to the very different political environment that we have entered? The extent to which compression is impacting our understanding of the current presidential nominating system is the focus of this dissertation and, as such, it is important to more closely examine the impact of these seemingly important changes on the system on key actors within it.

Whatever the goal of the reformers to the system might be at any given time, the ultimate objective of a nomination campaign is selecting the nominee to represent the party in the general election. The system as currently constructed still serves that purpose, no matter its peculiarities. This dissertation does not seek to add a normative critique of the system used to nominate presidential candidates nor the compression of the nomination campaign. It is intended to illuminate the impact of compression on the system’s key actors.

There are undeniably important implications associated with the conduct and structure of the process used to select a nominee. It is a concern with the fairness of process that has motivated every major reform to the system (Ceaser 1979; Kernell 2015; LeDuc 2001). Voter participation in terms of ideology, partisanship and even geography can have an impact on the type of candidates that are produced. The equity in this system is questionable, as place in the sequence determines the interest that campaigns place in a state. The primacy of the invisible primary, while seemingly innocuous and uniform to all candidates, can reward behaviors that are easier for those unburdened by the constraints of holding elected office. Position taking, fundraising, and retail politicking in Iowa and
New Hampshire are activities more conducive to the schedule of a politician who does not have to respond to their existing constituency.

As the impact of compression is both diverse and far-reaching, I attempt to isolate its effects on the actors who are most instrumental in creating this current structure and the most important to choosing the nominee. The key participants in this process are the candidates themselves who are empowered to begin their campaigns at any point without formal rules established by legal statute or from their respective parties. The voters who make their decisions in an information environment that can be tumultuous and uneven as candidates make strategic decisions as to where and how vehemently to compete in any given contest. Finally, perhaps the most influential actors in this process are the states themselves. As the order of sequence in the race for the nomination was not established by any central authority or for any normative purpose, it is the states who ultimately hold the responsibility for scheduling their contests and whose competition for influence drives this compression of the nomination calendar. The extent to which their purposeful actions have any tangible benefit is to be explored.
CHAPTER II

COMPRESSION AND THE STATES

In this chapter I determine if a state can receive more attention from candidates by moving their contest forward in the nomination calendar. Compression is a byproduct of states clustering early in the nomination calendar. A state’s contest is moved toward the front of the nomination calendar as a result of purposeful action. In isolation, it would not seem logical for states to collectively move their contests earlier, and compete with one another for the attention of the campaigns. Yet the compression of the nomination campaign is a demonstrably real phenomenon. There is a general perception amongst the states that earlier is preferable to later, despite the competition. This perception might well be true, but it might also depend on the type of state in question.

Rules governing the timing of participation by individual states in the nomination campaign are set out in national party rules and state laws. Each party sets the earliest possible date a state might hold its contest and gives a window of time to hold all contests before the delegates need to appear at the national nominating convention that summer. The Democrats\(^\text{11}\) and Republicans\(^\text{12}\) have recently institutionalized privileged states to the

\[\begin{align*}
\text{11 No meetings, caucuses, conventions or primaries which constitute the first determining stage in the presidential nomination process (the date of the primary in primary states, and the date of the first tier caucus in caucus states) may be held prior to the first Tuesday in March or after the second Tuesday in June in the calendar year of the national convention. Provided, however, that the Iowa precinct caucuses may be held no earlier than 29 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the New Hampshire primary may be}\]

23
front of that window to prevent states from attempting to challenge their primacy and invoke a response that might push those contests even earlier in the calendar\textsuperscript{13}. States are thus bound only by their internal political and legislative considerations, and the stipulation that they are not permitted to the very front of the nomination calendar when setting the date for their contest.

Beyond their position on the nomination calendar there are many differences between statewide contests for a party’s presidential nomination. The method for allocating delegates, it’s partisan composition, its regional location, and the context of the campaign itself ensure that some states are bound to be more impactful than others in deciding the nominee of any given campaign cycle. The demonstration of candidate strengths also remains an important feature of the system. Independent of these variations, the size of a state’s delegation will provide it with a measure of importance in selecting a nominee, as the nomination is still officially awarded based on the affirmation of delegates at the party convention. States with more convention delegates at stake will always be more prized than their peers in a competitive nomination campaign.

A state’s influence on the nomination campaign depends principally on two factors. The first is the size of the states delegation to the party convention, which is

\begin{quote}
held no earlier than 21 days before the first Tuesday in March; that the Nevada first-tier caucuses may be held no earlier than 10 days before the first Tuesday in March; and that the South Carolina primary may be held no earlier than 3 days before the first Tuesday in March. In no instance may a state which scheduled delegate selection procedures on or between the first Tuesday in March and the second Tuesday in June 1984 move out of compliance with the provisions of this rule. (DNC Delegate Selection Rule 11(A))
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{12} No primary, caucus, convention, or other process to elect, select, allocate, or bind delegates to the national convention shall occur prior to March 1 or after the second Saturday in June in the year in which a national convention is held. Except Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada may conduct their processes no earlier than one month before the next earliest state in the year in which a national convention is held and shall not be subject to the provisions of paragraph (c)(2) of this rule (RNC Rule 16(c)(1)).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{13} New Hampshire law states that the Secretary of State can change the date to ensure that the New Hampshire primary will take place at least seven days before any "similar election" in any other state(RSA 653:9 New Hampshire book of Statutes).
\end{quote}
determined most predominately\textsuperscript{14} by the size of the state’s population. The second is the place in sequence that the state’s contest is held. Party rules and state-level political decisions are responsible for the sequence of primaries and caucuses in the post McGovern-Fraser era (McCann et al. 1986; Mayer 2000: Kamarck 2009). States that are scheduled at or near the front of the nomination calendar have had an outsized impact on the race. In every nomination campaign cycle since 1972, and increasingly since 1988 a number of states seeking a greater national impact have changed the dates of their contests to move them earlier in the calendar (Greer 1988; Norrander 1996; Mayer 2004). One important reason for this is that the staggered nomination race has evolved in the post McGovern-Fraser era in a way that nominations are now routinely secured prior to the nominating convention and before all states have weighed in with a preference. With transparent rules of delegate allocation and very few at large delegates available at either party convention the results of statewide contests are decisive in choosing a party’s nominee. In the vast majority of contemporary nomination campaigns in both parties, the last candidate has conceded the race to the leader in pledged delegates shortly after Super Tuesday and long before the summer’s convention. States holding contests later in the nomination calendar, are faced with the prospect of holding their contests without any meaningful competition, leaving them with no real say on the party’s nominee.

The uncertain environment in which states operate provides an incentive for holding a contest early in the presence of an active campaign and a clear penalty of no

\textsuperscript{14} While there are differences between conventions and there are differences between parties the example of the current Republican convention formula can be constructive. Each state received a blanket 10 delegates to the convention and 3 delegates for the state chair, national committeeman and national committeewoman. Further delegates are awarded for the size of the states delegation in the House of Representatives multiplied by three, with bonus delegates awarded if the states electoral votes went to the Republican candidate in the last election, elected a Republican governor, controlled one or both state legislative chambers and had one or two Republican senators.
campaign activity in the state, if a state’s contest is held in the mop-up portion of the nomination campaign. The wide leeway states have in scheduling their contests places responsibility for the compression of the nomination calendar on their behavior, which is based in part on the perception that holding a contest in the early portion of the nomination calendar is more beneficial to a state. This preposition is deserving of greater scrutiny as more and more states of varying size have moved their way forward in the calendar as the reform era has matured.

The risk of a small state moving forward into the crowded early portion of the calendar is greater than for larger states. Small states that seek to influence the process face the same problem as any state in that they must schedule their contest during the competitive portion of the campaign in order to have any influence. Where small states face a greater challenge is their risk of being bypassed or ignored if they are in competition with a larger state for the attention of candidates. When scheduling their contest with a relatively low amount of delegates to be won, these smaller states run the risk of being ignored by strategic candidates if a more delegate rich contest draws their attention elsewhere in the days preceding it. Though more perilous for state’s with small delegations the search for influence has bedeviled states not named Iowa and New Hampshire in the post-reform era.

One of the few established consistencies in setting a date for its contest found within the rules of both parties, that states are obliged to respect is the first in the nation position owned by the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. Iowa and New Hampshire receive disproportionate attention from candidates and the media during the invisible primary period (Aldrich 1980; Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Winnebrenner
1998; Wattier 2005; Donovan 2009). The frontloading phenomenon that at least in part causes compression to the nomination calendar centers on the notion that the early states are often decisive and thus more important to the candidates and the media who cover the race. As suggested earlier this belief has been reinforced by a preponderance of contests not remaining competitive into the later stages. It is the environment that states exist within, which promotes the idea of frontloading as a way to maximize the utility of their contests. History has shown that states have often sought to better position themselves in the national political environment.

President Carter seeking to bolster his chances at securing a contested nomination from the liberal wing of his party in 1980 leaned on Florida to keep its pivotal\(^\text{15}\) primary in March and to persuade bordering Alabama and Georgia to join her on that date (Kamarack 2005). This strategic collusion between the Carter administration and those politically similar southern states was seen as a way to counter balance the important roll played by New Hampshire, a northeastern state thought to possibly give Senator Edward Kennedy of neighboring Massachusetts an important early advantage in the Spring of 1980. The Carter campaign’s calculation that their Southern “firewall” could hold off the Kennedy insurgency set in motion the potential for other states to follow the lead of Florida, Alabama and Georgia to further their own strategic objectives.

A similar calculation was made by Strom Thurmond and his political protégé Lee Atwater both of whom were enthusiastic supporters of Ronald Reagan and in 1979 successfully lobbied the South Carolina Republican Party at its state convention to move its contest ahead of all primaries except for New Hampshire (Black and Black 1992). The

\(^\text{15}\) Carter had defeated fellow southern governor George C. Wallace of Alabama in that state’s 1976 contest leaving him as the only Southerner left standing and helping to clear the way to his nomination (Stanley and Hadley 1987)
establishment of what would become institutionalized, as the “first in the south primary” was a calculated and transparent decision by conservative politicians in that state to manipulate the sequence of events in order to help politically conservative Ronald Reagan defeat more moderate challengers John Connelly and George Bush in the 1980 Republican nomination campaign.

Beginning with the 1988 nomination campaign cycle, many southern states sought to maximize their influence by clustering their primaries and caucuses on a single day in March that came to be known as “Super Tuesday.” After a series of defeats to its candidates in the general election culminating in Ronald Reagan’s 49 state landslide victory over Walter Mondale, Democratic party leaders in Florida advanced the notion that southern states\(^{16}\) should consolidate their primaries on a single date the earliest party rules would allow in order to advance a “native southerner” or “more conservative Democrat” (Cook 1987). This effort proved ultimately unsuccessful. Instead of providing the intended boost to moderate Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, liberal activist Reverend Jesse Jackson won half of the Southern Primaries and Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts won the three most delegate rich contests that day\(^{17}\). The intentions of the southern states were not secretive. Other states and would-be-candidates acted to make the calendar work to their advantage as well. Strategically, non-Southern candidates who planned to run in 1988 pressured their states to move their contests on to that Super Tuesday date in order to lessen the impact of the Southern Bloc. Instead of having a day to itself, the southern states helped usher in an almost defacto national

\(^{16}\) Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia all held a presidential primary on March 8, 1988

\(^{17}\) Texas, Florida and Massachusetts
primary day, forcing candidates to campaign not simply in the South but nationally, wherever they saw the potential to do the most good for their campaign.

An important legacy of Super Tuesday is that it ushered in the rush of states forward towards the beginning of the nomination campaign. Early movement by states in the 1980’s was relatively small in scale and done to favor well-positioned candidates. This changed after the 1988 effort by Democrats to find a more palatable alternative for conservative white southerners proved unsuccessful. Subsequent efforts by states to seek an advantage have been largely independent of greater regional or ideological considerations (McKee and Hayes 2009). Though from 1988-2008, states from all over the country have moved their contests forward in greater numbers each nomination cycle in an attempt to be influential in choosing the nominees.

While the preposition is logical given the rarity of a race remaining competitive up to the nominating convention, it is most certainly one that deserves greater scrutiny in that states cannot achieve the coveted position at the front of the calendar that have been established by Iowa and New Hampshire. Is there an observable benefit for a state to move its contest earlier if it cannot move to the very front? Is that benefit universal or are there in fact circumstances in which a state can be hindered by moving its contest forward in the nomination calendar?

I hypothesize that there is a demonstrable benefit in the attention received from the candidates, to the states that move their contests forward in the nomination calendar. Though there are states with small delegations to the national convention or who hold lightly attended party run caucuses that can be harmed moving their contest forward into a congested date on the calendar. With few exceptions the structure of completion is
shaped by the sequence of the states. Attempts to bypass contests falling in sequence in favor of more favorable ideological or geographical turf have spelled doom for even well-financed campaigns such those of Morris Udall, Howard Dean and Rudolph Giuliani, as the media declare winners in states no matter the structure of competition (Trippi 2005). Candidates are obliged to compete in upcoming statewide contests in the order in which they appear, if they wish to stay in the race and compete for the nomination. The lack of diverse strategies for winning the nomination is a benefit to states as they pursue earlier dates for their contests.

**Data and Methods**

To test this notion, it is important to conceptualize what it means for a state to be “influential” in the process. The base assumption is that states want to weigh in on choosing the nominee and that nominees are reciprocal in that they want to court potential supporters within those states. States move their contests forward to ensure that their voters are afforded the opportunity in choosing between two or more candidates for the nomination. This is only done during the competitive phase of the nomination campaign during an active campaign for a party’s presidential nomination. An active campaign is one in which multiple candidates are not merely on the ballot, but still seeking the nomination through campaign activities. It is voters in the states having a choice between candidates, and thus impacting the national discourse that is the desired outcome of states. Such a measure is not binary, in that there is an intensity to a campaign that is more desirable still. Besides just having eligible candidates on the ballot a state would ideally prefer that candidates make some effort to sway support within that state...
by paying attention to its voters and their concerns. States are engaged in an attention seeking behavior, trying to attract the candidates to their contests.

Measuring the intensity of the campaign within a statewide contest can be a complicated undertaking. The time a candidate spends on the ground in the state, the importance placed on the state by the national media, the money spent there on advertising, the number of campaign surrogates, local endorsements and the number of volunteers or paid staffers, would all be useful to know when attempting to measure this. Unfortunately, when looking at nomination campaigns this information is not always available for all candidates over the course of the post-reform era. In order to gain a full picture of how intensely a state is contested and thus its importance to nomination campaign, it is necessary to devise a measure that can be applied equally to each cycle that envelopes as many of the aforementioned measures as is possible.

In accordance with federal law, candidates are obliged to report to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on the location of their spending over the course of a campaign. There is available data from the first reform era nomination campaign of 1972 all the way through the 2008 campaign showing where candidates campaign disbursements have been allocated. Utilizing this information I have compiled a unique dataset of state nomination contests from 1972 through 2008 in which to examine the affect that compression has on the allocation of candidate disbursements in the states.

I theorize that candidate disbursements envelop many of the more perfect measures of campaign intensity that are unfortunately not available. While no conversation of presidential nomination politics can take place without consideration of the important part that the media plays in the dynamics of the campaign, I base this
analysis on the assumption that the attention from the media is reflective of the resources put into a race by the candidates and their campaigns. There is no theoretical reason why press attention to a contest would be more intense than that paid to it by actual office seekers. The inverse should be true as well. If the candidates are placing importance on the results of a contest to the extent they are allocating scarce resources, then that would be an event that warranted the attention of the political press. Moreover Robinson and Sheehan’s (1983) intensive study of press coverage of the 1980 nomination contests demonstrated a high correlation between press coverage and candidate spending. The media will follow candidates wherever they might go, so one should not expect for the media to pay lesser or greater attention to a contest than the candidates themselves. Staff, volunteers and surrogates must all be paid for by the campaign and should be reflected on a disbursement report, just as advertising will similarly be accounted for. A candidate’s spending is a reflection of their priorities just as sure as their physical presence in the state is.

As there have been important changes to campaign finance law, technological innovations and inflation between 1972 and 2008, I use the collective disbursements of all candidates in a state as a percentage of the total spent by all candidates in all states as the dependent variable. This measure is equally valid across each nomination campaign and in each statewide contest, and the best possible way to utilize existing data to measure the attention that is paid by candidates to various states. If a multitude of candidates are competing in a statewide contest early in a nomination contest and spending their respective resources there, that state is receiving a greater amount of “attention” in the form of candidate disbursements than if it were receiving fewer
disbursements from only say two candidates as it might be later in the race, or if it attracts only a regional challenger to the front-runner, or is for whatever reason not given serious consideration by any campaign. This also allows for the capture of attention paid to a state that might not see a competitive contest by capturing all disbursements in the state from the inception of the candidate’s committee until the day of the nominating convention. Thus if a state receives attention at any point from candidates who anticipate its importance, it will be captured here.

Due to the presence of outsized and outlying states in the data having the ability to skew the results of this analysis I utilize a test for robust regression, to determine if movement closer to the Iowa caucuses\(^\text{18}\) relative to the previous election cycle serves to increase the percentage of spending from candidates in that state in that year. The great variability that occurs in states between election cycles belies the use of a random effects model such as this (Clark and Lizner 2012). The regression equations will derive the affect on the amount of money disbursed by the campaigns through their principal committees to each of the 50 states holding primaries and caucuses, as well as other variables of interest that should serve to further delineate the factors that lead to the attention paid by candidates to various statewide contests.

The chief independent variable of interest is the change in time measured in days relative to the start of delegate selection in that nomination campaign cycle. The beginning of delegate selection is represented by the Iowa caucuses, which have been institutionalized as the first statewide contest of any type since 1976. For instance, the first delegate selection contest of 1980 was held as always in Iowa, on January 21st. That

\(^{18}\) The first party sanctioned contest in each election cycle between 1972 and 2008
same year Rhode Island held its primary on June 3rd. A period of 133 days passed between those contests. In 1984 Iowa once again held its first in the nation caucuses this time on January 24th and Rhode Island held its primary on March 13th with a span of just 48 days between the contests. This would be recorded in the 1984 data as an 85, as the contest moved up 85 days to the start relative to the previous cycle¹⁹. This movement provides a measurement for compression, as it measures a contests movement forward across elections. Measuring simple distance from Iowa in any one year does not account for the benefit of movement, only of its positioning. In other words, the reward for movement can be measured as opposed to simply affirming the benefit of being near the front of a sequential order. I hypothesize that there will be a significant positive relationship between compression and the percentage of resources in that cycle disbursed within that state.

A binary variable is created signifying if a state held its contest alone and had an opportunity to attract the undivided attention of the candidates. Another variable is used to represent those states from 1988 onward that were part of a Super Tuesday. The presumption is that there will be benefit to one of these variables but likely not the other. To add further explanatory strength to the model another binary variable to indicate if a state borders New Hampshire is included to account for cross state spending in the first in the nation primary that was though to be very high for campaigns constrained by FEC rules on state spending.

¹⁹ It should be noted that this measure does not allow for contests prior to 1976 to be included in the equations as there can be no compression in the dataset prior to the first contest. In fact much of the 1976 Democratic contest is also excluded as the rules in 1972 had not yet created but a mere 20 primaries and open caucuses.
A variable for the size of each states delegation will be included to test for the strength in relationship between delegate-seeking behaviors in the compressed environment. The number of delegates actually at stake in any given contest is not always clear due to procedural rules such as those for proportional allocation in which states are obliged to allocate delegates by congressional district, precinct or some other sub-state unit in order to satisfy party rules respecting minority candidates.

An additional explanatory variable indicating whether the contest is a primary or a caucus is included. Caucuses are traditionally low turnout affairs that require high levels of organization to identify and organize potential eligible supporters. Caucuses are easier to move up, as they do not require the actions of the state legislature but only the will of the state’s political party. Caucuses and primaries differ in terms of the composition of the electorate, the type of campaign spending employed (organizational as opposed to media), and the amount of emphasis campaigns place upon them (Berman 2012). Insurgent campaigns such as Pat Buchanan’s in 1996 or Barack Obama’s in 2008 have taken advantage of the higher cost of attendance amongst participants to utilize the energy of their supporters to counter the advantages that their front-runner opponents derived from their wielding of the party’s establishment base. What has yet to be learned is if this difference in the type of nomination contest any meaningful way in the benefits derived from compression in terms of attention paid to them.

A “native son” variable is included for states that have one or more candidates running from that state. States could conceivably benefit allocatively from having a native in the White House to say nothing of the prestige offered by being the home to a president.
The inclusion of the geographical proximity to the New Hampshire primary in part accounts for previous campaign finance restrictions, which limited the amount spent per state. No state was more disproportionately influential than New Hampshire in having electioneering paid for out of state. Staff headquartered in Vermont, Media buys in Boston, Massachusetts and cars rented in Maine and used in New Hampshire were all commonly accepted practices for campaigns accepting public financing (Duncan 1991). The same could not be said of Iowa where out of disbursements would have hamstrung candidates in delegate rich states such as Illinois and Wisconsin (Hull 2007).

The state-level unit of analysis allows for comparisons unique to American states that are not germane to other delegate selection events\(^{20}\) in which campaign and press activity is rarely observed and candidate visits are largely nonexistent.

While many of the assumptions of OLS regression are met in these equations there is a presence of outlying events that have potential to skew the results and weaken the conclusions derived from them (Riani Atkinson and Perrota 2014). States can move contests back towards the end of the nomination window for reasons that are not strategic but practical or accidental. States have on occasion moved their contest inline with an already scheduled statewide primary or to coincide with the other party for cost savings or for partisan intrigue. While rare in their occurrence it is important to account for the impact these events might have especially if the states are large and delegate rich.

Additional deviant cases where states move up in front of Iowa and are sanctioned by the

\(^{20}\) The District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and Democrats Abroad all send delegates to the nominating convention
party central committee and not competitive contests as a result are also problematic\textsuperscript{21}. They register highly on compression yet receive scant attention, as candidates are reluctant to campaign in those states.

The inverse is also true where some states receive prodigious amounts of disbursement while having selection contests that are largely irrelevant and not directly contributing to the compression phenomenon. This is a relatively recent development that has emerged since a greater number of candidates began to regularly refuse to accept federal matching funds and freely disburse resources without the constraints of state spending limits\textsuperscript{22}. Prior to such a time campaigns had to creatively find ways to allocate staff, print campaign materials, expense travel and sometimes even advertise across state borders. In 2000 George W. Bush opted out of the public financing system and was able to run most of his campaigns logistical and staffing operation from his home state of Texas without constraint, as was John Kerry able to do from his Northern Virginia office in 2004. In 2008 virtually all of the top-tier candidates in both parties sought to replicate this financial path to the nomination. These randomized outlying data points must be accounted for.

We can see demonstrated that OLS regression of compression on the percentage of total spending in a state shows that many cases are either high in leverage or have large residuals (Figure 2.1). Note the aforementioned points of Virginia and Texas on the far extreme of the x-axis are states where John Kerry in 2004 and George W. Bush in

\textsuperscript{21} Louisiana in the 1996 Republican nomination campaign as well as Michigan and Florida in the 2008 Democratic nomination campaign all saw candidates sign pledges to avoid campaigning there despite their names being included on the ballot.

\textsuperscript{22} See Appendix for a complete list of candidates who did not accept federal matching funds.
2000 allocated large portions of their vast resources for personal, consulting, advertising and logistical expenses.

**Figure 2.1**
Leverage and Squared Residuals of Spending on State Compression

Robust regression is a useful tool when there is potential for outliers to be present within the data that could influence the regression coefficients. Outlying observations are subsequently down-weighted in order to diminish their influence and extremely outlying observations are weighted at zero removing their influence entirely. Some states that are large and delegate rich see more variability in their movement around the nomination calendar across recent election cycles reflecting the changing norms of campaign finance. They also on the balance have political influence in more areas. For instance these states have important members of congressional leadership, produce presidential candidates, are
important to the general election strategy of both parties or simply have large delegations in the House of Representatives. Small and medium sized states that are not as politically influential in other areas such as in the House of Representatives or the Electoral College behave more uniformly in seeking to exert influence in this process. The varying size and influence of states within the realm of American politics must be accounted for. A least squares regression that is weighted and reweighted does just that.

**Results and Discussion**

The expectation is for there to be continuous and significant positive results across nomination cycles, indicating that there is, in fact, a tangible state-level benefit to those who contribute to the compression of the nomination calendar by moving their contests earlier. This expectation is affirmed by the results. Table 2.1 indicates the explanatory variables chosen, with the exception of the states holding contests alone on a given day were all statistically significant in the predicted direction. Lead by the size of a state’s delegation. This should come as no surprise as these states being the nation's largest and thus having the most voters to reach should take a good deal of resources to compete in.

These results also serve to illustrate the growing importance of Super Tuesday and the primacy of the New Hampshire primary as states associated with those two key events see a significantly positive relationship with their share of candidate resources. The notion that so-called native sons are instrumental in helping to advance their states towards the front of the nomination calendar (or are perhaps the motivation for other actors to do so) also gains affirmation from these results. The presence of a native son in the race could also require the other candidates to spend more in a state in order to
neutralize that advantage. In either or both cases the result offers intriguing theoretical possibilities.

**Table 2.1**
*Effect of Compression on Total Spending in All Presidential Nomination Contests 1976-2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>% Total Spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compression</td>
<td>0.00256***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000825)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Son</td>
<td>0.310***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0858)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Tuesday</td>
<td>0.229***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0736)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of Delegation</td>
<td>0.510***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo Contest</td>
<td>0.0578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0689)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Border</td>
<td>0.481***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.238***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0533)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

While a 0.00256% gain in candidate disbursement for moving up a day might not seem important enough to alter a state’s behavior in a meaningful way, consider that it is a percentage of total spending by all candidates. One need only look at the record breaking 2008 Democratic nomination campaign where the candidate disbursements exceeded $650,113,038.20, to see the potential impact. In that campaign a state moving its contest one day closer to Iowa relative to the 2004 Democratic nomination campaign
would benefit $1,664,289.38 in candidate disbursements for each advanced day. More frightening from the perspective of a state, they could lose out on that amount by failing to move up. Being that there is additionally the unknowable spending that comes from media attention within a state as well as whatever benefit comes to a state from perhaps helping to nominate a candidate in line with their preferences, there is a large and demonstrable financial incentive for states to further the compression of the nomination calendar all else equal. This tangible benefit can be extrapolated to include the intangible benefit of influence as we have seen.

Of course all states are not equal and it would be folly to suggest that it is a universal truth for a state to move its contest forward independent of circumstances. States have those basic party rules that constrain how far forward they can move and as the above results indicate the benefit to going alone is far from certain compared to the other variables, and of course there is nothing a state can do to alter its geography or grow in size. The only variable that states have the unfettered ability to alter is whether they chose to hold a primary election or to allow the state party to run a caucus or convention system. As these are very different types of events that draw a discernibly distinct electorate from the other, it is logical to expect that they will receive a reflective difference in attention.
Table 2.2
Effect of Compression on Total Spending in in Primary or Caucus/Convention
Contests 1976-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Caucus/Convention % Total</th>
<th>Primary % Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compression</td>
<td>0.00150** (0.000620)</td>
<td>0.00359** (0.00140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Son</td>
<td>0.0159 (0.0833)</td>
<td>0.615*** (0.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Tuesday</td>
<td>-0.100 (0.0734)</td>
<td>0.350*** (0.112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Delegation</td>
<td>0.443*** (0.0270)</td>
<td>0.518*** (0.0264)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo Contest</td>
<td>-0.0606 (0.0527)</td>
<td>0.281** (0.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Border</td>
<td>0.729*** (0.0933)</td>
<td>0.160 (0.204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.130** (0.0567)</td>
<td>-0.228*** (0.0814)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-Squared</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Distinctly different incentive structures emerge between primaries and caucuses (Table 2.2). For a caucus to go alone, they receive a lesser share of the overall percentage of candidate spending than they would have otherwise. The same problem exists for a caucus state if it holds its contest on Super Tuesday. The rules of caucuses are distinct in each state and candidates must allocate not just financial resources to those states, but technical resources as well. For campaigns that don not posses this highly sought-after expertise, the proposition of traveling to an out of the way caucus or ignoring the bigger Super Tuesday prizes might not be worth the expense. Even for caucus states though, going earlier is helpful in receiving attention from the candidates. A native son candidate
is not as demonstrably helpful to a caucus state as he or she is to a state with a primary. This might speak to the particular needs of a political organization required to court the smaller electorate often seen in a caucus environment being not worth the trouble to candidates who must face a native of that state’s political culture. Or it simply may be that caucus states do not have the same quantity or quality of candidate seeking office from them, as there are fewer of them, and they tend to be in smaller states.

Due in part to their prevalence within the data the results for the primary more closely resemble those of the full model and indicate that those contests hold a greater sway over the conduct of the nomination campaign generally. Large delegate-rich states, states that participate in Super Tuesday, as well as those who hold an exclusive contest on a specific date and states that have native son candidates in the race all benefit from moving their primary forward in a significant way. When observing these results side by side it is a fair conclusion that compression has benefited primary states more than it has states that insist upon maintaining a caucus/convention system, save of course Iowa and its leadoff precinct caucuses.

**Conclusion**

The states possessing a good deal of autonomy in the timing and structure of their contests benefit in a tangible way from moving them closer to the front of the nomination calendar. Candidates disburse a greater percentage of the total contests spending within a state that contributes to the compression of the nomination calendar. Absent a more stern guiding hand from the party central committee, there is no reason to believe that the current trend toward compression will subside. When deciding when to hold a contest,  

---

23 The only post McGovern-Fraser nominees from caucus holding states were Walter Mondale in 1984 and Robert Dole in 1996. Both were well known nationally the former a former Vice President and the later the Senate Majority Leader at the time of his nomination Both lost decisively in the general election.
the incentives for states support scheduling an earlier date. The behavior of other states should not deter a state from moving up, as there is benefit to holding a primary on Super Tuesday or alone.

States operate in an environment of relative uncertainty in which the decisions of other states can and do have an impact on what they do. A state might be accustomed to holding its contest in the spring, concurrent with a traditional local election day, only to find that it has been surpassed by several states and now sits behind many of its peers in the sequence. This was the case for Wisconsin in 2000. Their traditionally important March primary failed to see a competitive contest on either the Republican or Democratic side. In 2004 Wisconsin moved their presidential primary into February away from other statewide primary elections, and two full weeks before Super Tuesday, in order to ensure that Wisconsin voters would not be left out of presidential selection in that cycle. In 2004 Wisconsin played a decisive role in helping John Kerry finish off a former top-tier Democratic challenger in Howard Dean (Trippi 2005). While Wisconsin acted in response to a changing environment in order to have influence over the 2004 nomination it had some advantages. It was a state with a sizeable delegation, holding a primary on a date that it held exclusively and early enough to see an active campaign from several candidates. A state of its size can make a decision to move up, even to Super Tuesday and feel confident that it will benefit from that decision even if other states crowd around it.

States, especially smaller states, would be wise to consider the utility in maintaining a caucus system given the shifting structure of the compressed nomination campaign. Caucus states already artificially shrink the electorate by not holding a
statewide election. Candidates appear less likely to place serious resources in to caucus states if there are concurrent states where they can also compete. A smaller state that holds a caucus is in a different position than Wisconsin was after 2000. They can move their contest up in the calendar and see no significant impact. Holding the caucus alone nationally does not help and holding the event on Super Tuesday increases the prospect of being bypassed for more delegate rich states.

The structure of a state’s contest is important to those marginal states with small delegations to the national convention. Those states operate at the mercy of what their larger, and more politically important peer states do. For every other state these results do nothing to dissuade from the notion that sequence is important, and that going earlier is better for states seeking attention from the candidates, and the active campaign that comes with it. As long as this is the case we should not expect the nomination calendar to become less compressed without the intervention of non-state actors like a party central committee.
CHAPTER III

STRATEGIC CANDIDATE ENTRY

In this portion of the dissertation, I examine how the compressed nomination has impacted the entry of candidates into the nomination campaign. I do so utilizing a unique dataset covering the invisible primary period from the 1980 through 2008 in competitive campaigns for both the Democratic and Republican candidates over that span of time. I seek to determine the effect that compression has had on the entry of candidates into the nomination campaign.

The states who are the driving force behind the compression of the nomination calendar have at least the theoretical prospect of being reigned in by the central committee and party rules. With no sanctioning body or constitutional limitations on campaigning, the candidates themselves are able to begin their campaigns as soon as they see it in their best interest to do so.

With early success still highly sought after, an increasing expense to running for office and the ongoing compression of the nomination calendar, we should expect to see an invisible primary period marked by candidates responding to this changing environment. Those candidate responses could potentially impact the composition of the field and timing of their decisions. In this chapter, I examine the candidate’s entry into the nomination race over time, in an attempt to determine if changes in structural factors
such as the compressed nomination calendar, have played a role in the timing of when individuals make the decision to formally become candidates.

The term most commonly used to describe the pre-campaign period in which potential candidates try to best position themselves for the upcoming campaign is the “invisible primary”. As the name suggests, much of what is done during this period is done outside of public view. The deliberations that potential candidates go through are not fully knowable until they begin to publicly act in a way resembling how an office seeker might behave. While the impact of compression is chiefly important to this analysis, it is impossible to look at the behavior of presidential contenders in a unidimensional way. Each nomination cycle offers a contextually unique series of circumstances that must be taken into account. Through observation of the public behavior of candidates for their party’s nomination, analysis of the political environment in which decisions are made, as well as the structural factors that shape a party’s nomination contest, it will be possible to develop a greater understanding of when the decision to formally become a candidate is being made.

When a contender for the nomination decides to formally become a presidential candidate they are able to fundraise, secure endorsements, garner greater interest from the media on their activities and persuade the party faithful as to the value of their candidacy. Previous analyses of candidate behavior in nomination campaigns have utilized these variables in assessing the duration of a campaign (Adkins and Dowdle 2002; Hinckley and Green 2006; Adams and Merril 2008; Damore et al. 2010). While this work is important in assessing the behavior of candidates exiting the nomination contest, there is still a fundamental lack of understanding as to the conditions that impact the entry of
candidates into the nomination campaign. Theoretically, there is a problem in the study of candidate behavior when the subjects are not yet candidates. The “invisibility” of their activities makes observation of activity related to a campaign difficult. There is no way of knowing if their public behavior is with an eye towards higher office, what their intentions are, or even who should be observed. I hypothesize that there are structural and environmental factors that play into this decision process that are instrumental to candidate entry. The decision that individual candidates must make as to when to launch a campaign for the nomination are in fact contextual to not only the national political environment but to the structure of the nomination calendar and the context of the intra-party competition in which they are to be engaged.

There are also candidate-specific qualities that provide different incentives for entry into a nomination race. Front-runners have less incentive to become declared candidates than challengers attempting to marshal a momentum-based campaign based on early state success. Some candidates are serving in offices that demand a good amount of their time and energy, as well as their political skill and tact. Others are free from those constraints and able to take positions on the issues of the day without concern for the consequences of governing. The different political needs of the individual candidates will play an important role in the decision process and are considered carefully in this analysis.

There are difficulties in measuring structural and environmental factors to be sure, but the most difficult undertaking in this study is in the data points of the candidates themselves. It is first impossible to evaluate who did not run for President and how they are different and similar to those that did. Which factors might have led a politician who
seemingly had every advantage in place and opportunity to run such as Mario Cuomo in 1992 or Collin Powell in 2000 to decide against running? Where they aware of some lacking strategic element? Similarly what motivates politicians like Lamar Alexander in 1996 or Chris Dodd in 2008 to leave their senate seat and pursue a long shot presidential campaign, when their names are not even included in public opinion polls and they have no real base of national support. It would be difficult to call such accomplished men irrational, but their actions defy theoretical expectations and provide a challenging element to this analysis.

Despite these difficulties in measuring and the many inherent unknowables that bedevil this analysis, my expectation is that not only are candidates entering the nomination race earlier in the contemporary era, but also candidates that do not hold office are the predominant drivers of an earlier entry that is occurring. These candidates are able to dedicate substantial time to fundraising and are not constrained by a constituency in position-taking. This is a consequence of a compressed nomination calendar. Additionally, I expect to find that front-runners are not impacted by structural factors in the same way that challengers are. They have built-in advantages of name recognition and fundraising that allow them to make decisions that are optimal from their perspective with less regard for the early actions of their competition. Entry into the race and the subsequent electioneering serves to equate them with their fellow challengers, expose them to criticism and force position taking on issues as they arise.

In this analysis of candidate entry, I look at three factors that are key to when a candidate enters the nomination campaign. Chief among these is the structure of the nomination campaign that cycle. This is where the compression of the race has
heightened the imperative for early success and forced the nomination campaign to a more rapid conclusion. Second, is the contextual political environment in which every nomination campaign takes place. The other candidates and feelings of voters regarding both parties and the incumbent president can shape the narrative and tactics of a candidate’s campaign. Third is the quality of the candidates themselves. Front-runners and candidates occupying high office face a different electoral reality than candidates seeking to introduce themselves to potential supporters. The electorate must know a candidate before he or she can make a convincing argument as to their qualities for serving in higher office.

**Structure of the Nomination Race**

Compression has led to a much different pace in the nomination campaign once statewide contests begin to be held. It has not, however, altered where the beginning of the campaign takes place. The stable presence of Iowa and New Hampshire at the front of the nomination calendar has provided a level of predictability for candidates and their campaigns. Organizational resources can be best utilized in these two well-positioned states that have survived challenges to their prominence over time. Challenges such as those launched by Louisiana in 1996\(^{24}\) or Michigan in 2008\(^{25}\) have been met with sanctions from the national committee to their national convention delegate, pledged

---

\(^{24}\) Louisiana moved it’s party caucuses to February 6, 1996 ahead of Iowa’s February 12\(^{th}\) caucuses against party rules and after all major candidates had announced and made multiple appearances in Iowa. Iowa officials gathered signed pledges from President Bill Clinton, Republican front-runner Bob Dole and his chief challenger Steve Forbes to not campaign in that state.

\(^{25}\) Michigan challenged the right of New Hampshire to hold its traditional first in the nation primary in 2007 by scheduling their contest for January 15, 2008 ahead of New Hampshire. New Hampshire responded by moving their contest to January 8\(^{th}\) in response. The Republican National Committee responded by stripping Michigan of 50% of its delegates to the Republican Nation Convention. The Democratic National Committee stripped Michigan of all delegates to the 2008 convention and thanks to an obscure provision under Michigan law most major candidates for the Democratic nomination successfully had their names removed from the ballot.
campaign boycotts from the candidates and even the demanded removal of candidates from the ballot. Even if the sequential nature of the contest thereafter has been accelerated, candidates can be all but certain from these past experiences that Iowa and New Hampshire will be the first to record their preferences.

Though much has changed, candidates who wish to mount a successful campaign for their party’s nomination in a compressed calendar are not unlike their forbearers in the back-loaded contests of the 1970’s and 80’s in where they will start out. The underlying conditions under which candidates make their decisions will include the compressed calendar and the need to quickly mount a nationwide effort after those entrenched early states. As previously noted, the expense of running for the nomination has gone up exponentially and the available time to fundraise off of early success has been severely constrained by the forward movement of states. It is a growing imperative that candidates have the infrastructure of a winning campaign in place, as there is far less time to build it as they go.

The increasing expense of running for president is a non-trivial byproduct of having the presidential nomination decided by an electorate instead of a peer-reviewed convention-oriented system. Campaigns, especially those that cover multiple states, require extensive resources in order to communicate their message to a broad and diverse electorate. Seemingly, candidates for the nomination should be well known to begin with (as is the case with all front-runners) or begin a campaign very early in order to increase their profile and fundraising potential. It is in this regard that compression has potentially altered the decision of would be candidates as to when they might begin their campaign for the nomination.
The invisible primary period is critical to candidate success given the shorter amount of time available for a momentum-based campaign to take hold. Delegate-based strategies under which candidates can skip early states and focus their efforts on more advantageous political ground have proven unsuccessful for long-shot candidates and even front-runners (Trippi 2005). The compressed calendar created by the state legislatures and state parties has crafted an environment of heightened media scrutiny on early events and a lack of potential alternate routes towards winning the nomination (Meyer 2001; Winnebrenner 1998).

Strategic-minded politicians who wish to pursue their party’s nomination are unconstrained as to when they can begin their campaign. They are free to go to Iowa and New Hampshire for events, meet with donors and activists, and take action on issues that they think will be important to their partisan base as early as they think will be fruitful. Potential candidates are frequent visitors to these early states, whether they end up declaring for the nomination or not (Hull 2007). Knowing where to begin their campaigns, the outsized importance of the results generated from those contests and having no governing body to constrain or in any way sanction the start of a campaign provides a candidate lacking name recognition or otherwise motivated, to begin their campaign activities sooner.

**Political Environment**

While the compressed nomination calendar has been the most visible alteration in the system since 1972, there are contextual factors that make each party’s nomination race unique to any given cycle. First, and perhaps foremost, is related to the incumbent president. There is no political figure in the United States that exerts the level of
influence and generates strong feelings both positively and negatively as the incumbent president. There is a high correlation of feelings both positive and negative towards the president and feelings towards the president’s party (Beck 1991; Lebo and Cassino 2007; Nicholson et al. 2003). The presence of an incumbent president defines the fall campaign for both parties. For the opposition party, an incumbent president that is unpopular affords the opportunity to promptly provide an alternative program of governance. A popular incumbent forces the opposition party into the unenviable position of parsing differences and providing a tacit level of support for key programs.

When a president is leaving office and the party is attempting to hold the White House, they are in a position to defend the status quo for governance. They are advantaged by the popularity of the President and similarly disadvantaged if he is unpopular. Candidates for the nomination who are representing the party in power are subject to a different messaging environment than members of the opposition party, and face pressure to support the policy decisions of the President. There is also concern that presence of the campaign represents a de facto end of the current President’s term prematurely accelerating him into a lame duck. Activist support and attention shift to the next president and away from pressuring officials into support for the administration’s program. There should be a greater reluctance by potential candidates of the party in power to begin a campaign that will in some measure damage a President of their party. That is to say that there is a political price to be paid with the base for a candidate going against or in any way damaging the governing agenda of the President. This was an admitted concern for Vice President Gore in planning his bid to succeed President Clinton in 2000. The presumptive nominee was by his own admission attempting to
“respectfully” distance himself from the current administration and seek an opportune date for formally becoming a candidate that would not overshadow the policy objectives of the Clinton administration in 1999 (Turque 2000).

Once a nomination campaign has begun, there is little use for a potential candidate in waiting to join it, once he or she has determined to do so. The presence of intra-party competition can be a source of cross-pressure for a candidate to begin their campaign. When other candidates begin to actively campaign for the nomination, courting activist support in important early states, seeking and acquiring endorsements and raising money they gain an advantage over any potential candidate that delays a campaign start. This is a problem that should compound itself as more candidates enter the race. There are only so many activists in Iowa and New Hampshire to go around, only so many endorsements to be had and a finite amount of days to persuade potential supporters before the voting begins.

**Candidate Quality**

In the aforementioned categories the decisions of potential candidates are made in relative equality. Nomination candidates in any given cycle share an electoral environment and compete under the same rules using the same nomination calendar as their competition. In reality, each potential candidate enters into a race for their party’s nomination with very different prospects for winning, different political skills, and different constraints on their time.

The front-runner has less of an incentive to begin the campaign than candidates who seek to build a momentum-based campaign. Front-runners benefit from a status quo that vaulted them to the top of their party’s list for potential presidents absent any active
campaigning on their part. Once they become a candidate, they are subjected to the kinds of questions posed by the media and activists that force them to clarify positions on issues, they are contrasted with those of fellow candidates who are elevated to their status, and potential voters begin to more seriously evaluate their credentials and positions against potential alternatives.

Would-be-candidates who seek their party’s nomination and trail the front-runner in public opinion polls would seem to benefit from beginning their campaign as soon as possible. The have to make up a deficit in support that requires them to build up their name recognition and increase their fundraising potential. Previous nomination campaigns have shown that a candidate who is far behind in the polls and trying to build a momentum-based campaign must do so in the early states using a retail politicking strategy (Greer 1988; Hull 2007). This is a time-intensive process that requires that candidate to spend time on the ground in Iowa and New Hampshire. Starting ahead of like-minded candidates with similar objectives and limitations would further incentivize potential candidates to begin electioneering activities.

The length of the nomination campaign, cost and strategic decision-making required to successfully gain a party’s nomination would most certainly qualify as a full-time job for a candidate. So too would the job of United States Senator, Governor of a major state or congressional representative. Managing both an important office in government as well as mounting a campaign for the most expensive and highly sought after office in American politics is difficult to do well concurrently. For instance, after launching his candidacy for the Democratic nomination Barack Obama missed 78.9%26

of the votes held in the United States Senate from September through the end of 2007. Fellow candidates Chris Dodd, Joe Bidden and Hillary Clinton missed 68%, 65% and 63% of votes respectively. This is before the rigors of the general election campaign that offers virtually non-stop campaigning from the nominating convention through election night. Some of the votes missed can be on important issues to the party base such as then candidate Obama’s abstention from voting on the expansion of State Children’s Health Insurance Program, a very popular program with base Democrats in that cycle. Other votes might be important to the candidates existing constituency and challenge the candidate’s priorities. When a candidate misses 4 out of every 5 votes in the United States Senate, he is also missing time on the campaign trail when he returns to Washington to vote on those other occasions. Candidates that do not face the cross-pressures of campaigning and elected office are at an advantage and have the luxury to begin their campaign free of this dilemma.

**Data and Methods**

In order to determine how the structure of the nomination campaign, political environment and candidate quality are important to the strategic entry of candidates into the race, I have compiled a unique data set to encompass variables representing the aforementioned categories. I test the theoretical premise that these are important, utilizing a log logistical parametric hazard model for the duration of an eventual presidential candidate’s deliberation period. The candidate’s theoretical deliberation period is during the invisible primary, which begins the day after the midterm election prior to the presidential cycle and ends when there is a declared race for the nomination. The hazard term that represents the entry of the candidate into the nomination campaign is the date
that they begin fundraising activities, not their formal announcement that has become a staged event meant to garner media attention and is not in anyway the beginning of formal electioneering activities. The candidate’s filing of with the Federal Election Commission of an official Political Action Committee is when they can begin to actually accumulate the resources necessary to conduct any other activities and represents a clear delineation from the behavior of a prospective candidate to the behavior of a candidate for his or her party’s nomination for the presidency.

The data omits the 1980 Democratic and 1992 Republican nomination contests in which a sitting President was challenged. This is necessary to maintain a standard theoretical direction. Candidate entry for a sitting president is much more of an organic process than it is for a challenger. The presence of a challenger is motivated by the perceived weakness of a sitting president and the disappointment of fellow partisans (Fleisher and Bond 1983, Stone 1984, Norrander 1986). This is an irregular event and changes the behavior of the incumbent president who does not otherwise engage in an intra-party contest. With those omissions there are a total of 72 unique cases representing the candidates who competed in the Democratic and Republican contests between 1980 and 2008. Competition for the nomination is defined as declaring as a candidate, being invited to participate in a officially sponsored candidate forum or debate and appearing on the ballot in either the New Hampshire primary or the Iowa prescient caucuses. This allows the omission of candidates who form exploratory committees, drop out prior to the contest and/or fringe candidates such as Lyndon LaRouche27 who run as a spectacle or without any realistic chance of party support.

---

27 Lyndon LaRouche ran for the Democratic nomination in every cycle between 1976 and 2004 more than once while incarcerated. His views are on government are centered on his interpretation of Plato’s Republic.
The data compiled is done so for the purposes of directly modeling the time dependency exhibited in the invisible primary period by the eventual candidates. I model the time preceding the nomination campaign before the event of their entry. In this type of event history model the “failure” times of each candidate should rise over time as they draw nearer to the initial selection contest. The covariates that I have compiled reflect a condition that theoretically provides greater propensity for a candidate failing to remain out of the nomination race or more accurately to enter it. Non-parametric event history equations are most useful in studies with relatively small samples. In this study, the 72 candidates provide 8760 days of invisible primary deliberation and thus an empirical test as to the probability that a candidate will enter the nomination race at a given point under observable conditions in such a large sample is needed. A parametric model is more appropriate given the nature of the data to be analyzed and that there is a theoretical expectation that the distribution of the hazard rate will be predictably shaped. Candidates will tend to enter the nomination race close to one another fairly early in a given cycle with exceptions entering the race later rather than earlier. If my hypothesis is affirmed and the model correctly specified, candidates are entering the nomination race earlier in a more compressed nomination calendar and the distribution of the hazard rate should be right-skewed. There should also be more variation in the back-loaded period prior to 1988 when there was more strategic variation in how candidates pursued the nomination. Learning from those missteps has informed contemporary candidates.

The principal variable of interest in an event history equation is time. In this analysis each date from the midterm election is a separate observation. Once again failure
is the date in which a candidate files paperwork with the Federal Elections Commission creating an official political action committee to begin fundraising. The covariates of interest in this application reflect the theoretical categories I have previously specified as instrumental to a candidate’s decision to launch his or her nomination campaign.

Beginning with the structure of the nomination race I have created the chief variable of interest to reflect the compression of the calendar. As this dissertation explores the impact of compression on the nomination of presidential candidates, it is essential to properly conceptualize compression from the perspective of a deliberating candidate. For this, I choose to represent the compression phenomenon as the percentage of delegates to the national convention that are awarded prior to April of the election year. As discussed previously there has been a pressing, forward movement by large numbers of states as the reform era has matured. Though, as the results of chapter two indicate large states with a high percentage of delegates are strategically important to candidates. The movement of delegate rich states can have an outsized impact on the strategic behavior of candidates and should be reflected in this equation.

The variables created for the purpose of reflecting the dynamics contextual to the political environment of a given nomination cycle, include to begin with the candidate’s position in national tracking polls. Specifically, the polling distance each candidate is behind the front-runner on that day. While the invisible primary is short on many objective measures for evaluating the strength of a candidacy this does not stop the rampant speculation that goes along with the pursuit of the nation’s highest office from media organizations. Since 1980 the Gallup organization has polled for every
nomination very shortly before the midterm election and with increasing frequency thereafter.

The strength of the incumbent president is measured through their approval rating. Presidential approval is tracked weekly by Gallup and reported for that day. I hypothesize that an unpopular president will provide an inviting opportunity for candidates to vie to replace him and bring about earlier entry. A binary measure is included for the party in power, defined as the party holding the White House. The party occupying the presidency should constrain candidate entry. That said, not all presidents are popular within their own party to the same degree. To measure the president’s intraparty popularity, I examine their relationship with their party in Congress. The most refined measure available is the level of agreement with their party’s Roll Call votes in the House of Representatives for that cycle. The percentage of concurrence between the two should reflect the level of influence the President has with the party’s potential pool of candidates. A president who is a legislative ally within a party should deter the start of a nomination campaign to replace him. A president unpopular with the legislative actors in the opposition party will conversely by his presence encourage the commencement of a nomination campaign to replace him to begin sooner.

The final variable to evaluate the political environment of a given election cycle is the size of the field. Candidates can be forced to make decisions based on the presence of exogenous events. One of these that can quickly bring about the onset of a campaign is the presence of other candidates in the race. When making decisions based on static factors, the potential candidate still is in a position to deliberate. Once the first candidate declares and commences the nomination campaign, a delay is more costly as there is an
effort being made to court needed supporters. I hypothesize that the hazard rate will increase rapidly as more candidates get into the race, as it creates an imperative to begin competing in earnest for the resources necessary to mount an effective nomination campaign.

Candidate quality is difficult to conceptualize in a nomination campaign. When discussing congressional candidates, incumbency is of paramount importance, term of service in the legislature can be critical in strengthening the advantage of incumbency and, of course, high fundraising receipts make a candidate more formidable still (Carson et al. 2007; Maestas and Rugeley 2008). These notions are not directly analogous to a presidential nomination campaign, as there are various levels of incumbency outside of the presidency that are difficult to delineate from one another. How would one evaluate the incumbency of a governor over that of a Senator or a member of the House of Representatives? In the nomination campaigns encompassed within this dataset there has been present a business magnate, former Vice President, a Senator and/or a Governor that have been out of office for a number of years, mayors of large cities, former cabinet officials, civil rights activists and even a popular televangelist. Though the list of contenders often demonstrates incredible diversity is impossible to ignore that some candidates are superior to their rivals, even if they are categorically similar. Instead of attempting to parse the differences of incumbency for the various offices and positions I have tried to delineate legitimate contenders for the nomination from those candidates who are using the nomination campaign to advance a cause or their career through improving their public profile.
There is a type of candidate influential recurring in most every cycle who is either the safely entrenched incumbent of a gerrymandered congressional district or often times not an elected office holder at all when they begin a run for the nomination. These candidates are able use the profile of the nomination campaign to advance their particular issues. These men and women are what Norrander (2006) refers to as attention-seeking candidates. They usually do not have a realistic chance of winning their party’s nomination, but want to participate in the debates and the campaign to advance the cause or ideology that they champion. They are not to be excluded from this analysis as they have an impact on the nomination campaign, not just philosophically, but quite tangibly by collecting support and later votes. To account for their ideological difference, I have included a variable that measures their deviation from the mean opinion of the party in Congress. This is calculated by rating their public positions where they exist on key issues that are germane to that particular election cycle on a 5 pt. scale.

The closest that a candidate for the nomination comes to a something of an incumbency advantage would be having run previously for their party’s nomination. Having put together a field organization, filed delegate slates and competed in a multi-candidate, intra-party nomination campaign these candidates have presented themselves to a national partisan electorate and, as such, have a profile and experience that is invaluable. Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bob Dole, Al Gore and John McCain all captured their party’s nomination after a previous unsuccessful attempt. Respecting this invaluable institutional memory, I have created a binary measure in this analysis indicating a previous run.
Non-office holding candidates are advantaged in being able to dedicate copious amounts of time and effort to campaigning in a way that office holders responsive to an existing constituency cannot and are identified within the data. I have created a binary variable for candidates holding no elected office to identify this lack of constraint.

My hypothesis is that there will be a significant positive relationship between the variables in all three categories. Being that the only variable that serves to explain the compression of the nomination race is the percentage of delegates selected prior to April, this variable is of great concern. While there is also great explanatory potential in each of the remaining covariates, the candidate quality measures dealing with ideology and previous run should demonstrate a significant relationship in inverse directions. More ideological candidates will exhibit a greater hazard rate for entry, while a previous run should be negatively significant as candidates that have been through the a prior nomination campaign have less urgency in introducing themselves to the electorate and beginning their campaign.

**Results and Discussion**

Before discussing the parameter estimates of the full model of candidate duration, let us first observe the pattern of candidate entry at a base level. Candidates were more prone to early entry in the less compressed nomination seasons of 1980 and 1984 than they were from 1988-2008 when compression became a reality for a nomination campaign. Looking only at the mean duration until entry shown in Table 3.1 there was a propensity amongst the relatively few candidates in the two back-loaded nomination cycles to begin their campaigns roughly a month and a half earlier than later candidates in a compressed calendar, and with less variation. This neither affirms nor disproves the
hypothesis that compression leads to early candidate entry as this table shows that the frontloaded contests after 1984 have many more candidates and a wider range of time reflected in their decisions. A more refined measure of compression will help to illuminate this point.

Table 3.1
Candidate Entry by Era

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELECTORAL ERA</th>
<th>OBSERVATIONS</th>
<th>MEAN ENTRY</th>
<th>STANDARD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86.85</td>
<td>90.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-2008</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>130.05</td>
<td>100.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hazard rate for the two eras is demonstrated in Figure 3.1 and shows this dichotomous pattern. There is an observable difference in the slope that can lead us to contend that there was a very systematic period of early candidate entry in those two cycles.
The examination of the effect compression has on candidate entry purely as a measure of a front-loaded campaign against a back-loaded campaign speaks counter to the hypothesis that I have expressed but is absent the contextual factors unique to elections and candidates and is merely a blunt measure of compression. Nevertheless, the counterintuitive results of early entry being more prevalent when it was less of an imperative for candidates provide validation for the use of the covariates previously described. The context of the race and the more refined measure of compression discussed previously, provide needed clarity to a discussion on candidate entry into the nomination race.

While the results of the parametric log-logistical hazard equation do not validate all of the more ambitious hypothesis that I have expressed for the covariates, they do
affirm two hypotheses that can provide greater insight into the effect that compression is having on the pool of candidates in contemporary nomination campaigns.

Observing the parameterized estimates for the coefficients in Table 3.1 it is of primary interest that the compression variable is negatively signed. A negatively assigned coefficient implies that the expected duration decreases for changes in the value of the covariate. The compression covariate parses the differences between all of the nomination cycles by measuring the percentage of delegates awarded by April of the nomination year. The approximately -2.6 days of a potential candidate's time before seeking the nomination associated with a 1 unit increase in the percentage of delegates awarded earlier in the nomination calendar is in line with my hypothesis, though the measure itself does not reach a level of statistical significance.

The two covariates that provide the most explanatory value in this equation are both reflections of the quality of the candidate. The ideology of the candidate running and the lack of constraints that candidate has in terms of holding elected office during his or her campaign are both negatively signed and statistically significant. The approval of the President, the President’s party, the President’s level of agreement with his party, and the polling done on the nomination race have surprisingly not been significantly determinative to the entry of candidates into the nomination campaign.

The covariate representing candidates who have experienced previous runs does not adhere to my hypothesis. It is possible that candidates who have run previously have done so for different objectives and non-office seeking candidates who run for the nomination in multiple cycles have skewed the results. Democratic candidate and civil rights activist Jesse Jackson seems particularly instrumental here as he was very late to
declare in both the 1984 and 1988 nomination campaigns.

Table 3.2
Model of Expected Duration Before Becoming a Presidential Candidate Parameterized as Log-Logistical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>(S.E.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Delegates awarded prior to April</td>
<td>2.678</td>
<td>(3.230)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party’s agreement with the President in the House</td>
<td>0.00485</td>
<td>(0.0369)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Approval</td>
<td>-0.0343</td>
<td>(0.0430)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling Distance from the Front-runner</td>
<td>-0.0447</td>
<td>(0.0342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Size</td>
<td>-17.36</td>
<td>(1,034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds No Office</td>
<td>-1.484**</td>
<td>(0.749)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Run</td>
<td>-0.305</td>
<td>(1.423)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviation from party mean in the House of Representatives</td>
<td>-1.966**</td>
<td>(0.784)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party in Power</td>
<td>-0.521</td>
<td>(1.461)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>28.32</td>
<td>(1,034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln_gam</td>
<td>-0.127</td>
<td>(0.115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>8,681</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
From these results, we see that candidates who do not hold elected office are beginning their campaigns for the nomination earlier than those who are constrained with the responsibilities of governing. Candidates that deviate significantly from the mean ideology of their party in Congress are also at a significantly greater hazard for entering into the nomination campaign than their more mainstream counterparts. This might indicate that the candidates who are most anxious to begin their campaign are more in line with Norrander’s (2006) attention-seekers as opposed to legitimate contenders for the nomination. Though there are many candidates who once held high office such as former Vice Presidents and Senators that run for their party’s nomination with a legitimate opportunity to victory they appear less anxious to enter the race.

The extent to which these ideological divergent and/or non-office holding candidates for the nomination are instrumental in the behavior of their rivals in terms of candidate entry is not known for these results. What does seem normatively troubling is that candidates who seek their party’s nomination can enter into the race later than a candidate who is campaigning with a message that is more ideological and without concern for a present constituency. Knowing that so much of the initial nomination campaign happens in the early states, and that these states have a profound impact on the composition of the field after them is a potential explanation for why the Iowa caucuses have gone so contrary to conventional wisdom in the in 2004 and 2008. The presence of early campaigns in those states, even if they are not successful ones, can have an impact on the conduct of other candidates as they enter into the race and find the environment changed and ideological positions becoming more salient.

The lack of definitive evidence that compression leads to a longer campaign on
the front end of the nomination campaign, even as the portion that involves electoral competition is compacted, is worrisome from the perspective of the voters. If the campaign for the nomination were ending sooner but also beginning sooner then one could make the argument that voters still have time to process information about the candidates and make an informed decision. If, however, the campaign is merely reaching a conclusion more rapidly, then one must be concerned that it is doing so before potential voters are adequately able to evaluate the candidates. In a subsequent chapter I examine this possibility in greater depth.

While the empirical results of this chapter are disappointing the normative implications for a study of this type of behavior are potentially profound and worthy of further pursuit. Can candidates campaign for the nomination and still govern effectively? If they decide they cannot, is the candidate pool becoming limited to exclude politicians who place an importance on serving their current constituency as opposed to advancing their own careers? Is compression placing a greater premium on politics as opposed to governing? The results of this analyses has offered far more questions than answers yet should begin a very important conversation as to the pressures inherent to the invisible primary period and whether or not they are exacerbated by the compression of the nomination calendar.
CHAPTER IV


The state and candidate behavior described in the previous chapters is evident in examination of the key actors who compete for nominations in a compressed era. States are conscious of one another, and where they place in the priority of candidates. Candidates are aware of the calendar, other candidates, and the political factors present as they position to run for their party’s nomination, even if those things are not always determinative in their decision-making. Candidates constrained in some way by more than a nomination electorate, and more in line with the ideological mainstream of their party are less likely to start their campaigns and compete for the nomination earlier in the invisible primary. In this chapter I will illustrate the applicability of this theoretical framework from the proceeding chapters by comparing behavior in the back-loaded 1984 Democratic contest, the last before Super Tuesday was a formalized idea, with the most compressed contest in history, the 2008 campaign for the Republican nomination.

The 1984 Democratic nomination campaign that was contested all the way to a floor vote at the convention, saw a different environment and decision structure from states and candidates than did the compressed 2008 Republican contest. That race, saw
a multi candidate field quickly winnowed, and a bitterly divided contest come to a quick conclusion after Super Tuesday. A Super Tuesday that was loaded with 20 statewide contests that included the three largest delegations to the Republican National Convention in; California, New York and Texas.

The principal challenger for the nomination, attempting to use early state momentum to topple a better financed and established front-runner is the paradigm in each of the two cases. In 1984, a single candidate who surprised in Iowa and won in New Hampshire personifies this. In 2008, it required two separate candidates each possessing a unique regional and ideological strength with the electorate and fueled by early success in states where the other did not compete.

A back-loaded nomination calendar allows for a campaign that reaches more states, those states are able to influence commiserate with factors little related to placement on the calendar. The size of the delegation, the unique political or demographic groupings housed within the states become important for candidates attempting to demonstrate viability and electability. The 1984 Democratic nomination contest, offered the opportunity for most every state in the union to have some say in choosing the party’s nominee. Iowa and New Hampshire gave long shot candidate Gary Hart a chance to be seen and heard by a national electorate. Large and economically diverse states that are must wins for Democrats in the general election like Illinois and Michigan were fiercely contested, and the African-American vote, which was and is of paramount importance to that party proved to be decisive in key Southern states. The 1984 nomination campaign was a protracted fight from the invisible primary on through to the summer convention.
From 1984 through 2008 as the nomination contests in both parties compressed, the decision dynamics that both states and candidates were engaged in, became dramatically different. Delegates were awarded with greater rapidity once voting began, causing a conflict between campaign momentum and viability narratives. States were increasingly holding statewide contests alongside one another forcing candidates to make difficult choices as to where they should allocate resources and when they should enter the nomination campaign. When they did enter they found ideological, unelected candidates already attempting to set the tone of the campaign. The invisible primary seasons shrank by months as Iowa and New Hampshire moved their contests back in order to maintain their privileged status in the front of the nomination calendar. This movement was in part a result of pressures created by states attempting to become more prominent in presidential selection with earlier contests.

Neither of these parties produced a successful presidential candidate in these respective cycles. The singular motivation of both the Democratic and Republican parties are to produce candidates who can win. They design rules and processes that they believe will serve to achieve this end at the presidential level. Yet national party committee’s do not have enough control to fully curtail state movements, outside of setting the basic window for when contests can occur. The changes that have occurred are not by design, but rather a manifestation of pressures placed upon the system from a dissatisfied constituency. When candidates do not satisfy every constituency, or states do not feel fully valued within the process then they advocate for self-interested positioning that favor them. This happens regardless of the outcome of the election, though electoral
defeat or party disunity, can certainly accentuate discontent and a desire for change. Two decades of this behavior manifest itself in the stark changes seen between 1984 and 2008.

**1984 Democratic Nomination Contest**

The Democrats had the nomination season to themselves in 1984, as Republican incumbent Ronald Reagan did not face an intra-party challenger. In 1972, 1976 and 1980 the party had seen competitive contests, and had tweaked the delegate selection rules and calendar, reflecting a concern that the process was overly reliant on early success, and not on the electability of the candidate (Herrera 1984; Kamarack 2008; Southwell 1989). The rules were rewritten to allow a three-month window in which states would be allowed to hold contests. It was hoped that this would encourage states to overlap their contests on the same pool of Tuesdays and thus prevent a unified bandwagon effect. This calendar would allow candidates to press their geographic and ideological advantages where they existed (Polsby, Wildvarsky and Hopkins 2007). This intention ultimately proved futile, in large part because Iowa and New Hampshire ignored the rules and were granted exceptions from the constraints of the three-month window. This fateful schedule and the nature of the candidates in the nomination campaign ensured that the early states would prove pivotal in anointing the principal challenger to the prohibitive favorite former Vice President Walter Mondale.

The candidates in 1984 represented a relatively diverse ideological and geographical subset of the Democratic Party and included many accomplished politicians.

---

28 After the contentious floor fight at the 1980 Democratic National Convention in which Edward Kennedy’s supporters tried to appeal and win over pledged Carter delegate’s reforms were instituted to allow a greater number of unpledged delegates or “super delegates” to the have voting delegate privileges. These privileges afforded to elected officials accounted for 14% of the delegates at the 1984 DNC. (See, Bringing Back the Parties, by David Price, Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984)
Four sitting United States Senators were competing in the race. Of the candidates who did not hold office at the start of their campaign, only Reverend Jackson’s policy positions tracked more liberal than the party mean in Congress. Former Governor Askew and former Vice President Mondale while not constrained by a constituency when they began their campaigns were both slightly more conservative than the House of Representatives Democratic party mean. The race for the 1984 Democratic nomination was seriously contested by candidates that were within the mainstream of the ideology held by the party’s elected leaders in Congress.

This nomination campaign is largely memorable for the insurgent campaign of Senator Gary Hart, as it was an object lesson in the importance of early state success that would scare many candidates from pursuing strategies that overlooked their importance from then on. For a dark horse candidate like Gary Hart the 1984 campaign offered the potential to unseat not just a front-runner but also a prohibitive favorite in Walter Mondale. The former Vice President and party stalwart who had been running a “rose garden” campaign since President Carter’s loss to Ronald Reagan in 1980. Even though Vice President Mondale did not have an elected office from which to base his run, he remained in the spotlight, a fixture on Sunday morning news programs and a regular on the state party Jefferson-Jackson dinner circuit throughout 1982 and 1983 (Doherty 2012). Hart although a Senator from Colorado and a veteran political warhorse from McGovern’s ill-fated 1972 run for the White House, was not considered a serious threat to capture the Democratic Party’s nomination. Not in field that aside from the former Vice President also contained the Senator McGovern himself, hero astronaut and Senator from Ohio John Glenn, Florida Governor Reubin Askew and Senators Alan Cranston of
California and Fritz Hollings of South Carolina. These men all had a higher profile within the party, and were from larger more electorally relevant states (Shapiro 2012). To further complicate Hart’s path to victory the Democratic Party’s practice of awarding delegates to candidates clearing a threshold of 15% in congressional districts gave liberal civil rights activist Jesse Jackson incentive to stay in the race for the duration, in order to amass delegates and attempt to influence the party platform at the convention (Barker 1988).

The invisible primary season was interminably long leading up to the nomination. Table 4.1 shows the lengthy time invested by the Democratic candidates prior to any vote cast in 1984. Six major candidates began to act in ways that are consistent with active candidacies29 more than a year before the first in the nation Iowa caucuses. These six that included Hart and Mondale, were soon joined by liberal lions, and nationally known Jesse Jackson and George McGovern in what could already be described as a crowded field behind Vice President Mondale. With an established front-runner and a calendar set up for a protracted contest after the early states, there was little room for multiple candidates to obtain momentum after New Hampshire’s results.

29 Registering a Political Action Committee with the Federal Elections Commission
 TABLE 4.1  
1984 Democratic Candidate Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Entry Date</th>
<th>Days to Iowa</th>
<th>Exit Date</th>
<th>Days after Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reubin Askew</td>
<td>November 2, 1982</td>
<td>+448</td>
<td>March 1, 1984</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Cranston</td>
<td>November 19,1982</td>
<td>+431</td>
<td>February 29, 1984</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Mondale</td>
<td>January 3, 1983</td>
<td>+387</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Hart</td>
<td>January 10, 1983</td>
<td>+380</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Hollings</td>
<td>January 18, 1983</td>
<td>+372</td>
<td>March 1, 1984</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George McGovern</td>
<td>September 18,1983</td>
<td>+115</td>
<td>March 14, 1984</td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Jackson</td>
<td>November 14, 1983</td>
<td>+71</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observing again the timeline of the five candidates that did not pursue the nomination all the way to convention, there was a hefty amount of time invested prior to any statewide contest, and then rapid withdraw after the early states. Considering the results of the Iowa caucuses were decisive in favor of Mondale, as conventional wisdom would have suggested prior to the event, it should come as no surprise that the herd would be culled in the wake of such a strong candidate. Mondale collected a commanding 49% of the vote in Iowa, with Hart a distant second at 16%.

Something that greatly benefited Hart in 1984, and would have benefited another candidate, who might have duplicated his early success, was a media hungry for new faces, and new stories after a static invisible primary period dominated by the stoic Mondale (Jurkowitz 1996; Farnsworth 2010). The nomination calendar allowed time between contests sufficient for the narrative of the race to be reassessed prior to the next contest. Therefore even though Hart finished a distant second to Mondale in Iowa, he was still a more interesting figure to discuss after months of Mondale’s inevitability serving as the pervasive backdrop for each story. Who was this Gary Hart who zoomed past more seasoned politicians? John Glenn who finished sixth in Iowa with only 4% of the vote
was damaged significantly by this development. The media had the time to focus nearly exclusively on the little known insurgent candidate who finished second in Iowa and went on to win the New Hampshire primary 8 days later, while Glenn finished a distant third behind Mondale and Hart.

Gary Hart’s name recognition as recorded by the National Election Survey increased by double digits in three weeks between the Iowa Caucuses and the contests of March 13th, the date in which the most delegates were at stake for any one day during that cycle (Bartels 1988, 265-275). This must have in part been driven by the media’s fixation on Gary Hart. In a study in which the author coded the content of coverage line by line over that course of the nomination campaign, Hart saw more than 50% of the coverage from United Press International stories over those three weeks (Baker 1989). This is incredible considering the relative distance he finished from Mondale in Iowa, and the paltry number of delegates he secured by winning the New Hampshire primary 8 days later. For Senator Glenn and the other candidates there was no way to recover from this turn as the nomination race began to unfold.

The race for the nomination in this cycle was redefined after the first results from Iowa and New Hampshire were known. Despite all of the time and effort expended by all of the candidates prior to the early state contests, the narrative of the race began anew once Gary Hart demonstrated a measure of viability in those early states. The amount of time spent by the candidates in the invisible primary, laying the ground work for their multi-state campaign strategy far exceeded the time they spend campaigning in those states once the voting had begun. All of these candidates spent resources and made personal appearances in New Hampshire and all but Jackson did so in Iowa. They all
invested heavily, but only Gary Hart was able to collect on that investment and move forward to challenge Mondale for the nomination. The media helped Gary Hart to be perceived as the challenger to Mondale after two states had weighed in. As the forces skeptical of Mondale in the Democratic Party coalesced around Hart the other candidates dropped out of the race despite their impressive credential, years of service, connections and fundraising potential. The people of Iowa and New Hampshire had spoken, and their message was amplified by the media to set the tone for the remainder of the race.

Gary Hart was not successful in his effort to secure the nomination. Mondale with his deep ties to Civil rights groups and organized labor, was able to absorb the surprising challenge from Hart and secure enough delegates to win the nomination in 1984. It took hard fought narrow victories in Illinois, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania in a stretch from late March through early April for Mondale to regain his footing as a front-runner and even then Hart maintained his stiff challenge winning contests in every month of the nomination calendar.

2008 Republican Nomination Contest

The 2008 Republican nomination contest saw a truncated contest that afforded the opportunity for a few states to play pivotal roles in selecting the party’s nominee due to their advantageous position on the nomination calendar, or the size of their delegation. Iowa propelled conservative evangelical favorite Mike Huckabee into the National spotlight, and the New Hampshire primary allowed John McCain to reemerge as his party’s front-runner. The first in the south, South Carolina primary was once again central in selecting the party’s nominee, and the delegate rich winner take-all Florida primary set the stage for a decisive Super Tuesday contest that saw the field winnowed
drastically thereafter. By the time it was essentially a two-candidate race between an establishment favorite and an ideological insurgent, more than 80% of the delegations to the national convention were already awarded.\(^\text{30}\)

The candidate slate in the 2008 Republican Primary featured top tier candidates that were unconstrained by the constituencies attached to an elected office. Former Governor Mike Huckabee, former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and former Senator Fred Thompson were all several years removed from their former positions. Mitt Romney, who began his campaign in the waning days of his term as Governor of Massachusetts, was not seeking reelection in that state concurrent to his attempt to secure the nomination. Only Senator John McCain of Arizona was currently serving a statewide constituency as he campaigned for the 2008 Republican nomination, and this was in a state that had not given a Democratic candidate a majority of its votes\(^\text{31}\) for the presidency since supporting Harry Truman over Thomas Dewey in 1948. The candidates seeking the nomination and holding office in the House of Representatives had not faced a serious challenge over the previous decade. Between 1984 and 2008 running for the party’s nomination and holding an elected office with a statewide constituency, became far less fashionable.

The Democratic and Republican National Committees had both reacted to Michigan and Florida’s attempts to challenge New Hampshire’s status as the first in the nation primary, by stripping those state’s of delegates to the National Convention. In the Democratic contests no delegates were awarded to either state as punishment, and as a result most candidates removed themselves from the ballots and refused to campaign in

\(^{30}\) Based on an AP estimate on February 9, 2008 the same day that Mitt Romney withdrew from the race and offered his endorsement to Senator McCain.

\(^{31}\) Bill Clinton narrowly defeated Bob Dole in Arizona in 1996 though he only secured 46.5% of the popular vote.
either, partly to satisfy a pledge from the New Hampshire Secretary of State (Berman 2012). The Republican National Committee was less heavy-handed than their Democratic counterparts and only sanctioned Michigan and Florida half of their delegates, and thus those states joined Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina in the “early window” of the nomination calendar. All other contests could begin no sooner than February 5, 2008. Table 4.2 shows the nomination calendar and the forward movement of many statewide contests.
TABLE 4.2
2008 Republican Nomination Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Change From 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>+85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Caucus/Convention</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Republican National Convention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two unique features that set the 2008 Republican nomination contest apart from all others. The first of which was the rapid demise of the front-runner in the early states of Iowa and New Hampshire. The other is the severity of the compression of the race. This heavily compressed structure plays a part in the demise of the front-runner. With 31 statewide contests between January 3, 2008 and February 5, 2008, there was little opportunity for a candidate to recover from early stumbles or to mount a rear guard action toward his party stalwarts the way Mondale had done in the 1984 Democratic contest.

No one was immune from the resource crunch faced by candidates hoping to compete in the 20 state “Super Duper Tuesday”32 races that included the delegate rich slates of New York, New Jersey, California and Illinois. The front-runner through most of the invisible primary season was former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who had received national notoriety and acclaim for his management of the city in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. He was joined in this less than impressive field by; Senator John McCain of Arizona who had finished second in the delegate count to George W. Bush in the 2000 Republican contest, former governors Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee, former Senator and noted actor Fred Thompson, as well as the former Libertarian nominee for President in 1988 and Congressman from Texas Ron Paul, who was revered in many ideological circles for his consistent opposition to federal spending and foreign intervention.

32 A popular term for this particular election cycle, originally coined by a 2007 New York Times Editorial that opined on the negative consequences that could be associated with New York and California’s move to the front of the nomination calendar.
TABLE 4.3
2008 Republican Candidate Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Entry Date</th>
<th>Days to Iowa</th>
<th>Exit Date</th>
<th>Days after Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John McCain</td>
<td>November 16, 2006</td>
<td>+413</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>+244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudolph Giuliani</td>
<td>November 20, 2006</td>
<td>+409</td>
<td>January 30, 2008</td>
<td>+27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitt Romney</td>
<td>January 3, 2007</td>
<td>+365</td>
<td>February 7, 2008</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Hunter</td>
<td>January 12, 2007</td>
<td>+356</td>
<td>January 19, 2008</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Tancredo</td>
<td>January 22, 2007</td>
<td>+346</td>
<td>December 20, 2008</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Huckabee</td>
<td>January 29, 2007</td>
<td>+339</td>
<td>March 4, 2008</td>
<td>+61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Paul</td>
<td>March 12, 2007</td>
<td>+296</td>
<td>June 12, 2008</td>
<td>+161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Thompson</td>
<td>September 7, 2007</td>
<td>+125</td>
<td>January 22, 2008</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This field (Table 4.3) while deep in political experience did not contain a candidate skilled enough or with deep enough support to manipulate the party apparatus the way Carter had in 1980 or Bush did in 2000, to ensure the calendar unfolded in a way that was particularly advantageous. Though there were no shortages of candidates that were well funded or, strong in a particular geographical area the way that Carter had been, and no one possessed a network of surrogates who were strong enough to stem the pressing desire by states to advance themselves towards the front of the nomination calendar. In fact states acting on behalf of their native sons were more likely to move forward than not irrespective of the context of the race. The desire to support McCain by Arizona and Giuliani by New York were reasons given by legislators and activists when discussing reasons for moving those contests to the already crowded Super Tuesday slates.

33 Senator Hillary Clinton of New York was the Democratic front-runner and her strategy favored a more decisive early Super Tuesday as well (Gutgold and Cocoo 2009). Though Clinton was elected from New York and the Democratic Party controlled the state legislature, state level Republican affirmed their desire to hold the contest on Super Tuesday for the perceived benefits to Giuliani’s chances (See Primary Problems NY Times Editorial September 2, 2007).
The 2008 Republican nomination calendar did not reflect a desire to accentuate the strengths of any one particular candidate. The calendar was rather the manifestation of repeated infighting between states looking to have a greater influence on who the party’s nominee will be. The pressure felt by state-level actors to ensure their contests were relevant to the nomination drove many of them to the earliest start date allowed under party rules.

As the race began to take shape Rudolph Giuliani pulled his slumping campaign out of Iowa where conservative evangelical former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee proved very strong and ultimately successful. Giuliani did not demonstrate viability by winning in Florida where he had staked his hopes and placed the last of his resources. He was forced to exit the nomination race before attempting to compete in the expensive defacto national primary held on the most massive and definitive Super Tuesday on record. By failing to gain a single delegate despite having out raised every other candidate and possessing a lead in the national poll prior to the Iowa caucuses, Giuliani did something no other pre primary front-runner had ever done. The compressed calendar proved too much for even a skilled and nationally known politician to overcome.

The race to establish themselves as the national front-runner fell eventually to Mitt Romney and John McCain, with Iowa winner Mike Huckabee seeking delegates in more conservative southern states in hopes of a brokered convention. With a close New Hampshire victory Senator McCain began to out distance Governor Romney, and using a crowded field to win narrow pluralities in South Carolina and Florida he took a national lead in the polls and in the delegate count just prior to the massive Super Tuesday slate. This was helpful in securing endorsements from the Republican Governor of California
Arnold Schwarzenegger and Rudolph Giuliani in the week leading up to the contests in California and New York. McCain won those delegate rich states and took 9 of the 20 contests overall.

The showing on “Super Duper Tuesday” was enough for Romney to concede and endorse McCain. Huckabee would continue to compete and win contests in the South and Ron Paul would press his organizational strength to secure delegates at various party caucuses over the next month, though both eventually conceded that the delegate math was impossible to overcome and withdrew. On March 4, 2008 after being swept by McCain head to head in Texas, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont, Huckabee officially conceded the race, with 10 states left who had not weighed in on their preference. By choosing not to move to the front of a crowded field these states did not have an opportunity to help select the Republican nominee that year.

In 2008 the Republican contest was all but over by the time two candidates with different ideological perspectives were set to square off. By having 31 contests in the first month of the nomination calendar, early success was of paramount importance. John McCain had enough early success to win his party’s nomination. There could be no ebb and flow in a campaign that was this compressed. The fact that McCain was the only politician in the race that was still serving as an elected official, responsive to a statewide constituency did not impede his victory in this case. In this cycle the calendar overwhelmed most every other factor that might be determinative of candidate success. McCain’s campaign found its footing at the exact right time and others did not.
The Compression Decision

2008 was notable for a nomination calendar more compressed than any since the party implemented reforms to select a majority of convention delegates through statewide contests. Table 4.2 shows this incredible glut of states that voted on February 5, 2008, consider that concurrent to this, the Democrats were voting in these states and holding caucuses in two others. Taken in isolation it seems dubious that any state would want to move away from a system like the one in 1984 that saw relative parity in the wake of the privileged states Iowa and New Hampshire and join in this pack of states all competing for attention on the same day. This is not the case however and states with a fraction of the delegates move alongside larger states early in the nomination calendar. The fear of being left out and holding a meaningless contest seems greater than the threat of being lost in the shuffle.

States do not make their decisions in isolation but rather in an uncertain environment where they react to the movement of other states, with a desire to be influential. “If going early is a benefit to New Hampshire, Iowa, South Carolina and Nevada then why not for my state?” When any state answers this question with movement forward in the calendar it has the potential to cause a reaction from other states. These exogenous pressures towards forward movement can be even more critical when they involve a delegate rich state. This was the case in 2008, when the Democratic National Committee moved the Nevada party caucuses to the week between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. While at the same time, moving South Carolina's primary to the week following New Hampshire's and stating that no other state
that held a primary before February 5, 2008 would have its delegates seated. This decree set off a rush of states targeting that early February date

Of the contests held on February 5, 2008 California seems like one of the least likely to join this rush after failing to pass AB2949 a bill that would have mandated that California “require the Secretary of State to select a date that results in California being the first state in the United States to hold its presidential primary, as specified" only two months prior to the DNC’s ruling. Though unsuccessful this legislation highlighted an undercurrent of discontent in California for the lack of relevance the state had in selecting the President. Since 1992 California has awarded its electoral votes (the most of any state) to the Democratic candidate, and short of fundraising neither major party nominee spends much time campaigning in that expensive state, expecting similar results (Norrander 2009).

Concurrent to California solidifying as a Democratic Electoral College stronghold, it had also seen its presidential primary shrink from significance, as Super Tuesday became more definitive and nomination campaigns began to end earlier. The California primary was demonstrably interesting and instrumental even before the reform movement democratized the means of presidential selection. The Republican contest was won three times\(^\text{34}\) by future Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Earl Warren, and its first post-reform contest gave native son Ronald Reagan a resounding victory over President Gerald Ford in 1976, that sustained him and allowed for that contest to extend all the way through to the nominating convention. Prior to the reform era the Democrats had given famous author Upton Sinclair 11% in his bid against Franklin Roosevelt in

---

\(^{34}\) 1936, 1948 and 1952
1936 and vaulted Robert Kennedy ever so briefly to the top of the Democratic Party prior to his assassination at the Ambassador Hotel on the night of his primary victory in 1968 (Sorenson 1993). In the first post-reform contest of 1972, the June California primary was contested by all major candidates and proved definitive to the successful campaign of George McGovern. This traditionally late date also saw competitive contests for its large delegation in 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1992 from at least two major party candidates. It gave life to the challenges of Ronald Reagan, Edward Kennedy and Gary Hart and nearly did so for Gerry Brown in 1992\textsuperscript{35}, but it was not seeing its choice affirmed as it had in 1972.

As the dynamics of modern presidential selection favor the size of a state’s delegation and placement on the nomination calendar, California has an opportunity to assert its influence in nomination politics in a way it can not during a general election campaign by moving the date of its contest up in the calendar. This is what it did in 1996 by moving from its traditional June date to a late March primary. It was not enough to become impactful on the process, however as Bob Dole had cleared the field by the time the primary rolled around on March 26th of that year. The state moved up again in 2000 to March 7th, and once again in 2004 to March 3rd. The results from California were not determinative in any of those years either. On Sept. 27, 2004 Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law SB1730 which moved the budget strapped state’s primary back to June. The legislation introduced by a Republican but receiving bipartisan support termed the March primary an "utter failure." During the debate the bill’s sponsor noted, "In the 2004 Primary, California set a record for the lowest turnout

\textsuperscript{35} In 1992, California was the only state of 7 voting on June 2, 1992 that was closely contested between Gerry Brown and Bill Clinton. Clinton won the contest with approximately 45% of the vote to Brown’s 40%
ever in a presidential primary election. In the 2002 Primary, California set a record for the lowest turnout ever in a primary election in our state's history. And California's eight-month gap between the primary and general election resulted in the lowest turnout ever for a general election in November 2002.

Instead of retreating though California was back to debating an effort to move to first in the nation just two years later (California AB2949). Prompted by movements from Michigan and Florida to challenge the New Hampshire primary’s first in the nation status, the discussion of an earlier date in California was reignited and politicians began to again question the rationale behind letting smaller and less economically diverse states have such a prominent say in presidential selection while the largest state in the union with the largest economy waited on the sidelines. In response to question regarding a possible change from the June date to an earlier one at a Sacramento Press Club luncheon in January of 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger stated:

"I've spoken to the leaders about that, and I think that it is just something that we should look at, because I'm interested to make California a player (sic). I mean, right now, think about it, we are the number one state in the union, we're the number one place in the world, and yet we are kind of an afterthought when it comes to presidential campaigns. I mean, all those guys come out here and they clean up, and they take the money and they run; millions and millions and millions of dollars, both parties. But we have no—we are not part of the decision making. Or that they're even coming here and campaigning here, because they just it write if off, because California is not relevant. So what we want to do is, we want to make California relevant. And I think the way we make it relevant, this state, is by moving up the primaries maybe to February. So this is something we talked about, and I think that that is something that we should shoot for."

One day later legislation was introduced to move the California from June to the first Tuesday in February, the earliest date allowable under party rules.

Concurrent debate was already underway in states such as Minnesota and Connecticut, and instead of shrinking from sharing the date with California, and later
New York and New Jersey there was instead a greater urgency in moving forward (Norrander 2009). Small states that had moved their contests to February 5, were also staying put and not moving away from the date. Alabama was one such state where discussions began to move from February back to its original date in April after California’s move. These plans were quickly abandoned and many supporters of the early date doubled down in their support. Alabama Secretary of State Jim Bennett, said the growing bloc of primaries has increased the importance to become involved on an early date.

“The fact that everyone is doing it makes it more vital or you will have no voice," said Bennett, a past president of the National Association of Secretaries of State. “I think like 75 percent of all delegates will be selected by March so Alabama can’t wait until June if it intends to have any influence in any party.” (“Alabama’s Super Duper Dilemma” Tuscaloosa News 2 October 2007)

Secretary Bennett’s sentiment is not unlike that of many state actors seeking to influence this dynamic process. States, both large and small, negotiating a chaotic environment where guidance from the parties is limited and not often reflective of grander designs are left to work within the system as best they can. While some states like California feel they should have influence commiserate with their status amongst the states, other smaller states like Alabama are seeking to simply draw some attention from the candidates and be relevant to the discussion. Both are linked in that they are reacting to a lack of structure and out of an impulse to have their voters cast votes before the nomination is decided.
CHAPTER V

CANDIDATE FAMILIARITY IN A COMPRESSED CAMPAIGN

In the proceeding chapters I demonstrated that there is a pronounced compression of the nomination campaign once voting commences in the states, it does not appear to significantly impact the entry of the candidates and the duration of the invisible primary. Candidates by in large are not commencing the visible part of the nomination campaign and beginning their campaigns earlier. This is a potentially troubling development from the perspective of the voting public. Voters do not have more time prior to the early state contests to familiarize themselves with candidates they are being presented, instead they are faced with a compressed campaign that evolves rapidly and moves quickly from state to state after the first votes are cast. They have a shorter amount of time in which to become familiar with these candidates before events bring the nomination campaign to a conclusion. In this chapter I seek to use existing data to determine the changes in voter familiarity with nomination candidates from the back-loaded 1984 contest and the historically compressed 2008 campaign.

Before addressing those cases let us first consider the change that has occurred since the first post reform campaign through the most compressed campaign. The perspective of a voter in California in 1972 when the reform movement was in its infancy is instructive for this purpose. The most delegate rich state in the Democratic delegation held its contest on June 6th with the party’s convention just over a month away. That
voter was able to witness the epic drama of a marathon Democratic nomination campaign unfold over nearly half a calendar year. Beginning as always with the Iowa caucuses on January the 24th this nomination campaign was historic and dramatic in every respect. The tearful defense of his wife by front-runner Edmund Muskie in front of the New Hampshire Union Leader occurred on February the 26th, still two weeks before voting took place in that state shook up the field and damaged a party front-runner. The first statewide victory by eventual nominee George McGovern was not until April the 4th. George C. Wallace the champion of the southern reactionary wing of the party, Independent candidate in 1968 and winner of the delegate rich Florida primary survived an assassination attempt on the 15th of May, and went on to win contests in Maryland and Michigan while recovering from his wounds. Former Democratic nominee and Vice President Hubert Humphrey did not even enter the race until March of that year, weeks after the New Hampshire primary but was a force throughout, winning Illinois and Pennsylvania. If you were a voter in California you had 5 moths to observe these events, evaluate the men involved, take into account their viability, electability and issue positions, and weigh your choices prior to the pivotal winner-take-all contest. Humphrey, Wallace, McGovern and Muskie stayed in the race all the way through to the national convention, giving those voters an opportunity to not only learn about them but to make a selection for their preference of nominee. When Californians handed George McGovern the delegates he needed to win the party’s nomination in 1972 whatever the wisdom of their choice, there was little concern that they were making the decision between unknown entities.
If you were a Democratic voter in California in 2008 your state had even more delegates at stake to the national convention than it did in 1972, however they were now awarded on a proportional basis, which meant that most candidates who received significant votes in the state would be awarded some delegates. Barack Obama’s 2008 victory in the Iowa caucuses on January 3rd was groundbreaking and historic for many reasons, but shortly enjoyed as the campaign moved quickly to the first in the nation primary less than a week away. As Barack Obama emerged as a legitimate challenger to Senator Hillary Clinton the winner of the January 8th New Hampshire Primary the rest of the field quickly withdrew from the race. After failing to win the next and only primary before Super Tuesday in South Carolina, 2004 Democratic Vice Presidential nominee John Edwards withdrew from the race leaving only Senators Obama and Clinton to compete in the 46 states yet to weigh in with their preferences. A California voter went to the polls on February the 5th, not one moth removed from the New Hampshire primary along with voters in 22 other states to choose between two candidates, one of which was vaulted into the national consciousness in the very recent past. California saw visits from both senators Clinton and Obama leading up to the contest, which is more attention than 10 other states voting on that day received from them. Campaigning in 23 states in the 10 days after the South Carolina primary is a massive undertaking, which only the most well financed campaigns can hope to pursue righteously. Strategic choices must be made to appropriate scarce resources efficiently. California voters are fortunate to live in a state that cannot be ignored, and receive the attention that they did from the remaining candidates.
The nation’s largest state had joined with others in moving their contest forward to the earliest possible date allowed by party rules. This is a behavior that benefits a large state like California. What about the voters though? Did the month they had to observe this race, mostly from afar give them enough time to evaluate the candidates? The lack of a real campaign in many states, and the lack of time to become familiar with these candidates before a vote is required, is a potentially devastating flaw in this current iteration of a system for choosing a nominee.

Campaigns provide the electorate with information regarding candidates. Alvarez (1997, 2001) has demonstrated that voter uncertainty as to the issue positions of candidates falls over the course of presidential campaigns. A nomination campaign offers voters a much different dynamic in choosing between candidates than does the general election campaign. The policy preferences of candidates in an intra-party election are typically less divergent than those of competing partisans. Wattier (1983) demonstrates that a candidate’s ideology is an important explanatory variable in primary voting. Norrander (1986) found that voter preferences in the 1980 Democratic contests preference for a candidate were highly correlated with their perceived qualities. This, in part, affirmed earlier work by Marshall (1984) showing that candidate traits were important determinants in how voters selected their preferred candidate. Sill other works have shown that the viability of the candidate in the upcoming general election is considered strongly by voters (Abramowitz 1989).

Any explanation for voter choice is based on the foundation that the voters themselves have some opinion of the candidates they are selecting from regardless of their reason for that selection. There is an underlying normative assumption in studying
voter behavior that the act of voting is done purposefully (Enelow and Hinich 1984). Rational voters will thus not cast a ballot for a candidate that they have not yet heard of. Candidates attempting to secure their party’s nomination for the presidency have the daunting task of having to “introduce themselves” to the party faithful both nationally and more urgently in strategically selected states. I theorize that this has grown more difficult for candidates other than front-runners as the nomination contest has become further compressed.

In order to become a preprimary front-runner for their party’s nomination, a candidate must be one of the most highly visible and influential people in American politics, whereas other challengers for the nomination can come from all manners of obscurity. For candidates attempting to win the nomination without the benefit of national notoriety, the task can be prohibited by a scarcity of resources that do not trouble the front-runner. A lack of resources and name recognition is mitigated by early success and the subsequent momentum generated from it (Abramowitz 1989; Steger 2007).

Momentum in the sequential nomination campaign affords those who win unexpected victories the ability to take advantage of the media attention generated by their success to sway subsequent state voters and potential donors as to the viability of their candidacy (Bartels 1985, 1988; Gurrian and Hayes 1993 and Norrander 2000, 2006). As demonstrated in the second chapter, states are incentivized to move contests forward, and despite candidates responding to various pressure when deciding when to begin mounting their campaigns, the compressed environment is not determinative in beginning campaigns earlier. With contests occurring earlier, closer to New Hampshire and Iowa and in multiple states on the same day there is less time for the much desired media
attention afforded to momentum-based candidates to saturate news consumers. Whether trying to present themselves to potential voters through campaign activity or media outreach, a compressed calendar has accelerated the onset of electoral competition and given candidates less time to compete with increasingly well-funded and well-known front-runners for attention.

While the winnowing of challengers who fail to generate momentum from early success is common throughout the post reform era, momentum-based challengers seem to be in increased peril from a compressed calendar. Momentum-based candidates are still in the process of introducing themselves to the larger electorate after the results of Iowa and New Hampshire are recorded. They are the ones who need to build on the attention afforded to them by their early success and, in a compressed era, need to raise more money to compete in more states with far less time available for such purposes, than existed in previous eras.

As the sequence of states holding contests has grown more compressed, there is a concern that voters are not sufficiently aware of the candidates by the time they get to vote. The extent that the shorter time period afforded by compression poses a normative threat to the representativeness of the nomination process is contingent upon the voters or more accurately the potential voters ability to form some impression of the candidates prior to their opportunity for making a decision.

The winnowing of the field has the effect of eliminating candidate organizations that are engaged in actively mobilizing the electorate. As the field becomes smaller in subsequent states there are fewer candidates operating in a larger space. In a compressed environment, where there is less time available for potential voters to consume and
process information regarding the campaign. This lack of deliberate attention can create an information vacuum filled either by the media, or with non-campaign related information. In addition the cost associated with informing and mobilizing the electorate is far too great for most campaigns to undertake independent of coverage in the press. The media is the institution most responsible for informing the potential primary electorate as to the presence of the candidates, and the media is most concerned with presenting a story that is interesting to their readers or viewers than they are disseminating neutral or normatively important information.

Momentum-based campaigns are predicated on the use of the national media and their coverage of the “horse race” to help introduce the candidate to voters. “Horse race” is the term given to coverage of the nomination race as a competitive challenge between the candidates, in which one is leading or behind, gaining or losing ground or making a move (Mutz 1995). Candidates who exceed the expectations set for them change the narrative of the horse race in their favor, and provide the media an opportunity to update their coverage in a new and exciting way. Momentum is essential for challengers to introduce themselves beyond the early states where they actively campaign.

While some campaigns are in interesting for reasons beyond the horse race, on balance, very little is known regarding the candidates policy positions prior to the time candidates begin to campaign for the nomination (Dowdle, Adkins and Sterger 2009; Lenart 1997; Popkin 1991). Campaigns that are ideologically distinct are very rare in American presidential nominations and have a much more narrow appeal (Brady et al. 2007; Mathiowetz 2008). Candidates for their party’s nomination are demonstrably more similar to one another on salient policy issues than they are to the candidates from the
other party (Brady et al. 2007; Gerber and Morton 1998; Norrander 1989). The media also
tend to focus less on policy differences amongst candidates and more on the competitive
aspects of the horse race as the campaign progresses and there is a greater preponderance
of polling data and electoral results on which to extrapolate (Miller and Andsager 1998;
Mutz 1995).

With the disparity in stature between front-runners and challengers, it is a
daunting task to build mass partisan support when there are few discernable differences
to highlight on matters of policy and no informational shortcut in terms of partisanship to
rely upon. Candidates must distinguish themselves and inform the public of the unique
qualities they posses that will benefit the party in the general election and qualify them to
serve as President. In order for this to occur, they need to both engage in an aggressive
campaign to reach voters directly, and indirectly by way of media coverage. The former
can occur only after sufficient fundraising or time spent campaigning in states that hold
early nomination contests. The latter being possible after candidates have demonstrated a
measure of viability either through impressive polling or electoral results (Abramowitz
1987; Aldrich 1980; Bartels 1988; Collingwood and Barreto 2012; Stone 1983).

These limitations on the potential for generating momentum have led to an
acceleration of the winnowing effect had by early states (Mayer and Busch 2004). While
front-runners are largely insulated from this effect, failure to generate momentum has
traditionally proven decisive in eliminating other office-seeking candidates from the
nomination contest. What is of particular concern is whether or not momentum-based
candidates can still be successful in a compressed field. Are voters sufficiently aware of
these momentum-based candidates by the time they have to register a choice?
The central focus of this chapter is if voters are learning about the candidates in the race by the time their state begins its contest. A campaign that begins at roughly the same point and ends more rapidly has the potential to do so before a significant portion of the voting population has been mobilized. While this is concerning it is not necessarily something that can be assumed just by the mere presence of a compressed electoral calendar. There are, after all, more media alternatives available with the increasing dominance of the Internet as a means for the deliverance and acquisition of information (Prior 2007). Cable news has also provided political enthusiasts with a steady supply of political content and has become particularly instrumental in dispersing overtly partisan information (Coe et al. 2008). If such is the case that the shorter campaign period is offset by these technological and media innovations then we should not be at all concerned that the decision-making process for potential voters is being accelerated, so long as the means for acquiring information necessary for making that decision is concurrently being provided at an accelerated rate and that there is no group that is systematically unable or unwilling to participate in this political environment.

It is possible that candidates are winnowed before being brought in front of a significant portion of the American electorate. Even if voters have an opportunity to become familiar with candidates due to advances in media technology, without the presence of an election and the concurrent campaign, there is no real imperative for them to do so. This will be especially true for those who are not fully engaged in or interested in politics.

As compression has created a situation in which many states hold contests on the same day as others (or in rapid succession), a voter’s exposure to campaigns is uneven,
rapid or non-existent. Momentum-based campaigns that count on media coverage of their relative success in the horse race are limited to a smaller window of time to enjoy such coverage before having to further demonstrate viability in state after state. There is less time to compete in more places for candidates and the race comes to a conclusion before many voters have even had an opportunity to weigh in with their preference. To the extent that this is problematic would be contingent upon the ability of candidates to become known to the electorate. Are voters able to familiarize themselves with candidates in a way that allows for healthy electoral competition or has compression so altered the dynamic of the nomination contest that those candidates not widely known prior to the campaign are not able to be presented to the public as an alternative to more widely known front-runners?

I explore this idea by investigating two similar campaigns and candidacies that took place under very different electoral circumstances. The 1984 Democratic nomination contest, which saw the rise of then little-known Colorado Senator Gary Hart to challenge the presumptive Democratic nominee and former Vice President Walter Mondale, is the paradigm of a front-runner v. insurgent campaign in the back-loaded era. I contrast this historic campaign for the nomination with that of the 2008 Republican contest. In that contest, lesser-known Governors from Arkansas and Massachusetts emerged with momentum from results in Iowa and New Hampshire to challenge the mistake, prone favorite and 2000 nomination runner-up, John McCain in the most compressed electoral environment of the post-reform era. The inferences drawn from the study of and contrasts between these two historic campaigns should provide valuable insight into the familiarity of candidates to voters in these different environments.
Understanding that the electoral environments are much different for the Democrats in 1984 and Republicans in 2008, the comparison is still apt given what is being investigated. Chapter 3 illustrates there is no significant connection with the status of an incumbent president and the decisions made by candidates to enter the nomination race. It is therefore not theoretically problematic that the Democratic nominee was to face a Republican incumbent in the 1984 general election, and the 2008 Republican contest was to hold the White House after two terms of incumbency. The candidates are still seeking to introduce themselves to the voters regardless of who the president is or which party is in power. When examining compression and voter familiarity, it is reasonable to assume that the behavior of candidates and the way in which voters become familiar with candidates should be unaffected by the larger context of the campaign.

**1984 Democratic Nomination Contest**

After the Carter insurgency of 1976 showed the way forward for momentum-based challengers but before compression began to alter the calendar there was the 1984 Democratic nomination. This contest provides an intriguing opportunity to study voter familiarity with candidates in a back-loaded contest. This race featured a well-known front-runner and party stalwart in former Vice President Walter Mondale; a well-known challenger in former astronaut and U.S. Senator from the electorally important state of Ohio, John Glenn; an ideological attention-seeking candidate Reverend Jesse Jackson; and what came to be the quintessential dark horse insurgent candidate in Gary Hart. These candidates, along with a few peripheral figures, competed for the nomination in an electoral environment in which there was more than a month between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, no more than four states ever held contests on the same
date, and a majority of the delegates were awarded in contests held in May and June, with
the nominating convention in July.

From the survey responses in the 1984 NES rolling cross section surveys, Bartels
(1988) demonstrated that the public became more familiar with Gary Hart after he
received favorable media coverage in the wake of the Iowa caucuses. I utilize this same
data to examine how familiar respondents who were not yet exposed to the direct efforts
of any campaign were with the 1984 Democratic candidates. The results of this analysis
are shown in Figure 5.1.

Beginning with the initial results of the survey, two weeks prior to the Iowa
caucuses, the ability of voters to rate (either positively or negatively) the candidates for
the Democratic nomination are recorded weekly. As contests occur, respondents from
those states are removed from the data and only responses in states yet to vote are
recorded.

As can be observed in Figure 5.1, the candidates do not have a universal starting
point. John Glenn, Jesse Jackson, Walter Mondale and the party’s nominee in 1972,
George McGovern, all enter the race familiar to more than 90% of the electorate. After
finishing in a surprising second position in the Iowa caucuses Gary Hart is able to
achieve relative parity with those candidates in short order. After the 8th week of the
survey, Hart is able to sustain himself as a top-tier candidate on par with those more
famous politicians. By the 8th week Alan Cranston, Earnest Hollings and Reubin Askew
had all left the race after failing to achieve the notoriety that Hart was able to achieve
after his momentum generating campaign placed him prominently in front of the voting
public.
Earnest Hollings and Reubin Askew risked their political careers, collected millions of dollars in contributions, took part in candidate forums and debates, competed in early state primaries and caucuses, and then exited the nomination race before a significant portion of the American electorate was even aware of who they were. Former Astronaut and U.S. Senator John Glenn despite his standing as an American hero and Senator from Ohio, was not able to parlay his familiarity with voters into electoral success. Gary Hart’s campaign did not suffer from his initial lack of recognition amongst voters as his star shone very brightly after relative success in Iowa and began what was essentially a three candidate race between himself former Vice President Walter Mondale and Reverend Jesse Jackson for the duration (Parent et al. 1987).
Taken in isolation, the tracking of familiarity with candidates amongst survey respondents prior to the selection contests in their states reveals a slight gap in knowledge of the front-runner and of a key electoral challenger. Gary Hart reaches relative parity with Walter Mondale after a few weeks, in a back-loaded contest, such as the one in 1984, there was ample opportunity for voters to hear about the campaign and candidates after the early state contests. It is still potentially impactful on a race when a challenger is so much less familiar to voters than the front-runner. In this case well-known challengers like John Glenn are winnowed from the field after setbacks in early states and the competition evolved into a showdown between a well-known candidate, and one that voters were becoming familiar with over the course of the primary. Voters make up their minds at different stages, and there is a chance that some made up their minds to support a known commodity like Mondale before they were aware of his principal challenger.

Considering that respondents are making up their minds at times of relative uncertainty and with incomplete information, a voter can establish a preference for a candidate before being fully aware of potential alternatives. A front-runner is established during the invisible primary season, and despite the dynamics of the campaign and the results of the sequential elections, front-runners tend to win nominations whereas momentum-based candidates tend to finish second (Norrander 2006). Does this decision to support a front-runner potentially close off or make a voter less likely to explore alternatives? If so then the structure of the race would not matter. Momentum candidates would be faced with the prospect of introducing themselves to an electorate with a preference.
Examining the respondents to the 1984 NES that reported on a preference for one of the Democratic candidates in that cycle, I utilize a probit regression model in which support for Walter Mondale as the Democratic nominee (prior to a state’s contest being held) serves as the dependent variable. The chief independent variable is a binary measure of whether or not the respondent was able to offer a rating of Gary Hart on a feeling thermometer. A statistically significant negative association of this variable would indicate that respondents are expressing their preference for the front-runner without even cursory knowledge of that candidate’s chief rival. Control variables are included to account for the political predispositions, campaign exposure and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Interest in the campaign is reported on a three-point scale of very interested to not at all interested. Ideology is measured on a five-point scale ascending with the conservatism of the individual. A media variable accounting for the number of days in a week the respondent watched national television news regarding the campaign is included to account for exposure. A binary variable for race was included, with 1 being white and 0 equating to other racial identities. A similar binary variable was used for gender with 1 equating to male and 0 used to indicate female. The income variable is an 11-point scale advancing by $5,000 after the initial $10,000 threshold is cleared. The results of the probit regression analysis are reported below in Table 5.1.

36 White and non-white was chosen as there were several state contests in which there were no respondents identified as black
### Table 5.1
1984 Democratic Nomination Mondale Supporters Familiarity with Challenger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Mondale Support logit coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiar w/ Hart</td>
<td>-0.177** (0.0829)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>0.0746** (0.0364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.0400** (0.0157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV News</td>
<td>0.0132 (0.00979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-0.135* (0.0782)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.00698 (0.0489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-0.0285*** (0.00711)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.595*** (0.135)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 3,129

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The significant negative association between Mondale support and familiarity with Gary Hart indicates that a portion of Mondale supporters in 1984 were not aware of their party’s principal alternative for the nomination. Interest in the campaign, lower levels of income and relative political conservatism were also associated with Mondale support. This leaves the impression that Hart, who was a favorite of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, was not even known to many of Mondale’s supporters. A candidate such as Gary Hart with liberal economic policy preference might well have had a message that resonated with a lower-income electorate if they had become aware of his candidacy in time.
What is clear from tracking the familiarity of candidates across those crucial twelve weeks in 1984 is that Gary Hart’s supporters were almost certainly aware of the front-runner Walter Mondale who was known by 95.3% of the electorate two weeks before the initial contest in Iowa while a significant portion of Walter Mondale’s supporters were not aware of Gary Hart who was known only by 43.06% of respondents two weeks prior to the Iowa Caucuses. The logistic regression results indicate that there were a significant amount of Mondale supporters who chose him without being at all familiar with the most viable alternative to his nomination.

An alternative history of the 1984 Democratic nomination is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, in a race as close as that contest one can credibly wonder if the outcome might have been different had more of Mondale’s supporters been willing or able to know about the candidacy of Gary Hart before their states contest was held. With only 32% of the delegates determined before April in 1984 and the relative quickness in which Hart reached parallel levels of familiarity with Mondale the structure of the race does not seem prohibitive.

Perhaps Mondale was simply that dynamic a figure that he won many Democrats over very quickly. Hart had an opportunity to introduce himself to the electorate and to possibly win the nomination. He was able to compete in every primary and caucus through June and into July’s convention. Any blame as to his inability to become known to voters interested enough to support a candidate in a Democratic nomination campaign might well rest with him and not with the structure of the primary calendar.

While we can’t know how the Democratic nomination contest of 1984 would have turned out in a different electoral environment with a more compressed calendar we
can consider the case of the 2008 Republican nomination, and the plight of Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee trying to become familiar to the voters as they ran against the well-known party runner-up from the previous nomination campaign Senator John McCain.

2008 Republican Nomination Contest

The 2008 nomination calendar was the most compressed in history. The Iowa caucuses took place on January 3, 2008, followed five days later by the New Hampshire primary. There were 28 primaries and caucuses held prior to February 20th of that year. The dynamics of such a compressed race would make it difficult for candidates who were not well-funded or initially well-known to utilize a momentum-based strategy in the way a less well known candidate could have a quarter century earlier. This did not stop a substantial and diverse field of Republican candidates from entering the race however.

Competing in this highly compressed environment were the former mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, who had gained a level of notoriety and reverence from the American electorate for the way in which he managed the crisis in that city in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. He was running against Senator John McCain of Arizona, who had been the party’s runner up in the last competitive primary of 2000, and as such the favorite to capture the nomination in 2008. The field also included two recent governors, Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, both of whom had a growing appeal in the party though from different ideological constituencies (Southwell 2010).

Utilizing data from the rolling cross-sectional 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey, it is possible to examine the familiarity of candidates over time in much the same

---

37 February 20, 1984 was the date of the Iowa caucuses.
38 Every Republican Presidential nominee since 1980 who has been a previous runner up for the party’s nomination and run in the subsequent cycle has received the nomination.
fashion as in 1984\textsuperscript{39}. Beginning the analysis two weeks prior to the Iowa caucuses and advancing 12 weeks.\textsuperscript{40} I track the ability of respondents in states that have not yet held their selection contests to rate the candidate (either positively or negatively) in a standard feeling thermometer. The results of the analysis are provided in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2**
2008 Republican Candidate Familiarity Amongst the Remaining Electorate

Compared with the 1984 Democrats, all the candidates in this analysis are entering the field with a good deal of initial familiarity to voters. This is despite the survey period being advanced two months earlier by the compression of the race. All five of the major candidates are entering the critical period of the race familiar to more than

\textsuperscript{39} Data is limited to the five candidates listed in Figure 5.2

\textsuperscript{40} The time that it took for Gary Hart to achieve relative voter familiarity parity with Walter Mondale in 1984
80% of respondents. Giuliani and McCain, by virtue of their national status, are both at or near 95% familiarity for the duration of the race. The other candidates, after a slight dip when the early states are removed from the analysis, see a steady rise. Though nothing as meteoric as Hart’s 1984 surge and never reaching parity with front-runner John McCain. Despite his familiarity with voters, Giuliani was winnowed from the field in short order after early electoral stumbles (much more quickly than a similarly well-known John Glenn was in 1984).

Despite a victory for Huckabee in Iowa and an impressively close second place finish by Romney in New Hampshire four days later, neither is able to become familiar to even 90% of the subsequent electorate and reached relative parity with John McCain. No time exists for a “Post-Iowa saturation” in the compressed calendar. There are too many contests and opportunities for new media narratives to emerge. The presence of Super Tuesday serves as the defacto end of the 2008 contest. Four weeks after Super Tuesday, John McCain is the only Republican left in the field. Had Romney or Huckabee continued their campaigns and emerged from those contests more familiar to subsequent voters there were not delegates at stake in subsequent contests left to decide the nomination in their favor. The compressed 2008 Republican nomination came to a conclusion with the Mitt Romney, the candidate having accumulated the second-most delegates out of the race after six weeks of electoral competition, and still unknown to 11% of respondent in subsequent voting states. Mike Huckabee, the winner of the Iowa caucuses and seven other contests dropped out of the race four weeks after Super Tuesday still unfamiliar to 13% of the remaining electorate.
The tracking of candidate familiarity shows a slight gap between key challengers and the front-runner over the course of the campaign. The campaign itself comes to a more rapid conclusion in 2008 than it did in 1984. Despite success in early states, challengers are never able to reach a state of relative parity with the front-runner, even though they begin with high initial levels of familiarity relative to the previous era. To consider if this approximately 10% gap in familiarity is in anyway impactful requites an analysis of the front-runners support. This can be especially true in 2008 when there is a Democratic Primary happening concurrently.

I did not control for party in this analysis because of the preponderance of open primaries in 2008. 17 contests in which a voter was not required to have any prior declared party affiliation fell within the 12-week period of this analysis. Further, John McCain owed a decisive level of support in the state of New Hampshire to self-described Democrats (Donovan and Hunsaker 2009). It is more appropriate to control for ideology and interest in the subsequent analysis than to artificially restrict the tracking of familiarity to Republican partisans.

I employ a nearly identical analysis of respondents who describe themselves as supporters of John McCain in the 2008 ANES as the 1984 Democratic analysis of Mondale supporters. I once again utilize a pair of probit regression models in which support for John McCain as the Republican nominee prior to a state’s contest being held serves as the dependent variable. The chief independent variable is a binary measure as to whether or not the respondent was able to offer a rating of Mike Huckabee and of Mitt Romney on a feeling thermometer. I have recoded the previously used to measures to look identical to their 1984 counterparts for means of more accurate comparison. The two
differences between variables are in the income measure and the television viewing. The threshold has increased increments of $10,000 as opposed to $5,000 in an 11-point scale. The television-viewing question in the 2008 ANES survey asks the respondent how many days they have watched news related to the campaign. This includes cable and local news where as the 1984 question asked specifically about nightly network news. Results are reported in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
2008 Republican Nomination McCain Supporters Familiarity with Challengers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>McCain Support Logit coefficient</th>
<th>McCain Support Logit coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiar w/ Huckabee</td>
<td>-0.0702 (0.0457)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar w/ Romney</td>
<td>-0.167*** (0.0624)</td>
<td>0.167*** (0.0624)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>0.0327 (0.0261)</td>
<td>0.0327 (0.0261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.169*** (0.0163)</td>
<td>0.125*** (0.0125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV News</td>
<td>0.0321*** (0.00719)</td>
<td>0.0379*** (0.00565)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.171*** (0.0605)</td>
<td>0.179*** (0.0464)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.112*** (0.0346)</td>
<td>0.0996*** (0.0266)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.0206** (0.00841)</td>
<td>0.0326*** (0.00648)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.364*** (0.106)</td>
<td>-1.198*** (0.0813)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 5,825 9,387

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Looking the chief independent variable of interest, and just as in the 1984 Democratic primary there is a statistically significant negative correlation between support for the front-runner and familiarity with the principal challenger. Interestingly, this is not the case with the other challenger in this race, Governor Huckabee. The more ideologically conservative of the three and the least known amongst all respondents of the three was not unfamiliar to respondents who were supporting McCain even when controlling for ideology. The fact that Huckabee is ideologically distinct from McCain in a way that Romney is not might in some ways explain this disparate finding between the two.

Conclusion

When contrasting the 1984 Democratic and 2008 Republican nomination contests, the most striking observation is that in the more compressed era, the challengers never reached the same level of familiarity with respondents. This is in spite of them entering the 12-week period of analysis much better known than Gary Hart was in 1984. While the difference is slight, in that by week 12 Hart was known by 95% of the subsequent electorate and Huckabee was known to approximately 86%, it is important to note that there was no week 13 for the Huckabee campaign. The race had come to a conclusion as the number of delegates attained by McCain was seen as insurmountable.

The probit analysis demonstrates than in both elections there was a significant negative association between support for the front-runner and familiarity with the principal challenger. The more ideologically conservative and thus distinct Mike Huckabee did not suffer from the same lack of recognition amongst respondents who supported the candidacy of John McCain as Mitt Romney. This is perhaps because of his
ideological distinction from John McCain and the avid support he received from conservative Christians especially in the south after his surprising win in the Iowa caucuses (Medhurst 2009). The advantages in familiarity that a front-runner acquires prior to the nomination contest could not be equaled by a challenger over the course of the nomination campaign in the more compressed contest.

The front-runner is achieving support from those who are not familiar with alternatives in both eras. In a back-loaded contest, familiarity on par with the front-runner can be achieved by a challenger prior to a decisive amount of delegates being awarded. The compressed environment has produced a more competitive environment in which challengers seeking to benefit from the momentum of early victories are not as familiar to the electorate during the definitive portion of the contest as their counterparts in an earlier era, despite having more initial familiarity. This is likely due to the great glut of contests that occur so early in calendar. Candidates are challenged to campaign in all states holding contests on or around Super Tuesday for reasons both financial, and logistical. The front-runner benefits from compression to a much greater extent than even well known challengers. Candidates seeking to introduce themselves to the electorate are best served to do so prior to the first vote being cast. The indication given from the great growth of initial familiarity of the 2008 candidates is that they are in fact doing this.

The voters are given less time to become familiar with the candidates, though they seem able to adjust this changing dynamic remarkably well perhaps due to the more active campaign that occurs prior to the first contests, they have a greater initial level of familiarity with the candidates than the respondents of 1984. There is still the 10-15% of the electorate though who are not able to be persuaded by a candidate’s campaign as they
are not familiar with them by the time the race concludes. This was not a decisive amount of the electorate in 2008. In 1984, however, it was not even a concern as the lengthy campaign allowed ample time for voters to become familiar with a challenger the caliber of Gary Hart. Future elections in this compressed era might find this issue of candidate familiarity problematic in a narrowly decided contest.

John McCain defeated two challengers who were not able to parlay their early state momentum into sustained success and electoral familiarity on par with his. Would this have been the case if there were weeks and months for the press to have waxed on about the results from Iowa and New Hampshire primary? It is impossible to know. Though even if a small fraction of voters are not familiar with one of candidates in the race by its conclusion there is a normative concern that the race for the nomination has not been a truly representative expression of the popular will, of the party faithful. This would make the campaign less determinative in favor of the invisible primary. An elite process that involves the acquisition or resources, endorsements and attention outside of public view. The very thing the McGovern-Fraser reforms of 1972 sought to move away from.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The process for nominating presidential candidates by the major parties is a dynamic one, and requires consistent evaluation from scholars when structural changes are made to it. Change is constant and ongoing, making evaluation something of a moving target. There is more money than ever being raised and spent in nomination campaigns, creating pressures on candidates to fundraise and make appeals to motivated constituencies. Frontloading of contests grew every year between 1984 and 2008 with very little structured opposition from either major party’s central committee. More and more states have clustered on Super Tuesday. The common linkage amongst all of these phenomena is that of compression. The portion of the nomination race in which voters must decide between alternatives has been compressed into a period of less than three months.

I have offered a look at how the compression of the nomination calendar has impacted the behavior of states, the entrance of candidates into the race, and the familiarity that voters have with the candidates for the nomination. In this pursuit I offer some provocative findings that will serve as the basis for future scholarly inquiry on the subject.

The states themselves benefit from moving their contests forward. When looking at the disbursements of dollars from the campaign committee’s of candidates for the
nomination of both major parties into the states, there is shown a direct financial benefit to moving a state’s contest up relative to the initial contest from the previous cycle. This benefit is not universal. States that hold caucuses as opposed to a primary are in a more precarious position and going alone, or holding their contest on the ever crowding Super Tuesday is negatively correlated with candidate disbursements in those states. The states, which receive very minimal guidance from the party, are ultimately in charge of when to hold a contest and what type of contest to hold. The demonstrably greater financial commitment offered to them by the campaigns, shows that their movement is logical, and based on real and tangible incentives.

States being self-interested actors have every reason to move a contest earlier. There is a preponderance of historical experience suggesting that a competitive campaign cannot reliably be expected to continue past Super Tuesday. Large delegate rich states benefit and states that hold primaries on Super Tuesday see increased attention from candidates along with the intangible or contextual benefits associated with that attention.

The movement of large states to the front of the nomination calendar, the huge numbers of delegates at stake on Super Tuesday, and the cost associated with electioneering in such an environment have been criticized as creating a defacto national primary. Through a case study analysis of the 1984 Democratic and 2008 Republican campaigns, I have illustrated that these critiques of the system have grown in the quarter century between the two campaigns as state and candidate behavior have adjusted to the structure.

One critique of such a system speaks to a lack of representativeness. The need for vast financial resources favors, well-known and financially connected, national
politicians. The need to connect to the electorate, in terms of retail politics is diminished and isolated to the early states of Iowa and New Hampshire. If small states outside of New Hampshire and Iowa can only benefit from moving to the same day, and holding more costly primaries instead of party caucuses, then it raises the question as to the value of those states at the beginning of the process?. There is no other observable way for other small states to be impactful in their own right.

The normative critiques of this system are vast, but the results here point to the lack of incentive for change on behalf of a key constituency: the states. The party committee’s can and have altered the system in the past. The impetus to do so does not come from an innate sense of fairness, but rather some measure of political expediency. These types of changes have to be done at the national convention, which are politically staged events meant to demonstrate party unity for the benefit of the candidate’s general election campaign. Candidates, who have successfully navigated this type of system, are not likely to risk the optics of a floor fight, and create a potentially easier path for an intraparty challenge four years later, for an abstract principal like providing more equity in the nomination system. The parties themselves must see a compelling reason to make these changes because the states will not, and there is no reason to expect leadership from the candidates on the issue either.

The parties cannot prevent candidates from entering the race at any point they see fit do so. Candidates can make such a choice for themselves when they perceive the existence of a strategic advantage. The results of the analysis presented in the fifth chapter show that a structural factors like compression, and the dynamics of the race are not a significant determinant of when this occurs. What was significant was the
candidate’s divergence from the mean party ideology, and their lack of an existing constituency to respond to, and be held accountable by.

Ideological candidates not constrained by office are entering the race before moderates and successful politicians. How might this impact the rhetoric of, and conduct of other candidates in a race? There is activist energy, especially in early state contests that can be capitalized on. Even if these candidates do not win the nomination, they must alter the race in such a way that reverberates into the future. One needs look no further than the 2004 Democratic contest. Howard Dean, the liberal governor of Vermont upon leaving office was campaigning for the Democratic nomination more than two full months before serving United States Senator John Kerry, allowing him to fully dedicate time and resources to the endeavor. Dean rose to party front-runner for a time thanks in part, to positioning himself much closer to the anti-war left. Senator Kerry facing many votes on appropriations for the war in Iraq, and a highly publicized vote for the authorization of the use of force, was placed in a much more difficult position. Kerry had to explain his position with the party base in the early primary states, while responsibly helping to govern the nation and its interests. His nuanced position was reduced to a binary choice made in a 2002 vote by many in the Democratic party, and his clumsy attempts to critique both the Republican president and his Democratic rivals in an Iowa town hall, helped to establish the “flip-flopper” narrative employed against him by the Bush campaign.

While compression did not show itself to be determinative to a candidates decision when to enter the race, it is no less interesting that early entry is driven by ideological candidates. Early candidates might well be as important as early states,
depending on the traction they gain with the electorate. Not determinative in the outcome, but in the way in which they shape the race.

We also cannot know who decides not to run as a result of the compression of the nomination calendar. Governors and Senators who still have goals they wish to achieve in their current office might be disincentiveised to pursue the White House, knowing the time demands and financial realities that are involved are made more difficult, by the presence of more candidates in the race. Further study in regards to candidate entry must involve a systematic concurrent analysis of would be candidates as well as eventual candidates.

Finally, the results of this analysis of primary compression, shows a small difference in the familiarity of candidates between voters of different eras. In 1984, Gary Hart and Walter Mondale reached relative parity in their familiarity with remaining voters after nine weeks of analysis in which 10 contests had occurred. In 2008, Mike Huckabee and Mitt Romney never reached parity with John McCain, or came within five points of doing so before they conceded the race. This gap while small, is still troubling in that it represents a built in systemic advantage for a front-runner and diminishes the impact of momentum offered by voters subject to a campaign, once the race has begun.

Using the most back-loaded contest in which existing data was available for, and the most compressed race in the history of the nomination as case studies, there is shown a persistent problem of front-runner support being rewarded without full knowledge of the alternatives in both instances. This problem is of greater concern in a compressed environment when there is less time available for a candidate to build his or her own base of support. If the party base has already begun to coalesce around a front-runner and is
not receptive to an alternative, then a strategic candidate can seek to expand their base of support. Compression would seem to have limited the possibilities of doing this as the campaign moves to a rapid conclusion.

This dissertation has shown that compression is driven by the states, and largely a benefit to those states most responsible for it. The candidates in an era of growing compression who involve themselves in running for the nomination earlier, are more ideological and less likely to hold office than their forbearers. The voters themselves who are offered a reduced time frame for a campaign for the nomination have adjusted, by becoming familiar with candidates earlier in the process and not merely awaiting the results of early states to become informed. There are still a number of voters who are not sufficiently familiar with their alternatives when the campaign concludes, and many of them offer support for the front-runner despite this.

Taken in its entirety compression benefits well-financed, well-known candidates that can compete in the early states and quickly pivot to larger more expense states. Large delegate rich states and states that move their vote early benefit from the system as well, by receiving greater attention from the candidates, while voters are doing a remarkable job in keeping up. The cost incurred by compression comes at the expense of momentum-based challengers who struggle parlay their early state success with parallel familiarity to the front-runners, and to small caucus holding states seeking a strategically advantageous date for their contest.

It is not shocking that compression persists as this system has been constructed by, and most greatly benefits those who have the greatest opportunity, and least incentive to change it. It took the exogenous shock of violent anti-war protests in 1968 to spur the
Democratic Party leaders to institute the McGovern-Fraser reforms that sought a more representative system. Forty years of self-interested positioning amongst key actors has ironically altered the system to in many ways benefit well-financed candidates with elite support before the race commences. If compression continues unabated in a way that causes the voter to become less familiar with, and perhaps ultimately unsatisfied with their nominee, then perhaps it will be the party base once again that demands change.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Adkins, Randall E. and Andrew J. Dowdle. 2001. “How Important are Iowa and New Hampshire to Winning the Post-Reform Presidential Nominations?” *Political Research Quarterly* 54: 431-444


Duncan, Dayton. 1991 *Grass Roots: One Year in the Life of the New Hampshire Presidential Primary*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin


Kamarack, Elaine C. *Primary Politics: How Presidential Candidates Have Shaped the Modern Nominating System*.


Kernell, Georgia 2015. “Party Nomination Rules and Campaign Participation” *Comparative Political Studies* 48(6) 733-754


Thompson, Dennis F. 2010 “The Primary Purpose of Presidential Primaries” Political Science Quarterly 125(2): 205-232


In my analysis on candidate disbursements in states, I created a dataset using information provided by the Federal Elections Commission Primary Expenditures Report for each cycle from 1976 through 2008. For candidates utilizing federal matching funds an addendum to this report entitled “State-by-State Disbursements” was used for the period of time in which the candidate’s principal campaign committee was in existence, until such time as the nomination campaign officially came to a close at the nominating convention. For candidates who did not opt to utilize the federal matching funds available to them I utilized their “Campaign Finance Disclosure Year-End Report” to group each disbursement by state over the course of their campaign for the nomination.

The Following Candidates opted out of Public Financing and were categorized in such a way:

1980    John Connelly
1996    Steve Forbes
2000    George W. Bush
2000    Steve Forbes
2004    Howard Dean
2004    John Kerry
2008    Hillary Clinton
2008    Barack Obama
2008    Bill Richardson
2008    Rudolph Giuliani
2008    Mike Huckabee
2008  John McCain
2008  Ron Paul
2008  Mitt Romney
2008  Fred Thompson
VITA

Samuel R. Gedman

University of Mississippi
Department of Political Science
329 Deupree Hall
University, MS 38677

2901 Bertland Ave. #1612
Durham, NC 27705
Phone: (901) 463-0955
srgedman@olemiss.edu

AREAS OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

American Politics with concentration in Elections and Presidential Nominations. Extensive experience in survey data analysis and quantitative methods. Substantive areas of interest: the presidency, political parties, public opinion, political participation, health care policy, computational linguistics analysis

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Political Science, University of Mississippi, December 2015 (expected)
Major Field: American Politics
Minor Field: International Relations
Dissertation Title: The Dynamics of Compression in the Presidential Nomination Process
Committee Members: John M. Bruce (Chair), Michael Henderson, Marvin P. King

M.A. Political Science, University of Mississippi, August 2013

M.P.A. Public Administration, Eastern Michigan University, August 2007
Graduate Certificate Local Govt. Mgmt., Eastern Michigan University, June 2006
Graduate Certificate Public Mgmt., Eastern Michigan University, December 2005

B.A. Political Science, Western Michigan University, April 2004
Minor Field: History

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Temporary Instructor, University of Mississippi
POL 101: Introduction to American Politics
Full Time Fall 2014, Spring 2015

Adjunct Instructor, University of Memphis
POL 1501: Introduction to International Relations
Fall 2013
POL 1300: Introduction to American Politics
Spring 2014
POL 1301: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Spring 2014
POL 3505: International Organizations
   Fall 2013
POL 1300: Introduction to American Politics Online
   Fall 2015
POL 1301: Introduction to Comparative Politics Online
   Fall 2015

Graduate Instructor, University of Mississippi
POL 101: Introduction to American Politics
   Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014

MANUSCRIPT REVIEWS

American Politics Research

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

w/Dr. John Bruce, Fall 2010
   Collected and coded data related to state house apportionment from 2005 through 2009

Inter-University Consortium For Political and Social Research, Summer Program in Quantitative Methods, Summer 2011
   Studied Panel Data, Advanced Regression Analysis, and Matrix Algebra

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

Political Science Department Orientation Academic Advisor, University of Mississippi
   Academic Year 2012

Teaching Assistant, University of Mississippi
   POL 101: Introduction to American Politics, Fall 2010, Spring 2011

National Election Poll, Exit Pollster
   General Election 2012, 2014

AP Reader for the College Board
   American Government, Summer 2014, Summer 2015

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Acting Deputy Director, Durham County (NC) Board of Elections 2015

Coordinator of the Weatherization Assistance Program, Washtenaw County (MI) Employment Training and Community Services, 2006-2010

Congressional Intern, District Office of the Honorable John D. Dingell (MI-15) Spring & Summer 2005

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

German (intermediate); Lithuanian (basic)
PAPERS IN PROGRESS

“Presidential Ideology and Staff Construction: A Dynamic Examination of Professional Loyalty from Nixon through Bush”
With Dr. Salvatore Russo

“Structural Incentives and the Invisible Primary”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Learning from Iowa: How Voters Update Perceptions in Response to Early Primaries”
With John Dudley and Dr. Michael Henderson

“The Killing (Corn) Fields: The Implication of Institutionalized Early Primary Contests”
Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association, March 2013

“Progressive Presidential Ambition in the Contemporary United States Senate”
Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, January 2012

GRANTS & AWARDS

Instructor Fellowship, University of Mississippi 2014–2015

Graduate Assistantship, University of Mississippi 2010–2014

Induction into Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society for Graduate Students of Public Affairs and Administration, 2007, Eastern Michigan University

Transfer Scholarship for Achievement, 2001, Western Michigan University

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Society for Public Administration, 2005 to present
American Political Science Association, 2008 to present
Southern Political Science Association, 2011 to present
The Academy of Political Science, 2012 to present