

candidate's party's normal vote falls below 50%. Our observations are all major party candidates who competed in the general elections.

The model that pools the data for 1992 through 1998 indicates that the change to a blanket primary system did not significantly alter what proportion of individual contributions were given for the primary election, since the blanket primary dummy variable is not significant. Contrary to the arguments of both the proponents and the opponents of Proposition 198, the new primary system does not seem to have changed much in terms of the timing of contributions. This is a striking result that runs counter to initial expectations and pre-election rhetoric. It is also striking in that the results indicate that the 1996 election, *not* the 1998 election, is the outlier. As we can see from Table 9.3, the differing proportion of contributions intended for the primary can be explained by the same variables for each year except 1996. For 1996, none of the independent variables explains the variation in contribution timing. Moreover, the R^2 value is significantly lower for both 1996 models than it is for any of the other years.

As noted previously, the most obvious difference between the 1996 election and the others is that 1996 saw a much earlier primary date. So, while the change in primary type did not have a significant impact, the timing of the primary apparently does. Timing, then, trumps institutional design in its ability to alter the proportion of funds available for use in the primary. This claim is further bolstered when we note that the results in the column labeled "1996" are less similar to the other years' results than the results in the column labeled "1996 (June)." In the latter column, we artificially "moved" the 1996 primary date to June to coincide with the other years. That is, we counted all donations prior to June 2, 1996 as primary donations. Further analysis is warranted, but this preliminary inspection suggests that timing is at least as significant as the details of the electoral formula.

Lastly, one might expect individual contributors to behave differently in different types of races. In other words, the funding dynamic may be dissimilar between races for safe seats and competitive races. Certainly, it is true that candidates running in safe seats generally receive less funding than candidates running in competitive districts. Their constituents and supporters understand that they simply do not need the money. However, the change to the blanket primary may have altered this strategic situation in the aforementioned manner.

In order to test this hypothesis, we separated the data in two sets: safe seats and competitive seats. We defined a competitive seat as one in which the normal Democratic vote was either above 60% or below 40%. We then ran regressions with the same independent variables that were reported in Table 9.3. Again, the 1998 elections did not distinguish themselves from the other

years. Hence, safe district or not, 1998 was not a banner year for change in campaign donations.

CONCLUSION

As a general matter, identifying the precise effects of various features of electoral law proves difficult. Neither the formal, deductive nor the empirical, inductive literatures on the effects of election law is particularly rich with consensus findings. Debating the veracity, logic, and applicability of Duverger's law, a fairly simple and high-level claim, has kept scholars occupied for decades. Not coincidentally, politicians do not often introduce self-interested reforms in electoral procedures, even when they unambiguously have the power to do so. They may fear a public backlash from too obviously loading the dice. Or, they may regard electoral institutions as too unpredictable to be manipulated easily. Certainly, examples of changes in electoral law that either failed to produce the predicted outcomes, or even backfired by producing unanticipated consequences, are not hard to find. In recent years, Italy, New Zealand, and Israel have all made major changes to their national election rules without achieving their respective goals. New Zealand's politics have become, less, not more stable; Italy managed to accentuate its already exceptional partisan fragmentation; and Israel perversely increased the influence of very small parties.

Compared to those efforts, California's alteration of primary election rules is minor. The laws governing general elections are unchanged and the primary is still based on plurality rule. Should the introduction of fully open (blanket) primary rules have been expected radically to alter the elections, directly at the primary stage or indirectly at the general stage? We regard this "open" question as an open question. Here, we have not dwelt on the logics of optimal behavior under the old and new rules. Instead, we have shown that the most publicized predictions about how the new rules would play out in terms of voter turnout, competitiveness, and campaign finance do not seem to have been realized in the first trial. There does not seem to have been much change in turnout, so, conditional on the behavior of elites (that is, decisions to run, and campaign styles), the masses do not seem to have changed behavior in this regard. The primary elections were not especially close—they may even have been a little less close than normal. They also did not feed into newly competitive general elections.

Campaign finance is a complicated world, and inferences about changed behavior are, again, perilous, given that one can provide supply- or demand-side explanations for any trend. Moreover, the supply side includes sophisticated elite actors like PACs as well as ordinary citizens, acting on

small scales and in (relative) isolation. Again, though, our preliminary analysis revealed little change, rendering moot the question of whose actions should be regarded as most probable to have caused the (non-existent) change. Campaign expenditure and campaign contributions, in total, do not seem to have been off-trend for the blanket primary year. Nor was there any detectable shift in the timing of the donations. Based on one run, we see no sign that the blanket primary encourages front-loading one's spending, not even in seats dominated by one party. PACs seem to have been important in 1998, but not much more important than they already were in 1996, 1994, or 1992.

Our conclusion from this analysis, then, is that the blanket primary was a barely noticed and largely irrelevant innovation in its first application in California. We should close, though, by hedging our bets in two ways. First, there may be some respects in which the opportunities to crossover or otherwise support another party that a blanket primary presents did make a difference. For example, we eschewed analysis of the ideologies of candidates here, and so we cannot rule out that the potential broadening of the primary electorates did encourage moderation by some of the candidates. Second, election law, it is worth reiterating, is arcane. There is good reason to believe that equilibria should not be quickly discovered. It may take several elections for even elite actors to catch on to the subtle features of a change in rules. It has, after all, taken scholars many decades to formalize properties of election rules—200 years elapsed between Condorcet's paradox and the Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorem! So it may be premature to declare the rules on primary type irrelevant. One must observe a series of runs under the new rules to know how behavior settles. The open rules will not obtain in presidential elections hereafter, but the complicated double-counting formula eventually established after Proposition 3's defeat should provide political analysts with yet another form of data on how the (non-binding, but now observable) blanket results compare to the closed results. California's experiment in electoral law change is ongoing, and so will remain of interest to political scientists, journalists, and other political junkies, who can celebrate this variance in election law even while carefully qualifying any conclusions they draw about its consequences.

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