

When Presidential Candidates Skip Iowa: Modeling Participation in the First-in-the-Nation Caucuses, 1976-2008

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Why did Rudy Giuliani and John McCain skip the Iowa Caucuses in 2008? Which presidential candidates have opted out of the first-in-the-nation nomination contest—and when can they do so with impunity? To find out, this study proposes a risk/reward model based on Bartels' (1988) conception of momentum and Gurian's (1993) understanding of candidate strategy. To test the model, it delves into data from a newly updated 1976-2008 database on White House hopefuls' Hawkeye State participation to explain candidate days spent in Iowa in a particular election cycle. The results suggest candidates are more likely to skip Iowa if they believe they can survive due to high national poll ratings (like Rudy Giuliani in 2008); if they are lower-tier Democrats facing the Caucuses' 15 percent viability threshold (like Joe Lieberman in 2004); if they are incumbent presidents (like Jimmy Carter in 1980), and especially if they are "crowded out" ideologically, that is, if they are too closely surrounded by similarly positioned candidates or too distant from voters (like Sen. John McCain in 2000).

On February 10, 2007, Barack Obama stood before the Illinois capital building and announced his potentially historic presidential bid. The next day, he was in Iowa Falls, campaigning. He was far from the first—Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Mitt Romney, and Mike Huckabee were already swarming the Hawkeye State, seeking votes behind every corn silo. But not *every* top-tier presidential candidate was there. John McCain and Rudy Giuliani, for instance, skipped Iowa in 2008.

In 2004, John Kerry and Howard Dean thrust Iowa back into the lime-light—the first with an upset win, the other with his upset over losing. But the candidates with the truly different Iowa strategies were not Kerry, Dean, Dick Gephardt, or John Edwards, though each had different outcomes in Iowa. It was Wesley Clark and Joe Lieberman, who were nowhere to be seen. And McCain took the same approach in 2000—bypassing the Hawkeye State's bruisingly competitive, organization-heavy contest, hoping to live to fight again eight days later in New Hampshire.¹

These examples are not recent anomalies. They are part of a long, historical pattern. In 1992 Pat Buchanan also chose not to compete in Iowa against incumbent president George H.W. Bush, given the Caucuses' intense

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focus on party loyalists. Buchanan contested New Hampshire instead while banking on its reputation for independence (and aversion to tax increases). In 1988, no less a personage than Al Gore chose to focus his efforts on Southern states later in the process, where he perceived an opening for a conservative Southern Democrat—which promptly closed as he lost early contests. In 1980, frontrunner Ronald Reagan studiously avoided the Caucuses, choosing not to lower himself to the level of his scrambling competitors. The result was a disaster: A razor-thin victory by that same George H.W. Bush, only cleaned up weeks later with a Reagan win in New Hampshire. And in 1976, Sen. Henry “Scoop” Jackson and most other prominent Democrats competing for the nomination ceded the Iowa field to Jimmy Carter, giving the Georgia Governor an opportunity to win his party’s nomination (Aldrich 1980).²

Why do some candidates spend so much time in Iowa, when others bypass it? And what characteristics of not only the candidate, but the election cycle itself, make some candidates opt out of eating turkey legs at the Iowa State Fair?

Given that Iowa strategies played an important role in 2008, what is the rationale, or at least patterns, behind them? If the long, frosty nights shaking hands outside Polk County Central Committee meetings are unnecessary, why not skip the state—and its disproportionate demands in terms of candidate time and organization? That was certainly the conclusion of Gore in 1988, Buchanan in 1992, McCain in 2000, Clark and Lieberman in 2004, and McCain and Giuliani in 2008. By contrast, Jimmy Carter in 1976, George H.W. Bush in 1980, Gary Hart in 1984, and John Kerry in 2004 all chose to place their bets on the Hawkeye State.

In short, why do presidential candidates skip Iowa?

A Brief History of “Gaming” the Early States

To begin, it helps to map out these early-state presidential nomination dynamics in slightly more detail. The originator of the so-called “Iowa Strategy”—the now-common approach of spending substantial time in the state hoping for an upset win and a wave of attention—was Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter, who in 1976 captured the Caucus and then the nomination from a position of relative obscurity. In 1980, former CIA Director George H.W. Bush followed in Carter’s footsteps and managed to topple former California Gov. Ronald Reagan in the state, only to be defeated in New Hampshire and gain the consolation prize of the vice presidency.

Four years later, Sen. Gary Hart parlayed a distant second-place behind Carter’s Vice-President, Walter Mondale, into enormous buzz, which pro-

pelled him to a dramatic upset victory in New Hampshire and national prominence. Though he fell short of the nomination, he was well-poised for 1988—until he fell from grace, and ultimately from view, in a scandal.

Sen. Bob Dole and televangelist Pat Robertson turned the tables on Bush in 1988, forcing him into third place. Like Reagan, however, Bush was able to rebound in New Hampshire, dealing Dole an ultimately fatal blow. On the Democratic side that year, a similar dynamic took place, with Rep. Dick Gephardt topping the field in Iowa but failing to translate that win into the nomination. Sen. Al Gore that year basically bypassed both Iowa and New Hampshire, attempting the grand-daddy of all early-state primary ploys: counting on the South and Super Tuesday to salvage his bid. Instead, the approach savaged his bid; by the time the southern primaries came into play, Gore was an afterthought.

In 1992 Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) sought the presidency, making the Democratic contest there a foregone conclusion. As a result New Hampshire stood alone in the spotlight, and Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton managed somehow to parlay a third-place finish into a perception that he had exceeded expectations, making him the “Comeback Kid” who was to come back all the way to the White House. On the GOP side that year, Pat Buchanan rallied his troops in New Hampshire, ignoring Iowa, but since he was running against an incumbent president his semi-strong Granite State showing was much greater news than not competing in the Caucus the week before.

As noted above, McCain tried a similar New Hampshire ambush in 2000 against George W. Bush, which won him a momentary surge in momentum that ultimately fell short. By contrast, both Clark and Lieberman’s strategy of skipping Iowa allowed them to be snuffed out by Kerry’s decisive win in New Hampshire in 2004.

In 2008, after early questions about her commitment to the contest, frontrunner Hillary Clinton chose to engage Obama and Edwards in the state, ultimately coming in third and stumbling in what seemed an inevitable push to the nomination. Republican McCain at first tried to contest the state, and then after his political near-death experience in mid-2007, took his Straight Talk Express to friendlier territory in New Hampshire, where he won and rejuvenated his candidacy. Likewise Rudy Giuliani made some initial trips to Iowa but concluded that his interest lay in contesting later states, a strategy reminiscent of Gore’s in 1988, and which yielded the same result.

This cursory review suggests that since 1976, when Carter was thrust into the national limelight with a win there, candidates not competing in Iowa have generally fared poorly—but a select few have managed to avoid the state and still capture their parties’ nominations. Why?

The Dynamics of Presidential Primaries

The answer to that question may lie in better understanding the fundamental dynamics of the U.S. presidential nomination process. And the key to understanding those dynamics, in turn, is the concept of momentum. Momentum in presidential primaries, a concept largely introduced by Aldrich (1980), is most thoroughly explored in Larry Bartels' key work on the subject (1988). In that masterwork, originally the dissertation he defended in 1983, Bartels describes the transformation of the nomination system from "Back Rooms to 'Big Mo'"—that is, from the system based largely on party elites which existed up until the Democratic Party's crisis over the 1968 nomination of stalwart insider Hubert Humphrey over popular insurgent Gene McCarthy, to one tying nomination results more directly and transparently to state primary and caucus results. The result, says Bartels, was the dominance of momentum, where success in one state contest breeds success in subsequent states—and ultimately, at least in Carter's case, success at the party convention itself (Bartels 1988, 13-21).

As Bartels describes it, momentum brings together several dynamics into a central trend toward favoring succeeding candidates. Those independent dynamics include the "horse-race" style coverage favored by the news media, centered on who's up and who's down rather than on issues; voters' learning process, partially facilitated by coverage of winning candidates, but partially frustrated by the media's misplaced attention; and voters' expectations of what will ultimately happen in the nomination contest, which he says powerfully affects their nomination choices, and therefore their votes.³ These phenomena culminate in a cascade of support for candidates whose victories begin to stack up.

This insight helps illuminate the stark future facing candidates considering whether or not to participate in Iowa, or any other nomination contest for that matter. If they bypass it, they risk turning over not only the delegates, but the momentum, to whoever wins or exceeds expectations. Thus the stakes of any nomination contest do not consist merely of the delegates they allocate—far from it. The earlier the state and more prominent the contest, the more a losing candidate risks losing not just the delegates in that state, but those in others influenced by opponents' resulting momentum.

How do candidates respond to the world Bartels describes? After all, the goal here is to establish not just when candidates *can* skip the Caucus and still gain the nomination, but when candidates actually elect to forgo the Caucus. In a series of studies from the 1980s and 1990s, Paul-Henri Gurian lays out his answer: presidential candidates by and large make strategic choices that can rationally lead to their nomination.

For instance, Gurian (1993) constructs a dynamic model of candidate spending that assumes candidates are behaving rationally to maximize their chances of securing their party's nod. More specifically—and applicably—Gurian (1986) and Gurian and Haynes (1993) find that top-tier candidates attempt to run up their delegate counts, while low-tier candidates attempt to generate momentum for themselves instead.

Why? Because it makes sense for each to do so: gathering as many delegates as possible while candidates are on top constitutes the direct path to the nomination, while when candidates are on the bottom they only have the resources to compete in less delegate-rich contests (like Iowa?), trying to get on top. And, in fact, these studies find that candidates do allocate their resources proportionally between these races in relationship to their standing within the multi-candidate field.

Together, these two conceptions of presidential primary behavior help move toward an understanding of who skips Iowa. Bartels' description of the value of momentum makes clear why candidates participate so aggressively in the Caucus, in spite of the fact that the state has virtually no convention delegates (45 in 2008 on the Democratic side) and that the precinct caucuses themselves actually only select delegates to county convention, who in turn select state convention delegates, who, in turn, select Iowa's convention delegates. Beginning the nomination season with a high-profile win, many candidates reason, will start a cycle of momentum that is tough to break.

Likewise, resource allocation includes not just a campaign's money but a candidate's time. Accordingly, time spent in Iowa may correspond with Gurian's observed patterns of frontrunners and dark horse spending: given that it is the ultimate high-momentum, low-delegate race, it is to be expected that higher-tier candidates would spend less time there, and lower-tier candidates more. And more generally, Gurian's claim and finding that candidates mainly behave rationally to maximize their nomination chances can undergird an effort to determine what Iowa strategies would benefit given candidates most, in the belief that those strategies will correspond with candidate behavior.

Applying Momentum and Strategy to Single-State Contest Participation

This admittedly small plot of theoretical ground should prove a solid enough foundation on which to build a basic approach to presidential nomination contest participation in particular, and then to apply that approach to the case of the Iowa Caucus. The combination of Bartels' widely-accepted conception of momentum with Gurian's powerful assertion of candidates'

strategic behavior as base assumptions suggests the view that nomination contest participation can be understood as a candidate's strategic decision stemming from weighing the risk and reward available in that state. Will the momentum and delegates gained from participation in a state outweigh the risk of participating, raising expectations, and then underperforming?

What Bartels and Gurian's broad insights cannot tell us, however, is how candidate strategy plays out beyond the fundamental dynamics of state-to-state momentum and frontrunners vs. dark horse candidates. Centering the analysis on a single state provides the opportunity to take their arguments still further and then compare them with the data available.

With this goal in mind, the fundamental calculus playing a role in determining *time* spent in a given state might include candidates asking:

- How much will success in the state mean in terms of the ultimate nomination, or on the flip side whether the candidate can afford to skip the state and still have a reasonable—or at least plausible—path to the nomination; and
- Whether the candidate could actually achieve that success in the state, or is participating merely risking failure that would do more harm than good.

To reinforce this risk/reward framework for use in this study, it helps to examine the research on what factors tend to produce success and failure in Iowa, as well as on how Iowa matters in a given campaign or to a given candidate.

Risk: What Factors Suggest Underperformance in Iowa?

Skipping Iowa really boils down to one rationale: believing that competing there is not worth the effort—or even that competing would harm a candidate more than not competing. So up front there are reasons why a candidate might skip Iowa, not predicated on whether Iowa's results have an impact on the ultimate nomination—but rather on the humble question of whether a candidate might or might not do well there in particular.

For instance, some candidates' political philosophy might discourage them from contesting the state, given Iowa's purported ideological skew toward the extremes in both parties (Stone 1982; Winebrenner 1998; Mayer 2000). A number of scholars have wrestled with the ideological tradeoffs primary voters must make in a competition with no internal partisan cues. Brams (1978), for instance, has established a framework for understanding how such decisions are made: he posits that multicandidate-field ideological competition takes place first between philosophically similar candidates, and

only then between candidates from the party's conservative, moderate, and liberal factions. This understanding would explain the jockeying of candidates like social conservatives Sam Brownback and Mike Huckabee before 2007 Iowa's Ames Straw Poll. Huckabee bested Brownback in that contest, and soon thereafter Brownback dropped from the race, leaving Huckabee to carry the evangelical mantle deep into the GOP nomination fight against the more moderate McCain.

Brams' dynamic has been explored most carefully with respect to the Democrats' 1976 contest (Aldrich 1980). In that race, according to Aldrich, Carter not only capitalized on others' lack of effort in Iowa, he also enjoyed substantial philosophical elbow room as a Southern, relatively conservative governor. Having quickly consolidated his claim to that wing of the Democratic Party with his "victory" in Iowa, Carter faced off against a crowded field of more liberal candidates, each of which still had to struggle with one another for dominance within that faction (Steger 2006).

Norrander, who also explored such nomination dynamics, has found that ideologically more extreme candidates generally fared better in caucuses than they did in primaries (Norrander 1993, 343). Given that intra-party ideological maneuvering is taking place, candidates who have the most ideological "space" in Iowa—often easiest to open up by moving to one extreme of the party or the other—might expect the most positive outcomes, as both Carter and Huckabee found, and might therefore be most inclined to participate.

Second, the Iowa Caucus has long been accused of favoring Midwestern or farm-friendly candidates (Winebrenner 1998, 11), and, as noted above, once fielded a favorite son who all but mooted the contest. Given that, candidates who were competing with Iowa's favorite son or with opponents from states near Iowa might also choose to steer clear of the Caucuses, while Iowa's favorite neighbors might choose to stick it out there because of their perceived advantage. And if, as recent research suggests, New Hampshire "filters out" a bias against Iowa's favorite sons (Hull 2007, 51-54), we would expect that rational candidates competing against such a favorite son in particular would historically have had a powerful incentive to skip the Caucuses.

Third, Iowa is a relatively well-balanced state politically (Winebrenner 1998, 17), making it unlikely that one party or the other would view it as hostile territory. However, on the Democratic side the contest is more challenging than on the GOP side; according to party regulars, "Republicans just count numbers," whereas Democratic caucuses require stringent viability thresholds of candidates.⁴ That may create an incentive generally for Democrats to spend more time in the state than Republicans. However, while less well-known candidates generally might camp out in the state trying to get

noticed, those on the Democratic side might be less inclined to do so than those on the GOP side, given the Democratic Party's 15 percent viability thresholds that disadvantage lower-tier candidates (Winebrenner 1998; Hull 2007, 89-90, 95-96).

Fourth and finally, minority candidates might wonder whether they would truly be judged by the content of their characters, given Iowa's overwhelming white majority (Lengle 1981; Stone, Rapoport and Abramowitz 1989). Though one analysis has found no significant difference between minority and non-minority candidate performance in Iowa (Hull 2007, 116), an African-American candidate in particular might view the state as unfriendly territory, and focus more resources on another campaign with more balanced demography.

That yields four risk factors that might lead candidates to spend less time in the state, given a (perceived or real) higher probability of a loss there: ideology, Iowa's bias toward Midwestern candidates and its favorite son, a somewhat intricate partisan difference, and a candidate's race.

Reward: What Factors Explain How Much Iowa Matters?

Previous research on Iowa's impact on the presidential nomination is at its most convincing and united in the assertion that Iowa can sink a lower-tier presidential campaign that bets on the state and loses (Wolfinger 1989; Winebrenner 1998). Yet the Caucuses' impact on the ultimate nomination is an open question. During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars commonly focused on the additional and growing press attention and notoriety winning the state generates for a candidate (Patterson 1980; Robinson 1981; Bartels 1989; Brady 1989; Polsby 1989; Winebrenner 1998). That attention matters especially to lower-tier candidates: as noted above Gurian and Haynes (1993) found that frontrunners tend to focus on delegates, while dark horses focus on momentum. Given that Iowa's contest influenced only 45 Democratic delegates out of 4,409 total Democratic Convention delegates in 2008—and that it did not bind even those delegates—it is the momentum that matters almost exclusively in the contest.

Regardless, some have pointed out that Iowa's role is "mediated" by candidates' subsequent performance in New Hampshire in some way, limiting the Caucuses' overall impact on the rest of the primary season (Mayer 2004, 107; see also Brady 1989; Adkins and Dowdle 2001a; Adkins and Dowdle 2002). More specifically, studies have found that without accounting for more recent changes in the value of momentum,⁵ Iowa's main role is to influence the outcome of New Hampshire (Hull 2007, 49-51), and may not even have much impact there (Mayer 2004, 106-111). Finally, it has been suggested that New Hampshire may interact with Iowa to "filter out"

the Midwestern state's biases, at least toward favorite son candidates (Hull 2004; Hull 2007, 51-54).

More fundamentally, a spate of presidential primary studies have suggested that high levels of pre-presidential year support—in national polls and also potentially but not necessarily “Invisible Primary” fundraising success—is by far the best predictor of nomination performance, regardless of how candidates fared in Iowa or even New Hampshire (Norrander 1993, 2000, and 2006; Steger 2000; Adkins and Dowdle 2000, 2001b, 2004, and 2005; Steger, Dowdle, and Adkins 2004). Others have gone so far as to speculate that Iowa's role in actually settling a nomination is finished, and that it would never again replicate the boost that it gave to Carter (Mayer 1996; Winebrenner 1998).

Yet Kerry's 2004 Iowa win arguably constitutes such a case: a candidate who trailed in both fundraising and national polling for virtually the entire year before the election surprised the frontrunner in Iowa, rode that win to another victory in New Hampshire, and then to the nomination. And 2008 provides another powerful counterexample in Giuliani. Though leading in polls and fundraising going into the nomination process, Giuliani began to lose support as it became clear he was bypassing early states. Even before his loss in Iowa, he chose to pull up stakes in New Hampshire as McCain rose phoenix-like there, and ultimately put those stakes back down in Florida, but was unable to withstand the momentum hurricane that hit him when the other candidates arrived.

These two case studies suggest that while pre-election polling has the greatest statistical effect on nomination outcomes, only translating that support into state-by-state wins actually secures the delegates necessary to win at Convention. At least, 2004 and 2008 reinforce the importance of candidates' early state contest participation. After all, if it were true that pre-primary polls dictated nomination outcomes, every top-tier candidate would skip Iowa. Moreover, recent research also hints that Iowa's influence may be growing as new technologies amplify candidates' momentum surges by drawing in dollars and door-knockers online faster than ever before, a phenomenon termed “e-mentum” (Hull 2006; Hull 2007, 57-70).

Granted, McCain's successful bypassing of the Caucus in 2008 demonstrates that fighting there is not always necessary. So a statistical model teasing out historical candidate decisions is required to weigh the multifarious factors associated with skipping Iowa.

For that model, these prior findings on the ways in which Iowa matters suggest some reasons why most candidates are drawn to Iowa, and compete there. First, just as Gurian's work suggested, candidates seem to have benefited most from Iowa's Caucuses when they were low-tier candidates who rose from the ashes there and when they most needed additional press

attention and got it, which suggests testing the effects on participation of both national poll support and fundraising success. By contrast, higher-tier and/or better-known figures might calculate that they don't need the state's limelight—or worse, that the downside risk of competing and losing might be worse than not competing at all. For instance, Reagan in 1980 was in the former category, and Giuliani in 2008 was in the latter. And the most notable case of this downside risk would be an incumbent president facing a nomination battle, such as Ford in 1976, Carter in 1980, or Bush in 1992: a situation in which a win in Iowa is certainly not necessary to the candidate's nomination, and a loss there is all downside.

Second, what matters in the ultimate nomination may be not just the Iowa results, but the impact those results have on New Hampshire. Accordingly, we might expect candidates who were particularly strong in New Hampshire, like McCain in both 2000 and 2008, to attempt to bypass the Iowa bounce.

Third, another possibility is that candidates “learned” the increasing stakes in Iowa, and followed the growing media attention there, realizing more and more that they couldn't afford not to be a part of it. After 1976, Carter's win turned the Caucus into a famous event, and at least one candidate adopted his Iowa-heavy strategy in 1980. After that candidate, Bush, rode an Iowa wave to some success as well, more candidates tried it. In 1984 it also propelled Hart into the limelight.

This success led to a swarm in 1988, reports *Des Moines Register* columnist and leading Caucus expert David Yepsen, resulting in “perhaps the largest caucus event in history,” in which 13 candidates competed, employing 596 staff members, and spending 846 days in the state.⁶ But 1988 was to be Iowa's pinnacle in terms of candidate time in Iowa. Both winners, Midwesterners Sen. Bob Dole and Rep. Dick Gephardt, went on to lose New Hampshire, and ultimately their nominations. In both cases, Iowa's results were ruled an anomaly—an artifact of the farm crisis and the state's penchant for picking ag-friendly candidates. In fact, the amount of time Dole and Gephardt spent in Iowa may have actually harmed their chances of winning the nomination. Since that peak in 1988, candidates have spent a more modest, and steady, amount of time in the state.

Thus, if Iowa's impact has in fact increased over time, whether because of increasing media attention (between 1976 and 1988) or candidates' growing technological capabilities to capitalize on a strong performance there (between 1996 and 2008), it may be that candidates have chosen to spend more and more days in the state over the years.

So the rewards the Caucus in particular has to offer seem highest for those with low national and New Hampshire poll standings and those who

have raised the least money, and lowest for those with high poll standings and plenty of money, especially incumbent presidents. And perceptions of those rewards appear to have shifted over time, rocketing up through 1988 and then moderating through 2008.

The Risk/Reward Calculation

This cursory glance over the nomination literature provides a basic approach to presidential candidate nomination contest participation. In this model, rational presidential candidates would participate in a state contest after weighing the reward the contest might afford their campaigns, as well as the risk associated with participating in the contest. Were this assertion correct, a candidate would have to consider whether:

- a) Success in the state would help them win the nomination; and either
- b) They stand a reasonable chance of having success in that state; or they cannot afford *not* to compete in the state.

By contrast, rational candidates would skip an early state contest if:

- c) Success in the state would not appreciably help them win the nomination; and/or
- d) They have a substantial chance of doing poorly in that state, regardless; and they have a path to the nomination that bypasses the state.

Note that success by no means implies finishing first in the contest. Historically, finishing better than expected in a state is enough to propel a candidacy forward (Aldrich 1980; Gurian and Haynes 1993; Mayer 2004, 102-106). For instance, in 1976, Carter actually won only 27.6 percent of state delegate equivalents, finishing second behind “Uncommitted”—which received 37 percent—but besting the rest of the field yielded the desired result, which was national attention.⁷ Likewise, Gary Hart finished more than 30 points behind Walter Mondale in 1988 (16.5% to 48.9%), but his second place finish coupled with John Glenn’s dismal fifth in the state provided him considerable momentum.

How could success in a state possibly not help a candidate? If, for instance, the state is not *being watched by the media—for instance, Mitt Romney’s 2008 wins in Wyoming, Maine, and even Nevada all but vanished into the ether as though they had not happened, while his losses in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and especially Florida crippled and then destroyed his candidacy.

This, then, is a basic approach to the risk/reward calculation a rational presidential candidate must make when confronting the decision to compete in a given nomination contest.

Irrational, Irrelevant, and Incorrect Candidates

For the record, it is important to acknowledge that some presidential candidates are irrational, some are irrelevant, and some are incorrect. First, without pointing fingers, many presidential campaigns over the years might be accused of behaving erratically or in ways that do not appear to benefit them. Second, some candidates act in ways that have nothing to do with winning the White House, not because they are irrational but because that is not in fact their primary goal. Dennis Kucinich ran for president again in 2008 insisting he could win—but behaved very differently from a rational candidate attempting to do so, perhaps more motivated to keep his party focused on progressive goals than actually moving into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Third, some campaigns simply make poor judgments about the answers to the questions they face. Giuliani’s strategy of conceding more and more states, for instance, was an unmitigated disaster. No frontrunner had ever attempted to bypass two, three, or especially six states before, so the Giuliani camp technically had no historical precedent to guide them. The reason they had no precedent, however, is simply because no frontrunner had ever made such an egregious error before.

The analysis below assumes that irrational, irrelevant, and incorrect candidates will constitute real, but random, noise in the model. To the extent that irrationality, irrelevance, and idiocy are non-random, adding them to the mix must wait.

Measuring Risk/Reward Factors in Iowa Participation

Testing this simple assertion requires gathering data to measure candidate performance in each of the categories that might have determined candidate assessments of their chances of success in Iowa, its impact on their nomination chances, and their chances of capturing the nomination if in fact they skipped Iowa in particular. That variable centers on the number of days spent in Iowa by candidates from the last midterm election until Caucus Day for 90 candidates from 1976-2008.⁸ It also includes, for (most of) those candidates, measures of national prominence (Gallup Poll results, fundraising success, and incumbent presidents), ideological “crowding,” state of origin, race, the historical success of Iowa candidates in the nomination battle, and whether the candidate faced the prospect of being hampered by Democratic party rules requiring 15 percent support in any given precinct to obtain state

delegate equivalents (SDEs). Each variable is described in more detail below.

Gallup Poll Support

Candidates may be so popular that they feel they do not need an Iowa win, or at least can survive an Iowa loss. As noted above, past studies have found consistently that high levels of national prominence before the primary season begins are more important in determining nomination outcomes than any other factor (Norrander, 1993; Adkins and Dowdle 2001b), that Iowa and New Hampshire results rarely rearrange the rank order of nomination outcomes (Adkins and Dowdle 2001a), and that Iowa in particular has only an indirect impact on the outcome of the race (Mayer 2000).

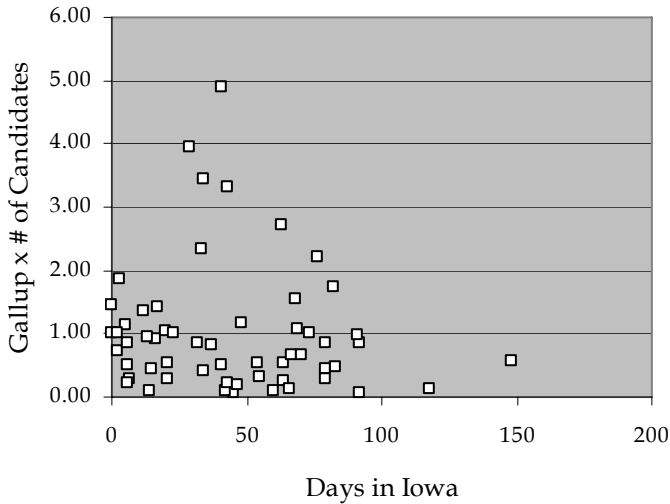
That said, since Carter broke out of the pack in 1976, lower-tier candidates have commonly sought an Iowa win to garner the national prominence they lack. This was certainly the twin calculations of Bush in 1980 and Hart in 1984, respectively. It may be, therefore, that candidates with a higher national profile systematically spend less time in Iowa, and those with a lower profile spend more.

To test the importance of a candidate's national prominence to time spent in Iowa, presidential polling performance relative to other candidates in the nomination seems to fit the bill. That data, drawn from the Gallup Poll conducted closest to the Iowa Caucus 1976-2004, and scaled by multiplying the data by the number of candidates in the field on Caucus day, is presented in Figure 1.⁹

From 1976-2004, there did appear to be a rough pattern that higher-tier candidates spend less time in the state, and lower-tier candidates spend more.¹⁰ Note the caveat above on lower-tier *Democratic* candidates in particular, however. In 2008, one low-tier Democrat, Dennis Kucinich, spent only 11 days in the state—either an acknowledgement of the tough 15 percent threshold there, or a symptom of a campaign going somewhere besides toward the nomination. Otherwise, the party's candidates spent roughly similar amounts of time, though climbing slightly as prominence declined: Clinton, leading the pack, spent 65 days there, the same as Bill Richardson. Obama, second in the Gallup Poll at the time, spent 76 days in Iowa; Edwards, in third, spent 74; Biden, in fourth, spent 87; and Dodd, a rounding error in national polls, spent 92.

The Republican side follows a roughly similar pattern, with the national poll leader Giuliani spending just 18 days in the state; McCain, who led in early polls but fell behind Huckabee as he concentrated his meager resources in New Hampshire, at 40 days; Huckabee and Romney, who spent most of the year mired near the bottom of the Gallup poll results and were just

Figure 1. Relative National Prominence and Days Spent in Iowa, 1976-2004



beginning to rise in part from their early-state media attention, at 53 and 67 days respectively. The low-tier outliers for the GOP were Fred Thompson, who entered the race late, and Ron Paul, whose campaign was more of a movement than a traditional campaign.

Fundraising Success

Another measure of national prominence might be the candidates' fundraising success. Prior research suggests that pre-election year receipts and/or cash on hand play a substantial role in determining a candidate's ultimate nomination success, though potentially not a statistically significant one (Adkins and Dowdle 2001a; Mayer 2004, 87; Hull 2007, 45, 189-190). Perhaps a candidate's national prominence as measured by fundraising success might also free that candidate from competing in Iowa. Accordingly, the model below includes 1976-2008 candidate receipts from the second half of the pre-election year (from October and Year-End reports to the Federal Election Commission), adjusted into real (2007) dollars.¹¹

The 2008 Democratic race, again, follows a pattern suggesting a slight trend. Receipts tracked Gallup Poll ratings closely, so Clinton led with over \$55 million raised in the second half of 2007, with Obama in second at \$44

million, Edwards in third at \$21 million, Richardson in fourth at \$10 million, Biden at \$4.9 million, Dodd at \$4.4 million, and Kucinich trailing at \$2.7 million—the same rank order as in national polling. And with the exception of Kucinich, days in Iowa essentially rose with an inverse correlation to money raised.

The exception on the Republican side was at the top end of fundraising success in the 2008 cycle. Romney headed the list of both receipts, at \$45 million, and days in Iowa, at 67. Otherwise, receipts and days in Iowa more or less followed the theorized pattern, with Giuliani and Paul at \$26 million and \$25 million and 18 and 15 days, respectively; Thompson at \$21 million and 20 days; McCain at \$15.7 million and 40 days; and Huckabee at \$7.7 million and 53 days in the state.

New Hampshire Support

To measure the impact of candidates' strength in New Hampshire on their proclivity for skipping Iowa, the data gathered also includes pre-Caucus Granite State polling data. Higher poll support in the first-in-the-nation primary might, like higher Gallup Poll support, constitute a measure of a higher-tier candidacy—or at least one with less to risk in the fields of the Hawkeye State. However, New Hampshire polls have virtually no correlation with candidates' decisions to spend time in Iowa: the coefficient of determination was close to zero ($R^2 = 0.007$). That raises serious doubts about the variable's explanatory power within the model.

Incumbent Presidents

The Iowa Caucus has a very different dynamic when there is an incumbent president in the mix than when there is not. The 1992 experience of Pat Buchanan, where the insurgent challenging Bush chose to pitch his battle in New Hampshire, suggests candidates may be less likely to tackle an incumbent president in the Caucuses, given their intensely partisan participants.

Also, incumbent presidents themselves have historically not campaigned in Iowa. Ford in 1976, Carter in 1980, and Bush in 1992 all faced primary challenges, but none spent significant time campaigning there. Reagan in 1984, Clinton in 1996, and Bush in 2004 did not face a significant challenger, so the Caucus was insignificant.

Being the incumbent president is the ultimate national prominence. Controlling for the effects of being an incumbent president makes historical, theoretical, and empirical sense.

Race

Minority candidates might also cut down on days in Iowa because they perceive that its lily-white demographics taint their chances. After all, caucuses generally have been found to be less representative than primaries (Lengle 1981, 112). And Iowa in particular is 96 percent white and just 3 percent black, with 3 percent of whites identifying as Hispanics, according to 2005 U.S. Census Bureau data.¹²

Does that demographic reality discourage minority candidates from showing up in the state? Before the Obama's 2008 candidacy, there were seven major candidacies to test the question on: Two for the Rev. Jesse Jackson (1984 and 1988), two for former Ambassador Alan Keyes (1996 and 2000), and one each for the Rev. Al Sharpton and Sen. Carol Moseley Braun (2004). Those candidates' average time spent in Iowa and the average time in Iowa of white (and Hispanic, given Gov. Bill Richardson's 2008 bid) candidates is presented in Figure 2.

Over the 1976-2008 period, African-American presidential candidates have in fact spent less time on average in Iowa than their white competitors, though that difference is not significant ($p = .705$). Regardless, the 2008 cycle bore out the opposite pattern: Obama spent more days in Iowa than any Democratic candidate but Dodd or Biden.

Crowding In: Number of Candidates in the Field

Quantifying the size of the field's impact is a prerequisite for building a measure for ideology's impact on skipping Iowa along the lines that Brams

Figure 2. Race and Average Number of Days in Iowa, 1976-2008

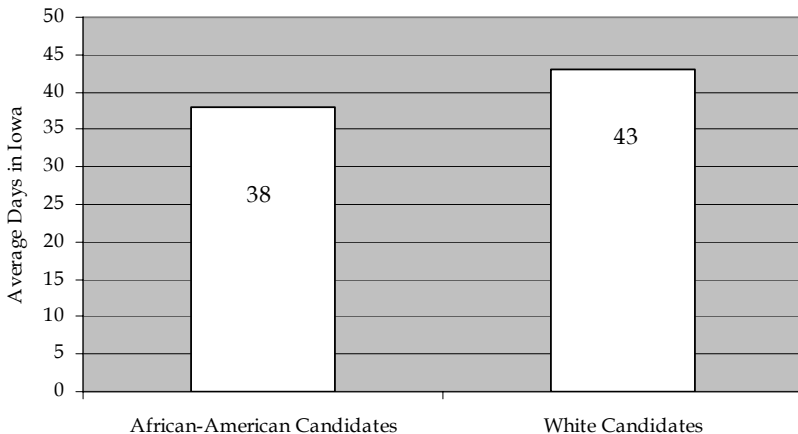
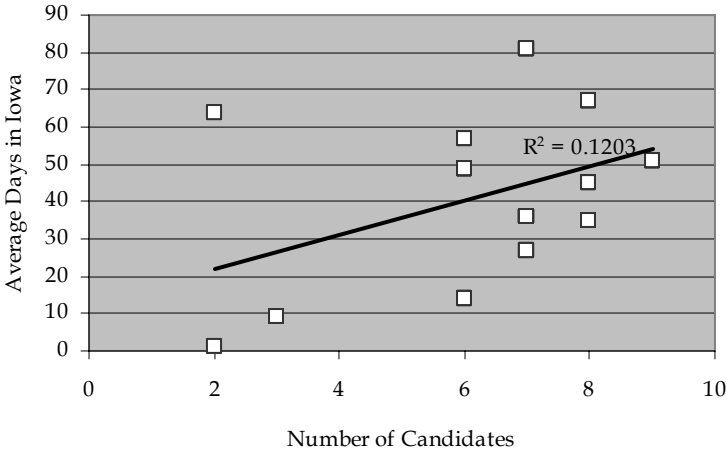


Figure 3. Number of Candidates in the Field and Average Days in Iowa for the Cycle, 1976-2008



(1978) and Aldrich (1980) describe. The more candidates who contest the nomination, the more candidates need to break out from the ideological pack somehow. One approach to doing so was Carter and George H.W. Bush’s way, that is, by spending more time in Iowa than one’s similarly-situated opponents and emerging as the dominant candidate for one part of the ideological spectrum. As Figure 3 hints, the more candidates there are in the field generally, the more likely candidates are to try to “crowd in”—to try to use Iowa to raise their profile among their many competitors.

Candidates running in larger fields, defined as greater than 6 candidates in the race on Caucus day (or more precisely, more than the grand mean of 6.71 candidates for the fields faced by all candidates in competitive Iowa fields, 1976-2008), spend more days in Iowa on average (48) than do those in smaller fields (35), a result that is statistically significant ($p = 0.046$).

That relationship, however, might be due to another dynamic: the relative competitiveness of the race. The number of candidates likely relates directly to the perception that a race is winnable for a potential entrant. The more competitive, or open, a race appears, the more likely a given potential candidate would be to enter the race. Thus a large field would in all likelihood be related to a more open race, and a small field to a less open race.

The nature of the Iowa Caucuses partially moots this discussion. The reason is that in uncompetitive years, no presidential straw poll is held at all in the state’s precinct caucuses. Thus the 1984, 1992 and 2004 cycles on the GOP side and the 1996 cycle on the Democratic side do not appear in Caucus data, as virtually no measures of candidate level of effort exist in

those years. The strict measure of competitiveness used as a cutoff in past research to arrive at this list can be found in Hull 2007 (178-179).

A less stringent measure of a race's competitiveness must be employed to test between high-intensity races with a closely-packed field and low-intensity races with an overwhelming frontrunner. Steger's extensive work on the pre-primary "Exhibition Season," for instance, has found that the most competitive nomination fights include the 1976, 1988, 1992, and 2004 Democratic races and the 2008 Republican race.¹³

One less-sophisticated measure which does not quite replicate these findings would be the frontrunners' lead over their second-place competitor in the last Gallup Poll before the Iowa Caucuses, divided by the number of candidates in the field on Caucus day. By that measure, the 1980 Ford vs. Reagan race was actually the most competitive, given that the two were locked in a dead-even race, polling at 45 percent each; and the least competitive (of the races with a contested Caucus) was the 2000 Bush vs. the field race, where the younger Bush held a 47.2 percentage-point lead over his nearest competitor, John McCain. Using that frontrunner's lead/number of candidates measure with a cutoff of 0.032, its grand mean, other competitive races include 1976 D, 2004 D, 2008 R, 1984 D, 1988 D, and 2008 D, while in addition to years without an Iowa contest, uncompetitive races include 1980 D, 1996 R, 1988 R, and 1980 R.¹⁴

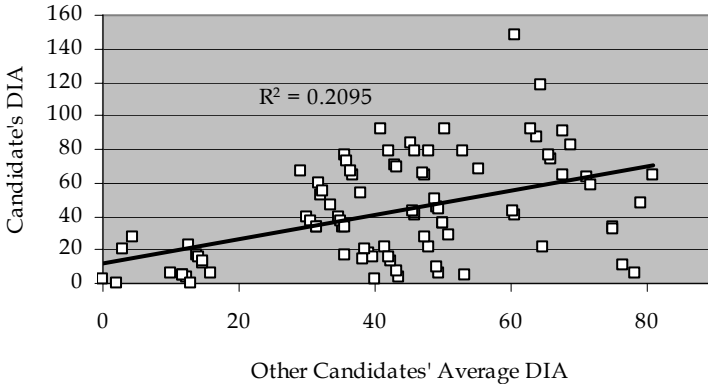
All that said, a means test between the two kinds of races suggests that the number of days in Iowa for candidates in competitive races (42) is in fact less than for candidates in uncompetitive races (49), though the difference that is not statistically significant ($F = 0.942, p = 0.335$).

That leaves one other important control variable with respect to the nature of the field: the average number of days in Iowa of the *other candidates*. While the competitiveness of the nomination race overall may not affect candidates' designs on Iowa, it would stand to reason that the competitiveness of the fight within Iowa would. Thus, some candidates spending more and more time in Iowa may ratchet up the pressure on the others.

The relationship between candidates' time spent in Iowa and that of their competitors, however, is a cryptic one. While calculating the average of all the other candidates' time in the state in a given cycle is straightforward, the resulting correlation is less so.

While others' days in Iowa appears to explain directly about 20 percent of the variation in candidates' time spent in the state over the entire 1976-2008 period, Figure 4 leaves a subtle additional impression: for each individual cycle, clearly visible as lines of related values, the relationship actually appears to be powerfully inverse. Factoring out the variation in average differences between each cycle, therefore, may leave a very different pattern indeed.

Figure 4. Other Candidates' Average Days in Iowa vs. Candidate's Days in Iowa



That said, it must be left to the model below to determine whether crowding into the state, that is, spending time in Iowa to try to break out of the pack because of the large numbers of candidates in the race or the degree to which they are competing in Iowa, is statistically significant controlling for other factors in the model.

Crowding Out: Candidate Ideology (and Exit)

The other way of breaking out of the pack would be by avoiding Iowa and moving on to another state. Since previous studies have found that candidates compete for dominance within their ideological wings of the party (Brams 1978), perhaps one way to do so is to exit an early race where too much such competition exists to succeed in a later contest with more philosophical breathing room. As formal modeling theorists could demonstrate better than the analysis here, the more hemmed in ideologically candidates are by their competitors, the more likely they might be to be “crowded out” of the state in this way.

To test this possibility, the measure used in the model below is built upon “raw,” Likert-scale ideology scores for each candidate from the benchmark survey of presidential nomination partisans, “Activists in the United States Presidential Nomination Process, 1980-1996” (Abramowitz, McGlennon, Rapoport, and Stone 2001). That data contains both ideological self-placement and candidate placement scores for each respondent. To that data have been added a new survey of Iowa activists, designed to reflect wordings from the Abramowitz et al. database with values from 2000 and

2004 (see Hull 2007), as well as 2008 data from *New York Times* and MSNBC national and Iowa exit polls.

Those raw scores were used to compute the “Ideological Proximity” between each respondent’s self-placement and their placement of each candidate, which in turn was used to calculate a theoretical “Ideological Vote Share,” meaning the percentage of respondents for whom the candidate was nearest in Ideological Proximity, with additional fractions of support allocated proportionally for cases in which one or more candidate was tied for closest Ideological Proximity for a given respondent.

Finally, “Ideological Crowding” can be calculated from that vote share, simply subtracting each candidate’s Ideological Vote Share from 100 percent. Ideological Crowding, then, is for each candidate the percentage of partisan activists ranking another candidate closer ideologically, including a proportional share of ties.¹⁵

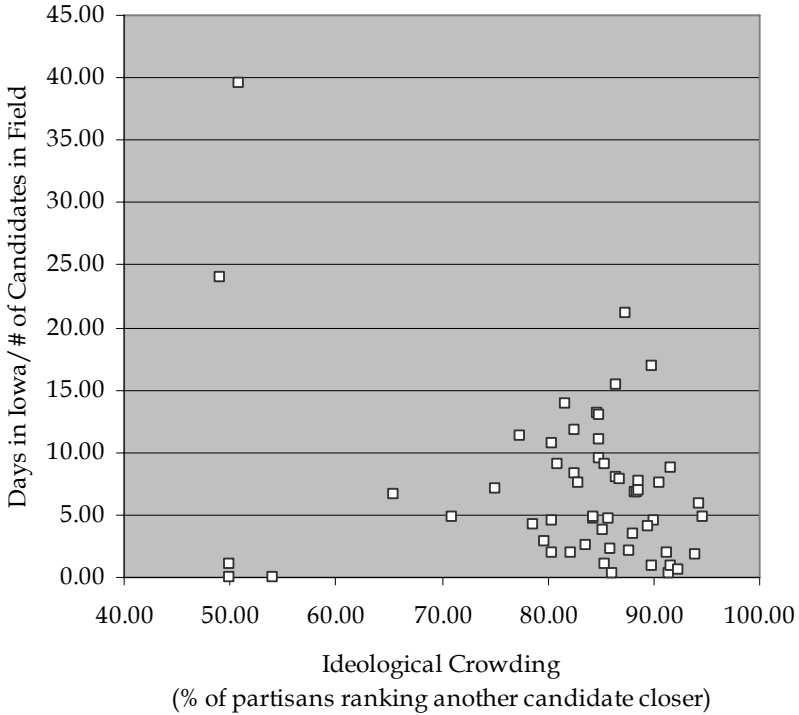
Figure 5 sketches the rough outlines of the dynamic described above: with three key outliers (namely incumbent presidents Ford in 1976 and Carter in 1980, and Ronald Reagan in 1976, a prominent candidate running the first year the Carter strategy was adopted on the GOP side—all factors for which the model below controls), the less ideological space candidates have in the crowded Caucus-day field, the less time they spend in Iowa.

In 2008, the three Democrats matched up philosophically against each other with virtually no variation in breathing room, according to a slightly tweaked methodology.¹⁶ On the Republican side, by contrast, the conservatively-perceived Fred Thompson had more space in Iowa than all other candidates, capturing an almost 25 percent ideological vote share in a field split six ways. Mike Huckabee was a close second, Romney third, McCain fourth, and Paul and Giuliani brought up the rear, tied with over 90 percent of Iowans arrayed against them ideologically. Thompson began his race late, and so his days in Iowa were relatively low, but otherwise this ideological crowding corresponds closely with the rank order of candidates spending time in the state.

Perhaps this gives us a view of one rationale for McCain and Giuliani’s decision to bypass the state: they were crowded out ideologically, and chose to take their fight elsewhere—one to New Hampshire, and one all the way to Florida.

A final option for a candidate who is crowded out, of course, is to leave the race. It is crucial to account for those candidates who spent less time in Iowa because of the ultimate negative strategic decision: the one to exit the race before the primary season even begins. Accordingly, the database also includes a dichotomous variable for those candidates who dropped out of the race before the Iowa Caucus took place. Theoretically interesting? Perhaps not. Crucial for a well-specified model? Likely so.

Figure 5. “Ideological Crowding” and Days in Iowa / Number of Candidates in the Field, 1976-2004



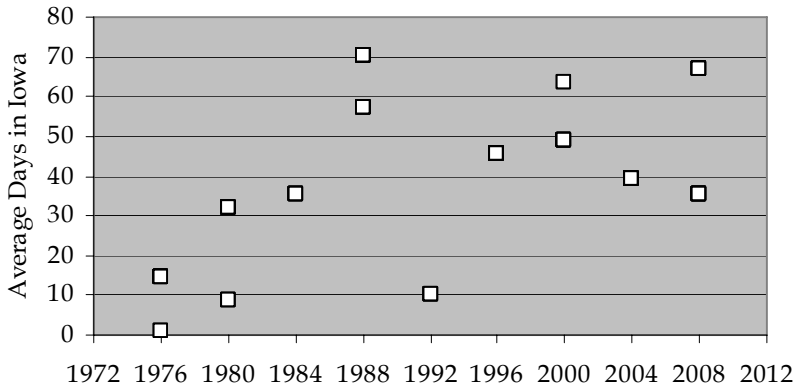
Timing is Everything: The Evolution of Caucus Participation

While Iowa’s impact may have grown over time, its surge of popularity among the politicians themselves appears to have crested like the tech tide of 2000, and returned to a more placid place, as Figure 6 illustrates.

The question is how to measure the two dynamics discussed above: the potentially increasing stakes of the Caucus, both from increasing media coverage as well as increasing online tools to capitalize on momentum, as well as “candidate learning” about the benefits of laying a bet on Iowa, and the downside of spending too much time there as well.

The first measure of this evolution that must undergird all others is some measure of *t*, the passage of time itself. It is most simply measured by using a number proportional to the amount of time that has passed between election seasons. In this study, that measure is the number of four-year election cycles since 1976, beginning at zero. If indeed over time candidates

Figure 6. Presidential Year and Average Days in Iowa that Cycle, 1976-2008

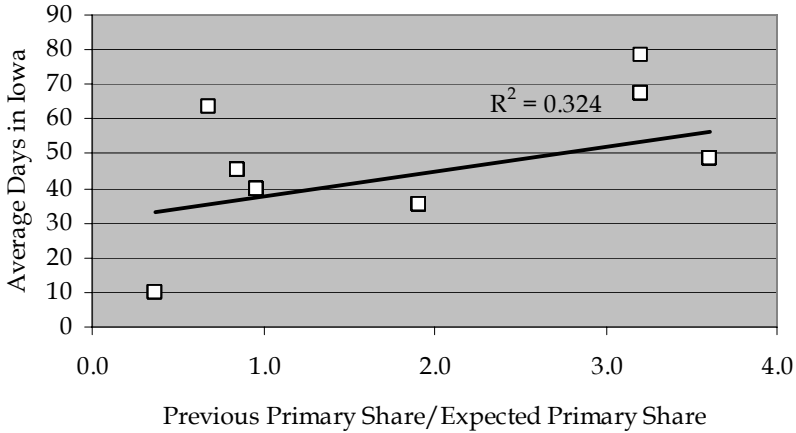


have been less likely to skip the Caucus as its impact rose all else equal, estimating the independent impact of this t factor should capture it.

Estimating the impact that Iowa had in the previous cycle might also help quantify candidates' impressions of the stakes in the Caucuses. Did the state appear to matter last time around? The more it did, the less likely rational candidates should be to bypass its nomination contest. Operationalizing how a given nomination contest matters can be tricky: for instance, Bartels' (1988) work on presidential primary dynamics uses the percentage won in a primary as a proxy for momentum to predict upcoming primary results; Adkins and Dowdle's study of early state impacts (2001a) and Mayer's (2004) enumeration of contemporary nomination dynamics use dichotomous variables for having won or placed second in Iowa and New Hampshire to test those states' impact on nomination finishes;¹⁷ the Hull (2007) study of the Caucus itself combines the two techniques, using Bartels' (1988) continuous percentage won variable to test Adkins and Dowdle and Mayer's findings in Iowa and New Hampshire.

In this case, the measure needs to capture the impact of first and second place finishes only, so using that amalgam does not work. A variation on the theme, however, would be to capture the total final nomination vote shares of the first and second place finishers in Iowa. The higher that total, the better Iowa's winner and runner-up performed in their pursuit of the nomination. That said, such a preliminary measure would need to compensate for differently sized fields; dividing it by the nomination vote share one would expect an average candidate to capture given the number of candidates in the field on Caucus day (which is the equivalent of multiplying the variable by the number of candidates) serves that purpose here.

Figure 7. Previous Primary Performance and Average Days in Iowa the Following Cycle



Total nomination vote percentage of both first and second place finishers in the prior Iowa Caucuses, divided by their “expected” primary share, that is, 1/number of candidates in the race on Caucus day, vs. the average days in Iowa of all same-party candidates the next cycle.

The resulting measure, the combined nomination vote percentage of Iowa’s winning and placing candidates divided by their “expected” vote share given the number of candidates in the race, may be tangled, but it also explains about a third of the variation in the following cycle’s average days in Iowa, as Figure 7 illustrates.

If candidates are less likely to skip Iowa in the wake of a successful showing the prior cycle, we might also expect that the amount of time they spend is also proportional to the time candidates spent in the state that same prior cycle. A glance back at Figure 5 suggests that candidates at first continually topped the number of days in Iowa of prior cycles. That pattern was broken, as the previous measure would suggest, when Iowa’s first and second place finishers of both parties ultimately lost the nomination, which is exactly what happened in 1988: Among Democrats, not only Gephardt but Paul Simon fared poorly in their nomination races, as did both Bob Dole and Pat Robertson on the Republican side of the aisle.

Thus adding into the mix the average number of days in Iowa in the previous competitive cycle—that is, leaving out Iowa races that were entirely uncontested, namely 1984, 1992, and 2004 on the Republican side and 1996 on the Democratic side—should provide an important control variable gauging the “industry standard” amount of time in the state.

Iowa's Favorite Son and Candidates from States Nearby

Obviously a favorite son running would discourage candidates from contesting Iowa, which took place in 1992 on the Democratic side when Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin sought the Democratic nomination, and which almost took place in 2008 when former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack briefly entered the race, only to exit due to lack of funds. Also, more generally, Iowa's long-alleged Midwestern bias and simple logistics might draw politicians from nearby states to spend more time campaigning there.

How one categorizes a candidate as "Midwestern" makes some, though not a significant amount, of difference. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Midwest includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.¹⁸ However, it is candidates from Iowa's border states, plus Kansas (which, while just a few miles from the state's southwest corner, does not actually border it) who have tended to take advantage of their geographic proximity: Missourian Gephardt, who at 148 days in Iowa before the 1988 contest holds the record, Delaware Republican Pete Dupont, who spent 92 days there that cycle, the second-most ever, and Illinois Democrat Paul Simon, at 91 days, again in 1988.

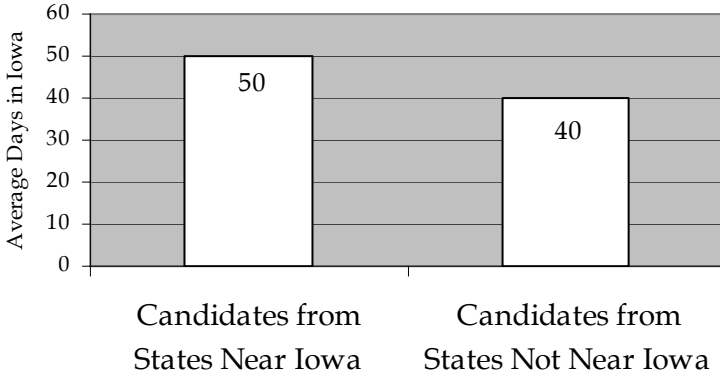
The averages reflect this reality: While Midwestern candidates spent about 46 days in Iowa on average, those from the states nearest Iowa spent 50, while those from the outlying Midwestern states spent only 36. (For skeptics who believe Kansan Bob Dole's many candidacies drive up the near-state average, excluding Kansas actually slightly increases that figure, to 51 days in Iowa.) So near-state candidacies are those that call for special attention.

It is easy to see the difference between candidates from states near Iowa and those further from Iowa, as Figure 8 indicates. Surprisingly enough, however, the difference is *not* statistically significant ($p = 0.245$).¹⁹ It remains to be seen if the factor plays a significant role when controlling for other variables, but it must surely be included regardless.

Differences between the Parties

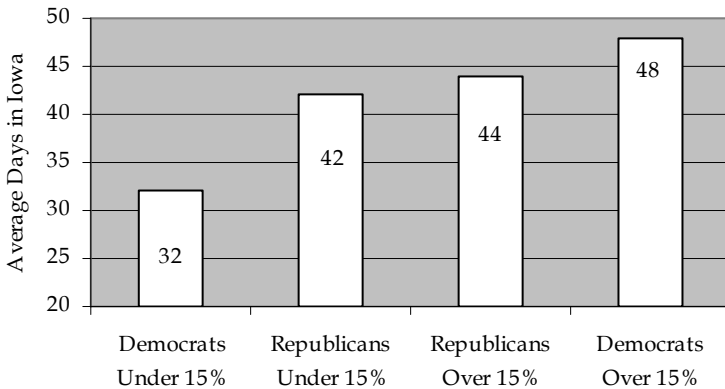
Measuring the difference in participation between the two parties is anything but straightforward. As noted above, the Democratic Party's 15 percent viability rule creates a distinct disadvantage for lower-tier candidates, which might on average drive down struggling Democratic candidates' attendance—but the complex nature of the contest itself might drive up Democratic attendance relative to the GOP.

Figure 8. Candidates from States near Iowa and Days in Iowa, 1976-2008



The near-state candidates over this period hail from Iowa border states Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and South Dakota, as well as Kansas. The data do not include Favorite Son Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa. The difference is *not* statistically significant ($p = 0.245$).

Figure 9. The Democratic 15 Percent Viability Threshold and Candidate Days in Iowa, 1976-2008



Differences between Democrats under and over 15% are statistically significant ($p = .016$); those between Republicans under and over 15% are not ($p = .730$). Differences overall between Republicans and Democrats are also not significant ($p = .904$).

The data, reflected in Figure 9, suggest both factors might be at work. One would expect that candidates doing poorly in a state generally would also have spent the least time there. But that neglects the essential dynamic of the Caucuses, in which unknown candidates compete for a Carter-like breakthrough. Thus on the GOP side it is actually the candidates on the lower end of the spectrum who appear there more often—though by an insubstantial amount.

By contrast, on the Democratic side, the pattern is not just reversed, but starkly so. Those facing the contest's 15 percent viability threshold spend an average of 21 fewer days in the state than those who do not.

The varying dynamics by party are represented in the database by a dichotomous variable for Democrats facing the 15 percent threshold and another for Republican candidates, to tease out both the average differences between the parties on time spent in Iowa, as well as the potential independent impact of being a low-tier Democrat in a race whose rules punish them. All this leaves the question of how these factors interrelate.

Testing the Risk/Reward Model for Iowa

To determine which candidates skip Iowa, a model is required to predict the most basic measure of a candidate's Hawkeye-state level of effort: the number of days the candidate spends in Iowa personally, which previous research has identified as the most important tactic available in the state (Hull 2007, 93-94, 118). Of the factors identified above, which best explain who spends more time in the state and who spends less? More specifically, a model explaining candidate days in Iowa will help test the risk/reward approach laid out above, which posits that skipping Iowa is a function of variables governing:

- What the downside risks are in the state, that is, the chances candidates would do poorly in the contest and ultimately harm rather than help their nomination chances; and
- The reward represented by success in the Caucuses, that is, the degree to which participating in the Caucuses would help a particular candidate relative to the downside risk.

In painful shorthand, a model can be constructed such that, for a candidate i ,

$$\text{Days_In_Iowa}_i = \text{Constant}_{1i} + \text{Risk}_i + \text{Reward}_i + \text{Controls}_i + u_i,$$

with the factors associated with the Risk and Reward that a candidate faces when deciding the extent to compete in Iowa, and the Controls necessary to

Table 1. Factors in Iowa Risk/Reward Model

Risk

- X₁ = IDEOLOGICAL CROWDING
- D₂ = RUNNING AGAINST FAVORITE SON
- D₃ = DEMOCRATS UNDER 15%
- D₄ = AFRICAN-AMERICAN

Reward

- X₅ = GALLUP POLLING
- X₆ = FUNDRAISING TOTAL
- X₇ = NEW HAMPSHIRE POLLING
- D₈ = INCUMBENT PRESIDENT
- X₉ = IOWA'S PREVIOUS PRIMARY PERFORMANCE
- X₁₀ = PREVIOUS COMPETITIVE CYCLE'S AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA

Controls

- X₁₁ = # OF CANDIDATES IN THE FIELD
 - X₁₂ = AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA FOR OTHER CANDIDATES
 - D₁₃ = CANDIDATE FROM STATE NEAR IOWA
 - D₁₄ = REPUBLICAN
 - D₁₅ = DROPPED OUT BEFORE CAUCUS
 - X₁₆ = *t*
-

properly specify the model, which are described in the previous sections and laid out in more rigorous detail in the Appendix, are provided in Table 1. These factors permit the estimate of a an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model of form

$$Y_i = \alpha_i + (\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 D_2 + \beta_3 D_3 + \beta_4 D_4) + (\beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 D_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10}) + (\beta_{11} X_{11} + \beta_{12} X_{12} + \beta_{13} D_{13} + \beta_{14} D_{14} + \beta_{15} D_{15} + \beta_{16} X_{16}) + u_i,$$

The estimate itself is presented in Table 2. The model explains only about half the variation in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .522$, $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .405$), a result that is nonetheless highly statistically significant ($F = 4.441$, $p < 0.001$). What is more, many—though by no means all—of the factors theory and previous research suggested are related to the amount of time a candidate spent in the first-in-the-nation caucus state are in fact statistically significant, with the signs—mostly—in the expected direction.

The overall results of the model tend to support Gurian's contention that candidates behave strategically. Factors associated with both risks and rewards in Iowa do indeed matter significantly in actual candidate behavior. All four "risk" factors, that is, those that signal candidates they may do poorly regardless of how much time they spend in the state, appear to make

Table 2. Estimate of Iowa Risk/Reward Model

Model Estimate	β	SE
Risk		
IDEOLOGICAL CROWDING	-2.54**	(0.83)
RUNNING AGAINST FAVORITE SON	-60.07**	(21.27)
DEMOCRATS UNDER 15%	-19.43*	(9.67)
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	-21.60*	(10.28)
Reward		
GALLUP POLLING	-0.78*	(0.34)
FUNDRAISING TOTAL	0.22	(0.36)
NEW HAMPSHIRE POLLING	-0.26	(0.40)
INCUMBENT PRESIDENT	-66.96*	(28.05)
IOWA'S PREVIOUS PRIMARY PERFORMANCE	25.00***	(5.38)
PREVIOUS COMPETITIVE CYCLE'S AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA	1.11***	(0.32)
Controls		
# OF CANDIDATES IN THE FIELD	13.34***	(3.66)
AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA FOR OTHER CANDIDATES	-0.635*	(0.31)
CANDIDATE FROM STATE NEAR IOWA	8.65	(7.31)
REPUBLICAN	-21.88**	(8.14)
DROPPED OUT BEFORE CAUCUS	-17.64*	(8.08)
<i>t</i>	-7.78**	(2.78)
(Constant)	176.98**	(59.21)
Dependent Variable: DAYS IN IOWA		
R ² = .522 Adj. R ² = .405 F = 4.441 Sig. < 0.001		

such a difference. For instance, candidates do seem to be crowded out of Iowa ideologically. While more candidates in the field draws candidates into the state, being hemmed in ideologically diverts candidates out. For every percentage point fewer of surveyed activists in the candidate's party reporting that they are closest ideologically to the candidate (including a proportional share of ties), the candidate spends on average two and a half fewer days in the state. Put another way, the more party activists that perceive they have alternatives closer to them ideologically than the candidate—regardless of whether those alternatives are more moderate or more extreme—the less likely it is that the candidate will fight in Iowa.

For example, John McCain in 2000, who that year was so crowded in philosophically that he reached a level between ultra-moderate Republican Arlen Specter in 1996 and eventual GOP break-away independent candidate

John Anderson in 1980, chose to compete in New Hampshire where his maverick style was more appreciated. Rudy Giuliani suffered a similar fate: confronted with the Hawkeye State's powerful conservative base in 2008, and with fully 94 percent of those surveyed placing another candidate closer than him philosophically, he elected not to run in Iowa.

Unsurprisingly, the risk of running against an Iowa favorite son was associated with significantly fewer days in the state on average: 60 fewer to be exact. This enormous disincentive to campaign in the state meant that every other Democratic candidate skipped Iowa during that 1992 cycle—except perhaps Paul Tsongas, who actually spent 27 days in the state in spite of Harkin's bid, ended up with a paltry 4.1 percent of the Caucus vote to show for it, saw Bill Clinton come roaring back in New Hampshire, and lost the nomination.

Another risk factor in Iowa, the 15 percent viability threshold imposed by the Democratic party, also seems to force lower-tier candidates to seek out greener pastures. On average, Democratic candidates with below 15 percent support in the *Des Moines Register's* Iowa Poll spent 19 fewer days in the state than other candidates. Along with ideology, this dynamic may help explain why 2004 candidate Joe Lieberman chose to stake his claim in New Hampshire and skip Iowa. By contrast, low-tier candidates Biden, Dodd, and Richardson in 2008 were counter-examples—all poured substantial resources, including time, into the Caucuses, and all paid dearly for it, badly underperforming their already modest Iowa poll support.

Finally, interestingly enough, while the difference between African-American candidates and others is not significant on its own, controlling for the other factors in the model demonstrates that the Caucus' demographic tilt may indeed discourage minority candidates from campaigning there *ceteris paribus*. Black candidates, according to this estimate, spent about 22 fewer days in the state, though only after holding other variables constant.

So, candidates have responded in an empirically demonstrable way to strategic disadvantages to succeeding in Iowa. Have they likewise chosen to avoid the state when the rewards it offered them were not as great?

The findings here are more mixed. As Gurian's work would suggest, candidates doing better in national polls do seem to visit in person less frequently (an average of about three quarters of a day fewer for every percentage point they draw in the Gallup Poll against their primary competitors). High national support, and thus the promise of delegate-rich states to come, may have been another factor at work in Giuliani's decision to skip Iowa, given that he was leading in nationwide polls for virtually the entire pre-election year.

For a similar reason, the status incumbent presidents hold does indeed appear to elevate the chances they will not campaign aggressively in the

state. Incumbent presidents like Bush, Ford, and even Carter have indeed spent very little time in traditional retail caucus politics, and the model estimates that presidents spend on average about 66 days fewer than other candidates, all else equal.²⁰

What's more, the model's findings are at their most powerful with respect to judgments about Iowa's value based on the last cycle. The average number of days spent in the state for candidates' parties' prior competitive contest does indeed have a highly significant correspondence with how much time candidates choose to spend in the state in that next cycle. In fact, for every day spent the last time around, candidates spend about 1.1 days, so previous calculations about the Caucuses' time value incent campaigns to up the ante in the next round of play.

The counterweight to that ever-escalating evolution, the model suggests, is Iowa's previous success stories' ultimate nomination performance. After Gary Hart's surprising second place in 1984, crowning him the top competitor to Mondale over American hero John Glenn, there was the swarm of Democratic pretenders to the throne for 1988, spending a towering 633 days in the state. Yet after the 1988 Iowa winner Gephardt and second-place Simon failed to garner even 10 percent of the primary votes cast, and with Iowa fielding a favorite son candidate, the caucuses were deserted in 1992—and in 2000, the process of escalation began anew, from a lower total.

So four of the six factors governing the reward from the state play significant roles in determining candidate level of effort—but for two, we cannot reject the possibility that they have no role at all. National fundraising, for one, does *not* appear to have a significant relationship with time spent in the state. This finding may be foreshadowed by previous research showing that controlling for national poll support, fundraising is not a significant factor in predicting nomination performance (see for instance Mayer 2004, 87, and Hull 2007, 189-190).²¹ Likewise, candidates' strength in New Hampshire does not seem to matter to their time allocation calculus, either. That finding is more surprising, as New Hampshire has been found consistently to play more of a role in determining nomination outcomes than Iowa, so it would stand to reason that those who can perform well in the first-in-the-nation primary might be more willing to bypass the first-in-the-nation caucuses. Yet the model provides no evidence of such a phenomenon, holding other factors constant.

The control variables include a couple of surprises, as well. As expected, Republicans do seem to spend fewer days in the state than Democrats, given the complexity of the Democratic contest, and controlling for those affected by the 15 percent viability threshold—about 22 fewer days on average. Also as expected, the number of candidates in the field is correlated

with an increased level of effort in the state—in fact, the relationship is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). For every candidate in the field, candidates have spent about 13 more days campaigning in Iowa. And finally, as expected, the control for candidates who dropped out of the nomination battle early is significant and negative.

But the “expected” ends there. The first surprise is average days in Iowa of other candidates. Contrary to the expectations laid out above, though foreshadowed by the subtle patterns in Figure 4, we find that campaigns respond to others spending more time in the state—by spending less. In fact, for every day on average other candidates are spending in the state, a given campaign will spend about two-thirds of a day less, holding constant other factors. *Here* is a strategic choice indeed: nomination hopefuls confronted with opponents investing heavily in one state invest their own time in others.

A second surprise is that the overall trend of time in Iowa is *down*, controlling for other factors. This may be a statistical quirk, but it merits a closer examination. This finding suggests that the rocketing increase in time allocated to the Caucuses is fully explained by the other factors in the model, and that those factors aside, on average Iowa is less and less popular.

The third and final surprise is that the model confirms that though candidates from states near Iowa have spent more time on average in the state, that difference is not statistically significant controlling for other factors in the model.²²

Discussion

When do presidential candidates skip Iowa? It’s a question of risk and reward. Generally speaking, those who face substantial downside risk of performing poorly in Iowa relative to their level of effort are the most likely to forego the contest. First, risk-averse candidates can be “crowded out” of the state. That’s true ideologically—that the more cut off candidates are from a bulk of like-minded partisans, the less likely they are to show up in the highly ideological first-in-the-nation Caucus state. It is also true in terms of other candidates’ days in the state—while a larger number of candidates in the field stimulates more interest in Iowa controlling for ideology, other candidates’ spending more time in Iowa discourages it, as campaigns strategically allocate their time away from the state’s crowded cornfields.

Second, lower-tier Democrats risking punishment by the party’s 15 percent viability threshold in Iowa are more likely to duck the state and head to happier hunting grounds. Facing the risk of underperformance, not only relative to their competitors but to their own polling results, these campaigns make the rational choice to allocate their time elsewhere, too.

Third, the risk of competing against a favorite son has a tectonic effect on the field. Granted, this only happened once in the post-reform²³ primary era, but Iowa's Tom Vilsack actually entered the 2008 race, and may be heard from again. And fourth, the risk of campaigning as a minority candidate in the minority-poor state also encourages candidates to find more demographically friendly country.

So campaigns seem to have responded rationally to potential risk factors in the contest. In addition, they have likewise reacted to a lack of potential rewards, regardless of their performance in the state. For instance, the more nationally prominent a candidate is, either in the Gallup Poll or by dint of being president, the less they feel the need to personally appear in Iowa—and past research has shown they're right. It is these candidates that can bypass the Caucuses and survive (although Giuliani in 2008 demonstrated amply that they cannot bypass Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Nevada, Maine, and Wyoming and survive). As Gurian's (1993) work would suggest, the rewards of competing in the low-delegate, high-momentum state sometimes do not rise to an adequate level to convince front-runners to participate.

Candidates have also skipped Iowa in the wake of evidence that its contest's rewards were declining. In cycles after the state's previous winner and second-place finisher performed poorly in the ultimate nomination battle, candidates have tended to decelerate their time investment there. Likewise, campaigns seem to take their cue for the proper number of days to campaign in Iowa from the past cycle: relying in part on precedent to set the value of the rewards the Hawkeye state offers.

Overall, these results seem to bolster the findings of both Bartels (1988) and Gurian (1993). Iowa's worth appears to be based on perceptions of the momentum it creates. Moreover, candidates are statistically most likely to react rationally to those strategic perceptions. Drilling further into a single state allows us to shine a light more deeply into those dynamics, find that they remain consistent and useful, and further illuminate how they work.

Which leads to the question: How does all this apply to 2008?

The baseline for candidate participation was low for Republicans but high for Democrats this cycle. Participation in both past races had been above average, and both fields were large—eight Republicans and seven Democrats reached the Caucus. But over these trends was laid the fact that the Democrats' Iowa winners had succeeded spectacularly in the prior competitive cycle, while on the Republican side it had been a bloody battle. In 2000 for the GOP when Bush won the Caucus, New Hampshire played a crucial role, with John McCain (having skipped Iowa) dealing him a crushing defeat and going on to closely contest the nomination. In 2004 for the Democrats, by contrast, Kerry had upset Dean and left the latter nowhere.

Likewise, John Edwards, the Democrats' second-place finisher in Iowa in 2004, had gone on to contest the nomination for some time, while Steve Forbes, who took second in the GOP Caucuses in 2000, had vanished from the scene almost immediately. If the perception of Iowa's reward matched its winners' previous primary vote shares, as the model above indicates, the Democrats would be flocking to Iowa and the Republicans would not.

That is exactly what happened. The risk/reward model predicts GOP candidates would have spent 36 days on average in Iowa in 2008, and in fact—they did. Thirty six days was in fact the Republican candidates' average. The model predicts Democrats would have spent 63 days on average in the state, and the actual figure was 67. Chalk one up for strategic estimates based on rational candidates.

For the cycle, Rudy Giuliani was the most spectacular case of skipping not just Iowa but other early primary states as well. Given his national poll lead—though it had narrowed to only 11 points by the time the Caucus took place, as Mike Huckabee surged into second place on media coverage generated by growing his Iowa success—and his painfully high philosophical encroachment by other candidates, the risk/reward model would estimate that a candidate like Giuliani would spend a paltry 18 days in the state. That is precisely the number of days he spent. Did Giuliani make a mistake by skipping Iowa? Not according to these estimates. He performed exactly as a rational candidate in his predicament would have. Does that explain why he continued to skip states including New Hampshire, with the highest risks and rewards of any state including Iowa, and where the electorate matched him ideologically much more closely? Not at all.

Hillary Clinton constitutes a fascinating counterexample. In May of 2007, her campaign went through a serious debate about limiting her exposure in Iowa, with a senior staff writing in an internal memo, "My recommendation is to pull completely out of Iowa and spend money and Senator Clinton's time on other states. . . . If she walks away from Iowa she will devalue Iowa—our consistently weakest state." Nevertheless, when the memo leaked, her campaign vehemently denied that would be her strategy, and decided to train its guns on the state. "There is no plausible path to the nomination that doesn't begin in Iowa," one of her senior aides remarked as the contest loomed.²⁴

Given Clinton's towering Gallup lead before Iowa—she was at 45 percent then—the risk/reward model estimates a candidate like her would spend about 46 days in the state. Instead, she spent 65, putting her on par with Richardson and just shy of Obama and Edwards. That attention raised expectations in the state—expectations dashed by her humiliating third-place finish, as well as by Obama's landslide win and his resulting momentum that

buried the Clinton campaign, at least through New Hampshire and arguably beyond.

According to this analysis, after determining all was lost there, Hillary Clinton should have skipped Iowa. Again, no model of rational candidate behavior can capture poor decisions, except on average.

The implications of these findings go beyond helping explain Iowa Caucus participation in 2008—hopefully, at least. One central question the analysis raises is whether a similar risk/reward model would hold true for the rest of the nomination process. Do candidates choose states that are ideologically akin to them more generally, or is that an artifact of Iowa’s extremity? Does the perceived past nomination impact of a given state influence participation there? Do candidates allocate time and money away from states where their competitors are placing heavy bets, all else equal?

Those questions are for another day. For today at least, both John McCain, who skipped Iowa, and Barack Obama, who did not stand atop towering waves of momentum, made the correct decisions about Iowa.

APPENDIX

Factors in Days in Iowa Model

Factor	Descriptive Statistics for Iowa Risk/Reward Model					
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.Dev.	
DAYS IN IOWA From Last Midterm Election to Caucus	90	0	148	42.38	30.55	
IDEOLOGICAL CROWDING, in percentage points (100-pct. pts of all partisans for whom candidate is ranked closer than any other on an ideological Likert scale, PLUS proportional share of ties, with imputed values, scaled to 100% per cycle), filled using Expected Vote Share of those with ideology data, Gallup Polling, Fundraising, President, VP, Senate, First Lady, House, African-American, Dropped Out Before Caucus	108	39.742	95.801	85.99	10.87	
RUNNING AGAINST FAVORITE SON (Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin, 1992)	108	0	1	0.04	0.19	
DEMOCRATS UNDER 15% in Des Moines Register Iowa Poll, filled using Iowa Caucus Results, Fundraising Share, African-American, Senator, Running vs. Favorite Son, Dropped out Before Caucus, Candidate from State Near Iowa, Gallup Polling, Expected Iowa Poll Share (1/#of candidates in poll data), Ideological Crowding	108	0	1	0.34	0.48	
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	108	0	1	0.07	0.26	

Appendix (continued)

Factor	Descriptive Statistics for Iowa Risk/Reward Model				
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.Dev.
GALLUP POLLING, in percentage points, last poll before Iowa Caucus, with imputed values (using Gallup Expected Share, Fundraising Share, Dropped Out Before Caucus, President, VP, Senator, First Lady, House, African-American), scaled to 100% per cycle	108	0	60.075	13.89	15.25
NEW HAMPSHIRE POLLING, in percentage points, pre-Caucus, filled using NH Expected Share, Gallup Polling (f), Fundraising Share (f), Ideo Crowding (f), Candidate from State Near Iowa, Pres, VP, Sen, 1st Lady, Gov, House, Af-Am), Scaled to 100% per Cycle	108	0	52.6	12.96	13.22
FUNDRAISING TOTAL, in Millions of 2007 \$s, Filled, Third and Fourth Quarter Pre-Election Year	105	0	55.11	9.46	10.57
INCUMBENT PRESIDENT	108	0	1	0.03	0.17
IOWA'S PREVIOUS PRIMARY PERFORMANCE – combined % primary performance of party's last Iowa 1st and 2nd place finisher/Expected Vote Share (1/# of candidates in the field on Caucus day)	94	0.366	3.609	1.92	1.08
PREVIOUS COMPETITIVE CYCLE'S AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA	96	1	81	43.11	21.66
# OF CANDIDATES IN THE FIELD on Caucus Day	108	2	9	6.71	1.69
AVERAGE DAYS IN IOWA FOR OTHER CANDIDATES of the same party that cycle	106	0	81	41.98	19.42
CANDIDATE FROM STATE NEAR IOWA (border states MN, WI, IL, MO, NE, SD, plus KS)	108	0	1	0.20	0.40
REPUBLICAN	108	0	1	0.48	0.50
DROPPED OUT BEFORE CAUCUS	108	0	1	0.19	0.40
<i>t</i> (# of 4-year increments since 1976)	108	0	8	4.38	2.74

NOTES

¹The contests were held respectively on January 24 and February 1 that year.

²My thanks to Wayne Steger for pointing out this crucial example of skipping Iowa.

³Bartels qualifies this assertion in another work (1985) by noting that voters “strongly and consistently” project their own candidate preferences onto their expectations of what would happen in the nomination contest.

⁴Author's interview with Eric Bakker, Administrative Assistant to Iowa Senate Democratic Leader Mike Gronstal, Des Moines, Iowa, May 13, 2003.

⁵See Hull 2007, 57-70.

⁶David Yepsen, 2004.

⁷Sam Donaldson points out that Carter had to fly to New York City after the Caucus to get the media to cover his "win"—and also points out that it was Donaldson himself who did the interview for his network. Author's interview with Sam Donaldson, ABC News, Des Moines, Iowa, January 3, 2008.

⁸Days in Iowa data come from Winebrenner, 1998; Squire, 1989, 5; *Des Moines Register*, 2004; Hugh Winebrenner, "Individual Candidate days in Iowa 1997-2000," provided to the author; Roger Simon, "Dodd Unloads on Obama and Clinton," *The Politico*, December 28, 2007, at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1207/7599.html>, accessed December 27, 2007; and Mark Memmot and Jill Lawrence, "Dodd Leads If You Count the Days in Iowa," December 28, 2007, at <http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics/2007/12/dodd-leads-if-y.html>, accessed January 3, 2008. The 2008 data are through December 28, 2007, not through Caucus day, and one of the sources hints that the beginning data may actually be January 1, 2007, not January 1, 2006, or the day after the prior midterm election used for the rest of the data.

⁹Note that the Gallup data includes imputed values for candidates missing from a given poll. It is also scaled to eliminate undecideds and arrive at a 100 percent total for all candidates of that party and year in the dataset.

¹⁰For some of this data, a heteroscedasticity problem appears to exist, *viz.*, the variance of the dependent variable increases as the value of the independent variable rises, leading to inefficiency in the estimators of regression models in which they are used. Figures are provided in part to allow readers to take this violation of regression assumptions into account when interpreting the model.

¹¹The figures used to determine "real" spending figures come from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. Specifically, I used the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U.S. city average, which puts 1982-84=100. To get 2007 dollars, the number was divided by the CPI Index for the year it occurred, then multiplied by 210.04, which is the index value for the end of 2007. Note that the Federal Election Commission data also includes imputed values for candidates who did not file the relevant reports, or for which no data could be found. The data are also scaled post-imputation such that each candidate's percentage of the total amount raised sum to 100 percent for all candidates of that party and year in the dataset.

¹²See U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 and 2006.

¹³Wayne Steger supplied this information in peer review comments for this paper.

¹⁴Note again that the 1992 Democratic race, while highly competitive nationally, was not competitive in Iowa because of Tom Harkin's candidacy.

¹⁵The concept of ideological crowding was suggested by Barbara Norrander, and this particular formulation is an extrapolation of the technique using coders and cross-sections of voter data used by Cohen et al., 2004. For more details on calculating Ideological Crowding, see Hull, 2007, Appendix A.

¹⁶With no proprietary 2008 Iowa survey, my Georgetown colleagues and I constructed an analogous measure from more readily available data: MSNBC's Iowa exit polls for Republicans (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21228177/>) and Democrats (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21225980/>), which contained voter-level ideological self-assessments, as well as Rasmussen Reports' national survey (http://www.rasmussen-reports.com/premium_content/political_tracking_crosstabs/december_2007/crosstabs_ideology_december_10_18_2007), which in turn contained candidate ideological

assessments. The new methodology was to multiply the percentage within each of the self-assessed categories— L_i or liberal (plus very liberal for Democrats), M_i or moderate, and C_i , or conservative (plus very conservative for Republicans)—by the percentage placing candidates in each of those categories, a figure we referred to as “Total Candidate Ideological Share” (TIVS). The figure represented the percentage of Iowans who placed themselves in the same category as the candidates occupied in the national assessments (M_C , L_C , and C_C). We then added up those shares for both all Democratic and all Republican candidates and divided each share by that figure, to arrive at Ideological Vote Share, that is, the percentage of Iowans placing themselves in the same category as the candidates with ties allocated proportionally—a figure analogous to the IVS drawn from raw data. We then subtracted each candidate’s IVS from 1.00, to arrive at Ideological Crowding (IC). Thus the formula for Ideological Crowding for candidate i in a field of k candidates was:

$$IC_i = 1 - ((C_i * C_i) + (M_i * M_i) + (L_i * L_i)) / (\sum((C_i * C_{i...k}) + (M_i * M_{i...k}) + (L_i * L_{i...k})).$$

¹⁷Mayer adds an important caveat: he grants candidates the boost of a second place finish only in multicandidate fields (see Mayer 2004, 105). This study omits that interesting distinction.

¹⁸See http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf, accessed February 20, 2008.

¹⁹None of the difference of means tests performed on Midwestern, states near Iowa, or border states found a statistically significant difference, and the latter two were nearly identical, both in that test and in the model itself.

²⁰While Ford in 1976, Carter in 1980, Reagan in 1984, Bush 41 in 1992, Clinton in 1996, and Bush 43 in 2004 all follow this pattern, it is worth taking the estimate itself with a grain of salt, because the number of days in Iowa is available only for the 1976 and 1980 incumbent president contests—and the model loses 1976 because it employs retrospective data (*viz.* the last competitive cycle’s days in Iowa and nomination performance of the last Iowa 1st and 2nd place finishers), and 1972’s values are either unavailable, inapplicable, or both.

²¹On the other hand, the finding is a change from a preliminary model reported by Hull (2005), in which candidates who raise more money actually showed up in Iowa *more* often, not less, controlling for the other factors in the model (about 6 additional days for every additional 1 percent of national fundraising). It is important to place that preliminary result together with the Gallup Poll result: holding national poll support constant, raising more money means more time in Iowa. So per percentage point in the Gallup, 1 percent more money means about 6 days more campaigning in the Caucus. Without controlling for Gallup support, Log of Receipts—the factor employed in that model—was not statistically significant (though it was still positive). The bottom line is that financially better-off candidates appeared to spend more time in Iowa, but only when holding national popularity constant. Whether this new finding is a result of an improved model or the addition of new data is an open question.

²²In the earlier iteration of this study that considered data from 1976-2004 but not 2008 (Hull 2005), this figure *was* statistically significant within the model. It may be that the 2008 cycle, with East Coast candidates like Biden and Dodd spending extraordinary amounts of the time in the state—tipped the scale back away from Midwestern candidates.

²³“Post-reform” refers to the Democratic Party reforms on the 1970s. Though 1972 was conducted under the main corpus of rules adopted after the Democrats’ 1968 debacle in Chicago described briefly earlier in the paper, 1976 is generally thought of as the first contest of the post-reform era.

²⁴See for instance Roger Simon, “Should Hillary Clinton Have skipped Iowa?” *The Politico*, January 1, 2008, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0108/7660.html>, accessed February 21, 2008.

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