Downsian competition with primaries and valence asymmetries

Bernard Grofman*  Orestis Troumpounis†  Dimitrios Xefteris‡
University of California, Irvine  University of Lancaster  University of Cyprus

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Abstract

We introduce primaries -both closed and open- in a Downsian model of electoral competition allowing candidates to differ in valence. Unlike the standard model with valence asymmetries and no primaries that never admits a pure strategy equilibrium, we identify a stabilizing effect of primaries on electoral competition by showing the existence of a unique pure strategy equilibrium. By characterizing this equilibrium several interesting properties arise: a) within each party, the high valence candidate wins the primary and candidates propose differentiated platforms: primary winners locate closer to the ideal policy of the society's median than primary losers who locate on their party's median; and b) the winner of the general election need not be the candidate with the highest valence: a high valence candidate who went through a competitive primary may lose the general election to a lower valence candidate if that candidate faced a primary opponent of significantly lower valence. While all previous properties are valid when both parties hold the same type of primaries, it turns out that the choice of one system over the other can crucially affect the winner of the general election when a party in opposition aims at replacing an incumbent.

Keywords: Downsian model; primaries; valence.

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*Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, 3151 Social Science Plaza, CA 92697-5100, USA. E-mail: bgrofman@uci.edu
†Department of Economics, Lancaster University Management School, Bailrigg, LA1 4YX, UK. E-mail: o.troumpounis@lancaster.ac.uk
‡Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Cyprus. P.O. Box 20537, CY-1678 Nicosia (Cyprus). E-mail: xefteris.dimitrios@ucy.ac.cy
1 Introduction

Party primaries are a common method of nominating candidates for the general election. While in the US this is a historical feature and primaries are organized by the central administration, in Europe and Latin America this is a more recent phenomenon generally run by the parties. Several questions of interest naturally arise. For example, what is the effect of primaries on the stability of the party system? How do primaries influence candidates’ policy proposals and the outcome of the general election? Is the presence of two competent primary candidates beneficial or detrimental for the electoral performance of their party in the general election? If parties in opposition can determine their primary rules, how should they run the primary so that they successfully replace the incumbent? Does it make a difference running open primaries where any citizen can participate, or closed primaries where eligibility is restricted to party members?

In order to answer the previous questions we first introduce closed primaries in a standard Downsian model of electoral competition with two primary candidates in each of the two parties.\(^1\) We allow all four candidates to differ in terms of a commonly valued non-policy characteristic. In the literature, one usually refers to such differentiation among candidates as heterogeneity in valence or quality. The relevance of introducing this heterogeneity among candidates is clear: voters not only vote on the basis of policy proposals, but also on the basis of which candidate is considered to be “better” (for example, in terms of charisma, corruption allegations and experience). Regarding candidates’ behavior, we consider that all candidates aim at maximizing their general election vote share.\(^2\) This setup is very general and imposes no restrictions on parties’ structure. Parties are treated as exogenous at the time of the primary and the key element is the ideology of the party’s median.

The introduction of primaries in this intuitive setup provides results in sharp contrast to the standard Downsian model with two candidates of unequal valence competing in the general election. While without primaries a pure strategy Nash equilibrium does not exist (Aragonèes and Palfrey, 2002),\(^3\) we show that with closed primaries a unique equilibrium in pure strategies always exists, and this is true for any distri-

\(^1\)Standard assumptions of a Downsian model are office-motivated candidates, full commitment, and sincere voting among others. See Grofman (2004); Osborne (1993) for a list of assumptions that are generally perceived to best justify the description of a model as a Downsian one.

\(^2\)We stress that this objective is perfectly in line with the more natural lexicographic objective of maximizing probability of winning in the general election, and, when indifferent, maximizing the probability of winning in the primary. Actually, the vote share objective is a refinement of the lexicographic objective described above: an equilibrium of the game with the vote share objective is always an equilibrium with the lexicographic objective described above, while the opposite need not hold.

\(^3\)To be precise, Aragonèes and Palfrey (2002) consider that the two heterogeneous candidates are win-motivated and hold imperfect information regarding voters’ policy preferences. As it is argued in Aragonèes and Xefteris (2013), in these models, win-motivation with imperfect information about voters’ preferences is technically equivalent to vote-share maximization and perfect information about voters’ preferences.
bution of voters’ preferences. That is, while the standard Downsian model of electoral competition with valence asymmetries predicts that stability can not be reached, the introduction of primaries provides a clear stabilizing effect. This stabilizing effect of primaries on electoral competition is the first substantial result of our analysis.

Apart from pointing at the stabilizing effect of primaries, our setup permits the full characterization of this unique equilibrium, with several interesting properties arising. In equilibrium, each party’s low valence candidate proposes a platform coinciding with the ideal policy of her party’s median. On the contrary, each party’s high valence candidate is relatively more moderate than the low valence candidate and, targeting at the best electoral outcome in the general election, locates the closest possible to the society’s median. The valence asymmetry between the two primary candidates ultimately determines how differentiated the two platforms will be. The larger the advantage of one candidate is, the more she is capable of moving towards moderate policies and hence becoming more appealing in the general election while guaranteeing a primary victory. In terms of policy proposals, primaries serve as the arena for meaningful intra-party policy debates since primary candidates propose differentiated platforms. As far as valence is concerned, since high valence candidates always win their primary, our result is in line with recent empirical evidence showing that primaries tend to be effective at selecting high quality types (Hirano and Snyder, 2014).

Interestingly, the winner of the general election depends: a) on how competitive the two primaries were, and b) on the policy preferences of the society’s median. The former implies that the winner of the general election need not be the highest valence candidate among all four. The low valence general election candidate may win if she faced a weak party primary opponent, while the highest valence candidate was not capable to propose a moderate enough platform because of tight primaries inside the losing party. Hence, our divergent equilibrium result shows that primaries may end up being harmful if they create too much competition in a party during their nomination process. This within-party competition effect of primaries on electoral outcomes, is the second substantial result of our analysis and relates to the negative aspect of the divisive effect of primaries (Key, 1953; Agranov, 2015).

Third, our analysis suggests that primaries have a matching effect: candidates nominated by leftist (rightist) parties win more often when the society’s median is leftist (rightist). This is a result of primaries making candidates more responsive to the policy preferences of their primary electorate rather than the general one. If for example the society becomes more leftist, the leftist party will win more often than before, since the high valence primary candidate of the rightist party cannot react to the median’s shift. If the rightist high valence candidate were to propose leftist policies that would please the new median, this would potentially make her lose the primary. Notice that this otherwise intuitive feature of our equilibrium
is, surprisingly, absent from most electoral competition models without primaries: models with office motivated candidates usually generate equilibria in which candidates converge (either in deterministic or in probabilistic terms) and models with policy motivated candidates usually predict that candidates will locate equidistantly from the society’s median -and will hence tie- independently of whether the society’s median is leftist or rightist. Overall, the matching effect may further strengthen the stability of the party system as it allows parties to form a more durable ideological framework.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper to point at these three effects of primaries simultaneously. The first and the third effect are obviously a positive ones: primaries stabilize the electoral process and generate consistency between the party of the elected candidate and voters’ policy preferences, and these in turn promote a sense of trust in the political system. The second effect, has, arguably, negative implications: a high valence candidate that faces hard within-party competition might end up losing the general election to a mediocre candidate that won in her party’s primaries a low quality opponent.

We propose several modifications to our analysis and find that our results are robust in a number of directions. First, we focus on open primaries. Once all candidates make their policy proposals, active citizens who are willing to participate in the procedure vote in the primary of the party in which their top-ranked candidate participates. Hence, a candidate proposing moderate platforms, not only increases her general election vote share, but also increases her party’s size. We still have a unique equilibrium in pure strategies (stabilizing effect of primaries) such that: a) in some instances, the highest valence candidate does not emerge as the winner of the general election (within-party competition effect of primaries) and b) the winner of the leftist (rightist) primary is more likely to be the general election’s winner when the society’s median is leftist (rightist) (matching effect of primaries). Comparing further open and closed primaries, it turns out that the “negative” within-party competition effect is stronger (weaker) in closed than open primaries, when the highest valence candidate is a candidate of the more (less) extreme party. That is, the highest valence candidate is the winner under open primaries more often than under closed primaries, only when this candidate belongs to the party with the most extreme political views. In other words, parties that are most benefited from the transition from a closed primaries system to an open one are those with relatively more extremist party members.

Finally, we investigate situations where a primary is held only in one of the two parties (either closed or open). This is of interest since often incumbents who run for reelection without going through a nomination process face a challenger who emerged from a primary. In our model, we assume that the position of the incumbent is fixed and that primary candidates in the opposition strategically choose their
platforms (typically the incumbent has less flexibility than the challenger in credibly promising something different to the implemented policies). We find that when the incumbent implements socially detrimental (appealing) policies, the highest valence challenger is elected less (more) often under closed primaries than under open primaries. The reason why bad incumbents are less threatened by challengers that emerge from closed primaries is that closed primaries hold candidates close to their party’s median, who might be quite far from the society’s one. Open primaries pose no such restriction and allow candidates to expand their primary electorate by moving towards the centre. In other words, open primaries give incentives to high valence candidates of initially less moderate parties to move towards the center and, thus, to: a) win more often and, perhaps more importantly, b) make their parties more moderate by moving towards the centre and hence attracting new moderate voters for their primaries. These results point to an interesting effect of the organization of the party in opposition on the incumbent’s decisions when the latter cares about reelection: incumbents have stronger incentives to implement moderate policies when the challenger’s party holds open primaries than when it holds closed primaries.

Our paper complements the existing literature on primaries with valence asymmetries by adding several insightful new results. Our work closely relates to Adams and Merrill (2008) since, to the best of our knowledge, this is the only other setup where all four primary candidates may differ in valence. Nevertheless, while Adams and Merrill (2008) focus on a probabilistic voting model we focus on a deterministic one. As well known, probabilistic and deterministic voting models with valence asymmetries deliver very diverse predictions on candidates’ equilibrium behavior and as we show this is precisely true in the context of primaries. The presence of a random element eventually leads primary candidates proposing identical platforms, while the point of convergence might differ across parties (Adams and Merrill, 2008). On the contrary, we show that primary candidates run on different platforms giving back to primaries the element of an internal battlefield.

Hummel (2013) also employs a non probabilistic valence model, but, unlike us, he considers that: a) the higher (lower) valence candidate of the leftist party has precisely the same valence with the higher

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4Research on primaries without valence issues was presented among others in Owen and Grofman (2006); Coleman (1971); Aranson and Ordeshook (1972). For papers interested in the non commitment of primary winners and flip flopping between primary and general elections see Hummel (2010); Agranov (2015). For the effect of sequential primaries on electoral competition see Callander (2007); Deltas et al. (2015). For work on different ways of candidates’ nomination including primaries see Crutzen et al. (2010); Jackson et al. (2007).

5In a probabilistic voting model one votes for a certain candidate with a probability that is increasing in the utility that one derives from the election of this candidate. That is, one need not vote for the candidate that she likes best, while voting for the top-ranked candidate is one’s most probable action. In a deterministic voting model one always votes for the candidates one likes best.

6For example, in standard two party competition models, while probabilistic voting models do not rule out convergent equilibria when valence asymmetries are not very large (see, for example, Schofield 2007), this never occurs in deterministic voting models (see, for example, Aragonè and Palfrey 2002).
(lower) valence of the rightist party and b) voters are strategic and may strategically decide not to support their top-ranked candidates. Similar to Hummel (2013), even with sincere voters, high valence candidates propose more moderate policies than low valence ones. Nevertheless, by allowing all four candidates to differ in valence, we provide new results on the effect of primaries on the winner of the general election and demonstrate why and when the highest valence candidate may not win the general election.

Takayama (2014) uses similar assumptions to those of Hummel (2013) and models primaries only in the challenger’s party with overall three candidates of different valence. She shows that as the incumbent’s valence increases, the qualifying challenger becomes more moderate. Our results under the presence of an incumbent are different and depend on the primary type. We show that if the party runs closed primaries, the policy proposed by the high valence challenger is not affected by the incumbent’s characteristics. On the contrary, when the party organizes an open primary, the challenger becomes more moderate as the incumbent’s valence decreases.

In Kartik and McAfee (2007), like in Hummel (2013), there are two levels of valence but different to the aforementioned papers high valence types are committed to an exogenous platform. In Serra (2011); Snyder and Ting (2011) both primaries and the general election function as a valence revelation mechanism and their focus is more on the adoption or not of primaries rather than on primaries’ candidates’ platforms proposals. For models of primary elections with endogenous valence see Serra (2010); Casas (2013).

The remainder is structured as follows: In section 2 we present the model, in Section 3 we present our results for closed, open and one party primaries. In Section 4 we conclude.

2 The Model

The policy space is the $[0, 1]$ interval. We have a unit mass of general-election voters whose ideal policies are distributed according to an absolutely continuous, strictly increasing and twice differentiable distribution function $\Phi : [0, 1] \to [0, 1]$ with a unique median, $m \in (0, 1)$, defined by $\Phi(m) = \frac{1}{2}$. Two positive measure subsets of these voters form the two exogenously given parties and participate in a closed primary election where no other voters can participate. Let the median of the leftist party be the primary voter with ideal policy $l \in [0, 1]$ and the median of the rightist party be the primary voter with ideal policy $r \in [0, 1]$ with $l < m < r$.\footnote{Notice that we impose very little structure on the precise kind of closed primaries that each party holds. While for example one party may run a (primary) election where only handful of core party members are eligible, another party may run a primary where all party members can participate.} Candidates $A$ and $B$ compete in the primary of the leftist party and candidates $C$ and $D$ compete in the primary of the rightist party. Each candidate $J \in \{A, B, C, D\}$ is characterized by a valence parameter $v_J \geq 0$ and strategically chooses and commits to an electoral platform $x_J \in S_J$, where
$S_J = [0, m]$ if $J \in \{A, B\}$ and $S_J = (m, 1]$ if $J \in \{C, D\}$.

Let $v_A < v_B$, $v_D < v_C$ and $v_B > v_C$. This assumption is without loss of generality: it just provides equilibrium locations in order with candidates’ “names” and places the highest valence candidate $B$ in the leftist party. Throughout the paper we assume that $m + 2v_B < r$. That is, valence differences are small enough such that the high valence candidate can not unambiguously win primaries and the general election by locating near the society’s median.

The game has three stages. In stage one, all four candidates choose and announce their policy platforms simultaneously. In stage two, closed primary elections take place in each of the two parties. In stage three, the general election takes place and each voter votes for one of the two primaries’ winners. All ties, either in primaries or in the general election are broken with equiprobable draws.

The utility of a voter with ideal policy $i \in [0, 1]$ when candidate $J \in \{A, B, C, D\}$ is elected in office (or else, wins in the general election) is given by

$$u_i(x_J, v_J) = -|i - x_J| + v_J$$

in line with literature on electoral competition among candidates of unequal valence (see for example, Groseclose 2001; Aragonès and Palfrey 2002). Voters are sincere both in primaries and in the general election and vote for the available candidate that offers them the highest utility. In case of indifference we assume that a voter supports any of the two candidates with equal probability.

Since voters’ behavior in this model is essentially parametric, one may define the expected vote share of candidate $J$ in the general election as

$$P_J(x_J, x_{-J}, v, \Phi, l, r)$$

where $x_{-J}$ is the vector of platforms of the other candidates and $v = (v_A, v_B, v_C, v_D)$. Candidates are Downsian, that is, they maximize expected vote shares in the general election. A Nash equilibrium in this setup is a vector $\hat{x} = (\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_B, \hat{x}_C, \hat{x}_D)$ such that for every $J \in \{A, B, C, D\}$ it is true that

$$P_J(\hat{x}_J, x_{-J}, v, \Phi, l, r) \geq P_J(\hat{x}_J, \hat{x}_{-J}, v, \Phi, l, r)$$

for any $\hat{x}_J \in S_J$. This assumption is only made to ensure a tractable structure of our proofs and is without loss of generality. That is, both the existence and the uniqueness of the characterized equilibrium is robust to allowing each candidate to locate anywhere in $[0, 1]$.

The motive of maximization of the general election vote shares presents itself as the natural Downsian objective in this first-primaries-then-general-election game as it is compatible with (it is actually a refinement of) the following ordered pair of objectives: a) a candidate prefers all outcomes of the game in which she is the winner of the general election to any other outcome and b) among all outcomes in which a candidate does not win the general election, this candidate prefers the outcomes in which she wins her party’s primaries.

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3 Results

Before presenting our main results, let us define two concepts of crucial relevance. In equilibrium each primary is won by the high valence candidate (B wins the leftist primary and C wins the rightist primary).

We refer to the valence difference of the two general election candidates as the “toughness” of the general election (defined as $T_G = -(v_B - v_C)$). Similarly, we refer to the valence difference in each party as the “toughness” of the primary election (defined as $T_L = -(v_B - v_A)$ and $T_R = -(v_C - v_D)$ respectively).

Notice that “toughness” takes generically negative values, with zero being its maximum value when both candidates are of equal valence.

Proposition 1 There exists a unique Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, and it is such that $\hat{x}_A = l$, $\hat{x}_B = l + v_B - v_A = l - T_L$, $\hat{x}_C = r - v_C + v_D = r + T_R$ and $\hat{x}_D = r$. In equilibrium, candidates B and C win their parties’ primaries and a) candidate B wins the general election if $l + r - 2m + T_R > T_G + T_L$, b) candidate C wins the general election if $l + r - 2m + T_R < T_G + T_L$ and c) each of B and C wins with equal probability if $l + r - 2m + T_R = T_G + T_L$.

The existence of a unique Nash equilibrium points at the stabilizing effect of primaries on electoral competition. While in the absence of primaries, and when the two candidates differ in valence, no equilibrium in pure strategies exists, this is no longer true when these two candidates have been selected through a primary race. Valence asymmetries in primaries create interesting electoral dynamics and in equilibrium lead to the divergence of proposed platforms in the primary race (in line with Hummel 2013 and in contrast to Adams and Merrill 2008; Serra 2015). The low valence candidate locates at the party’s median, while the high valence candidate is more moderate and locates closer to the society’s median. How far towards the society’s median the high valence candidate is capable to move depends on the “toughness” of the primary. The higher the valence asymmetry inside a party, the more the winning candidate can converge towards the society’s median improving her future performance in the general election. On the contrary, if both candidates are of almost equal valence, then the high valence candidate is not able to differentiate much and this may have a negative impact in her performance in the general election.

In this equilibrium, all more extreme party members than the party’s median are indifferent between the two candidates and therefore vote for any of the two primary candidates with equal probability. All more moderate party members than the party’s median vote for the high valence candidate. Hence, the high valence candidate wins the primary with the support of three quarters of party members.

Regarding the winner of the general election, any of the candidates may win depending on parties’ and
the society’s medians as well as the valence asymmetries determining the “toughness” of both primaries
and the general election. According to our results, the high valence leftist candidate \( B \) wins the general
election when \( l + r - 2m + T_R > T_G + T_L \). The right hand side is capturing the aggregate “toughness”
the leftist candidate is facing in terms of valence in the primary and in the general election. When the
aggregate “toughness” is below (above) a given threshold (i.e., \( l + r - 2m + T_R \)) then the leftist candidate
wins (loses) the general election. This threshold illustrates that the leftist candidate is favoured by a
moderate leftist party (large \( l \)), an extreme rightist party (large \( r \)), a “leftist” overall electorate (small
\( m \)) pointing at the matching effect of primaries, and tough primaries in the rightist party (large \( T_R \)). On
the contrary, the leftist candidate is harmed by tough primary and general elections (large \( T_L \) and large
\( T_G \)). Tough primaries do not permit the qualifying candidate to move away from the party median and
propose a moderate platform harming her general election performance (within-party competition effect).
Tough general elections also harm the candidate’s performance where voters directly compare the valence
characteristics of the two general election candidates.

In order to further illustrate the effect of valence characteristics on \( B \)'s electoral performance consider
the symmetric case in terms of ideologies (i.e., \( m = 0.5 \) and \( l = 1 - r \)). The condition for the victory of
the highest valence candidate becomes

\[ T_R > T_G + T_L \]

that is, \( B \) wins the general election when the aggregate “toughness” she faces is lower than the
“toughness” of the rightist primary. In other words, \( B \) may not win the general election when the
primaries of the leftist party are significantly “tougher” than the primaries of the rightist party. As our
model shows “toughness” of primaries is crucial for the determination of the general election’s winner since
it draws candidates near parties’ medians and far from society’s median. Hence, our model illustrates the
presence of a detrimental within-party competition effect that may potentially harm the party’s qualifying
candidate.

3.1 Open parties

Having obtained a very general result for closed primaries a natural question is what occurs when parties
hold open primaries. Open primaries are a wide and increasing in popularity phenomenon with several
parties electing their candidates using this method.\(^{10}\) We therefore extend our setup allowing voters to

\(^{10}\)In the US around one third of the states hold an open primary for their presidential primary. In Europe the socialist
parties of France, Greece and Italy run open primaries as it is the case for the conservatives in the UK for some candidates.
The European Green Party run a paneuropean open primary for 2014 EU election. In Latin America open primaries take
place in Argentina. For mixed empirical evidence on the effect of primaries on political competition see Kaufmann et al.
decide in which primary to participate once all four candidates announce their platforms.

For the analysis of open primaries some further assumptions are necessary. Let us consider that a subset of all voters are “active” and are participating in the primaries. Let active voters have ideal policies distributed according to any continuous log-concave distribution $F$ with a unique median $m^a$.

These “active” voters participate in the primary of the party where the candidate that gives them the highest utility is competing and vote for that candidate. Hence, parties are now endogenously formed and depend on candidates’ policy proposals and valence characteristics. Finally, let each candidate $J \in \{A, B, C, D\}$ strategically choose and commit to an electoral platform $x_J \in S_J$, where $S_J = [0, m^a]$ if $J \in \{A, B\}$ and $S_J = (m^a, 1]$ if $J \in \{C, D\}$. Again we assume that valence differences are not very large.

**Proposition 2** Let $(l^*, r^*)$ be the unique values such that $2F(l^*) = F\left(\frac{l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}\right)$ and $2[1 - F(r^*)] = 1 - F\left(\frac{l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}\right)$. There exists a unique Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, and it is such that $\hat{x}_A = l^*$, $\hat{x}_B = l^* + v_B - v_A = l^* - T_L$, $\hat{x}_C = r^* - v_C + v_D = r^* + T_R$ and $\hat{x}_D = r^*$. In equilibrium, candidates $B$ and $C$ win their parties’ primaries and a) candidate $B$ wins the general election if $l^* + r^* - 2m + T_R > T_G + T_L$, b) candidate $C$ wins the general election if $l^* + r^* - 2m + T_R < T_G + T_L$ and c) each of $B$ and $C$ wins with equal probability if $l^* + r^* - 2m + T_R = T_G + T_L$.

As in closed primaries, an equilibrium exists and it is unique, guaranteeing the stabilizing effect of open primaries, when the distribution of ideal policies of active voters is nowhere “too convex” (log-concavity of $F$). Unlike, though, the case of closed primaries in which an equilibrium always exists, given the fixed party structure, when primaries are open, it might be the case that an equilibrium does not exist when $F$ is too convex in certain regions (that is, when the density of ideal policies of the active voters increases very much when moving from $x$ to $x + \varepsilon$ for some $x \in (0, 1)$). In specific, when $F$ is too convex about $l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D$ (if, for example, it is log-convex about this point) then an equilibrium does not exist. Candidate $B$ can still win the primary by moving marginally to the right of $l^* + v_B - v_A$, increasing at the same time her general election vote share. This is so because when $F$ is too convex about $l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}$, a slight transition of $B$ from $l^* + v_B - v_A$ to $l^* + v_B - v_A + \varepsilon$, brings in the leftist primary many new supporters of $B$. Hence, $B$ still wins the primary and improves her

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11We consider that a continuous distribution function $F$ is log-concave if $\frac{\partial^2 \ln F(x)}{\partial x^2} < 0$ and $\frac{\partial^2 \ln [1 - F(x)]}{\partial x^2} < 0$ for every $x \in (0, 1)$. That is, the notion of log-concavity that we employ implies that $F$ is strictly increasing and twice differentiable in its support too.

12Given that party medians are now endogenously defined, the sufficient condition provided for the closed primaries case, $m + 2v_B < r$, is not applicable here. Instead we assume that $0 < m^a + 2v_B - 2v_C + v_A - v_D < 1$. Notice that $\lim_{m^a \to 0}(m^a + 2v_B - 2v_C + v_A - v_D) = m^a$. Hence, for any admissible $F$ the condition is guaranteed to hold for sufficiently modest valence differences.

13The notion of log-convexity that we employ is symmetric to the one of log-concavity.

14Note that the existence of a pair $(l^*, r^*)$ such that $2F(l^*) = F\left(\frac{l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}\right)$ and $2[1 - F(r^*)] = 1 - F\left(\frac{l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}\right)$ does not depend on the concavity of $F$; only its uniqueness does.
performance in the general election. All these suggest, that indeed the stabilizing effect of primaries holds
even when primaries are open for a very general class of preference profiles, but, as expected, it is weaker
compared to the closed primaries case. We note though that the fact that open primaries might stabilize
electoral competition for such a general class of preference profiles, is more surprising, at least to us,
than the fact that they are less prone to lead to stability compared to closed primaries. At first sight, one
would expect that the dynamics that lead to the existence of an equilibrium when primary electorates are
fixed, would disappear once we considered that parties are endogenous. As we have proved above this is
far from being the case.

The equilibrium structure is similar to the one in closed primaries with primary losers locating on
parties’ medians and primary winners diverging from the party median towards the median of the society.
What is different compared to closed primaries is that now party medians (i.e., $l^*$ and $r^*$) are endogenously
determined and those depend on all four values of valence characteristics as well as the distribution of
active voters (see Example 1). As it turns out, candidates $B$ and $C$ propose the two most moderate
platforms and the indifferent voter between the two determines not only their vote shares in the general
election but also the party sizes. Since active voters decide to participate in the primary where they
can identify the candidate that gives them the highest utility, all active voters on the left (right) of the
indifferent voter participate in the primary of the leftist (rightist) party. Once each party’s primary
electorate is endogenously determined, all more extreme voters than the party median are indifferent
between the two primary candidates and randomize their vote. All more moderates than the party
median support the high valence candidate. Similar to closed primaries, the high valence candidate
obtains support of three quarters of the endogenously formed party and qualifies for the general election.

The condition such that the highest valence candidate wins the general election provides parallel
insights as under closed primaries. Candidate $B$ wins the general election as long as the aggregate
“toughness” she faces is lower than a given threshold (i.e., $l^* + r^* - 2m + T_R > T_G + T_L$). The difference
compared to closed primaries is that the threshold value is endogenously determined since it depends on
$l^*$ and $r^*$, which are defined by $F$ and $v$. Similar to closed primaries, the high valence candidate loses
the general election if the primaries in the leftist party are much tougher in terms of valence than the
ones of the rightist party. In order to be nominated, candidate $B$ has to move close to the endogenously
determined party’s median and far from the society’s median that may result in a too extreme position
to win the general election. Hence, as in closed primaries, open primaries can be harmful to high valence
candidates through the within-party competition effect. Moreover, the matching effect of primaries where

\footnote{\textit{Log-concavity of the distribution of voters’ ideal policies is a general assumption and it is very widely used in political economics literature [CITATIONS].}}
the leftist candidate benefits from a leftist electorate is still present since candidate \( B \) wins more often as the society becomes more leftist (i.e., small \( m \)).

The following example further illustrates how platforms depend on the characteristics of all four candidates and not only on those of the primary candidates as was occurring in closed primaries. Moreover, it stresses that the identified matching effect is not a mere consequence of having different primary and general election electorates (that is, of \( F \neq \Phi \) or, simpler, of \( m \neq m^0 \)): it is still present when the preferences of the two sets of voters are correlated (that is, even if \( F = \Phi \)).

**Example 1** Let both general election and active voters be identically and linearly\(^{16}\) distributed on \([0,1]\). That is, let \( \Phi(x) = F(x) = \frac{2-a+ax}{2}x \), where \( a \in [-2,2] \) (\( a = -2 \) corresponds to the triangular distribution with a pick at zero, \( a = 0 \) corresponds to the uniform distribution and \( a = 2 \) corresponds to the triangular distribution with a pick at one).

1. When both sets of voters are uniformly distributed on \([0,1]\), that is when \( a = 0 \), a unique equilibrium exists and it is given by,

\[
\hat{x}_A = \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2}v_A + v_B - v_C + \frac{1}{2}v_D = \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2}(T_L + T_G - T_R),
\]

\[
\hat{x}_B = \frac{1}{4} - \frac{3}{2}v_A + 2v_B - v_C + \frac{1}{2}v_D = \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2}(T_L + T_G - T_R) - T_L,
\]

\[
\hat{x}_C = \frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{2}v_A + v_B - 2v_C + \frac{3}{2}v_D = \frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{2}(T_L + T_G - T_R) + T_R, \text{ and}
\]

\[
\hat{x}_D = \frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{2}v_A + v_B - v_C + \frac{1}{2}v_D = \frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{2}(T_L + T_G - T_R).
\]

As this example shows, all equilibrium platforms depend on all valence characteristics. The losing leftist candidate (i.e., candidate \( A \)) proposes a platform that coincides with the median of the endogenously formed party (i.e., \( l^* \)). Overall, high valence of the winning leftist and the losing rightist candidates act as centripetal forces. On the contrary, high valence of the losing leftist and of the winning rightist act as centrifugal forces. The winning leftist candidate (i.e., candidate \( B \)) proposes a more moderate platform than its primary opponent. With a similar intuition as our general result, the toughness of the primary determines by how much he moderates. The above hold in a symmetric fashion for the rightist party.

2. When most voters are leftist (\( a < 0 \) or \( m < \frac{1}{2} \)), then \( \lim_{v_B \to 0}(l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D + \frac{m - v_G}{2}) \in (m, \frac{1}{2}) \)

and when most voters are rightist (\( a > 0 \) or \( m > \frac{1}{2} \)), then \( \lim_{v_B \to 0}(l^* + v_B - v_A + r^* - v_C + v_D + \frac{m - v_G}{2}) \in \)

\(^{16}\)By “linearly distributed” we mean that the density function is linear (increasing, decreasing or flat).
(..., m). That is, when the majority of general election voters are leftist and the valence differences are sufficiently modest, the candidate of the leftist party wins and vice versa.

3.2 One party primaries

In reality not both parties need to hold a primary before the general election. A typical situation of interest for the absence of primaries in one party is when an incumbent runs for reelection. Let the incumbent be candidate \( C \) whose ideal policy \( x_C \) is known and fixed. The incumbent is also described by a given level of valence that can be either higher or lower than any of the other candidates. The leftist candidates \( A \) and \( B \) may run in an open or a closed primary as defined before (without loss of generality we still assume that \( v_B \geq v_A \) but we do not require that \( v_B > v_C \)). In this setup, a Nash equilibrium is a vector \( \hat{x} = (\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_B) \) such that none of the two leftist primary candidates has incentives to deviate.

**Proposition 3** If the leftist party runs a closed primary there exists a unique Nash equilibrium, \( \hat{x} \), and it is such that \( \hat{x}_A = l \), \( \hat{x}_B = l + v_B - v_A = l - T_L \). In equilibrium, candidate \( B \) wins the leftist primaries and a) candidate \( B \) wins the general election if \( l + x_C - 2m > T_G + T_L \), b) candidate \( C \) wins the general election if \( l + x_C - 2m < T_G + T_L \) and c) each of \( B \) and \( C \) wins with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \) if \( l + x_C - 2m = T_G + T_L \).

When the incumbent is challenged by a party organizing a closed primary, both primary candidates follow the same strategies as when both parties hold closed primaries. The low valence candidate between the two leftist candidates proposes a policy identical to the party’s median (i.e., \( \hat{x}_A = l \)). The high valence candidate proposes a more moderate policy becoming as appealing as possible in the general election while guaranteeing the victory in the primary. How much the high valence can moderate depends again on the “toughness” of the primary race and not at all on the incumbent’s characteristics (i.e., \( \hat{x}_B = l - T_L \)). Of course the incumbent’s characteristics play a crucial role in determining the winner of the general election. Whether the leftist challenger succeeds in replacing the incumbent depends on the ideology of the leftist party, the ideal policy of the incumbent, as well as the “toughness” of the primary and of the general election in terms of valence. The aggregate toughness threshold condition such that the challenger \( B \) wins (i.e., \( l + x_C - 2m > T_G + T_L \)) implies that the incumbent is of course harmed by her own extreme policies. The challenger is benefiting from a moderate leftist party, a leftist median voter, and non-competitive primaries. Clearly, the “toughness” of the general election in terms of the valence difference between the two candidates and who of the two candidates has a higher valence is also crucial.

\[17\] Note here that while \( T_L \leq 0 \), for the general election we have that \( T_G < 0 \) if \( v_C < v_B \) and \( T_G > 0 \) if \( v_C > v_B \).
Notice that in closed primaries candidates aim at winning nomination focus only on their party’s median. This explains why the challenger’s proposed platform is not affected by the incumbent’s platform. As we describe in the following proposition this is no longer true when the party in opposition holds an open primary.

Proposition 4 Let \( l^\ast \) be the unique value such that \( 2F(l^\ast) = F\left(\frac{l^\ast + v_B - v_A + x_C + v_B - v_C}{2}\right) \) for any log-concave distribution \( F \). If the leftist party runs an open primary, there exists a unique Nash equilibrium, \( \hat{x} \), and it is such that \( \hat{x}_A = l^\ast, \hat{x}_B = l^\ast + v_B - v_A \). In equilibrium, candidate B wins the leftist primaries and a) candidate B wins the general election if \( l^\ast + x_C - 2m > T_G + T_L \), b) candidate C wins the general election if \( l^\ast + x_C - 2m < T_G + T_L \) and c) each of B and C wins with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \) if \( l^\ast + x_C - 2m = T_G + T_L \).

Now \( l^\ast \) is the unique median of the endogenously formed leftist party. Since \( l^\ast \) is increasing in \( x_C \) and decreasing in \( v_C \), both leftist primary candidates propose relatively more moderate platforms when the incumbent is an extremist or of low valence. This movement towards moderate policies increases the leftist party’s vote share in the general election. The aggregate toughness threshold condition such that the winning leftist candidate B also wins the general election is intuitively similar to when party B runs a closed primary.

The following example illustrates equilibrium proposals for the leftist candidates when primary voters are uniformly distributed.

Example 2 Let “active” voters be uniformly distributed across the policy space. If the leftist party runs an open primary, \( \hat{x}_A = \frac{1}{3}(x_C - v_A + 2v_B - v_C) = \frac{1}{3}(x_C - T_L - T_G), \hat{x}_B = \frac{1}{3}(x_C - 4v_A + 5v_B - v_C) = \frac{1}{3}(x_C - 4T_L - T_G) \).

In contrast to closed primaries, all platforms depend on the quality characteristics of all candidates including those of the incumbent as well as the implemented policy. If we also assume that the society is uniformly distributed then the location of the indifferent voter and hence B’s vote share under an open primary is given by:

\[
\frac{2}{3}(2v_B - v_A + x_C - v_C)
\]

From Proposition 3, we know the proposed platforms in case of closed primaries (i.e., \( \hat{x}_A = l, \hat{x}_B = l + v_B - v_A \)). When the society is uniformly distributed the location of the indifferent voter and hence B’s vote share under a closed primary is given by:

\[
\frac{l + v_B - v_A + x_C + v_B - v_C}{2}
\]
Given that the location of the indifferent voter varies across the two primary types, the selection of one system over the other clearly affects the electoral outcome and possibly the winner of the election. Comparing the location of the indifferent voter, the vote share of the challenger’s party is larger under a closed primary rather than under an open primary if and only if $T_L + T_G > x_C - 3l$.

Figure 1: Winner of the general election and the challenger’s vote share ($V_B$) for open and closed primaries in the challenger’s party. The upper graph depicts a “moderate” party ($l > 0.25$) and the lower graph an “extreme” party ($l < 0.25$).

Figure 1 summarises the comparisons across the two primary systems in terms of the challenger’s vote share and the winner of the general election. Given the incumbent’s characteristics ($x_C, v_C$) and the ideology of the median voter in the leftest party ($l$), the aggregate toughness the qualifying candidate $B$ is facing is crucial. If the aggregate “toughness” (i.e., $T_L + T_G$) is low the challenger wins regardless of whether the party is running a closed or an open primary. On the contrary, if the aggregate “toughness” is high the incumbent remains in office irrespectively on whether the challenger won an open or a closed primary. Nevertheless, there exists an intermediate level of aggregate “toughness” where the type of primary actually determines the winner of the general election. Hence, the choice of one kind of primary over the other is of crucial importance.

Consider for example that the leftest party is “extreme” ($l = 0.1$) and that the ideal policy of the incumbent is moderately rightist ($x_C = 0.7$). Let both candidates of the general election have the same valence ($T_G = 0$) and candidate $B$ have higher valence than $A$ by 0.125 (i.e., $T_L = -0.125$). Then we are at the lower part of the graph (since $l < 0.25$) and at the interesting interval where $B$

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15Remember that $T_L = -(v_B - v_A)$ denotes the “toughness” in the leftest primary (with $v_A < v_B$). Large values of $T_L$ denote a very competitive primary that does not allow the primary winning candidate $B$ moderate enough and become attractive in the general electorate. The “toughness” of the general election $T_G = -(v_B - v_C)$ also has a similar effect with larger values of $T_G$ being detrimental for the leftest candidate. $T_G$ in the one party primary setup may take a positive value if the incumbent has a higher valence than the challenger.
wins the general election by organizing an open primary while it loses if it runs a closed primary (i.e., $-0.125 = T_L + T_G > x_C - 1 + l = -0.2$ and $-0.05 = x_c - 0.75 < T_L + T_G = -0.125$). This is because if $B$ wins in an open primary, the equilibrium platform is at 0.225 and hence $B$ obtains a 46.25% vote share in the general election. On the contrary, if the leftist party organizes an open primary $B$’s platform is at 0.4 and hence in the general election she obtains 55% of the total votes.
4 Appendix

Proof of Proposition 1. This is a four-player, asymmetric and discontinuous game and hence not only there is no standardized way to characterize a unique equilibrium but even existence of an equilibrium is not trivially guaranteed. We will establish our result first by characterizing properties of an equilibrium and identifying a unique strategy profile that satisfies all of them (Step 1 Uniqueness of an equilibrium) and finally we will argue that this strategy profile is indeed a Nash equilibrium (Step 2 Existence of an equilibrium).

Step 1 In this part of the proof we will establish a number of properties that a Nash equilibrium, \( \hat{x} \), should satisfy.

I) In a Nash equilibrium, \( \hat{x} \), B should win the primaries of the leftist party with certainty and get a strictly positive vote share in the general election. The latter is obvious: given that B is the candidate with the highest valence it trivially follows that if she runs in the general election she will be voted by a positive fraction of voters independently of the policy platforms that she and her opponent chose. As far as the first part of the claim is concerned we observe the following: since a) candidates maximize their general election vote shares, b) \( B \) can always win with certainty the primaries of the leftist party by choosing, for example, any \( x_B \in [l - v_B + v_A, l + v_B - v_A] \) and c) candidate \( B \) always gets a strictly positive vote share if she runs in the general election against either \( C \) or \( D \) it follows that in equilibrium it must be the case that \( B \) advances to the general election with strictly positive probability. So there are two cases: either \( B \) advances to the general election with certainty or with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \). Candidate \( B \) advances to the general election with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \) if and only if she receives exactly the same share of votes in the primaries of the leftist party as \( A \). This may happen if and only if \( |x_A - x_B| > v_B - v_A \) and either \( \frac{x_A + v_A + x_B - v_B}{2} = l \) or \( \frac{x_A - v_A - x_B - v_B}{2} = l \). In both cases \( B \) can deviate marginally towards the location of candidate \( A \) and secure a sure win in the primaries and practically double her expected general election vote share. Hence, it cannot be in equilibrium that \( B \) advances to the general election with any probability smaller than 1.

II) In a Nash equilibrium, \( \hat{x} \), it should be the case that \( C \) wins the primaries of the rightist party with certainty and gets a strictly positive vote share in the general election. Since \( C \) can always win with certainty the primaries of the rightist party and secure a strictly positive vote share in the general election by choosing, for example, \( x_C = r - v_C + v_D \) it is obvious that in equilibrium it must be the case that \( C \) advances to the general election with strictly positive probability and once in the general election against \( B \) it receives a strictly positive vote share. So there are two cases: either \( C \) advances to the general election with certainty or with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \). Candidate \( C \) advances to the general election
with probability $\frac{1}{2}$ if and only if she receives exactly the same share of votes in the primaries of the rightist party as $D$. This may happen if and only if $|x_C - x_D| > v_C - v_D$ and either $x_C + v_C + x_B - v_B = r$ or $x_C - v_C + x_D + v_D = r$. In both cases $C$ can deviate marginally towards the location of candidate $D$ and secure a sure win in the primaries and practically double her expected general election vote share. Hence, it cannot be in equilibrium that $C$ advances to the general election with any probability smaller than 1.

III) In a Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, it should be the case that $\hat{x}_A = \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A$. Consider first that $\hat{x}_A > \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A$. Since by (I) it is the case that $B$ wins with certainty the leftist party’s primaries, it should be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A + v_A + \hat{x}_B - v_B}{2} < l$. By (II) we know that $C$ advances to general with certainty and that she receives there a strictly positive vote share. Hence, there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that if $B$ deviates to $\hat{x}_B + \varepsilon$ it will still be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A + v_A + \hat{x}_B + \varepsilon - v_B}{2} < l$ ($B$ wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty) and moreover $B$ will secure a strictly positive increase in her general election vote share. So in equilibrium it cannot be the case that $\hat{x}_A < \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A$. Now consider that $\hat{x}_A > \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A$. If $\hat{x}_A > \hat{x}_B + v_B - v_A$ then, given that $B$ wins with certainty the leftist party’s primaries, it should be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A - v_A + \hat{x}_B + v_B}{2} > l$. Again, there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that if $B$ deviates to $\hat{x}_B + \varepsilon$ it will still be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A - v_A + \hat{x}_B + \varepsilon + v_B}{2} > l$ ($B$ wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty) and moreover $B$ will secure a strictly positive increase in her general election vote share. So in equilibrium it cannot be the case that $\hat{x}_A > \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A$.

IV) In a Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, it should be the case that $\hat{x}_A = l$. Consider first that $\hat{x}_A < l$. Then by (III) it follows that $\hat{x}_B = \hat{x}_A + v_B - v_A < l + v_B - v_A$. This suggests that there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that if $B$ deviates to $\hat{x}_B + \varepsilon$ it will be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A + v_A + \hat{x}_B + \varepsilon - v_B}{2} < l$ ($B$ wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty) and moreover $B$ will secure a strictly positive increase in her general election vote share. Hence, it cannot be in equilibrium that $\hat{x}_A < l$. Now consider that $\hat{x}_A > l$. By (III) it follows that $\hat{x}_B = \hat{x}_A + v_B - v_A > l + v_B - v_A$. This suggests that there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that if $A$ deviates to $\hat{x}_A - \varepsilon$ it will be the case that $\frac{\hat{x}_A - \varepsilon + v_A + \hat{x}_B - v_B}{2} > l$ ($A$ wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty) and moreover $A$ will secure a strictly positive vote share in the general election. Hence, it cannot be in equilibrium that $\hat{x}_A > l$ either.

V) In a Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, it should be the case that $\hat{x}_B = l + v_B - v_A$. This is a trivial implication of (III) and (IV).

VI) In a Nash equilibrium, $\hat{x}$, it should be the case that $\hat{x}_C = r - v_C + v_D$ and $\hat{x}_D = r$. Given (IV) and (V), that is, given that the candidates of the leftist party in equilibrium locate far from $m$ one can use similar arguments (actually simpler) to the ones employed in (III) and (IV) in order to establish that $\hat{x}_C = r - v_C + v_D$ and $\hat{x}_D = r$.

Hence, there exists a unique strategy profile that is a candidate for an equilibrium in our game;
\[ \hat{x} = (l, l + v_B - v_A, r - v_C + v_D, r). \]

**Step 2** In this part of the proof we have to show that no candidate has incentives to deviate from \( \hat{x} = (l, l + v_B - v_A, r - v_C + v_D, r) \). First of all let us note that in this strategy profile \( P_A(\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_B : v, \Phi, l, r) = P_D(\hat{x}_D, \hat{x}_C : v, \Phi, l, r) = 0 \) and \( P_B(\hat{x}_B, \hat{x}_C : v, \Phi, l, r) = 1 - P_C(\hat{x}_C, \hat{x}_D : v, \Phi, l, r) = \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}). \)

Candidate A will have incentives to deviate if there exists \( \hat{x}_A \in [0, m] \) such that \( P_A(\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_-A : v, \Phi, l, r) > 0 \). But if A deviates to \( \hat{x}_A < l \) then \( \frac{\hat{x}_A + v_A + \hat{x}_B - v_B}{2} < l \) (B wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty) and hence \( P_A(\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_-A : v, \Phi, l, r) = 0 \). If A deviates to \( \hat{x}_A > l \) then at least all voters with ideal policies in will vote for candidate B in the primaries of the leftist party. Notice that \( l \in [0, \hat{x}_B] \) and hence B wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty and \( P_A(\hat{x}_A, \hat{x}_-A : v, \Phi, l, r) = 0 \). Therefore, candidate A has no incentives to deviate away from \( \hat{x}_A = l \). Similar arguments rule out incentives for deviation away from \( \hat{x}_D = r \) for candidate D too.

If candidate B deviates to \( \hat{x}_B < l + v_B - v_A \) then, even if she wins in the leftist party’s primaries, she gets a vote share of \( \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}) \) that is strictly smaller than \( \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}) \). That is her payoff is strictly smaller than \( P_B(\hat{x}_B, \hat{x}_-B : v, \Phi, l, r) \). If candidate B deviates to \( \hat{x}_B > l + v_B - v_A \) then \( \frac{\hat{x}_A + v_A + \hat{x}_B - v_B}{2} > l \) and hence A wins the leftist party’s primaries with certainty. That is, \( P_B(\hat{x}_B, \hat{x}_-B : v, \Phi, l, r) = 0 \). Therefore, candidate B has no incentives to deviate from \( \hat{x}_B = l + v_B - v_A \). Similar arguments rule out incentives for deviation from \( \hat{x}_C = r - v_C + v_D \) for candidate C.

Finally, in this unique equilibrium B is the winner if \( \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}) > \frac{1}{2} \iff l + 2v_B - v_A + r - 2v_C + v_D > 2m \), C is the winner if \( \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}) < \frac{1}{2} \iff l + 2v_B - v_A + r - 2v_C + v_D < 2m \) and each of these candidates wins with probability \( \frac{1}{2} \) if \( \Phi(\frac{\hat{x}_B + v_B + \hat{x}_C - v_C}{2}) = \frac{1}{2} \iff l + 2v_B - v_A + r - 2v_C + v_D = 2m \).

**Proof of Proposition 2.** To prove existence of an equilibrium for any log-concave distribution, \( F \), we first argue that for every log-concave, \( F \), there exists a unique pair \((l^*, r^*) \in (0, 1)^2 \) for which \( 2F(l^*) = F(\frac{l + v_B - v_A + r - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}) \) and \( 2[1 - F(r^*)] = 1 - F(\frac{l + v_B - v_A + r - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2}) \); and then that no candidate has incentives to deviate from \( \hat{x}_A = l^*, \hat{x}_B = l^* + v_B - v_A, \hat{x}_C = r^* - v_C + v_D \) and \( \hat{x}_D = r^* \).

As far as existence of a unique pair \((l^*, r^*) \in (0, 1)^2 \) with the described properties is concerned, notice that for every \( q \in (0, 1) \) there exists a unique \((l, \bar{r}) \in (0, 1)^2 \) such that \( 2F(l) = F(q) \) and \( 2[1 - F(\bar{r})] = 1 - F(q) \). When \( q = 0 \) we have \((l, \bar{r}) = (0, m^q) \Rightarrow l + v_B - v_A + r - v_C + v_D = \frac{m^q + v_B - v_A - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2} > 0 \); when \( q = 1 \) we have \((l, \bar{r}) = (m^q, 1) \Rightarrow m^q + 1 + v_B - v_A - v_C + v_D + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2} < 1 \); and both \( \frac{\partial}{\partial q} \in (0, 1) \) and \( \frac{\partial}{\partial q} \in (0, 1) \) - these derivatives are trivially positive and they are smaller than one due to log-concavity of \( F \) (see, Le Breton and Weber 2001, 2005). That is, there should exist a unique \( q \in (0, 1) \) for which \( \frac{l + v_B - v_A + r - v_C + v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B - v_C}{2} = q \), which is equivalent to having that there exists
a unique pair \((l^*, r^*)\) ∈ \((0, 1)^2\) for which \(2F(l^*) = F\left(\frac{t^*+v_B-v_A+r^*-v_C+v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B-v_C}{2}\right)\) and \(2[1 - F(r^*)] = 1 - F\left(\frac{t^*+v_B-v_A+r^*-v_C+v_D}{2} + \frac{v_B-v_C}{2}\right)\).

Finally, we argue that any unilateral deviation from the posited profile is unprofitable. Given that this profile is such that \(A\) and \(D\) locate exactly at the median of their party and \(B\) and \(C\) as close to the society’s median voter as possible (that is, as long as they win the primaries with certainty), nobody has an incentive to deviate to a more extreme policy. But deviations towards more moderate policies cannot be trivially ruled out. Assume that candidate \(B\) deviates towards the centre. Then, indeed she looses primary votes from the left but she gains primary votes from the right. For this deviation to be unprofitable we need that the gain from the right is smaller when compared to the loss from the left. Consider that \(\hat{x}_B \in (l^*+v_B-v_A, m)\). In such a case the primary vote share of \(B\) is \(V(\hat{x}_B) = \frac{F(\hat{x}_B+v_B+\hat{x}_C-v_C+\hat{x}_D-v_B-v_C)}{F(\hat{x}_B+v_B+\hat{x}_C-v_C+\hat{x}_D-v_B-v_C)}\).

We notice that: a) \(\lim_{\hat{x}_B \to (l^*+v_B-v_A)} V(\hat{x}_B) = \frac{F(l^*+v_B+v_A+v_D)}{F(l^*+v_B+v_A+v_D)} = \frac{1}{2}\); and b) \(\frac{\partial V(\hat{x}_B)}{\partial \hat{x}_B} < 0\) for every \(\hat{x}_B \in (l^*+v_B-v_A, m)\) due to log-concavity of \(F\). In other words, if \(B\) deviates to any \(\hat{x}_B \in (l^*+v_B-v_A, m)\), she loses from \(A\) in the primary and gets a payoff equal to zero. Similarly, one can show that \(A\) has no profitable deviations to the left of the posited strategy. The arguments that prove that \(C\) and \(D\) have no incentives to change policy platforms are symmetric.

As in the proof of Proposition 1 in this unique equilibrium \(B\) is the winner if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+\hat{x}_C-v_C}{2}\right) > \frac{1}{2} \iff l^*+2v_B-v_A+r^*-2v_C+v_D > 2m\), \(C\) is the winner if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+\hat{x}_C-v_C}{2}\right) < \frac{1}{2} \iff l^*+2v_B-v_A+r^*-2v_C+v_D < 2m\) and each of these candidates wins with probability \(\frac{1}{2}\) if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+\hat{x}_C-v_C}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2} \iff l^*+2v_B-v_A+r^*-2v_C+v_D = 2m\).

**Proof of Proposition 3.** For the same arguments as in Step 1 of the proof of Proposition 1 a) candidate \(B\) must win the primary of the leftist party with certainty and get a strictly positive vote share in the general election b) in a Nash equilibrium, \(\hat{x}\), it should be the case that \(\hat{x}_A = \hat{x}_B - v_B + v_A\) and \(\hat{x}_A = l\). Also the arguments of Step 2 of Proposition apply so that neither \(A\) nor \(B\) have incentives to deviate from \(\hat{x} = l, l+v_B-v_A\). Finally, we observe that in this unique equilibrium \(B\) is the winner if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+x_C-v_C}{2}\right) > \frac{1}{2} \iff l+2v_B-v_A+x_C-v_C > 2m\), \(C\) is the winner if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+x_C-v_C}{2}\right) < \frac{1}{2} \iff l+2v_B-v_A+x_C-v_C < 2m\) and each of these candidates wins with probability \(\frac{1}{2}\) if \(\Phi\left(\frac{\hat{x}_B+v_B+x_C-v_C}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2} \iff l+2v_B-v_A+x_C-v_C = 2m\).

**Proof of Proposition 4.** With similar arguments as in the proof of Proposition 2 there exists a unique value \(l^*\) such that \(2F(l^*) = F\left(\frac{t^*+v_B-v_A+x_C}{2} + \frac{v_B-v_C}{2}\right)\) for any log-concave distribution \(F\). For the same reasoning as in Proposition 2 we can then argue that neither \(A\) nor \(B\) have incentives to deviate from \(\hat{x}_A = l^*, \hat{x}_B = l^*+v_B-v_A\).
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