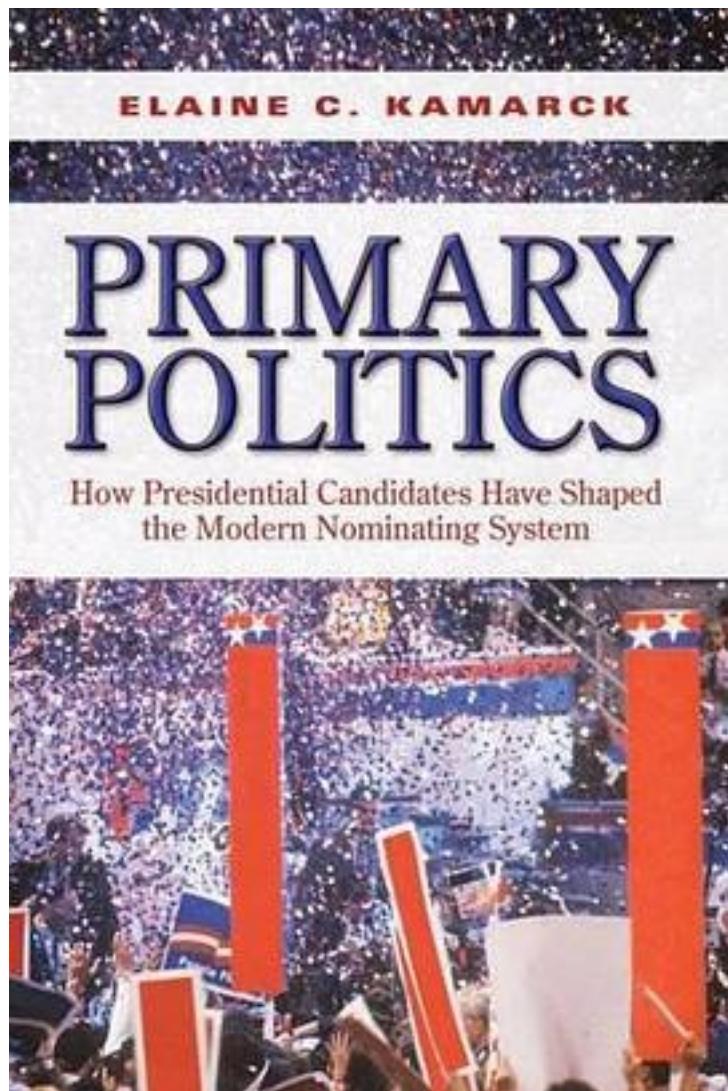


Primary Politics



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出版者:Brookings Institution Press

出版时间:2009-7-15

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780815702924

The 2008 presidential primaries produced more drama than many general election campaigns. John McCain overcame the near-implosion of his campaign to capture the Republican nomination by March, despite a strong challenge from quotable pastor-turned-governor Mike Huckabee. Hillary Clinton entered the Democratic race as the heavy favorite, only to fall to a first-term senator from Illinois in a battle that lasted into July. Democratic delegations from Florida and Michigan were unseated and reseated; superdelegates took to the airwaves; and millions of Americans heard of the 'robot rule' for the first time. In "Primary Politics", political insider Elaine Kamarck explains how the presidential nomination process became the often baffling system we have today. Her focus is the largely untold story of how presidential candidates since the early 1970s have sought to alter the rules in their favor and how their failures and successes have led to even more change. She describes how candidates have sought to manipulate the sequencing of primaries to their advantage and how Iowa and New Hampshire came to dominate the system. She analyzes the rules that are used to translate votes into delegates, paying special attention to the Democrats' twenty-year fight over proportional representation. Kamarck illustrates how candidates have used the resulting delegate counts to create momentum, and she discusses the significance of the modern nominating convention. Drawing on meticulous research, interviews with key figures in both parties, and years of experience, this book explores one of the most important questions in American politics - how we narrow the list of presidential candidates every four years.

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