American Direct Primary

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A major study of the origins of direct primary US elections since the 1920s.This book rejects conventional accounts of how American political parties differ from those in other democracies. It focuses on the introduction of the direct primary and argues that primaries resulted from a process of party institutionalization initiated by party elites. It overturns the widely accepted view that, between 1902 and 1915, direct primaries were imposed on the parties by anti-party reformers intent on weakening them. An examination of particular northern states shows that often the direct primary was not controversial, and only occasionally did it involve confrontation between party 'regulars' and their opponents. Rather, the impetus for direct nominations came from attempts within the parties to subject informal procedures to formal rules. However, it proved impossible to reform the older caucus-convention system effectively, and party elites then turned to the direct primary - a device that already had become more common in rural counties in the late nineteenth century. EAN/ISBN : 9780511030376 Publisher(s): Cambridge University Press Format: ePub/PDF Author(s): Ware, Alan

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