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## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: ROLE OF SWING STATES

### ABSTRACT

The elections in the US are considered to be fought mainly in battleground states. The role of few swing states determines the regime. In the election's candidates are directly elected by popular vote, whereas the president and vice president are elected through the process called electoral college. The electoral college is a compromise between the vote in congress and by citizens. The swing states hold a record of the role swing states play during the elections. In 1948, Democrat Harry S. Truman won by less than one percent of the vote in the five swing states. In 2000, George W. Bush won 25 electoral votes in Florida. In 2016, Donald Trump won in six out of ten of the swing states. In 2020, Joe Biden won in 4 out of six of the Swing states. The paper would analyze the importance and role of swing states and the electoral college in the US elections. The paper would also consider if the role of swing states intensify distrust in American government.

### INTRODUCTION

The United States of America has a presidential form of a governmental setup. In a presidential form of government, the president is both the head of the government and of the state. The US can be called the originator of this kind of governmental system. Under this setup the three organs of the state exist independently. The independence of the president is based on the election. The Americans are innovators of electoral systems. The States have a unique system of election procedure. They follow the electoral college system where the votes are translated into

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seats in the presidential elections. The inception of the term 'swing state' could be traced in the American politics. The term is nothing more than a group of states whose choice of vote can turnaround the entire outcome of presidential elections. These states do not have the largest population or a well economic output but what makes them important is their mixed-orientation that impacts the American political system. The swing states matter the most in determining who the next president would be. The swing states are determined by considering the past election results, opinion polls, political trends and toughness of the candidates and their policies, change in population and demographics and during every election cycle the swing states change.

## HISTORY

The wartime stress in the US convinced the delegates that there was a need for an executive. Some proposed to choose multiple single-term executives. The delegates were of the opinion that the executive be chosen by the congress. But they reconsidered the peril of dependency over the legislature. A committee headed by David Brearley proposed the electoral college. The delegates seemed reluctant to entrust the executive with the authority until this agreement concluded. Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution of the United States begins with a simple declarative statement: "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America." The term swing state emerged during the wake of civil war in the 1860's. According to David Schultz "After the civil war, elections started to become ever more nationalized and candidate-centered and a wide array of states swung between competitiveness and solid partisanship,"

## HOW THE SWING STATES ACT?

A swing state is a state that has the competitive, bellwether, swinging and the battleground status. Opposite to Swing state is Safe states. These states are the ones that has recurrently voted in favor of one party in several elections.

The founding father's intended to obviate voting by mob rule. In 1787, Mandating the Electoral College system is considered as the most important decisions that was made by the Constitutional Convention as the electors were directly voting. Rather minor states did not assent to direct popular election as that would hinder the power and voice of their people. A few of them wanted to abandon the system of electoral college and adopt popular elections for better

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communication and understanding. It is an undeniable that a candidate's fact can win the popular vote but not the election. The system also set up a plan to hinder the popular will of the people by allowing states choose their mode of selecting the head of their State. The demand for democratizing the process ultimately led states to adopt a system of direct election. In the American system the executive head of the state is not directly elected by the members of the state. The members of the electoral college cast their vote at a later point and its supported by the most voters in the state. The number of electors that each state has is taken into account basing its population. For instance, Florida will determine 29 electoral votes with its large population. "swing states" have populations that are divided more politically. These states have swung back and forth between the red and blue candidates. The swing states are also referred to as battleground states or purple states, these states are highly responsible for swung between voting for different parties in the elections. These states make more money during the election campaign, and the state voters who depend upon one party gains nothing. According to Mayer "a voter whose final allegiance is in doubt all the way up until election day." The value of battleground states in national elections makes it seem like a deeply ingrained part of the United States political language.

Nomination of presidential candidate and the choosing the representatives of electoral college are rooted in the state elections. A candidate securing 270 electoral votes win the election contest. The results of popular election determine the vote each of them sought. Exempting Maine and Nebraska, who split their votes between candidates, all these states grant their electoral votes to a single candidate. The United States employs an incredibly unique institutional arrangement, the Electoral College, to translate votes into presidential elections seats. There are direct indications that exclusive bias exists in the Electoral College and that it can meaningfully alter election outcomes as there are three such occurrences where the president has been elected despite losing the popular vote. When no candidate secures majority, the House of representatives elect the president from among the candidates having highest electoral votes.

The main reason as to why there exists a swing state within the country is because the electoral system is constructed around the states. According to John Hudak, "Our presidential election system is designed to make states the important jurisdictional unit in voting." There are

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underlying determinants that help evaluate the long-term battleground status of a state. Presidential elections coincide with House, Senate, and state legislative races, influencing voter decisions. Demographic variations among groups that traditionally support the Democratic or Republican Parties can narrow state margins in forthcoming elections. The parties represented during a state's congressional delegation also confirm that the regional divide exists every four years.

The principle “Every vote count” is remarkably accurate in swing states. In 1948, Democrat Harry S. Truman won by less than one percent of the vote in the five swing states. In 2000, George W. Bush won 25 electoral votes in Florida. In 2016, Donald Trump won in six out of ten of the swing states. In 2020, Joe Biden won in 4 out of six of the Swing states. States that cast vote early in the process of nomination benefit so does a swing state in the general election.

The end of presidential elections in America gains importance. As 48 states out of the 50 have a "winner take all" system. Meaning that a candidate who gains the majority of the popular vote also gains all of state's electoral college votes. Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Arizona, and Wisconsin these states alone structure 101 of the 270 electoral votes needed. The competitive states are getting to be crucial for either candidate to receive 270 electoral votes. The electoral rules that govern the rendering of votes into seats exert a significant influence on the party system's nature and size. Most states require that its electoral votes go towards whoever won the favored choice in that state. Electors that vote or attempt to vote against the majority are referred to as "faithless electors" and also known as swing voters. These voters do not decide to whom they will cast their vote. The swing voters vary on the following variables: Ideology, Age of the candidate, Political party, and Identification. The swing voters could easily transfer their votes to support the opposition party. The voter preference in the battleground states vary but remain stable over time. Issues like climate change, health care, immigration, or the economy could affect swing voters' vote preference. Swing voters seem very comparable to their counterparts. It is pertinent to examine how in state-specific politics, economic change, different geographical patterns be a base to define the political structure of the US.

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## CONCLUSION

There has been a widespread call for reforms from advocated and policy makers to give more leverage to states in the presidential election thereby bringing in an evenly distributed electoral related benefits. But to abolish the Electoral College in favor of direct elections serves an advantage to one major party alone. Thus, a more feasible alternative that does not advantage in either party should be brought about. The fact that even though losing the popular vote one can still become the president by targeting the Electoral College should not serve as a loophole strategy by partisans and political parties to enjoy power without the support of the populous. By adopting a different plan, establishing a competitive plan the attention from presidential candidates and the political parties will be more widely spread across the United States. This will effectively decentralize the benefits by the partisans only towards the battlegrounds states.

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