

## Case Example #2: Did Definitions Help Make Obama President?

The United States does **not** elect Presidents based on which candidate gets the most popular votes. It is determined by a vote of the Electoral College and 48 of America's 50 states use a winner-take-all electoral voting scheme. That is simply because historical precedent has been formulated into U.S. law.

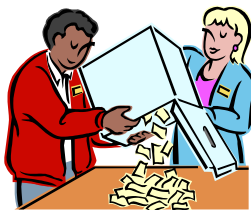
Political Parties, however, set their own rules in choosing their individual candidates for President of the United States. Rules are a form of definitions (or a series of definitions) as are descriptions, laws and social norms.

Rules and definitions simply do matter. They also frequently reflect the tendencies and interests of the rule-makers. Indeed, both major U.S. Political Parties have long supported laws, rules, court rulings and rule making to bring their guiding principles to fruition.

Still that did not eliminate the turmoil in the Presidential election of 2008. If the Democrats had, for illustration purposes, used the Republican Party's national and state nominating rules, Hillary Clinton would have been their nominee, not Barack Obama.

It is a fact, if only one state, California, had set up a winner-take-all delegate selection process in the primary season Hillary Clinton would have amassed a sizable lead in delegates even under the existing 2008 Democratic Party rules. In reality, in the 2008 primaries Barack Obama beat Hillary Clinton in only one out of the ten largest states (his home state, Illinois).

The National Democratic Party's rules and definitions also created a non-elected class of delegates. The role of these superdelegates was to ensure that the regular delegates do not choose a nominee deemed a weak candidate (and that was certainly a loaded definition if there ever was one).



What might have made more sense is a nominating process that more closely mirrored the general election for president (obviously, history will be the ultimate judge of that). If, for further example, the race between Obama and Hillary Clinton had been under the same rules as the November, 2008 final Presidential contest, Hillary would have easily locked up the Democratic nomination. It is that simple.

There is a larger point and it is that politicians are historically very partial to rule making. And once rules are set down they tend to stick. Who benefits most when more rules are created? The rule-makers themselves profit for sure. They wield more power and authority. Rules simply beget more rules unless they reflect truths; and that is practically impossible to do. Against rule making, truth is unfortunately all too often an orphan. Of course, only time will tell if the United States has benefited from the definitions that Barack Obama intelligently used to his advantage to become the Democratic Party nominee for President of the United States.