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The Impact of Negative Campaigning: Evidence from the 1998 Senatorial Primaries

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We investigate the amount of negative campaigning in the 1998 senatorial primaries and the ramifications of negative campaigning on primary turnout and general election outcomes. A large literature has developed to show whether primary divisiveness has significant consequences for electoral outcomes, though we do not have much knowledge about what primary divisiveness entails (Bernstein 1977: 540). We employ a holistic measure of campaign negativity measured by coding newspaper articles three months prior to the primary to uncover how much negativity exists in senatorial primaries, which campaigns turn negative, and the relationship between primary negativity and several campaign factors. We find that primary divisiveness is strongly related to campaign negativity, negativity boosts primary turnout, while divisiveness depletes a nominee's general election fortunes.

The adoption and spread of the nominating primary election at the end of the Progressive era spawned an industry of investigation into its effects on the political party, the voter, and governance. The classic work on state government by V. O. Key, Jr. (1956) presented convincing evidence that primaries erode the party organization, change the face of representation, relocate the locus of competition from interparty to intraparty, and perhaps handicap those emerging from divisive primaries. Research thereafter has built upon those themes, with a rather extensive literature exploring, among other facets, the impact of contested primaries on a nominee's fate in the general election (Hacker 1965; Bernstein 1977; Kenney and Rice 1987; Abramowitz and Segal 1992).

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In another related branch of electoral research, scholars over time increasingly have taken up the topic of negative campaigning, mostly through the medium of negative advertising (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). The questions have focused on whether negative advertising demobilizes the electorate (Ansolabehere et al. 1994, 1999, including the exchange in the *APSR*), degrades campaign discourse (Jamieson 1992), and affects candidate choice (West 1997).

We integrate these two literatures to the advantage of both. Through the use of aggregate election returns in the divisive primary literature, some of the connective tissue of primary division to nominee success is lost. We have little knowledge of what divisiveness means (Bernstein 1977: 540). While we would assume that close primary contests are more negative than barely contested nominations, that relationship is untested. Few references are substantiated concerning what valuable resource division might deplete, which might include trampled voter party loyalties, emptied campaign war chests, personal and policy credibility, favorability, and electability (though see West 1994, 1997). Several pieces have shown, however, how divisiveness alienates intraparty challenger activists (Johnson and Gibson 1974; Buell 1986; Miller, Jewell, and Sigelman 1988). To begin to fill some of these gaps, we attempt to document the relationship between primary divisiveness, campaign negativity, and a few of these campaign resources: general election support and primary turnout.

Why should we expect the mere closeness of the primary outcome to influence behavior in the general election? The effect that the primary campaign experience might have on the general election stems mostly from the content of the primary campaign. Thus, we believe that a measure of campaign negativity, as we refer to it, derived from the substance of the campaign environment provides a more detailed picture of the primary campaign than traditional aggregate outcome measures.

Finally, this work provides new leverage on the relationship between campaign negativity and turnout by testing theories on a new set of elections: primaries. Ansolabehere et al. (1994) and Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) suggest that voters are demobilized because the negative campaign denigrates the political process. If this is the case, we should expect to see the same demobilizing effect in a primary setting. There is, however, reason to expect that the effect of negative campaigning may be fundamentally different in primaries. From the public's point of view, differences between primary candidates are often muted. The candidates are probably closer to one another (and primary voters) on important issues than to whomever the opposing party nominates. If negative campaigning serves to differentiate primary candidates, voters should perceive that they have more at stake in the outcome. In other words, negative campaigning may provide a reason to vote in a context in which many voters are indifferent and apathetic.

NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING: DEFINITIONS, DATA, AND METHODS

Most discussion of negativity in the electoral context concerns negative coverage by media, negative advertising, and personal attacks by candidates. We take a somewhat more expansive view of what constitutes negative campaigning, which consists, for the purposes of this article, of any contrasts drawn between same-party candidates during speeches, debates, or advertising. In short, negative campaigning is a reference by one candidate or the candidate's campaign challenging a same-party candidate's fitness, issue positions, experience, temperament, etc. The strict presentation of one's own qualifications for office would be considered positive campaigning. Additionally, criticisms of another party's candidates are excluded; we include only what could be referred to as "in fighting."

In order to gather such data, we used newspapers within each primary state.¹ Therefore, we rely on newspapers to report faithfully the events and doings of campaigns. This assumption is violated when a campaign fails to generate media coverage, when journalists overreport negative campaigning, and when journalists fail to cover all aspects of the campaign, focusing perhaps only on the most visible aspects. However, if we care about the effect of negative campaigning on candidates and the public, then reporting only the activities of viable challengers and the campaigns' most visible manifestations is perhaps the proper bias to have. If journalists overreport negative campaigning, they may overreport it equally for all candidates. On this basis, market-share-driven editors may emphasize campaign negativity from any and all sources. This assumption is further legitimated by the success of the "attack the frontrunner" strategy—why else would attacks create attention and coverage other than through the manipulation of media values?

Additionally, few voters directly experience campaigns. Most of the campaign information a voter receives stems from the media. Therefore, whether the media paint an accurate picture of the campaign tone is not the key question for this research. Rather, the question is how voters respond to the campaign information to which they are exposed.

We code articles from area newspapers in states hosting primaries in 1998 that were available on Lexis/Nexis starting three months prior to the primary date. A listing of these newspapers appears in Appendix A. Coverage ranges from a low of six stories for the three months leading up to the Maryland Republican primary, the star-crossed winner of which would face Barbara Mikulski in the general election, to the several hundred stories in the larger states, such as in the New York, Ohio, and California primaries, in which several fortunes collided and/or many papers covered the race.

¹ There were no newspaper references to candidates in both Hawaii primaries, both South Dakota primaries, and the Oregon Republican primary (all had little-known candidates except the Hawaii Democratic primary with incumbent Senator Inouye). Therefore, we were forced to exclude them from the analysis.

While we are not concerned with the absolute amount of campaign negativity, it is nevertheless important to be clear about the likely implications of our measurement strategy. Following Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt (1998; see also Lau and Pomper 1998), each article is coded for campaign negativity as a single unit. This choice is made for several reasons, primarily because other options raise other problems or are not as useful for this research question. For example, coding candidate statements raises problems about defining what constitutes a statement, but, more importantly, does not incorporate information from the larger campaign environment to which voters are exposed. For example, how would ads without candidate statements be coded?

A second option would be to code each paragraph (or sentence) of the article as a separate unit, which would almost certainly underestimate the amount of negativity in primary campaigns. First, writers often need to include several paragraphs of background material (listing the candidates, describing the race, when the election is, etc.) in an article to make the context accessible to readers. This amount of largely factual information would increase the denominator in a calculation of negativity, attenuate estimates of negativity, and would increase measurement error and bias statistical results.

Given the potential problems with hand-coded content analyses, we performed several checks to ensure the intersource and intercoder reliability of these data. The first potential problem is a bias induced by the newspaper; certain media outlets may be simply more prone to reporting negativity. This tendency could influence our tests by giving us an inappropriate measure of negativity for those states. Fortunately, we have data from several newspapers for 21 of the 34 primaries studied. In not one case is there a significant difference in the proportion of negative stories across these newspapers (results not shown).

The second potential source of bias in a content analysis is the coding. Fortunately, the coding scheme used here is simple and straightforward enough that this is not a problem. We performed several intercoder reliability checks, and found near unanimity across coders—92 percent of cases reviewed by multiple coders are in agreement. The Kappa value for interrater agreement is 0.82, which Landis and Koch (1977) would interpret as “almost perfect.” All told, the data are reliable measures of the newspaper coverage of these Senate primaries.

Table 1 describes the data; note that primaries in which a candidate ran unopposed are excluded from this table. The data reported here provide some hints that our measure of negativity is sensitive. For instance, there are several states where one party’s primary was quite negative while the other party’s was not (Arkansas, California, Kentucky, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington). If we observed the opposite, meaning roughly equal levels of negativity in both primaries, it could mean that the level of negativity recorded was a function of media bias and not actual campaign conduct.

≡ TABLE 1
CAMPAIGN COVERAGE OF 1998 SENATE PRIMARIES

| State | Republican Primary | | Democratic Primary | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | Number of Stories | Percent Negative Stories | Number of Stories | Percent Negative Stories |
| Arkansas | 25 | 0.0 | 136 | 25.0 |
| California | 85 | 48.2 | 127 | 0.0 |
| Colorado | 115 | 9.6 | 33 | 0.0 |
| Florida | 18 | 0.0 | n/a | |
| Georgia | n/a | | 19 | 11.1 |
| Idaho | 28 | 0.0 | n/a | |
| Illinois | 47 | 44.7 | n/a | |
| Indiana | 58 | 13.8 | n/a | |
| Kansas | n/a | | 6 | 0.0 |
| Kentucky | 58 | 3.4 | 97 | 51.5 |
| Maryland | 5 | 0.0 | 45 | 0.0 |
| Missouri | 70 | 4.3 | 47 | 10.6 |
| Nevada | 38 | 5.3 | n/a | |
| New Hampshire | 35 | 14.3 | n/a | |
| New York | n/a | | 109 | 33.0 |
| North Carolina | 43 | 2.3 | 45 | 22.2 |
| North Dakota | 10 | 0.0 | n/a | |
| Ohio | 165 | 0.0 | n/a | |
| Oklahoma | n/a | | 3 | 0.0 |
| Oregon | n/a | | 3 | 0.0 |
| Pennsylvania | 18 | 16.7 | 7 | 42.9 |
| South Carolina | 25 | 16.0 | n/a | |
| Vermont | 10 | 40.0 | n/a | |
| Washington | 93 | 35.5 | 92 | 0.0 |

There is also a sizable difference in the amount of coverage primary races receive in and across states. In some states both primaries received roughly equivalent coverage (North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington); in others, one race received substantially more coverage (Arkansas, California, Colorado, and Kentucky). These differences are also suggestive of the reliability of the information culled from the content analysis. We would expect to see a noticeable amount of variance in the amount of coverage races receive. In states with two contested primaries, for instance, we would expect roughly equal coverage, while we should see large disparities where only one race was hotly contested or where a popular incumbent was running.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN “DIVISIVE” AND “NEGATIVE”

There is a notable variety in both the amount of coverage garnered by a campaign and the campaign's negativity. How and whether this translates into a divisive primary is another question. As Hacker (1965) and Bernstein (1977) noted, “divisive” denotes more than is often appropriate. Researchers have attempted to add meaning to divisiveness by placing it in context, as discussed above. But aggregate measures of primary divisiveness, again, ignore the content of the campaign, the heart of what is implied by divisiveness. More direct and meaningful measures are possible, however, and the following campaigns make the utility of gathering these data readily apparent.

The Democratic senatorial primary in Kansas would be considered divisive using standard definitions and aggregate data; the vote difference between Paul Feleciano, Jr. and Todd Covault was 17.4 percent (58.7 for Feleciano and 41.3 for Covault). Simultaneously, Sam Brownback received 100 percent of the Republican primary vote. The Democratic morass in Kansas is deepened in light of the numbers participating: 98,222 people participated in the Democratic primary compared to the 255,747 who came out to rubber stamp Brownback, so even had Feleciano received the total Democratic primary vote he would have emerged with just over a third of Brownback's support. As a result of his divisive primary, however, Feleciano began the general election with only about a fourth of Brownback's support. In the papers, the Democratic aspirants were roundly ignored. A search of three months of coverage of the *Kansas City Star* and the *Topeka Constitutional Journal* netted six articles, none of which suggested infighting, though they did fire criticism at Brownback. The beleaguered status of the minority party nominee in Kansas was compounded by the lack of media coverage, a combination of factors which worked against the party's and candidate's attempts to boost interest, turnout, and provide a forum for their views. The outcome of the Kansas Democratic primary was divisive in outcome, but did not have the other elements of a truly divisive contest we would expect.

Contrast the Kansas race with the truly divisive Republican senatorial primary in Illinois. Whereas the divisive Democratic primary in Kansas involved little media coverage, low voter participation, little campaign expenditures, and no infighting to speak of, Peter Fitzgerald and Loleta Didrickson waged war on each other with total primary candidate spending in excess of four million dollars. In addition, nearly 50 percent of the articles about the campaign mentioned negative campaigning, mostly detailing a nasty ad war. The primary ended with Fitzgerald, a political novice with a personal fortune behind his campaign, edging past Didrickson 52 to 48 percent. Clearly, the Illinois Republican senatorial primary was divisive in every sense of the word, whereas the Kansas Democratic senatorial primary merely ended with a divided Democratic house.

After the disastrous, nasty 1992 Democratic senatorial primary, New York Democrats were determined to play nice in 1998. Mark Green, however,

≡ TABLE 2
 BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS OF PRIMARY CAMPAIGN
 NEGATIVITY AND DIVISIVENESS MEASURES

| Variable | Percent Negative Stories |
|--|--------------------------|
| Number of Stories | 0.19 |
| Winner Below 60% (Bernstein) | 0.52** |
| Winner %—Runner-up % < 20% (Hacker) | 0.41* |
| Comparative Divisive Measure (Kenney and Rice) | -0.46** |

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $n = 33$.

announced his candidacy by attacking everyone—Al D'Amato, Chuck Schumer, and Geraldine Ferraro, among others. Schumer and Ferraro focused mainly on their records, although they did engage each other sporadically and infrequently. Overall, the campaign can be classified as divisive and fairly negative, though not near the levels of negativity seen in the 1998 general election contest.

These three primary campaigns would be treated as roughly equivalent by standard measures of divisiveness despite their obvious differences. Our measure, based on the conduct of the campaigns, however, can distinguish negative, potentially destructive primary contests from merely close ones. While there are anecdotal differences between divisiveness and negativity measures, it is important to demonstrate systematically how they differ. First, we must ask, are negative primaries also divisive? One of the missing facets of the divisive primary literature is the lack of investigation behind aggregate election outcomes to understand what divisive means substantively.

Table 2 shows bivariate correlations between the percent of negative stories in a primary's coverage and several standard measures of primary divisiveness. Again, negativity refers to the content of the campaign, while divisiveness is about the outcome. An early measure of divisiveness (Hacker 1965) is a binary variable equaling one when the nominee receives less than 60 percent of the primary vote and zero otherwise; another dichotomous variable equals one when the difference between the winner and the runner up is less than 20 percent (Bernstein 1977) and zero otherwise. A third is continuous, comparing the winner-runner up percentage difference between the two parties, which we label the comparative divisive measure (Kenney and Rice 1987; Atkeson 1998). There is a strong and positive correlation between the percentage of negative stories and the Hacker and Bernstein measures of primary divisiveness, indicating that primaries with close outcomes are more negative. There is also a strong and negative relationship with the third, comparative measure of divisiveness, which suggests that the nominee involved in the comparatively less divisive primary experienced a less negative campaign than her general election opponent.

We also break down the primary races by a standard set of indicators that describe the context of U.S. elections. In his discussion of the effects of primaries on state politics, Key (1956) suggested that attention, energy, and competition will shift to the point of true institutional choice, which in one party states would be the choice of the nominee. Thus, divisive primaries should occur with more frequency in dominant parties and perhaps take the focus away from challengers and inter-party politics.

The presence of an incumbent has been one of the most important determinants of campaign outcomes and strategy. An incumbent may drive away competition in both the incumbent's and challenger's primaries and reduce negative campaigning. On the other hand, the incumbent is often a popular target, both because of the existence of a paper and vote trail and due to the political hay that may be made by attacking the frontrunner. We would expect open seat races, however, to be much more negative and divisive because the probability is higher that the seat can be taken—the stakes are higher when no incumbent is present. Further, we might expect Democrats to have primaries that are more negative, since they are considered to have the more diverse tent (Mayer 1996a) than Republicans (Lengle, Owen, and Sonner 1995).

In Table 3, we can see that contested primaries with incumbents running are the least negative, with only 4 percent of the stories about the campaign mentioning negative campaigning. Both challenger and open seat primaries were four times more negative than incumbents' primaries. T-tests of these differences indicate that the rate of negativity in races with incumbents is significantly lower than in challenger races. Neither of these, however, is significantly different from primaries for an open seat. A good portion of this effect is because incumbents draw significant amounts of coverage of their official duties during the campaign, and hence little coverage of their challengers and little, if any, negativity. In addition, incumbents in 1998 did not face any quality primary challengers. On the other hand, a quarter of the challenger primaries had two quality candidates contesting the nomination, and four of the six open-seat primaries had at least two quality candidates running.

When we look at the effect of candidate quality on negative campaigning, we see that most negative campaigning takes place when at least two quality candidates contest a nomination. When two or more quality candidates are present, 30 percent of campaign stories mention negative campaigning; this compares to just 10 percent when fewer than two quality candidates are running, a statistically significant difference. We would expect quality candidates to attack each other with more frequency than those who only scrape together the filing fee because they have the opportunity and funding to do so and because it has proven to be a successful campaign strategy. The lone quality candidate need not engage in negative campaigning, which would only bring unwanted attention to lesser known rivals, increase negative references to the sponsoring candidate, and reduce chances to build needed name recognition.

≡ TABLE 3
 THE MEAN PERCENT OF NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING STORIES
 BY SEAT STATUS, CANDIDATE QUALITY, AND POLITICAL PARTY

| Variable (n) | Mean Proportion of Negative Stories (n) |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Seat Status</i> | |
| Incumbent (9) | 0.04 (60) |
| Challenger (18) | 0.18 (35) |
| Open Seat (6) | 0.16 (90) |
| <i>Candidate Quality</i> | |
| One or Fewer Quality Candidates (24) | 0.10 (40) |
| Two or More Quality Candidates (9) | 0.28 (75) |
| <i>Political Party</i> | |
| Democrat (14) | 0.14 (55) |
| Republican (19) | 0.13 (50) |
| Dominant Party | 0.11 (65) |
| Minority Party | 0.16 (42) |
| Overall Average | 0.14 (52) |

We also examine the differences for each party; the Democrats have often been thought to be the more divided of the two camps, though this may be changing as the GOP searches for an identity and some independence from powerful movements lodged within the party, i.e. Christian conservatives. Here, there is no significant difference in negative campaigning between the parties. Finally, dominant party primaries attract the most attention and are the least negative (average of 65 stories and 11 percent negative), while the out party draws less attention and is more negative (42 stories and 16 percent negative, on average), perhaps in part to gain more media attention—a twist on Key's earlier findings.

THE SUBSTANTIVE IMPACT OF NEGATIVE PRIMARY CAMPAIGNING

Ansolabehere et al. (1994) and Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) find evidence, though by no means undisputed, that negative campaigning turns off the public and suppresses turnout in general elections. Primaries are different. Because they are often low coverage and low turnout affairs, negative campaigning may in fact draw attention to the race and increase turnout. The effect of election specific factors depends highly on the context in which they occur (Key 1956), and the differences between nominating and general elections are significant.

≡ TABLE 4

BIVARIATE CORRELATION AND MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION ESTIMATES
OF THE RELATIONSHIPS OF NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING, DIVISIVENESS, AND
PARTY DOMINANCE WITH TURNOUT IN PARTY PRIMARIES^a

| Variable | Correlations w/ Primary Turnout | OLS Regression Estimates of Primary Turnout ^b | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------|
| | | Coefficient | s.e. |
| Proportion of Negative Stories | 0.45** | 23.42 | 9.83** |
| N of Stories | 0.36*** | | |
| Winner Below 60% | 0.30* | | |
| Winner %—Runnerup % < 20% | 0.38** | 5.45 | 3.56 |
| Comparative Divisive Measure | -0.23 | | |
| Two or More Quality Candidates | 0.25 | -1.00 | 3.81 |
| Dominant Party Primary | 0.25 | 6.58 | 2.85** |
| Constant | | 11.14 | 2.39 |

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10

^a In order to calculate the turnout for each primary, we needed to estimate the eligible, or likely, electorate. Because of the different participation rules, difficulty of obtaining registered voter numbers (if they exist), and different primary formats, we use the average congressional party vote margins for each state from 1996 multiplied times the VAP for the state as the baseline (denominator).

^b Model statistics: Adj. R² = 0.278; SEE = 7.844; n = 32; F = 3.981** (4 df)

We suspect negative campaigning may increase voter participation in the primary² and test this relationship in Table 4. Unlike Ansolabehere et al.'s findings, 1998 Senate primary turnout appears to be positively related to more divisive and more negative primaries. Both measures of divisiveness as well as the negative campaigning variable are strong, positive, and significant correlates of primary turnout. There are some inklings that the other measures—party dominance, candidate quality, and the comparative divisiveness measure—are also correlated, though the small number of cases prevents them from achieving statistical significance.

² Measuring turnout in a primary is no mean feat; consequently, various methods of defining the denominator (party members), which is comparable across space and time, have been used. We use the average state percent vote received by House candidates in the previous election (1996) multiplied times the state's voting age population to estimate the potential party primary electorate. There are other measures (for instance the number of registered partisans), but we prefer this measure because it is consistent across states. The choice is, essentially, between having a constructed measure that is the same for every state or attempting to combine several different measures for different states. We adopt the former strategy.

We then submitted selected variables to OLS regression. We find, controlling for the number of quality candidates, party dominance, and primary divisiveness, that negative campaigning is significant and positively related to primary turnout. The only other factor to achieve significance is party dominance—the stronger party draws a higher turnout (including other measures of divisiveness does not change this result). Negative campaigning likely increases the information stock of the electorate, piques their attention, and consequently brings more voters to the polls. Additionally, the campaign negativity measure swamps the effects of divisiveness, suggesting that actually measuring the content and not simply relying on outcome-based measures of primary elections is appropriate.³

Lastly, we investigate the effects of primary negative campaigning on general election outcomes (see Table 5). For this analysis, the dependent variable is the percent of the general election vote the Democratic candidate received (this reduces problems with correlated errors across observations). To model the impact of the primary campaign, we include measures of the level of campaign negativity, the number of stories, whether or not the primary was divisive, and whether or not there was more than one quality challenger. We take into account the interdependent nature of election outcomes, since a candidate's general election success will depend on their own primary experience as well as their opponent's, through slightly altered variable coding. The divisiveness measure, therefore, is coded as one if the Democratic primary was divisive and the Republican was not, zero if either both primaries or neither were divisive, and negative one if only the Republican primary was divisive. We include a variable to capture the presence of an incumbent in the race, coded as one if there is a Democratic incumbent, zero if it is an open seat, and negative one if there is a Republican incumbent. Finally, we introduce the denominator for our primary turnout measure—the 1996 state average House percent vote for the Democratic Party—as an indicator of the normal party vote. Not surprisingly, the normal vote and the incumbency status of the candidate go a long way toward explaining general election outcomes.

The nature of the primary does influence the outcome of the general election. The model estimates suggest that candidates solely facing a divisive primary (when the nominee's percentage of the primary vote is less than twenty points greater than the runner-up's) should expect an eight point drop in general election vote share. When two or more quality candidates contest a primary, the eventual nominee does better in the general election by three and one half points, in part because quality candidates are attracted to run against vulnerable incumbents.

³ Although we only report the results for a single measure of divisiveness, the substantive pattern holds for all of the divisive primary measures. In each case, the negativity variable is positive and significant, while the divisiveness measure is insignificant. We also included measures for the type of primary (closed, open, blanket, etc.) and there were no significant findings.

≡ TABLE 5
 OLS REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE'S GENERAL ELECTION
 VOTE SHARE

| Variables | Percent of Vote | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| | Coefficient | S. E. |
| Party of Incumbent | 10.59 | 1.59*** |
| State avg. 1996 House Vote | 38.17 | 17.33** |
| Winner %—Runnerup % <20% | -7.65 | 2.91** |
| Two or More Quality Candidates | 3.63 | 1.99* |
| Number of Stories about Primary | 0.01 | 0.03 |
| Prop. of Neg. Stories in Primary | 0.14 | 0.09 |
| Constant | 29.31 | 8.45*** |

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10
 Model Statistics: Adj R² = 0.740; n = 32; SEE = 6.83;
 F = 15.73 *** (6 df)

The negativity of the primary campaign does not affect a nominee's general election vote share; the effect is positive, but insignificant ($t = 1.56$). We feel that the effect of the variable is conflicted. On the one hand, negativity brings with it the troubles discussed in the divisive primary literature—disgruntled party workers, unearthed personal and political dirt, and the stigma of running negatively. On the other, we know that negativity boosts primary turnout and is related to the number of quality challengers present. In fact, if the quality challenger measure is excluded from the general election outcome model, the negativity measure remains positive and attains statistical significance. With such a small number of cases (32) and the relatively high collinearity between the two variables (0.65), it becomes difficult to disentangle the effect of challenger quality from the challengers' primary strategies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we examined the amount and implications of what has come to be known by pundits and the public as the scourge of modern elections (Mayer 1996b). In an average Senate primary, only about one-sixth of campaign stories contain references to negative campaigning. However, because of media values, campaign strategies, and the quality of candidates in the campaign, negative campaigns receive more coverage. Neither the candidates nor the press are entirely to blame since they feed off one another to create an environment conducive to negative campaigning.

In contrast to previous studies, we found that more negative campaigning actually increases turnout in primaries. The main challenge for primary

candidates is to generate interest and spread their message. Negative campaigning helps to do this by focusing the media spotlight on intra-party squabbles. However, it cannot produce electoral participation when it counts in the long run. Divisiveness in the primary, a situation that negative campaigning is related to and encourages, weakens a nominee's chances in the general election.

Negativity is determined, in part, by the electoral context. The number and quality of challengers in the primary significantly shape the conduct of the campaign. The more candidates in the race, the greater the need for them to distinguish themselves by going negative. The presence of an incumbent suppresses negativity in his or her own primary, but *increases* it in the other party's primary. This may foreshadow the tone of the general campaign. If the primary chooses who will face an incumbent, the challengers may realize they will have to go negative in the general election, so the cost of attacking in the primary is diminished.

APPENDIX A
NEWSPAPERS OF RECORD FOR EACH STATE'S PRIMARY

| Primary State | Newspapers of Record |
|----------------------|--|
| Arkansas | Arkansas <i>Democrat-Gazette</i> |
| California | Los Angeles <i>Times</i> , The San Diego <i>Union-Tribune</i> , The San Francisco <i>Chronicle</i> |
| Colorado | The Denver <i>Post</i> , The Denver <i>Rocky Mountain News</i> |
| Florida | St. Petersburg <i>Times</i> , The Tampa <i>Tribune</i> |
| Georgia | The Atlanta <i>Journal and Constitution</i> |
| Idaho | Idaho Falls <i>Post Register</i> , The Idaho <i>Statesman</i> , The <i>Spokesman-Review</i> |
| Illinois | Chicago <i>Sun Times</i> , St. Louis <i>Post-Dispatch</i> |
| Indiana | Indianapolis <i>Star</i> , Indianapolis <i>News</i> , South Bend <i>Tribune</i> |
| Kansas | <i>Associated Press</i> , Kansas City <i>Star</i> , Topeka <i>Constitutional Journal</i> |
| Kentucky | Cincinnati <i>Enquirer</i> , Louisville <i>Courier-Journal</i> |
| Maryland | Baltimore <i>Sun</i> , Washington <i>Post</i> |
| Missouri | St. Louis <i>Post-Dispatch</i> , Kansas City <i>Star</i> |
| Nevada | <i>Associated Press</i> , Las Vegas <i>Review-Journal</i> |
| New York | New York <i>Times</i> , New York <i>Daily News</i> |
| New Hampshire | Manchester <i>Union Leader</i> , Boston <i>Globe</i> , <i>Associated Press</i> |
| North Carolina | Raleigh <i>News and Observer</i> , Charlotte <i>Observer</i> , Greensboro <i>News and Record</i> |
| North Dakota | Bismarck <i>Tribune</i> |
| Ohio | Columbus <i>Dispatch</i> , Cleveland <i>Plain Dealer</i> |
| Oklahoma | <i>Associated Press</i> , Tulsa <i>World</i> |
| Oregon | The Oregonian, The <i>Bulletin</i> |
| Pennsylvania | Pittsburgh <i>Post-Gazette</i> , The <i>Morning Call</i> |

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| South Carolina | <i>The Post, The Herald</i> |
| Vermont | <i>Associated Press, The Boston Globe, The New York Times</i> |
| Washington | <i>Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The Columbian, The Spokesman-Review, The News Tribune</i> |

APPENDIX B
SELECTED MEASURES EMPLOYED

Negative Campaigning: We coded newspaper articles for any mentions of a candidate by another candidate of the same party or by that candidate's campaign three months prior to the primary election. Though "comparative politicking" would be a more accurate phrase, negative is the standard reference and we adopt it here.

State Avg. 1996 House Vote. The state average percent vote for both House Republicans and Democrats for the 1996 elections.

Winner %—Runnerup % < 20%. The Bernstein (1977) measure of primary divisiveness; the measure = 1 if the difference between the winner and runnerup is less than 20 percent, and is 0 otherwise.

Winner Below 60%. The Hacker (1965) measure of primary divisiveness = 1 if the nominee received less than 60 percent of the vote, and is 0 otherwise.

Comparative Divisive Measure. This measure (Kenney and Rice 1987) contrasts the winning primary margins of the two nominees. If the Republican nominee won by 20 percent of the vote and the Democrat 10 percent, the measure would equal 10 for the Republican and -10 for the Democrat.

Dominant Party. Is determined by which party the current or past (if open seat) incumbent is affiliated. The measure = 1 if the primary is in the dominant party and 0 otherwise.

Two or More Quality Candidates. A candidate is considered quality if he or she held state legislative, state-wide executive, or federal office before running or if he holds a considerable fortune. Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL), with no elective experience but a personal fortune, would be a quality candidate in this scheme.

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