



When Primary Campaigns Go Negative: The Determinants of Campaign Negativity

David A. M. Peterson; Paul A. Djupe

Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 1. (Mar., 2005), pp. 45-54.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-9129%28200503%2958%3A1%3C45%3AWPCGNT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

Political Research Quarterly is currently published by University of Utah.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/utah.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

The JSTOR Archive is a trusted digital repository providing for long-term preservation and access to leading academic journals and scholarly literature from around the world. The Archive is supported by libraries, scholarly societies, publishers, and foundations. It is an initiative of JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to help the scholarly community take advantage of advances in technology. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



When Primary Campaigns Go Negative: The Determinants of Campaign Negativity

DAVID A. M. PETERSON, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
PAUL A. DJUPE, DENISON UNIVERSITY

Standard investigations of both campaign negativity and primary elections focus on either the electoral institutions or the primary voters. In this article, we begin to explore the factors affecting the content of the information environment voters face by examining the effects of timing and electoral context on which primary races are likely to become negative and when. Using a content analysis of newspaper coverage of every contested Senate primary in 1998, and binary time-series cross-sectional methods, we demonstrate that negativity is an interdependent function of the timing of the race, the status of the Senate seat, and the number and quality of the challengers in the primary.

Negative campaign tactics have received tremendous amounts of attention from scholars. This attention has focused largely on two questions: historical trends in negativity (e.g., Jamieson, Waldman and Sherr 1998; Kaid and Johnston 1991; West 1997) and the impact negativity has on turnout (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, and Simon 1999; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon and Valentino 1994; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, and Babbitt 1999; Wattenberg and Briens 1999). The findings of the former literature are clear—negativity has increased in all types of elections in recent years (though the magnitude of the increase is an unresolved debate). In the latter literature, the linkage is still an open question—in some studies negativity boosts turnout, in others it depresses turnout.

A largely separate, but equally important, literature furthers our understanding of how the primary contest actors behave (Abramowitz 1989; Abramson, Aldrich, Paolino, and Rohde 1992; Bartels 1988; Cooper and Munger 2000; Geer 1989; Gerber and Morton 1999; Kenney and Rice 1987; Mutz 1995; Popkin 1991; Stone, Rapoport, and Atkeson 1995). The dominant questions in this literature focus on the vote choice of individuals, and the forces of momentum for candidate evaluations and campaign contributions. Largely absent from both of these literatures is much more than conjecture (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995) and anecdotal evidence about patterns of negativity within primary campaigns—why do primary campaigns turn negative when they do (though see Haynes and Rhine 1998 for presidential campaigns)? Given the importance of negativity in both primary and general election campaigns, we find this oversight surprising.

We examine which races are likely to go negative and when during the campaign candidates will attack their opponents, with an eye toward understanding some of the structural and dynamic elements driving campaign choices. That is, the content of campaigns is predictable based on the

general dynamics of campaigns and the types of challenges and opportunities candidates face. We test our hypotheses on every contested Senate primary from 1998.

This article proceeds as follows. In the next section, we lay out our theoretical expectations for when we expect to see candidates attack their opponents. We then briefly describe the data, a content analysis of media coverage, and the method, a binary time series cross sectional model. Finally, we present our results and conclude with a brief statement about what we can learn about candidate decisionmaking in campaign context.

PREDICTING NEGATIVITY

We begin with the assumption that the campaign choices candidates make are driven by the desire to attain elective office. The standard advice given to candidates by one prominent political consultant includes: "Go negative early, often, and right through Election Day. . . . Define your opponent, before he or she can define him/herself or you. . . . If attacked hit back even harder. . ." (Kamber 1997: 46-7). Put simply, the advice most candidates get is to attack from the start and never let up.

The literature on negativity in general elections suggests that candidates take this advice. Candidates use negative campaigning as a tool to drive down the positives of their opponent and demobilize voters of the other party (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). This strategy, however, has the potential to backfire as voters may view the attacker more negatively as well. Of course, this strategy is a more likely choice in some races than others. Because negative campaigning is a dangerous choice, it is more likely to be used in competitive races (Damore 2002; Hale, Fox, and Farmer 1996; Kahn and Kenney 1999; and Theilmann and Wilhite 1998). Additionally, once the negativity begins the tone of the race can spiral downward—early negative campaigning the tone for the rest of the race (Kahn and Kenney 1999; though see Damore 2002).

The electoral history of the candidates in the race matters as well. Because they have a clear record, usually greater name

recognition, and more positive evaluations from constituents, incumbents are less likely to go negative than are challengers (Hale, Fox and Farmer 1996; Harrington and Hess 1996; Kahn and Kenney 1999; and Theilmann and Wilhite 1998). Often candidates for open seats behave as challengers because they lack the advantages afforded an incumbent (Kahn and Kenney 1999). In contrast, because neither candidate in an open race has unpopular elements to their records, it is sometimes harder to use policy based attacks against these candidates (Hale, Fox, and Farmer 1996). The time during the campaign may also matter, as candidates are more likely to take the risky strategy as the election nears (Damore 2002). In short, the decision to go negative is a strategic one. Candidates base their decisions on the expected balance between the losses their opponent will suffer from the attack and the risk they face from being perceived negatively.

Primary campaigns, however, provide a fundamentally different element to the calculation. Instead of weighing the benefits and risks in a single election, candidates need to forecast the impact this type of campaigning will have on their general election chances as well. The candidates want to win the primary, but they cannot alienate the supporters of their in-party opponent whose votes they need in order to win in November. While the empirical evidence about the general election ramifications of divisive and negative primaries is mixed (Abramowitz and Segal 1992; Bernstein 1977; Born 1981; Djupe and Peterson 2002; Hacker 1965; Johnson and Gibson 1974; Kenney 1988; Kenney and Rice 1984, 1987; Lingle, Owen, and Sonner 1995; Piereson and Smith 1975; Westlye 1997), candidates do not share the same detached interest in the evidence as academics. It is intuitive, if not definitive, that a nasty primary campaign will hurt in November, and it is not too strong an assumption to believe that many candidates will strategize as if a negative primary will hurt them on election day.

Therefore, primary candidates face a dilemma. Following the conventional wisdom, the best way to win the primary is to attack early and stay negative throughout the race. While this strategy may be short term optimal (the candidate may be more likely to win the primary), it hinders the candidate's long-term goal of winning the general election. Candidates must therefore strike a delicate balance between the effects attacks will have on the outcome of both the primary and the general elections. We know that sequential elections alter the decision making of voters (Morton and Williams 2001). This article examines how the sequential nature of elections alters the decision making of candidates. In particular, how candidates balance these interests, we argue, depends on three types of factors: the primary context, the likely general election context, and timing in the campaign. We now turn to discuss the likely influence of each of these factors.

Primary Context

Following the literature on general election negativity, the first predictor of negativity in the primary campaign is how

competitive the primary race is expected to be. Closer primary contests should spur more negativity, as the candidates must discount the general election ramifications of going negative in order to attend that contest—if the candidate loses the primary, obviously the general election is out of reach. The typical measures of competitiveness of the race (election results and poll results) have two problems. On a practical level, publicly available polling data does not exist for many Senate primaries. More problematically, either of these measures of competitiveness is likely to be endogenous to the degree of negativity. It would be impossible to determine if the negativity drove the closeness or the closeness shaped the campaign strategy of going negative. Instead of using these measures, we rely on three other, less circular measures. The first measure is the *number of quality candidates*, defined as whether the challenger has previously held elected office. Our expectation is that the more quality challengers there are in the race, the more negative the race should be.

The presence of a large number of challengers of any background may also create an incentive to go negative. In a crowded field, each candidate faces the difficult task of presenting a clear, differentiated image to the public. The more contestants, the harder it becomes to present a clear distinction, especially in a primary where candidates often share ideological predilections.¹ One tool in defining yourself is to compare yourself to your opponent; it is easier to convey to voters what you are not than to explain what you are. Thus, the more candidates in the race, the more negative the campaign will be.

We include a measure of the amount of *spending in the primary campaign*. The expectation is simple: higher spending campaigns should be more hotly contested and more negative. If the race is not close, if no candidate is spending much, then we expect the race to remain positive. To measure campaign spending we use the total amount spent by all candidates, as reported by the FEC, divided by the population of the state. Per capita spending should be positively related to negativity—more expensive races should be more negative.

We also include a measure of *party*. Given the context of the 1998 elections in the midst of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, the Democrats may have been more unified and less likely to attack one another. Our expectation here is weak, since there is no general theory about which party is more likely to be negative in the 1998 primaries and party serves merely as a needed control.

Finally, we include a measure of the amount of media coverage the race receives, measured by the *number of newspaper*

¹ Greater numbers of candidates in the race should generate negative campaigning simply by chance. To demonstrate why, assume that every candidate goes negative randomly with probability 0.5, and that negativity is independent across candidates. If there are two candidates in the race, there are four possible outcomes: candidate A is the only one negative, B is the only one negative, both are negative, or neither is negative. Three of these four outcomes include negative campaigning, thus the probability that the campaign goes negative is 0.75. The probability of a negative campaign increases to 0.875 if three candidates are in the race and increases further with every candidate thereafter.

stories about the race. This functions as a necessary control for media values that tend toward flocking to and remaining focused on a negative campaign (Sabato 1993). The measure serves to downplay the effect on the analysis of races with heavy coverage and holds no substantive interest here.

General Election Factors

The status of the seat the candidates are vying for in the general election has been found to affect campaigns significantly, i.e., the challengers fielded, funds raised, and votes received (e.g., Abramowitz and Segal 1992; Jacobson 1997). To account for this we include three variables, (1) whether the incumbent is in the primary, (2) whether the seat is open (the incumbent is in neither party's primary), and (3) whether the party currently holds the seat (an open seat or not). Because of the opportunities an open seat presents, more quality challengers participate and the campaign should be more negative, especially in the former incumbent's party (Key 1956). The presence of an incumbent running should suppress negativity; given that such candidates are extremely likely to win their party's nomination; it makes little sense for incumbents to waste the political capital and attack a challenger. If the primary election winner is to face an incumbent in the general election, we expect a greater probability of campaign negativity. In all likelihood, a challenger in the general election will attack the incumbent. If primary candidates know they will attack in the general election, they may go ahead and attack in the primary as well.

Similarly, we also expect the degree of negativity of the other party's primary to influence the later tone of the campaign. If the opposing candidates in the Republican primary are attacking each other, the potential for negative campaigning to put the Democrats at a disadvantage in November may be lessened, allowing more negativity in the Democratic race.

Timing

Finally, the time in the campaign may make an important difference in the level of negativity. The first thing candidates must do is explain to the public why they are running. There are a number of ways to do this, the most prominent of which may include why they would make a better representative than the other candidate(s). Thus, campaigns are likely to start negatively as candidates attempt to differentiate themselves, appear vibrant, gain media attention, and gain initial activist supporters and campaign donors. After a brisk start, campaign negativity may then slow a bit as candidates fill in the gaps, telling audiences where they stand and who they are (positive campaigning).

We also expect that negativity will increase as the primary nears. In the final days of campaigning, small changes may matter, especially if the race is close. Candidates may decide to brave the general election ramifications of going negative in order to cinch up the nomination or nudge their

candidacy over the top. At the other extreme, when the race is not close, the candidate lagging far behind may attempt desperate measures. In either case, we expect to see a significant increase in negativity at the end of the campaign. In combination, these two scenarios suggest that the negativity across a campaign should be U shaped—high early, declining in the middle of the race, with an increase at the end.

DATA

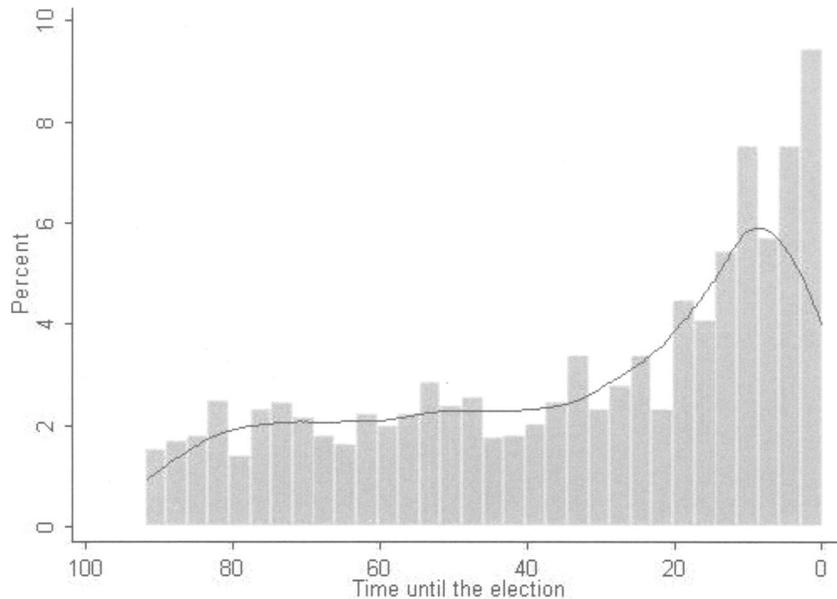
To test these expectations we need data about the level of negativity over time for a number of comparable primary races. The only data source we know of which fits our needs is the content analysis of media coverage of the 1998 Senate primary races compiled in Djupe and Peterson (2002). We code every newspaper article covering every contested Senate primary in 1998, starting 90 days before the election for whether the candidates campaign negatively against their opponent(s) in the same party (attacks made on candidates from the other party are not coded as negative). In our work, we rely on the aggregate level of negativity in the primary race as a predictor of the level of turnout in the primary and the general election outcome. The data, however, were collected and coded in such a way as to make a much more fine-grained analysis of campaign negativity possible. See Appendix A for a detailed discussion of the data.

Figure 1 presents a histogram of the stories across time with a kernel density line plotted to smooth out the data. While stories are more frequent as time progress, the stories are spread fairly evenly across the full time studied.

We rely on the full data set of newspaper stories, treating each story as a single case ($n = 1715$). There are four significant components of these data that affect modeling choices. First, the dependent variable (whether the story describes the campaign as negative) is dichotomous. There is no level of negativity, the story either describes or does not describe negative campaigning. Second, the data stem from several electoral contexts (a cross sectional component) and, third, the data run over several time points before the primary (a time series). Fourth, what makes these data especially complex is that there may be (in fact we wish to determine if there is) temporal dependence. That is, the probability of negative campaigning may depend on the time point within the campaign. In standard time series cross sectional models, temporal dependence is accounted for by specifying a dynamic process, either as a lagged dependent variable or as an autoregressive error process (Stimson 1985; Beck and Katz 1995, 1996). Neither of these strategies is practical if the dependent variable is binary.

According to Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1997), the solution to estimating a binary time-series cross-sectional model (BTSCS) is to employ a logit model with two additional techniques to account for the spatial (in this case across elections) and temporal heterogeneity. A robust standard error can account for the cross-election heterogeneity. For the temporal variation, Beck, Katz, and Tucker suggest a cubic spline to substitute for the time dummy variables that

≡ FIGURE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF STORIES OVER TIME



would result in a large loss in degrees of freedom from including, in this case, 89 extra coefficients. Instead of a spline, we use a fractional polynomial that generates a smooth curve describing the effect of time on the dependent variable (Royston and Altman 1994). The advantage of the fractional polynomial is that it is easier to estimate and provides clearer tests about appropriate model specification. As described by Peterson et al. (2003), the fractional polynomial is simply an iterative curve fitting exercise. The estimation technique tests the fit of a large number (3002 in this case) of possible functions of time and picks the one that best fits the data (in our case we find that two polynomials best fit the data—more are simply not worth the loss in degrees of freedom). Essentially, this is merely atheoretic curve fitting, but it does produce the shape of the time function that best describes the underlying pattern. It is analogous to the baseline hazard rate in a duration model (see Beck, Katz, and Tucker's (1997) discussion of time effects in a BTSCS model).

It is easy to think of this time variable as simply a nuisance, something to be controlled for (Beck and Katz 1996). In some analyses that may be true; here it is not. Campaigns make a conscious choice about when to go negative, and this choice has the potential to affect the election. We know that most voters tend to tune in to primary campaigns rather late in the contest. Going negative late in the campaign may alter the turnout and vote decisions of those who tune in then, such as more independent and less engaged voters. If campaigns go negative early, it may only affect the strong partisans who are paying attention at that point. Additionally, a tit-for-tat interaction between the candidates would suggest escalating negativity where the probability of going negative increases monotonically with the campaign. The BTSCS model with a fractional polynomial allows us to use

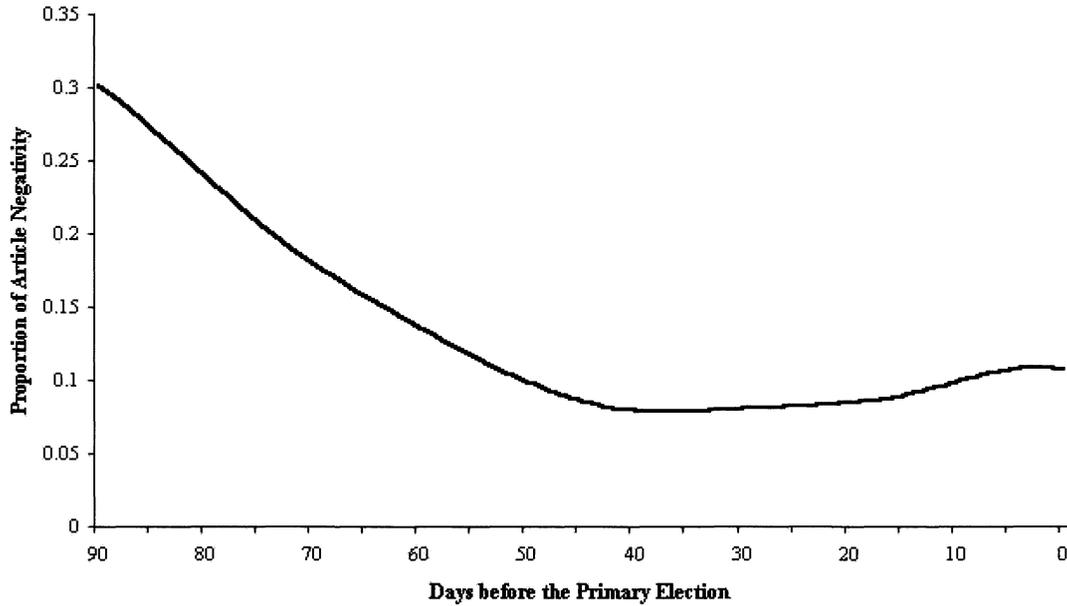
these data to detect general temporal patterns along with the effects of the electoral context to gain a fuller picture of the factors driving campaign negativity.

WHEN AND WHY DO PRIMARIES TURN NEGATIVE?

As we have suggested above, negative campaigning should begin early when candidates announce, moderate for a time, and then resume as the primary election nears. A feasible way to examine the level of negativity at each point in the campaign is simply to plot the average negativity at each day of the campaign. In Figure 2, the Y-axis represents the proportion of stories that are coded as negative for each day at a given time point listed along the X-axis, which runs from the beginning of our coverage of the campaign (90 days before the primary) until the primary (labeled 0 days). The line is lowest smoothed to ease interpretation. As can be seen, campaigns are at their most negative early on, when candidates need to present some justification for running, and steadily decline in negativity through the middle of the campaign. In the final days before the primary, negative campaigning increases, when some candidates pull out the stops to win.

While illustrative about the dynamics of negativity within a primary campaign, this provides no help in testing our main hypotheses about the difference in negativity across primaries. To explain the variation in negativity, we now move to a multivariate analysis. Table 1 presents BTSCS results and, for the most part, confirms our expectations about the importance of the primary context, the general election context, and campaign timing. The competitiveness of the primary influences the tone of the campaign. The number and quality of the candidates in the race drives up negativity and the more money spent in the race, per

≡ FIGURE 2
 PROPORTION OF CAMPAIGN NEGATIVITY IN NEWS STORIES PLOTTED ON TIME, LOWESS SMOOTHED



capita, the more negative the campaign. While party matters (Democratic primaries were less negative than Republican primaries), the total coverage of the campaign is not a significant predictor of negativity. This latter result should alleviate some fears about the data. The coverage measure should be significant if the media misreport campaigns by focusing exclusively on negative races (Patterson 1994).

The likely status of the general election contest also matters. Incumbents and open seat competitors are involved in less negative campaigns, while dominant party primaries see more negative campaigning. Finally, the tone of the campaign seems to depend on the other party's primary—greater negativity in one primary is positively related to negativity by candidates in the other party's nomination contest.²

As with any logit model, the coefficients are not directly interpretable. In this case, interpretation is further complicated both by the effects of time in the campaign and in the interrelations between some of the independent variables. For instance, the effects of incumbency, an open seat, and the party holding the seat depend on one another. Some clarity is achieved when the coefficients are converted to predicted probabilities and plotted in Figure 3. The Y-axis gives the probability that an article describes negative campaigning. The X-axis shows the variation over time (again running from when the campaign begins (90 days before the primary) to the primary election (labeled as 0). The four curves

present the probabilities for different types of elections (all other variables are set to their mean values), and show the non-linear effects of campaign timing on negativity.

The shape of the curve is determined by the fractional polynomial (labeled Time Polynomials One and Two in Table 1). Again, this polynomial is merely a data-fitting device that iteratively compares a large number of curves to

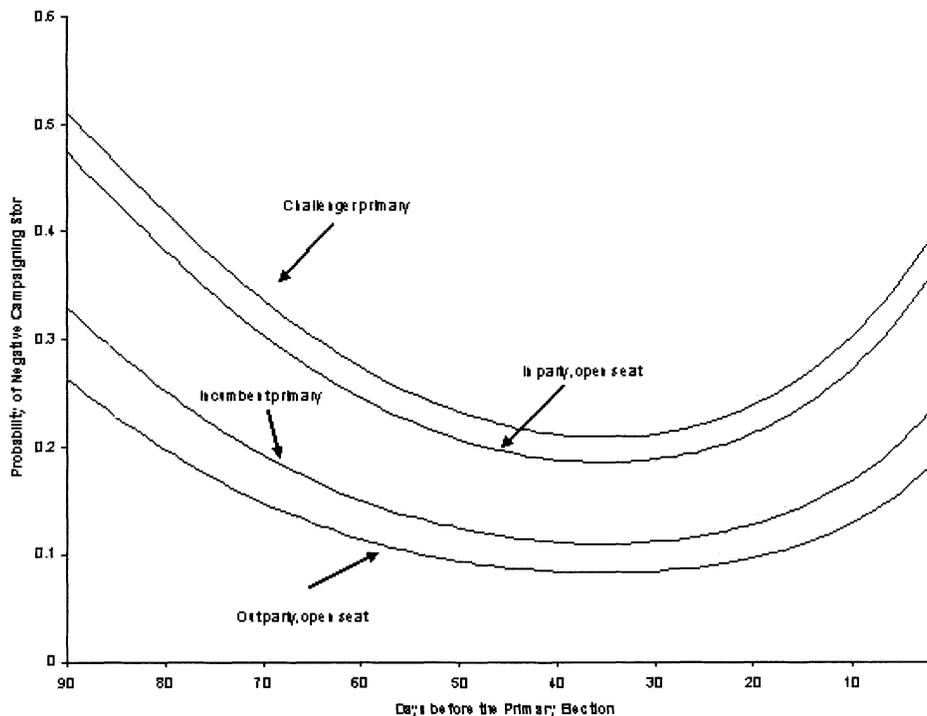
≡ TABLE 1
 NEGATIVITY OF PRIMARY CAMPAIGNS (LOGIT RESULTS)

Variable	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error
<i>Primary Context</i>		
Number of Quality Challengers	1.34**	0.15
Number of Challengers	0.35**	0.08
Per Capita Spending	0.46*	0.25
Democratic Primary	-1.92**	0.30
Total Number of Stories	-0.003	0.003
<i>General Election Factors</i>		
Incumbent in Primary	-2.17**	0.44
Open Seat	-1.94**	0.21
Party Holds Seat	0.77**	0.33
Negativity of Other Party's Primary	0.33	0.20
<i>Time</i>		
Time Polynomial One	-0.41**	0.13
Time Polynomial Two	0.05**	0.01
Constant	-3.81**	0.46

² One concern about the data is that they are skewed by the number of races that do not turn negative (13 of 33), creating something of a selection problem. Re-estimating the model in Table 1 without those races (meaning 588 fewer stories) changes two substantive conclusions: the spending and number of challengers measures are no longer significant. The sign and significance of every other variable does not change.

**p < 0.05, *p < 0.10; N = 1715, Log Likelihood = -582.69

≡ FIGURE 3
PROBABILITY OF A STORY DESCRIBING NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING BY TIME AND SEAT TYPE



find the one that best fits the data. In this particular case, the time curves (in conjunction with the constant in the model) indicate the underlying probability of an article being negative at any point in time. This curve is not the result of some specification we have chosen; it is the best fitting curve from over 3000 different curves (including a simple linear function).

Figure 3 reprises the temporal pattern shown in Figure 2. Early in the campaign, as candidates stake their ground, they are likely to attack each other, but this tendency declines through the first month. In the second month of the campaign, the negativity rate continues to decline but flattens out. With about one month to go, the attacks pick up in earnest and the probabilities of negative campaigning accelerate as the primary election approaches. Note that the declining negativity in the middle of the campaign is not due to a decline in the amount of coverage, but a decline in the attacking that takes place.

As can be seen by the different levels of the four curves, an open seat decreases the probability of negativity for the out party, and, as Key (1956) might predict, open seat primaries for the former incumbent's party are more negative. Candidates flock to the dominant party primary as that contest is often tantamount to winning the election, though less assuredly in modern Senate races (Jacobson 1997). In a reversal of Key's formulation, however, Figure 3 shows that those fighting to challenge incumbents in the general election generally face the most negative primaries. Challengers have little to lose since they will most likely have to go negative against

the incumbent in the fall in any event: "Challengers certainly hope to convince people of their own virtues . . . but they are not likely to get far without directly undermining support for the incumbent" (Jacobson 1997: 70).

The importance of the pattern Key uncovered was that out-party candidates could avoid bruising primary challenges and receive an advantage in the general election, thereby weakening one party dominance. The increased negativity in challenger primaries found here, however, suggests adding another facet to the already imposing incumbency advantages, which prop up one party dominance and further weaken a competitive electoral process.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article we take an initial look at negative campaigning in primaries, examining how electoral context and timing influence which races go negative when during the 1998 Senate primaries. Negativity is determined, in part, by the electoral context. The number and quality of challengers in the primary significantly shapes the conduct of the campaign. The more candidates in the race, the greater the need to distinguish themselves by going negative. The presence of an incumbent in a primary suppresses negativity, but increases it in the other party's primary, which may foreshadow the tone of the general election campaign. Facing an incumbent in the general election, the challengers realize they will have to go negative, so the cost of attacking in the primary is diminished. In a primary election for an open

seat, out party candidates may be unwilling to bloody each other knowing they will have a close race in the fall.

Elements of strategy can be found in looking at when races go negative. Negative campaigning is most common at the beginning and end of campaigns. Candidates in primaries use negative campaigning in an effort to establish themselves early (or potentially undermine an opponent early) and as a last minute effort to seal or steal the election. We hesitate to say much beyond this, but the variation in negativity throughout the campaign suggests that the decision of whether and when to go negative is more subtle than the conventional wisdom suggests. Candidates do not simply attack from start to finish or become involved in escalating attacks. They seem to pick and choose the appropriate times to launch attacks with a calculus based on their needs situated in particular primary and prospective general election contexts.

Moreover, this analysis speaks to other works investigating the effects of information flow to voters from varied institutional arrangements, such as mail-in or single day balloting (e.g., Morton and Williams 2001). We concur that voters have

different information stocks depending on when they tune in to the campaign. Because different types of voters tune in and make up their minds at different times of the campaign, the particular set of information provided is important to consider and will likely have differential effects depending on the audience. Negative campaigning may mobilize partisans early, but demobilize independents tuning in late, both of which may be the goals. In all, the interdependent effects of timing and electoral context are important considerations in an understanding of primary campaign dynamics.

While this research identifies a general temporal pattern to the dynamics of engaging in negative campaigning, there may be candidates that defy the pattern systematically. Future research in this area might investigate whether candidates with a strident ideological agenda pound away on an incumbent or front runner without much regard for the practical effects of such tactics. Further, variance in regional political cultures in tolerating negative campaigning may allow candidates to engage this tactic more consistently through a campaign.

APPENDIX A DATA DESCRIPTION

The standard approach to measuring campaign negativity involves gathering data on negative coverage by media, negative advertising, and personal attacks by candidates. The approach taken here is more inclusive. Djupe and Peterson define negativity, for the purposes of the content analysis, as a reference by one candidate or the candidate's campaign challenging a same-party candidate's fitness, issue positions, experience, temperament, etc. Presentations of one's own qualifications for office or criticism of the other party's candidates are excluded; they include only what could be referred to as "in fighting."

In order to gather such data, Djupe and Peterson used newspapers within each primary state.¹ They coded articles from area newspapers in states hosting primaries in 1998 that were available on Lexis/Nexis starting three months prior to the primary date. Table 1A lists these newspapers and Table 2A details the number of stories that mention primary contestants and the proportion that are coded as describing a negative campaign. The level of negativity in Table 2A varies considerably, even within states.

Additionally, Djupe and Peterson performed reliability tests to compare negativity across coders and across newspapers for the same races. They report the Kappa indicating inter-coder reliability as 0.82—above the accepted norm for this type of data. In every race with more than one newspaper covering the campaign, there is no significant difference in the level of negativity reported across media outlets (see Djupe and Peterson 2002 for more details).

An alternative would be to attempt to measure the actual content of what the campaign says. For most Senate primaries this is impossible. Measuring the content of mass media advertising generates a skewed sample since not all primaries generate advertising. Furthermore, many of the races that would purchase advertisements would produce very few—making it impossible to uncover any of the important dynamic processes detailed here. Thus, while we recognize that this measurement strategy is not ideal, we are convinced that Djupe and Peterson's approach is the best possible approach to being inclusive in the cases we select while still providing a reliable and valid measure of the tone of the race.

≡ TABLE 1A
NEWSPAPERS OF RECORD FOR EACH STATE'S PRIMARY

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

≡ TABLE 2A
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

REFERENCES

- Abramowitz, Alan I. 1989. "Viability, Electability, and Candidate Choice in a Presidential Primary Election: A Test of Competing Models." *Journal of Politics* 51 (4): 977-92.
- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Jeffrey A. Segal. 1992. *Senate Elections*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, Phil Paolino, and David W. Rohde. 1992. "Sophisticated Voting in the 1988 Presidential Primaries." *American Political Science Review* 86 (1): 55-69.
- Ansolabehere, Steven, and Shanto Iyengar. 1995. *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*, 1st ed. New York: Free Press.
- Ansolabehere, Steven, Shanto Iyengar, and Adam Simon. 1999. "Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 901-10.
- Ansolabehere, Steven, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88 (4): 829-38.
- Bartels, Larry. 1988. *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Beck, Nathaniel, and Jonathan N. Katz. 1995. "What to do (and not to do) with Time-series Cross-section Data." *American Political Science Review* 89 (3): 634-47.
- _____. 1996. "Nuisance vs. Substance: Specifying and Estimating Time-series Cross-section Models." *Political Analysis* 6: 1-36.
- Beck, Nathaniel, Jonathan N. Katz, and Richard Tucker. 1997. "Taking Time Seriously: Time-series Cross-section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (4): 1260-88.
- Bernstein, Robert A. 1977. "Divisive Primaries do Hurt: U.S. Senate Races, 1956-1972." *American Political Science Review* 71 (2): 540-45.
- Born, Richard. 1981. "The Influence of House Primary Election Divisiveness on General Election Margins, 1962-1976." *Journal of Politics* 43 (3): 640-61.
- Damore, David F. 2002. "Candidate Strategy and the Decision to Go Negative." *Political Research Quarterly* 55 (3): 669-85.
- Djupe, Paul A., and David A. M. Peterson. 2002. "The Impact of Negative Campaigning: Evidence from the 1998 Senatorial Primaries." *Political Research Quarterly* 55 (4): 845-60.
- Geer, John. 1989. *Nominating Presidents: An Evaluation of Voters and Primaries*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Gerber, Elizabeth R., and Rebecca B. Morton. 1999. "Electoral Institutions and Party Competition: The Effects of Nomination Procedures on Electoral Coalition Formation." Presented at the Annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 15-17.
- Gronke, Paul. 2000. *The Electorate, the Campaign, and the Office: A Unified Approach to Senate and House Elections*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hacker, Andrew. 1965. "Does a 'Divisive' Primary Harm a Candidate's Election Chances?" *American Political Science Review* 59 (1): 105-10.
- Hale, Jon F., Jeffrey C. Fox, and Rick Farmer. 1996. "Negative Advertisements in U.S. Senate Campaigns: The Influence of Campaign Context." *Social Science Quarterly* 77 (2): 329-43.
- Harrington, Joseph E., Jr., and Gregory D. Hess. 1996. "A Spatial Theory of Positive and Negative Campaigning." *Games and Economic Behavior* 17 (2): 209-29.
- Haynes, Audrey A., and Staci L. Rhine. 1998. "Attack Politics in Presidential Nomination Campaigns: An Examination of the Frequency and Determinants of Intermediated Negative Messages Against Opponents." *Political Research Quarterly* 51 (3): 691-721.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 1997. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 5th ed. New York: Longman.
- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, Paul Waldman, and Susan Sherr. 1998. "Eliminate the Negative? Defining and Refining Categories of Analysis for Political Advertisements." Paper presented at the Conference on Political Advertising in Election Campaigns, Washington, DC.
- Johnson, Donald B., and James R. Gibson. 1974. "Divisive Primary Revisited: Activists in Iowa." *American Political Science Review* 68 (1): 67-77.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin, and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. "Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship Between Negativity and Participation." *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 877-90.
- Kaid, Lynda Lee, and Anne Johnston. 1991. "Negative Versus Positive Television Advertising in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-1988." *Journal of Communication* 41 (3): 53-64.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin, and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. *The Spectacle of U.S. Senate Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kamber, Victor. 1997. *Poison Politics: Are Negative Campaigns Destroying Democracy?* New York: Plenum.
- Kenney, Patrick J. 1988. "Sorting out the Effects of Primary Divisiveness in Congressional and Senatorial Elections." *Western Political Quarterly* 41 (4): 765-77.
- Kenney, Patrick J., and Tom W. Rice. 1984. "The Effect of Primary Divisiveness in Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections." *Journal of Politics* 46 (3): 904-15.
- _____. 1987. "The Relationship between Divisive Primaries and General Election Outcomes." *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (1): 31-44.
- Key, V. O. Jr. 1956. *American State Politics: An Introduction*. New York: Knopf.
- Lau, Richard R., Lee Sigelman, Caroline Heldman, and Paul Babbitt. 1999. "The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-analytic Assessment." *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 851-76.
- Lengle, James I., Diana Owen, and Molly Sonner. 1995. "Divisive Nominating Mechanisms and Democratic Party Electoral Prospects." *Journal of Politics* 57 (2): 370-83.
- Morton, Rebecca B., and Kenneth C. Williams. 2001. *Learning by Voting: Sequential Choices in Presidential Primaries and Other Elections*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Mutz, Diana C. 1995. "Effects of Horserace Coverage on Campaign Coffers: Strategic Contributions in Presidential Primaries." *Journal of Politics* 57 (4): 1015-42.
- Patterson, Thomas. 1994. *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage.
- Peterson, David A. M., Lawrence J. Grossback, James A. Stimson, and Amy Gangl. 2003. "Mandate Elections and Policy Change in Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (3): 411-26.
- Piereson, James E., and Terry B. Smith. 1975. "Primary Divisiveness and General Election Success: A Re-examination." *Journal of Politics* 37 (2): 555-62.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Royston, Patrick, and Douglas G. Altman. 1994. "Regression Using Fractional Polynomials of Continuous Covariates: Parsimonious Parametric Modeling." *Applied Statistics* 43 (3): 429-67.

- Sabato, Larry J. 1993. *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism has Transformed American Politics*. New York: The Free Press.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1966. *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- _____. 1971. "The Politics of the Executive." In Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines, eds., *Politics in the American States*, 2d ed. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Skaperdas, Stergios, and Bernard Grofman. 1995. "Modeling Negative Campaigning." *American Political Science Review* 89 (1): 49-61.
- Stimson, James A. 1985. "Regression in Time and Space: A Statistical Essay." *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (4): 915-47.
- Stone, Walter J., Ronald B. Rapoport, and Lonna Rae Atkeson. 1995. "A Simulation Model of Presidential Nomination Choice." *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (1): 135-61.
- Theilmann, John, and Allen Wilhite. 1998. "Campaign Tactics and the Decision to Attack." *Journal of Politics* 60 (4): 1050-62.
- Wattenberg, Martin P., and Craig Leonard Brians. 1999. "Negative Campaign Advertising: Demobilizer or Mobilizer?" *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 891-900.
- West, Darrell M. 1997. *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns: 1952-1996*, 2nd ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Westlye, Mark C. 1997. *Senate Elections and Campaign Intensity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Received: May 3, 2004

Accepted for Publication: July 5, 2004

djupe@denison.edu

dave@polisci.tamu.edu

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 1 of 5 -



You have printed the following article:

When Primary Campaigns Go Negative: The Determinants of Campaign Negativity

David A. M. Peterson; Paul A. Djupe

Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 1. (Mar., 2005), pp. 45-54.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-9129%28200503%2958%3A1%3C45%3AWPCGNT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

This article references the following linked citations. If you are trying to access articles from an off-campus location, you may be required to first logon via your library web site to access JSTOR. Please visit your library's website or contact a librarian to learn about options for remote access to JSTOR.

References

Viability, Electability, and Candidate Choice in a Presidential Primary Election: A Test of Competing Models

Alan I. Abramowitz

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 51, No. 4. (Nov., 1989), pp. 977-992.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28198911%2951%3A4%3C977%3AVEACCI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J>

"Sophisticated" Voting in the 1988 Presidential Primaries

Paul R. Abramson; John H. Aldrich; Phil Paolino; David W. Rohde

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 86, No. 1. (Mar., 1992), pp. 55-69.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199203%2986%3A1%3C55%3A%22VIT1P%3E2.0.CO%3B2-X>

Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout

Stephen D. Ansolabehere; Shanto Iyengar; Adam Simon

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999), pp. 901-909.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199912%2993%3A4%3C901%3AREUAAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 2 of 5 -



Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?

Stephen Ansolabehere; Shanto Iyengar; Adam Simon; Nicholas Valentino

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 88, No. 4. (Dec., 1994), pp. 829-838.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199412%2988%3A4%3C829%3ADAADTE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

What to do (and not to do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data

Nathaniel Beck; Jonathan N. Katz

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 89, No. 3. (Sep., 1995), pp. 634-647.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199509%2989%3A3%3C634%3AWTD%28NT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>

Taking Time Seriously: Time-Series-Cross-Section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable

Nathaniel Beck; Jonathan N. Katz; Richard Tucker

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 42, No. 4. (Oct., 1998), pp. 1260-1288.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28199810%2942%3A4%3C1260%3ATTSTAW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>

Divisive Primaries Do Hurt: U.S. Senate Races, 1956-1972

Robert A. Bernstein

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 71, No. 2. (Jun., 1977), pp. 540-545.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28197706%2971%3A2%3C540%3ADPDHUS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M>

The Influence of House Primary Election Divisiveness on General Election Margins, 1962-76

Richard Born

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 43, No. 3. (Aug., 1981), pp. 640-661.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28198108%2943%3A3%3C640%3ATIOHPE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>

Candidate Strategy and the Decision to Go Negative

David F. Damore

Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3. (Sep., 2002), pp. 669-686.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-9129%28200209%2955%3A3%3C669%3ACSATDT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 3 of 5 -



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

Paul A. Djupe; David A. M. Peterson

Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 4. (Dec., 2002), pp. 845-860.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-9129%28200212%2955%3A4%3C845%3ATIONCE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>

Does A "Divisive" Primary Harm a Candidate's Election Chances?

Andrew Hacker

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 59, No. 1. (Mar., 1965), pp. 105-110.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28196503%2959%3A1%3C105%3ADA%22PHA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

Attack Politics in Presidential Nomination Campaigns: An Examination of the Frequency and Determinants of Intermediated Negative Messages against Opponents

Audrey A. Haynes; Staci L. Rhine

Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 3. (Sep., 1998), pp. 691-721.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-9129%28199809%2951%3A3%3C691%3AAPIPNC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>

The Divisive Primary Revisited: Party Activists in Iowa

Donald Bruce Johnson; James R. Gibson

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 68, No. 1. (Mar., 1974), pp. 67-77.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28197403%2968%3A1%3C67%3ATDPRPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>

Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship between Negativity and Participation

Kim Fridkin Kahn; Patrick J. Kenney

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999), pp. 877-889.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199912%2993%3A4%3C877%3ADNCMOS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V>

Sorting Out the Effects of Primary Divisiveness in Congressional and Senatorial Elections

Patrick J. Kenney

The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 4. (Dec., 1988), pp. 765-777.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-4078%28198812%2941%3A4%3C765%3ASOTEOP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 4 of 5 -



The Effect of Primary Divisiveness in Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections

Patrick J. Kenney; Tom W. Rice

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 46, No. 3. (Aug., 1984), pp. 904-915.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28198408%2946%3A3%3C904%3ATEOPDI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M>

The Relationship between Divisive Primaries and General Election Outcomes

Patrick J. Kenney; Tom W. Rice

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 31, No. 1. (Feb., 1987), pp. 31-44.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28198702%2931%3A1%3C31%3ATRBDPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>

The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-Analytic Assessment

Richard R. Lau; Lee Sigelman; Caroline Heldman; Paul Babbitt

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999), pp. 851-875.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199912%2993%3A4%3C851%3ATEONPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>

Divisive Nominating Mechanisms and Democratic Party Electoral Prospects

James I. Lingle; Diana Owen; Molly W. Sonner

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 57, No. 2. (May, 1995), pp. 370-383.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28199505%2957%3A2%3C370%3ADNMADP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>

Effects of Horse-Race Coverage on Campaign Coeffers: Strategic Contributing in Presidential Primaries

Diana C. Mutz

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 57, No. 4. (Nov., 1995), pp. 1015-1042.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28199511%2957%3A4%3C1015%3AEOHCOC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>

Congressional Response to Mandate Elections

David A. M. Peterson; Lawrence J. Grossback; James A. Stimson; Amy Gangl

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 47, No. 3. (Jul., 2003), pp. 411-426.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28200307%2947%3A3%3C411%3ACRTME%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 5 of 5 -



Primary Divisiveness and General Election Success: A Re-Examination

James E. Piereson; Terry B. Smith

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 37, No. 2. (May, 1975), pp. 555-562.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28197505%2937%3A2%3C555%3APDAGES%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0>

Regression Using Fractional Polynomials of Continuous Covariates: Parsimonious Parametric Modelling

Patrick Royston; Douglas G. Altman

Applied Statistics, Vol. 43, No. 3. (1994), pp. 429-467.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0035-9254%281994%2943%3A3%3C429%3ARUFPOC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>

Modeling Negative Campaigning

Stergios Skaperdas; Bernard Grofman

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 89, No. 1. (Mar., 1995), pp. 49-61.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199503%2989%3A1%3C49%3AMNC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

A Simulation Model of Presidential Nomination Choice

Walter J. Stone; Ronald B. Rapoport; Lonna Rae Atkeson

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 39, No. 1. (Feb., 1995), pp. 135-161.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28199502%2939%3A1%3C135%3AASMOPN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>

Campaign Tactics and the Decision to Attack

John Theilmann; Allen Wilhite

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 60, No. 4. (Nov., 1998), pp. 1050-1062.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3816%28199811%2960%3A4%3C1050%3ACTATDT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>

Negative Campaign Advertising: Demobilizer or Mobilizer?

Martin P. Wattenberg; Craig Leonard Brians

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999), pp. 891-899.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199912%2993%3A4%3C891%3ANCADOM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>