

Northeastern Political Science Association

The Representativeness of Primary Elections: Ohio, 1968

Author(s): David W. Moore and C. Richard Hofstetter

Source: *Polity*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter, 1973), pp. 197-222

Published by: [Palgrave Macmillan Journals](#)

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Accessed: 06/09/2011 11:38

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The Representativeness of Primary Elections: Ohio, 1968*

David W. Moore

University of New Hampshire

C. Richard Hofstetter

The Ohio State University

Moore and Hofstetter carry further the discussion of the representativeness of direct primary voters, commenting on the Wisconsin studies and the Amsterdam studies published in Polity in 1972. Are those who vote in primary elections of a higher social stratum than those who do not? Are primary voters considerably more involved in politics than nonvoters? Do candidate and issue preferences differ among the two groups? Are the results parallel for the two parties? In this Columbus, Ohio study some significant differences between the primary voters and nonvoters were found in the Democratic party, a result that differs somewhat from earlier studies and from the Republican findings, leading to questions of the conditions in which such "misrepresentation" is likely to occur. The livelier the election, the more likely misrepresentation may be, the authors suggest. Interestingly, by checking actual voting records it was determined that thirty percent of those who claimed to have voted (in interviews) actually had not voted, reclassifying the voters on the basis of these records increased the misrepresentation found in the primary.

David W. Moore is assistant professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire. His principal work has been in the comparative study of foreign policy, and he is currently investigating the empirical relationship between democracy and foreign policy. C. Richard

* This project was supported in part by a research grant from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, The Ohio State University; by the Polimetrics Laboratory, Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University; and by the Department of Political Science, University of New Hampshire. We are grateful to John Kessel, Philip M. Burgess, David Hoovler, and Austin Ranney for critical comments on earlier drafts of this report.

Hofstetter is professor of political science at Ohio State University, Director of the Polimetrics Laboratory, and Co-Supervisor of the Ohio State University Poll. His main fields of interest are public opinion, voting behavior, mass media, and computer applications.

One of the arguments made for party primary elections is that they allow the rank and file of a party to exert a measure of control over the party hierarchies. Richard Rose and Harve Mossawir, for example, observe that the absence of a primary system in Great Britain detracts from the influence of voters over the selection of Members of Parliament:

... the absence of voter influence upon the nomination of candidates and upon the choice of men to hold key administrative posts reduces the significance of elections, by contrast with, say, America, where primary elections greatly increase voters' choice and influence.¹

V. O. Key acknowledged this point of view when he observed that

A favorite argument of some of the more sophisticated advocates of direct primaries used to be that the primary afforded a means for popular correction of the errors and misjudgments of the party organization in the nominating process.²

But having acknowledged the argument, Key rejects it. He contends instead that the general lack of participation in primaries and, more important, the "unrepresentative character of the segment of the party that does participate," attenuates the influence of the party members as a whole over the party hierarchy.³

To support his contention that "the effective primary constituency may often be a caricature of the entire party following," Key demonstrates from aggregate data that turnout in the local primary is directly related to the relative strength of the two parties in each locality. Primary voting for Democrats and Republicans is more frequent in localities in which respective party organizations are the stronger.⁴

However (as Key readily admits), these aggregate data do not permit an analysis of the socioeconomic and attitudinal characteristics of primary voters to determine if the voters were in fact unrepresentative of the party

1. Richard Rose and Harve Mossawir, "Voting and Elections: A Functional Analysis," *Political Studies*, 15 (June, 1967), 193.

2. V. O. Key, Jr., *American State Politics: An Introduction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 165.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 152, *passim*.

following as a group. In subsequent studies, Ranney and Epstein⁵ and Ranney⁶ sought to test Key's thesis concerning the representativeness of the primary electorate. In the first study, primary voters were found to be unrepresentative of nonvoters on both socioeconomic and involvement indicators: In general, the higher the socioeconomic status and political involvement, the greater the participation of the respondents in primary elections.

But, as Ranney argues, "implicit in Key's position is the judgment that only *attitudinal* unrepresentativeness would be politically significant."⁷ Key had suggested that the elected official might respond not to the constituency as a whole, but to the actual participants in state-wide direct primaries. And the consequences for representation would be particularly acute if

... the effective primary constituency of the state as a whole . . . (came) to consist predominantly of the people of certain sectors of a state, of persons chiefly of specified national origin or religious affiliation, of people especially responsive to certain styles of political leadership or shades of ideology.⁸

It is this last clause that is the crux of Key's thesis. For if the voters generally share the same views as nonvoters with respect to styles of leadership and shades of ideology, then differences in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or religion do not detract from the quality of representation.

In the second paper on this question, Ranney expanded his analysis with regard to political attitudes and found that Republican and Democratic voters were unrepresentative of respective party nonvoters on just two each of twenty-one current issues, and for three of these four issues, voter/nonvoter differences disappeared when the responses were dichotomized. Finally a majority of voters failed to take a position contrary to a majority of nonvoters on any of the issues. Thus, Ranney concluded that for his study in Wisconsin,

Primary voters were *not* significantly "unrepresentative" of their non-voting partisans in issue positions or candidate preferences, but only as the active and involved are socially and economically unrepresentative of the inactive and uninvolved in all elections.⁹

5. Austin Ranney and Leon D. Epstein, "The Two Electorates: Voters and Non-Voters in a Wisconsin Primary," *Journal of Politics*, 28 (August, 1966), 598-616.

6. Austin Ranney, "The Representativeness of the Primary Electorate," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 12 (May, 1968), 224-238.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

8. Key, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

9. Ranney, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

In a more recent study dealing with the same issue of the representativeness of the primary electorate,¹⁰ DiNitto and Smithers analyzed the responses of Democratic partisans who voted in the primary with the responses of those Democrats who voted in the general election. The conclusions of this study were similar to Ranney's with respect to political attitudes: no significant differences were found between the two electorates. The findings differed, however, with respect to socioeconomic and involvement indicators. As already noted, the Ranney and Epstein study found that the higher the respondents in socioeconomic status and political involvement, the more likely they were to vote in the primary election. In the DiNitto and Smithers study, the comparisons were between primary voters and general election voters rather than between primary voters and nonvoters. Nevertheless, the expectation is that the general election voters, many of whom do not vote in the primary, would as a group be lower in socioeconomic status and political involvement than the primary voters. But, as the authors point out, "we found no significant differences in the socioeconomic characteristics between those Democrats who voted in the primary and in the general election."¹¹ Nor did the authors find any significant differences between the two electorates on "party loyalty and activism" measures.

The purpose of our own study was initially to examine the applicability of Ranney's findings to the electorate in a major metropolitan area in Ohio. The importance of replicative studies to the advancement of theory is widely accepted if infrequently practiced, and the examination of voter/nonvoter representativeness across state and local systems of political behavior is of critical importance, for, as Price argues, findings for one ecological system may not hold for another system of behavior.¹² This would seem particularly true of state and local political systems, since differences among local patterns of political behavior are marked in most states. Misrepresentation, for example, may typify an electorate within a state system, while a less inclusive and more homogeneous local system may manifest quite representative opinion distributions.¹³

10. Andrew J. DiNitto and William Smithers, "The Representativeness of the Direct Primary: A Further Test of V. O. Key's Thesis," *Polity*, 2 (Winter, 1972), 209-224.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

12. Douglas Price, "Micro and Macropolitics: Notes on Research Strategy," in Oliver Garceau, ed., *Political Research and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), especially pp. 130-134. Also see Johan Galtung, *Theory and Methods of Social Research* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 37-45.

13. A type of masking, for example, appears to distort the relationship between interparty competition and voting turnout in primary elections. At the state level, a positive relationship between competition and turnout exists, while a negative

Since our original effort, however, DiNitto and Smithers have conducted their study of a relatively small (population = 36,000) metropolitan area in New York. Thus, in the latter part of this paper, we will compare the findings of all three studies and the reasons for any differences that emerge.

I. Data Collection

Data for this study were obtained from a probability sample designed to represent adult residents in the greater Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area. Personal interviews were conducted with 398 respondents shortly before the May 7, 1968 Ohio primary election; of these, 281 were interviewed by telephone (supplemented by personal interviews for respondents who could not be reached by telephone) within two weeks following the primary.¹⁴ The latter set of 281 interviews was designed primarily to determine whether or not the respondents had voted in the primary election. A second wave of personal interviews was conducted with 311 of the original respondents in late July, prior to the national party conventions.

Following Ranney's earlier work, respondents were divided into four groups according to each respondent's party identification and voting behavior:

relationship is discovered when competition is correlated with turnout for counties. Ecological concentrations of voters and contextual effects of the resulting homogeneous political contest appears to account for this discrepancy. See Robert E. Lane, *Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1959), pp. 310-311.

14. Personal interviews were conducted by students in the second author's advanced public opinion class following a two-week period of intensive training in interviewing techniques and an introduction to the study. Respondents who could not be reached by telephone were given personal interviews during the second phase of the project. About eighty percent of the interviews attempted on the first wave were successfully completed, while approximately seventy-five percent of the second wave interviews were completed. Failure to complete second wave interviews was due to a number of reasons, including refusal of respondents to give his name on the first wave, and inability to reach the respondents by either telephone or in person after three attempted callbacks on the second wave. Rigorous quality controls were instituted throughout the project. Analysis of demographic characteristics supports the contention that the sample is representative of the metropolitan area with regard to education, income, sex, age, and race at the five percent level of confidence when compared with 1960 census distributions for these variables. Within the corresponding confidence interval, fluctuations from 1960 estimates are in the direction expected for each variable, that is, slightly younger, better educated, and more affluent populations. On the reliability of telephone interviews supplemented by personal interviews, see S. Stephen Kegeles, Clinton F. Fink, and John P. Kirscht, "Interviewing a National Sample by Long-Distance Telephone," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33 (Fall, 1969), 419.

1. Republican voters (RV's): All strong, weak, and independent Republican identifiers who voted in the primary (N = 47).
2. Republican nonvoters (RN's): All strong, weak, and independent Republican identifiers who did not vote in the primary (N = 76).
3. Democratic voters (DV's): All strong, weak, and independent Democratic identifiers who voted in the primary (N = 67).
4. Democratic nonvoters (DN's): All strong, weak, and independent Democratic identifiers who did not vote in the primary (N = 121).

Like Ranney's study, respondents who indicated that they were "independent" and who did not "lean" to any party were excluded from the analysis. Unlike Ranney's study, however, the classification of the respondent into the voter or nonvoter categories was based not on the respondents report, but on actual inspection of official voting records. Most of the respondents were, as stated previously, asked to indicate whether or not they had voted in the primary, and these responses will be compared with the official election records later in the paper. But the classification for the analysis that follows is based on "observed" voting behavior (that is, official voting records) rather than "reported" voting behavior.

Following the pattern of Ranney's earlier studies, issue questions concerning American involvement in Vietnam, racial integration, economic and welfare liberalism, liberal-conservative self-identification, violence in American society, and identification with social groups were asked. In addition, respondents were asked questions concerning their preferences for the Democratic and Republican nominations for President and for the Senate seat from Ohio. Finally, standard political involvement, political participation, media usage, and socioeconomic information was obtained from respondents. The chi-square test is used to indicate when differences between voters and nonvoters are statistically significant.

II. Findings

The results of this analysis are summarized in Table I. Of the 124 items in the questionnaire, significant differences occurred between voters and nonvoters on 18 items among the Republicans and 46 items among the Democrats. As was found in the earlier studies by Ranney and Epstein, the voters of both parties tend to misrepresent the nonvoters on the socioeconomic and political involvement variables. Also, DV's tend to misrepresent DN's with considerable frequency on measures of participation and media usage, although RV's are not nearly as likely to misrepresent RN's as

Table I Frequency of Misrepresentation on Items by Type of Item and Party.

<i>Type of Item</i>	NUMBER OF MISREPRESENTATIVE ITEMS		
	<i>Republicans</i>	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Total Items</i>
General Political			
Attitudes	4	6	51
Candidate Attitudes	4	13	32
Socioeconomic Variables	4	5	9
Political Involvement	4	11	12
Political Participation	2	6	15
Media Usage	0	5	5
Totals	18	46	124

DV's are to misrepresent DN's on these variables. In short, the data summarized in Table I support the interpretation noted by Ranney earlier, but contradicted by the Amsterdam study, that people who vote in primary elections are in a more highly politically involved stratum than those who do not vote in primaries.

A different finding from any of the earlier studies is that, at least among Democrats, voters misrepresent nonvoters on about one-fourth of the items in the combined categories of candidate and political attitudes. RV's, on the other hand, misrepresent RN's on less than ten percent of such items, just slightly more frequently than would be expected by chance (at the .05 level of significance). Thus, findings pertaining to the Democratic primary give some support to V. O. Key's original hypothesis about the "unrepresentative character of the segment of the party that does participate" in primary elections. The reasons why the misrepresentation is greater in the Democratic party than in the Republican party need to be examined, as do the possible reasons why our findings differ from the earlier studies. Before making such an analysis, however, we shall discuss more fully the items on which the voters and nonvoters of both parties showed significance differences.

1. *Socioeconomic Variables.* Voters in both parties are older, have lived in the metropolitan area for a longer period of time, and are more affluent than nonvoters of their respective parties. Republican voters are somewhat more likely to have been reared in an urban area than RN's, while Democratic voters are more likely to have higher occupational prestige and to be white than DN's. Thus, according to data presented in Table II,

Table II Distributions of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Socioeconomic Variables^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Age (Years):</i>	18-35	19.6	46.7	25.8	48.3
	36-50	37.0	22.7	34.8	22.5
	51 or over	43.5	30.7	39.4	29.2
		100.1	100.1	100.0	100.0
		(46)	(75)	(66)	(120)
<i>Number of Years In Columbus:</i>	0-10	23.4	52.0	16.4	43.2
	11-20	12.8	18.7	16.4	11.9
	21-30	17.0	10.7	20.9	16.1
	31 or more	46.8	18.7	46.3	28.8
		100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0
<i>Income:</i>		(47)	(75)	(67)	(118)
	Under \$7,500	28.3	51.4	35.9	62.0
	7,500-14,999	43.5	32.4	53.1	32.2
	15,000 or more	28.3	16.2	10.9	5.8
		100.1	100.0	99.9	100.0
<i>Where Raised:</i>		(46)	(74)	(64)	(121)
	Farm	6.5	26.3		
	Town	19.6	15.8		
	Small City	28.3	15.8		
	Large City	45.7	42.1		
<i>Occupation:</i>		100.1	100.0		
		(46)	(76)		
	White Collar			50.8	31.9
	Blue Collar			36.9	47.9
	Non-Labor Force			12.3	20.2
<i>Race:</i>				100.0	100.0
				(65)	(119)
	White			88.1	75.0
	Non-White			11.9	25.0
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(120)

^a Distributional differences are significant at the .05 level by a conventional chi-square test. Missing data are removed in each instance, and the absence of a particular set of distributions indicates that voters were not significantly different from nonvoters for the item and party.

Table III Distributions of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Political Involvement Variables.^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Expect to vote in the Primary: (In April)</i>	Yes	79.9	53.9	95.5	51.2
	No	21.1	46.0	4.5	48.7
		100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>Expect to vote in November: (In April)</i>	Yes	95.7	52.6	94.0	51.2
	No	2.1	40.8	1.5	40.5
	DK	2.1	6.6	4.5	8.3
		99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>Interest in local campaigns: (In April)</i>	Very Much	14.9	6.6	38.8	13.2
	Somewhat	36.2	21.1	38.8	34.7
	Not Much	8.5	25.0	20.9	47.9
	DK	40.0	47.4	1.5	4.1
		100.0	100.1	100.0	99.9
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>Interest in local campaigns: (In June)</i>	Very Much	31.9	18.4	23.9	6.6
	Somewhat	42.6	35.5	22.4	17.4
	Not Much	21.3	46.1	19.4	15.7
	DK	4.3	0.0	34.3	60.3
		100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>When first heard of Democratic candidate for Senate: (In May)</i>	Early Campaign			43.3	9.9
	Mid Campaign			17.9	5.8
	Late Campaign			1.5	0.0
	Other			6.0	1.0
	DK			31.3	83.5
				100.0	100.2
				(67)	(121)

participation in primaries has social and demographic bases that are similar to comparable bases of participation in general elections.

2. *Political Involvement, Participation, and Media Usage.* Data presented in Tables III, IV and V indicate that primary election voters are con-

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Care about Senate nomination:</i> (In April)	Yes			70.1	47.1
	No			26.9	48.8
	DK			3.0	4.1
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Interest in national campaigns:</i> (In May)	Very Much			79.1	44.6
	Somewhat			16.4	33.1
	Not Much			3.0	19.0
	DK			1.5	3.3
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Care about Presidential nomination:</i> (In May)	Yes			52.2	28.9
	No			13.4	11.6
	DK			34.3	59.5
				99.9	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Expect to vote in November:</i> (In June)	Yes			65.7	33.1
	No, DK			34.3	66.9
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Care about (November) election for Senate:</i> (In June)	Yes			55.2	19.0
	No, DK			44.8	81.0
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Interest in national campaigns:</i> (In June)	Very Much			52.2	24.0
	Somewhat			13.4	10.7
	Not Much			1.5	5.8
	DK			32.8	59.5
				99.9	100.0
				(67)	(121)

^a See notes to Table II for information on statistics.

siderably more psychologically involved in politics than primary nonvoters. While the general statement is true of voters and nonvoters in both parties,

Table IV Distributions of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Political Participation Variables.^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Contacted by party workers? (In May)</i>	Yes	19.1	4.0	26.9	5.8
	No	80.8	96.0	73.1	94.2
		99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>. . . Usually vote in primary elections, sometimes vote in primaries, or rarely vote in primaries? (In June)</i>	Usually	53.2	28.9	56.7	17.4
	Sometimes	4.3	6.6	9.0	5.8
	Rarely	0.0	13.2	1.5	14.0
	DK	42.6	51.3	32.8	62.0
		100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(47)	(76)	(67)	(121)
<i>. . . Usually vote for the same party in primary, or for different parties as often as not? (In June)</i>	Same Party			44.8	20.7
	Different Parties			19.4	12.4
	DK			35.8	66.9
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Do you talk to spouse about a candidate? (In June)</i>	Yes			53.7	23.1
	No			46.3	76.9
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Did you try to persuade anyone to vote for a particular candidate or issue? (In June)</i>	Yes			10.4	1.6
	No			89.6	98.4
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Did you vote in the primary for the person you now prefer for Senate? (In June)</i>	Yes			38.8	6.6
	No, other			16.4	2.5
	No, no vote			3.0	15.7
	DK			41.8	75.2
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)

^a See notes to Table II for information on statistics.

Table V Distributions of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Media Usage and Attitudes Concerning Media.^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Where (do) you get most of your news about what's going on in the world today?</i>	T.V.			25.4	24.0
	Newspapers			25.4	14.0
	Radio			6.0	1.7
	Magazines			6.0	0.8
	Other People			4.5	0.0
	DK, None			32.8	59.5
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Where do you get most of your information about the political campaigns?</i>	T.V.			23.9	26.4
	Newspapers			26.9	9.9
	Radio			4.5	1.7
	Magazines			4.5	1.7
	Other People			4.5	0.8
	DK, None			35.8	59.5
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>If you got different or conflicting reports about the same thing . . . which of these (sources of news) would you be most inclined to believe?</i>	T.V.			26.9	23.1
	Newspapers			14.9	8.3
	Radio			6.0	1.7
	Magazines			11.0	3.3
	Other People			3.0	0.8
	DK, None			37.3	62.8
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>. . . Do you think television news programs tend to favor one of the candidates for President over the others?</i>	Yes			19.4	18.2
	No			41.8	16.5
	Neither			3.0	3.3
	DK			35.8	62.0
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)

DV's are more frequently misrepresentative of DN's than RV's are misrepresentative of RN's.

More specifically, voters are more likely to expect to vote in the primary and in the general election, and to express interest in the campaigns and in

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Do you . . . watch television news programs nearly every day, usually, occasionally, or not much at all?</i>	Every day			30.8	23.1
	Usually			13.4	7.4
	Occasionally			11.9	8.3
	Not Much			3.0	0.8
	DK, None			32.8	59.3
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)

^a See notes to Table II for information on statistics. These questions were asked in the June interviews.

both kinds of elections than are nonvoters in both parties. DV's are also more likely to express interest in and concern about the Ohio Senate nomination and to continue interest in national campaigns from one wave to another. For the Democrats at least, these findings suggest that the primary electorate may be a relatively small, hard-core group of party loyalists who maintain continual concern with party affairs.

Voters in both parties are also more likely to report having been contacted by party workers and having "usually" voted in primary elections. DV's, moreover, are more likely than DN's to report voting for the same party, talking to their spouses about the candidates, and trying to persuade someone to vote for a candidate or issue.

Although RV's misrepresent RN's on none of the media exposure questions, DV's are considerably more likely than DN's to expose themselves to media other than television, to rate media other than television as credible, to deny the view that television is biased in favor of any of the candidates, and to view televised news programs more frequently than DN's. Assuming that use of print media requires greater personal involvement than exposure to electronic media and that more exposure requires greater involvement than less exposure, the findings of this study once again support findings in the voting studies and the earlier findings of the studies concerning primary elections: voters are more involved than nonvoters.

3. *Attitudes about Candidates.* The presence or absence of attitudinal differences about candidates between voters and nonvoters in primary elections is of major concern in assessing the representativeness of primary electorates. Even if primary voters are more involved and active in politics, and more affluent than nonvoters, if attitudes of nonvoters are reflected in voters' preferences then the policy significance of the misrepresentation dwindles. Preferences and evaluations of candidates is of central impor-

Table VI Distributions of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Attitudes Relating to Candidates.^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Do you feel (positively), (negatively), or have no feelings about . . . Saxbe (Republican candidate for the Senate)?</i> (In April)	Negative	6.5	1.3		
	Neutral	47.8	68.4		
	Positive	45.7	30.3		
		100.0 (47)	100.0 (76)		
<i>Do you feel (positively), (negatively), or have no feelings about . . . Robert Kennedy?</i> (in April)	Negative			23.9	10.7
	Neutral			28.4	27.3
	Positive			47.8	62.0
				100.1 (67)	100.0 (121)
<i>Do you feel (positively), (negatively), or have no feelings about . . . Eugene McCarthy?</i> (In April)	Negative			14.9	4.2
	Neutral			44.8	52.5
	Positive			40.3	43.3
				100.0 (67)	100.0 (121)
<i>Do you feel (positively), (negatively), have no feelings about . . . Richard Nixon?</i> (In April)	Negative			35.8	21.7
	Neutral			26.9	45.0
	Positive			37.3	33.3
				100.0 (67)	100.0 (121)

tance in this regard, since the major purpose of the primary is to select candidates.

RV's misrepresent RN's in three instances relating to candidate attitudes and preferences. RV's are significantly more likely than RN's to report both positive and negative feelings about the GOP Senate nominee, to favor a candidate for president (especially Rockefeller), and to report favoring the Democratic or Republican nominees for office following the primary. Thus, a tendency does exist for Republican voters and nonvoters to maintain somewhat different sets of preferences and attitudes about candidates, although these differences are not as frequent as those evidenced by DV's and DN's below. Furthermore, the first two of the three items on which RV's differ from RN's may reflect differences in involvement as much as candidate preferences. More RN's than RV's, for example, felt "neutral"

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>... Which candidate ... would you say that you personally care ... about ... is nominated? (In April)</i>	None of them	21.3	35.5		
	Johnson	2.1	0.0		
	Wallace	2.1	0.0		
	Kennedy	4.3	5.3		
	McCarthy	2.1	2.6		
	Nixon	46.8	50.0		
	Rockefeller	12.8	1.3		
	Reagan	2.1	3.9		
	Percy	0.0	1.3		
	Other	6.4	0.0		
		100.0	100.0		
		(47)	(76)		
<i>Which (Senate) candidate is (now) your favorite? (In May)</i>	Gilligan	36.2	9.2		
	Saxbe	4.3	1.3		
	Lausche	6.4	31.6		
	DK, None	53.2	57.9		
		100.1	100.0		
		(47)	(76)		
<i>Which (party's) nomination for the Senate do you personally care about? (In June)</i>	Democrat			64.2	40.5
	Republican			4.5	0.0
	Other			0.0	0.8
	DK, None			31.3	53.7
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Which candidate (Senate) do you favor for the nomination? (In April)</i>	Lausche			43.3	20.7
	Gilligan			9.0	9.9
	Other			7.5	9.1
	DK, None			40.3	60.3
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)
<i>Which candidate do you favor for President? (In May)</i>	DK, None			52.2	76.9
	Johnson			1.5	0.0
	Wallace			3.0	2.5
	Kennedy			1.5	1.7
	Humphrey			14.9	5.0
	McCarthy			9.0	4.1
	Nixon			9.0	2.5
	Rockefeller			7.5	5.8
	Reagan			0.0	0.8
	Other			1.5	0.8
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(121)

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Which Democratic candidate for President (of the following) do you favor most?</i> (In April)	Johnson			23.9	9.9
	Wallace			7.5	5.0
	Kennedy			10.4	14.9
	McCarthy			20.9	9.9
	DK, Other			37.3	60.3
				100.0 (67)	100.0 (121)
<i>Which Democratic candidate for President (of the following) are you most opposed to?</i> (In April)	Johnson			6.0	7.4
	Wallace			47.8	25.6
	Kennedy			6.0	0.8
	McCarthy			6.0	4.1
	DK, Other			34.3	62.0
				100.1 (67)	99.9 (121)
<i>Which Democratic candidate for President (of the following) do you favor most?</i> (In June)	Johnson			17.9	10.7
	Wallace			6.0	5.8
	Humphrey			16.4	9.9
	McCarthy			23.9	12.4
	DK, Other			35.8	61.2
				100.0 (67)	100.0 (121)
<i>Which Democratic candidate for President (of the following) are you most opposed to?</i> (In June)	Johnson			4.5	4.1
	Wallace			49.3	26.4
	Humphrey			4.5	3.3
	McCarthy			7.5	3.3
	DK, Other			34.3	62.8
				100.1 (67)	100.0 (121)
<i>Which candidate do you favor most for the Senate?</i> (In June)	Gilligan			29.9	10.8
	Saxbe			13.4	2.5
	Lausche			10.4	2.5
	DK, Other			46.3	84.2
				100.0 (67)	100.0 (121)

about Saxbe, while more RV's than RN's had either negative or positive feelings about Saxbe. Also, more RN's than RV's personally cared about the nomination of "none" of the candidates.

DV's misrepresent DN's on thirteen candidate-related items. DV's felt

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>Which Republican candidate for President (of the following) do you favor most? (In June)</i>	Nixon			20.9	9.9
	Rockefeller			38.8	20.7
	Reagan			3.0	5.0
	Percy			4.5	2.5
	DK, Other			32.8	62.0
				100.0	100.1
				(67)	(121)
<i>Which Republican candidate for President (of the following) are you most opposed to? (In June)</i>	Nixon			29.9	13.2
	Rockefeller			9.0	3.3
	Reagan			22.4	14.9
	Percy			4.5	4.1
	DK, Other			34.3	64.5
				100.1	100.0
				(67)	(121)

^a See notes to Table II for information on statistics.

more negatively and less positively toward Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy. Toward Richard Nixon, DV's felt both more positively and negatively, while DN's felt more neutral. This latter item thus suggests greater psychological involvement by the DV's, while the feelings toward Kennedy and McCarthy are clearer cases of misrepresentation. In addition, DV's reported caring more about their own party's primary and about the fortunes of Lausche in that primary than DN's and favored Humphrey or McCarthy or Nixon or Rockefeller more frequently than DN's. Again, these three items may also reflect greater psychological involvement by DV's, since DN's are more likely to favor no candidates or not to know what their own preferences are. Among Democratic candidates (including Wallace), DV's favored Johnson or Humphrey or McCarthy more than DN's, and DV's were considerably more opposed to Wallace than DN's. This preference structure may have been retained throughout the campaign, since preferences are similar in April and June. DV's were also more likely to favor their nominee, Gilligan, after the primary election than DN's, and were also more likely both to favor and oppose Nixon or Rockefeller than DN's when asked preferences among Republican candidates (DN's had a much higher rate of "don't know" responses).

4. *Attitudes About Political Issues.* Candidates take positions on issues in primary elections, and it is assumed that perceptions of those positions explain at least some of the variation in candidate preference. Thus, the

Table VII Distribution of Statistically Significant Misrepresentation by Voter Class and Party on Attitudes Relating to Political Issues.^a

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>If a man believes a particular war is wrong, then he should not be forced to fight in it.</i>	Agree	21.4	42.6	21.9	39.6
	Disagree	78.6	57.4	78.1	60.4
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(42)	(68)	(64)	(111)
<i>Would you say you feel closer to the local or to the national level of government?</i>	Local	60.9	36.1		
	National	32.6	52.8		
	Neither, Both	6.5	11.1		
		100.0	100.0		
<i>Most whites want to keep Negroes down as much as they can.</i>	Agree	17.8	37.3	27.4	49.1
	Disagree	82.2	62.7	72.6	50.9
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		(45)	(75)	(62)	(116)
<i>Would you say that . . . city government has a very great effect, some effect, little effect, no effect at all on the way you run your life?</i>	Great	23.4	17.1		
	Some	46.8	26.3		
	Little	12.8	26.3		
	None	17.0	30.2		
		100.0	100.0		
<i>The war in Vietnam is the wrong war against the wrong enemy in the wrong place.</i>		(46)	(76)		
	Agree			31.6	48.5
	Disagree			68.4	51.5
				100.0	100.0
				(57)	(103)

question of position on political issues is related to the extent to which partisan primary voters represent the candidates (and issue) preferences of nonvoters among the electorate.

RV's express positions that are significantly different from the positions taken by RN's on four items. Compared with RN's, RV's are more likely to express feelings that a citizen's personal views about a particular war (as distinct from views about all wars) should not exempt him from service, that they are closer to local than to national government, and that city government has an effect on their lives. Republican voters also disagree

		PERCENTAGE			
		RV's	RN's	DV's	DN's
<i>American boys should not be forced to fight in the Vietnam war until the government tells us more about why we are there.</i>	Agree			32.3	50.4
	Disagree			67.7	49.6
				100.0	100.0
				(62)	(115)
<i>It's probably in everyone's best interest if white and Negro children go to separate schools.</i>	Agree			7.5	18.1
	Disagree			92.5	81.9
				100.0	100.0
				(67)	(116)
<i>Sometimes conditions get so bad that violence is the only way for a group to get ahead.</i>	Agree			12.3	31.6
	Disagree			87.7	68.4
				100.0	100.0
				(65)	(117)

^a See notes to Table II for information on statistics. All the above questions were asked in the April interviews.

that whites want "to keep Negroes down" more frequently than Republican nonvoters.

The differences between DV's and DN's are similar to the differences between RV's and RN's on the questions of forced military service for those opposed to a particular war, and of whether or not whites want to "keep Negroes down. . . ." DV's are also more likely than DN's to disagree that "Vietnam is the wrong war . . .," and that "American boys should not be forced to fight in Vietnam until. . ." they get more justification for the war. DV's are also more likely than DN's to disagree with racial segregation in schools and that conditions could necessitate the use of violence for a group to get ahead.

Thus, DV's are somewhat more "hawkish" on the war issue than DN's, although significant differences were not found on all items concerning the war. Also, DV's are more supportive of racial harmony.

5. *Summary of Findings.* It is difficult to say at what point one can conclude that voters are unrepresentative of nonvoters on political attitudes and candidate preferences. In this study, RV's misrepresented RN's on seven of the eighty-three items in the two categories, while DV's misrep-

resented DN's on nineteen of the items. In the Ranney study, in both parties voters were unrepresentative of nonvoters on two each of twenty-one items, which prompted Ranney to conclude that overall the voters were not significantly unrepresentative of the nonvoters. Perhaps the RV's in our study were also not overall significantly unrepresentative of the RN's, because misrepresentation occurred on less than ten percent of the items. DV's were unrepresentative of DN's on twenty-three percent of the items, however, which makes it quite difficult to conclude that the nonparticipant was represented at the polls by his more politically involved party member. An examination of the questions on which misrepresentation occurred also suggests that the differences between Democratic voters and nonvoters were important. On two of the most salient national issues, for example, the war and school segregation, voters were unrepresentative of nonvoters.

In most instances of misrepresentation, a majority of voters do not oppose a majority of nonvoters; in these cases, the misrepresentation involves differences only in intensity. It may be argued that such differences in degree of sentiment are not meaningful when questions of representation arise, because public policies either favor or oppose a particular position. This argument, however, overlooks the point that intensity is related to behavior (the more involved being more likely to vote), and that representation of intensity is an important concomitant of representation of position on an issue. Given a low level of political involvement (and an even lower involvement in primaries), it seems very likely that intense minorities can carry their views in the face of a majority's mild opposition.

III. Comparison of the Wisconsin, Amsterdam, and Columbus Findings

The findings in this study have indicated that misrepresentation does occur in some primary elections. Previous studies, as well as this one, have also demonstrated that misrepresentation does not always occur, that there are some primary elections where the political attitudes and candidate preferences of the party voters are virtually the same as their partisan compatriots who have not voted. The importance of this study, therefore, is that it allows us to move from the question of whether misrepresentation occurs to why it occurs. Furthermore, by providing one case where misrepresentation did occur (the Democratic primary) and one case where it did not occur (the Republican primary), this study—in comparison with the previous studies—points to some conditions which may be conducive to misrepresentation.

1. *The Wisconsin Study.* As noted by DiNitto and Smithers,¹⁵ one of

15. DiNitto and Smithers, *op cit.*, p. 210.

the criticisms of Ranney's findings is that "the demonstration of issue similarity between voters and nonvoters was . . . in a primary lacking a strong issue stimulus."¹⁶ This criticism seems particularly telling when we analyze the results in the Columbus study, where voters were unrepresentative of nonvoters in the Democratic but not in the Republican party. The reason for this difference between parties may well be related to the degree of issue stimulus in each party primary. The Democratic senatorial primary, for example, was a sharply contested race in which a well-known conservative, Frank J. Lausche (the incumbent senator and former governor), was pitted against an initially little-known liberal, John P. Gilligan. In the last two weeks of the campaign, Gilligan blitzed television with spot commercials supporting the liberal theme of his campaign against the conservative views of Lausche. In addition, the widespread support among liberal groups and rejection of Lausche by the state party organization doubtless contributed to Gilligan's eventual victory.¹⁷ In contrast, the Republican senatorial primary candidate, William Saxbe, faced no serious opponent in a rather uneventful primary.

While the electorate is probably even less issue-oriented during primary elections than during general elections, the conditions just outlined in the Democratic primary—strong ideological differences between candidates, extensive and one-sided use of television advertising, and traditional Democratic interest groups and the state party organization supporting just one of the candidates—all would provide some stimulus to polarize the party electorate along liberal-conservative lines. And it may be, therefore, that some of Lausche's traditional, conservative support failed to turn out at the polls due to the comparatively low stimulus and support of Lausche's campaign, while the deeply involved liberals stimulated by the intensity of Gilligan's campaign, turned out in proportionately greater numbers.

This interpretation of the results of the Columbus study is only suggestive, however; and the hypothesis that the greater the issue stimulus, the greater the chances of misrepresentation needs to be tested further. Nevertheless, if the hypothesis is valid, it would provide an explanation for the differences between the Wisconsin and Columbus findings, as well as for the differences between the Democratic and Republican primaries in the Columbus study.

A second factor that may contribute to the differences between the two studies is the method of classifying respondents into the voter and non-

16. Judson L. Jame, *American Political Parties: Potential and Performance* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 187n.

17. In Franklin County, the subject of the survey reported in this study, Lausche beat Gilligan by six percentage points although Gilligan won the state primary overall.

voter categories. As indicated earlier, one of the differences in methodology between this study and Ranney's is that we classified respondents on the basis of actual voting records, while Ranney classified respondents on the basis of each respondent's reported behavior. Yet the fidelity with which a respondent reports his own behavior is known to vary. The social desirability of an action, the salience of an event, and interviewer rapport all partially account for inaccuracies in reported behavior.¹⁸ Thus, if respondents were misclassified, differences between voters and nonvoters that might have been statistically significant would be somewhat attenuated. In our study, we attempted to examine that possibility.

Although the causal network that explains response invalidity is doubtless complex (and studies of general elections show that inaccurate voting reports may be relatively less frequent than inaccurate reports of other behaviors),¹⁹ we decided to compare the respondents' reported voting behavior with their behavior as reflected in official voting records for two reasons: first, voting turnout in primary elections was assumed to be a behavior of low salience to most citizens (about thirty-five percent of the eligible electorate normally votes in Ohio primaries); and second, voting is a socially desirable act. Both low salience and social desirability tend to increase response invalidity.

Net overreporting in the Wisconsin study was very low (4.2 percent) and only slightly higher (ten percent) in this study, when sample projections of the vote were compared with official returns. When we compared the reported voting with the official records, however, the percent of misclassifications was much higher. Of the 311 respondents included in the earlier part of this study, 224 were reached shortly after the primary election and asked to indicate whether or not they had voted in the primary.²⁰

18. On the problem of response validity, see Aage R. Clausen, "Response Validity: Vote Report," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32 (Winter, 1968-1969), 588-606; and Charles R. Tittle and Richard J. Hill, "Attitude Measurements and Prediction of Behavior: An Evaluation of Conditions and Measurement Techniques," *Sociometry*, 30 (June, 1967), 202 ff. A study that had a strong influence on the methodology of this survey was Eugene J. Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz, and Lee Sechrest, *Unobtrusive Measures: Non-reactive Research in the Social Sciences* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

19. Clausen, loc cit.; Don Calahan, "Correlates of Respondent Accuracy in the Denver Validity Survey," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32 (Winter, 1968-1969), 607-621; and Carol H. Weiss, "Validity of Welfare Mothers' Interview Responses," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32 (Winter, 1968-1969), 622-633.

20. The remaining respondents were not classified either because they did not identify with a party or because they could not be located in official voting records due to refusals to give names, listing of incorrect addresses, or to changes in registration status which appeared in the voting records for a few respondents.

Of the 117 who said they had voted, thirty percent actually had not voted, while 3.7 percent of the 107 who said they had not voted in the interview actually had cast ballots in the primary. Thus, thirty-nine respondents (17.4 percent) would be incorrectly classified using reported voting behavior as the criterion. Apparently, for some voters, voting in a primary is so “devoid of any emotional or politically significant personal consequences . . . that a substantial number of voters may have . . . no personal awareness of voting, or even of an election.”²¹ In these instances, low salience of primaries may combine with socially desirable over-reporting and distort the results that are found in an analysis.

The extent of this distortion will vary among studies, of course, but in this study we found a substantial reduction in the number of items on which misrepresentation occurred when we classified respondents on the basis of their reported behavior rather than actual behavior. Earlier in this study, we indicated that of the eighty-three items on candidate and political attitudes, voters misrepresented nonvoters on seven items in the Republican party and nineteen items in the Democratic party. When respondents were classified into voters and nonvoters on the basis of their reported behavior, misrepresentation occurred on no items in the Republican party and only seven items in the Democratic party.

The implication of this finding seems to be that even a small net “over-reporting,” as reflected in aggregate turnout figures, may conceal a significant amount of respondent error in reporting voting behavior.²² And this error may in turn obscure differences that actually do exist between voters and nonvoters. Whether such error did in fact occur in the Wisconsin study, however, is impossible to determine at this point. The smaller

21. Rose and Mossawir, *op. cit.*, p. 176. This notion about the very low salience of primary voting is supported by the observations in DiNitto and Smithers' study that “12 percent and 8 percent of the primary and general election voters respectively . . . though they said they had made up their minds, minutes after they voted could not name the candidates for whom they had voted.” See DiNitto and Smithers, *op. cit.*, p. 219n. Presumably, there were additional voters who had not claimed that their decision was made before entering the booth and who also could not name the candidates for whom they had voted. Clearly, for all these voters, the primary election is not a very salient event in their lives.

22. For a discussion of the “minimal change assumption,” implicit in basing inferences about error on comparisons of global figures only, see Philip E. Converse, “The Problems of Party Distances in Models of Voting Change,” in M. Kent Jennings and L. Harmon Zeiller, eds., *The Electoral Process* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 177 ff. This problem is similar to that faced by analysts who attempt to make inferences about individual behavior from aggregate data. A brief summary of this problem is presented in Hayward R. Alker, Jr., *Mathematics and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 89–111.

overreporting in that study compared to the Columbus study, and the issue stimulus hypothesis outlined above, suggest that the different methods of respondent classification may be of minor importance in explaining differences between the two studies. Nevertheless, the respondent error would have modified our own conclusions about the extent of misrepresentation in the Columbus primary had we not checked official election records, and the different methods of respondent classification thus remains a possible explanation for the differences in findings between the Columbus and Wisconsin studies.

2. *The Amsterdam Study.* Unlike Wisconsin, issue stimulus did seem to be high in the Amsterdam primary, for as the authors report, "the 1970 New York State Democratic primary was a lively affair." Candidates were opposed for the gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional nominations.²³ Yet, the authors found no evidence to support V. O. Key's skepticism about the representativeness of the primary electorate as we did in the Democratic primary in Columbus. The Amsterdam findings, therefore, suggest a reconsideration of the potential importance of issue stimulus in promoting voter misrepresentation.²⁴

Yet, two important characteristics of the Amsterdam study may account for the differences between our findings and those of DiNitto and Smithers without detracting very much from the issue stimulus hypothesis. The first characteristic involves the methods of analysis, the second refers to the limited scope of the political attitudes examined by DiNitto and Smithers.

The methodological difference between the Columbus and Amsterdam studies is an important one. As did Ranney, we compared issue and candidate preferences of those who voted in the primary election with those who did not vote, and the preferences of both groups of respondents were recorded in the same time frame. DiNitto and Smithers, on the other hand, compared issue preferences of those who voted in the primary election with those who voted in the general election, and the preferences of the primary voters were recorded five months prior to the preferences of the general election voters. Furthermore, many of the primary election voters undoubtedly voted in the general election as well, but in their analysis

23. DiNitto and Smithers, *op cit.*, p. 211.

24. The differences between the Columbus and Amsterdam studies could not be due to respondents' errors in reporting whether or not they had voted. The authors of the Amsterdam study and their students went to randomly selected voting booths and attempted to interview, as much as the time and size of crowds would allow, all people who were leaving the voting area. Thus, all the respondents were known to have voted.

DiNitto and Smithers do not separate those who voted only in the general election from those who voted in both elections.

The consequences of this methodological difference is that the Amsterdam study is not really comparable to the Columbus and Wisconsin studies. First, the "nonvoter" category in the latter studies is much different from the "general election voter" category of the Amsterdam study. Not only does the general election voter category include primary election voters, it excludes those who failed to vote in either the primary or general election. Thus, differences that might exist between the voters and non-voters of the Amsterdam primary may be largely obscured when primary voters are compared with general election voters. Second, it is impossible to know whether any differences on issue preferences that do emerge between the primary voters and general election voters are due to underlying issue differences between two classes of voters or to changing issue positions over time. This latter point is explicitly recognized by DiNitto and Smithers. In fact, when they report the results on one of the issue questions asked of the respondents, the authors do find that "the voters in the general elections were, on the whole, more supportive of the President's actions than their counterparts in the primary election." This would seem to be an important case of misrepresentation, but the authors dismiss this result as not being evidence of underlying issue differences between two classes of voters, and speculate instead that the differences "were a result of time more than anything else." They suggest time as the explanatory factor because "the first questionnaire was administered less than two months after United States' troops had entered Cambodia; the second, after troops had been withdrawn from that country and President Nixon had continued to withdraw troops from Vietnam."²⁵ But, of course, in five months of a "lively" campaign, numerous factors are bound to arise which could suggest that response differences between electorates are due to changes in opinions rather than to underlying attitudinal differences. Unless the time lag is removed from the design of the study, results are bound to be inconclusive.

The second important characteristic of the Amsterdam study is that apparently only two questions eliciting political attitudes and no questions on candidate preferences were asked.²⁶ On the Vietnam War question, as

25. DiNitto and Smithers, *op cit.*, p. 218.

26. While questions were asked about who the respondents voted for, obviously the choice of candidates in November was different from that in June. Thus, there is no way to know if among the candidates in the primary election, the preference of the general election voters differed from those of the primary election voters.

just outlined above, differences between the two electorates were found but attributed to opinion change over time, and on the student unrest question the responses of the two electorates were "strikingly similar." It is questionable whether just these two questions adequately tap the underlying political attitudes of the electorates and provide sufficient data to detract very substantially from the issue stimulus hypothesis.

IV. Conclusions

Unlike previous studies of the representativeness of the primary electorates, this study supports V. O. Key's original skepticism that "the effective primary constituency may often be a caricature of the entire party following." More specifically, this study—in comparison with previous studies of primary electorates—suggests two hypotheses: first, that misrepresentation by voters of nonvoters in primary elections is more likely to occur in highly issue-oriented and tightly contested elections than in elections of low issue and candidate stimulus; and second, that subjects' responses about whether or not they have voted in the primary election may be distorted both by the low salience of the election and the perceived social desirability of voting. This latter hypothesis has important implications about the validity of primary studies which rely solely on the reported behavior of the respondents, rather than on official election records, to classify respondents as voters or nonvoters. Certainly, this area needs to be examined more extensively.

The first hypothesis is more interesting from a substantive point of view, since it suggests certain conditions under which misrepresentation in the primaries may occur. To the extent that these conditions allow intense minorities to carry their views in the face of a majority's opposition, the primary election does indeed provide what Key calls "the illusion of popular rule."²⁷

27. Key, *op cit.*, p. 32.