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GETTING THEIR MONEY'S WORTH: CANDIDATE SPENDING IN THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

This essay offers a multifaceted analysis of spending by candidates for president during the 1988 primaries. First, the literature on the effects of campaign spending during the nomination sequence of presidential elections is reviewed. Second, hypotheses are forwarded about the relationship between the amount of funds expended and the number of votes as well as election outcome, and about how the level of finances spent per vote corresponds to election finish. These expectations are tested using correlation and regression analysis together with descriptive statistics, with the results divided by candidate and political party. In the concluding section, recommendations for improving the study of xpenditures during nomination campaigns are proposed.

Throughout the study, money is conceived as a resource which is vital to election success.

II. SPENDING AND ELECTION OUTCOMES

Scholars examining campaign pending during presidential elections emphasize the peculiar nature of the nomination process.

Orren argues that (1985: 43), "campaign spending is a short-term force that, like election rules, has a greater influence on the nomination process than on general elections." Sorauf states that (1988: 197), "Campaign finance in the preconvention period is a very special case in American politics" in that funds are employed for "a series of campaigns." Biersack and Wilcox believe that (1990: 234),"Spending in presidential campaigns has been treated separately from other issues of campaign finance, in part because of the small number of candidates in any cycle, and in part because of public financing provisions and the additional restrictions on financial activity."

The manner by which finances are related to election finish in presidential primaries is somewhat unclear. Parent et al. postulate that (1987: 70) "previous analyses of the presidential nomination process have suggested a very modest impact for campaign expenditures." Brown et al. hold that (1990: 2) lthough there is little consensus on how well the ability to raise money translates directly or indirectly into vote Ul upport or convention delegates, still, few would deny that the ability to raise money plays a crucial role in the process..." expenditures during the 171) "a mixed pattern."

Goldstein's investigation of campaign 1976 presidential primaries reveals (1978: He finds that in fifteen of twenty-five cases the winner outspent others, but in ten cases the loser spent more than the winner. Orren's study of 1984 nomination contests concluded that (1985: 51) "in the primaries and caucuses of 1984 there were 26 events in which the winner outspent the loser and 26 events in which the loser outspent the winner." Robinson's (1984) research on 1984 Democratic primaries finds that the biggest spender won a plurality of the vote in but ten of twenty-nine contests.

Parent et al. (1987) comprehensively examine influences on the total vote received by each of the three main Democratic candidates Gary Hart, Jesse Jackson, and Walter Mondale—in the 1984 primaries and caucuses. One of the variables, campaign expenditures, is operational zed according to the money spent by each candidate (p. 77) "as a proportion of all state-allocated expenditures by candidates contesting the state event." The results show that when independently estimated, the R between spending and votes m the primarie 'H <n .27, .58, and .04 for Hart, Jackson, and Mondale, respectively. The authors assert that (p. 77), "The results of our analysis highlight the fact that it takes relatively modest amounts of money to activate a receptive audience."

DiClerico notes that prior to 1976, those with (1990: 10) "great personal wealth or access to wealth" possessed certain advantages in the nomination stage of presidential selection.

These included the ability to convert money into other resources, meet initial costs of the campaign, and to keep their challenge afloat should problems arise. However, the candidacies of Harold Stassen, Nelson Rockefeller, William Scranton, and George Romney illustrate that money alone cannot ensure the nomination.

As DiClerico contends (p. 10), "if he was perceived as deficient in past accomplishments, image, and issue stances, no great amount of money was likely to save him."

A number of writers have probed the effects of the Federal Election Campaign Act—passed originally in 1971 and significantly amended in 1974—on presidential nomination spending and outcomes since 1976. Pomper (1977) postulates that the finance regulations have increased competition during the nomination seguence and augmented the proportion of state primaries. Orren (1983) suggests that expenditure limits set during the presidential nomination season reguire candidates to select states in which they wish to compete as well as concentrate resources in early primaries. He further finds that spending caps reduce disbursements for vital activities, enhance the impact of independent expenditures, and heighten centralization of primary campaigns. Abramson et al. observe that (1983: 15), "In important state contests, state expenditures limits can be crucial." DiClerico and Uslaner identify three effects of the campaign finance reforms below(1984: 101):
First, they have substantially curbed the ability of fat cats to use money as a means of obligating Presidential candidates. Second, they have narrowed the disparities in financial resources among competing candidates, particularly at the general election stage.

Third, through a system of full and timely disclosure, the public may ascertain where candidates get their money and how they spend it.

Other scholars also assess the impact of finance regulations. Crotty and Jackson contend that (1985: 174), "The campaign financing laws also help determine candidate strategies in terms of influencing decisions on which contests to enter." Davis (1987) delineates how nomination finances have increased the overall cost of presidential primaries, necessitated active campaigning in most states, and lengthened the duration of nomination campaigns. Kessel (1988),

Wilcox (1988), and DiClerico (1990) each cite the tendency of candi- dates in nomination contests to seek ways to circumvent state and national spending limits. Wilcox claims that (p. 9), "Not all candidate spending is allocated to states--the law allows campaigns to report some spending as being associated with their national campaigns, not with specific state elections," and that financial figures "do not include spending by candidate PACs and tax-exempt foundations." Finally, Edwards and Wayne (1990) review several consequences of campaign finance reforms in presidential nominating contests, including reducing unaccounted contributions and expenses, lessening dependence on large contributors, increasing the impact of organized non-party groups, and enlarging the amount of money spent in preconvention politics. A 1989 Federal Election Commission press release substantiates the last point above:
•ndiusted disbursements by all primary election candidates in both parties totaled $66.9 million on 1976, $92.3 million in 1980, $103.6 million in 1984, and $210.7 million in 1988.

III. HYPOTHESES, MEASUREMENT, AND METHODOLOGY

The present research is intended to expand our scattershot and incomplete understanding of the impact of spending in presidential primary campaigns. Three hypotheses shall guide our expectations; they appear below:

1. The more money spent by a candidate in a presidential primary, the more votes which the candidate will receive.
2. The more money spent by a candidate in a presidential primary, the better the candidate places in the election.
3. The higher the cost of each vote received by a contestant in a presidential primary, the less favorable the out- come for the candidate.

The data on amount of money spent and votes received by candidates are gathered from Federal Election Commission records. The cost per vote variable in hypothesis three is formulated by dividing the funds spent by total votes cast for each primary election challenger. The dependent variable in hypotheses two and three is place of finish, coded as 1 for first, 2 for second, etc. This operationlization is utilized because the purpose of primaries is to allocate delegates. With very few exceptions, state rules for primaries permit delegates to be apportioned to all contesting candidates, provided they meet minimum threshold percentage of total votes cast. Hence, placement is a more accurate indicator of candidate performance than simply measuring winners and losers when conducting an empirical investigation, although the afore- mentioned classifications are valuable for descriptive purposes.

The present study taps each candidate's performance in every state primary in which they spent funds and earned votes as the unit of analysis. Included in the quantitative test are the five main Democratic contenders in the 1988 presidential primaries—

Michael Dukakis, Richard Gephardt, Albert Gore, Jesse Jackson, and Paul Simon--and the three most active Republican combatants—George
Bush, Robert Dole, and Pat Robertson. The analysis is also divided by party. Because the hypotheses are linearly specified, correlation and regression will be employed. Descriptive statistics are likewise furnished.

IV. RESULTS

Tables 1 and 2 present correlation coefficients and adjusted 2 R s for each major Democratic and Republican candidate who took part in state primaries in the 1988 presidential campaign.

The results indicate that hypothesis one, assuming a positive relationship between money expended and votes earned in each presidential primary, appears to be confirmed. The correlation coefficients show a relatively strong positive association between money and votes for all of the candidates in both political parties. For the Democrats, the highest CMK is .71 for Jesse Jackson, denoting that money explained a large proportion of the variance in votes received, whereas the lowest adjusted is .33 for Paul Simon.

Republican Pat Robertson topped all candidates in the amount of votes explained by spending (.78), whereas only one-fifth (.21) of George Bush's vote total is explained by expenditures, lowest of all major candidates m either party. Table 2 illustrates that if we combine the spending and votes of all Democratic candidates on the one hand and all Republican candidates on the other hand, it is apparent that more of the vote total is accounted for by spending among Democrats (.43) than Republicans (.18). Approximately a third of the variance in votes is explained by expenditures for all candidates (.31) .

In Table 3, the average and overall spending and vote figures garnered by the Democrat and Republican candidates in the 1988 presidential primaries are offered. In the Democratic primaries,

Michael Dukak Wrdpent $50,000 more per contest on average than his nearest financial competitor, Albert Gore, and more than twice the amount per primary than Jesse Jackson averaged. However, when observing the total funds expended during the 1988 primaries, we find that Dukakis had a 3:2 spending edge over Jackson, and a 10:1 edge over Gore. Alternatively, the ratio of average votes per primary among candidates within each party closely mirrors overall vote ratios.

The relationship between money spent and place finish posited in hypothesis two is likewise verified, although the results are less convincing than those from the analysis of the link between money and votes. Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the variables are inversely correlated as predicted—the more funds disbursed, the lower the place (meaning the better the outcome for a candidate)-- both within parties for each challenger all candidate figures from each party. and overall when combining For the Democrats, the highest explained variance between expenditures and primary place finish is .26 for Albert Gore, while only 12 percent of the varianc in Paul Simon's place finish is explained by funds invested. Robert Dole's campaign shows the highest amount of place finish explained by funds spent (.44), with George Bush having the lowest percentage of place finish accounted for by financing among Republicans (.34).

There is tu higher amount of place finish explained by money spent for the Republicans together (.33) than for the Democrats (.14), although the R for this equation is much lower (.17) than for the prediction equation between money and votes (.31) when all candidates in both parties are included.
Table 4 indicates the number of primaries where each candidate finished first or other than first when they spent the most funds.

Although it is the case that neither party's candidates won a majority of contests after outspending others, the figures show the strength of the eventual nominees. Indeed, Michael Dukakis won twelve of fifteen primaries when he expended more funds than other Democrats, and George Bush placed first in all fourteen primaries where he used more finances than other Republicans. Cook (1989) cites the fact that Bush and Dukakis were among the front-runners in collecting government-match able individual contributions at the end of 1987, providing them with momentum and resources entering the nomination season. He further elaborates on George Bush's advantages below (p. 39):

From the very beginning, the 1988 Republican nominating contest was Bush's to lose. He had enlisted more big time support within the party, raised more money, and built more of a national organization than any of his competitors. In addition, nearly every national poll showed Bush with a significant lead over Dole, while the rest of the Republican field trailed far behind.

It was also to Bush's advantage that the 1988 Republican race was rather mundane, at least compared to the party's great ideological fights of the past.

Several writers point to the impact which Super Tuesday—the March 8 set of twenty primaries and caucuses held mostly in southern states--had on the 1988 campaign. Within the Democratic party, according to Pomper (1989: 38), "all the candidates faced the basic strategic needs of any campaign: to gain attention, to develop a theme, to form a winning coalition.

In 1988, these basic strategies were inevitably shaped by Super Tuesday." Regarding financing, Wilcox (1988) asserts that in nearly three-quarters of all Super Tuesday contests, the Democratic candidate who spent the most money won. The present author finds that m eleven of sixteen Democratic Super Tuesday primaries, spending more money than competitors resulted in victory. On the Republican side, Super Tuesday seemed more important in terms of delegates than spending. Pomper declares that (1989: 58), "In that single day, Bush won the presidential nomination.

Although Bush finished first in each of fifteen March 8 primaries, he was outspent in eleven of them. Hence, while financing played larger role in Democratic contenders' chances on Super Tuesday, it meant more to place finish throughout the primaries for Republicans.

The results of the analysis are inconsistent as they pertain to the relationship between cost per vot and primary place finish.

Hypothesis three supposes a positive relationship between the factors.

However, Tables 1 and 2 furnish findings revealing negative correlations between cost per vote and election finish for three of five Democratic candidates and one of three Republican contestants. Concern Democratic contenders, the highest adjusted Jackson, whereas only one-fifth of the variance CMaK -H is .41 for Jesse Michael Dukakis

01 place finish is explained by the cost per vote measure. Regarding

Republicans, similar percentage of the variance in primary election place is explained by cost per vote for George Bush Cl NJ and Pat

Robertson (.49), but the CM CE for the equation is much lower for Robert Dole (.11). The proportion of election place explained by cost per vote is somewhat higher for the combined Democrat candidates (.21) than for all Republicans (.13).

Table 4 displays the statistics for those candidates having the lowest cost per vote in the 1988 primaries. In only sixteen of thirty-eight Democratic primaries did the candidate having the lowest cost per vote finish first, compared with thirty-four of thirty-five Republican primaries where lowest cost per vote resulted in victory.

In the Super Tuesday primaries, Democratic candidates who enjoyed the least cost per vote finished first in just five of sixteen states, whereas Republican contestants having the lowest cost per vote won fourteen of fifteen state elections. The most impressive finding from this table is that both parties' eventual nominees went undefeated m primaries where they spent the least funds for each vote.

For at least three reasons, however, the cost per vote measure is not always a reliable indicator of election performance.

First,;u very competitive primary may result in high spending by all candidates but a divided vote result. Second, a candidate may choose not to seriously contest the primary financially. Third, certain influences may lead to an inordinate level of funds being expended in a primary, such as the fact that it is a candidate cn home state, or because a victory is necessary of achieve or regain momentum.

Table 5 furnished the average cost per vote expended by Democrat and Republican candidates in the presidential primaries in which they took part. Jesse Jackson had the lowest state average of any candidate in either party. It should be noted that Robert Dole's average cost per vote is reduced by almost $5.00 if the Puerto Rico primary is excluded. Tables 6 and 7 show the average cost per vote in each state for the Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Although they measure cost per vote differently than is formulated here, Crotty and Jackson state that (1985: 175) "in both 1976 and 1980 progressively less money was spent per vote as the season developed."

If the mean state cost per vote figure

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Averaged by month, we find the latter proposition to have some merit: the Democratic averages fell from February ($12.76) to March ($1.71), increased in April ($2.26), but decreased in May ($1.85) and June ($0.72); Republican state averages declined steadily from February ($12.64) to March ($8.96) to April ($1.37), increased in May ($2.85), though experienced a reduction in June ($0.34).

V. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Past research has tended to focus more on campaign spending during the general election for president than with its relation to primary election results (Nice, 1985; Nagler and Leighley, 1989).

Similarly, studies of voting in presidential primaries have emphasized personal characteristics of the electorate (Bruce, 1989; Hadley and Stanley, 1990) or candidate evaluations (Southwell, 1989; Abramowitz, 1989; Abramson et al., 1990) over financial considerations. However, recent work mentioned above has attempted to fill the gap in our knowledge of how candidate expenditures affect primary election outcomes.

Although the current study provides some promising findings, much more information remains to be uncovered. To accomplish this task, Bier sack and Wilcon suggest improving specification of models through devising (1990: 235) "some measure of the strength of candidates before spending commences..." Other scholars recommend studying funding in conjunction with the dynamics of the nomination season.

Aldrich asserts that a candidate's resources may be constant over time, can vary in predictable ways, or in the case of money, be (1980: 652) "time-variable," changing according to expectations.
Sorauf discusses the two-way link between finances and election consequences below (1988: 197, 199):
Candidates enter state contests in part to boost their credibility as candidates so that they can raise money to contest more state primaries or party processes. So, in a very real way, candidates win because they have raised money; and they raise money because they are already winning.

In such an extended, interactive, multicontest race, an impressive correlation quickly builds between the sums of money raised and the number of delegates pledged to one's nomination.

With innovative approaches and increased methodological sophistication, future investigations of preconvention spending in the presidential selection process will surely prove fruitful.

Table 1_ Correlation Coefficients for 1988 Presidential Primary Candidates

Democrats (N)	**Money-Votes**	**Money-Place**	**CPV-Place**
Dukakis (38)	.46	-.25	-.02
Gephardt (30)	.56	-.39	-.16
Gore (32)	.49	-.05	.37
Jackson (36)	.80	-.01	.57
Simon (33)	.52	-.66	-.36
Republicans (N)			
Bush (35)	. 16	-.00	.63
Dole (31)	.51	-.10	-.03
Robertson (30)	.79	-.31	.04
Adjusted R s	for 1988 Presidential	Primary Candidates	
Democrats (N)	Money-Votes	Money-Place	CPV-Place
Dukakis (38)	.44	.24	.20
Gephardt (30)	.49	. 20	.21
Gore (32)	.46	.26	.27
Jackson (36)	.71	.19	.41
Simon (33)	.33	.12	.28
Republicans (N)			
Bush (35)	.21	.34	.52
Dole (31)	.55	.44	.11
Robertson (30)	.78	.39	.49

(N): Number of primaries which the candidate competed in CPV: Cost per vote

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients for 1988 Presidential Primaries by Party

Party (N)	Money-Votes	Money-Place	CPV-Place
Democrats (169)	.53	-.28	.17
Republicans (96)	.19	-.08	.13
Both Parties (265)	.38	-.26	.06

Adjusted R^2s for 1988 Presidential Primaries by Party

Party (N)	Money-Votes	Money-Place	CPV-Place
Democrats (169)	.43	. 14	.21
Republicans (96)	.18	.33	.13
Both Parties (265)	.31	.17	.10

(N): Number of primaries which all party members competed in
CPV: Cost per vote

Table 3

Average Expenditures and Votes Per Primary During 1988 Campaign

Democrats	Expenditures	Votes
Dukakis	223,443	278,503
Gephardt	103,194	47,200
Gore	173,310	97,689
Jackson	96,079	187,240
Simon	51,574	31,336
Republicans		
Bush	209,333	230,601
Dole	245,159	71,982
Robertson	181,625	35,152

Spending and Vote Totals During 1988 Presidential Primaries

Democrats	Expenditures	Votes
Dukakis	22,294,886	9,944,270
Gephardt	7,862,468	1,398,224
Gore	2,036,867	3,191,414
Jackson	14,637,562	6,906,765
Simon	6,800,265	1,106,757
Republicans		
Bush	22,936,275	8,071,054
Dole	22,448,619	2,231,445
Robertson	22,906,744	1,060,447

Table4

Spending and Performance During 1988 Presidential Primaries

Democrats	Most Spent: First Place	Most Spent: Not First
Dukakis	12 Primaries	3 Primaries
Gephardt	1	2
Gore	5	9
Jackson	0	5
Simon	0	1
Republicans		
Bush	14	0
Dole	1	15
Robertson	0	5

Democrats	Low CPV: First Place	Low CPV: Not First
Dukakis	8 Primaries	0 Primaries
Gephardt	0	4
Gore	1	4
Jackson	6	11
Simon	1	3
Republicans		
Bush	33	0
Dole	1	1
Robertson	0	0

CPV: Cost per vote

Table 5

Average Cost Per Vote by Candidates in 1988 Presidential Primaries

Democrats	CPV
Dukakis	2.05
Gephardt	2.99
Gore	4.39
Jackson	0.72
Simon	3.33

Republicans	CPV
Bush	1.96
Dole	9.85
Robertson	6.80

Table 6

Average Cost Per Vote by State in 1988 Democratic Primaries

February

New Hamshire=$21 . 18
Minnesota = $8.87
South Dakota=$8.23

March

Vermont=$2.04 (4)
Alabama=$2.00
Arkansas=$0.99
Florida=$1.05
Georgia=$2.11
Kentucky=$0.63
Louisiana=$0.59
Maryland=$0.55
Massachusetts=$1.08
Mississippi"$0.62
Missouri=$0.32
North Carolina=$2.44
Oklahoma=$1.05 (4)
Rhode Island=$0.34 (4)
Tennessee=$0.48
Texas-?1.61
Virginia=$1.45
Illinois=$1.65
Michigan=$10.72
Connecticut=$2.66
April

June

California=$0. 54 (4)
Montana=$0.40
New Jersey=$0. 93 8
New Mexico=$0. (
North Dakota=$ 42 2)

Wisconsin=$1.30
New York=$4.74
Pennsylvania=$0.75

District of Columbia=$4.95 (3)
Indiana=$0.54
Ohio=$0.63 (4)
Nevada=$0.24 (4)
Wyoming=$2.10 (4)
Oregon=$0.21 (4)
Idaho=$4.34 (2)

Note: Numbers m parentheses denote how many candidates are competing; in those without numbers all five Democrats are included.

Table 7

Average Cost Per Vote by State in 1988 Republican Primaries

February

New Hampshire=$16.19

South Dakota=$9.10

March

South Carolina=$8.28
Alabama=$4.48
Arkansas=$4.11
Florida=$3.66
Georgia=$2.61
Kentucky=$3.83
Louisiana=$6.22
Maryland=$2.74
Massachusetts=$13.97
Michigan=$3.68
Missouri=$2.19
North Carolina=$4.80
Oklahoma=$3.23
Rhode Island=$13.23
Tennessee=$3.64
Texas=$2.68
Illinois=$2.84
Puerto Rico=$81.36 (2)
Connecticut=$2.71

April

Wisconsin=$1.88
Pennsylvania=$0.86

District of Columbia=$12.00
Indiana=$1.51
Ohio=$0.98
Nebraska=$4.40
West Virginia=$0.02 (2)
Oregon=$0.75
Idaho=$0.30 (1)

June

California=$1.28
Montana=$0.13 (2)
New Jersey=$.0001 (1)
New Mexico=$0.29
North Dakota=$0.02 (1)

Note: Numbers in parentheses denote how many candidates are competing; in those without numbers all three Republicans are included.

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