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Following the 1982 elections women held 13 percent of the state legislative seats nationwide, and the figure for Arkansas stood at 5.2 percent.¹ In fact, only four states currently have a lower percentage of women serving in their state legislatures.² The question, "Why so few?" opens a Pandora's Box of possible explanations for the markedly low percentage of female members of the Arkansas Legislature. However, recent studies exploring the entrance of women into elective office tend to focus either on the self-perceptions of the involved elites of this group, on societal and political support or opposition arising from traditional sociopolitical constraints, or on sheer numbers of female candidates and their success rates relative to their male counterparts.³ Because political scientists have only recently begun to devote serious attention to the area, there exists only a modest literature exploring campaign strategy and voter choice where a female candidate enters competition.⁴ To date, discussions of mass public attitudes toward political women, as well as the candidates' own self-images, have neglected the relationship of the electorate, and the candidates themselves, to the level of financial support given female candidates. Yet, it is generally accepted that female aspirants find it difficult to raise campaign chests which equal or outweigh those of their male opponents, with an additional variation in the sources of financial support (Mandel, 1981: 184-5).

This paper is addressed to the gender-based levels of campaign contribution receipts reported in 1982 by candidates for the Arkansas General Assembly, with the intent of ascertaining what pattern, if any, exists in the amounts and sources of legislative campaign contributions received by candidates according to gender.

Data

The data used in this study are drawn from 664 pre-election, final, and supplemental legislative campaign finance reports of contributions

¹ Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New York: February, 1983.

² Women's Election Central, National Women's Education Fund, Washington, DC: October, 1982. The four states are Alabama, 4.2 percent; Pennsylvania, 3.9 percent; Louisiana, 1.4 percent; Mississippi, 1.1 percent.

³ See Kirkpatrick, Chapter 7; also Mandel, Tolchin, MacManus, Hedlund, Ekstrand and Eckert, and Welch.

⁴ Kirkpatrick, Mandel, and Susan and Martin Tolchin are notable exceptions.

and expenditures for the 1982 primary and general elections, on file in the Secretary of State's office.⁵

Findings

Table 1 shows campaign contributions reported for General Assembly contested elections in 1982, divided among six categories. In the primary elections, critical in a one-party dominated state, more contributions (and hence higher expenditures) were reported, on the average, than in the general elections. In the House primary and general elections, the three highest ranking categories were led by individual contributors of less than \$250.00, followed by self-contributions, and then political action committee funds. Combined, funds coming from individual small contributors plus the candidates' own funds constituted over 78 percent of the total contributions.

When the figures are categorized according to gender, a pattern emerges. Table 2 shows that while the three highest ranking contribution categories were the same for male candidates for the House in both the primary and general elections, this was not true for female candidates. The highest percentage of primary election contributions came from the women themselves. Whereas male candidates in the House primary elections self-contributed an average of \$1,855.00, or about 26 percent of their own campaign funds, female candidates contributed an average \$5,646.00, or nearly 57 percent of their own funds. This was followed by personal contributions of under \$250.00, and then by those over that amount. In the House general elections, small contributors were the greatest source of income for women, followed by the women themselves, and personal contributions over \$250.00. In the Senate general elections, no contributions from non-personal sources were received by female candidates.

Table 3 shows the outcome of contested races by largest spender. Although the results must necessarily be tempered by considerations of incumbency (obviously favoring males), and partisan identification (in the general elections), they do show a marked relationship between the level of campaign finance and the incidence of electoral success, as would be expected. However, when the outcome of contested races by largest contribution receipts is categorized by gender, shown in Table 4, again a gender-based difference is prominent. In House elections, 80 percent of male candidates netting higher contributions than their opponents ultimately won elections, but the percentage dropped to 67

⁵ The reports are required by the Campaign Finance Act (Sec.3-1109-1118). Candidates filing above-zero contributions/expenditures numbered as follows: House primary, 153; House general, 76; Senate primary, 68; Senate general, 35.

Table 1. Average Contributions in 1982 Contested General Assembly Campaigns

Source	HOUSE		SENATE	
	Primary n=77	General n=40	Primary n=41	General n=22
Self ^a	\$2,298	\$ 778	\$5,680	\$2,695
Personal ^b	639	382	2,250	2,695
Other ^c	3,525	2,949	8,334	5,955
PAC ^d	826	424	1,733	1,037
Business ^e	124	59	663	442
Party	0	137	0	119
TOTAL	\$7,412	\$4,730	\$18,660	\$10,894

^aAll monies, whether reported as a contribution or "loan" derived from the candidates' own funds. In cases where expenses but not contributions were reported, and where expenses exceeded contributions, the differential was added to and tabulated under this category.

^bPersonal contributions in excess of \$250.00 (itemization required).

^cPersonal contributions under \$250.00 (no itemization required).

^dContributions from self-defined political action committees as well as election-year "arms" of interest groups not exclusively political.

^eFor contributions made in the name of businesses owned by the candidates to their own campaigns, the amount was entered in "Self" column.

Table 2. Average Contributions in 1982 Contested Legislative Campaigns by Gender

Source	HOUSE				SENATE		
	Primary		General		Primary*	General	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
Self	\$1,855	\$5,646	\$ 667	\$1,071	\$5,680	\$2,730	\$2,344
Personal	624	750	325	532	2,250	650	621
Other	3,570	3,188	2,758	3,454	8,334	6,276	2,745
PAC	896	299	422	432	1,733	1,140	0
Business	134	56	81	0	663	486	0
Party	0	0	130	155	0	131	0
TOTAL	\$7,078	\$9,939	\$4,383	\$5,644	\$18,660	\$11,412	\$5,709

*There were no female candidates in contested Senate primary elections.

Table 3. Outcome of Races by Largest Spender

	HOUSE		SENATE	
	Won	Lost	Won	Lost
Primaries	<u>27</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>
General Elections	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTAL	<u>77%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>40%</u>

Table 4. Outcome of Races by Largest Spender According to Gender

	HOUSE				SENATE			
	Won		Lost		Won		Lost	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Primaries	<u>24</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>	n/a	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
General Elections	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	n/a	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	<u>80%</u>	<u>67%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>62%</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>38%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 5. Electoral Success According to Gender for 1982 House General Elections

	Male	Female
Candidates	29 (72.5%)	11 (27.5%)
Elected	16 (80.0%)	4 (20.0%)

Table 6. Other-than-self Contributions According to Gender
House Primary and General Elections

	Male	Female
Primaries	\$5,223	\$4,293
General Elections	3,716	4,572

percent for their female counterparts.

Further, Table 5 shows that the higher average level of campaign contributions reported by women (Table 1) was inversely related to the incidence of electoral success. Whereas males were 72.5 percent of all House general election candidates, they claimed an 80 percent success rate overall. Thus, reporting greater contributions (and thus greater expenditures) than one's opponent did not affect the outcome of races for female candidates as positively as males, and the overall higher levels of contributions to female candidates did not translate into corresponding victory at the polls.

Finally, Table 6 shows total contributions according to gender, excluding self-contributions, and thus a clearer picture of actual outside contributions. In primary campaigns, male candidates collected 20 percent more money than did the women; yet, the situation was reversed in general election campaigns.

In brief, then, Arkansas state legislative campaigns were largely self-financed by both male and female candidates, though significantly more so by women, who reported higher average contribution levels in both the primary and general House elections. Moreover, male candidates who raised more funds than their opponents won overwhelmingly, while females with higher campaign incomes than their opponents were also successful, but at a much lower rate. Past the critical primary stage, females were able to raise slightly more funds from other-than-self sources than were males.

Discussion

Female state legislative candidates in general have been described as self-starters.⁶ Lacking what might be called elite participation in professional, economic, and partisan activities, and hence the opportunities for recruitment and support, women have necessarily been forced to depend upon their own resources in order to gain access to legislative seats.

As evidenced in Table 1, however, this self-reliance apparently applies to all Arkansas legislative candidates, regardless of gender, though there is a substantial difference in degree. Table 2 shows the extent to which women rely upon their own funds compared to men. What Table 2 does not show, however, is the extent to which women are actively pursuing and cultivating outside sources of financial support, a question which must necessarily be addressed if the wide variation in sources of financial support is to be explained.⁷ There are, however,

⁶See Mandel.

⁷This question was included in interviews of seven candidates for elective office during Spring, 1982. Although the respondents claimed to actively seek non-personal contributions, the responses were vague (only two named specific fundraising strategies) and therefore not included here.

a number of factors inherent in the status of Arkansas' legislative politics which do at least offer partial explanations of the findings presented here.

Welch has suggested that one important reason for female exclusion from public office is their severe underrepresentation in the "eligible pool" of the population from which candidates for public office are drawn, the "eligible pool" being determined primarily by educational and occupational status (1978: 372-80). In a related recruitment study, Rule reports that a small-size legislature and low income levels for men in occupations outside the legislature, as well as a Democratic party-dominated legislature help to explain the variance in women's legislative recruitment (1981: 60-77). While the problem of extracting female candidates from the "eligible pool" occurs nationwide, the Arkansas General Assembly is one of the most heavily Democrat party dominated in the nation (Rosenthau, 1981: 140). Also, low income levels for men in occupations outside the legislature would follow from the lower state-level socioeconomic status found in Democratic party dominated states (Gray, Jacob, and Vines, 1983: Chapter 4). Thus, intense competition against men for legislative seats may occur simultaneously with direction of support to the "local boys".⁸

While Arkansas would seem to conform to the results of Rule's analysis, Democratic party domination *per se* is only one of a number of manifestations of the traditionalistic political culture of the South. Further, political parties have been shown to be negligible sources of campaign funds for both male and female candidates, and hence cannot be said to present a discriminatory obstacle to female candidates in raising campaign funds.

The lack of contributions to female candidates by organized, group sources is readily apparent in Table 2. It is clear that in the House primary stage, the female candidates themselves were their own greatest sources of financial support, spending more than three times of their own money over male candidates. Although the differential was less marked, the same held true for general elections. What is not so clear is whether funds were withheld or simply not pursued by the female candidates. This raises at least two questions.

The first question regards the oft-mentioned problem of female politicians: credibility. Did the level of other-than-self contributions to women increase during the general election campaigns only after they had proven themselves capable of electoral victory at the primary stage? Recall in Table 2 that whereas during primary campaigns the under-\$250.00 contributions were greater to men, this was reversed in general election campaigns, suggesting more public support for women in the post-primary stage without a corresponding public reaction to male candidates. From a different perspective, a second question emerges.

⁸See Welch, Diamond.

Of the 29 male candidates facing competition in the general election, 12 (41 percent) were incumbents; of the 11 female candidates, 3 (27 percent) were incumbents. Given the tendency of incumbents to collect more in campaign contributions than challengers, the males' other-than-self contributions might have exceeded the females' on this point alone, yet they did not. In fact, women's contribution receipts outdistanced men's in every category except business, which placed last on the list for both males and females. Somehow, female candidates circumnavigated their entrenched male counterparts sufficiently to out-finance them, but not to defeat them, as shown by Tables 3 and 4.

Political action committees, while accounting for less than ten percent of the total contributions in the House campaigns, placed highest among the organized, group contributors. As in the case of individual small contributors, PACs favored male candidates by a wide margin in primary elections, yet the gap was closed in general elections. Again, this raises the question of credibility, but of a different nature. Whereas individual contributors may have myriad reasons for supporting a candidate, including ideology, personality, partisan identification, or personal familiarity, political action committees invest in candidates to secure specified economic or other policy ends. Accordingly, contributions are regularly made in support of male candidates (Mandel, 1981: 192).

Because the numbers of candidates reported in this study are so small, it would be premature to suggest that Arkansas-based political action committees might withhold contributions to female legislative candidates because of a perceived inability to produce desired policy ends. It is interesting to note, however, that two recent surveys taken of members of the 73rd General Assembly asked legislators to rate their colleagues in terms of (1) their effectiveness as legislators, and (2) their value as sources of advice and opinions to be sought by other legislators (Whistler, 1983). On neither point did any of the female legislators gain in-house support from their colleagues, male or female.⁹ These findings would suggest that any lack of confidence in female legislators cannot in this case be totally attributed to gender discrimination or political party domination, in view of the fact that these female legislators did not even mention each other.

The question of political action committee support also returns to the question of whether female candidates pursue that source of funds, or whether they are attempting to gain access to traditional centers of political support. Mandel, with others, suggests that women are wary of accepting money that has strings attached, suspicious of the expected repayment, because they are strangers to reaching goals via high-risk

⁹Points were assigned according to first mention, second mention, and so forth. Of the five female legislators, only one received a positive score, the result of a fifth-mention by a single colleague.

wheeling and dealing, and prefer instead a step-by-step goal realization process (1981: 197). Additionally, Schramm has speculated that while women's traditional "amateur" status, defined as issue-oriented and not likely to compromise, has gained them a fair number of convention delegate seats because their support can come from groups not necessarily part of the regular political milieu, it might also explain their slow integration into elected legislative posts when compared to "professionals" who are defined as preoccupied with winning elections (1981: 46-59). Political action committees, too, are preoccupied with winning elections, and to the extent that PAC support makes a clear statement about the perceived effectiveness of a legislator, an objective study exploring the relationship between political action committee support, as well as other non-personal sources of funds, and legislative candidacies run by women would be helpful in determining different degrees to which male and female candidates actively pursue outside contributions.

Conclusion

In pragmatic terms, it makes little difference if the public offers ideological support for female legislators if concrete activist and financial support is not forthcoming. While the numbers contained in this paper are much too small to permit persuasive generalizations, they may serve as a springboard for assessing the current behavioral position of groups known to finance legislative campaigns and thereby defining lines of support and non-support. More studies are needed in this area to further clarify the extent to which women running for the Arkansas Legislature are required or are willing to finance their own campaigns; the financial obstacles they face during the primary stage relative to male candidates; and the lower correlation between campaign finance and electoral success than experienced by men.

In the absence of other studies exploring the relationship of public opinion to campaign finance in Arkansas legislative races, and further into the allocation of contributions based on the gender of candidates, the point to emerge here is that women are reporting more money and winning fewer elections than male candidates. Because such a large percentage of their reported contributions came from the female candidates themselves, the relationship between public support for female legislators and the level of campaign contributions from outside sources, particularly in the primary stage, might be further explored with a view toward determining the actual fundraising strategies employed by female candidates.

In the case of the general elections, where the other-than-self contributions came more readily to women yet the votes did not, future studies to determine a possible differential pattern of male/female media expenditures would be helpful in discovering a correlation between gender-based methods of campaign exposure and subsequent ratios of electoral success.

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