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Have Nominating Conventions Lost Power?

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HAVE NOMINATING CONVENTIONS LOST POWER?

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida 2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

Do conventions still have relevance in the modern political world? Some call them glorified television infomercials for presidential candidates while others refer to them as admired pillars of American political history. Whichever viewpoints one identifies with, presidential conventions are interesting to study historically, and can be studied analytically. The following case studies examine the institution of the nominating convention: what they do, how they form, what they have accomplished and how they affect the voters. This study finds that conventions are still meaningful in American politics, particularly for affecting party unity, candidate image and, to a lesser degree, party platform.

I would like to dedicate this work to my family: my mother, my father, Nathan and Kelsey.

Thank you for showing your eternal support through all my endeavors.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

DNC: Democratic National Convention

RNC: Republican National Convention

GOP: Grand Old Party

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CONVENTION WORLD

Some call them glorified television infomercials for presidential candidates while others refer to them as admired pillars of American political history. Whichever perspectives you ally with, presidential conventions are interesting to study historically, yet their complexity and relevance to the political landscape allow them to be studied analytically. The following case studies will examine the institution of the nominating convention from several facets, resulting in the reader's knowledge and understanding of what conventions do, how they form, what they have accomplished and how they affect the voters.

To study the complete course of conventions in the media age, from 1952 until the present day, the analyst would need to undertake thousands of pages of research, hours of taped speeches and news coverage, and volumes of scientific research. This foreknowledge would prove necessary for one to fully understand the effective reach conventions have on politics, the voters and the campaign. Within the scope of this work, bookends of the media age of conventions will be qualitatively studied, allowing the reader to understand how the rules, society, conventions and nomination of presidential candidates have changed. The research design and variables included in this study will be discussed later in this chapter. However, for one to understand conventions in the media age, the history and background of the previous convention eras must be briefly examined to provide the relevant context.

History of the Convention

“Each state shall appoint...a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress...The electors shall...vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the Same state with themselves.”

--- The U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section II

While many Americans are aware of the quadrennial presidential convention, very few know the internal procedures other than the revealing of the candidate and the vice-presidential running mate. Even fewer members of the general public know the interesting and multifaceted history behind the nomination of presidential candidates and the evolution of the national convention.

Prior to the presidency of George Washington, political parties had not established their concrete philosophies or platforms, so it was on the hands of the Constitutional Convention members and the constitutionally established Electoral College to elect a leader for the newly formed United States. In 1787, Washington won over the caucus, and during his terms as president saw the first hints of party organization with the factions of Federalist and Democratic-Republicans. In the years following, both of these rival factions nominated their candidates through group discussion rather than official, formal voting procedures. This disallowed the mass majority of both parties, the general public, from having any voice in which candidate received the nomination ticket (Davis, 1983, p. 19-21). With the solidifying of party loyalties at the turn of the Nineteenth Century, congressional caucuses became the new nominating entity and held this power until the 1830s. As Davis continues to discuss, “...the congressional caucus (known as “King Caucus”) was a centralized or national mechanism that contained some representatives from all or nearly all of the states...These parleys furnished a measure of

legitimacy to the presidential candidates they nominated, even though many states were not even represented (p. 21).”

Some authors would state the general public’s revolt over a lack of representation in their party brought about the end of the congressional caucus. As Byrne and Marx (1976) suggest, “Suffrage was being extended, and the influence of states that had formerly held much of the power in the original thirteen colonies was being reduced...The western areas were also growing, both in population and in determination to exert a greater impact on political affairs (p. 22).” While this extension of suffrage may have played a role in the shifting opinions of the American public, it is more plausible to credit the fall of “King Caucus” to the failure of the Federalist Party and the unchallenged rise of the Democratic-Republicans during the 1820s. As Davis (1983) points out,

“...the superficial solidarity of the congressional caucus disintegrated in 1824 because there was no opposition party to force the reigning Democratic-Republicans, faced with a multi-candidate field, to unite and make a binding nomination...Clearly, one-party politics do not necessarily translate into political harmony, as the late V.O. Key, Jr., and other Twentieth Century students of American parties have repeatedly explained (p. 21).”

From this point, the nomination process entered what Davis (1983; 1972) calls the “transitional period”. Between the fall of the congressional caucuses and the beginnings of the national conventions, Davis lays out four methods of presidential nomination that failed to catch on. For instance, the first included a joint meeting of state legislatures, while the second involved state legislators from the party as well as delegates from towns unrepresented by the legislature (“mixed convention”), a set-up that most resembles what would be the modern national convention. The third method involved state conventions meeting during the interim period to decide on the nominee, while the final method had general voters voice their choice for candidates at public meetings (Davis, 1972).

While it seems the “mixed convention” would be the framework for what would be the modern convention, it seems that the most democratic method involved the general public. However, although supremely democratic, this method does offer up complex and time-consuming problems. Tallying the votes from every municipality and township that holds a public forum would result in thousands of (if not more) potential candidates. However, as Davis (1972) points out, “...it is entirely possible that if the state convention or legislative caucus system had persisted, a multi-party system might have evolved, since each state conclave was completely free to put forward any candidate that captured its fancy (p. 4).” Would this outcome have transpired? Perhaps the natural polarization of political society would have created two main political parties regardless. Although it seems conceivable, the vast number of candidates and minor parties that would have been created would most certainly have strained the system. This strain would result in a complete alteration of the nomination process making it much easier to recommend candidates. Hence, a two-party national convention system, in some form, would have been constructed. In reality, what we get is the collapse of the caucus and the exclusion of Congress from the presidential nomination process (p. 25).

The Evolution of Conventions

As noted in Buell (2004) and Wroe (2009), there are three eras of conventions: 1836-1908, 1912-1968 and 1972-present day (Buell, 2004; Wroe, 2009). In this chapter, a brief examination of the first era will be needed to study our bookend case studies. For the remainder of the chapters, the second and third eras will be studied.

With the fall of the “King Caucus”, parties now needed an organized venue to discuss and vote on the candidate to run for the office of the presidency. However, the creation of this political pillar arrived from an unlikely source. Although not held by a major party, the Anti-Masonic party has been credited with the first convention to nominate possible presidential candidates. The Baltimore meeting contained 116 delegates from 13 states and unknowingly established the following precedents for future conventions:

- “Delegations were chosen in a manner determined by each state.”
- “Each state was entitled to as many votes as the state’s representation in Congress.”
- “A special majority – the Anti-Masons had decreed three-fourths of the delegates – was required for nomination.”
- “An Anti-Masonic national committee was appointed to carry on national party business between elections.”
- “The first national party platform was approved by the delegates (Davis, 28).”

Although the Anti-Masonic Party convention faded from the political arena soon after its creation, throughout the 1830s, the major parties began holding their quadrennial conventions without fail. After 1840, these meetings had become a new staple in the nomination process and have yet to be abolished. However, the convention has evolved somewhat between its beginnings and modern times. For instance, control of the conventions changed hands from the collection of delegates to state party leaders who “forced the various aspirants to bargain with them over matters of cabinet posts, patronage, or major issues facing various regions of the country before putting their stamp of approval on the favorite (Davis, 1982, p. 31)”. We see this in modern convention workings where failed candidates bargain for government positions and other perks for loyal voters (i.e. Dukakis hired Jackson staffers in 1988). For example, the party may have numerous candidates for president, yet only one may take the ticket. These losing candidates have accumulated loyal voters throughout the campaign, and if they go unaccounted for by the lead candidate, on Election Day voters may vote for the other party, find a third party

candidate or not vote at all. Therefore, not only is the national convention a place to proclaim the party's platform and introduce the nominee, but it serves as a marketplace for nominees with voters as the currency (Davis 1982; Polsby and Wildavsky, 2000). As Polsby and Wildavsky point out,

“In the old days, “pledged” delegates actively supported their candidate, while “bossed” delegates negotiated for the disposal of their votes...Now the roles of both these relatively autonomous types of politicians have sharply diminished, since most delegates come to the convention pledged to one or another presidential candidate. This means that candidate organizations, not state party leaders, have to do the bargaining (p. 129).”

Conventions evolved the most during the latter half of the Twentieth Century, with the introduction of the media and the level of candidate participation in the campaign process. For instance, Davis (1982) acknowledges that after the Second World War, candidates realized the importance of presidential primaries. “...former Minnesota Republican Governor Harold Stassen (R-MN) and Senator Estes Kefauver (D-TN) – recognized the value of the presidential primaries to develop popular appeal, attract a solid base of delegates and also expose their rivals as weak vote-getters (p. 33).” John F. Kennedy, an up-and-coming candidate for the Democratic ticket, took advantage of the primary system and managed to become a household name within the party by convention time(p. 34).

Voters and delegates became the main focus in the third convention era and without the influence of technology and the media, many voters would sway or fail to vote at all, resulting in negative outcomes for the party candidates. To understand the study of conventions however, we must understand how they have evolved through American history. Once that aspect has been delivered, we can focus less on how conventions work and more on how they affect elections. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the effects of conventions on the delegates *and* the voters during the “media age,” or those conventions following the election of 1952.

Both the voters and the convention delegates have enormous effects on the strength of a candidate's campaign and the overall outcome on Election Day.

Research Design

Although Kennedy proved to be a successful vote-getter during the 1960 election, he has been credited with innovation on the convention floor. Polsby and Wildavsky (2000) have given Kennedy's election team credit for creating "the first modern candidate organization at a national convention, tied together with sophisticated communications equipment (p. 130)." Although many authors state the modern convention began in the 1950s with the introduction of televised conventions (i.e. 1952), it seems more logical to presume that the Kennedy convention began the modern days of national party conventions. All elections after and including 1960 had a fall campaign consisting of conventions and the "modern candidate organization"¹. Election campaigns in 1960 and 1968 would begin the transition from the second age to the third age of Buell's convention eras.

To expand on this "modern candidate organization", every convention following 1960, candidate organizations used a derivative of the Kennedy convention example and built onto it. Kennedy's campaign team during the 1960 convention began a new era of convention effects. "No nomination since 1976 has been in real doubt when the convention opened, but the possibility of floor fights on the platform or rules requires candidates to prepare for the worst (Polsby and Wildavsky, 2000, p. 132)." In studying conventions during the media age, it would be in the best interest to include conventions as far back as Kennedy's, but no sooner. If the study included conventions prior to 1960, the "modern candidate organization" variable would

¹ Although there was a televised debate in 1960, debates did not become a mainstay until 1976.

be small or non-existent. Furthermore, to study a campaign as a whole, you must include other variables: the debates, televised or otherwise, were not established until 1960, meaning the media variable did not affect the conventions or the campaign as strongly before 1960. However, debates did not become a true variable until 1976, but the media age had still started. The design of this thesis is to study the bookend years of the media age. Although we will be studying both the second and third eras of Buell's convention history, as the case studies will reveal, various themes reoccur throughout the latter half of the Twentieth Century and well into the Twenty-First Century.

The first pair of conventions includes 1960 and 1968. Examined here will be the end of the second Buell era, where delegates decided the nominee at the convention. Following these two case studies will be a chapter addressing the rule changes that occurred between 1969 and 2000 (although the changes did not take effect until the presidential election of 1972), transitioning the work and explaining how three decades rescinded power from a handful of delegates and delivered it to the people in the form of state primaries and conventions. Finally, the 2000 and 2008 conventions, two of the most recent, will be included to allow the reader to see how conventions have evolved (for better or worse) and how they have stayed constant. What has been improved? Are conventions still worth having? Does any power still exist within the halls of the party conventions?

The reasoning behind using these case studies among others is simple. Each of the four chosen cases exist within the "media age", while at the same time implementing the "modern candidate organization" factor established in the Kennedy camp in 1960. As will be seen in the 2000 and 2008 cases, many see the national conventions as overvalued ad campaigns with name drops, vast groups of "supporters" and prime soapbox time. Are political scientists able to study

the conventions of the 1960s and apply the same methodology to conventions of the Twenty-First Century? Have conventions lost the power they once had to decide the presidential candidate in the Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century? To help support this hypothesis, the study includes a set of qualitative variables and controls. To control for the incumbent effect, the case studies would only cover open seat races for the presidency. The examination of the case studies will include a myriad of viewpoints, including the state of the nation, the presidency, popular opinion about the parties and the state they were in. Three main variables stand out throughout the course of this study:

- *party unity*
- *candidate image*
- *party platform*

The variables are quite simple and their appearances carry on through all four conventions. *Party unity* appeared in “The Convention Bump” as a quantitative variable affecting candidates and their bounce in Gallup poll numbers following their respective convention weeks (Campbell 1992). In this study, *party unity* will be viewed qualitatively and its effect depends on the decisions and outcomes occurring with each candidate camp at each party convention. Indicators of this variable taking effect include delegate support of a nominee, surrounding protests, salient issues, and delegate make-up. Since many conventions following the rule changes of the 1970s and 1980s have been used to unite the party, it seems logical that a unity variable be included. For instance, if the party is clearly split on an issue, such as the 1968 Democratic Party with the Vietnam War, the convention is the perfect venue to soothe those wounds and unite under one banner and one candidate. However, when unity goes unsolved or progresses negatively, the

public sees this struggle and tends to vote for the party with greater peace and organization, such as the Nixon's victory in 1968.

Candidate image further plays a crucial role in the study of conventions, for without a positive candidate image, the party has no chance of receiving the highly valued public votes in the general election. This variable stems almost directly from the convention itself, meaning that the convention's success depends on the candidate's political appearance to voters and delegates, while the same image is dependent on how well the convention performs. Next to party unity, this is the most prominent goal of the convention: to portray the new nominee positively and get the American public familiar with his personality, demeanor and stance on issues. In this study, a candidate's personal image can be seen through public opinion polls, his/her nomination speech, and even his/her primary or caucus performances. Just as *party unity* is critical in getting elected, so is *candidate image*, and the convention serves as an initial and critical point in the campaign where the party gets the limelight to represent that image.

The final variable focuses less on the candidate and the party and more on the party platform. At the convention, next to nominating or announcing the nomination of the candidate, it is also customary to compose, critique, present and decide on the parties' platforms for the next four years. Using 1968 as an example again, the Vietnam War policies of Johnson's administration proved to be a bitter wound among hawks and doves², not only in the convention delegation, but also in the American public. Salient issues such as Vietnam find their way into the party platform, and depending on the party's stance, may improve or worsen their chances among the delegation and voters when Election Day comes. In 1960 national security played a major role

² "Hawks" referred to those supporting the Americanization in Vietnam while the "doves" supported a peaceful military exit from the country.

in politics, while in 2000, the salient issue of abortion had a large effect; and although the issues change from year to year, the platform effect should happen either way. If the people disagree with the platform, indicated by protests or delegate floor-fights, this may create a negative image for the convention, with the fall campaign inevitably suffering.

Now there are clearly a number of interactive variables in this study, and for the most part, those will be addressed within each individual case study. For instance, a candidate's ability to unify the party will have a positive effect on his or her *candidate image*; this effect is blatant in the Kennedy and Obama scenarios, where both candidates' parties were in dire need of political fusion, and so the responsibility was turned over to the nominees.

Hypothesis

Using our case studies and the corresponding variables, the main hypothesis has been derived from the following research question: Do conventions hold any power? Clearly, throughout history, we have seen the power that these party meetings have in selecting a nominee to represent the views and policies of a large percentage of the American public. Due to the power of the "King Caucus" and the party bosses, most of that power was out of the hands of typical, voting Americans. Even up until the 1960s, many of the delegates were selected through party leaders and district voting outcomes, with little to no say from the public. The reform era of the 1970s and onward ripped the power from the delegates and party leaders and delivered it to the primary system, where party members could vote for the delegates who would represent their candidate.

With this being said, those who voice that conventions are still meaningful cite aspects other than the administrative duties: “Modern political conventions are marketing events aimed at the November electorate...John McCain ...tried to use the Republican Convention to reboot his campaign and fundamentally change its direction (Sizemore, 2009, p. 27-8).” McCain was the nominee going into the convention, and he was the nominee coming out; it was the convention that boosted him into the fall campaign, but it was little more than a primetime, four-day rally. Therefore, the main goal of this thesis is to theoretically support the ideal that conventions are still useful, or provide evidence otherwise, using case studies detailing the convention events for both parties in 1960, 1968, 2000 and 2008 while instituting the core variables of image, platform and party unity.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF CONVENTION LITERATURE

To understand conventions and their effect on the public, one must examine the history and evolution of the convention from the beginnings of the political parties to today's Internet-based world. After this has been accomplished, the next best step is to regard past research done in this field.

Cataloguing Conventions

	Delegate Vote On First Ballot	Incumbent?	Comments
TYPE A	50-59 %	NO	Kennedy (1960), Nixon (1968)
TYPE B	+60 %	YES	Johnson (1964)
TYPE C	+60%	NO	Nixon (1960), Humphrey (1968)
TYPE D	Less than 50 %	NO	Stevenson (1952)
TYPE E	Less than 60 %	YES	Taft (1912)
TYPE F	Refused nomination	YES	Chester A. Arthur (1884)

Table 1: Byrne and Marx (1976) Convention Catalogue

Byrne and Marx (1976) classify and analyze six different types of conventions, each defined by incumbency, delegate approval and party unity. Although the authors attempt to study and compare conventions of different election years, their studies assist in the research focusing on specific election years, where party unity is a key factor.

The main focus of this study, and by far its shining achievement, is the classification of conventions. The writers manage to label each type alphabetically (for example, Type A, B,

C...), and have catalogued every convention since 1864 into these six archetypes. As detailed and innovative as this may be, the generational factors may pose a problem for comparisons over time. For instance, the 1868 conventions, with Grant and Seymour as the nominees, are radically different from the 1968 conventions, featuring candidates Nixon and Humphrey. Although both involve Type C conventions³, the media and technological advancements between the two eras makes the Type C convention of 1868 almost completely dissimilar from the Type C convention of 1968.

On another note, there is one glaring problem with their classification system, and it involves the year 1936. When conventions first began in the 1830s, the Democrats of the time instituted the “two-thirds rule”, which allowed a candidate to be nominated only when two-thirds of the delegations had voted for them (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). On the surface, it would seem that this rule not only promoted democracy, but party unity. However, the work of Byrne and Marx (1976) utilize the percentage of delegate nomination as one of the pillar descriptions of their convention types. For instance, the Type A convention, or the conciliatory convention, involves the party’s candidate receiving between 50 and 59 percent of the delegation vote. It would seem, then, that any convention before 1936, when the two-thirds rule was eliminated for the Democrats, had any chance of being a Type A convention, or any convention that had a delegation vote percentage of less than 66.6 percent. After examining the cases studied, no Type A convention is looked at nor seems to have occurred before 1936, except the 1932 Roosevelt/Hoover campaign. However, it seems the authors contradict their initial definition of the Type A candidate. While Roosevelt is the Type A candidate of 1932, he managed to gain 81

³ The Type C convention entails that one strong candidate (usually from a party without an incumbent president seeking re-nomination) receives 60 percent of the delegate vote on the first ballot (34).

percent of the delegate vote on the fourth presidential ballot. Therefore, Roosevelt's definition does not match any of the categories Byrne and Marx present; of course, any one case will not fit a classification scheme.

However, the categories prove useful when examining election cycles and nominating conventions occurring after the elimination of the two-thirds rule. The true reforms, however, occurred after the turbulent events during the 1968 Democratic convention.

Critiques of Modern Conventions

The conventions of 1968 and 1972 were a turning point for the Democratic Party and how their members executed a presidential nominating convention. Sullivan, Pressman and Arterton (1976) excel most by presenting theoretical ideas to the convention research utilizing graphs and diagrams illustrating the polarization of the convention delegates. For instance, with the 1974 Democratic Charter Conference, reforms took place that the authors employ to place delegates on the "professional-purism" scale covering the quadrants of pro- and anti- party as well as pro- and anti-reform. Thus the theme for the work is the cleavages formed by the professionals, the pro-party advocates with little reform, and the purists, those wanting reform while going against the party. This type of party cleavages can be seen in party activism research (Paddock, 1997), where party members are determined to be ideological purists or pragmatic professionals.

As for the theoretical contributions, the work's authors attempt to correlate a time-series effect among the state delegations, the candidate organizations, and the group caucuses:

"In 1972, candidate organizations, state delegations and group caucuses all seemed powerful and important the first day of the convention. Expectations were high. By the fourth day of the convention, the winning candidate organization was more powerful than others, the state delegations were viable, but the group caucuses had disintegrated (116)."

In 1974, they witnessed the opposite effect: weak candidate organization coming into the conference brought the more powerful caucus groups to the surface. “When candidate organizations weaken, group caucuses increase in power and, of course, when candidate organizations increase in power, group caucuses weaken (Sullivan, Pressman and Arterton, 116).” It proved an interesting and necessary read concerning the dramatic rule changes the Democratic Party underwent following 1972.

Davis (1983) further opened and studied the smaller facets of the convention world. For the most part, the organization of the book needs no critique considering it covers every topic from organization of the modern convention to the convention in an age of television, as well as the effect of conventions and the presidential campaign process on the public. “Convention choices usually have been foreshadowed early by Gallup preference polls, often in the first poll of the campaign, taken up to three years before the conventions (Davis, 1983, p. 176).” The author goes on to dictate that 50 percent of the time, the first poll taken during the campaign predicts the party candidate. One Davis table reveals four points during the campaign, one for the Democrats and Republicans, and which candidate was ahead at the time of polling. The prediction percentage grows as the poll points draw closer to the election, which is a logical assessment. However, the organization of this data draws some criticism.

First, a poll taken three years in advance of an election leaves out a large portion of the population that turns voting age within the three years. Even after leaving out these young voters throughout the study (a small percentage of the electorate), this omitted variable will negatively affect your prediction percentage overall. Further, during those three years, what happens to the voters that pass away? Does Davis utilize the young voters coming of age as replacements to

these aged and dying voters? Second, the Gallup data measures popularity of candidates among voters, but what about popular candidates who perished during the campaign. Robert Kennedy perished during the 1968 campaign, and he was the most popular during the first three poll points of the campaign. Clearly he could not be the most popular, viable candidate during the last poll point, but his passing negatively affected the prediction percentage. Therefore, the campaign of 1968 is a strange and somewhat out of place research topic in this study.

Judging the work based on one unsteady study, though, should not take away from the insight that the remainder of the book delivers. Davis (1983) continues his look at conventions with a chapter fully dedicated to reforms in the convention process. He presents three *possible* major nomination system reforms as well as a number of primary reforms; here the focus is on critiquing those nomination system reforms. The “national preprimary convention plan”, promoted by Thomas Cronin and Robert Loevy, makes the simple change of reversing the order of the primaries and the convention. If this were the case, the convention business (adoption of platforms, discussion of administration, and general delegate dealings) would all be attempted with the nominee in the balance. Following the confusion of the conventions would be the national primary, one day in September when “separate national presidential primaries in both major parties” are held. Although the author details the positives of this system (p. 239), the negatives (p. 239-40) seem to outweigh it, including two national elections during a 60-day interlude and the possible conformity of state election practices.

The third nomination reform presented by Davis (1983), the Sanford Plan, was instituted by Terry Sanford who served as chairperson for the 1974 Democratic Charter. In this reform, “uninstructed delegates” would populate the national convention, theoretically resulting in “both parties [accepting] the same basic rules on delegate selection and that this compact would

quickly bring state legislatures and state parties into compliance (p. 240).” Also, presidential primaries are permitted, but only “beauty contest” primaries. One can only assume that a presidential “beauty contest” primary results in an “appearance only” criteria, allowing delegate votes to be based solely on public appearances.

However, though Davis merely presents these reforms, he should not be liable to their criticism. The last interesting aspect of this chapter includes Table 18 (p. 217), which suggests that in 1979, 66 percent of the electorate favored a one-day primary election (as seen in the “national preprimary convention plan”) with the abolishment of the convention altogether. Although attitudes may have changed, this may be the result of controversial events affecting the convention at the time, including the Chicago riots in 1968 (notice the 76 percent favor). Perhaps a steady decline among those favoring to abolish the convention occurred. This look at public opinion would be interesting to include in the final study⁴. This idea of primary rescheduling alludes to other works dealing with the timetable of the nomination and convention process.

Altshuler (2006) explores why and how incumbent parties always follow the challenging party in the convention dates, and what effect this has on the general campaign and eventually, Election Day. Interestingly enough, the incumbent party actually benefits from following the challenger’s party in two ways.

First, financial constraints may hinder some challengers, such as Bob Dole in 1996, who acquired the nomination from Republicans in March and had already spent \$30.9 million dollars on the campaign (Altshuler, 2006). Meanwhile, Clinton, the incumbent with no opposition to his

⁴ The data for Table 18 was found in the *Gallup Opinion Index*, No. 174, so updating this information up to 2008 should be relatively easy.

nomination, spent the same allowed financial amount on attacking Republican candidates. Dole was already too broke to fight back. However, both candidates must use the same amount of campaign funds, which commences with the party conventions:

“Although having the later convention helped Clinton by giving him more time to spend his **pre**-nomination treasury, his acceptance of the limit imposed by public funding minimized that advantage. Having the earlier convention helped Dole, as it allowed him to begin using general election money to replenish his empty nomination campaign treasury although that meant using the same amount as his opponent over a *longer* period of time (p. 665-6).” [Italics added for emphasis.]

This same incident occurred during the 2004 election with Bush as the incumbent nominee and Kerry as the challenging runner: “Kerry’s general election treasury of \$75 million would have to last from July 28 until Election Day in November, Bush’s for a month less (p. 666).” This revelation in what some may deem unfair campaign strategies has the author call for party cooperation, which he says may not happen.

Although these findings may have been the highlight of the work, other aspects of the paper should be noted. For instance, the backdrop of the history behind convention scheduling was effective, informative and almost necessary for the audience to understand not only how the convention works into the campaign, but the party politics behind it.

Conventions and the Mass Media

Finally, Altschuler (2006) calls in the media as a factor in convention effect. Altschuler used a Gallup poll from 1948 to show the slim percent of people watching the convention on television. By the 1950s, 50 percent now watched what the author calls “the most significant parts” of the convention (p. 663).

It can be said without much hesitation that the evolution of the media has directly influenced and changed politics through the generations. Not only has the media become an essential part of the presidential campaign, it is the all-encompassing method of contact for the nominee, his new administration and the general public. Some of the most influential campaigning has been done using television spots, commercials, and the Internet, especially with the recent 2008 Obama campaign.

However, recent use of technology and the mass media in politics is nothing new. The media in politics, especially conventions, can go back as far as the 1840s with the use of the telegraph, and in 1880 the telephone was used among reporters. In 1924, the Republican National Convention (RNC) was broadcast across radio and then on television in 1940 on NBC-W2XBS (Panagopoulos, 2007). To show how influential the media has become, in 1980 the media outnumbered delegates 3 to 1 (11,500 to 3,381) at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) (Davis, 1983). During that same election year, Reagan, receiving his nomination in May, had a jump on Carter to portray the unity of the GOP on television to the viewing public. Davis further quips that the media has boosted unknown senators running for president into the public eye with appearances on “Meet the Press” and “Face the Nation”, alluding that the media is a powerful tool in the election process (p. 167-8).

Panagopoulos (2007) collects and edits several articles concerning the media effect on conventions alone. In the author’s introduction, he presents the four themes of the articles:

- Developments in mass media have provided powerful stimuli for convention change
- Conventions have changed in response to stimuli exerted by changes in mass media
- Conventions still matter
- Conventions continue to evolve but not necessarily towards irrelevance. (2-3)

The first two themes seem to go together forming a chain of events. The media changes, creating stimuli that eventually change the convention. Is the media the “end-all be-all” of the nomination campaign? According to this study, the media’s power seems greater than the party’s. The last two themes seem to stem off from the first two: conventions still matter because the media chooses them to matter? Are conventions evolving not of their own accord, but only by the media-created stimuli? The concluding over-arching theme, then, is that the present convention is eternally and dependently linked with the ever independently-changing media.

Continuing to explore *Rewiring Politics*, there are two important articles that focus on the media as an independent player in convention evolution. Jonathan Morris and Peter Francia (Panagopoulos, 2007) present the effect of cable news on conventions, citing that 2.3 million viewers tuned in to the 2004 DNC on CNN, 2.1 million on Fox News and 1.3 million on MSNBC. During the 2004 RNC, Fox News managed to get more tuning in than the big network draws (i.e. NBC, ABC and CBS). In a study done by the Pew Research Center and presented in the article, the average attention given to the conventions over the types of media are as follows: cable (2.70⁵), network (2.13), newspapers (2.36), radio (2.41) and Internet (2.37). This study completed in 2004 shows that attention to the convention is pretty tepid, but sways toward the television, especially cable news, than any other medium. But how has this relationship between cable news and viewers affected the relationship between nominees and their possible voters?

Fine (2007) found that the media influence has negatively affected conventions: “The mass media has contributed to the decline of convention deliberation in its own efforts to retain

⁵ 1 = followed not at all closely; 2 = followed not too closely; 3 = followed fairly closely; 4 = followed very closely

viewers in an increasingly competitive media market...[the] response to this trend is to broadcast less of the actual convention while developing and producing news stories about actors, events and issues that are less central to the core convention purpose (p. 179).” This added with the constraining three hours of coverage broadcast between the 8-11 prime time has strongly affected what goes on and who does what on the floor. Major speeches and deliberations must be presented in this time frame, as well as key visual and audio stimulations, like the color of dropping balloons (p. 177-178)!

So what can be said about this? The voters are now subject to the media’s spin on events and politicians appearing at the convention, and an avid watcher has view places to go for the “real” convention coverage. Although the mass media has opened doors to a new world of networking with voters, do the cable news and network stations inherently care who wins or loses in the election, or are the number of viewers their key goal? At one point, hours of convention material was presented per day on many of the networks, but today the emphasis is on entertainment, party conflict and rushed excitement.

At one time, the media coverage of the convention was positively perceived. Shafer (1988) comments on the presence of state and local media sources at the convention, “In one sense, this represented a greater variety in coverage, multiplying the points of public information while it diversified and localized (p. 331).” Shafer further speculates how the media will adapt to the changing schedule of the convention committee: “participants...alert reporters to emerging items of conflict or as much as an effort to utilize, reschedule, or disrupt major convention speeches (p. 333).” So at one time or another, during the 1980s, the media was still a fledgling aspect and at the beckoning of the convention activities. With the 1990s and the explosion of cross-country

networking, the convention was demoted to back-seat driver and the mass media gained the upper hand.

Timmerman and Weier (1998) address the use of media *by the party*, no less, to “construct the institutional message over the course of the convention (p. 79).” These messages theoretically mean to portray the party in an optimistic fashion, whether they want to be the financial solvers, the foreign policy workers, or the healthcare fighters, for example. This meant that negative or argumentative aspects of the convention were kept under wraps and away from the camera to prevent a negative message. “Unfortunately, the drive to produce telegenic conventions forced each party to dodge debate and paper over differences. They were, at the end of the day, institutional discourse in the form of extended commercials (p. 97).”

According to the history, before television, the convention was a place for debate, decisions, arguments, nominations and bargaining. Whether it was a bargain for a failed nominee’s constituency or a squabble among delegates for the party’s platform, the core of the convention’s purpose is decision-making, and very few decisions among humans can be done peacefully and quickly, no matter how much the media wishes they were. So have we seen the convention “dumbed down” for media usage? Can the public ever be convinced that the convention is more than just a 3-hour coverage block on four nights ever four years, despite cable coverage?

Using a quantitative approach to the effects of the convention week on voters adds greatly to the research on nominating procedures. The convention is one, if not the main, factor in determining what party the country has more faith in. Although the primaries and campaigns focus on state-to-state reactions to candidate image, the conventions bring up national reactions. These national reactions, compared with the state of the union, could determine what side of the political spectrum the U.S. will lean towards, allowing us to make reliable scientific predictions

to the outcome on Election Day. Numerous items were addressed by Campbell, Cherry and Wink (1992), including how conventions could heal a party, leading to favorable responses from the country and higher trust. They further support their theory by comparing conventions from 1968 to 1988, revealing that a bump exists and that there are variations to the bump. These positive and comprehensible findings add to the usefulness of the article. The authors conclude that post-convention, the nominee often receives an opinion “bump” in the Gallup trial-heat polls taken before, during and after each national party’s conventions. However, the most important advancement of this study should be the continuation of the research to include recent elections. Once those updates have been collected and analyzed, we must consider a qualitative look at the events surrounding the conventions and its nominees, how the candidates conduct a convention, the time span between convention and Election Day and voter television viewership.

CHAPTER 3: 1960: NEW FRONTIERS AND SURRENDERS AT FIFTH AVENUE

Nearly fifty years ago, politics and conventions entered a new age of public consumption called the media age. While some may argue that the media age of politics began with the televised conventions of both the Republican and Democratic Parties in 1952, it did not become official until the year of the first televised debates and the “new frontier” of communication. In this chapter, a study on the 1960 presidential conventions and its candidates, winners and losers, will be analyzed with historical context. To figuratively put the reader in their own seat at the convention, the states of both national parties will be addressed. What events have left the parties and their leaders weaker or stronger in the eyes of the American people? Would this put a strain on their appearances at the conventions? The three main variables of study will be addressed and applied to the RNC and the DNC, with Richard Nixon and John Kennedy as the respective party candidates. Further, and as one will see throughout this work, that the analysis on convention categories by Byrne and Marx (1976) will be utilized to get a better idea of how and why we compare conventions, regardless of the nominees and the events surrounding the event. Finally, employing the analytical framework of the “convention bump” (Campbell, Cherry and Wink, 1992), the 1960 conventions will undergo systemic examination in hopes of finding new and interesting data that can be employed with other conventions in the future.

The Eisenhower Administration

Although 1960 was a pivotal year for the Democratic Party, the years leading up to the Kennedy nomination and the failings of the incumbent Republican Party and Eisenhower administration definitely affected not only voters but the convention delegates as well.

In 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower defeated Adlai Stevenson for the presidency, the Republican Party gained back power after a long twenty years of being idle. However, some authors theorize that the nation just liked Ike, and that because the Republicans lost both chambers of Congress in the 1954-midterm elections to the Democrats followed by the re-election of Eisenhower in 1956, the United States was far from accepting the GOP as the majority party (Donaldson, 2007).

In the Democratic Party, prior to 1960, political scientists began to see a partisan shift from the peripheral south. Intraparty factions formed around the issues of civil rights, starting with the reforms of the Truman administration and well into the 1960s. This not only created a split in the Democratic Party, but with the influx of conservative Southerners moving to the Republican Party, you see a new far-right coalition within the GOP.

The 1950s were an era of unfinished wars in Korea, McCarthyism and Cold War politics. While the Republican Right suffered for the rambling of Senator McCarthy, Eisenhower and his “modern Republican (Donaldson, 2007)” following managed to escape unscathed. However, leading up to the 1960 election, Eisenhower had been accused of botching important foreign policy, including the 1953 armistice signed to end the fighting in Korea. While claiming that the U.S. cannot “go it alone” in their foreign tasks, the right-wing faction of his party preferred to take the fight to the Chinese and the Soviets with MacArthur at the helm. This incident not only

upset those hell-bent on stopping the spread of communism, but it visibly split the Republican Party into the moderate Eisenhower camp and the strongly conservative division.

Eisenhower's second term in office included further defeats of the Republican Party, with losses of forty-eight seats in the House and thirteen seats in the Senate in 1958. This either indicated a failure on the GOP, or the American electorate was simply liberalizing their voting behavior (Donaldson, 2007). However, the allegiance of the American South was tilting more and more away from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. Democrats like Adlai Stevenson tip-toed around such issues as civil rights while Eisenhower claimed he would never institute desegregation into the South, even after his movement of federal troops into Little Rock in 1957 (Donaldson). Even with these splits among conservative Republicans, moderate Republicans and the South, Eisenhower still led the ruling party in the 1950s. The 1950s, though, was also the decade for rising Democratic stars like Lyndon Johnson and Stevenson. Johnson, according to Donaldson, "emerged as the leading light of the Democratic Party. As Majority Leader of the Senate, he had pushed through legislation with an amazing ability of persuasion, compromise, and political maneuvering (p. 23)." Although settling to compromise with the Republicans to pass legislation, one of Johnson's main goals was to split the Republican Party so the Democrats would appear as the best, unified political machine to control the government.

Stevenson, a main player in the Democratic Party, received the nomination in 1956 without the delegate votes of Texas or the endorsement of former president Harry Truman. His nomination in 1956 included the endorsement of 39 year old Senator John Kennedy and his brother Robert Kennedy. Robert worked with Stevenson on his campaign while Jack Kennedy was chosen to deliver the nomination speech at the previous convention. While in the running

for the vice-presidency, Jack Kennedy proved hesitant in offensively promoting himself, since it was questionable whether the party would accept a Catholic nominee. However, Stevenson's choice to let the convention delegation choose a vice-president for him was seen by Johnson as a weak and unprofessional move (Donaldson, 2007). Eisenhower ended the 1956 campaign by winning in a landslide larger than his 1952 win, with Richard Nixon as his vice-president again (to the dismay of the Republican delegation).

In 1960, Eisenhower, his administration and the Republican Party faced controversial issues including questions on the "missile gap", failure to win in the space race against the Soviets and a mishap with secret U-2 reconnaissance aircraft over the USSR. While hoping to end his second term as a peacemaker (Donaldson, 2007), Eisenhower was seen by some as a stalwart defender against Russian attacks, while others saw the foreign failures in the Soviet Union, riots in Japan and the communist takeover of Cuba. With these issues in delegate and the minds of voters, the months leading up to the national party conventions had both parties in contention for the presidency and control of government.

Democratic National Convention

July 11-15, 1960 in Los Angeles, California

Held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, the DNC featured mass controversy over the nomination of their candidate, which would go up against the Republican nominee Richard Nixon Republican ticket. The main events taking place at this convention included Kennedy winning the first ballot, the failed movement behind Adlai Stevenson and the fight over the vice-

presidency, including Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy's battle between personal feuds and compromised politics.

Although many claim that the Republicans were basking in a political comeback during the 1950s, in reality, Eisenhower was the public favorite, heading the "modern Republican" ideology while right-wing Republicans suffered under the influence of McCarthy. After the Republicans won congressional control in 1952, they soon lost it again in the 1954 elections where Ike had improved his victory from 1952. The idea that the Democratic Party was "struggling" for control as the 1960 election approached seems inaccurate, considering their strength in Congress. What the Democratic Party *did* need was a new leader. The party was searching for a new direction, and obviously a young and vibrant candidate came to save the day. However, the party was split on what type of candidate would lead the party to presidential victory. The 1960 convention is where this debate reached its apex.

Adlai Stevenson had been the national nominee for the Democratic Party in 1952 and 1956, had more "world travels" than the other potential 1960 candidates and possessed a strong following with the delegates in Los Angeles. Stevenson also had something the other Democratic nominees did not have: two national losses. Stevenson had failed not once, but twice, under the Democratic ticket, and both were to Eisenhower; however, Stevenson followers still called for his nomination? Perhaps this past history affected Stevenson's demeanor, resulting in his lackluster performance at the convention, leading to his eventual denial of the nomination. In 42 states there were "Draft Stevenson" organizations calling for his nomination (Rorabaugh, 2009; Donaldson, 2007). Three times Stevenson had a chance to wow the delegation, but he denied his followers at each instance, reiterating that he was "neutral" when it came to his support. Former governor Averell Harriman would call the useless adulation of

Stevenson's followers "a ridiculous performance", and though former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt backed the failed candidate, the Kennedy camp knew "Adlai has everything going for him but the delegates (Rorabaugh, p. 77)." So what term describes Stevenson in the world of convention candidates? A candidate that has the people's support yet fails to get the nomination. He/she is a sure-fire threat to the seriously considered nominees who carry a formidable amount of the delegate votes. Therefore, a *sleeper candidate* could be deemed a threat if not handled properly by the poll-popular candidates. In this 1960 case, LBJ and Jack Kennedy are the poll-popular candidates while Stevenson plays the sleeper candidate role.

While Adlai is the more popular sleeper candidate, the fourth major player in the 1960 Democratic nomination race was Stuart Symington, the protégé of former president Harry Truman; President Truman supported the Missouri senator because of his dislike for the Kennedy brothers' father, Joe Kennedy (Donaldson, 2007). Symington had a short-lived take at the nomination and an even shorter chance at the vice-presidency. He failed to achieve that sleeper candidate fear that Kennedy and Johnson had for Stevenson, but he fared about the same as Adlai in the first ballot.

Did Stevenson and Symington affect the *party unity* in 1960? According to the ballots by the Democrat delegation, only 5 percent of the delegation supported Stevenson, despite his alleged cult following. Symington, faring better than Stevenson, still only managed to win over 5 and a half percent of the delegation, nowhere near as strong as Johnson and Kennedy's pull with the convention. So to consider these characters as powerful game-changers is inconclusive; they have their followers but fail to win over new and larger factions within the party giving them the power they need to win the nomination and affect *party unity*.

Although Kennedy had been a nominee consideration in 1956, he was a powerhouse at the 1960 convention. His one threat, other than the sleeper Stevenson and the lackluster Symington, was the Senator from Texas who had only officially entered the race six days prior to the start of the convention, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Regardless of how the Texas senator and the senator from Massachusetts felt about each other, “[w]hatever Johnson was, Kennedy was not; and whatever Kennedy was, Johnson was not. It truly was the perfect ticket (Donaldson, 2007, p. 81).” However, to look at the convention ballot for the nominee, a reflection of the state-by-state outlook on both candidates gives political scientists a predictor of how popular each candidate would be in the general election.

For instance, looking at the delegates from southern states, Johnson achieved most of the region. Of the eleven states of the old Confederacy, Johnson managed to get most of the delegate votes from nine of them. Stevenson managed to get 31.5 votes from the 81 votes allotted to California while the other sleeper Symington received his home state of Missouri (39). Other major wins for Johnson over Kennedy included Kentucky and Oklahoma (Congressional Quarterly, 2001), but it was no use; LBJ only managed 409 votes to Kennedy’s 806, disallowing the subsequent ballots predicted by each camp. These multiple subsequent ballots were predicted to weaken Kennedy’s hold on the voters, resulting in another of the candidates taking the nomination. This explains why the Kennedy camp worked so hard to wrangle delegate votes (i.e. “modern candidate organization”), because JFK and his advisors predicted the same outcome. The Kennedy camp’s method of winning delegate votes and organizing that information has been, according to Polsby and Wildavsky (2000), an enduring aspect of convention organization used by almost all future nominees.

While the *Congressional Quarterly* recalls “Kennedy surprise[ing] some supporters and political observers by choosing his erstwhile adversary, Lyndon Johnson (p. 118)”, other authors claim that LBJ was the “obvious” choice, and Kennedy’s closest advisors and backers agreed with him (Donaldson, 2007). Johnson had avoided entering the nomination race by claiming, “someone has to tend the store” within the Senate during the primary season, giving him the image that he cared more about initiating legislation than winning elections. As candidate image, this boasted well for his campaign and his appeal as a vice-presidential running mate.

Although the two candidates were on record as not liking one another, however, they did agree on salient topics, including civil rights. In 1957, Johnson had helmed a civil rights bill that satisfied “white southerners, civil rights advocates, [and] the Eisenhower administration (Donaldson, p. 74)”, and in 1960 he headed another Civil Rights Act that continued the anti-discriminatory measures from 1957. Kennedy supported the civil rights agenda because it was believed to carry a 10 percent boost in the African American vote, and possibly a 1 percent jump in the total vote of some northern states (Rorabaugh, p. 76). So Johnson had his southern state following, while Kennedy had his northern states; Johnson carried the Civil Rights Act, which negatively affected his pull in the South, but after becoming the Democratic platform and voted on by the convention delegates, it was difficult for the Southern delegation to walk out on the approved ticket:

“We shall also seek to create an affirmative new atmosphere in which to deal with racial divisions and inequalities which threaten both the integrity of our democratic faith and the proposition on which our nation was founded—that all men are created equal. It is our faith in human dignity that distinguishes our open free society from the closed totalitarian society of the Communists... We believe that every school district affected by the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision should submit a plan providing for at least first-step compliance by 1963, the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. To facilitate compliance, technical and financial assistance should be given

to school districts facing special problems of transition (The American Presidency Project, 2010).”

The 1960 DNC allowed a healthy amount of party unity (Byrne and Marx, 1976). With the factional split among delegates between candidates Kennedy and Johnson on the ballot, a party split was indeed present. However, Byrne and Marx detail that this low-percentage win for Kennedy actually helped improve his following with the party because the number of delegates voting against him at least had their voice heard. With the announcement of Johnson as the vice-presidential candidate, this only further solidified the ticket, accumulating the Kennedy and Johnson factions into one leading group. Kennedy’s attempt to unify the party paid off, giving his image a boost as a unifier and a team player who will put personal preferences aside for the good of the party, with Johnson performing that same role.

Republican National Convention

July 25-28, 1960 in Chicago, Illinois

The Republican National Convention, which occurred at the International Amphitheatre in Chicago, Illinois, proved a different game for Nixon and his delegates. Most of the historical controversy took place outside the convention, while within the delegation, splits within the party cracked between the varying ideologues of the Republicans. The main factors creating the tumultuous convening of delegates included Nixon’s revamp of the party platform and his choice of vice-president.

With ten days between conventions, Nixon, a cold personality with a calculated demeanor, had the task of out-doing the newly nominated Democratic candidate John Kennedy, “a power speaker with an appeal to the emotions (Donaldson, 2007, p. 82).” From all opinion polls and

accounts, Nixon had the nomination within his grasp long before the opening of the GOP convention: “He had control of some one thousand of the six hundred-plus delegates needed to win the nomination without having done much of anything to win their support (p. 83).” The American people, who had the fabled conservative majority (Rorabaugh, 2009), respected and wanted the cold warrior with his vice-presidential experience and his inheritance from Eisenhower, who was still popular in the polls at 60 percent. However, just as the foreign policy failures with *Sputnik*, Cuba, the “missile gap” and other trending topics negatively affected the outlook of the Republican Party, so did these events negatively influence Nixon’s presidential campaign. To his advantage, Nixon spun the U-2 aircraft debacle of May 1960 into a Cold War tactic, making “[Eisenhower] appear to be standing up to the Russians while protecting the nation from a Pearl Harbor-like attack by authorizing the U-2 overflights (Donaldson, p. 85).” These events allowed the Republican candidate to appear a warrior in foreign affairs, while Kennedy, the pampered Senator from Massachusetts, was portrayed as young and inexperienced.

Nixon, though, took on the modern-Republicanism of Eisenhower, and although these ideological Republicans currently had the power in the party, a growing new section of the party now existed for the first time: the Southern Right. Feeling that the liberal Democrats were gaining too much power and snuffing out the conservative moral values, many southerners, including delegates from Texas, Louisiana and South Carolina, wanted to cast their vote for Arizonan native Barry Goldwater, the up and coming leader of the Republican Right. However, although the southern votes were leaning Republican for the presidency, southern Democrats still ruled the legislative branch, and this environment would not fully shift, some experts would say, until the Republican control of Congress in 1994 (Black and Black, 2002). With that being said, these new southern delegates were inexperienced having no “elective political experience”

(Rorabaugh, p. 112) and were therefore unable to have any sway in the platform decisions that they were so angry and disagreeing about.

Right away, the convention began with a party split, one Nixon should have addressed from the start by considering the views and thoughts of the new Southern faction. However, with Nixon's support of the Republican majority, the party split went unattended, resulting in what would become a divided convention. With the South being a major actor in the political campaign, Nixon saw Johnson's nomination as the Democratic vice-president a sure southern win of Texas and most of the region to Kennedy. So Nixon focused in on New York's delegates and supporters, and their favorite son, Nelson Rockefeller.

Rockefeller was originally thought to be the vice-president on Nixon's campaign. With that on their minds, the platform committee, containing mostly conservatives and headed by Charles Percy of Illinois, tried to mold the platform to Rockefeller's liking. This was bait to not only lure Rockefeller to the vice-presidency but to win a majority of the liberal Republicans and most of the moderate voters as well (Donaldson, 2007). But while Rockefeller was the liberal camp's leader, and Nixon headed the "modern Republicans", the conservative camps were sold short. With Goldwater as their potential nominee, the conservatives' main concern was civil rights; if they went unappeased, it looked like a party split was closing in on the horizon.

After days of debate and negotiations, the Platform Committee produced a seemingly acceptable balance of views and policies that adequately melded the stances of Rockefeller, Eisenhower and Nixon (Donaldson, 87). Unbeknownst to the committee, Chairman Percy (who advised via telephone) and Nixon had made a secret compromise with Rockefeller in his New York apartment on the night of July 22, three days before the platform went to convention. In this "treaty", the liberal and the moderate attempted to re-write the party's platform on federal

spending, national defense, Social Security and civil rights. The following morning, the party was aghast at seeing their platform thrown aside for “a wet towel in the face”, according to *Newsweek*. Members cried that Nixon had sacrificed his integrity and positions to satisfy Rockefeller, calling the platform “The Surrender of Fifth Avenue” and the “Munich of the Republican Party”. Although the two masterminds had tried to win over the southern delegates with a conservative spin on defense, many delegates hoped to abandon Nixon and vote in favor of Goldwater, including the Texas delegation that, at one point, voted to rescind their Nixon ballots.

Table 2: Rating of Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates, by Region

	Nixon (R)	Kennedy (D)	Lodge (R)	Johnson (D)
East	42 %	47	50	19
Midwest	50	42	44	19
South	17	37	35	34
West	40	39	45	27

Percentages in table refer to those expressing a highly favorable opinion.

Interview Dates: 7/30 – 8/4/1960

Poll Release Date: August 19, 1960

Source: Gallup Poll

Although it seemed the South and the Republican Right were abandoning him, Nixon, with his decision to campaign for increased defense spending, managed to anger Eisenhower and his “modern Republican” followers. Nixon inherited party splits in all three camps and a now faced an “up in the air” nomination, with the Rockefeller-Nixon platform to blame. Nixon claimed that New York would win him the election, so he pandered to Rockefeller. This cropped the South from his plans, and exiled Eisenhower supporters, and further angered the South. In solution to the dilemma and possible floor fight, Nixon added a vague paragraph to soothe the warring factions:

“The United States can and must provide whatever is necessary to insure its own security and that of the free world and to provide any necessary increased expenditures to meet new situations, to guarantee the opportunity to fulfill the hopes of men of good will everywhere. To provide more would be wasteful. To provide less would be catastrophic. Our defense posture must remain steadfast, confident, and superior to all potential foes.”

This soothed many of the troubled Republicans, “[e]veryone except Goldwater. Like many other Republicans, Goldwater was calling for a stronger national defense. Consequently, he hated the first Nixon compromise with Rockefeller; *and* he hated the second compromise with Eisenhower (Donaldson, 2007, p. 88).” However, even though Goldwater and the Right were unsatisfied, their power in the party was not yet commanding enough to sway decisions. Although a major split occurred among the party factions, the moderate and liberal Republicans were the majority, and it showed in the nominee ballot. Nixon obtained 1,321 of the possible 1,331 delegate votes⁶. Although this appears to portray extreme party unity, Byrne and Marx would state that this “steamroll” nomination has a negative effect on the Nixon campaign. The party factionalism is still there, and the negative response towards the party platform intensified this disunity. The party platform variable, therefore, has negatively affected the convention with the significant response by the media and the delegates. Names like “The Surrender of Fifth Avenue” and the “Munich of the Republican Party” spins a negative image of the party. The voting electorate observes this negative connotation in their choice for president. While Kennedy’s ballot procedure portrayed party disunity, he managed to ultimately connect the party under the Kennedy/Johnson ticket with his demeanor and message; Nixon, on the other hand, avoided the southern faction, changed the platform, and angered his predecessor and the moderate Republicans. Even though Nixon was the acclaimed candidate among the delegation, his last chance at unification laid with his choice of a reputable vice-presidential candidate.

⁶ 10 went to Goldwater from Louisiana, even though he had publicly withdrawn himself from the race.

Enter Henry Cabot Lodge, former Eisenhower ambassador to the United Nations and one of the few members of the political world of that time to regularly appear on news outlets (Donaldson, 2007), making him a familiar face to the general public. Goldwater and the Right considered Nixon's pick for VP "a disastrous blunder". They considered him a Kennedy-esque, upper crust Northeasterner that would further control the party, ignoring the views of the South and the conservatives. Eisenhower, however, considered it a solid pick. The president knew, as well as Nixon, that a foreign policy face-off with Kennedy would have to be a major campaign issue for the Nixon-Lodge ticket to have a winning effect. At a gathering of Republican leadership, with no conservatives present, party elites talked over the state of the vice-presidential ticket. Tom Dewey was quoted as saying, "If we want to send the delegates home happy, we ought to agree on [Thurston] Morton...But if we want to make the *people* happy, it should be Lodge (Rorabaugh, 2009, p. 115; Donaldson, p. 91)."

So although the GOP convention nominated Nixon 1321 to 10, it did not occur without its fair share of controversy and party disunity. Although many presidential conventions begin and end with some form of party split, as Campbell, Cherry and Wink (1992) point out in their research, the convention can utilize a "healing process" that helps unify the ailing party. With Kennedy and the Democrats, although there was major debate over the ticket candidate, Byrne and Marx catalogue the contest as a "healing" factor, where each nominee and his supporters at least had a chance, and although the candidates lost to Kennedy, they saw it as a fair fight. With the GOP, the convention was a battlefield between the Rockefeller moderates and the Goldwater Right, with Nixon and the moderate Republicans inevitably siding with Rockefeller. The convention's fights centered around the GOP platform and Nixon's affair with Rockefeller; Nixon's abilities, his inheritance from Eisenhower and his vice-presidential experience became minor elements in

Nixon's attempt to head a successful convention. Kennedy's *party platform*, though riddled with small disagreements concerning the civil rights plank (the minority report was rejected by the convention), created a positive spin on the DNC with the accepted planks on national security and the economy. Nixon, however, faced a large uprising against his secret platform forged with Rockefeller in New York City. Nixon attempted to control the convention with power the delegation had yet to give him, explaining the "steamroll" effect mentioned so often. His platform ignored some factions and angered others, and managed to counteract the party split that was prominent well into the convention week.

The Republican Party contained prominent factions, more so than their Democratic counterparts. Nixon, itching to win the nomination, took advantage of his majority status and essentially ignored the South's plea, creating a dangerous political rift that would affect the party at the 1964 convention. Compared to Kennedy, Nixon seemed unwilling to negotiate and trudge on with the support he had. Kennedy, on the other hand, utilized the factionalism leading up to his nomination, and even selected his strongest opponent as vice-president in hopes to unify the delegates behind his ticket. This realization meant that the party candidate played the front running role in *party unity*, with Kennedy positively adding to party unity and Nixon, according to the events, negatively affecting his.

Applying the Byrne and Marx Study to 1960

It is Byrne and Marx (1976) who compare these types of conventions; a candidate who wins with a torrid yet healthy contest, as Kennedy did, versus a candidate who wins with a major landslide, as Nixon did. Although the authors of *The Great American Convention* did not write a

chapter on the conventions styles in 1960, utilizing their catalogue of convention types, we can easily pit the Democratic and Republican national conventions against each other applying the Byrne and Marx parameters.

Kennedy at the 1960 convention is termed by Byrne and Marx as a Type A Convention, the most desirable of the convention types. Type A, or conciliatory, conventions involve a party with no incumbent to take the presidential nomination and a majority delegation vote (“between 50 and 59 percent”) on the first ballot (1976, p. 29). Kennedy achieved this label by scoring 806 of the 1,521 possible delegate votes (52.9 % of the vote). The authors reiterate that although the candidate in a Type A convention was subject to a number of conflicts within the party over the nomination, that this conflict results in a unifying party effect. The “fair fight” among the potential nominees brings to the forefront a deserving victor, creating a “level of harmony to enable the party to unite around its strongest candidate and conduct a unified campaign (p. 29).”

With the 1960 Democratic convention, Kennedy faced all of these odds, barely winning on the first ballot. However, though his nomination involved the clashing of Democratic favorites, his vice-presidential nomination went to the runner-up, a popular southern senator. Regardless of the delegation’s view of Kennedy, he had won fair and square and nominated another party favorite as his running mate; the 1960 Democratic convention was about party unity behind Kennedy.

Nixon, on the other hand, experienced a different convention. Byrne and Marx categorize Nixon and his convention with the Republican Party in 1960 a Type C convention. This label involves the political party, with no incumbent, giving more than 60 percent of delegates’ votes to a candidate on the first ballot (p. 34-5). Further, the authors attribute “too much harmony or too much conflict” to the Type C convention, leading to a very disgruntled minority and a split in

the party. As seen with the Republican convention, “segments of the party [became] isolated and alienated from the candidacy of the party’s leader (p. 35).”

So how do these convention comparisons affect the fall campaign? In the Kennedy case, the Type A candidate survives a “trial by fire” with the large number of possible candidates at the 1960 delegation. According to Byrne and Marx, “he is assured of a more highly esteemed and more highly publicized place in the public eye than what he would have had if he had not weathered battles with other leaders in the party in his drive to win the nomination (p. 32).” The Type C, which is almost the antithesis of the Type A, faces little to no struggle during the nomination convention, winning from 60 to 100 percent of the delegate votes. Unlike Kennedy, who made gestures of friendship and compromise to warring factions (increasing his *candidate image* and *party unity*) and unifying the party by the end of the convention, Nixon had the nomination almost won by the time the convention doors open. Byrne and Marx call the Nixon delegation type “indifferent”, allowing him to make huge leaps in the party platform, which is evident by the Rockefeller compromise, without the deliberation of the party factions (p. 36). While Kennedy compromised, Nixon did not. Kennedy survived a “trial by fire” while Nixon did not. Kennedy’s fall campaign utilized the “trial by fire” and the faction compromise to win over the nation and win the election; Nixon ignored factions like the conservative wing and some Eisenhower supporters, to win over the moderate-to-liberal camps, resulting in an electoral loss. Nixon, despite his political breakdown in 1960, would redeem himself in 1968 when his convention achieved a Type A rating, and a presidential win.

CHAPTER 4: 1968: VIETNAMIZATION AND CHICAGO CHAOS

Tumultuous measures affected the United States between 1960 and 1968. After the close defeat of Nixon, Kennedy went on with a presidency that was painted with national respect, controversy and potential nuclear war. In 1962, the Bay of Pigs mission proved to be an utter failure. American troops, in an attempt to overthrow the Cuban dictator, Fidel Castro, had been captured during what was foolishly thought to be a secret mission (Janis, 1983). The following year, the Kennedy administration countered their previous failure with the successful policy-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis, “the greatest danger of catastrophic war since the advent of the nuclear age” (Janis, 1982; Allison and Zelikow, 1999). Kennedy’s presidency and legacy was quickly snuffed out by assassination in November of 1963, promoting Lyndon Johnson to the presidency. It was during Johnson’s term that events of war and civil rights set the stage for the conventions of 1968.

The election campaigns of 1964 changed the leadership of the Republican Party. Southern and conservative factions took control of the party platform with the nomination of Barry Goldwater as the Republican Party’s nominee. The “crazy-quilt collection of absurd and dangerous positions (Congressional Quarterly, 2000, p. 121)” consisted of conservative-leaning pillars on extremism, civil rights and the control of nuclear weapons. There were moderate-led convention floor-fights to change the platforms, but the conservative delegation defeated them all. Goldwater was nominated and elected on the first ballot, and during his acceptance speech attacked the moderate leadership: “I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue” (CBS News, 1968). With William Miller as his vice-presidential candidate, Goldwater took his

conservative dynasty to the general election, where an incumbent Johnson defeated him in the largest landslide in presidential election history. Johnson gained over 61 percent of the popular vote with 90 percent of the Electoral College votes. Goldwater managed to win Arizona (his home state) and the Deep South (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina)⁷. Regardless of the Republican Party platform, Johnson still looked to be the South's favorite son, as well as the heir to Kennedy and his policies (Leip, 2010).

Johnson met little dissent at the 1964 convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He gained the party nomination without a delegation ballot, and the party approved the platform without a floor debate (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). The party platform included topics on disarmament and D.C. representation in Congress, with a challenge by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. However, the greatest change made at the 1964 Democratic convention was the convention rules set into place to control southern delegations and award state delegations for their loyalty in 1960. For one, the "new vote-allocation formula was in effect that combined consideration of a state's electoral vote with its support for the Kennedy-Johnson ticket in 1960 (p. 123)"; as a result, there was a 52 percent increase in delegates from the 1960 election (as seen in Figure 1).

⁷ While Goldwater took these southern states from Johnson with ease, it was the state of Arizona that appeared undecided on the two candidates. Goldwater narrowly defeated the Texan by one percentage point, alluding to the idea that Arizona, while staying loyal to their favorite son, may not have agreed as wholeheartedly with the Republican Party Platform as the core Southern states did.

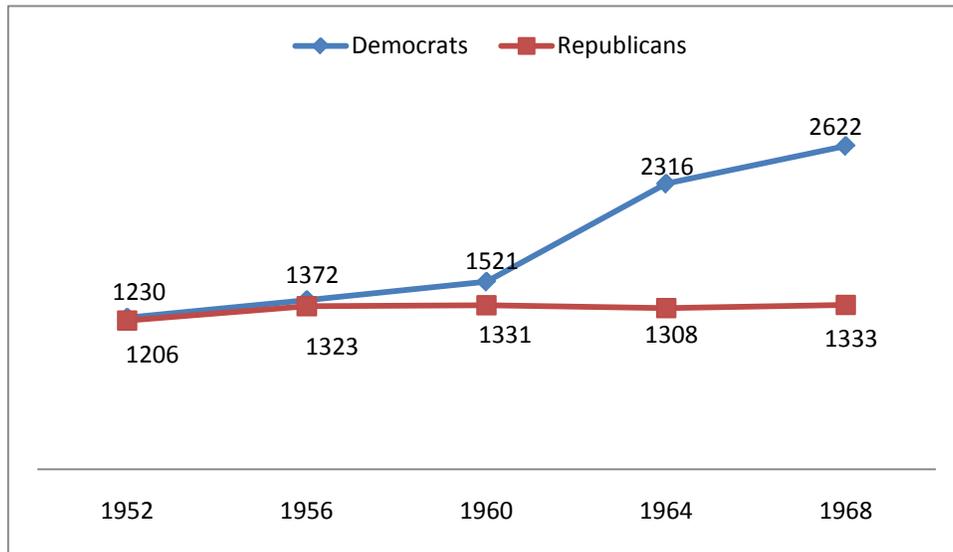


Figure 1: Republican and Democrat Convention Delegates, 1952-1968

Further, in an attempt to integrate the Mississippi state delegation, the Democratic Party approved the barring of certain state delegates for instituting racial discrimination in their voting procedures. This resulted in all but four of the Mississippi delegation to leave. In another instance, Alabama was forced to sign a “loyalty oath” for their use of anti-Johnson placements on the state ballot. Forty-two of the 53 Alabama delegates left the convention without signing (p. 123). One can only assume this tension carried over to 1968 with the new support for Nixon in the South.

Over the next four years, the Democratic Party and the Johnson administration faced their share of factional opinions on the American involvement in Vietnam. The riotous years of war brought about student movements on university campuses, a rise in military opposition, the rise and fall of Robert Kennedy, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the dilapidation of the Johnson cabinet over the entire ordeal. Secretary of War Robert McNamara resigned in 1967 over his reluctance to continue the movement of troops into a never-ending struggle; “[h]e was

troubled by the destructiveness of the war, particularly the civilian casualties, and by the growing domestic opposition, brought home to him in public appearances when he had to shove his way through and shout down protesters (Herring, 2002, p. 215)”. King was shot and killed on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, inciting riots in well over one hundred towns across the U.S. And although the preceding primaries had Robert Kennedy⁸, the brother of President John Kennedy, in the running for the Democratic Party candidate, June 5 brought the untimely death of the younger Kennedy brother. With Johnson out of the race as soon as March of 1968, the negative events surrounding the election brought delegation controversy to the Miami convention and utter chaos to the Chicago meeting.

1968 Republican National Convention

August 5-8, 1968 in Miami Beach, Florida

Table 3: Representation of Minorities in the 1968 Republican Delegation

Minority	Percentage
Women	16
Blacks	2
Young (under 40)	17

Source: CBS News

With 10 percent of the American population African-American, only 2 percent of the RNC delegation was black. This clearly shows that the party was uninterested in winning the black

⁸ RFK won the Indiana, Nebraska, California and South Dakota primaries, with 42 percent, 51 percent, 46 percent and 50 percent of the vote, respectively.

vote in 1968 (CBS News, 1968); however, as witnessed in the 2000 Republican National Convention, including non-white delegates while allowing the party platform to go unchanged to non-white issues also failed as a tactic (Philpot, 2007).

Women, on the other hand, are represented more at the RNC delegation than at the party's Democratic counterparts. However, the RNC delegations required seating four women to each delegation; this requisite, however, went unused for most of the RNC delegations.

CBS News fails, however, in presenting the delegate run-down based on education, as they do for their 1968 Democratic National Convention edition. Furthermore, the delegate sections in both editions are frustratingly inconsistent, presenting the party delegates from one angle, but not another.

Nixon, Rockefeller and Reagan

Since the former 1964 convention and presidential campaign had failed, the main theme behind the Republican National Convention was the return to moderation. Covering the base for the conservative camp in 1968 was George Wallace and his southern following, winning Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas in the November election, despite Nixon's subtle attempts to attract conservative voters. This return to moderation meant a homecoming to the revamped "New Nixon", who was placed in front of favorable audiences and getting asked all the right questions during the primary season (Gould, 1993). Using these positive reviews to his advantage, Nixon employed the time before the convention to plan out his fall campaign, since his performances at the primary level portrayed little party struggle in deciding a candidate. Had Nixon managed to unify the Republican Party, where only four years ago power had shifted so radically to the right? Did the GOP enter the convention week a

cooperative party behind a decided candidate? Had Nixon achieved the title of party unifier that would serve him so well?

Even though the Republican Party *looked* as though they had found their nominee, it did not keep other popular candidates from trying their chances. Rockefeller was back with his large fortune and his planned liberalization of the party, antagonizing his chances at the Republican Party's good graces. He made useless attempts at soiling the Nixon name, and although some would comment that Rockefeller would be the man for the Johnson/Humphrey haters, he would only manage about 25 percent of the Republican voters (Mailer, 1968). Compared to Humphrey, though, some viewed Rockefeller was the *true* heir to the Johnson administration and its policies. However, the Republican Party did not favor a candidate that openly opposed the 1964 candidate, nor did they favor a reluctant candidate who continually hesitates to enter the presidential race. Further, one could contemplate his lasting effects on the party from 1960, where his control of Nixon and the Republican Party platform had negatively affected his performance and image among the delegation, Nixon's image among Republicans and the evident party split among conservatives and moderates (Donaldson, 2007; Rorabaugh, 2009). Again, the variables of party unity and party platform are major factors when comparing the 1960 GOP convention and the 1968 RNC. The platform affected candidate image for Nixon and Rockefeller among the delegation, and although eight years had passed, that image still stuck with Rockefeller. Nixon, on the other hand, sporting his new image, attempted factional agreement within the party during the primary season, resulting in the party's relative support for his candidacy.

Fighting the liberal side of the Rockefeller Republicans was Ronald Reagan, esteemed B-movie actor and governor, who now voiced for the conservative hawk faction of the party.

Supporting Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election, Reagan carried “favorite son status” from the large delegate state of California, and supported many of the issue ideals of the southern states, launching him as a serious threat to Nixon. In the *CBS Report* (1968) produced before the convention, a tally done on the current delegates on July 15 had 160 votes for Reagan with 32 leaning between Nixon and Reagan. A further estimation was made featuring a first ballot scenario, having 148 delegate votes for Reagan, and 31 delegate votes leaning between Nixon and Reagan. According to some sources, then, Reagan was not the threat some authors showed him to be (Mailer, 1968; CBS News, 1968). The real threat to Nixon was Reagan’s attraction to the southern delegates *during* the convention week; however, conservative candidates like Strom Thurmond and Barry Goldwater quickly won back their delegates, abandoning what could have been a formidable Reagan support faction. The desertion of Reagan support left Nixon a clear path to sure victory. Reagan’s support of less government was alluring to most southern states, who were looking to overthrow the judicial order to integrate schools (CBS News, 1968); Nixon, however, took a stand against busing, saying moving “the child - a child that is two or three grades behind another child - into a strange community” goes against the citizens’ right to take their child to any school they see fit (Gould, p. 104). So while playing the moderate, Nixon had conserved enough of his ideals to win back the southern following from Reagan, without dealing with harsh race issues the Wallace campaign was dependent on (Black and Black, 2002).

Nixon’s outreach to the southern delegation and his adjusted views on school busing was a clear indication of the candidate’s wish to unify the party. From his experiences in 1960, “new Nixon” had learned that his chance at victory rested in the support of new Republican factions, and appealing to them through platform and issues was his best opportunity.

The Republican Vietnam Solution

The real difference between the two national conventions of 1968 was not so much their opinions on the Vietnam War strategy, but the response from the delegates on the intended platform policy. As will be seen in the Democratic National Convention section, Johnson pushed through an aggressive American front in Vietnam, planning only to discontinue bombing when “*this action would not endanger the lives of our troops in the field* (Peters, 2010).” Surprisingly, Nixon and the Republican platform drafting committee, for the most part, agreed with the Johnson administration in attacking the spread of Communism in the East. However, because the war effort was portrayed so poorly in the eyes of the general public, the Republicans proposed a strong but immediate end to the war, without surrendering to the opposing force in the Cold War. In August 1968, a Gallup poll indicated that 66 percent of Americans supported a plan to “Vietnamize” the war, while 52 percent of Americans listed the Vietnam War as the most important problem facing the nation. However, Americans were split on which party would handle this problem: Republican (31%), Democratic (27%), No Opinion (42%)⁹. Hence, in their final platform, the GOP platform committee appeased both “doves (anti-Vietnam)” and “hawks (pro-Americanization)” by calling for a de-Americanization of the war with an increased “Vietnamization”, militarily and politically (Gould, 1993; Congressional Quarterly, 2000).

Initially, the plank utilized hard-line language, but a new, better-worded plank was placed into the final draft. Leaders like Nixon and Rockefeller called for the protection of the South Vietnamese to control their own military and “developing a greater sense of nationhood”. The platform further called for advancement in weapons technology: “We have frittered away

⁹ While the “Vietnamization” Gallup Poll was not administered until after the Republican Convention, the “Most Important Problem” poll was calculated prior to the 1968 RNC.

superior military capabilities, enabling the Soviets to narrow their defense gap, in some areas to outstrip us, and to move to cancel our lead entirely by the early Seventies (Congressional Quarterly, p. 126).” It seemed counter-productive to suggest de-Americanization of the Vietnam War while supporting the creation of new weaponry. Was this an attempt to win over both the hawks with promises of research in weapon technology and win the doves with a plank for withdrawing from Vietnam?

With the drafting of the GOP platform, and its acceptance by the delegation with no divisive disapproval, the Republican Party managed to utilize this convention function as a party unifying tool. While the Democratic Party suffered a party split among the hawks and doves, the Republicans worked in platform language that appeased both factions. For Nixon in 1968, the success of the fall campaign depended on the party platform and party unity at the Republican National Convention.

Type A vs. Type C: A Revisit

This appeasement of the factions reinforces the ideas presented in *The Great American Convention* by Byrne and Marx (1976). As compared in the 1960 convention season, the 1968 presidential year brought again a showdown between a Type A and a Type C convention. Nixon, receiving 51.9 percent of the delegate vote, is considered by the authors to be an underwhelming candidate compared to Humphrey’s 67.2 percent win over the Democratic delegates. Nixon’s low majority caused party factions to emerge, but his inevitable conciliation of these factions allowed the party to exit the convention more unified, and logically, more organized on policies than they had been entering the convention.

Considering this information, why was Nixon's nomination at the convention so successful in the long run than it was against Kennedy in 1960? Was it the "new Nixon" persona that reflected more a politician willing to change and less a cold warrior of the 1950s? Perhaps the outrage caused by the White House Vietnam strategy? Many issues may have caused Nixon's success, yet compared to 1960, two of these issues stand out.

First, Nixon's vice-presidential nominee pick in 1968 fared better than his pick of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. in 1960. Choosing Spiro Agnew, Nixon predicted to win some border Southern states while following the campaign policies (Gould, 1993). Although losing Agnew's home state of Maryland, Nixon managed to win North and South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia (a total of 57 electoral votes). Compared to 1960, where Nixon's southern wins included Virginia, Tennessee and Florida (33 electoral votes), it seemed that picking the Senator beat by Kennedy in 1952 did not pan out as the presidential candidate had planned.

Another reason Nixon fared better in the '68 delegation and at the convention was his separation from the Rockefeller camp. As Byrne and Marx (1976) worded the phrase, Nixon and Rockefeller "steamrolled" the party platform across the delegates, giving little opportunity for debate in 1960. Although the party platform committee and the delegates were unhappy with the "Surrender of Fifth Avenue (Donaldson, 2007)", 99.2 percent of the delegation voted Nixon in as the nominee. Although it looked unanimous, the party was split between the Rockefeller liberals and the far-right conservatives of the South. In 1964, with the extremism and eventual failure of the Goldwater ticket, the Republican Party realized that a moderately-conservative America needed a moderately-conservative party. Therefore, by eliminating the influences of Rockefeller and Goldwater, while still pandering to southern factions, Nixon mirrored Kennedy in his party unification and leadership skills.

1968 Democratic National Convention

August 26-29, 1968 in Chicago, Illinois

Table 4: Representation of Minorities in the 1968 Democratic Delegation

Minority	Percentage
Women	13
Blacks	5.5
Young (under 40)	N/A

Source: CBS News

Unlike the 1968 Republican delegation, the Democrats had more African-American representation. As CBS News reported, the national population was 10 percent black; both party delegations failed to approach any proportional representation in this instance. Further, women were less represented at the Democratic National Convention than the Republican. However, there are a required number of seats for women at the RNC, most of which went unused. The news report did not indicate that the DNC implemented the same requirement of their delegations (CBS News, 1968).

What the news source failed to unveil was the percentage of Asian delegates. Considering the Vietnam War was fought on Asian soil, it seems logical that some Asian-Americans, more importantly Vietnamese-Americans, considered this a personal or relatable issue. Another problem with the delegation was that of the education levels among the members. Thirty-one percent of the delegates possessed a law degree, while 18 percent obtained a “less than college” education. While 56 percent possessed a bachelor’s degree, “some college” and “no college”, 44 percent had higher levels of college education, but were saturated with the 31 percent of the law degree delegates. Considering, each of the educational sub-groups look to be overpowered by

those possessing law degrees. More notably, does education matter in terms of delegation demographics?

Comparing this to 1970 census data and the representation of the same groups at the 1972 convention (Soule and McGrath, 1975), we can see if the Democratic Party improved on their representation of the American public in the delegate selection.

**Social and Economic Representativeness
of the 1968–1972 Democratic National Conventions**

	1970 Census ^a	1968 Delegates ^b	1972 Delegates ^b
	%	%	%
Women	53	13	40
Blacks	11	6	15
Income less than \$10,000	70	13	27
21–29 years old	12	4	21 ^c
College degree	11	43	52

^a*Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1970* (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1971).

^bThese figures are taken from the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, vol. XXX, no. 28, p. 1642; *The Democrats in Convention* (Washington: Democratic National Committee), pp. 122–125.

^cThis figure includes 18–29 year age group.

As seen in Table 3, the percentages stay relatively consistent with that of the CBS News reports. However, the purpose of the table is to unveil the improvement (or lack thereof) the DNC delegation achieved from 1968 to 1972. As we see in both convention years, the college-educated are severely over-represented again, with only 11 percent of the American public possessing a college degree, but making up 50 percent of the delegates. Women and blacks increased their representation by 27 and 9 percent respectively. This seems impressive, but one must consider that from 1968 to 1972, due to changes in convention rules, the number of delegates rose from 2,622 to 3,016. Further, in 1974, a Democrat Charter Conference voted new

rules in delegate selection to include such underrepresented groups (Sullivan, Pressman and Arterton, 1976). New rules in 1978 expanded the number of delegates further and ordered that the total account of female delegates be at least 50 percent (Congressional Quarterly, 2000).

Daley and Chicago

To begin with the bedlam that was the Democratic convention, the chaos that was occurring during the convention and in the streets of Chicago must be discussed. Initially, Chicago as the Democratic Party's convention site was put into motion in 1967, with LBJ still as a viable candidate as the party's nominee. Meanwhile, in an attempt to show the strength of his city organization, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley not only controlled the events on the outside, but some said he forcefully controlled the convention from the inside, as well.

In the streets, Daley fought the demonstrators with "twelve thousand Chicago police...five thousand Illinois National Guardsmen, six thousand riot-trained federal troops, hundreds of state and county police", a private security group and secret service agents (Biles, 1995, p. 152-3). Undercover agents, known as "plainclothes", roamed the streets. Antiwar activists, such as the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE) and the Youth International Party ("Yippies"), were denied, by City Hall, licenses to gather during the convention week (Biles, 1995). Demonstrations became uncontrollably violent during most of convention week and many of the police activities were filmed by the media outlets and reported on national television. Many reporters claimed to be roughed by police and security officials during the bedlam outside and *within* the convention halls. "Everywhere visitors saw the helmeted police. Intended as much to assure conventioners of their safety as to inhibit potential lawbreakers, the ostentatious display of force nevertheless proved unsettling to many out-of-

towners (Biles, 1995).” Daley not only denied the demonstrators city licenses, but the media as well. Unlike their treatment in Miami weeks earlier, Daley only permitted seven floor passes to each network (Biles, 1995; Mailer, 1968), claiming the “liberal media” thinks, “they can do anything, [and] they can violate the law.”

Daley controlled the convention within as well, having “plainclothes” officers stand guard in convention hall bathrooms and throughout the floor. During a long running floor debate over the Vietnam platform, Daley initiated the end of the night, moving “a finger across his neck in a dramatic sign to silence the speakers (Biles, p. 158)”. Reporters were roughhoused and delegates were dragged out of the audience chamber for not heeding a warning to silence. For the Democratic Party convention, Daley operated security in an undemocratic way.

Vietnam

One of the blatant highlights of the convention was the party’s stand on the government’s actions in Vietnam. The Democratic Party, at the time of the convention, was split between the antiwar movement led by Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy and the current war policy of Johnson and his administration. Humphrey’s advisors suggested he resign as vice-president and divide himself from the unpopular government policy, but any opposing stand on Vietnam made by Humphrey would anger the president, end Humphrey’s presidential support and result in the resignation of the chair of the platform committee (Gould, 1993). The Democratic platform’s stance on Vietnam could be seen through this statement:

“Bombing: Stop all bombing of North Vietnam when this action would not endanger the lives of our troops in the field; this action should take into account the response from Hanoi (Peters, 2010).”

The party was continuously shifting into two camps over the issue. The antiwar camp, submitting platform wording drafted by McGovern and McCarthy, detailed the immediate end of bombing, but this angle did not bode well with the more conservative camps that feared the spread of communism and agreed with the current Johnson agenda. It was decided then that the above wording would appease the liberal Democrats as well as the Johnson and Humphrey supporters, even though the vice-president secretly disagreed, or was entirely indifferent, about the topic. During the convention, three hours of debate was allowed for the McGovern/McCarthy minority draft, but it was eventually defeated 1,567.75 to 1,041.25 delegate votes.

Just as the platform determined the unity of the Republican Party in 1968, so did the Democratic Party platform in Chicago. The divisive split between the hawks and the doves was tremendously more prominent than the Republicans in Miami, and because of this split, the Democrats suffered an unsuccessful fall campaign. Humphrey held too tightly to the policies of President Johnson, even though a high percentage of the American public disapproved of the administration's choices concerning Vietnam. A party split within the party would have the Democratic electorate reconsidering their candidate.

Credentials challenges and the elimination of the unit rule

The credentials committee was formed to create more democracy and representation within the delegations attending the Democratic meeting. McCarthy and Humphrey joined forces to eliminate the 136-year-old unit rule, which administered the total delegate votes to the majority-favored candidate (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). Along with those changes, a number of state challenges were addressed and voted on. In these challenges, factions within state delegations

were requesting seats and representation at the convention, including Loyal National Democrats of Georgia, the National Democratic Party of Alabama, the Alabama Independent Democratic Party (AIDP) and other factional groups. Although the committee or voice votes decided many of the challenges, the Texas, Georgia and Alabama challenges went to a floor roll-call vote.

Although minority delegate factions submitted reports to have their groups seated separately from the regular state delegation, each of the three state roll-calls called for the committee's initial recommendation. In the case of Alabama, the committee "proposed seating all members of the regular delegation who would sign a loyalty pledge and replacing those who would not sign with loyal members of the AIDP delegation (Congressional Quarterly, p. 127)." The southern delegates, who had been barred from the delegation in 1964 for using racial discrimination in voting, now received ample consideration for their challenges, which should have satisfied them by the time of the nomination proceedings. "The goal was to make the party more open and more representative; the unintended consequence was to render Democrats less able to pick candidates who could win the White House (Gould, 1993, p. 121)." With an already divisive environment caused by the Vietnam platform, the decision to determine delegation seating only furthered the temperament. *Party unity* and *party platform* were decisive factors in determining the success of the 1968 Democratic convention. While Nixon had learned from his experience in 1960, the Democrats had become lost with convention rules, unsupported legislation and an unpopular administration.

Nomination

On Wednesday, during the worst day of violence in the streets, the presidential nominee vote was cast. Humphrey took the nomination with 67 percent of the delegate votes (1,759^{1/4} of the

2622), with McCarthy following (601) and McGovern and Phillips gathering only a few delegate votes. It is hard to say exactly how democratic the ballot was, even with the elimination of the unit rule. Some authors suggest that Daley's bully security guards were not only enforcing safety, but political outcomes as well (Kusch, 2004): "With Daley's henchmen patrolling the floor, the mood was decidedly undemocratic...Delegates were intimidated for failing to return to their seats on command, or if they spoke out too loud on the wrong subject (p. 102)." Were the ballots cast under sure duress? Would the outcome of the ballot been somehow different or altered had the convention been subject to further debate? How many ballots would have occurred?

Although Humphrey was now the presidential nominee, despite not entering a single primary, the party suffered greatly in the months following the Chicago convention. Vietnam continued to pose a problem and split the party into factions, while the media portrayal of the violent events surrounding the amphitheater instilled distrust of the Democratic Party in the American people. If the leaders of the party cannot peacefully run a political convention, how can they peacefully solve the quagmire in Vietnam?

Nixon beat Humphrey¹⁰, with his strong but idealistic solution to Vietnam and the country's foreign policy problems, as well as the issue of crime, another strong topic of concern with the American public. Humphrey managed to obtain most of the Northeast, Texas (being heir to LBJ) and Oregon while Nixon finally won out in Middle America, and some of the South.

¹⁰ 43.42 percent of the popular vote to 42.72 percent. However, Nixon's electoral win had a greater effect, winning 301 of the College's votes. George Wallace, an independent candidate, managed 13.5 percent of the popular vote with 46 electoral votes, winning Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

CHAPTER 5: RULE CHANGES 1972-2000

An interesting aspect of studying both the 1960 and 1968 presidential conventions is that they are similar in rules and era. Further, they are the last two conventions before major rules changes occurred within the Democratic Party and to some degree, the Republican Party. From 1972 to 1992, rule changes were abundant within the Democratic National Committee over the quadrennial nominating conventions. Many of these rules were categorized under two types: delegate selection and convention operations. For the Republican National Committee, although the rule changes may not have been as frequent and altering, a few modifications took place to keep up with modern times.

DNC Convention Rule Changes

Prior to the 1960 elections, Republican and Democratic delegations stayed steadily similar. From 1932 to 1960, both parties' convention delegations hovered between 1,000-1,500. In 1944, following the abolishment of the two-thirds rule, a bonus system was put into place by the Democratic Party, which allowed states "extra votes for supporting the [party's] presidential candidate in the previous election (Congressional Quarterly, p. 20)." This allowed for the drastic increase in delegate numbers at the 1964 Democratic convention, where convention rules set into place controlled southern delegations and rewarded state delegations for their loyalty in 1960. For one, the "new vote-allocation formula was in effect that combined consideration of a state's electoral vote with its support for the Kennedy-Johnson ticket in 1960 (Congressional Quarterly, p. 123)"; as a result, there was a 52 percent increase in delegates from the 1960 election.

Delegate numbers continued to increase within the Democratic Party until they seemed to plateau in 1984. The Democratic Commission conference held in Kansas City in 1974, the first midterm meeting of the party, was implemented to improve the delegate and convention process through the McGovern-Fraser Commission. Encouraging the representation of minorities, women and the young, the commission further recommended the state parties apply steps to the delegate selection process: “adopt explicit rules governing the process; forbid proxy voting; forbid use of the unit rule; party meetings be held on uniform dates, at uniform times and in public places of easy access; require ‘adequate’ public notice of party meeting involving delegate selection (Sullivan, Pressman and Arterton, 1976, p. 9-10).”

In 1980, at least 50 percent of the Democratic delegation must be female, as set into place by the rules of June 1978. In June 1982, the Hunt Commissions, proposed by commission chair James B. Hunt of North Carolina, created a new group of delegates called the “superdelegates”, or uncommitted officials making up a large percentage of the ballot (14 percent in 1984) and have grown in influence since then. Further Hunt Commission rules included a presidential delegate replacement rule, the relaxation of the proportional representation on delegate selection and banning the “loophole” primary (except for Illinois and West Virginia in 2000). State primaries were also rescheduled to place the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries in late winter, allowing for a decrease in small state primary influence. New primary rules also prohibited non-Democrats from being selected into the delegation to prevent “cross-over primaries”, where voters not affiliated with the Democratic Party could vote in the delegate selection (Congressional Quarterly, 2000).

In the 1990s, the Democratic Party banned the winner-reward system, prohibited winners in the primaries or caucuses from gaining more delegates. This would explain the apparent leveling

off of delegate numbers from 1992 onward. Further, California's primary was moved from June to late March in 1996 to shorten the nomination process and allow the party to be unhindered when planning the convention. This indicated that the convention was no longer the arena where the presidential nominee would be decided. The Democratic primaries are now the deciding factor in which the party will place in contention for the White House, giving the convention a reputation for uselessness.

RNC Convention Rule Changes

Unlike the Democratic Party, the Republican Party enacted very few new rules into the convention and delegation process between 1972 and 1996. GOP state parties were given relative free reign of their delegate selection process, unlike the DNC which seemed to control the state parties from a national position. In July 1972, the Committee on Delegates and Organization recommended new requirements for Republican delegate selection, including:

“...open meetings held at various sites; bans on mandatory assessments of convention participants, proxy voting, and ex-officio delegates; an ‘endeavor’ by each delegation to have an equal number of women and men; inclusion of persons under twenty-five years of age ‘in numerical equity to their voting strength’ in each delegation; and doubling the size of convention committees to implement a new requirement for one person under twenty-five and one member of ‘a minority ethnic group,’ as well as one man and one woman, from each delegation (Sullivan, Pressman and Arterton, 1976, p. 12).”

Similar to the Democrats, however, was the RNC's institution of a bonus system for states who decide on their delegate selection after the middle of March, leading to a quick nomination decision in 1996. The Republicans, though, desired a longer period of delegate selection; they removed the bonus system in 2000 (it would take effect in 2004) and implemented

“superdelegates”, or the undecided officials making up a large section of the convention delegation (Congressional Quarterly, 2000).

Another major change within the Republican Party’s nomination process was the increase of presidential primaries from 1972 to 2000. Rising to forty-four primaries in 2000, this process selected 85 percent of the Republican convention delegates. This also facilitated the shortening of the nomination period, so the presidential nominee was decided earlier to increase the time to prepare for the convention (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). Why, then, have delegate selection at all if the same process that decides the number of delegates (primary system) also decides the candidate? What is the job of the delegates on deciding the nominee? Are they now only voters on platform and credentials challenges? Does the convention serve any administrative purpose anymore, or is it the “elaborate American political pageants” everyone says they are (Montgomery, 2000)?

CHAPTER 6: 2000: THE PARTIES AND THEIR PARTIES

As discussed in the earlier chapter, numerous rules and changes were made to the convention process in the years following the 1968 conventions and elections. The most important of these, for this purpose, was the reliance on primary delegate selection. Here, the party's delegations are divided up among the state primary winners, and the candidate with the most delegates is the party's presidential nominee. When the decision is made following the primary season, there are still usually months before the party's national convention, allowing the convention committees to worry less about who the nominee will be and more about how the party will appear on television and among the delegates.

So the hypothesis stands that convention power has been somewhat diminished, since a fight for the nomination among candidates for delegate votes rarely occurs in the reform convention era. Since 1972 for the Democrats and 1980 for the Republicans, the presidential party candidate has been chosen through the primary system, taking away the principal purpose of past conventions. There were a total of 89 U.S. statewide caucuses and primaries in the 2000 election year, which took place between January 24 and June 6, almost two months before the first of the major political party conventions. Following "Super Tuesday", about one-third of the winning delegates were allotted to the candidates of both parties, sealing the 2000 nomination race for Vice President Al Gore and Senator George W. Bush as the Democratic and Republican nominees, respectively (Trent, 2002).

According to Judith Trent's article in *The 2000 Presidential Campaign* (Denton, 2002), the primaries serve a number of purposes that the convention system fails to accomplish. For instance, the candidates know how they appear to the general public way before their

appearances at the convention where they accept the nomination from their respective parties. For instance, current Vice President Al Gore tended to shy away from associating himself with President Bill Clinton, thinking that any involvement with Clinton during the Lewinsky controversy would be bad for his political aspirations. It was also an attempt to forge his own political identity and step from the shadow of the struggling but relatively popular president. Gore had the primary season to sort out his appearances, how he would present himself to voters and the type of rhetoric he would utilize on the campaign trail, as did his rival Governor George W. Bush. The voter feedback during primary season brought some candidates from the media shadows and into the daily spotlight: “Bush was, all of a sudden, a regular fixture in the back of his campaign plane...Bush’s speeches became more conservative, he began attacking McCain, and his staff either worked with or allowed the Christian Right to run a smear campaign against McCain in South Carolina and Michigan (Trent, 2002, p. 39). In prior years, especially during the 1960 and 1968 conventions, many candidates, Kennedy in ‘60 and Nixon in ‘68 especially, had to introduce or re-introduce themselves during the convention season; these introductions were not only for the delegates’ sake. With the influence of television, these candidate introductions served to connect the presidential contender with the American voters watching the convention on their television sets.

This presents a question: *how do conventions affect the voters’ opinion of the candidates?* What variables determine the outcome? In 1960 and 1968, we see the media (television news reports and newspapers) influencing the American voters, and we see the candidates and their teams influencing the convention delegates. In 2000 and 2008, the conventions serve the same purpose, but to a lesser extent. First, as will be seen in this chapter, the 2000 conventions for both parties will be financial “grab bags” instead of a political struggle for delegate votes. The

2000 and 2008 chapters will focus less on a party wavering above a decision for their nominee, but more on the party platforms and the established candidates' images. The American people are no longer seeing these nominees for the first time, because the primary system has introduced them months prior to the convention. Therefore, the convention audience will not witness battles between candidates and major floor fights among delegates over candidate loyalties; the audience will see the nominee make campaign promises, a party feigning unity and the public response to issues of the day.

So, as previously acknowledged, the conventions have lost power in the nomination process, relinquishing that duty to the primaries, where delegates are allotted and calculated through state elections. But is this not considered more democratic? As seen in the CBS News make-up of delegates in 1968, we see that many Americans go under-represented at the convention, or in some cases are over-represented (CBS News, 1968). With the state primary system deciding the party candidate, any American willing to vote can decide which candidate they feel is suitable for the White House. State primaries “were a source of feedback to the candidates and to the political parties, and they allowed the people—not the media, not the political parties—to determine who the candidates would be (Trent, 2002, p. 41)”. Although some state primaries and caucuses may be open only to party members, while other state issues go unnoticed after “Super Tuesday” (Trent, 2002), the primary system in deciding nominees seems to be among the most democratic procedures. What if the Democratic Party convention in 1968 had been decided with primaries? Would the American public have chosen Humphrey, the heir to the Johnson administration, when most of the American people were against further Americanization of the Vietnam War (Gallup, 1968)? More importantly, how have the set-up and operation of national conventions changed since primaries took the power of nomination?

Republican National Convention

July 31 – August 3, 2000 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Unfortunately, conventions in the 2000s were little more than “elaborate American political pageants” of how parties are portrayed to the American public (Montgomery, 2000). For instance, many of the parties who organize a modern day convention have themes that reflect the positive characteristics of the party, making them more about appearances than functional political operations. In 2000, the Republican Party’s new millennium theme was “Renewing America’s Purpose. Together”, which focused on compassionate conservatism and party unity on platforms and policies. “Latinos, blacks, women, young Republicans—they’re all being celebrated one way or another. Even the music ranges from rockers Lynyrd Skynyrd to Cuban-born pop star Jon Secada (Berselli, 2000).”

Although some administrative party work was completed, much of the convention, in reality, was one big party. The “Red, White and Blues” concert, a dance-fest hosted by Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott called “The Lott Hop”, golf tournaments, Dick Clark appearances...and the party nominee doesn’t even arrive until Wednesday (Berselli 2000). The roll-call, where the state delegations submit their votes for the nominee which has already been decided, are considered a comical formality. “A chance to wax zany, floridly, absurdly about the great state of this or that (Merida, 2000)”. Many of the large and game-changing states like California, Illinois, Florida and New York passed to submit their nominations on Wednesday, with cameras on and America watching. The Texan delegation presented their votes for Bush last, concluding the somewhat scripted event that had dragged on for almost four days (Merida, 2000).

As far as candidate image is concerned, the public saw and learned very little from the governor turned presidential candidate. “Bush has talked less about his life story than almost any presidential candidate in recent memory (Brownstein, 2000).” Through the convention, the American public found that Bush was previously the governor of Texas and the son of a past president, George H.W. Bush. How can the party increase positive candidate image if they fail in revealing personal aspects of their nominee. Was this absence of information the cause of the greater “convention bump” in the polls for Gore?

As seen in the previous studies, the convention is the stage for the candidates of each party to be introduced to the American public. Kennedy and Johnson became household names in 1960, while Nixon had proved a well-known politician through his years as vice-president. 1968 had Nixon faring better at his convention, while Vice-President Humphrey struggled to lose the grip of the Johnson Vietnam plan. In each instance, the convention presented the candidates in some light, and since the 2000 conventions are more for show than the previous conventions of the 1960s, it would seem practical to “show” off the nominees in a light the political parties feel is acceptable.

Most literature focuses on the events surrounding the convention rather than the actual meeting of the delegates. Some spotlight the predetermined and formal roll-call, while some mock the “nasty and nice” parties for “schmoozing” possible campaign donators (Milbank, 2000; Berselli, 2000; Marcus, 2000). However, behind the veil of champagne glasses and bank accounts, we see similar themes that parallel the convention events surrounding the Republican Party meetings in 1960 and 1968.

Protests in Philadelphia

One of the more major aspects of the 2000 RNC happened right outside its doors. Protestors gathered at the beginning of convention week, crying out against the party's forgotten issues and those affected by them. Unlike the chaos that reined in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention in 1968, almost all of the protest rallies and activities were sanctioned by the city of Philadelphia and did not focus on one specific political issue. The protests went under the banner *Unity 2000*, founded by Michael Morrill, executive director of the Pennsylvania Consumer Action Network. Among the "Bushville" inhabitants, "shadow conventions" took place, allowing the dissidents to voice opinions on issues overlooked by the major political parties (Montgomery, 2000).

Unlike Chicago, the police force in charge of peace and protection of the city, as well as FBI and Secret Service agents, had all spent weeks gathering intelligence on when and how the protests would occur. Morrill claimed to have been "photographed extensively", with many of the Unity 2000 activists claiming the surrounding police force used "overly aggressive surveillance" (Montgomery, July 21, 2000). However, "aggressive surveillance" is much more suitable than the violent quelling used by most of Mayor Daley's police force in 1968. Further, protests in Philadelphia did not prove to be a safety issue for the delegates and other convention workers as it did in 1968. Just as the riots in 1968 Chicago had a negative impact on the nation's view of the Democratic Party, it would seem that because the protests in Philadelphia were allowed with little to no trouble with police forces, the American audience saw the Republican Party as one who welcomes dissenters. Not only that, but the party enforces peaceful protests, unlike the uncontrollable mobs of 1968 Chicago. Did the media take account of this? Do the convention committees consider these events in their planning of the conventions?

Even though American flags were burned during the National Anthem, the purpose of Unity 2000 was to overcome the sophisticated fundraisers and the media-friendly speeches of the RNC and address issues of “campaign finance reform, abortion rights, transgender rights, protecting farmers, supporting immigrants, ending racism (Montgomery, July 31, 2000).” To see protests in the streets while delegates meet to roll-call gives the convention a democratic atmosphere, allowing those unrepresented in the state delegations to have their issues presented in some capacity. And with the city of Philadelphia controlling the violence without inciting it gives hope that at future conventions following the 1968 Chicago riots, peace and progress can be possible.

Republican Party Platform

During the conventions of 1960 and 1968, not only was the presidential nomination a critical aspect of the delegates’ responsibilities, but also the voting of the party’s platform, which facilitated in establishing the strengths (or weaknesses) of the party and portraying its unity (or disunity). However, the topics and issues have changed in saliency since the Vietnam-themed 1960s. For instance, the conventions of Kennedy-Nixon presented issues like national security and civil rights as the important problems of the day. Years later, the Humphrey-Nixon conventions dealt with the Americanization of the Vietnam War and domestic crime. Both conventions and both parties’ platforms attributed to the infighting and disagreement among the delegates; Vietnam issues and civil rights events spurred numerous riots within and surrounding both conventions in 1968.

At the 2000 Republican National Convention, one major issue stood out as a cultural topic among many American citizens: abortion. The protests of Unity 2000 and other activists groups

surrounding the RNC had abortion among its top troubles. Despite the passionate activists camping outside the convention hall, the GOP platform plank spoke out against the Supreme Court decision on partial-birth abortions, where states were incapable of banning the method (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). The platform wording for 2000 claimed “the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed...we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children (Congressional Quarterly, 2000; Peters and Woolley, 2010).” Although less verbose than their 1960 and 1968 counterparts, the Republican delegation took a strong, moral stand, almost a religious step, into government legislation. Bush pledged that he would sign in any amendment or legislation banning abortion methods, and he further supported an increase in adoption tax credit, and the party wrote to avoid punitive actions against those that have used abortion methods (Peters and Woolley, 2009).

Although the Republicans took a moral stand on abortion, their steps may have contradicted other platform planks. For instance, a section of the platform entitled “Women’s Health” goes on to say:

“As Republicans, we hold dear the health and vitality of our families. Our efforts to build healthier families must begin with women — our mothers, daughters, grandmothers and grand-daughters. This nation needs far greater focus on the needs of women who have historically been underrepresented in medical research and access to the proper level of medical attention. We are reversing this historic trend.”.

The delegate drafters fail to mention abortion in the women’s health section, and vice versa. Had the Republican delegates considered abortion a method for preventing or solving a health problem, perhaps the abortion policy could have been less stringent and acceptable to the protesting methods outside the convention walls.

To further show the power of women at the Republican convention, it was reported by the AP Press that less than one-third of the 2,066 delegates were women, meaning 66 percent of the delegation were men. The platform committee, then, was less likely representative on women's issues; and the platform planks may have failed to fully reflect a female voice on party issues. Unlike the Democratic Party, the Republican Party has no rules requiring certain delegation make-up (Congressional Quarterly, 2000). However, was the Democratic National Convention the antithesis to the Republican convention, or did the same problems affect both political parties in 2000?

Democratic National Convention

August 14-17, 2000 in Los Angeles, California

Amid the controversy of the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, Vice President Al Gore managed to transcend the tumultuous situation and beat out his competitor Bill Bradley in the state primary races. The goal of the Democratic National Convention was intended to introduce Al Gore to the people. His image? A loving husband, grandfather, Vietnam War veteran, lawyer, a son of a senator, friends with actors; all of which culminated to a "four week slide for Bush...[a]fter months of riding high, [Bush] fell behind Gore in virtually every poll, just as the serious campaign season began (Sabato, 2002, p. 52)." This suggests that the 2000 DNC had significant effects on the people's opinion of the Democratic candidate, but does this convention operate under the variables of *party unity* and *party platform*? To further emphasize the idea that conventions in this age are incompatible with conventions of different eras, notably the 1960s, this quote from the Congressional Quarterly concerning the DNC is crucial:

“No other names were placed in nomination, and there were no floor fights over the party rules or platform (p. 165).”

Using this statement alone seems to solidify the proposal that although the conventions of the 2000s are similar to the 1960s in themes, operationally, they are little more than parties to showcase the candidate and party. It seems the conventions of the 2000s and 1960s are only similar in name. However, our variables of *party unity* and *party platform* may still be intact.

Democratic Party Platform

While the RNC had droves of protestors outside of the First Union Center in Philadelphia, the Democratic National Convention had its own share of large, but peaceful, protests. Groups going by the names “Queers and Allies”, “Transgender Menace” and “International Prostitutes Collective” gathered outside the Staples Center. Author Dana Milbank (2001) insists the gathering groups had no intention of causing a radical uproar, but to celebrate the art of protest in its purest form. “Fithian’s [the protest organizer] sole goal in L.A. is to allow her motley army of thousands to vent their spleen without letting the marches deteriorate into chaos and violence (Milbank, p. 302).” This is just another example of how the city planners and organizers of the convention have prepared for protests and safety concerning the conventions; the 1968 Chicago riots placed power in the hands of the protestors, even if violence was their main weapon. Convention organizers and city forces now prepare for the arrival and activities of many protests, even if the gathering groups oppose it.

As seen in the 2000 RNC study, as well as the 1968 DNC Chicago convention, riots and protests are directly related to the party and their stances on issues like Vietnam in 1968 and abortion, as well as other issues, during the 2000 RNC. However, since the protests during the

DNC were peaceful, driven by the art of protest and not focusing on one specific salient issue, does that signify the public's acceptance of the Democratic National Platform?

No floor fights erupted during the Democratic National Convention, so one can assume that the delegation had little to no problems with the wording or issues included in the party platform. Further, as stated above, there was no violent unrest among the protestors gathering outside the Staples Center in Los Angeles, further lending to the supposition that the American people (or activists on the left) had no problem with the wording or issues placed within the platform. Compared to the 2000 RNC, although floor fights were avoided, that does not signify that delegates and the American public were satisfied with the Republican platform. As the *Congressional Quarterly* states, floor fights were evaded on the Delaware Plan and the plank on abortion. Republican moderates wished to adjust the phrasing of the abortion plank to help present the GOP candidate in a less-conservative light to voters (p. 162). For the Democrats, their “pro-choice” wording on abortion had not only been accepted by the left, but it upheld the decisions of the Supreme Court as well as wording suggesting “that individual Americans—not government—can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction (p. 165-6).” Perhaps supporting women’s rights on abortion was a ploy to beat out the GOP platform, which did not support abortion.

The *party platform* variable in studying conventions is a reliable indicator of not only the state of the political parties themselves, but also the American public’s view on the political parties. In 1960, we saw floor fights on issues like civil rights and the economy, meaning that not only were these hot issues for the American public, but to convention delegations as well. With that being said, party platforms can affect the candidate image to the party and the public, as well as affect the unity of the party. For instance, although Kennedy won the first ballot for the

candidacy in 1960, the platform and its issues affected the southern states and their views of the party and the new nominee. At the GOP convention, Nixon's choice to construct the platform with Rockefeller created a party rift between the hard-conservatives and the more moderate party members. Although Nixon was voted in as nominee with 1321 of the 1331 delegate votes, his platforming angered the South, the conservatives and Eisenhower, creating a negative image and factions within the party.

Using the conventions of 2000, however, the *party platform* has lost much of its influence, either because it truly has little effect, the policy differences within the party are less visible or the party and the media fail to reveal the possible party strife. The DNC, as well as the RNC, are now strategically organized to imply party unity and positive candidate image to the American public and the delegation while setting the tone for the fall campaign...a fall campaign that needs financial funding.

Financial Ethics

As mentioned before, the convention of modern years have taken a turn for the elaborate, showy and politically formal but overall inconsequential. For the most part, though, the conventions are tools for the political parties to raise not only awareness of the parties' positive characteristics, but to raise funds for the fall campaign and the presidential hopeful.

In 1974, Congress adjusted the campaign finance laws to provide public funding and avoid corporate manipulation on the campaign (Marcus, 2000). For the 2000 conventions, both the Democratic and Republican Parties received \$13.5 million in tax money to fund the conventions, most of which Marcus calls a "down payment" on the festivities. The Washington Post reports

both conventions raising \$30 million in private funds and far more resources pouring in from efforts by the political parties (Marcus).

For the Democratic Party, a financial caste system was created for those donating over \$350,000 (Leadership 2000) and those donating \$500,000 (Chairman's Circle). Some of the activities surrounding the convention were used to raise funds for the Gore campaign, while others were used to raise money for the Hilary Clinton Senate race (Marcus, 2000).

“The parties’ insatiable appetite for funds has become especially unquenchable since 1996, when the Clinton-Gore campaign pioneered the use of the Democratic party to pay for so-called issue advertising that did everything but directly urge viewers to vote for the Democratic ticket. Republicans followed that lead, and such advertising has since become a staple not only of the presidential campaign but of House and Senate races as well, providing a new use for the huge soft money donations to the parties and generating demands for even more (Marcus).”

So while both parties are guilty of using the convention to fund elections and “shmooze” with celebrities, the American people are the ones putting on the show. As stated, the Philadelphia convention and Unity 2000 had protestors calling out for change in “campaign finance reform”, meaning the people outside of the delegation had gripes with \$27 million of Congressional tax money going to both parties to put on celebrations to make more money that may not find its way back into the taxpayers’ pockets.

These financial tribulations and, some would say, misuse of tax money can and does have a negative effect on party appearance. If the parties’ main goals are to have conventions to show off the unity and positive attributes of their respective political machines, the best course of action is to avoid the appearance of gluttony, wastefulness and self-absorption.

If there were a variable to represent this aspect of the convention process, it would be a simple allocation variable. For instance, first one must know the complete fiscal amount

allocated to the party convention (\$X). Then, tabulate the percentage of X that went to the immediate needs of the convention (i.e. hotel, food, moderate entertainment for delegates). Depending on the turnout, we can see where the party used the Congressionally allocated funds, and based on the scientists' variable, how much was left over or went to waste. This would allow the American public to see where their tax-money is being spent, and whether the parties' are using it justly or not. Non-delegate, party members may have a problem with tax-money going to overdone conventions, resulting in a party split among the party elite and the regular American voters (Hadley and Bowman, 1995).

The New Great American Convention Study

As in the previous two studies, one using the 1960 presidential conventions and the 1968 conventions, this thesis has compared how the cataloguing study by Byrne and Marx (1976) has stood up to the test of time in each instance. As stated before, the 1960 conventions presented a Type A candidate/convention versus a Type C, which went under speculation since Byrne and Marx's original work did not include a chapter on this year. The authors did include the 1968 Humphrey-Nixon, which reversed the category for each party, making the RNC a Type A and the DNC a Type C convention (it was the opposite for 1960).

But since publication of the original Byrne and Marx work in 1976, and the last convention sets they studied from 1972, conventions have updated with the times and rules have been added and altered, leaving the now powerful primary system to determine the presidential nominee for each party. So how would the authors update their now out-of-date study?

Logically, instead of altering the entire study, one would simply change the “convention type” variable from the “percentage of delegation votes” at the convention, which no longer applies, to “primary delegate wins” or “percentage of state primaries won”. For instance, in the 2000 Republican primaries, Bush won 84.8 percent of the 2,066 available delegates (approx. 1,752 delegates) while his intra-party competitor, John McCain, only managed 13.4 percent of the primary vote (Leip, 2010; Congressional Quarterly, 2000). Byrne and Marx would most likely refer to this candidate as a “steamroller” in the primaries.

However, not every primary produced a single, clear-cut winner. As we will see in 2008, candidates Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama battled until the very last state primary, having Obama beat out Clinton by only 2.4 percent (41.8 to 39.4 percent). Would this close “Type D” victory within the primaries create any *party disunity* during the convention? Did this somehow affect the *candidate image* of Obama during the convention week?

CHAPTER 7: 2008: IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

After eight years under the Bush administration, following the controversial 2000 election cycle, the people of the United States called for change, while some called for a maverick. These were the themes thrown back and forth between news outlets and determined voters during the long, strenuous bout that was the 2008 election campaign. President Bush's ratings were falling, and 80 percent of Americans believed that the current course of the country was the wrong one (Sizemore, 2009). This put the Republican Party at a strong disadvantage, while giving the Democratic Party political ammunition to work with. Salient issues leading up to the primaries and the summer campaign consisted of unfinished wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. budget and to a point, healthcare. On September 14, all these issues took a back seat to the now critically failing economy, but leading up to the conventions, which occurred prior to 9-14, it was a race to see how favorable the candidates could become to the American voters.

However, before discussing the convention cases of 2008, the status of the general hypothesis must first be addressed. Since 1960, we have seen the variables of *candidate image*, *party platform* and *party unity* change in effect, but never entirely disappear. As will be seen in the 2008 case studies, although the delegates no longer decide the presidential nominee administratively in this new reform convention era, factions of the delegation may still be loyal to a candidate that lost in the primaries. This example was not seen in the 2000 conventions, since both Al Gore and George W. Bush had the complete support of their entire delegations well before conventions time. This unified agreement among each party's delegation, and presumably their voting members, positively increased the *party unity* variable going into the convention. The only negative effect on party unity could be seen through the party platform for

the Republicans: involving the contentious issue of abortion on the platform created protests in Philadelphia, and some moderate and liberal Republicans considered the stance too conservative, creating a faction of pro-choice Republicans. Finally, although *candidate image* was positive in both the Democratic and Republican Party's nominee in 2000, some claim that the more personal approach from Gore had more of an effect on the voting public than the formal approach taken by the Bush camp (Brownstein, 2000).

As previously stated, the difficulty in comparing conventions of the 1960s and those of the 2000s has become apparent. Operationally, the 2000 and 2008 conventions no longer serve as open forums on platforms and candidates, leading up to a delegate vote; the primaries serve as the deciding entities now. As far as campaign tools, however, the four campaigns in this study are proving to be similar in more ways than just one. As the 2008 case studies will reveal, the events and delegate disagreements will hearken back to that second age of conventions.

Democratic National Convention

August 25-28, 2008 in Denver, Colorado

The Democratic National Convention was wrought with controversy rooted in the state primaries and caucuses that occurred during the winter and spring months of 2008. It seemed that Americans throughout the country supported Illinois senator Barack Obama or New York senator Hillary Clinton, one way or the other. Through April and May, Clinton and Obama's superdelegate count had only a buffer of 37, with the Chicago native in the lead (Sizemore, 2009). In either case, the Democratic nominee would either be a woman or an African-American; a first for both demographics as far as the presidency was concerned. Even though

Obama went on to win based on a pronouncement by Democratic leaders to hasten the superdelegate decision, it was evident that the party and its members, especially the voting public, were still split between the two candidates.

Primary Problems

This created a delegation split leading into the conventions. “In both 1968 and 1980, Democrats were facing a general election with an unpopular member of their own party occupying the White House. And in both those years, they were internally divided over matters of substantive policy (Sizemore, 2009, p. 20).” Although the nominee had technically been decided, the primaries had created a massive Clinton following; a small portion of this following would still see her as the nominee up until the convention roll call. Therefore, the primary system produced a party split on candidates before the convention even started; party unity was at risk, despite the fact that recent conventions would have solved this problem in the weeks following the primaries. In 2000, months prior to the convention, Gore and Bush had been decided as nominees by both parties, with little intraparty disagreement over the outcome. So the goal of the 2008 Democratic convention was not only to introduce the nominee and the vice-presidential candidate, but also for the Obama camp to win over the estimated 18 million votes that would have gone to Clinton (Holloway, 2009). Consider the Kennedy nomination in 1960; for one, even though the delegates selected him as nominee by a majority on the first ballot, large factions of the delegation did *not* vote for him. These factions would rather see their candidate, be it Johnson or Stevenson, go on to the White House. It was Kennedy’s message, demeanor and choice of vice-president that would go on to unify the 1960 Democratic Party, which led to the electoral victory for the presidency. “Just weeks before the convention, plans to unify the

delegates behind Obama were still unresolved and an ABC interview with President Bill Clinton fueled speculation about the Clintons' lack of support for Obama (Holloway, 2009, p. 20)."

Would Obama manage to unify the party in the midst of this candidate divergence? Many authors on the subject say the 2008 convention did prove unifying, with the help of Bill and Hillary Clinton, the Obama campaign and the most expensive convention to date. Not only did Senator and President Clinton get primetime speeches, but also Ms. Clinton fully endorsed Senator Obama, halting the roll call on Wednesday of convention week. Clinton's endorsement relieved the possible party split that analysts predicted would explode if Clinton had fought the nomination (Wroe, 2009). The announcement of Joe Biden as vice-president added the Washington experience and foreign-policy knowledge that the campaign lacked and was criticized for. Speeches by Senator Ted Kennedy, who suffered from brain cancer, and Michele Obama also helped to unite the party by promoting themes of hope and change. Kennedy went as far as to say Obama embodied the messages of his older brother, President John Kennedy (Sizemore, 2009; Holloway, 2009; Ceaser, Busch and Pitney, 2009; Wore, 2009). However, most of the credit went to the Clintons and their support: "Both Clintons, wily politicians making calculations about future power, swallowed their pride after a sometimes-bitter primary contest because there was no feasible alternative to supporting the nominee-elect (Wore, p. 119)."

With the support of his party, Obama went on to deliver a memorable acceptance speech in Invesco Field, symbolizing the all-encompassing campaign message of change (from the Pepsi Center) while accommodating anyone who wished to see the speech. With 80,000 people in the crowd and millions watching at home, Obama managed to unite a party with the help from his party. Not only did *party unity* fall then rejuvenate itself over the course of the convention, but also the new nominee's *candidate image* improved by his respite with Clinton, the endorsement

of major Democratic players and the reaching out to the different-minded Democratic factions. Was it the actual convention, though, that solved these problems, or the players at the convention? Is there a difference between the two? No convention events gained mention, except for the interrupted roll call; most of the unifying was done through participant speeches and support.

Platform

As a variable, *party platform* measures the positive or negative response to the party's platform that is revealed at each quadrennial convention. In 1960, national security was at the top of every Democrats mind. In 1968, the Vietnam War severely divided the Democratic Party into the hawk and dove factions. In 2000, peaceful protests over equality and abortion found their way to the Republican convention, while the Democrats only had protestors for the sake of protest, implying that the Democrats achieved party agreement on the main issues of 2000.

The 2008 scenario mirrored these same attributes; there was little strife over the Democratic or the Republican Party platform. With the main issues of the day, including the Iraq/Afghanistan engagements, same-sex marriage, climate-control and the economy, both groups produced party-acceptable policies (Peters, 2010):

“To renew American leadership in the world, we must first bring the Iraq war to a responsible end. Our men and women in uniform have performed admirably while sacrificing immeasurably. Our civilian leaders have failed them. Iraq was a diversion from the fight against the terrorists who struck us on 9-11, and incompetent prosecution of the war by civilian leaders compounded the strategic blunder of choosing to wage it in the first place.”

“...[remove] the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding that still exist in America. We support the full inclusion of all families, including same-sex couples, in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections.”

“We must end the tyranny of oil in our time. This immediate danger is eclipsed only by the longer-term threat from climate change, which will lead to devastating weather patterns, terrible storms, drought, conflict, and famine.”

“Jumpstart the Economy and Provide Middle Class Americans Immediate Relief (Peters, 2010).”

Among these main issues, the Obama camp and the platform committee also detailed a new approach to relations with nations of the world (especially Europe and Asia), as well as notes on “securing nuclear weapons” (Peters, 2010). However, did the party platform variable suffer or become ineffective on the convention because of the more important and stronger issue of *party unity*? In a Gallup poll taken in May of 2008, with McCain as the GOP candidate and Obama as winner of the primary count, only 10 percent of those wanting to vote for Obama were doing so based on policy. For McCain, the Gallup “policy variable” affected 12 percent of those wanting the GOP candidate. The purpose of the entire poll was to show why people would vote for McCain or Obama, and the leading answers were for “change” for the Democratic candidate or “experience” for the Republican.

So while all three of the convention variables exist, only two truly drive the convention: party unity and candidate image. The convention was not a success because of the accepted party platform, but because it unified a party after a major primary split, and the candidate behind the unification managed it with help from his primary opponent, Democratic leaders, a stirring acceptance speech and his message of change. However, not much time was spent celebrating, for McCain and the Republican Party moved along towards their convention with the nomination of Sarah Palin as vice-president on August 29th leaving the media and the American public little time to stay transfixed on the Democrats (Wroe, 2009) or tally the convention “bump”.

Republican National Convention

September 1-4, 2008 in St. Paul, Minnesota

“John McCain...tried to use the convention to reboot his campaign and fundamentally change its directions (Sizemore, 2009, p. 28)”. Ironically, McCain’s campaign at the convention strived to formulate the image that the Arizona senator was more experienced and different than Senator Obama. At the same time, the convention attempted themes of “change”, independence from Washington, reform and bi-partisanship. With the nomination of Sarah Palin as vice-president, the presence of independent Joe Lieberman, the effects of Hurricane Gustav and the exile of President Bush references, the Republican Party’s National Convention was on par to succeed as well as the Democratic Party convention.

By March of 2008, Senator John McCain was the official nominee of the Republican Party with 66.2 percent of the delegates administered through the primary process (Halloway, 2009; Leip, 2010). However, even though the primary fight was won in March, McCain was overshadowed by the media coverage of the Obama-Clinton primary showdown that lasted until May. Although the GOP had months to plan and organize a well-received convention undeterred, the party and McCain sacrificed valuable screen time with American voters while the country was focused on the Democratic primary race.

Leading up to the convention, McCain had a few party problems on his hands. The religious right and Evangelical members of the GOP, who, in 2000, McCain had previously referred to as “agents of intolerance”, were unhappy with the “maverick’s” tendency to lean both conservatively and liberally. Further, the inclusion of independent Senator Joe Lieberman into the folds of the McCain camp did not bode well for the McCain-Evangelical relationship,

considering Lieberman was on McCain's list for the vice-presidency. The shift of the party and the convention occurred when McCain's actual vice-presidential nominee was announced.

The Palin Predicament

In an effort to win over the social conservatives as well as the independent anti-Washington factions, McCain announced the day after the Obama acceptance speech that his 2008 vice-presidential running-mate was Alaska governor Sarah Palin. Her social conservatism spread from her keeping her fifth child, diagnosed with Downs Syndrome, despite the statistics that say 90 percent of mothers abort the child when hearing this information (Ceaser, Busch and Pitney, 2009). Her term of reform as governor in Alaska pandered to the independent and moderate factions of the GOP, fueling the McCain theme of maverick-ism that would carry their ticket throughout the fall campaign. At the convention, however, Palin was a breath of fresh air and she mirrored the effect of female senator Hillary Clinton in her rise to the top in the presidential race. "Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America, but it turns out the women of America aren't finished yet, and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all (Sizemore, p. 24)."

As far as *party unity* is concerned, this move to nominate the Alaskan governor appeased social conservatives, the moderates and the female Republican voters. In a Gallup poll taken before and after the Palin announcement, female GOP support for McCain rose 5 percentage points (Newport, September 3, 2008). Further, support among white women for McCain rose 2 percentage points after the Palin announcement, while Obama's white women support dropped a percentage point (Newport, September 24, 2008). The Republican Party managed to unify the factions in moderation with McCain and conservatism with Palin. Additionally, the female

supporters who were let down that Clinton was unable to receive the Democratic nomination now had a candidate to stand behind.

The initial appeal, however, lost momentum over the course of convention week. Governor Palin became the target of a media circus when it was revealed that her teenage daughter was pregnant, but the Republicans fought back saying that her pro-life beliefs held up the decision to keep the child. Even Obama mentioned that his mother was eighteen when he was born, ending the chance that this would be a mudslinging subject (Ceaser, Busch and Pitney, 2009; Wroe, 2009). “As the convention approached, McCain faced increasingly hostile questioning about his pick’s lack of experience and knowledge and suggestions that his team had not vetted her properly (Wroe, p. 121).”

Gustav and the Convention

The events of the GOP convention were met with troubling news that Hurricane Gustav was approaching the Gulf States of the southern United States. This dredged up memories of a failed Bush administration in their efforts to help New Orleans during the Hurricane Katrina debacle in 2005. For this reason, the Monday events during convention week were reorganized to highlight the southern state governors’ updates and McCain spending his first convention day helping with efforts in Mississippi (Sizemore, 2009; Wroe, 2009). Speeches by President Bush were scrubbed and he appeared via satellite a few days later. The convention theme “country first” fueled the Republican Party and addressed the misnomer that the party and their leaders were “incompetent and, perhaps worse, did not care about people in dire straits (Wroe, p.120)”. McCain’s image, however, avoided this negative connotation by appearing in Mississippi during the Hurricane and having President Bush’s speech moved past the hurricane’s coverage.

The remainder of the week's speeches included former Republican nominee opponents Mike Huckabee, Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney, creating that unifying effect that emulated the Clinton-Obama agreement after the turbulent primary race. What truly set the Republican convention apart from the Democrats' convention was the final speeches by Palin and McCain. Both were positively received, even if some speculate that Palin had the upper hand with her address, while "McCain's speech was much less rapturously received (Wroe, p. 121).

"If one measures the quality of a convention speech by how well the performance exceeds expectations, Sarah Palin's address was one of the most successful speeches ever given at a party convention. It was cutting, it was gentle, it was delivered with freshness and with a certain bravado (Ceaser, Busch and Pitney, p. 144)."

While both candidates highlighted the themes of reform, experience and "country first", it was Palin who bashed the Democratic nominee for his lack of experience, despite her own lack of Washington inside knowledge. McCain's speech reiterated his veteran roots and his years as a POW, as well as his long government service record. For the most part, the convention served as an introduction to Governor Palin and a reminder of who McCain is and what his campaign stood for.

The 2008 Republican convention improved both *party unity* and *candidate image*. McCain immediately stepped up to the effects of Obama's highly rated nomination speech and managed to unite the moderate-conservative factions behind the new vice-presidential candidate. Speeches provided by the losing primary candidates united delegates, even though McCain gained over 66 percent of the delegates in the primary race. And although his early primary win placed him somewhat outside the media spotlight for many months, he returned refreshed and his speech reinvigorated the Right, positively develop his candidate image. The political sparring against Obama was left to Palin, and technical snafus occurring during his speech were dealt

with honorably and calmly. In the Gallup polls, McCain enjoyed a 6-point bounce after the convention, inching out Obama and leading him 49-44 (Wroe, 2009; Gallup, 2008). Despite the positive results of both conventions, however, September brought the ugly monster of the economy into debate, and all too soon the fall campaign began a back-and-forth about who would be better prepared to solve the nation's economic dilemmas.

The conventions proved their worth. The Democrats mended a split party and the Republicans jump-started a new campaign. Candidates were introduced and glorified, while voters and the delegates were the ever-present audience. Although the initial hypothesis claimed that conventions have lost power, it proves correct only to a degree. While from some aspects, the 2000 and 2008 conventions have lost power administratively, but socially and within the campaign, the conventions still serve as the voters' access to the candidates, the parties' platforms and the nominees' camps.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Do the national nomination conventions still hold relevance today? This is the question that the prior chapters have attempted to address. Of course, the broadness of such a question leaves open a variety of research avenues, each employing different methodological approaches. The research in this thesis took a case study approach in examining eight national conventions, offering substantive insights into the conventions, while also acknowledging the restrictions of the case study approach. In this final chapter, the assumptions and findings made in the previous are revisited and placed in context; where needed, the limitations of this work are addressed. Additionally, some future research questions on party conventions are introduced in order to provide a theoretical and substantive framework for further scholarship.

The Convention Variables

Among the variables used to examine and study party conventions, the most important and influential of the three is *party unity*. After all, the convention remains the starting point for the general election campaign, therefore parties strive to use the convention to appear unified, cooperative and cohesive to the American electorate. A political party that fails to unify its delegation and its party members neutralizes the chance of performing well during the general election. Among the eight conventions examined, major party splits (or *negative party unity*) were evident at the GOP convention in 1960 and 2008. The Democratic Party suffered *negative party unity* at the turbulent Chicago convention in 1968. In each of these cases, the divided party failed to win the presidency. To further suggest that *party unity* is a leading factor in convention

outcomes, changes in party performance and decision-making are clear indicators of party unity at work.

In the case of 1960, where Nixon overlooked the formation of warring factions within the Republican Party, a significant split among the conservative right and the moderate-liberal camps occurred and affected the party for the next eight years. Following Nixon's loss to Kennedy in 1960, the Republicans reorganized their party platform in 1964 and assumed a new conservative outlook to pander to these new factions with the appointment of candidate Barry Goldwater. Regardless of the GOP loss in 1964 to incumbent president Lyndon Johnson, the 1960 RNC was clearly taken into account when the Republicans redrafted their platform. The convention and its Republican delegation served as an indicator of the American political landscape, and Republican party leaders used it to their advantage.

To further show lessons learned in the Kennedy-Nixon election, a "new Nixon" came to the stage in 1968. Eight years prior to his victory in 1968, Nixon led a Type C convention (gaining more than 60 percent of the delegate vote and "steamrolling" the party platform) while his competitor, John Kennedy, achieved a Type A convention, gaining 50-60 percent of the vote and unifying the party (Byrne and Marx, 1976). When comparing the "1960 Nixon" and the "1968 Nixon", instances of change can be seen, indicating that the two-time Republican nominee utilized his experiences at the 1960 convention and improved them for his appearance at the 1968 convention in Miami. For one, he avoided controversial talks with political players like Rockefeller, proved more apathetic to the factions within the party and "earned" his nomination by achieving delegate support on their schedule, not his. Therefore, with these positive characteristics, Nixon headed a Type A convention in 1968, beating out Humphrey (a Type C convention) in November.

The Democratic Party realized their need for change in 1968 as well, with the tumultuous and chaotic Chicago convention as the catalyst. Almost immediately after this infamous political fiasco, the Democrats began rewriting convention rules and procedures, creating what is now considered the age of modern conventions, or the reform era. *Party unity*, whether negative or positive, still has sway over how the party operates and the future decisions it makes. The Democrats in 1968 suffered a major party split over the Vietnam War on the convention floor; despite this negative outcome, the party's power to modify and reform the convention and its procedures was still very much operative. Convention power is still present whether party unity is negative or positive. Only when a party is completely unified on every candidate, platform plank and social issue will conventions no longer be needed. Until then, the party, its delegates and even the American people need an event to grieve their differences, oppose the platform and critique the party's performance. As portrayed in the 1968 and 2000 conventions, non-delegates still gathered outside the convention halls and demonstrated their thoughts on current party business (violently in 1968, peacefully in 2000).

The second convention variable, *party platform*, proves the least influential of the three variables, and yet still serves as a critical part of the convention. Just as *party unity* determines the state of the party as it enters the fall campaign, the party platform is the political proclamation that fuels each party's message, brands (or re-brands) the party and determines their campaign path. Without a formidable and acceptable platform, parties would have little else but the appeal of the individual candidate to win over votes. The convention serves as the stage for delegates to approve and adjust the platform to a level of acceptance among the party members and the American voters. Completing an acceptable platform with unified party support places the candidate and his/her party on the path to campaign success. Therefore, a

successful party platform is agreed upon at the party convention to jumpstart the fall campaign on the right track.

Party platform proved more influential in the 1960 and 1968 cases than in the latter 2000 and 2008 cases. For instance, in 1960, Nixon rejected the initial GOP platform and instead went behind the delegation's back and formulated an alternative platform with Rockefeller in New York City. According to recollections of party leaders and news headlines (Rorabaugh, 2009; Donaldson, 2007), the delegates, as well as American voters, rejected the platform, not only for its planks, but also for Nixon's gall in secretly drafting it. The platform angered and overlooked the new conservative factions that would take power in 1964, and despite his sweep of delegate votes on the convention's first ballot, seriously hurt Nixon's image within the party. The result was negative *party platform*, where the drafting is directly correlated with the success of the convention. Nixon's candidate image was affected by his role in the platform, and the party unity was similarly affected. With this in mind, "new Nixon" reevaluated his mistakes and prevented them in 1968. He avoided talks with Rockefeller and appealed to the GOP factions, earning his party's nomination and his victory over Humphrey.

Again, to further strengthen the effects of *party platform*, the Democrats in 1968 severely split their party on the issue of Vietnam, as seen by the riotous streets of Chicago by anti-war groups and within the convention halls by long floor fights over the issue. It was this divisive convention that led to the adjustments in convention and party procedures, most importantly the McGovern-Fraser Commission, that conferred nomination power to the primary system. However, with the primary system nominating candidates months before the convention, the problems of division within parties simply moves from one time of the election year to another. The party's platform, on the other hand, is still decided upon by the delegation at the convention,

even though the delegation has an ample amount of time to review it beforehand. Although party platform is the least influential of the three variables, it is among the three critical convention events that shape and prepare the party for the general election.

The third and final variable to be discussed is *candidate image*, which focuses less on the party as a whole and more on the individual presidential nominees. *Candidate image* was found to be prevalent and equally effective in every case study. Notably, using the works of Campbell, Cherry and Wink (1992), image plays a roll in how well the candidate improves in polls before and after a convention. Some of the facets of this variable seen in this work include how well the candidate unifies the party, how s/he effectively panders to the sometimes-quarrelling factions within the party and how successful his vice-presidential pick is. The conventions still prove a viable stage for introducing the candidate to the electorate, whether the campaign has been on hiatus for months (i.e. McCain in 2008) or gets introduced as the party's candidate for the first time (i.e. Humphrey in 1968, attending none of the primaries). Depending on their performances at the conventions, the candidate may go on to receives positive public responses (Campbell, Cherry and Wink, 1992), or go on to anger the delegation and the American voters.

Evaluation of the Work

For the sake of this study, incumbency was controlled for, meaning that none of the candidates found in the eight case studies were sitting presidents. The only election year omitted was 1988, where the election pitted Republican George H.W. Bush against Democrat Michael Dukakis. However, the approach of “media age bookends”, it seemed suitable to explore differences and similarities between the conventions of the 1960s and their appearance against

the modern conventions of the 2000s. Utilizing this theoretical framework, the major changes in convention procedure over 30 years is more prominent and significant. However, a truly preeminent work on media age conventions should include *all* conventions of every election year during the media age (1952-present).

Also overlooked was the extreme and multi-faceted effect of the media on the convention and the electorate. The media has become a strong factor in how politics are performed and how political events, like conventions, affect the public; for the same reason, modern conventions in the reform era (1972-present) have evolved into televised spectacles, concerned more with appeasing the delegates and promoting a certain party image, and less about the administrative details.

However, the main goal of this thesis is to reveal the variable effects of conventions on delegates and the American electorate through a qualitative methodology. Inclusion of media variables would have extended the research, added new hypotheses and reevaluated the method of assumption. For instance, how were the candidate portrayed on television during convention week? Did this affect their poll standings before or after the convention? How does the Internet affect convention knowledge among voters? Currently, generalizations can be made about conventions to help answer the main hypothesis; with the inclusion of media effects, greater generalizations could be made. For the scope of this research, however, the advancements in media outlets over the course of 40 years place comparative analysis at a disadvantage.

Further Research

As mentioned in the previous section, there are extensive possibilities to further the research in nomination conventions. To include the media and its effects seems the most logical step to take from this point. The media effects on conventions are, as pointed out time and time again, extensive, complex and time-consuming; at the same time, however, including this research can only make this investigation stronger. For instance, how does the Internet play a role in the awareness of voters on convention events? Does primetime coverage of the conventions affect the candidate's poll standings, or is 24-hour coverage more effective?

Regarding research without the effects of the media, a setback in this research is that the conventions were not studied first-hand. Regardless of how it seems, Nixon may have truly considered the factions in 1960 and some intervening factor negated the *party unity* needed at the GOP convention. Only Nixon knows what Nixon was thinking; researchers cannot correctly assume historically what past political actors were contemplating at the time of the conventions, or what fueled their decisions and what they thought the outcomes would be. The best approach is to accumulate as much qualitative and quantitative data available concerning the convention and hope that the assumptions made are sound.

Another opportunity to improve this research would introduce the effects of the primary system. For the 1960 and 1968 case studies, primary power had yet to reach its apex. Conversely, in the 2000 and 2008 conventions, the nominations were decided through the primary system, eliminating one of the major functions of the convention. Therefore, if further research into conventions is attempted, especially conventions after the reforms of 1972 and the McGovern-Fraser Commission, the effects of the primary and caucus systems must also be

included. As considered in the 2000 and 2008 chapters, a reliable update to the Byrne and Marx study (1976) may utilize the candidate's primary and caucus wins to determine the type of convention that will occur (Type A, Type C, etc.). For instance, since McCain won the primaries with 66.2 percent of the delegates, the GOP convention for 2008 may be considered a Type C convention, since it mirrors the same characteristics of Byrne and Marx's Type C. In the case of Democratic candidate Barack Obama, only 41.8 percent of the delegates were awarded to him, while Senator Clinton managed to receive 39.4 percent of the delegates. Re-categorizing conventions using the primary and caucus delegate allocation would not only further the work of Byrne and Marx, but add theoretical framework to any further research in reform era conventions.

Finally, it would be in the best interest of further researchers to reevaluate and modify the convention variables. For instance, the interaction between certain variables may prove useful in the exploration of convention effects on delegates, voters and the fall campaign (i.e. when *party unity* is positive, it reflects positively on *candidate image*, since the nominee is seen as a unifier of party members). Also, variables concerning the delegates were regrettably absent from this study, but may prove as excellent framework for a study performed on the delegations of media-age conventions. For instance, does the representation of minorities in the party's convention delegation reflect the representation of minorities in the United States? Do parties portray themselves as minority sympathizers, yet only include a small percentage of that minority in the delegation (e.g. the Democrats allot a minimum of 50 percent of the delegation to women, while the Republican delegation has no minimum requirement.)

Conclusion

Does the main hypothesis and research question have enough evidence to prove significant? Have the eight case studies sufficiently provided enough support to generalize how conventions perform, despite the cultural, social and technological changes that are common with generational change? Nominating conventions in the reform era have not lost their influential power, despite the changes in administrative obligations. Throughout the case studies, even those as recent as 2008, party conventions, their portrayal on television and other media outlets and the events that take place during convention week *still* have an extreme effect on how the party is viewed by the delegates and the American public. In a Gallup poll taken in 2000, 60 percent of voters were paying attention to the presidential campaign during the month of conventions (Gallup, 2000). Further, according to Rachel Holloway (Denton, 2009), “the television for nominating conventions dropped dramatically over four decades, from 30 million viewers in 1960 to 15 million in 2004,” however, “...nearly two-thirds of all American households, or 120.1 million people age two or older, watched at least one of the 2008 political conventions, while nearly 40 percent of households watched both conventions (p. 18-9).” This indicates that the increase in media coverage, media outlets and convention events are reeling in American voters, educating them on platforms, the state of the political parties and the potential candidates.

Administratively, conventions have lost the power of nomination to the primaries; however, both the Republicans and the Democrats democratically granted that power to the primary and caucus systems. The power to introduce the candidate, discuss platforms, raise campaign funds and unite the party are still the pivotal objectives of the conventions, and to argue that

conventions serve no purpose is an ineffective case. The Democratic and Republican Party should continue this long-lasting tradition, because delivered correctly and performed with unity, positive candidate image and platform as their main purposes, the presidential conventions are critical tools for a successful fall campaign.

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