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Diplomová práce

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Bc. Lenka Vašíčková

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**The US Presidential Nomination System
and Its Evolution**

Diplomová práce

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Autor práce: **Bc. Lenka Vašíčková**

Vedoucí práce: **PhDr. Věra Kotábová**

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Abstrakt

Diplomová práce „Vývoj nominačního systému amerických prezidentských voleb“ se zaměřuje na politické a historické aspekty systému výběru prezidentských kandidátů ve Spojených státech amerických. V první spíše historické části se zabývá vývojem během předcházejících dvou století, kdežto druhá část je věnována spíše politologickým aspektům systému. První kapitola je rozdělena do čtyř částí popisujících vývoj nominačního systému od doby přijetí Ústavy v 80. letech 18. století, přes stanovení nominačních sjezdů a zavedení primárních voleb, až po období reform v 70. letech 20. století. Druhá kapitola se zaměřuje na současný nominační systém a jeho pravidla v rámci Demokratické a Republikánské strany, zatímco třetí kapitola, jež je rozdělena do tří částí, popisuje troje významné primární volby 20., respektive 21. století. Demokratické primárky v roce 1960 a následný výběr J. F. Kennedyho, republikánské primárky roku 1980 s Ronaldem Reaganem jako bezkonkurenčním kandidátem a v neposlední řadě také poslední demokratické primárky v roce 2008 a následná nominace Baracka Obamy. V závěru je celý vývoj shrnut a současně jsou nastíněny možnosti budoucího vývoje.

Abstract

“The US Presidential Nomination System and Its Evolution” Master’s thesis focuses on political and historical aspects of presidential candidate selection system in the United States of America. Covering the past two and a half centuries of historical development in the first more historical part the final paper then continues with more political

characters of the system. The first chapter is divided into four sections describing the evolution of the selection system since the very beginning of the US political history when the Constitution was adopted in 1780s over the establishment of national conventions and implementing primary elections around 1900 until the modern period of reform years in 1970s. The second chapter focuses on current selection system within the Democratic and the Republican Party while the last third chapter, being divided into three parts, describes three key primary elections of 20th and 21st century, respectively. The Democratic primaries of 1960 and a selection of J. F. Kennedy, the 1980 Republican primaries with Ronald Reagan as an unrivaled leader and the last Democratic primary elections of 2008 selecting Barack Obama a presidential candidate. In the conclusion the whole development is summarized and few ideas of future form of the system are provided.

Klíčová slova

prezidentské volby, Demokratická strana, Republikánská strana, výbory, primárky, kampaň, národní sjezd, delegáti, Spojení státy americké

Keywords

presidential election, Democratic Party, Republican Party, caucuses, primaries, campaign, national convention, delegates, the USA

Rozsah práce: 137 055

Prohlášení

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Bc. Lenka Vašíčková

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Projekt diplomové práce

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Věra Kotábová

Autor: Bc. Lenka Vašíčková

Summary:

The main focus of my thesis is to introduce the system of the presidential primaries in the United States of America over the period of the country's modern history. The main attention will be given to the 20th century, especially its second half. In the second part of my thesis I will illustrate the way the present nomination system works on three particular case studies describing three specific primary elections.

Description:

In the first section of my thesis the attention will be paid to political parties. America's modern political two-party system consists of the Democratic Party (left-of-center) and the Republican Party (right-of-center). The historical evolution of both parties as well as their main ideologies – Democrats as a liberal and Republicans as a conservative party – will be described there, as well as their different views on economic, social, foreign or legal issues. To understand better the nomination system of each party, I will also analyze structures and compositions of both Democrats and Republicans.

Primary election system itself is an internal party process that chooses the political party's candidate (in some cases more than just one) for the next general election. Over the period of the past 240 years it is obvious that the nomination rules have changed. As the Constitution doesn't specify the presidential primary system at all, there have been lots of strong debates about how to establish the rules. The historical evolution will be described in details in the second part of my thesis. This section should present early period after the Continental Congresses in Philadelphia and within the 19th century, followed by significant changes instituted in the beginning of the 20th century up to the modern rules that have been used for primaries since the second half on the past century, including a more detailed description of two different systems that Democrats and Republicans use to vote for their final candidates.

The priority will be given to factual case studies. I have chosen three primary elections that I consider to be interesting, appropriate and worth to be described in more detailed way. Those are 1960 primary election that preceded the general election after which John Fitzgerald Kennedy became the 35th president of the United States. The second are 1980 primaries after which Ronald Reagan took over the presidential office. Those will be compared to primaries that were held four years earlier, namely 1976 elections when Reagan almost defeated the incumbent president Gerald Ford. And then last but not least presidential primaries of 2008 that were the first step for Barack Obama to be the first Afro-American

president of the US. One way or another, there would be either the first woman president candidate or the first Afro-American one, so the primaries were specific for both important political parties.

Topic selection:

I have chosen American nomination system to be my main focus, because not only I am particularly interested in the US political system, but I am also convinced that the whole system of American presidential elections is way too confusing to understand and I would like to bring a comprehensible resource of how the candidates, who run for the president in general elections, are chosen by their political parties. The language selection is then obvious as well, because most of the sources are written in English, which prevents me from making mistakes and misunderstandings in my own translation.

Hypothesis:

The aim of my thesis is to present American primary election and their evolution over the past years and to point out some important moments from the history that contributed to create the system that is used nowadays. The goal is to describe the mechanism of choosing the candidate for president for each specific party, in our case Democrats and Republicans. To make the process more understandable, I picked three primary elections to describe the process on. Those are all unique and differ in the times when they were held, e.i. 1960, 1980 (1976) and 2008.

The main methods I will use are descriptive and comparative. The first named will be used while clarifying the whole nomination process and its evolution within the history as well as while speaking about the American political system. Comparative method will be applied while equating presidential primaries in the last part of my thesis with the main focus of transfer theoretical concepts into practice.

Questions:

In my final paper I will try to answer following questions:

What are the most influential factors that affected the long-term generation of the presidential primary election system?

Why does the Democratic Party use system of proportional representation to select candidates unlike the Republican Party that prefers majority election?

Are there any differences in organization of primaries in various parts of the country?

What strategies were used in 1960, 1980 and 2008 primary elections and why do they differ?

What are the perspectives for the future? Are there any changes soon-to-be adopted?

Structure:

The introduction will cover the main features of American political parties and its two-party political system. There are two major contemporary political parties that have won every American presidential election since 1852 – Democrats and Republicans. I will focus on their historical evolution, organization, ideologies and differences in their programs, as Democrats support an American liberalism platform, but Republicans support an American conservative platform.

The main section will be divided into three chapters:

1. The Evolution of the Presidential Primaries

The first part will cover the historical evolution of the presidential primary election system over the period of the last 240 years with the main focus on the 20th (21st) century. It will be divided into four parts:

1.1. The Early Evolution

In this part I will present the very first ideas of how the presidential candidate should be nominated and how the political parties (fractions to be exact) used to choose their delegates. This part will then cover the period from the time of Continental Congresses to approximately the year of 1824.

1.2. Since the Nominating Convention Establishment

Second part's main subject will be the evolution in 19th century, creation of the national nominating convention and differences in the states all over the country.

1.3. Since Adopting Direct-vote-system

The third part will focus on implementation of the direct vote of the delegates, the characteristics of election, the electoral system as well as the differences between The Democratic Party and The Republican Party.

1.4 Modern Period - 1970s until Now

The last part will cover the last forty years. I will try to analyze increasing importance and prestige of presidential primaries and I will also focus on nominating contests and various strategies and tactics used while reaching for the priority to be nominated as the party's candidate.

2. Democratic Party and Republican Party Rules

This chapter's main focus will be on current rules that Democrats and Republicans follow to select their delegates for National Conventions, differences between pledged delegates and superdelegates, the "winner-take-all" method versus proportional representation, specific criteria that vary state by state, campaigns, meetings, caucuses, voter turnout, calendar of presidential primaries and other attributes that characterize the whole process of selecting a presidential candidate.

3. Case Studies

The third chapter will be more specific. I will use three different primaries to apply the theoretical concepts from the first chapter into practice. I will also focus on different mechanisms and I will analyze the main factors that led to each specific results.

3.1. 1960 Primary Election

3.2. 1980 Primary Election (with a complementation of 1976 primary election)

3.3. 2008 Primary Election

In the conclusion I will answer the questions I had mentioned earlier above. I will also summarize the knowledge I got from analyzing specific elections and find some features those elections had in common as well as the main differences. I expect to provide an intelligible interpretation of the nominating system followed by predictions for the future development.

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- www.jfklibrary.org
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- www.whitehouse.gov

Contents

Introduction	2
1.The Evolution of Nominating System.....	4
1.1.The Early Evolution.....	4
1.2.National Conventions Establishment.....	11
1.3.State Primaries	17
1.4.Modern Period – the Reform Years.....	22
2.Selection System Nowadays	29
2.1.Primary Elections	29
2.2.National Conventions	36
3. Case Studies	39
3.1.1960 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Democratic Party	39
3.2.1980 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Republican Party.....	42
3.3.2008 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Democratic Party	46
Conclusion	50
Summary.....	52
Resources.....	53

Introduction

The United States of America is a presidential republic with a President being the head of state and head of government at the same time ever since the country was established by the Constitution. Throughout modern history, American politics has been dominated by two-party system. Since 1852 when the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, in their current names, became the only two political parties to alternate within the political system on a long time basis, we have witnessed that only several third parties have emerged mainly on a local basis.

General ideological position of the two main political parties within the American political spectrum is that the Democratic Party is considered to be left-of-center whether the Republican Party is more right-of-center. The Democrats believe in rights of each citizen such as liberty, dignity, security, equal opportunities, justice, etc. without interference from government and their ideology goes together with liberalism, whereas the Republicans are more conservative and support limited government, low taxes and business regulations.

Every four years both major parties encounter for winning the highest position in the country – the Presidential office. The strategies and tactics differ depending on party, state and other factors, all together making the selection system. Nominating the right person as the party's presidential candidate is a result of a long journey at the end of which there are two people, one Democrat, one Republican, who join the presidential election battle against each other. The process preceding the main duel will be the main focus of my thesis.

The election year starts in January with primaries and caucuses which run until June and then during the summer time the national conventions of both major political parties are held. At the end of the summer the nominee is announced and the selection process is over. But not always the nominations had the structure I outlined above. Historical evolution went through more stages and the people did not play as significant role as they do these days. Founding Fathers put more power to delegates who had been previously elected and therefore were trustworthy, but progressive development of political system as well as the society brought necessary changes to what we now call the selection system.

Historical evolution will be covered in the first part of my thesis together with evolution of main political parties. While analyzing attributes of the system, I will focus on political factors (more than on historical) and I will be searching for an answer to the main questions for the first chapter: “What are the most influential factors that affected the long-term generation of the presidential primary election system?”

The second chapter will be targeted to current selection system and will mainly focus on its attributes such as different types of primaries, electoral formula, voting procedure, allocation of delegates, etc. The main questions I will try to answer are: “Why does the Democratic Party use system of proportional representation to select candidates unlike the Republican Party that prefers majority election?” and “Are there any differences in organization of primaries in various parts of the country?”

The last, but not least, will be the third chapter conceived as a case study part. I have chosen three election years to outline differences not only between timing of the nominating process, but also between the Democrats and the Republicans. This chapter will be focused on 1960 Democratic primaries in which John F. Kennedy won the nomination, followed by the Republican primaries in 1980 at the end of which Ronald Reagan became the party’s nominee and finally will get to 2008 Democratic primaries and the nomination of Barack Obama. In this whole part I would like to find out if there were any differences in primaries within the United States and I would also like to explore strategies that were used in those three primaries and possibly find out how they differed, if they differed.

In the conclusion part, I will answer questions I mentioned above and depending on the results of my research I will try to analyze future perspectives and possibly discover some changes soon-to-be-adopted, again, in case there are any.

I will use a combination of descriptive and comparative methods, while some parts will undoubtedly require an analysis as well, which will be included.

1. The Evolution of Nominating System

The first chapter will be dedicated to the evolution of the selection system over the period of the last two and a half centuries and the main focus will be given to political figures more than to historical facts. The main character that goes through the whole time period, but only its value and impact change from decade to decade, is the amount of participation the people get. Having this in mind provides an interesting viewpoint on the whole following chapter. Starting with basically no participation on voting at the end of 18th century, the United States of America became a country with developed system of primary election throughout the whole country, giving the people a chance a decide who is the right candidate representing its values and therefore providing a democratic representation required in 21st century.

1.1. The Early Evolution

The key discussion about the form of the Constitution of the United States, the main document of the U.S. statehood, had been held among Founding Fathers, who also signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. By that time, they considered the presidential selection to be the most difficult procedure of all. The era of approximately thirty years after implementing the supreme law (1788), will give us the time frame for the first part of evolution of party system, election system, but mainly nominating system, to which the biggest attention will be paid.

The Constitution might seem to be the source of the form of nominating system, but this is not really true. Section 1 of Article II of the Constitution is only a source of rules for presidential election procedure - the system which had been used since the ratification of the Constitution in 1788 until the adoption of XII. Amendment in 1804. Section 1 describes formal requirements for the person to held presidential office followed by the system of choosing this person (along with vice-president).

The group of people, who decide who the best candidate is, is called the Electoral College. According to the Constitution and Section 1 of Article II the president is elected by gaining the highest number of votes (and a majority of votes at the same

time) from Electoral College members. The whole procedure, just like today, used to happen on state level and after the election was completed the votes were counted and sent to the Speaker of the House who counted all the votes and announced the winner. But there is neither a part specifying the actual nominating system nor any closer information about how the candidates used to be chosen which means that basically anybody could have been placed as a nominee (*Constitution of the United States of America*). This was very characteristic for Washington era (1789-1797) and Adams era (1797-1801).

Founding Fathers

It was the Founders who introduced, as the first people in the history, the very basic ideas of how to choose the head of the executive power. They put their ideas together and therefore the Founder's Theory of Selection was written. According to them, the selection system had five functions, which were necessary to be followed to make sure the system is as democratic as possible and provides the right tools to reach the goals they were willing to achieve. These five main functions were (Caesar 1979: 83-84):

- *Controlling ambition*

To avoid soliciting, the Founders tried to make sure there will be enough mechanisms to withdraw a candidate during a campaign and to prevent abuse of power.

- *Presidential leadership and the power of the office*

The main goals of Founders were mainly to keep the president above all the popular demands and to make sure he exercises independent discretions. Therefore they tried to avoid a contest "in which the candidates would have to pose as "friends" of the people or make specific policy commitments" (Caesar 1979: 83). In the same time they wanted the office to be run under the laws.

- *Presidential character*

Searching for a capable candidate with previous political experience was one of the goals the Founders aimed to fulfill.¹ They imagined someone of a good character, but they also realized, that many candidates participate on elections

¹ Just like nowadays people who were well-known had higher chances to obtain more votes. In current politics, we can see such electorate's behavior as well. As an example I can mention local elections where people who are well-known to others do some public activities or simply have occupations that are very „trustworthy“ (ex. MDs) are more likely to be elected, because people generally trust them and they see them as „nice people next door“.

for their own personal profit and that finding someone “virtuous” won’t be easy. For that reason, they tried to influence people to prioritize public good over their own.

- *Legitimacy*

The Founders brought many principles in accordance with republican government, but not as many in accordance with democratic principles. They did, however, aim to create such a system, which would provide a secure majority winning to a perspective candidate.

- *Choice and Change*

They didn’t see the purpose of elections to be a “time of changes”, they preferred the elections to be a time when people can judge the incumbent executives and then decide whether they want any changes to be made or not.

Those five main points faced a lot of criticism. One of the reasons was that they didn’t provide party competition which had a lot to do with the lack of political parties typical for the end of 18th century. The period after implementing the Constitution can be called “*pre-party era*”(Crotty-Jackson 1985: 7) because no political parties existed yet. James W. Ceaser says, that “The Founders’ system was designed to elevate a man who stood out from others on the basis of his reputation for merit” (Caesar 1979: 87) and continues his thought with the fact, that this proceeded even later after establishing political parties.

Beginnings of party organization

As many political scientists and historians have tried to clarify and describe political history of the US since the very beginning, there are currently lots of ideas providing more or less sufficient answers to the question when the political parties in the US emerged. John F. Hoadley (Hoadley 1986: 3-7) has made a brief, but still detailed research in this field, based on which he outlined few different ideas of when specialists think the American political parties were originally created. One of the opinions is that parties existed since the very beginning of the national government, other says that there was a “(...) clear evidence of partisan behavior beginning in the First Congress, based on economic interests of members” (Hoadley 1986: 3).² Based on this research, Hoadley

² Others even came up with more exact timing – one of these opinions expects the year 1795 to be the year of formation of the first political party. Another scholar considers the Federalists to be a political party since 1792 and the Republican since 1794. Others say that no real political parties existed earlier than in 1830.

then thinks that political parties existed this early, but there was no such thing as party system. “The case is something like the metaphor of half-full or half-empty glass” (Hoadley 1986: 4).

According to Crotty and Jackson’s *Presidential Primaries and Nominations* the first effort to organize a party was expressed in Madison and Jefferson era. Jefferson’s party was the Democratic-Republican Party and their opponents were the Federalists. The second president of the US John Adams was elected by the Federalists in 1796 and four years later the Democratic-Republicans elected Thomas Jefferson the third US president. But there were some major differences between these two political parties. Jeffersonians slowly developed a very strong party organization, which led to a close relationship between leaders and followers and they also focused on mass appeal, unlike Federalists, who stood on elitist principles. Therefore it became more and more difficult for them to resist emerging unified Democratic-Republican Party (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 7-10). Presidential election of 1800 proved Jeffersonians raising position.³

Running for president in 1790s was pretty simple, because basically anybody who wanted to be a candidate and a potential president could do so. Contact with other people and “*community status*” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 8) were the key things to one’s victory. The whole process lacked any formal structures, therefore the system could be described as follows: “Candidates were self-announced or, more usually, brought forward by a group of influential persons after some sort of *parlor caucus*, and even when mass-meetings were called for the purpose of making local nominations, they (...) probably did no more than ratify the proposals that were laid before them” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 8). Hoadley completes the idea in his *Origins of Political Parties*. First, he agrees that basically anybody could be a candidate but in few states they moved one step forward by “submitting names to an official who posted the list of nominees before the elections” (Hoadley 1986: 37).

³The other difference between now and then is the fact that no organized means existed at the end of eighteenth century. That means that there were no such groups of people gathered based on member’s similar opinions, which would be represented by a leader. It was just a matter of time for those elected leaders not to be accountable for their actions to their constituencies and people and to undermine the whole “*system*”. The system established by Founders lasted for not even a decade – mostly during 1790s. The need for political parties was more than essential and that was the time of their emerging, although we don’t have any detailed evidence that would give us one unique timing (ideally an accurate year) providing a starting point of the research. It is obvious that before the year 1789, we only spoke about *faction* in terms of future political parties. Those probably emerged in 1790s and started to develop very quickly by the beginning of the new century, when congressional party caucuses were created.

Early years of nominating system

After about a decade the self-nominating process appeared to be the most democratic. As the communication channels were much more limited than now, the world didn't know the invention of television yet and travelling was more difficult, the face-to-face relationship between candidates and officeholders was built just on the closeness. As a result there were local differences in self-nomination system.⁴ Firstly, the informal congressional nomination system seemed to be sufficient enough, although some non-expected cases occurred from time to time. But later on the nominations started gaining more and more importance and factional and party politics became more and more important as well. It was necessary to bring a new structure into the whole procedure. In 1790s no party caucuses existed yet, although Congress member parties gathered on different occasions to discuss specific topics.⁵

In 1790s Electoral College members could vote for anybody who they considered to be the best president-to-be, which worked very well as soon as they were able to agree on one person – just like when George Washington was elected a president on April 6, 1789 (in the office since April 30, 1789). But as it would have been difficult to choose delegates for each state and the system would have been too complicated and maybe not even possible to run at that time, the Electoral College was simply formed from members of Congress, because that way the representativeness of each state was guaranteed and unquestionable.

As most historians believe, there was no real formal caucus that would have met before the presidential election until the year of 1800.⁶ After Washington had retired a caucus among the Democratic-Republican Party congressmen was held but unfortunately the party wasn't able to agree on one person to be a vice-president.⁷

⁴ Crotty and Jackson describe them in *Presidential Primaries and Nominations* and they find that the most extreme self-nomination system was in southern states, where candidates presented themselves in front of other people. On the other hand they see a significant difference between this approach and the approach that New England states had, where candidates were chosen in advance and they were discussed in detail during town meetings.

⁵ According to Hoadley, there were two main reasons for incentives for party caucus meetings. One was the coordination of legislative strategy and the other one was to agree on candidates for presidential elections. Unlike nominations for Congress elections, presidential election was more complicated, though (Hoadley 1986: 53).

⁶ As Hoadley says, no caucus had met before the election in 1792 to find an opponent for John Adams, who was an incumbent vice-president by that time (Hoadley 1986: 54).

⁷ Their presidential candidate was Thomas Jefferson, who they all agreed on, so there was no second candidate for presidential office.

Federalists held a “quasi caucus”⁸ in Philadelphia in May 1796 after which they nominated John Adams and Thomas Pinckney. But as the system was developing during Adam’s era, Jefferson’s presidency (1801-1809) and mainly the nomination process that led to his candidacy was held under different conditions, in different public mood and mostly under more formal rules. “Each party in 1800 agreed on its candidates for president and vice-president in advance of the selection of the electors (...)”says Caesar and continues with an opinion that changes made in 1800 “(...) emerged under the pressure of events, as partisans sought to win power in order to further their ideological goals” (Caesar 1979: 88). Both the Democratic-Republican Party and the Federalists held their congressional caucuses, although they were based on more secret level. First mentioned gathered in Marache’s boarding house⁹ in Philadelphia, where they nominated Aaron Burr for vice-president. All delegates had previously unanimously agreed on Thomas Jefferson to be a presidential candidate, so he was not formally chosen by caucus. Federalists held their caucus in Philadelphia as well, where they agreed on incumbent president Adams and Charles C. Pickney, who was a brother of Thomas Pickney, who was nominated four years earlier (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 3).

XII. Amendment

The selection system of congressional caucuses dominated presidential politics for the next two decades. The Democratic-Republican Party contributed to the face of selection system based on caucuses with two main points. Firstly, it was them who came up with the idea for a candidate as a party leader and secondly they initiated ratification of the XII. Amendment in 1804. The main aim of changing the mechanism of presidential election by this amendment was to make changes while the Electoral College gathered.

XII. Amendment brings to the procedure one new thing – the way how each member of the Electoral College can vote for president. Before 1804 they had two votes that they gave to two candidates who they preferred, without any further specification of who should become a president and who should become a vice-president. The person with the highest number of votes received simply became the first mentioned and the person with second highest number of votes received became the second mentioned. Since 1804 members of Electoral College have been distinguishing between those two

⁸ The term was firstly mentioned by historian Roy F. Nichols

⁹ Marache’s boarding house is a former residency of several Republican leaders.

positions and now they have one vote for presidential candidate and one vote for vice-president (*Constitution of the United States of America*). This was a reaction to 1800 election when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr (both Democratic-Republican Party candidates) received the same amount of electoral votes (after which the House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson).¹⁰

Party system at the beginning of 19th century

By 1816 the Federalist Party became very passive and barely existed. They did not hold a caucus or any kind of a meeting to choose their candidates. Democratic-Republicans, on the other hand, held a caucus and nominated James Monroe for the presidential office and Daniel D. Tompkins for the office of vice-president. Therefore as a result, there was only one political party taking part in 1816 and 1820 presidential elections, which was the Democratic-Republican Party. In 1820 they didn't even organize a caucus or any formal or at least informal gathering. "Despite the fact that Monroe and Tompkins were not formally nominated, electoral states were filed on their behalf. They both received nearly unanimous Electoral College victories" (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 5) say the reports about 1820 presidential nominations.

But as the Federalists were slowly losing their power and technically stopped existing as a political party between years 1815-1820, more and more protests against the caucus system arose. Not only that not all the Democratic-Republican Party members were present at the caucuses, but it was also known that there were some members who were strictly against the whole system. Historian Edward Stanwood says that: "(...) there were mass meetings around the country to protest the caucus system. Opponents claimed that the writers of the Constitution did not envision the caucus, that presidential

¹⁰ The first election held under the XII. Amendment was the election of 1804. The Democratic-Republican Party organized a caucus and decided to nominate Thomas Jefferson as a presidential candidate and George Clinton, who was New York's Governor, a candidate for vice-president. They both easily took their offices, moreover according to Congressional Quarterly's publication "*National Party Conventions 1831-1992*" we don't have any record of Federalists having their caucus or any kind of meeting to nominate candidates in 1804. Before Jefferson accomplished his second presidential period, caucuses of two main political parties were held. The Democratic-Republicans made one step forward by formal announcement of their meeting during which they decided to nominate James Madison, who eventually defeated Charles C. Pinckney, who was the Federalists' candidate, and became a president of the United States for the next two terms (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 4).

nominating should not be a function of Congress and that the caucus system encouraged candidates to curry the favor of Congress” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 5)¹¹

The presidential election of 1824 is considered to be a breakthrough point. The existence of caucus system had to be replaced by another – more effective – system. The candidacy of Andrew Jackson in 1824 was rejected by the Democratic Party caucus in favor of William Crawford. This step eventually caused the party’s defeat because Crawford ended up on the fourth place out of four after the general election. Jackson decided to take part in the next election of 1828 on his own. He was successful in winning the presidential office and during the next four years of his presidency he contributed to great Democratic expansion and mainly to adopting the system of national nominating conventions.

1.2. National Conventions Establishment

The system of party caucuses experienced its last election in 1824. Since then there has been no such system used any more. The main point of losing its power appeared in the moment when a field of candidates didn’t agree with the choice that party caucus had made and they were not able to tolerate it. Sooner or later more disadvantages of caucus system were recognized. Those were mainly connected to voting procedure and to suffrage. The candidates simply needed more support than just what caucus provided.

Introducing national conventions

As a result, in 1824 it was decided that there should be a special state meeting organized, something close to the idea of what Joseph Bucklin Bishop calls “*state convention*” in his book *Presidential Nominations and Elections* (Bishop 1916: 5). As he says, such convention should consist of the same number of delegates as the number of representatives is and they should nominate a presidential candidate. “Thus, the policy of nominations, emanating directly from the people, instead of by legislative caucus, was inaugurated” (Bishop 1916: 5-6). The convention was then organized in August 1824 and started a new era of American politics.

¹¹ Crotty and Jackson add the fact that districts where no members of Congress were elected had at the same time no contribution on presidential nominations which might be understood as elitist (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 10).

It was inevitable that as the new system was so popular at the state level, it was just a matter time before it spreads to national level as well. Crotty and Jackson describe a *convention* as “a body of elected or appointed representatives selected to represent their constituents at a higher level party meeting” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 11).¹² Another step away from caucus system to national convention system was the fact that these conventions have always been called in advance. After the date and place had been chosen, formal announcement followed. This happened early in the election year or even a year earlier, depending on each party and its organization (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 5-6).

The very first national conventions preceding presidential election were held in 1831-1832. As we know from the previous era, there were two political parties – the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. Forty to fifty years later the situation looked differently. The Federalists were slowly dissolved after 1816 (potentially even after 1812) and by 1832 only succeeding organizations existed. The other political party – the Democratic-Republicans – split and more politically active entities were then formed. The main reason was an opinion difference when the question of a successor of President James Monroe (in the office 1817-1825) came up. The section led by Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren gained some level of separation and subsequently adopted name the Democratic Party. Another movement inside the original Democratic-Republican Party was formed as an opposition against President Andrew Jackson (in the office 1829-1837) and was called the Whig Party.

Besides those two, the National Republican Party emerged as well, supporting John Quincy Adams as a presidential candidate later on (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 251-265). But there was one more important political movement - the Anti-Masonic Party. Described by Bishop with a little bit of exaggeration as “one of those ephemeral political movements whose birth and death occur in a single campaign” (Bishop 1916: 8). I would have personally guessed that it was the Democratic Party or maybe the National Republicans, who held the very first nominating convention, but it was the Anti-Masons.

¹² Such conventions were usually held in small buildings to prevent too many spectators from passive participation. As the transportation wasn't nearly as good as nowadays, the location was very often chosen according to the city's geographical location. Baltimore, MD was a very popular city for the 19th century conventions, as it is located in the centre of political life of those days. The Democratic Party chose it for six of its conventions between years 1832-1852. Chicago, ILL became another popular meeting point in the second half of the 19th century and stayed the most popular even until present time.

The First Anti-Masonic Party convention

The years 1831 and 1832, as I said, are the years when first national conventions of the three most important political parties were held. In 1831 the Anti-Masonic Party gathered in Baltimore, where a hundred and sixteen delegates from thirteen states arrived. They nominated their presidential candidates and adopted a three-fourths majority rule. But upcoming presidential election of 1832 was the only one they participated on, after that most of them left the party for the Whigs.

The National Republican Party convention

The National Republicans held their convention three months later in the same city. They were united in their strong opinion against current president Andrew Jackson, but otherwise they had no closer ideas about how to manage their first convention. One hundred sixty-eight delegates from eighteen states arrived (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 25). They hadn't set any rules previously, they only called each other's names and then unanimously agreed on Henry Clay of Kentucky as their presidential candidate.

The Democratic Party convention

The Democratic Party held the first convention in May 1832 in Baltimore as well. Jackson wasn't formally nominated because his candidacy was obvious so more attention was paid to a vice-president candidate. The convention adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, that each State be entitled, in a nomination to be made of a candidate for the vice-presidency, to a number of votes equal to the number to which they will be entitled in the electoral colleges, under the new apportionment, in voting for President and Vice-President; and that two-thirds of the whole number of the votes in the convention shall be necessary to constitute a choice" (Bishop 1916: 9-10).

The apportionment method remained one of the Democratic Party convention's features until 1940 and the two-thirds rule hadn't been changed until 1936.¹³ Eight years later they adopted one more important rule. Bishop says that it was proposed by a member of the Massachusetts delegation, "in the form of a rule directing each delegation, to take informal ballots as to candidates until a majority should be recorded for some one candidate, upon which a report of the result should be made to the convention, and the vote of the majority of each delegation should be reported as the

¹³ Also, there was no formal address for the people issued afterwards, the party decided to let each state to make a statement on its own.

vote of that State” (Bishop 1916: 13). This rule is called the *unit rule* and together with the *two-thirds rule*, it has defined the Democratic Party presidential candidate selection system since then.¹⁴

The years of reconstruction

The second half of the 19th century is known as a period of *reconstruction*. Politicians were more focused on organization of the state than on the rules of selection system. The country experienced a civil war and there was a need for “new birth of freedom” (*Liberty, equality, power: a history of the American people* 2008: 463). Abolition of slavery became one of the most important goals of the Northern states and the selection system itself became not so important during this period of time.

In terms of party system, the second half of the 19th century is usually defined as a Third-Party System, succeeding the Second Party System (approximately 1828-1854). This period begins in 1854, the year when the Republican Party officially emerged. Both of the largest political parties identified themselves with different groups of people and sooner or later the nation split between Republicans and Democrats, depending on whose opinions were closer to each person. Generally, the North states, Protestants, clerks, businessmen and professionals favored the Republicans and the Democrats were more a party of Catholic immigrants, farmers and labors (Karas-Kupka 2005: 3-4). Traditional European right-left scale for political parties is not applicable for American politics and nor is the traditional blue and red color distinguishing. While European tradition uses blue for conservative parties which are more on the right-hand side of political spectrum and red color for parties more on the left or socialist parties, in the US blue color became a symbol of the Democrats, while red is known the Republicans’ color.¹⁵ The second half of the 19th century is known for the Republican Party

¹⁴ Before the Democratic candidate James K. Polk took over the presidential office after John Tyler in 1845, another set of national conventions had been held. The Democratic Party convention was a unique one in terms of not only the telegraph invention, but also the very new phenomenon that appeared called the “*dark horse*”. Martin Van Buren, former American President, was a front runner of the Democratic Party and his position seemed to be safe. The convention, taking place in Baltimore in May 1844, ratified the two-thirds rule again and the need for nomination was 178 votes, which neither Buren nor Cass, his main opponent, approached. The name of James K. Polk was mentioned just modestly, firstly in connection with vice-presidential candidacy. He was a former Speaker of the Tennessee House and former governor of Tennessee and became an acceptable choice for even the presidential office. Winning the nomination on the ninth ballot “marked the first time in American history that a dark-horse candidate won a presidential nomination” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 30).

¹⁵ That’s how the nicknames “*blue states*” and “*red states*” became familiar. Simply according to the fact, whether the state itself prefers the Democratic or the Republican candidate on a long time basis.

dominance, in fact the Democrats managed to win only three presidential elections – in 1856, 1884 and 1892.

The Republican Party dominance

The first Republican president was Abraham Lincoln, who was firstly elected in 1860. The party was not satisfied with Buchanan's administration and therefore they not only gathered by themselves for their nominating convention in Chicago, but they also invited other groups who shared the opinion with them. The main things discussed involved the problem of nominating majority which was eventually solved by passing the minority report based on simple majority of votes (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 40-41). The final vote gave the nomination to Abraham Lincoln who then defeated Democratic candidate Stephen A. Douglas in presidential election.

The Democrats held their convention in South Carolina and as the party was very fragmented in opinions mainly on slavery, the main aim was to gain at least some kind of party unity. There were two reports introduced to the convention, "(...) the majority report (favored by the South) declared that no government – local, state or federal – could outlaw slavery in the territories. The minority report took a more moderate position, stating that the decision of allowing slavery in the territories should be left to the Supreme Court" (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 39). Eventually the minority report was accepted. As a result, the majority of Southern delegations withdrew (Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Texas, South Carolina and Louisiana) along with other three states (Arkansas, Delaware and North Carolina). The convention then had to deal with the situation and decide whether the two-thirds rule should be based on total votes allocated or on the number of delegates present. Reseating missing delegates was another option. After another walkout only about two-thirds of the original convention was present, but still able to agree on Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois as a presidential candidate.¹⁶

¹⁶ The second half of the nineteenth century had a bigger impact on American history than on political system. As a reaction to Abraham Lincoln's election as President of the United States 11 southern states left the Union and established Confederate state of America as known as "the Confederacy". Lincoln's aim was to prevent expansion of the slavery behind the border of the states where it already existed. Before he was inaugurated seven other states had joined the Confederation but the association has never been recognized by any country in the world. The war lasted until 1865 and ended up by victory of the North, which meant the end of slavery in the US. All the other issues that came up during the war – political, social, economic etc. – were crucial for the post-war era for which we generally use a term "reconstruction" and which lasted to approximately 1877.

After the Civil War the Democratic Party was uniformed again, but its strength on the national level was replaced by Republicans. They were strong especially in Southern states, where their candidates usually won, but it was obvious that the more on the North we went, the less support they had which was most noticeable in border states. The Republicans became extremely strong and they managed to hold their power for almost three-quarters of a century, 1860-1932. “(...) [they] projected a patriotic image, which, coupled with the party’s belief in national expansion and limited federal involvement in the free enterprise system, helped make it the dominant party (...)” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 261).¹⁷

Getting closer to the end of the century, the criticism of political parties spread all over the country. As Crotty and Jackson say: “The spoil system, the awarding of jobs, contracts, and political favors to supporters, was the rule, not the exception” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 12). Participation of the public in nominations for public offices was lower and lower and although there were a few rules about the process of presidential nomination, they were not enforced. Crotty and Jackson continue that even physical forces were used to manipulate gaining or prohibiting entry to convention deliberations. So many abuses led to threatening the whole idea of a country being built on principles of democracy. Conventions became “(...) symbols of all the political extravagances of the age” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 12). By the end of the century, change of current system appeared to be necessary.

National conventions for presidential nomination weren’t entirely abandoned immediately – like for example caucuses in 1824 when they were replaced by conventions. Progressive changes had been made over the period of many years and the system went through lots of modifications until it turned to the system of state primaries.

¹⁷ According to Congressional Quarterly (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 254) “The Democrats occupied the White House for 16 of these 72 years, controlled the House of Representatives for 26 years and controlled the Senate for 10 years.” Or in other words, the Republicans controlled the White House for 56 years, the Senate for 60 years and the House for 50 years.

1.3. State Primaries

History of the nominating system in the twentieth century is characterized by two different models of national nomination process. The first one was Van Buren's conception and the other one were thoughts of Wilson and the Progressives. Both of these differ in nominating arrangement, a role of political parties as well as electoral behavior. Caesar describes Van Buren's conception as a "*party-dominance model*" with the main characteristics such as "nomination by "regulars" of the party organization, a favorable attitude within the populace toward political parties, and a strong partisan identification among the voters rooted in a combination of affective attachment to their party and a commitment to its general principles" (Caesar 1979: 213). The nomination is then a result of inside negotiations of party leaders and favorable candidates are either politically neutral persons or people having the skill of mediating among elements.

On the other hand the Progressive idea, as Caesar (Caesar 1979: 214) continues, could be called a "*candidate-supremacy model*" or "*plebiscitary model*", which is characterized by nomination by amateurs, who are somehow interested, ambivalent attitude toward political parties and electorate, which is interested in current issues and open to changes. The party then forms around the nominee at the final election campaign and adopts his vision as the party program. A high-minded and goal-directed person seemed to be a perfect candidate for this conception.¹⁸

Beginnings of primaries

Primaries itself were introduced during the 19th century, but those were just on the state level, so we can't speak about presidential primaries yet.¹⁹ Application of primary method to presidential selection dates to 1905, when Wisconsin "(...) established by law a primary for the direct election of national convention delegates" (Crotty-Jackson

¹⁸ These two models went through three phases during the twentieth century. The first can be dated from the election of 1912, when the idea of candidate supremacy was introduced for the first time. Firstly the idea gained public support but towards 1920s the power of political parties was re-established and the model lost its support. The second phase lasted from 1920s to 1960s and contained elements of both models, which led to a mixed system. The final breakdown came in 1972 election, when the system was transformed to a plebiscitary system, which began the third phase.

¹⁹ Local primaries were firstly used in 1840s in Crawford County, Pennsylvania by the Democratic Party. Although it was dropped in 1850s, Republicans started using it again in 1860s. Around 1900s more states adopted primaries to select delegates for presidential nominating conventions.

1985: 14), which can be considered the first presidential primary.²⁰ The aim of these early primaries was to let people choose who the delegates will be, but without providing any further space to make a preference about presidential candidate and if so, then the convention was not committed to that previous selection at all.

In 1910 the primaries were adopted in Oregon in the form we know them today. The difference was that voters were allowed to register their preferences for president and vice president and they could also choose national convention delegates directly (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 14), which became popular in other states very quickly. Two years later fifteen states provided presidential primaries.

1912 national conventions

In the first two decades of the twentieth century a new movement called the Progressives was established. It can't be called a new political party in terms of a new subject that would appear on American political scene because they formally separated from the Republican Party which happened after the presidential convention of 1912 as a result of a dispute between President William Howard Taft (1909-1913) and former President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909).²¹

Only two names were then placed in presidential nomination – Taft and La Follette. As Roosevelt's supporters didn't participate in balloting, Taft won easily by receiving 556 votes. La Follette received only 41 votes, Roosevelt 107, but 348 did not vote at all although they were present. Roosevelt claimed that he "(...) would accept the nomination of the "*honestly elected majority*" of the Republican convention or a new progressive party" (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 69). The next day the Republicans gathered to listen to their leader speaking about an option being elected as a candidate of an honestly elected progressive convention. Therefore Governor Hiram

²⁰ Subsequently Pennsylvania adopted primaries to elect delegates for national convention in 1906 followed by South Dakota doing the same thing three years later (1909).

²¹ According to Congressional Quarterly (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 69) the Republican Party convention of 1912 in Chicago was the most tumultuous ever. Although Roosevelt had defeated Taft in presidential primaries, Taft on the other hand controlled national committee and Southern delegation, so the difference in their strength wasn't as tremendous at all. The party wasn't uniform and therefore able to elect a temporary chairman, when Taft's wing supported Senator Elihu Root of New York but Roosevelt delegates preferred Governor Francis E. McGovern of Wisconsin. Eventually, Root won over McGovern 558 to 501 (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 69), but this situation only led to even bigger disagreements. Roosevelt then advised his delegates not to withdraw from the convention, but to stay as a silent protest according to steamroller tactics. (According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the steamroller tactics is characterized by "a crushing force especially when ruthlessly applied to overcome opposition." In this particular case, the pro-Roosevelt part of convention "emphasized the feelings by blowing sandpaper and imitating a sound of a steamroller".)

Johnson was temporarily named a chairman of the new political party – the Progressives.

Two months after the Republican convention had been held the Progressives called their own Chicago convention.²² Both Roosevelt and his vice president were nominated by acclamation and the party platform was adopted by the same method. It was called “*A Covenant with the People*” and it contained main principles that the Progressives followed. Crotty and Jackson summarize it and say: “They believed in breaking the concentration of political power held by party leaders, (...) “*depoliticizing*” the political process and making it more efficient, accountable, and, in a business sense, economical” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 12-13). To achieve such a goal they prioritized the direct election of US senators, nonpartisan elections, recall and referendum elections (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 13) as well as women’s suffrage and nationwide presidential primaries (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 71).

The Progressive platform of 1912 says following about the nominating system: “Electoral Reform: In particular, the party declares for direct primaries of the nomination of State and National officers, for no-wide preferential primaries for candidates for the presidency; for the direct election of United States Senators by the people; and we urge on the States the policy of the short ballot, with responsibility to the people secured by the initiative, referendum and recall” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 71).

The Democratic convention of 1912 included the idea of presidential primaries to its platform as well, just in other words: “Presidential Primaries: The movement toward more popular government should be promoted through legislation in each State which will permit the expression of the preference of the electors for national candidates at presidential primaries” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 71). The platform also included their aim to make the presidential office just a single-term with no option for the president to be reelected. The idea of primaries placed power over nominations to the people, the party’s electorate and made the nominating system more open and

²² Over two thousand delegates from different backgrounds gathered for a three-day convention. During the Republican campaign party organizations in the South supported Taft, which included blacks, so as a result, Roosevelt focused on white leaders in the region. He called Southern black delegates as “uneducated and purchasable” and insisted that only “lily white” delegations could be seated in the Progressive convention (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 69).

participatory. For the first time it was the electorate who could decide who was going to be the party's nominee for general election.²³

Golden years of primaries

The year 1916 might be considered as a peak of early primary movement. As fast as the concept was adopted at the beginning of the 19th century it was quickly abandoned at the end of the second decade. Alabama established the system, but it was eventually abolished as unconstitutional and shortly after that Minnesota, Iowa, Vermont and Montana reverted to convention system and delegate selection (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 15). The system entered its second phase and became more or less mixed, or limited for the next forty years.

The importance of primaries increased especially when incumbent president didn't seek for reelection or when there was no dominant figure in the race. In some cases primaries even helped candidates to obtain party's nomination. "Herbert Hoover and Al Smith won commanding victories in their respective parties' primaries in 1928 and, after previous failures, captured their parties' nominations. In 1932 Franklin Roosevelt beat Al Smith, who had been the 1928 Democratic standard bearer, in three of the four major primaries in which they faced each other (...)" (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 16-17). John F. Kennedy needed to prove that over his Catholicism he could still receive support from Protestants. Victories in Wisconsin and West Virginia showed he was a great campaigner and he was able to convert it into national convention support. Therefore his success in the primaries could have a significant importance for future nomination. As a result the party leaders had to pay attention to particular candidates, even though the victory during primaries was never sufficient to gain a nomination, it was sometimes a necessary condition to win party's support.

The system of primary election remained popular for decades, until 1960s, when it reached its breakthrough point mainly because the society changed and therefore the political system needed to react to the situation.

²³ After sixteen years the Republicans eventually lost the presidency to Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson, who became twenty eighth president of the United States in 1913. This also led to the fact that nine other states adopted presidential primary laws over the next four years.

Sudden decline of primary system

The subsequent stagnation of the system at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century was caused by numerous factors. Those weakened the party system, encouraged factionalism, but more importantly as they differed from state to state, it was more difficult for the parties to define eligibility (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 18). The turnout was not as high as it was hoped for and the system still did not automatically provide high-quality candidates. Adding high cost of campaigns and weakening structure of traditional party organization²⁴ partisans now had lots of cons and reason why the system of primaries needed to be reformed. Some states, for example Wisconsin, adopted *open primaries*, other even more extreme form – *blanket primary*, in which voters could choose Democratic candidates for one set of offices and Republican candidates for another and vote in different party contests at various levels.²⁵ Other states adopted *closed primaries* – only for declared party members (those who passed a test of party identification).²⁶ The turnout dropped under one-third as a result of people's lack of interest. Not only the turnout was so low, but the quality of candidates wasn't improved either. The growth of primaries that occurred in 1970s was mostly caused by the fact that presidential primaries were easily understood unlike other primaries.

The whole period from Progressive era to 1960s is called *old party system* (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 21). “Under this system, the primaries were essentially either advisory, indicating which candidates might have the most grass-roots support within a state, or tactical, demonstrating to the party bosses a candidate's potential to fund and run a campaign or to attract certain voters” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 21). But as American society changed in 1960s, the parties' coalitions became more fragmented and therefore the old party system proved less satisfactory for resolving internal party differences. Major reforms were irreversible.

²⁴ According to Crotty and Jackson (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 18) the Progressives never appreciated political parties and their role in democratic system, but parties linked the views of party members and public with candidates and officeholders and without parties voters have just a few ways how to promote their interests.

²⁵ In California a candidate could even run in both Democratic and Republican primaries having a chance to obtain both nominations.

²⁶ Illinois and Mississippi even required to be registered for at least two years prior the primaries in which the candidate wanted to participate.

1.4. Modern Period – the Reform Years

In 1960s the Democratic Party was the majority party. January 20, 1961 John F. Kennedy was inaugurated the 35th President of the US succeeded by his vice president Lyndon B. Johnson after his assassination in November 1963. The Democratic Party era lasted until January 20, 1969 when Richard Nixon took over the presidential office and began a two-term Republican dominance characterizing 1970s.

Political mood of 1960s was strongly influenced by American society and its changes. Two main national conventions were held in 1964²⁷ and 1968²⁸ and both of them led to significant changes within the Democratic Party, which were adopted in 1970s. Vietnam War was a major historical and political event of this decade, having an essential impact on many political decisions made back then and influencing American politics as a whole. The three main movements – the civil rights movement, the protest against the war in Vietnam and the movement for equal rights for women – gained a lot of strength over the years and increased role of television even augmented these movements. As a result of this situation in 1960s, the 1972 conventions brought important changes to both Democratic and Republican Party.

1972 Democratic Party convention

The Democrats held their 1972 convention in Miami Beach, FL in the middle of the summer. The previous convention of 1968, which was held in Chicago, established two commissions to draft the reforms – the Commission on Rules (chaired by James O’Hara of Michigan) and the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection (chaired

²⁷ The 1964 Democratic national convention was the first impulse to subsequent changes within the two main political parties. The Convention was held in Atlantic City, NJ and Lyndon B. Johnson was undoubtedly sure about his nomination. But as the civil right revolution was spreading all over the country, the situation had been influenced by it as well. The delegation from Mississippi was all-white group of leaders under the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), a group of both black and white people actively participating on civil right movements in their state. “The MFDP called on the Democratic party to live up to its civil right ideas, and they demanded all the seats held by the segregationist delegation, which had been duly selected under Mississippi law” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 28). Hubert H. Humphrey (a vice-president-to-be) arranged a compromise between these two groups. Two of the MFDP delegates should be seated and the rest were just “*honored delegates*” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 28).

²⁸ 1968 was the year of Vietnam. The nation as well as the Democratic Party were divided not only over the war, but over Johnson’s presidency as well. After the New Hampshire primaries Johnson announced his withdrawal as a result of his defeat against Senator Eugene McCarthy. Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. hit the world in April 1968 followed by assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy in June 1968, the night he won presidential primaries in California (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 29). Humphrey easily won the nomination with 67 percent of the delegate vote.

by Senator George McGovern of South Dakota) (*National Party Conventions 1995*: 117). The first mentioned composed set of rules out of which the following were adopted by the Democratic National Committee:

- A new vote-allocation formula based nearly equally on Electoral College strength and the Democratic vote in recent presidential elections.
- An expansion of the convention rules, platform and credentials committees so that their make-up would reflect state population differences rather than the previous method of allocating two seats to each state.
- The assurance that women and men be equally represented on committees and among convention officers.
- The requirement that the meetings and votes of all convention committees be open to the public.
- The requirement that the reports and minority views of all the committees be released at specific dates before the opening of the convention.
- The banning of floor demonstrations for candidates.
- The arrangement of the states and territories for roll calls in random sequence determined by lot rather than in traditional alphabetical order.

(*National Party Conventions 1995*: 117)

The Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection formulated eighteen guidelines, which became a part of 1972 convention call. “Among the important features of the 18 guidelines were the elimination of the unit rule; the restriction that no more than 10 percent of a state’s delegation be named by its state committee; the requirement that all steps in the delegate-selection process be publicly advertised and held in easily accessible public place within the calendar year of the convention; the requirement that women, youth and minority groups be included in delegations “in reasonable relationship” to their presence in the state’s population; and the establishment of a detailed, public method of hearing delegate challenges” (*National Party Conventions 1995*: 117).

The 1972 Democratic convention was the largest ever, having 3,203 delegates out of which nearly two-thirds had been selected in primaries.²⁹ The report of the rules that the

²⁹Four years earlier, in 1968, only 41 percent of delegates were elected by the primary system (*National Party Conventions 1995*: 118).

committee agreed on included for example abolition of winner-take-all primaries by 1976; requirement for choosing a woman to be a chairman of 1976 convention with the subsequent rotation of sexes from then on or the creation of a special fund to cover expenses. The output of the meeting was the longest ever (around 25,000 words) and among other attitudes on foreign policy, the Vietnam War, economy, taxes, poverty, etc. the platform also discussed the presidential elections concluding with:

“We favor a Constitutional change to abolish the Electoral College and to give every voter a direct and equal voice in Presidential elections. The amendment should provide for a runoff election, if no candidate received more than 40 percent of the popular vote” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 120).

1972 Republican Party convention

The Republican Party held its 1972 convention six weeks later in the same place in Miami Beach. With a range of debates twice as short as the Democrats had they adopted a new procedure of selecting delegates consisting of awarding bonus delegates for states electing Republican governors. As a reaction another plan rewarding mainly large states was suggested and then the dispute began. Final victory of conservatives over liberals prevented expansion of the convention to 2,000 delegates in 1976 compared to 1,358 in 1972. This struggle was the only case of party’s division, otherwise the Republicans were able to nominate Nixon unanimously – he received 1,347 votes out of 1,348 (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 121).³⁰

Between 1964 and 1976 many revisions within both major political parties were made. These changes included rules regarding translations of votes into seats, timing of primaries and caucuses, rules of open and close primaries, relationship between candidates and delegates, etc.

³⁰ While comparing the Democratic 1972 platform and the Republican 1972 platform we can find some differences. The Republicans criticized not only McGovern as a new leader of the Democratic Party, but also Kennedy’s and Johnson’s administrations. Major differences were in domestic economic policies, taxes, national health system etc., but mainly in foreign affairs and defense policies which was caused by ongoing Vietnam War. The Democratic platform of 1972 says: “We will end that war by a simple plan that need not be kept secret: The immediate total withdrawal of all Americans from Southeast Asia” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 119). The Republican platform did not say anything like this, moreover required continuing negotiations with North Vietnam and possible increase of American involvement in the war. All in all any form of amnesty was unspeakable.

Changes within the Democratic Party

The McGovern-Fraser Commission was the most important institution and the key body during the reform years (1968-1976) together with the Mikulski Commission followed by the Vinograd Commission and the Hunt Commission that were active during the postreform years (1976-1988).

The McGovern-Fraser Commission was named after Senator McGovern of South Dakota and Representative Donald M. Fraser of Minnesota. In the book *Of the People: The 200-Year History of the Democratic Party* McGovern is described as: “a soft-spoken preacher’s son whom Robert Kennedy once called “the most decent man in the Senate” (*Of the People: The 200-Year History of the Democratic Party* 1992: 145). The idea arose after catastrophic 1968 National Convention where party leaders ignored Eugene McCarthy, who had gone through primaries demonstrating his appeal to voters, by nominating another candidate instead of him – Hubert Humphrey, who had not attended a single primary. The Commission should prevent such cases by creating rules and conditions for selecting candidates to provide a better representation. Crotty and Jackson (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 35-36) point out the Commission was mainly very concerned about minorities and their representation as well as women, young people or blacks. Therefore they prohibited a long-time used unit rule, which allowed candidates who obtained less than fifty percent of delegate’s votes and still win the nomination. This was temporarily banned in 1968, but then the Commission made it permanent.³¹

The Commission also decided that the two delegate selection method was acceptable, which meant that direct election of delegates through primaries combined with caucuses and conventions together was allowable. The most important rule adopted by the McGovern-Fraser Commission was the way of distributing delegates for which the proportional representation (PR) had been chosen. This method reflects the percentage of votes obtained during primaries in the percentage of delegates of the convention. “Thus, in theory, a candidate who receives 60 percent of the mass votes in a primary ought to get 60 percent of the final delegate seats. His opponent, in a two-person race, ought to get the 40 percent of the seats that would result from 40 percent of the mass

³¹ “In some ways, the convention that nominated McGovern was the most representative of the country’s populace in history. Women comprised nearly 40 percent of delegates; young people made up another quarter; and the number of blacks doubles since 1968” (*Of the People: The 200-Year History of the Democratic Party* 1992: 145-146).

vote” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 36). In practice it is very difficult to make the system work precisely.

To make the system more transparent and to avoid too many candidates, a minimum threshold of getting a single delegate, which effects distribution of delegates among candidates, was set.³² The McGovern-Fraser Commission decided to set the threshold at 15 percent and once a candidate obtained at least 15 percent of votes in primary election, he would be awarded by a proportionate share of delegates. Crotty and Jackson (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 36-37) then explain that as soon as the threshold was decreased to 25 percent a few years later and a significant disproportion between votes gained during primaries and the number of delegates gained after all arose, the threshold was lowered to 20 percent for the 1984 campaign.³³ This system adopted by Democrats in 1984 gave more advantage to front-running candidates.

Another requirement that the Commission made was the direct vote of delegates to allow all the groups to be represented in the nominations and therefore the winner-take-all primary was introduced later on. This system obviously causes even bigger loss of votes because all votes, besides those that the winner obtained, are “wasted”. For 1984 primaries eight states chose to use direct vote primaries and 34 states stuck with PR method (either caucus or primary).³⁴

One of crucial aspects of primaries is who can actually vote and therefore we distinguish between two main types of primaries: open and close. “If some test of party loyalty is required, the primary is *closed*. If no test of party loyalty is required, the primary is *open*” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 42). The most common way how to close primary is the membership. You simply have to identify yourself with one of the parties and then take part in just the ballot of the party you had selected. For 1980 elections

³² If the threshold is too low, more than two candidates can easily obtain votes from delegates, which then increases the amount of delegates for the first two candidates and therefore isn’t desired.

³³ This was a case of Jackson and Mondale when Jackson received less delegates than his proportionate share indicated according to primaries (about 10 percent of delegates compared to about 18 percent of votes obtained in primaries) unlike Mondale, whose proportion was opposite (he received approximately 39 percent of votes in primaries, but 52 percent of the delegates). As a result, the threshold was decreased to 20 percent of popular vote. But then another problem arose. In the districts where Jackson did not meet the threshold, he did not receive any delegates, but in the states where he did so, he gained a large amount of votes as his supporters where mostly gathered geographically. This means that even though slightly over 50 percent of votes would have been enough he commonly obtained large majorities (80-90 percent) which resulted in “wasting” lots of votes. As Mondale’s votes were widespread he was the one who proportionally received more delegates.

³⁴ The Commission also adopted rules about timing of primaries. Over criticism about the length of the whole process they eventually decided that the selection of delegates starts in the same year when the presidential election is held. The ideal was accepted without any further comments.

only close primaries were declared, which had a negative impact on Wisconsin and Michigan which did not want to abandon open version. Wisconsin stayed controversial while having open primaries anyways. The state was then fought at the Supreme Court and therefore in 1984 there was an open presidential preference primary combined with closed caucuses for delegate selection. As Hart won by the first method and Mondale by the second one, it was proven that the two-process combination can bring different results even on a state level (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 43).

Schlozman summarizes achievements of the McGovern Commission and points out mainly the fact that “the effect was to lessen the significance of the national convention in the process (...); made the decision of the grass-roots party voter the determining factor in choosing a presidential nominee; brought more blacks, youth and women into the process (...). The end result was reshaping of nominating process and a redefinition of the political power structure within the party” (Schlozman 1987: 76).

According to what Schlozman wrote in 1987 in his *Elections in America* (Schlozman 1987: 83) the nominating system in 1970s was characterized by five following attributes:

- The rules were not based on one-person/one-vote assumption.
- The nominating season was long, basically beginning right after the previous campaign ended.
- The whole process was very extensive.
- The media played a considerable role during the whole campaign.
- The nominating system was complicated and beyond what a regular citizen or even a party member could understand to.

Changes within the Republican Party

Besides the fact that the Republicans controlled the presidential office for a greater amount of time and they had been generally pleased and content with their party, they still decided to form two commissions for reform. One of the reasons why they did so was their electorate which had been in a decline and also the electorate base was getting older. The demographic changes such as increased number of blacks and Hispanic voters who identified themselves with the Democratic Party were a result, too. Last, but not least, was the fact that as the Democrats made lots of reforms that required a change

of law, the Republicans were eventually influenced by them as well and they had to reorganize some of their principles, too.

The first Republican commission was the Delegates and Organizations Committee (also known as the DO Committee) which suggested recommendations for changes like: convention meetings should be open to party members, no automatic delegates should be allowed, equal number of men and women in the delegation, including people older than 25 years to state delegations, etc. (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 47). These suggestions weren't forced by law and as the reform was not the major issue inside the party they also did not have a sensible impact.

The second body was the Rule 29 Committee formed in 1972 having a goal to explore minority representation. Among main recommendations was for example to widen each state's party base, which was not very successful as the party did not manage to make the program more attractive to minorities. None of the reforms actually changed the Republican Party decision-making, nominations, dominant role of state parties, etc.

As I previously said, general content within the party was the main reason why not as many changes were adopted. Party regulars had nothing to complain about and radical reforms might have weakened their power, which was not desirable. As there was no general discontent with the nominating process and the changes were not as significant as inside the Democratic Party, they were clear to understand and therefore broadly accepted. Moreover, party members were also content with Republican economic and social policies and a very strong national organization in the Republican National Convention was just the proof.

The reform period of the second half of the 1960s and then 1970s mainly ensured adoption of formal written rules for presidential candidate selection as well as for party decision making. More power over presidential nominating was transferred to the national level and therefore the state level was weakened. At some point there had been thoughts of complete replacing caucuses and conventions by primaries. Secondly an increased role of media and mainly television had a huge impact on a new form of

primaries. The candidates became closer to their electorate and some even believed it was more about the decision that media made than about party leaders.³⁵

2. Selection System Nowadays

The idea of selecting candidates in primary elections rose as a consequence of political gatherings during caucuses because the electorate was completely left out from the procedure. When public showed resistance to being excluded from voting political figures the system of primaries was adopted, proving a possibility to the people to vote by themselves and therefore actively participate on political life in the area and potentially in the whole country or even behind the borderline. Since 1968 the main attention has been on primaries instead of national conventions because since then the delegates only confirm the results of primary elections.

2.1. Primary Elections

Presidential primaries relate mostly to the two main political parties. Smaller parties rather use the petition system – a name of a candidate appears on the ballot just in case certain amount of people sign a petition suggesting the person to be a candidate.

Types of primaries

The system of presidential primary elections varies according to a political party and to a state where the election is held. Generally, people either vote for their delegates directly or they express a support to a certain presidential candidate. Therefore we distinguish four scenarios (Krejčí 2008: 71):

- People vote for delegates to national conventions and they can make a preference for a presidential candidate they prioritize.³⁶

³⁵ In 1970s “between two and three times the number of party members participate in the process today, compared with the pre-reform era – perhaps 20 percent of the adult population” (Crotty-Jacson 1985: 50).

³⁶ For example the Democratic Party insists on this information.

- People pick a ballot with names of candidates for delegates and the ballot already says whether they prefer certain presidential candidate or they vote independently.³⁷
- The third option is a primary election during which delegates have to vote for the presidential candidate who received majority of votes in Congress counties or in a state as a whole. The delegates themselves are either elected directly in primaries as well or during the national convention in each state. Only the Republican Party in California follows the system in which the candidate with majority of votes receives all the delegates' votes from the state.
- The last option is the proportional representation (PR). People make a preference for a presidential candidate and depending on the results certain amount of delegates for national conventions is then "allocated". For example the Democratic Party requires a minimum of twenty percent of votes for each candidate to be obtained to even participate in "redistribution of delegates".

Another specific case is whether to make primaries open or close.³⁸ The Democrats completely abandoned open primaries and only use close primaries for presidential elections. In most of the states the Republicans use the open version as well. In Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont and Wisconsin non-registered voters can elect, too but they have to sign a statement that they support the Republican Party candidates (Krejčí 2008: 72).

Some states have adopted the rule of binding primaries, in which a certain amount of delegates is previously set to vote for a specific candidate until he (she) gets enough votes. The Republicans use this method of "*hooked delegates*" in Washington D.C. and eighteen other states.³⁹

Structure of primaries

Firstly appeared in 1912, the number of primaries amounted to thirty by 1980 and by 2008 even eight more states used primary elections to select a presidential candidate. The first-in-the-nation primary in New Hampshire gets a significant attention every

³⁷ This type of primaries is called indirect primaries with preliminary preference (Krejčí 2008: 72).

³⁸ In close primaries only registered voters of each political party can elect in that political party's primaries.

³⁹ Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, South Dakota, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin (Krejčí 2008: 73).

February in the election year. Having not even a half a percent of overall US population, the third smallest state of New England faces a lot of criticism every four years for having such an impact on the whole campaign. The results of the first primary usually reveal preferences and show the direction of the next development.

As a reaction to this strong position of New Hampshire during the presidential candidate selection, several southern states formed “a coalition” to demean the position by scheduling their primaries on the same day and as early as possible. “They were rapidly joined by small flock of other states, turning March 8, 1988 into “Super-Tuesday” with primaries in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Texas” (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 115). In 2012 primary election the Super Tuesday was held on March 6 with fourteen states⁴⁰ voting at the same time. “In 2008, Super Tuesday fell on February 5, when 24 states nominated candidates, and in 2004 it was March 2, with 10 states holding nominating events.”⁴¹ As Polsby and Wildavsky say, there were two reasons for creating the Super Tuesday. Firstly, to give the southern states more influence on presidential nominations and secondly to switch from caucuses to primaries and to hold the primaries early in the campaign before everything is decided (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 118).

Primaries and caucuses usually run during the first six months of the election year. This year a total of thirty-nine states including Washington, D.C. is holding primaries⁴² and twelve states are holding caucuses.⁴³

⁴⁰ Alaska, American Samoa, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Wyoming (*National Conference of State Legislatures: 2012 Presidential Primary Calendar*, cit. April 8, 2012, available online: <http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/2012-presidential-primary-calendar.aspx>)

⁴¹ *National Conference of State Legislatures: 2012 Presidential Primary Calendar*, available online: <http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/2012-presidential-primary-calendar.aspx>

⁴² In order by date: New Hampshire, South Carolina, Florida, Missouri, Arizona, Michigan, Georgia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Illinois, Louisiana, Washington D.C., Maryland, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Indiana, North Carolina, West Virginia, Nebraska, Oregon, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, California, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah (*2012 Election Central: 2012 Primary Schedule*, available online: <http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/2012-republican-primary-schedule/>)

⁴³ In order by date: Iowa, Nevada Colorado, Minnesota, Maine, Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, North Dakota, Kansas, Hawaii (*2012 Election Central: 2012 Primary Schedule*, available online: <http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/2012-republican-primary-schedule/>)

Primaries and media

A significant importance of primaries and public opinion polls has been more and more important which has been emphasized by media. Ever since the television broadcasting developed, many political scientists, and not only them, have written lots of books and papers about the impact of newly available source of information.⁴⁴ As soon as politicians find out who the front runner is, a big pressure immediately emerges and the role of television even increases. Primary election races are easier to cover for the television than for press, plus the process of primaries is more interesting for reporters than just plain talking during caucuses which, as a result, leads to exaggeration and overexcitement. Richard Rubin claims in his *Press, Party and Presidency* that television tends to dramatize the whole election procedure by using short sporting sentences to even deepen the experience. “Candidates are “leading the pack”, “closing fast”, “sagging in the stretch,” and “gaining ground (...) (Rubin 1991: 194)”. The game analogy is even more significant on the television. “(...) With primaries replacing caucuses and conventions, it is fair to say that candidates have to care much more about how they do on television than whether they please leaders of their party” (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 120).

The fact that candidates are seen on the television very often leads to another fact that people, voters, obviously create a relationship to these politicians and when they manage to receive their votes, it is very likely due to their personalities as dominating factors over their actual political views and opinions. The question of timing primaries suddenly comes up as another significant factor. According to Polsby and Wildavsky the most of Carter’s support in primaries in 1976 came from his early successes. Brody and Rothenber released a study proving that the voters’ turnout decreases toward the end of the whole primary season (Polsby-Wildavski 1991: 121-122). Is it then possible to identify qualities that a candidate should have to “win the race”? And do the rules of counting votes effect the final numbers?

Electoral formula

The method of counting votes always influences final results of any election. We differ three basic ways of counting votes during primaries:

⁴⁴ Samuel Kernell’s book *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Kernell 2006) is one of good sources of further description of presidential powers in terms of cooperation with media.

- Winner-take-all – the candidate who gets a plurality of votes in the entire state gets all the delegates.
- Proportional representation (PR) – after passing a certain threshold all candidates get a percentage of delegates in accordance with their percentage of votes.
- Congressional districts – after delegates are allocated to districts, the candidate with a plurality in each area gets all of its delegates (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 123).

If we tried to recalculate results from previous primaries, or just picked one situation and did some math going through all three possibilities, we would have most likely come up with different numbers and different results.⁴⁵ Lenge and Shafer analyzed 1972 Democratic primaries in terms of electoral formula and its effect on distributing votes and their results were more than interesting. Humphrey would have won, if redistribution of votes had been done under winner-take-all. He would have obtained 446 delegates, Wallace would have had 379 and McGovern 249. But if the counting had been done under PR Wallace would have received 350 delegates being on the first place, followed by McGovern with 319 delegates and Humphrey would have ended up on the third place with 314 delegates. Using congressional districts, the order would have been the same as for PR, but the number of delegates would have been different (367 for Wallace, 343 for McGovern and 324 for Humphrey). And finally the last option, the actual results – neither Wallace nor Humphrey reached McGovern's leading position having 401 delegates. Wallace being the second obtained 291 delegates and Humphrey at the third place received 284 delegates (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 124).

Generally, the winner-take-all formula gives more advantage to larger and populous states having larger number of delegates. These are North-eastern states and California which have lots of urban voters, ethnic minorities and laborers. Proportional representation gives advantage to smaller states where giving support to one candidate pays off.

⁴⁵ Considering primary election in Pennsylvania in 1972 and applying a different formula, the results change significantly. If the primary had been run under winner-take-all, Hubert Humphrey would have gained all 182 votes. But according to actual formula he received only ninety-three votes, which was still more than what he would have obtained if the proportional method had been used – in that case it would have been only sixty-six votes. The difference was actually “(...) greater than the total number of delegates available in twelve out of the first fifteen primaries” (Polsby-Wildavsky 1991: 123).

Allocation of delegates

According to Democratic *Detailed Delegate Allocation – 2012* there are currently two main factors influencing the allocation of pledged delegates. The first one is the proportion of votes each state gave to the Democratic candidate in presidential elections of 2008, 2004 and 2000 and the second one is the number of delegates each state has in Electoral College. If states schedule primaries for later dates they are automatically awarded with a bonus. States with April dates receive a ten percent bonus whether states with May dates receive even a twenty percent bonus (in addition to the number of votes) (*Democratic Detailed Delegate Allocation – 2012*). In 2008 Republican primaries McCain clinched the presidential nomination in early March⁴⁶ and Barack Obama was leading Democratic nominee being far in front (Nagourney 2008).⁴⁷

In 2008 Republican primaries the party gave more power to decide between PR and winner-take-all methods to the states and therefore there were states using statewide winner-take-all method (for example New York), proportional allocation (Massachusetts) or district and state-level winner-take-all (California) (*Republican Delegate Selection and Voter Eligibility*). For 2012 primaries the Republicans made changes towards implementing PR method to more states.

Critics and suggestions

One of the most common arguments against primaries that I have been facing to is the fact that Iowa and New Hampshire are the first states holding any kind of voting procedure (either caucus or primary) although they do not represent typical American states. As the influence of the first states holding primaries is significant, there should be some more representative parts of the US on the top of presidential primaries schedule. There have been a few attempts to move Iowa and New Hampshire primaries from the top of calendar, but they have never been successfully adopted and approved.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ http://articles.cnn.com/2008-03-04/politics/march.4.gop_1_mccain-on-tuesday-night-mike-huckabee-gop-nomination?_s=PM:POLITICS

⁴⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/20/us/politics/20memo.html?_r=1

⁴⁸ For example in 2005 the Democratic National Committee considered it but unfortunately with no further success.

Also, early primary results support a bandwagon effect⁴⁹ among people, a situation during which voters accept the opinion of majority and the wave spreads based on rapidly growing amount of people acting the same, voting the same.

In 1999 the Republican Party formed a commission on presidential nominating system which eventually suggested a new system of timing primaries, known as the Delaware Plan. As Barbara Norrander (Norrander 2010: 98) explains, the main idea is dividing the whole nation into four groups of states according to their size and then scheduling primaries for each group together at the same time. The smallest states and territories come first, the most populous states are at the end. The idea did not get enough support and from the initiative of staff of George W. Bush was rejected by national convention. “Such a rule change would be controversial, especially among the larger states, and the Bush organization did not want any controversy at their convention” (Norrander 2010: 99).⁵⁰

The American Plan is one of the other options of reforming primaries based on randomly selected states holding primaries during ten two-week blocks during which an escalating number of votes is contesting.⁵¹ The plan was not supported either mainly because of the fact that larger states would always have to schedule their primaries for later. Both the Delaware Plan and the American Plan use different values for state classifications and therefore we might see differences in allocating states to each group.

“Arizona is eligible for the first round in the American Plan, but is relegated to the third

⁴⁹ Firstly used by Paul F. Lazarsfeld in terms of electorate’s sudden change of preferences caused by publishing preliminary opinion polls. As a result people who are originally decided to vote for a certain candidate (political party) change their preference and vote for the person (party) who is most likely to be the winner supported by a majority. The essential idea is that psychologically people want to “*go with the flow*” and they do not want to stand aside (<http://rpm.fss.muni.cz/Revue/Heslar/bandwagon.htm>).

⁵⁰ On the other hand the Delaware Plan would have decreased the role of the states where the very first primaries of the year are held, because the majority of delegates would have been selected during the fourth group’s primaries, as those would be the most numerous states. Therefore the results would have been uncertain until June.

⁵¹ As the American Plan is specific to explain, I will use the exact extract explaining the principle: „Any state or combination of states amounting to a total of eight congressional districts could be in the first round of primaries and caucuses, including areas that have large proportions of people of color. The District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, which also send delegates to both national conventions, are each counted as one district in this system. In the second period--two weeks later--the eligibility number would increase to 16 (8 x 2). In the baseline design of the American Plan, every two weeks, the combined size of the contests would grow by eight congressional districts, until a combination of states totaling 80 congressional seats (8 x 10)--nearly one-fifth of the total--would be up for grabs in the tenth and last interval toward the end of June. Because our biggest states are much more populous than the other states, this baseline design would allow California, which has 53 districts, to vote no earlier than the seventh interval, in which the eligibility number is 56 (8 x 7). To put California on equal footing with the other populous states, the order of Rounds 4 through 10 is staggered: 8, 16, 24, 56, 32, 64, 40, 72, 48, 80” (<http://archive.fairvote.org/?page=965>).

pod in the Delaware Plan (...) A slightly larger mid-sized state, Virginia is eligible for the second round in the American Plan, but is dead last in the Delaware Plan” (Gangale 2008: 173).

National Association of Secretaries of States introduced its own version of reforming presidential nominating system. The NASS Rotating, Regional Presidential Primaries Plan divides the US to four regions (the East, the South, the Midwest, the West⁵²) rotating on yearly basis (the region coming first one year goes last next time) having primaries scheduled for the first Tuesdays in March, April, May and June. Special position for Iowa and New Hampshire would be preserved (*NASS Rotating, Regional Presidential Primaries Plan*).⁵³

Besides these three plans many more have been released (the Ohio Plan, Interregional Primary Plan, etc.) but none of them was (or has been) supported enough. Crotty and Jackson differ two groups of thoughts on significance of primaries: the proreform school and the restorian school. According to the proreform school, “(...) increased participation is an advantage to the political system: the mass voters are the best repository of the wisdom and good judgment needed to make the crucial collective choice of the major parties nominees” (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 98). On the other hand the restorian school is more critical to primaries and their impact and highly supports return to the system used during the prereform era (Crotty-Jackson 1985: 98).

2.2. National Conventions

After going through all primary elections, usually during the summer of the election year, national conventions of each relevant political party are held.⁵⁴ The gathering is basically just a confirmation of results of primaries, although nothing is decided yet.

⁵² East: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and Guam.

⁵³ http://www.nass.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=74&Itemid=210

⁵⁴ 2012 Democratic National Convention will be held on September 3-6 in Charlotte, NC hosting a total of 2,778 delegates (using proportional representation to select a candidate). 2012 Republican National Convention

Formal announcement is usually released eighteen months prior the convention and gives enough space for organization. There is no strict rule specifying the order of conventions, but according to an informal tradition built during the twentieth century the party out of power usually goes first which will be applied for 2012 national conventions as well. The conventions are held either in July or in August (rarely in early September) and they usually take four days with about a month between Democratic and Republican convention.⁵⁵ Each party also sets its own rules about participation and delegate selection according to each state's population, Congressional representatives or government officials. To give an example, 2008 Democratic convention hosted a total of 4,418 delegates and the Republican convention was attended by 2,380 delegates (*The Green Papers: 2008 Presidential Primaries, Caucuses, and Conventions*).

Structure and voting procedure

The structure of a four-day convention is usually very similar for both parties. During the first day the opening speeches are delivered and then committee appointments are made as well as the Permanent Chair⁵⁶ is elected. The Democrats also schedule the keynote address for the first session whether the Republicans usually leave it for the second day. The keynote address sets the themes of the convention and usually mentions the general election campaign as well. Again, this speech is delivered by another prominent person or a "rising star" of the party. The second day agenda is mostly formed by approving platform committees and debating over rules and credentials followed by adopting the party platform, a statement of principles and policies. The third day is usually the day of presidential nomination, which has lately been accomplished within one evening. During the voting procedure each state is called alphabetically (starting with Alabama and Wyoming being the last one) and is represented by a spokesman. After introducing the highlights of the state and its main political representatives the delegate count is announced. The method is called a *roll call of the states*. The last day of the convention the vice presidential nomination is usually given followed by vice presidential and presidential acceptance speeches, the

will be held on August 27-30 in Tampa, FL gathering overall 2,286 delegates (according to the winner-take-all method, 1,144 delegates is a majority a candidate has to obtain to be elected).

⁵⁵ According to a tradition, when summer Olympics are held in the election year, one political party usually schedules its convention prior the games and the other one after them.

⁵⁶ The Permanent Chair presides the convention and is usually represented by a senior party figure, most often the party leader in the House of Representatives (*Presidential Elections in the United States: A Primer* 2000: 24).

second mentioned being the closing event of the whole convention (*Presidential Elections in the United States: A Primer* 2000: 24-30).

Brokered convention

Obviously, the results of primaries throughout American states have major influence on party conventions and voting itself. At the end of primary season, two scenarios may occur, depending on whether there is a candidate with enough delegates won and therefore he or she does or does not have a pre-existing majority for the first ballot. If there is not a person with clinched nomination the convention is “*brokered*”⁵⁷ and the delegates who were previously pledged can second guess their original preference and vote for someone else. Historically, this situation happened for example during 1976 Republican primaries when Gerald Ford was in a slight lead after primary elections and caucuses but he did not obtain enough delegates to secure the nomination and eventually almost lost it to Ronald Reagan (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 127-129). As far as I can remember, the last Democratic National Convention in 2008 was also expected to be brokered until beginning of June. Generally the Democratic Party tends more to brokered conventions simply because of their system of proportional representation.

“Immediately following the conventions, the nominees are faced with several tasks. These include uniting the party behind the candidates, establishing a general election campaign organization, and preparing a campaign plan” (*Presidential Elections in the United States: A primer* 2000: 31). The presidential race moves to the next phase – the campaigning terminated by winning the office and becoming the President of the United States of America.

⁵⁷ The definition of a brokered convention according to Taegan Goddard’s Political Dictionary to be found also online on: <http://politicaldictionary.com/words/brokered-convention/>

3. Case Studies

The third chapter describes three remarkable presidential primaries followed by national conventions. Two of them were held in the 20th century and one in the 21st century, two of them were Democratic primaries and one were Republican primaries. According to the timeline, this chapter firstly focuses on John Fitzgerald Kennedy's journey to being elected the Democratic Party nominee for 1960 presidential election, followed by Republican primaries of 1980 and Ronald Wilson Reagan's nomination. The third part will be dedicated to 2008 presidential primaries within the Democratic Party, which was unique in terms of shifting the United States to another phase of presidential candidate nominations, when either a woman, Hillary Rodham Clinton, or an Afro-American candidate, Barack Hussein Obama, were right about to win the office.

3.1. 1960 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Democratic Party

In the beginning of 1960s nothing was decided when it came to presidential primary elections. There were states which chose direct primaries as a method of a candidate selection but there were also states which abandoned it and some states were just experimenting with it by changing rules decade to decade. As a result, in 1960 sixteen American states⁵⁸ held primaries to select a presidential candidate.

Primaries

The Democratic Party had two main candidates for primary elections. One of them was Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, who eventually became Lyndon Johnson's Vice President in 1964, which was his first successful nomination for presidential and vice-presidential, respectively, candidate but third overall. The other one was soon-to-be-elected American President and according to Gallup statistics a

⁵⁸ Oregon, California, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Florida

person holding the presidential office scoring the highest overall average job approval⁵⁹ rating ever, John F. Kennedy (*Gallup* 2012).

Humphrey ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1952 for the first time, receiving only twenty-six votes during the first ballot. Four years later he became a vice-presidential candidate of the Democratic Party and received 134 votes in the first ballot and 74 in the second one. For a long time ignored by press, he “had grown in public measure” and became well-known in the years between 1956 and 1960 (White 2009: 29). After traditional opening primary in New Hampshire Wisconsin hosted one of two breaking primaries, in which Kennedy was more successful but he did not manage to fulfill expectations and predictions about his lead. According to White’s *The Making of President: 1960*, JFK won six districts but “no one could tell whether Humphrey’s districts had voted against Kennedy because they were Protestant or because they were farmland closest to Minnesota; nor whether Kennedy had won his own six districts because they were heavily Catholic or because they were heavily industrial” (White 2009: 94). Humphrey commented on Kennedy’s well-funded campaign with lots of representatively-looking people around, great organization and assurance saying that he felt “like an independent merchant competing against a chain store” (Schlesinger 1996: 195).

West Virginia primary

After seeing the results of Wisconsin primary Humphrey decided to continue his campaign in following state, in which he faced JFK - West Virginia. Kennedy’s preferences had been slightly decreasing but he decided to stand up the religion issue. As a Catholic candidate he afforded to focus less on Catholic-Protestant differences and move more attention to tolerance-intolerance dichotomy. Making a good impression on people was highly supported by his wealthy financial background. While Humphrey travelled across the country by bus to meet his electorate, Kennedy could easily afford luxury plane rides in a family-owned airplane.

⁵⁹ Gallup.com has been focusing on presidential approval for years and its statistics start with Harry Truman (in the office 1945-1953). The highest overall average job approval ever reached 70.1% (JFK) and the lowest on the other hand only 45.4% (Harry Truman). For comparison, George W. Bush’s overall average job approval was 62.2% during his first term in the office and then dropped to 36.5% during the second terms. Obama’s average job approval has been 49.0% (*Gallup* 2012).

Highly Protestant West Virginia's primary was held on May 10 and after counting all votes later in the evening it was sure that Kennedy defeated Humphrey by winning about sixty percent majority and proved that a Catholic candidate can win in a non-Catholic state (White 2009: 112). As a result, Humphrey decided to resign on his candidacy for Democratic Party nominee for 1960 presidential election. He managed to win two primaries – in South Dakota and District of Columbia.

Results

After Humphrey left the game there were still more candidates in primaries, having a potential chance to win the nomination, but mostly just in their home states. Pat Brown, a Governor of California, won by 67% in the Golden State, George Smathers, a Senator of Florida, won by 100% in the Sunshine State primary and Michael DiSalle, a Governor of Ohio and a Mayor of Toledo, won by 60% in the Buckeye State.⁶⁰

JFK won in ten states including Massachusetts, his home state, where he received 92.4% of votes in the Democratic primary. According to John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum statistics, the overall percentage of votes he obtained during primaries was 32.5%.⁶¹ Brown being the second received 23.8% of votes, so Kennedy's lead can be considered as safe.⁶²

In June, at the end of primary season, John Fitzgerald Kennedy clinched himself a good starting position for upcoming Democratic National Convention, this time being held in California.

National Convention

1960 Democratic National Convention was, for the first time ever, held in Los Angeles, CA hosting more than 4,000 delegates (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 103). In the beginning rules and credentials were discussed, as usually, followed by a dispute over Puerto Rico Delegation and balloting over the solution. The convention also discussed the Democratic platform, which had been the longest yet written (20,200 words).

⁶⁰ Data of John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
(<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Miscellaneous-Information/Primaries-1960.aspx>)

⁶¹ In numbers: 1,847,259 votes, 100% being all the votes for the Democratic Party, not overall number of votes.

⁶² Data of John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
(<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Miscellaneous-Information/Primaries-1960.aspx>)

The next session dealt with presidential candidate selection. JFK, as mentioned previously, was a front-runner of the convention with a very advantageous nominating majority. His strongest opponent was Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, who did not enter a single primary. Kennedy and Johnson met during a joint debate of Massachusetts and Texas delegations the day before balloting, but their discussion hardly had any effect on final results. According to *National Party Conventions* a total of nine candidates were nominated, but the first ballot gave Kennedy a significant majority before the rest of them. When the roll call was over, JFK had 806 votes compared to 409 votes for Johnson. The third and fourth candidate did not even reach 100 votes. Based on these results, the convention decided to make the nomination of Massachusetts Senator unanimous. “Kennedy’s selection marked the first time since 1920 that a senator had been nominated for the presidency by Democrats or Republicans and the first time since 1928 that a Roman Catholic had been represented on a national ticket of one of the two major parties” (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 103).

Many participants might have been surprised by Kennedy’s vice-presidential candidate selection when the name of Lyndon B. Johnson was announced. He was then approved by acclamation.

At the end of the convention Kennedy soon-to-be-elected American President delivered his acceptance speech composed of about 80,000 words. He not only dedicated a large part of it to Richard Nixon and the race they were right about to start against each other, but he also focused on people generally not forgetting to mention his Catholicism believing that it was not an issue any more. “I hope that no American, considering the really critical issues facing this country, will waste his franchise and throw away his vote by voting either for me or against me because of my religion affiliation. It is not relevant” (*American Rhetoric* 2012).

3.2. 1980 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Republican Party

Twenty years after remarkable era of John Fitzgerald Kennedy holding the presidential office, political situation in the United States grew into another phase. After significant changes adopted in 1970s by both major political parties, the nominating system gained

even more attention and a new period of presidential candidate selection started. The Republicans held the office since 1969 (when Richard Nixon overtook it after Lyndon Johnson) continuously until 1980s with just one four-year term served by Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), who was a Democratic Party member. Carter won presidential election of 1976 when he beat Reagan, who eventually managed to win four years later in 1980 presidential election.

By 1980 incumbent Democratic president Jimmy Carter was highly unpopular mainly due to his economic policy. Levine sums up his four-year term in the office in his *Presidential Campaigns and Elections* and points out three facts – the inflation hit eighteen percent, the unemployment rate amounted to double digit numbers and at the end of Carter’s presidency only every fifth American agreed with his economic performance (Levine, 1992: 146).

Primary elections and caucuses

Ronald Reagan was a front-running candidate of the Republican Party for 1980 presidential primaries. As he realized his position, he did not consider Iowa caucus, being traditionally the very first event during the primary elections and caucuses season, to be highly important and focused more on New Hampshire. That step turned out to be a mistake once the results were revealed. George H.W. Bush beat Reagan with 31.6% to 29.5%⁶³ and won the advantage of early preference.

But as a whole month was there between Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary, Reagan had enough time to prepare himself for “winning his position back”. The Nashua Telegraph⁶⁴ invited both Bush and Reagan for a two-person debate. As no other Republican Party candidates had been invited, it might have been considered as an illegal support of Bush and Reagan’s campaigns. The situation was solved by Reagan’s campaign paying for the whole debate. By the time the debate was about to start four Republican candidates showed up eager to participate as well. Reagan spoke in their defense and therefore the moderator asked for Reagan’s microphone to be turned off. His reply “I’m paying for this microphone” (Levine, 1992: 150) immediately became famous and contributed to Reagan’s victory in New Hampshire Republican primary

⁶³ The turnout was 106,051 (*Iowa Caucuses & New Hampshire Primary Guide* 2012: 12). Available online on: http://msnbc.zendesk.com/attachments/token/w02nlnlnazkr2dv/?name=2012_IA-NH_book_FINAL_1_.pdf

⁶⁴ The Nashua Telegraph (or the Telegraph) is a daily newspaper in Nashua, New Hampshire founded in 1869. In 2005 it was the second largest newspaper in the state.

(53% for Reagan to 22% for Bush).⁶⁵ Although Reagan did not win all the primaries and once he even ended up the third after Bush and Anderson (who lately joined the presidential race as an independent candidate) he still clinched his nomination very early with almost 60% of overall votes and 28 primaries won out of 34.⁶⁶

National convention

The GOP⁶⁷ National Convention of 1980 was held between July 14-17 in Detroit, MI. Although the presidential nominee was very likely to be Ronald Reagan, the biggest suspense was provided by a vice-presidential candidate, who had not been known yet. At first Ford seemed to run as Reagan's mate which would have made him to be the first former president running for vice-president. As a result, two groups inside the Republican Party emerged – the Ford group and the Reagan group. Reagan talked to Ford about such an option and Ford decided to think it over. In a subsequent interview for CBS Ford stated his position: "I would not go to Washington and be a figurehead vice president. If I go to Washington I have to be there in the belief that I would play a meaningful role" (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 132).⁶⁸ Although he did not specify what exactly he would be in charge of in case his imagination was fulfilled, according to *National Party Conventions* he would basically be a co-president with Reagan having responsibility for agencies such as the National Security Council or the Office of Management and budget.

The national convention also dealt with the problem of both Reagan and Ford being from the same state. According to the XII. Amendment when voting for president and vice president in certain state at least one of them shall not be an inhabitant of that state (*the Constitution of the United States of America*). Therefore this rule would apply for

⁶⁵ Ronald Reagan speaking about his debate with George H.W. Bush: "When the Nashua Telegraph offered to sponsor a debate between the two of us on the Saturday evening preceding the election, we both accepted. Understandably, this brought howls from the other candidates. In protest, one of them, Senator Bob Dole, complained to the Federal Elections Commission that by financing a debate between only two of the seven candidates, the newspaper was making an illegal campaign contribution to the Bush and Reagan campaigns. The commission agreed with him, so my campaign offered to pay the full cost of the debate - a few thousand dollars - and they accepted. I thought it had been unfair to exclude the other candidates from the debate." (available online on: <http://www.nhreagannetwork.com/>)

⁶⁶ The total amount of votes he received was 7,709,793 representing 59.79%, while George H.W. Bush received 3,070,033 votes representing 23.81%. The last candidate still having double digit percentage of votes was John B. Anderson receiving 1,572,147 representing 12.19%.

(available online on: <http://www.ourcampaigns.com/RaceDetail.html?RaceID=51805>)

⁶⁷ Grand Old Party, another name for the Republican Party

⁶⁸ Ford was also asked if it would have been difficult to be a vice president after having had the highest position on which he answered: "Not at all. I'd be more interested in substance than glamour" (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 132).

California, but would not have any impact on voting elsewhere. As a result some ideas such as changing Ford's permanent address to Michigan (where he had represented the House for 25 years) or Colorado where he had a house emerged, but eventually were not implemented.

Later in the evening of July 16 Reagan called Ford asking whether he wanted the vice-presidential candidacy, while back in the arena roll call of states began. When Reagan obtained enough votes to be the Republican Party official nominee Ford decided to withdraw. "His instinct told him it was not the thing to do", commented Reagan (*National Party Conventions* 1995: 13). The second option was George H.W. Bush who was Reagan's biggest competitor during primary elections although he won just six of them.⁶⁹ He was considered to be a good candidate for his extensive experience in Washington (unlike Reagan, who did not have any), he served four years in the U.S. House, had been head of the U.S. liaison office in Beijing, ambassador to the United Nations and director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Although Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, leader of right wing within the Republican Party, run for the vice-presidential nomination as well and managed to receive 54 votes, Bush was more successful with 1,832 votes received. Original duo Reagan-Ford was replaced by Reagan-Bush.

The GOP platform of 1980 was more a plan of how to win the presidential office in November. Having lots of different factions inside the party, the Republicans managed to come up with a strategy that did not please any faction entirely, but on which everybody could more or less agree.

Traditionally, the last event of the Convention was the acceptance speech. Reagan (receiving the nomination on the first ballot) promised to unify the country again, to renew American spirit and he strictly rejected that the US had already had its best days and that the nation had passed its zenith. He also criticized Carter's administration, his national defense policies and mainly foreign policy as well as the economic situation.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Michigan, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

⁷⁰ „First, we must overcome something the present administration has cooked up: a new and altogether indigestible economic stew, one part inflation, one part high unemployment, one part recession, one part runaway taxes, one party deficit spending and seasoned by an energy crisis. It's an economic stew that has turned the national stomach. Ours are not problems of abstract economic theory. Those are problems of flesh and blood; problems that cause pain and destroy the moral fiber of real people who should not suffer the further indignity of being told by the government that it is all somehow their fault. We do not have inflation because--as Mr. Carter

“It is the responsibility of the president of the United States, in working for peace, to insure that the safety of our people cannot successfully be threatened by a hostile foreign power. As president, fulfilling that responsibility will be my number one priority.”⁷¹

3.3. 2008 Presidential Candidate Selection – the Democratic Party

Four years ago the presidential nominating procedure within the Democratic Party experienced an unusual race between former US President Bill Clinton’s wife Hillary and a young African-American Senator of Illinois Barack Obama. At the end of six-month primary season both of them were tight and nothing was decided until June.

Early primaries and caucuses

2008 presidential primary season was opened traditionally by Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary. The nation rule does not allow any state besides these two, Nevada and South Carolina to hold primaries before February 5, but as Michigan and Florida broke this rule, the results of these two primaries had not been recognized (CNN, March, 6 2008).⁷² Obama won the caucus in Iowa on January 3, 2008 and commented on it with: “Our time for change had come” (*Boston Globe*, January, 3 2008).⁷³

The importance of early primaries and caucuses, respectively, has already been described, so it is unquestionable that New Hampshire primary results were eagerly awaited. Clinton pointed out herself in a debate against Obama on January 5, 2008 while she was passionately speaking about making changes and working hard (*ABC News*, January 5, 2008).⁷⁴ Her emotional and convincing appearance surprisingly won

says--we have lived too well. The head of a government which has utterly refused to live within its means and which has, in the last few days, told us that this year's deficit will be \$60 billion, dares to point the finger of blame at business and labor, both of which have been engaged in a losing struggle just trying to stay even. High taxes, we are told, are somehow good for us, as if, when government spends our money it isn't inflationary, but when we spend it, it is.“

Available online on: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25970#ixzz1uGxH6bs5>

⁷¹ Available online on: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25970#ixzz1uGzMyS6O>

⁷² Available online on: http://articles.cnn.com/2008-03-06/politics/florida.michigan_1_florida-and-michigan-primary-date-jennifer-granholm?_s=PM:POLITICS

⁷³ Available online on:

http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2008/01/obama_says_time.html

⁷⁴ Available online on:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/DemocraticDebate/story?id=4092530&page=12#.T5Rw8tndPCM>

her a three-percent victory over Obama in popular vote. Eleven days later Clinton won Nevada primaries and overtook the leading position, but Obama's strong position in rural areas put him back to game practically immediately. January 26 primary in South Dakota gained a lot of attention because a large part of population living there is African-American. Obama won by 55% to 27% for Clinton and obtained 33 delegates, while Clinton received only 12 (*CNN*, August 20, 2008).⁷⁵

Super Tuesday

The biggest Super Tuesday gathering the largest amount of states and allocating the largest amount of delegates in the United States presidential primaries ever was held on February 5, 2008. The Democrats held primaries and caucuses in more than twenty states at the same time and a total of 1,681 delegates was reallocated representing 52% of all Democratic delegates (*The Washington Post*, January 15, 2008).⁷⁶ At the end of the day when the results were announced Obama and Clinton ended up being tight again. Obama won 847 delegates which was only thirteen more than what Clinton received. On the other hand, Clinton won the popular vote by receiving 46% - only one percent point more than Obama (*The New York Times*, February 5, 2008).⁷⁷ Eight days later *NBC* called Obama "Mr. Front-runner" (*NBC*, February 13, 2008)⁷⁸ as a result of an analysis; either including or excluding Florida and Michigan (or just one or the other one), Obama was always in lead.

Clinton's strong position was renewed at the beginning of March again, as expected, when she won Ohio, Rhode Island and Texas primary (but lost Texas caucus). Less than two weeks later Obama managed to erase Clinton's gains from early March and overtook the leading position again.

⁷⁵ The remaining 18% of people voted for Edwards, who eventually did not receive any delegates.

Available online on:

<http://edition.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/state/#SC>

⁷⁶ Available online on:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/14/AR2008011402926_pf.html

⁷⁷ Available online on: <http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/results/votes/index.html>

⁷⁸ "For Clinton to overtake Obama for the pledged delegate lead – which we think is the single most important statistic for superdelegates to decide their vote – she'll have to win 55% of the remaining delegates. Assuming next week goes Obama's way in Wisconsin and Hawaii, that percentage rises to 57%. Toss in likely Obama victories in Vermont, Wyoming, Mississippi, Oregon, Montana, and South Dakota, then Clinton's percentage need tops 60% of the remaining delegates available (...) So no matter how you slice the total popular vote, Obama is the leader." (Available online on: http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2008/02/13/4427039-first-thoughts-mr-front-runner)

Later primaries

The longer the primaries lasted the smaller chances were given to Clinton's ability to catch up again. On April 22 Clinton scored winning in Pennsylvania receiving 85 delegates compared to Obama's 73, but on May 6 Obama succeeded in North Carolina obtaining 67 delegates while Clinton dropped to 48 (*CNN*, August 20, 2008).⁷⁹ May primaries scenario continued similarly until June 3, the last day of primary season. After South Dakota and Montana votes had been counted, Obama clinched the Democratic presidential nomination by going beyond necessary 2,118-delegate threshold. Subsequently, Clinton suspended her nomination, but at the same time she expressed her support⁸⁰ to the "first black candidate to lead a major party ticket" (*The New York Times*, June 4, 2008).⁸¹

National Convention

2008 Democratic National Convention was held in Denver, CO, from August 25 to August 28. The theme of the first day of the convention was "One Nation" and the principal speakers were Michelle Obama, Caroline Kennedy or Nancy Pelosi. The next day's theme was "Renewing America's Promise", and it was dominated by Hillary Clinton and her speech, which main idea immediately appeared in newspaper headlines throughout the whole country: "No way. No how. No McCain" (Tolliver 2011: 91). Wednesday's theme was "Securing America's Future" and the main speeches were given by Joe Biden, vice presidential candidate, Bill Clinton, former president, or John Kerry, Senator of Massachusetts. Clinton highly supported Obama in her speech and ensured the crowd that he was the right person to be elected the next President of the United States. The final fourth day's theme was "Change You Can Believe In" being supported by Al Gore as one of the main speakers.

During the roll call Hillary Clinton suggested to suspend the rules and elect Barack Obama by acclamation. She also released her delegates in purpose to vote for Obama as the Democratic Party nominee and therefore he obtained 3,188.5 votes (of 4, 419 votes)

⁷⁹ Available online on: <http://edition.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/>

⁸⁰ "The way to continue our fight now, to accomplish the goals for which we stand is to take our energy, our passion, our strength, and do all we can to help elect Barack Obama, the next president of the United States. Today, as I suspend my campaign, I congratulate him on the victory he has won and the extraordinary race he has run. I endorse him and throw my full support behind him. And I ask all of you to join me in working as hard for Barack Obama as you have for me" (*The New York Times*, June 7, 2008. Available online on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/07/us/politics/07text-clinton.html?pagewanted=all>).

⁸¹ Available online on: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/us/politics/04elect.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

representing 72%. After announcing the results he stepped up on the stage and announced: “With profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for presidency of the United States” (Tolliver 2011: 95). And the history was made. In a forty-two-minute speech Obama expressed what he wanted to achieve and persuaded eighty four thousand people sitting in the arena and another millions watching him on their TVs that he was the right person to hold the presidential office in the next four years. He outlined various reasons for Republican candidate McCain not to be elected and his acceptance speech has been considered one of the best ones ever.

All three primaries described above differ mainly by the time period in which they were held. Development of television broadcasting together with Kennedy’s cross-country trips and his appearance contributed to his victory in receiving a party nomination for presidential elections. In 1960, balance between primaries and caucuses was starting to be disproportional and more advantage was slightly given to primaries and therefore a very good local connections together with eliminating distance between politicians and people turned out to be a very good strategy for winning not only a party nomination, but also the presidential office. Twenty years later, in 1980, when Reagan was seeking for Republican nomination, his “ace in the hole” was his rhetoric skills. He had a very good starting position and the way he acted only helped him to develop enough confidence to become a candidate without serious opponents within the Republican Party, which was unfortunate for George H. W. Bush, who had more experience in politics, but lacked communication skills and overall political stature compared to superior candidate Reagan. Another twenty years later, in 2008, the situation was much more difficult for Barack Obama. Hillary Clinton was sure about her strong position within the Democratic Party and firstly did not feel jeopardized by young Senator from Illinois. As Obama knew Clinton would be very successful in certain states like Ohio or Pennsylvania, he focused on gaining as many votes as possible in the states where Clinton’s position was not so strong, and eliminating her gains in the states where she was the favorite. As a result he focused on caucuses and specific rural districts. Therefore, a unique previously developed detailed strategy of each district together with internet expansion were the key tools to his, firstly unexpected, win.

Conclusion

American selection system has gone through significant changes since the time of the first president George Washington to presence when 44th president Barack Obama is holding the office. At the end of 18th century, Founding Fathers aimed to create a selection system based on five criteria that fulfill the idea of democracy to make sure the right candidate will be chosen. Running for president in the system where no political parties existed yet was therefore different and in many ways easier because basically anybody who met legislative requirements could be a candidate. After people of similar opinions and political points of view started gathering and formed first political parties, the system of caucuses emerged. The idea, however, barely lasted for more than two decades because as soon as the Federalist formally stopped existing as a party, overall criticism of the system arose aiming to emphasize the original idea of the selection system not being a function of Congress. 1824 election year was the last one when party caucuses were held.

The idea of giving more power to people was supported by introducing new system of national conventions and nominations were then given directly by people instead of legislative caucus. This idea spread from state level to the national level very quickly and main political parties each held their first convention in 1831-1832, most important being the National Republican Party and the Democratic Party. In the years of reconstruction, during the second half of the 19th century, the political system experienced a “lack of interest” as the civil war and other historical issues gained more attention, but strong Republican remained one of the characteristics of that period.

By the end the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, respectively, the selection system moved to its next phase by slowly implementing primary elections. Firstly appearing on a state level, gradually being adopted by more and more states and eventually spreading to the national level in the second half of 20th century. What I think contributed to long-time evolution of the selection system is mainly the large area that the US covers, the process of implementing different rules as well as historical facts. On the other hand it is very relative to judge the system as a long-time evolution because compared to Europe the US has had the same constitution for the last more than two hundred years and politicians have been making changes under one regime,

although many countries in Europe went through more regimes and were based on various constitutions until they finally reached democracy.

Modern selection system as we know it nowadays consists of two parts: primaries and national conventions. Primary elections are mainly in hands of each state and that is why they differ and that is why some states still prioritize caucuses. There are certain rules about timing primaries, but any other specifics depend on each state's organization. Other major influence of the way how primaries are organized depends on each political party. The structure, open or closed primaries or the electoral formula are the main characters. There is no strict rule for choosing either winner-take-all method or proportional representation, but the Republicans probably chose the first one to select a candidate very quickly and then focus only on him and his winning the office.

From three case studies introduced in the last part of the thesis we have learned that different strategies led to different results of the selection systems in 1960, 1980 and 2008 primaries. Kennedy was a charismatic leader of the Democratic Party who was highly supported by media and new rise of television broadcasting. Reagan was a great speaker who overshadowed his more experienced colleague(s) in various debates and clinched himself a nomination in early period of primary election season, while Obama, having a strong opponent within his own party, focused on careful preparation and explored his chances in each state separately and then based his strategy on the results.

To make primaries more democratic and equal, many ideas such as Delaware Plan or American Plan have been proposed, but no significant changes have been made to lower the cost of primaries and to provide a more simple schedule. One of the main reasons for reforming current system is to eliminate the bandwagon effect of New Hampshire primary and Iowa caucus and generally to change the structure to make the primaries more righteous. But there is still more discussion awaiting that will hopefully lead to a solution which most of the people and politicians will be satisfied with.

Summary

“The US Presidential Nomination System and Its Evolution” covers two and a half centuries of historical development of American selection system and provides detailed analysis not only of historical background, but mainly of political progress and changes and determines main drivers that contributed to current form of selection system as we know it. In three main chapters the final paper provides in-depth exploration of historic factors and describes modern nominating system and its features. Implementing the theoretical scope to practical situation the thesis is enriched by case studies of two seasons of the Democratic and one season of the Republican primary elections. In the conclusion future vision of the whole nominating process is provided.

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