The equal division rule of the democratic national committee and its effects on female leadership

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The Equal Division Rule of the Democratic National Committee and Its Effects on Female Leadership

By

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April, 1997
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The Equal Division Rule of the Democratic National Committee
and Its Effects on Female Leadership

A Senior Project Submitted to
The Faculty of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies

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Richmond, Virginia
April 1997
Table of Contents

I. Introduction

II. Literature Review
   Background
   Gender and Leadership
   Female Political Leadership
   Women’s Leadership in the Workforce
   Transactional and Transformational Leadership
   The Equal Division Rule and Female Leadership

III. Methodology
   Synopsis
   The Equal Division Rule
   Document Analysis

IV. Findings
   Interviews
   Content Analysis
V. Analysis

VI. Conclusion

VII. Appendix
   A. Interview Questions
   B. Democratic National Committee: Survey Questions
   C. Summary of the Official Guidelines of the Commission
      on Party Structure and Delegate Selection

VIII. Bibliography

IX. Annotated Bibliography
INTRODUCTION

The current political opportunities for women are limitless in the Democratic party. They exist in large part because of guidelines which were created as a result of a very unsatisfactory Democratic National Committee of 1968, and a growing desire, by women, to be intimately involved in party politics. Women currently hold several of the offices of Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General nationwide. This is in addition to the women in Congress. Despite the fact that the number of women in these offices is not in proportion to their presence in the American population, approximately fifty-two percent, it still represents an increase in the last twenty-five years. Although these offices were not directly affected by the Democratic National Committee's Equal Division rule, also referred to as A-2 (from the original procedures of the McGovern Commission), the women filling these offices were of the same generation and in the same predicament as those directly affected. Despite the fact that they were interested in being involved in politics at the most elite levels, there was no point of entrance for them. When facing off with a man of equal qualifications the woman would still be likely lose, simply based on the faulty assumption that women were inherently less qualified than men. "More than any other kind of human activity, politics has historically borne an explicitly masculine identity. It has been more exclusively limited to men than any other realm of endeavor and has been more intensely, self-consciously masculine than most other social practices" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 24). The assumption that men are better prepared for politics, and that men are better leaders than women, as well, is one of the reasons for enacting the
Equal Division rule.

My primary reason for investigating this topic is the large assumption which is being made in the Equal Division rule. The rule assumes that by increasing the numbers of women involved in each state's delegation party, it will also increase the amount of participation and leadership which the women exhibit as well. That may very well be a faulty assumption. As is documented in previous research (Linimon, Barron, and Falbo 1076; Korabik 330) women are capable of being equally as dominant and authoritative as men; however, when in mixed gender groups, their likeliness to behave in democratic, facilitatory, transformational manners increases. Therefore, it may be incorrect to assume that merely because women constitute fifty percent of the delegation committee, and the women present are politically active, well-educated, and well-informed, they will also carry out half of the leadership tasks.

According to the decision of the Democratic National Committee’s Party Affairs and Delegate Selection Committee, as of the 1972 Democratic National Convention, each state's delegation party was to be evenly distributed between male and female delegates. This decision was reached as a result of disproportionate males to females. However, numerical equality was not the only issue of concern. Along with the physical absence of females from the delegation parties was another absence, that of the female voice and leadership.

In addition to the importance of what the Equal Division rule meant to female delegate representation, it also signified a more negative idea. Many committee members were against the idea, because it had striking similarities to the affirmative action legislation (Shafer 274). The primary distinction between the two mandates was that the Equal Division rule affected people based upon gender, whereas affirmative action
affected people based upon race. "To us, it meant no quotas. It was the closest we could come without saying quotas, and still have some action toward improving the situation" (Shafer 275). Interestingly, neither issue can be changed; it is something which is ascribed to us. However, the privileges, or lack thereof, which we are given because of these personal characteristics can be changed. When there is such a situation as the suppression of women in politics, the Equal Division rule is the right thing to do.

The Equal Division rule was created in 1968 as a result of an unsuccessful and unimpressive Democratic National Convention in Chicago. However, it was not until 1980, when the Democratic National Committee voted to replace the word “recommend” with “requires,” (Sandler and Boylan 11) in order to assure equal representation, and therefore assure forward progress on the gender front that the balance between men and women was assured. Despite the fact that the American population was approximately evenly split between men and women, the delegates at convention were not as representative of the larger population. Therefore, women were not being heard in the necessary manner, and being given the necessary respect and attention.

As is clearly explained in a 1995 document from Rick Boylan, Director of Party Affairs and Delegate Selection, at the request of President Bill Clinton, the Equal Division rule was carefully planned and created. "As to the equal division rule, we conclude that, although it does impose a quota, it is an exceptional remedy justified by an exceptional set of circumstances" (Sandler and Boylan 5). To date, there has already been at least one instance where the Equal Division rule was challenged in court as being unconstitutional. "But a political party is not a government. To the contrary, a party is a private entity that has its own constitutionally protected associational rights, which the Supreme Court has found can only be infringed by a ‘compelling’ state interest" (Sandler
and Boylan 13). The Equal Division rule was upheld. It was upheld for very basic reasons. Nowhere in the rule does it state that men are being disadvantaged by the decision, and nowhere does it state that women are being given a greater presence in the Democratic party activities than they rightly deserve. Furthermore, "the existence of the equal division rule continues to be justified by underrepresentation of women in elective office and the likelihood of gender imbalance at the Convention in the absence of the rule, and that it imposes a slight burden on nonbeneficiaries, i.e., males" (Sandler and Boylan 6) is not the primary issue. The Equal division rule was neither created nor enacted out of spite for the prevalent male leadership, it was implemented because of a justified reason to assist women in achieving some of the most party elite political positions. "The Equal Division rule manifestly has a rational purpose . . . Means to stimulate greater female participation were ineffective until the Equal Division rule was formulated and adopted" (Sandler and Boylan 19-20).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the last twenty-five years, the Democratic National Committee has gone to great lengths to try and provide parity between men and women at the upper-levels of party politics. The greatest single step which it has taken is in regards to the representation of women. In 1968, the Mikulski Commission created what is now known as the Equal Division rule, however, it was not fully in effect until 1980. From the following excerpt we are able to see exactly what the original members sought to achieve by the Equal Division rule.

Section 3: “In order to encourage full participation by all Democrats, with particular concern for minority groups, native Americans, women and youth, in the delegate selection process and in all Party affairs, as defined in the By-Laws, the national and state Democratic Parties shall adopt and implement affirmative action programs.” (Hixon 242)

Section 5: “This goal shall not be accomplished either directly or indirectly by the national or state Democratic Parties’ imposition of mandatory quotas at any level of the delegate selection process or in any other Party affairs, as defined in the By-Laws.” (Hixon 243)

Section 7: “...equal division at any level of delegate or committee positions between delegate men and delegate women or committeemen and committeewomen shall not constitute a violation of any provision thereof” (Hixon 243).

Background

Surprisingly, little research has been conducted regarding women and leadership in the political sphere. Politics, in its purest forms, is open to all people. Every citizen is allowed the right to voice his/her opinion via a vote. Those citizens who are further interested in the political sphere may seek election. As an individual’s interest in and knowledge of politics increases, so too may his/her political office. Based on these general criteria for involvement in politics, it would seem as though politics would be a good venue in which the theories of gender and leadership may be tested. However, such
was not the case based upon the literature which was examined. Clearly stated, ". . . women simply are absent from leadership posts disproportionate to their presence in the population and as voters” (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 220). Research such as this seems to conclude that this inequity is more so because of the financial needs and lack of high political exposure, than to the desire of women to be involved.

In the literature review the researcher will frame the topic of gender and leadership with regard to current research. This topic will be looked at both from a leadership perspective and a political science perspective since the proposed research topic, the Equal Division rule of the Democratic National Committee, is a combination of both. Aside from a general overview about the writings, the researcher will try to highlight the common leadership themes presented in the research. The researcher will also discuss how the information may be further studied and/or applied to the Democratic National Committee specifically. What is true for women in the business sector or non-profit sector is not necessarily true for women in politics. However, there are a few similarities among the different fields which help lead us in better directions.

One set of findings, by Geiger, McCulloch, and Gergel, states that, "regardless of sector, the women making the highest salaries are those whose behavioral styles are more 'masculine'” (61). Such findings reinforce the fact that in order to succeed women have been forced to adopt more masculine traits and leadership qualities. The task-oriented leadership style, most commonly associated with men, which contains some of the qualities which women have been shown to adopt in order to remain competitive and successful, contains "behavior items concerned with directing subordinates, clarifying subordinate roles, planning, coordinating, problem-solving, criticizing poor work, and pressuring subordinates to do better” (Park 53).
Another way of reiterating what has already been mentioned, that requiring women to conform to or adopt male leadership styles is non-beneficial, is that "traditional male-dominated organizational contexts require women to conform to masculine norms and expectations and, therefore, suppress women's values and strengths and mask gender differences" (Druskat 100). If allowed to develop to the fullest extent, the differences mentioned which distinguish men and women could be immensely more helpful than devaluing, blending or selecting a masculine style exclusively. Bringing multiple perspectives to the table provides the discussion with a much better analysis of what the issue is and what may be done to address it. A simple rule of probability would tell us that the more people who are allowed to voice an opinion, the greater the chance that a different point of view will be heard.

The presence of women in leadership positions in politics did not grow at a noticeable level or in noticeable areas until the last few years. As a select few women have made it through all the hoops and broken down all the barriers in the last ten years, more women have been placed in leadership roles. This change provides cause for us as a society to assess how and why our male and female leaders are different, if at all. "Power underpins leadership. The perception of power grants an individual an advantage in being accepted as a leader, and if one is a leader, one is more likely to be seen as powerful. Because men have more social power and hold more political leadership posts, they benefit more in the relationship between leadership and power" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 30). Based on studies of gender differences, some proposed justifications for the differences between male and female leaders are socialization, psychological, and trait differences (Kokopeli 19). All of these factors may in fact affect how women lead; however, they do not provide an adequate explanation for why female leaders are not as
successful and numerous as male leaders.

Gender and Leadership

One major theme in "gender and leadership" research is that the way in which women are perceived (as people and as leaders) greatly impacts how they lead and how successful they are at doing so. Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly found that "... gender is a complex concept and phenomenon. It generates from bodies that are biologically sexed but only gains meaning through its social construction. Because gender is socially constructed, it is composed of ideas, or more specifically normative beliefs about valuation, modes of behavior, and being" (32-33). When female leaders are non-stereotypical, people may discount their validity and their knowledge as a leader. Unfortunately, women have been in a catch-22. Some people want to know why women leaders can not be more like their male counterparts. But, if their styles are more like those of men, they are condemned. Only when people see women leading in a relationship-oriented, facilitating, and encouraging manner do they believe that their leadership is effective.

Even if we set aside the problem women face being recognized as leaders at all, women can successfully enter masculine leadership roles but face two unhappy options, neither of which alters extant gender power relations. Either women must conform to artificially heightened gender differentiation as a leader and agree that feminine leaders’ styles exist, thereby perpetuating gender differentiation in the process or women leaders can ‘do masculine leadership’: they can perform their leadership tasks in a way more masculine than men. (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 31)
Many times, "women are inhibited from assuming leadership roles because of stereotypes and sex role expectations that are based on socialization" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 121). However, research shows that some women do lead in traditionally male environments, and do so in a traditionally male manner. "Stereotypes tend to exaggerate or distort the true degree of differences between the sexes. Images regarding each sex are developed" (Park 51). Unfortunately, society still seems to hold generalizations about what a female leader should do and how she should lead. These lingering stereotypes and generalizations merely perpetuate faulty judgments about female leaders, and prevent us from seeing how women lead, without the lens of bias.

Women are still perceived as token representatives in some arenas. Research has concluded that "...women have neither been present in large numbers in U.S. elective office. nor, ... has there been a cultural expectation that women are, or even could be, leaders. Traditional patterns of gender power lead us to not question this absence" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 221). The decision-making power, and formal leadership titles are still given to males, in disproportionate numbers sometimes without just cause (except that he is male). However, this is so, despite the fact that "women are no longer gender typing the role of manager while men are" (Atwater and Roush 39). Researchers indicate that women tend to be more open to new and different leaders and leadership styles, while men are still more favorable toward directive, hierarchical, male leadership. This is one dimension about which the literature, from several different fields of study, seems to agree (Druskat 103). One study found that "subordinates ... rated male and female leaders using participative leadership styles equally favorable, but rated women using task behavior more negative than males using task behavior" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 120). Such conclusions indicate that followers associate males as task-oriented leaders
and females as relationship-oriented leaders, and when they stray from the norm and display alternative leadership styles, they are judged in a negative manner.

Just as leadership positions can be based on gender differences, they also are frequently based upon or heavily influenced by educational and/or positional achievement. The distinctions between educational opportunities for men and women has been a source of interest for years. Men have been provided infinite opportunity for advanced education. Their academic knowledge has separated them from women for a number of decades, therefore leaving women unable to obtain equal jobs/positions as men. However, as women's education levels rose, and their presence in professional fields increased, many organizations were faced with the questions of how to address the new and improved woman. Despite the fact that women are excelling in their education and becoming more competitive in the work force, they still fail to represent any significant proportion of top-level positions.

**Female Political Leadership**

“For individual female candidates, personal confidence and the acquisition of credentials are still two of the most critical elements they need to possess in order to establish credibility with voters” (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 104). Credibility as a female candidate, in addition to support that women are equally as politically astute than men remains to be a hurdle. We are still able to find numerous political races in which there is one male and one female candidate, with equal political knowledge and experience, and the male comes out victorious. It is only “...with greater voter acceptance, [that] women have been able to extend the range of what voters consider appropriate qualifications for office, freeing women candidates to come from
backgrounds or to offer voters credentials that are different from men's" (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 102). Women have faced dual problems with regard to working in a predominately male environment. They have had to establish themselves as authoritative, and they have had to present credentials that men perceive as credible and accept as comparable (Witt, Paget, and Matthews 104). When women are in positions which force them to conform to male political norms, they potentially compromise the benefits of feminine characteristics in leadership, which could be advantageous for everyone, rather than detrimental.

Women's Leadership in the Workforce

With the increase in the numbers of women in the work-force more studies have been conducted regarding the ways in which men and women differ. What was once an area of speculation and stereotypes has become one of considerable study, with conflicting results. There appear to be two major fields of thought regarding gender differences and leadership. One source of "gender and leadership" literature asserts that when comparing leadership behaviors and/or tendencies of males and females in the same organizational environment and the same organizational position, there will be few differences between them and their leadership styles (Park 50). However, this must be kept in mind with the fact that there are many more limitations in this area of research than can be explained in the findings. "Nevertheless, the empirical differences between male and female leadership styles, although present, are small in effect and moderated by organizational factors" (Bass 82). The second school of leadership literature claims that distinct differences between male and female leaders still remain, even in such situations where both the male and female fill very similar organizational positions (Atwater and
Another aspect of the debate between male and female leadership styles is whether there is a truly "androgynous leader." According to research results, "androgyny is an instance of situational flexibility... androgyny is one particular manifestation of the multifaceted self, comprising different identities that are invoked in different social settings and roles" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 124). The first side of the debate about androgynous leaders says that women and men do not have as many differences regarding how they lead as we may have thought. According to Virginia Schein, "... there are far fewer differences [between male and female leaders] than is commonly believed. Moreover, research indicates that the differences within each sex are greater than the differences between the sexes" (Wren, ed. 163). By comparing males and females in similar positions in similar fields research has discovered that their psychological characteristics and leadership behaviors are similar.

The second perspective differs significantly from the first. These findings state that women and men do possess and exercise noticeably different leadership styles (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 119). Research shows that men are more likely to be task-oriented, whereas women are more likely to be relationship-oriented. "Studies of sex differences have found that males assume an individualistic and task-oriented leadership style compared to females who assume a nurturing or relationship-oriented leadership style" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 119). Based upon this finding, the notion of an androgynous leader is difficult to support.

Due to these disparate findings, the need for research about the differences between men and women still exists. It is clear that "context plays an important role in defining leadership" (Druskat 100), which is all the more reason why the contexts in
which research is conducted must be expanded. However, conducting research between
men and women of equal stature, making it valid to compare outcomes, is still difficult.
Because few women have broken the "glass-ceiling" in many traditionally
male-dominated realms, research is complicated and there is a paucity of data.
Furthermore, the research which has been conducted to date is fairly similar. It is similar
in the kind of organization where the research was conducted (primarily businesses), and
the information which is sought from the research (whether or not males are more
task-oriented and transactional, and women are more relationship-oriented and
transformational).

Most published findings about the effect which gender has on leadership are in an
overall sense. They relate the issue of gender to the ominous notion of "leadership,"
without noting all the different variables which may either facilitate different behaviors
between men and women in that environment, or encourage different leadership styles.
Research shows that "men world-wide are socialized from birth to assume an
individualistic (independent, aggressive, task) leadership orientation while females are
socialized to assume nurturing or collectivist leadership (compromise, caring,
relationship) orientations" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 119). However, many
researchers have concluded that strong male leadership (e.g. task-oriented, directive
behaviors) are better than female leadership. Yet, there are recent findings which show
that those environments which facilitate and encourage group formation are good for the
long-run. Researchers recently found that, "... while leadership styles that lean more
toward consensus building may be less efficient and not as conducive to moving an issue
through the legislative process in the short term, they provide participants with
opportunities to learn about different views and arguably then lead to improved long-term
solutions to public problems” (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 187). Unfortunately, conclusive results past that of task/relationship and transactional/ transformational leadership dimensions are scarce.

In addition, a majority of the research is carried out on men and women in large businesses. “More than twenty years have elapsed since the passage of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action legislation, yet women continue to be underrepresented at the top of the organizational hierarchy” (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 142). Although corporations should be a place likely to contain a measurably significant number of women, there are limitations which the corporate environment has on possible generalizations. One writer states that "Some research is now showing that female managers are no longer adopting completely masculine orientations as they were forced to in the past in order to succeed on the job" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 122). However, this gives rise to questions about what masculine leadership characteristics women still have to adopt in order to succeed. Concomitantly, was this a factor in restraining the women who did not advance to the upper tiers? This question poses a more serious one. Not only might one’s gender have an effect one one’s success as a leader, but also the leadership style which he exhibits. The transactional and transformational leadership dichotomy is an example of how a leader’s leadership style of choice impacts how he is perceived.

**Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

Several studies and articles in the field of leadership conclude that women are transformational leaders while men are transactional leaders (Dionne et al. 136) Transformational leadership "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in
such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality . . ." (Wren, ed. 101). But "transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (Wren, ed. 101). Transformational leadership takes place when one person is inspired to change the level of devotion and encouragement which another person holds. This type of leadership implies that a single individual has the desire to change the status and significance of a group regarding leadership. Inherent in transformational leadership is the tenet that the leader exercises more than the basic directive or maintenance behaviors which suffice in other leadership styles.

Another area in which much research converges is the conclusion that women tend to be more transformational leaders and men tend to be more transactional leaders. Yet the evidence to date is not strong enough to support these conclusions. An example of the current research findings which facilitate polar opposite opinions, maintains that "the connection of masculinity and task-oriented leadership style is preferred to that of femininity and relations-oriented leadership style in selection of leaders" (Park 55). These findings exhibit a potential bias in the research. Such conclusions may lead the reader to believe that the research was conducted in such a way that women were not adequately represented, or that it was conducted in a field in which the presence or power of women was resented. However, other research shows that "most sex and gender differences apply to traits and styles, but do not affect leadership performance or effectiveness" (Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker 126)

Correlations have been proposed between males who are task-oriented, transactional leaders and females who are relationship-oriented, transformational leaders...
Transformational and transactional leaders both strive to achieve goals, and objectives, however, the methods these leaders employ to motivate followers differ (Dionne et al. 135). It is a commonly held belief that women are more often transformational leaders whereas men are more frequently transactional leaders. And "although numerous studies have been conducted on transformational leadership and effectiveness on performance, little research is present that focuses primarily on female transformational leaders and their influence on subordinate effectiveness and performance" (Dionne et al. 136). This remark reiterates the general consensus felt about current research and how women are affected by it, as well as how they impact their followers based upon the leadership style(s) which they exhibit.

The Equal Division Rule and Female Leadership

In the political arena, women's participation and leadership has grown remarkably at the grass-roots and lower levels of politics, yet something still holds them back from attaining the most elite positions in politics. On the positive side for women and governance, a critical mass of women had been making their way into positions of political leadership since the rebirth of feminism during the 1960s. Women filled about one-fifth of state legislative seats, for example. The pipeline -- lower offices, political appointees, board members and commissioners -- now had a female presence that gave these women qualifications to be seen as viable political candidates for higher office. (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 222) Hypothetically, women should be filling a greater number of political positions than they currently do. Since they constitute over one half of the American population, they should
constitute a greater percent of the members of Congress.

The significance of the female population in the United States, with regards to the political electability of candidates, prioritization of issues, and candidate success rates, has grown in the last twenty-five years. "It is worth remembering that women constitute 53 percent of U.S. voters and have voted such that Democrats benefit from women's votes" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 222). With the increase in female education levels, and female participation in areas which used to be virtually all male, their value as members of political society has also grown. These factors do not produce proportionate numerical increases among women in these areas, however. Herein lies the problem.

Much of the research about female leadership is conducted in the business context. Therefore, it is a leap to apply the findings from a business environment to the political environment. Much of the published information is fairly redundant and/or general. Despite the fact that general knowledge about male and female differences is important, research has not been extended adequately enough in this specific area.

An example of such a situation, where women grew in participation but not in representation, is with regards to the Democratic National Convention. As the demographic base of the Democratic National Committee's constituents diversified, the necessity of the party to rethink how its delegates to the National Convention were chosen prevailed. "While the stated intention of the rules was an open (classical) democratic process, the process actually had been dominated (as some reformers may have intended) by issue-oriented, educated middle- and upper-middle-class amateurs . . . " (Wekkin 25), not by a representative group of the Party. Therefore, to have exclusively upper-class, middle-aged men speaking on behalf of such a diverse group would be hypocritical. For this reason the party has enacted certain changes in the last twenty years to help bring
about true gender representation in its officials, and through its representative roles and
administrative positions. This was done in order to accomplish a better interface with the
nation's population distribution.

One of the most important and wide-reaching changes that the party has
implemented in the last twenty years is referred to as the Equal Division rule. This rule
was first voted in at the 1974 Conference on Democratic Party Organization and Policy.
However, "1984 was the first year in which the Democratic quota for women delegates ..
. was in effect" (Shafer 206). Its premise was that if the American population was
fifty-two percent females and forty-eight percent males, yet the Party leaders and elected
officials were much less representative, then the way the party representatives were
selected must be changed. This reference to "better [the] representation of women" has to
do first and foremost with the number of women who fill roles such as state delegates and
state alternate delegates to the national convention, or as state party chairs. A basic
knowledge of the party's delegation history tells us that without the Equal Division rule,
fewer women filled any official party position.

Despite the fact that the Equal Division rule has been operational for thirteen
years, there is little published information about the impact which the Equal Division rule
has had on women, the party, and their leadership. The most thorough research about the
Equal Division rule is contained in Democratic National Committee summaries of the
initial action, as well as later memoranda addressing a particular aspect. The logic of the
Equal Division rule, that if women compose fifty percent of our population then they
should also compose fifty percent of the delegates, focuses virtually exclusively on
numbers (based on gender population, and delegation size).

Because the background (both demographic and professional) of delegates varies
significantly, research which is not done specifically on this particular group is difficult to apply. This underscores the primary reason for more deeply researching the topic. Although prior research in a similar field to that which is being investigated is sometimes helpful, and the findings may be applied to a different context, such a process is difficult to do with as specific a situation as this. Not only is it a specific action from a private, yet political, organization, but the direct impact of this rule on gender representation will directly impact leadership.

**METHODOLOGY**

Insufficient information in my area of interest has rekindled my desire to delve further into the uncharted waters of the Equal Division rule. Therefore, it is my intent to enhance the research on gender and leadership in the context of political parties through an examination of the Equal Division rule in the Democratic National Committee. My study will include an examination of access to leadership roles in the Democratic National Committee as well as the impact of leadership style (e.g. transformational and transactional) on the acceptance and the effectiveness of formal leaders.

**Synopsis**

My primary hypothesis for the project is: Men’s and women’s leadership styles are similar at the state delegate level to the National Convention and/or state party level.

A vast majority of what will be examined will be collected through extensive library document analysis research, such as literature reviews and qualitative interviews. Interviews will be conducted with people who have served as delegates to the Democratic
National Convention. However, the difference which I expect to find is that the amount of influence and decision-making power which men hold is greater in comparison to women.

*Equal Division Rule*

The Equal Division rule has sparked my attention for several reasons. The primary one being that it implicitly assumes that by equaling the numbers of males and females in state delegation parties, it has also equaled the leadership responsibilities. Those two assumptions are not necessarily true.

The rule is based on the premise that by enforcing numerical parity, other forms of parity will come as well. It was first created and developed in 1968 in response to a very unsuccessful Democratic National Convention. In order to remedy some of the more visible problems, the Committee decided to implement a more specifically outlined set of delegate selection criteria. Unfortunately, what they did with the Equal Division rule, and the desire to raise the number of female delegates, falls little short of quotas. What was first a "strongly recommended" change, at the conclusion of the McGovern Commission, became a numerical requirement in 1980. To some members, this looked very similar to affirmative action. Ironically, in both cases, the problem being addressed did concern factors ascribed to all people, race and gender. However, affirmative action received harsher criticism than did the Equal Division rule.

Research about the Equal Division rule and female leadership will be gathered from two general fields: leadership and political science. Academic journals and other primary sources will allow the researcher to collect multiple writings about the many facets of this topic. Although much research has been conducted on the topic of gender
and leadership, very little has been done on the impact of the Equal Division rule and female leadership. Therefore, conclusions from the academic opinions of experts in both of these fields of study are necessary in order to attempt to draw some broader conclusions.

Much to my surprise, there is little research about this topic in political science journals or other writings. What has been written in political science journals has to do largely with the actions of the committee and not the effects of the decisions. Furthermore, the political science writings commonly lack any elements of leadership theories.

Unfortunately, case studies and my conclusions about journal articles are as close as I will come to finding any relevant information about this topic. There is no other place, be it political science journals, leadership journals, or dissertations on the Equal Division rule, that also incorporates leadership concepts. Therefore, I will be drawing my conclusions based upon my own research about the topic, trying to provide the missing link between research on the Equal Division rule and leadership theory.

To get an accurate look at the roles of Virginia’s 1996 Democratic National Convention delegates, I will rely upon case studies. They will allow me to analyze multiple aspects of the delegates’ roles within the delegation party. As is documented in research regarding female leadership styles and personal behaviors and mannerisms, women’s decisions (behaviors) “do experience more hindrances and problems” (Chandler and Taylor 114). Therefore, it is significant to look not only at how a female delegate voted at convention, but also through what political channels she traveled in order to get to the delegate level, and what distinguishes her from other delegates. Without using case studies, it may be difficult to separate the factors which were most important or
influential in getting the delegate where she is today. Despite the fact that case studies are not as quantitative as other research methods, they are the best fitted for this kind of study. To understand why males display more leadership tendencies than females (theoretically), the researcher must first understand the contributing factors in the individual's leadership career.

Although the Equal Division rule does display certain surface level similarities with affirmative action, there are distinct differences. The Equal Division rule affects only the members of the Democratic Party, directly. Conversely, affirmative action was enacted to affect the entire United States population. The Equal Division rule was implemented with the intention of changing the gender distribution of National Convention delegates. By doing more research, and speaking with certain members of the Virginia Delegation party, I hope to uncover more useful information about such facts.

*Document Analysis*

In order to substantiate my hypothesis, I will be referring to several Democratic National Committee documents from the original meetings about whether the Equal Division rule should be adopted. Furthermore, I will be using the current research about male and female leadership differences in order to validate the premise that in order to obtain proper representation at Convention, there needs to be an equal representation of women.

The Democratic National Committee documents which address the Equal Division rule are primarily subjective, since they originate from committee meetings. Conversely, the research about male and female leadership distinctions is supported by
empirical studies. By integrating these two forms of research, I hope to come up with a happy medium regarding practice and theory.

Document analysis is a helpful method for conducting research in that it provides tangible elements to be analyzed. The reason for using this method of research is because of the scope of information which may be assessed. Information has been written on male-female leadership in numerous different fields (both academic and practical). The findings of these studies could vary equally as much as the fields. So, in addition to utilizing the political science and leadership bodies of information on the Equal Division rule and female leadership styles, I will also refer to research in fields such as business, sociology, and psychology to give added dimensions to the findings. When research across these different fields finds similar conclusions, I will know that the information is reliable.

**FINDINGS**

*Interviews*

In order to receive a first-hand account of how things were done in a delegation party, I sought to speak with several people who went to Convention to represent the state of Virginia. The people with whom I have spoken are Sue Wren, the Democratic Party Chair of Virginia; Susan Mc Cleary, Technical and Party Services Director; Lynn Cooper, the Chesterfield County Democratic Party Chair; and Jeff Kelso, State Central Committee, and Vice-Chair of Third Congressional District. Each of these people, though coming from different experiences and backgrounds, has said the same things about women in leadership and women in the Democratic Party. I selected these people
as the best people to interview because of their extensive knowledge not only about the Democratic National Committee's Equal Division rule policy, but also because of their personal experiences at virtually all levels of party politics. These people have been involved at different places in party politics, and have viewed the party through multiple lenses.

Content Analysis

Based upon my interviews with Sue Wren, Susan McCleary, Lynn Cooper, and Jeff Kelso, I have been able to discover a pattern (regarding perception and attitudes about women and leadership in the Democratic National Committee). Not one of the interviewees made a distinction regarding male and female leadership practices within the Democratic Party of Virginia. Although not mentioning the transactional and transformational leadership styles by name, the interviewees described the leaders as a combination of both. Politics is inherently a transactional field, just as most women are inherently transformational and relationship-oriented leaders.

Each person I interviewed spoke of having risen to his/her current position by fulfilling roles at all other levels (incrementally), while acknowledging a difference about men. All the interviewees said that men tend to get to their positions in the party, especially localized positions, because they are well respected and have good standing in the community. On the other hand, women get there by their own merit and track record. Aside from methods of reaching these positions in Democratic Party politics, there appear to be few distinctions other than opinions regarding the Equal Division rule.

When I spoke with Jeff Kelso about his opinion regarding the Equal Division rule and how it has affected the Democratic National Committee, he responded by saying that
there has been no loss of productive input since women have taken on a more visible leadership role in the party. Like the other interviewees, he too noticed that not only is our state party chair a woman, but so too is much of our executive board. “Membership of the DNC, its Executive Committee, the governing body of each state party and each state party’s delegation to Convention . . . must be equally divided between men and women. [Charter, Art. 9, sec. 16; Delegate Selection Rule 6(C)]” (Sandler and Boylan 3).

In addition to discussing the technicalities of the Equal Division rule, Jeff also pointed out several of the more common complaints regarding it. The most general complaint appears to be that the rule is not evenly applied at all levels of state party politics. Men obtain position largely because of position/standing in community (i.e. a lot of lawyers) and don’t usually go through the ranks. Rather than having numerical parity, at one level, he would prefer to see gender balance at all levels of the system.

The background of female delegates coming from the local level of politics, if not at the volunteer/community level, was mentioned by all of those with whom I spoke. Lynn Cooper specifically explained a hypothetical chronology of events and offices through which women may participate prior to reaching the delegate level. Susan McCleary discussed both the path which women tend to take in party politics (local/volunteer, then state) as well as that which their male counterparts commonly take (highly visible or respected profession, then participating in highly visible political roles). Sue Wren mentioned the distinction between women’s and men’s political background only in the context of the personal attributes which are necessary to attain higher party offices (such as assertiveness, confidence, and expert knowledge).

“Leaders who are appointed derive authority and power from their position in the unit and organization. Specifically, appointed leaders would be expected to have more of
French and Raven's (1959) legitimate, reward, and coercive power than elected leaders” (Bass 146). The Democratic Chair of Virginia is appointed by the highest ranking state official. As stated by Jeff Kelso, the state party chair is “anointed” by the leader of the party. So, although the Chair is not elected by the people, it is assumed that he/she has proven to have legitimate power. Legitimate power can come both in the hands of proven experience as well as positional legitimacy. In the case of Sue Wren, her power and leadership come from both a life-long love for and involvement in politics, as well as proven leadership abilities in other state party offices. On the other hand, many men in offices of equivalent stature often come via more assumed/positional ways.

As already noted, after interviewing several women who are closely involved with the upper tier of party politics, I have noticed several similarities in their stories. The most glaring similarity between the women at these levels, compared to their male counterparts, is that the women tend to begin small (in roles such as head of the PTA, a volunteer for a political figure, or a part-time campaign worker). Through these roles, the women become acclimated to the political culture and their interest in and devotion to politics grows. From these early stages, the women determine if they are interested in pursuing higher political positions within the party.

Susan McCleary and Lynn Cooper displayed similarities in their comments. Both support the notion that women become involved at volunteer or grass roots level of politics, then work their way up through different local offices within the party, followed by a run for party delegate or larger state party office. The Equal Division rule is not even considered except in initially choosing at-large delegates. After that it is not an issue since everyone is extremely knowledgeable in the politics, therefore, no one is holding the group back, either politically or intellectually.
Unlike women, most men are involved in the public aspects of politics from the beginning. If not the person running for office, or the person running the campaign, men tend to be involved in a consultant role or high donor role. This visible sign of expressed interest in political events leads others to assume that the man has a personal interest in politics. After proving himself from the campaign perspective, and assuming that he, too has proven himself in the business sphere, a man is given large opportunities to run various divisions of political events (campaigns, offices, etc.).

When asked whether or not they felt that the Equal Division rule has had any negative effects on the Democratic Party, all of the respondents said no. Their responses generally lent to the logic that there is no time at which they have experienced a set-back in the Party because of it. Furthermore, the women do not significantly, or regularly disagree with the men on any given issue; however, the issues pertaining to gender are the most touchy. In fact, there was only one responded who expressed any sort of complaints against the Equal Division rule. These complaints were more in the line of inconsistencies rather than the premise.

Overall, there were several general areas on which all the interviewees touched. Each person noted the fact that few women are financially able to afford running for these high political positions. Furthermore, very few women still are seen as credible and as knowledgeable as men, in the field of politics. Without a great deal of encouragement and financial support, women would not be running. However, once women do break the “glass ceiling,” they excel. As the Democratic Party has witness in the last fifteen years, with the increased presence of women in places of higher political involvement, it has gained much more than it has lost. In fact, Virginia has come so far that a majority of the state party chairs over the last ten years have been women. This is clearly a result of the
opportunities which were opened to women as a result of the Equal Division rule

ANALYSIS

Among the people to whom I spoke, there was an apparent use of transactional leadership in each of them, as well as the presence of transformational leadership in those with the greatest political background. People such as Sue Wren, the Democratic Party Chair of Virginia, have been active in politics for such an extended length of time, all of her adult career, that she has learned not only what is necessary to be a good political leader (what is necessary to transact political business), but also what it takes to go a step further as a leader, and transform others to higher levels of performance and self.

From the research which I have conducted over a prolonged period of time, I have concluded that at the most selective levels of any organizational structures (or political organizations) there are few noticeable differences between male and female leaders. Within this specific context, the delegation level of the Democratic Party of Virginia, women are just as transformational as they are transactional, and the same generally holds true for men as well. Politics is by nature a very transaction oriented field. It is primarily through compromise that anything is accomplished. “We can conclude that party leadership is generally transactional, but it has vast transforming potential” (Burns 343). However, not all political leaders are transactional. Those who are good political leaders not only know how to be effective transactionally, but also how to transform their followers to a higher level of knowledge and/or morality.

From my observation in the different offices of the Democratic Party in the last year (the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic National Convention, and the
is similar, there is little distinction between male and female leaders at this level of party politics.

As Sue Wren noted in response to a question related to the effect which one's environment (regarding peers and context) may have on her leadership style, she did admit that there has likely been a gradual shift in her leadership over a period of time, due to the fact that she is in a primarily male field. Despite the fact that she is the top official within the state party, she has likely spent more time with a male leader above her than she has in charge of male subordinates.

Sue's comment reinforces the idea that "... social constructions of gender and the inculcation of societal expectations about roles appears to be more important in determining behavior than is sex itself" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 72). Societal norms greatly impact how we perceive things to be and how they should be. Therefore, if the societal norms or expectations in an environment such as politics, encourage women to emulate male leadership in order to climb the ladder of success, then that is likely to affect how the women behave. In fact, "Ellen Fagenson ... found that: perceived masculinity is related to position (the higher the position, the higher the perception of masculinity): masculinity is positively related to the perception of power, and men and women at upper levels see themselves as similarly masculine ..." (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 79).

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this research, I have found that male and female leaders in high political positions (such as the head of state party) differ only slightly in their
leadership styles. As Sue Wren pointed out, she does not know if the constant company of male leaders has affected her style more than her own personal leanings toward one leadership practice over another. According to research regarding how one's sex affects his/her leadership, it has been found that, "... sex is related to a preference for using a particular style but does not cause a preference for a particular style. The gendering of decision making, therefore, is not a function of one’s sex as much as it is a function of cultural roles, expectations, socialization, and stereotypes" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 76).

Her leadership style represents that of a relationship-oriented, transactional leader. She is relationship-oriented in the sense that she has a desire to develop and maintain relationships which will endure more than her two, four, or six years as the State Party Chair of Virginia. However, she also displays a strong sense of transactional leadership. Although I honestly expected to find less transactional leadership in her, such was not the case. Politics is one place for transactional leadership to occur in its pure fashion. There is always a need to trade votes, reach compromises, and work together.

Upon the conclusion of this research, I feel that I have disproved my original hypothesis. At these elite levels of political activity, women differ only minimally from men. The women appear to be more aware of the background differences between themselves and men, yet aside from that added knowledge, there is little noticeable distinction. Both men and women have survived the trials of elections. That in and of itself speaks to the equal ability of men and women.

Also similar between the men and women with whom I spoke is their leadership styles. Despite the fact that I expected to find a more distinct difference between male and female leadership practices in the Party, I did not. Much of this, I believe, is because of the transactional nature of politics, as well as the brevity with which upper party
officials are in a particular position of leadership. I suspect that in such environments as politics, more specifically party politics, leadership is both situational and environmental. Nonetheless, I do suspect that there are such cases where a political leader (even for a small, specifically focused organization) is truly transformational. However, the amount of time which it takes to fully transform another individual is much greater than the amount of time which any of the people who I interviewed has been in office. I have full faith that the people who are running the Party at this point in time are overqualified to do so, and are taking advantage of the unique qualities which each person brings with them, whether it be gender differences or simply different paths which people took to get to this point in a political career.
Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. What is your role in the Democratic party, and the state party specifically?

2. What was your role as a delegate to convention? (i.e. voting/non-voting, leader/follower, committees/caucuses)

3. Who was the formal leader? (head delegate -- spokesperson for state delegation party)

4. Who were the informal leaders of the state delegation?

5. Did the women possess 50% of the leadership and decision-making powers? How so?

6. How does having 50% women and 50% men affect the decisions and/or votes made by the delegation party? If yes, in what way(s)?

7. Do you observe any kind of resentment, or forced pressures regarding women being required to represent 50% of the delegation slots? Is there any kind of discussion in the way of women not being as effective as men?

8. How are delegates selected? What are the criteria?

9. What type of organization/body selects the delegates? What is its gender and racial make-up?

10. Do you notice significant differences between how men lead the group and how women lead the group? How so?

11. Once you reach the delegate level of party politics, how do people rise to leadership roles? Is there a difference between men and women (regarding steps which are taken, success at reaching leadership positions, etc.)?

12. Who were the most vocal members of the delegation?

13. What is your view of your own success in a political leadership position and/or as a delegate?

14. What were the contributing factors?
15. Did the Equal Division rule have an impact on your political career? In what way?

16. What factors contribute to female/male leadership in the political arena?
Appendix B
Democratic National Committee: Survey Questions

1. Do you notice different sorts of leadership practices used by your leader in relations with men and women, as a group? Explain.

2. What effects, positive or negative, do you believe the policy (concerning parity in the male-female makeup of the leaders or public figures of the DNC) has had on the organization?

3. Do you personally feel more comfortable (i.e., able to confront, able to be honest, able to complete your work without unnecessary interruptions) with male or female leaders?

4. Is it your opinion that women leaders are too concerned with everyone's emotions?

5. Are the female leaders whom you encounter generally effective, good leaders or do you feel they are simply fulfilling a quota, or somehow less effective or deserving of the men in those positions? Explain.

6. Do you believe that women bring with them different social lessons and expectations into the DNC? How does that serve to hurt or hinder larger group goals or ways of reaching them?
Appendix C
Summary of the Official Guidelines of the
Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection

A-1 Discrimination on the Basis of Race, Color, Creed, or National Origin

Requires that the six basis elements of the Special Equal Right Committee be added to all state party rules.
Requires affirmative steps to overcome past discrimination, including minority presence in the state delegation in reasonable relationship to the group’s presence in the state as a whole.

A-2 Discrimination on the Basis of Age or Sex

Requires affirmative steps to overcome past discrimination, including presence of young people (ages 18-30) and women in reasonable relationship to their presence in the state as a whole.
Requires state parties to allow Democrats aged 18-30 to participate in all state party affairs.
Bibliography


General information about the DNC. Democratic National Committee.


Annotated Bibliography


This is an exact account of what was said, and by whom, at the 1974 meeting on Democratic policy. It covers the monologues which took place, as well as the lengthy and somewhat heated discussions about the pros and cons of the Equal Division rule.


The primary focus of this article is the way in which productive changes can be made. Such things as shortening the primary season, bringing elected officials into the nomination process, and returning more decision-making power to the national convention [and its delegates] are a few of the proposed changes.


This article reviews the reasons for the changes in delegate selection by citing how poorly represented certain sectors of the population were previously. It reviews the different methods of delegate selection and how each may have potentially benefited certain groups of people.


This report reviews the steps which the McGovern-Fraser Commission took to eliminate the inadequacies previously in place with delegate selection. It also broaches the touchy topic of how to keep the Equal Division rule in tact while avoiding the difficulties, such as legal challenges, of affirmative action, since they are somewhat similar.

This article lays out in great detail what the history and logic of the Equal Division rule is. It makes key distinctions between the Equal Division rule and Affirmative Action, a frequently made comparison.