

A PENCE-IVE NARRATION OF A GENDERED VICE-PRESIDENCY

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This is for you.

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## Introduction

The selection of Indiana Governor Mike Pence to be the vice-presidential nominee for the Republican Party is a rhetorical opportunity abundant in rich communication, fixed well beyond the traditional political substance that usually dominates such moments of historical significance. The pageantry of such a selection process, historically a nationally telegraphic moment since the mid-century, is made even more electric by the involvement of Donald J. Trump, the real-estate tycoon with a vivacious personality who captivated and puzzled political audiences throughout the 2016 presidential election cycle. The powerful magnate, who had electorally seized control of the GOP via a gruesome political bloodbath, existed in the Republican primary as a neophyte politician who had repeatedly dominated the conservative electoral map against candidates bearing higher levels of experience and political pedigree. Trump, ever the over-the-top competitor as seen in his reality TV appearances on *The Apprentice*, had eviscerated his political opponents in a repetitive process of tough and insulting rhetoric akin to a style rarely even utilized on the opposing Democratic Party in more traditional election years.

Now, law and party rules mandated that Trump could no longer use a go-it-alone strategy along his political journey since the party primaries were completed and a vice-presidential running-mate was desperately needed. The more mild-mannered Pence, a quietly controversial first-term governor, was reported to have made the short-list for the number two position on the ticket. Trump, a traditionally self-reliant communicator known throughout the political world for instrumentally ushering birtherism theories on President Barack Obama to a larger national stage, would be forced to share his symbolic leadership of the GOP with another. Together, he and that chosen running-mate would

depart on a quest to “Make America Great Again” in keeping with Trump’s adopted campaign theme. In choosing such a partner for the position of vice-president and the symbolic leadership of his campaign, the unusually bombastic Trump was reported to be limited by the actual Republican politicians willing to run and serve alongside him. He also appeared to be indecisive as he grappled with potential choices. This list of would-be vice-presidents purportedly included New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and the lesser known Pence, an alternative who had a pedigree appropriate for the religious right still questioning the faith of Donald J. Trump. The positive and negative trappings that each vice-presidential selection could bring to such a pairing were heavily discussed ad-nauseam during the weeks leading up to the Republican National Convention. By law, this gathering of Republicans would be charged with uniting Trump and the lucky selectee-to-be in running-mate matrimony in much ritualistic pageantry.

Yet more time passed and the designated vice-presidential nominee continued to remain unnamed while it became more evident that the normally bold Trump may have developed a case of cold feet and appeared to be cautiously pondering the sort of committed partnership he desired for the rest of his political life. During this week of suspense, first came leaks and then garbled confirmation from off-record sources that Indiana Governor Mike Pence would be the nominee, after all. The only source holding back confirmation was the puzzling fact that Trump admitted he was not yet prepared to publicly name his nominee, despite the intense barrage of confirmations of Pence. Further, deep background sources within the campaign contended that a major rift existed between Trump, his family, and various campaign factions. This claim was readily

supported by abrupt changes in travel plans on the part of the candidate and key campaign personnel, envoys seen coming and going in erratic patterns from Trump's location, and the nominee's own continued bizarre social media communications neither confirming nor denying Pence. Growing speculation fueled the idea that Trump just could not settle on Mike Pence for some unknown reason that remained a mystery. This theory was compounded by a campaign that had never fully operated as a traditional national political operation, instead charting new courses on how to do everything differently in the political realm and succeed. Throughout this period of indecision, a variety of academic, media, and political elites continued to opine on the process, the merits of a Pence selection, and just how the potential running-mates could work together. The speculation and silence was broken by Trump who finally weighed in with the Tweet, "I am pleased to announce that I have chosen Governor Mike Pence as my Vice-Presidential running mate. News conference tomorrow at 11:00 A.M." (Donald Trump, Twitter). With that moment, the question had been answered and a vice-president named.

Pence, who was little known outside of his congressional and gubernatorial credentials as a religious conservative, now became the person standing with Donald Trump as one half of a potential administration. In contrast to his running-mate, Pence existed politically calmer and quieter than the brash New Yorker who had tapped him to join the team. Trump, a candidate who had not played by longstanding GOP rules like the tradition of working your way up through a series of smaller offices while supporting more experienced standard bearers, had finally found a political running-mate capable of accepting the package of an unconventional reality TV star turned presidential candidate.



With a selection like Pence, Trump had found at least one credentialed political person willing to endorse sharing a place on a major presidential ticket. Overall, Pence offered an immediate contrast when juxtaposed next to Trump, a nominee struggling to condense a coalition of traditional Republican, religious right conservatives, and the type of independent voters needed to win a presidential campaign. The pairing of Trump/Pence was a sight never quite seen before by the modern political observers watching the spectacle and it afforded both participants and audience members a chance to employ and witness communication ripe with rhetorical framing. These two opposites, now standing publicly as one unique presidential ticket with two distinct parts, became an interesting rhetorical artifact as they interacted with media and were dissected by the same, all the while they were striving to reshape a nation after eight years of Democratic rule.

Pence, who would not make normal political sense given his poor track record at home and chance of defeat in the fall as a candidate for reelection as Indiana's governor, offered an immediate contrast when juxtaposed next to the brackish Trump. Although Pence had angered many in his state by signing a controversial religious freedom law designed to minimize same-sex marriage, his cautious language choice had usually kept him out of trouble. The more boisterous persona of Trump did not match the mild-mannered state executive who often let his actions or inactions offer more in symbolic rhetoric than any words he deployed. Pence, it had been argued, had arrived in the Hoosier state's executive mansion to maintain the viability of a budding presidential career after a safely conservative record in Congress. Trump, in contrast, had arrived at national candidacy via larger-than-life real estate ventures, high profile divorces, and a

stint on reality television that was hardly the typical ascension of a candidate in either major party.

The stark differences of personality between the two candidates was clear on the day that Pence was officially announced. At the New York announcement, Trump took a full 28 minutes to introduce Pence and instead chose instead to conduct a campaign style rally of self-promotion. Maggie Haberman of the New York Times noted that “vice-presidential roll outs are usually a carefully orchestrated high point of a presidential campaign, but Mr. Trump’s has been unusual and chaotic from the start” with the writer going on to offer sympathy for vice-presidential designee Mike Pence, “whose speech clocked in at roughly 12 minutes” (Trump Delivers a Long, Passionate Speech, 2016). The denial of Pence a swift and affirmative announcement on Trump’s ticket set back his ascendancy into the vice-presidency even further when combined with a debut that largely ignored him. Unlike many of his predecessors who all eventually took their place into second-place mediocrity after brief celebration at their announcement, Pence was to be denied his own day where attention should have been reserved for his own record, experience, and background. This would be the first of many such difficult days where the vice-presidential candidate would find similar circumstances of Trump dominance.

The events and communication surrounding this vice-presidential selection, as a once in a four-year phenomenon, featured this odd pair of running-mates who both complemented and contrasted each other on a regular basis as a new sort of political power couple. Such an opportunity logically offered rhetoricians the ability to weigh words and deeds for their very influence on the vice-presidency, the greater American political processes, and ultimately the traditional gender roles associated with presidential

tickets. As an epic political phenomenon demonstrating the pairing of two politicians into one unified presidential ticket, audience members bore witness to powerful narrative frames that reinforced and modified their perceptions of the vice-presidency and a general understanding of running-mates on highly publicized national tickets.

In this process, Pence, along with political pundits and members of the media alike, allowed for a unique and key moment in which the vice-presidency was framed through familiar gender reinforcing narratives for national audiences. Such framing, regardless of whether intended or unintended, offers rhetoric for which Pence and the vice-presidency are portrayed on a large scale. These frames, deployed by multiple sources in the media and political world, come to define the vice presidency beyond the strict and limited terms legally carved out in such sacred national tomes as the Constitution or the rigid confines of Executive Branch flowcharts. This may be most apparent in a country where citizens regularly fail to identify the current vice-president, the nature of the number two position, and former or future occupants who held the position at some point in the nation's over two century history. As a result, information on such candidates becomes better known through the narrative rituals inherent in vice-presidential selection processes, nominating conventions that ratify such nominees, large-scale televised addresses and interviews featuring such candidates, and widely viewed vice-presidential debates between the opposing parties. After all, scholars like Benoit and Henson (2009) argue that through such rare vice-presidential debates "given the fact that presidential candidates are usually better known than their running mates, this makes the opportunity to learn about the vice-presidential candidates through debates significant for voters" (p. 39). Such opportunities, because of rhetoric, reinforce the office and occupant

by the prevailing narrative that is offered and achieved while such candidates gain notoriety on a national stage. Further, these narratives tell us how audience members will understand and communicate about the vice-presidency as they engage the position, its occupants, and the American political process.

This thesis seeks to identify and understand the narrative surrounding Governor Mike Pence and his pursuit of the vice-presidency. This will be accomplished by understanding the traditional feminine gender roles Pence rhetorically occupied during the 2016 presidential campaign where he served as running-mate to Donald Trump. This is an appropriate study intersecting gender and the vice-presidency, argues scholars, who have indicated that the position reinforces traditional feminine roles as it intersects with the more masculine presidency. Bostdorff (1991) argues that “that the contemporary vice presidency is, in effect, a traditional feminine role” which prescribes that “although vice presidents must seem to have enough strong ‘masculine’ traits to ensure their competence during national emergencies, they must submerge their independence and individualism to perform their day-to-day duties which consist mainly of abject ‘feminine’ servility” (p.2). The author argues that sitting vice-presidents and potential aspirants to the office use strategies of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission to fulfill a gendered role in service to a more powerful, highly masculine presidency. To accomplish a review of Pence and the notion of a gendered vice-presidency, this thesis will specifically examine the rhetorical artifacts of Pence’s interview alongside Trump on the television magazine *60 Minutes*, the Indiana Governor’s nomination acceptance speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention, and finally Pence’s debate appearance with U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee. This thesis presents a

rationale for such an examination followed by the relevant literature to be reviewed, appropriate research questions to be answered, and methods to be utilized to explore the rhetorical nature of the vice-presidency and its gendered perspective. Such a work will lead to a greater understanding of the rhetoric surrounding Pence and a gendered vice-presidency during the 2016 election. This paper also discusses implications for the important office as it engages the American political process in the future of a highly rhetorical republic.

### **Rationale**

Why even study the vice-presidency and the gendered rhetoric inherent in our American political process? After all, political and rhetorical audience members might scoff at the notion of studying an office deemed unimportant by so many, further begging the need for greater rhetorical analysis and understanding of such a unique office. On a larger scale, research here is important because it attempts to better understand the rhetorical nature of an office not easily decipherable, a position that exists in the larger political communicative sphere while deemed insignificant, meager, and weak by its contemporaries. As the literature review will demonstrate, this diminishment of stature exists because of the vice-presidency's role and function in relation to the greater presidency, an institution of great power and prestige to rhetorical audience members. A former occupant labeled the position best, noting that "no statement is more repeated than John Nance Garner's observation that the office "is not worth a bucket of warm spit" (In search of the proverbial bucket, 2004). The perceived shortcomings of vice-presidential occupants have also detracted from the position, with history accurately portraying only men in the position, males who were not always selected to national tickets for merit

purposes and at times, were unqualified for national office. Further, the very language of vice-presidential occupants allows for narratives that cast the position into secondary roles behind the presidency.

The need to expand on the work of scholars like Bostdorff who contend that gender roles are present in the vice-presidential position, also provide important rationale for study. As will be discussed, past candidates like Geraldine Ferraro and Sarah Palin, were viewed under highly gendered expectations of how a woman seeking such traditional male roles should function. If female vice-presidential candidates can be the subject of discussions about gendered expectations in such an office, then certainly their male counterparts can, too. If gendered expectations regularly exist in the vice-presidency, then how do individuals such as Pence, reinforce or reject such roles? This question deserves consideration and greater understanding with an office largely overlooked by pundits and audience members, alike.

When further justifying a rationale for such a study, it should be noted that from its inception, American culture, history, and political actors have notably dismissed the offices' occupant and official purpose, alike. Outside of the highly viewed events involving the position, such as the selection process, nominating conventions, large-scale televised addresses, and widely viewed national debates, the vice-presidency is still rarely observed for any sort of special significance for the average spectator. Regardless of this little notice, the person occupying the position exists legally and symbolically in a fate-filled position just one heartbeat from the presidency, a fact that marks the office for importance and therefore, greater understanding. Overall, the vice-president is the second highest elected official in a large and important nation with the greatest of potentials to be

cast into the role of president, should fate intervene. At any given time, a vice-president may find themselves occupying the highest office in the land with the fate of the world resting on their decision-making ability.

The American political phenomenon revolves most exclusively around the presidency; that one person marked as leader of the free world, who reliably has a willing vice-president ready to be dispatched for any given need, notion, or whim of their commander-in-chief. Conservative columnist Tim Donner writes, “there is also the undeniable effect of the bully pulpit controlled by the president” but “it is not always a crisis that results in expanded executive power: Sometimes it is just the president’s belief that the public will accept it” (The ever-expanding power of the presidency, 2016). There is no other elected office the vice-presidency, particularly when attempting to compare it to the presidency, the highest office in the land and a precedent setting position. The relative weakness of the vice-presidency, as will be discussed, juxtaposed with its potential for power should the aspirant reach the White House, presents conflicting messaging of both insignificance and immensity. This narrative of the second position with potential for greatness, further evokes a strong, yet diminished vice-presidency trapped in its own proverbial web.

The president, conversely, is symbolically the most highly recognizable figure in the world with all the visible and symbolically known trappings of the position. He or she lives in the most recognized home in the world, is transported in Air Force One, a plane that is the very symbolic definition of prestige and strength on a global stage “ready to travel anywhere in the world on a moment’s notice” (Air Force One, 2016). In contrast, standing next to the chief executive is a lesser known vice-president, the proverbial

runner-up individual who does receive an official residency and his or her own airplane, although both the home and the aircraft are certainly less recognizable and smaller than that of their presidential counterparts. The benefits of one office over the other also transcend beyond the material and into the realm of personnel as audience members consider images of sentry-like secret service agents and throngs of staff and bureaucrats lining the halls of federal agencies. After all, while a president may direct armies and legions of staff as commander-in-chief of an important nation, vice-presidents command little to nothing with much smaller resources and personnel, altogether.

At the root of the origins of the chief executive, presidents descend from tradition and high-minded precedent on a highly identifiable national scale visibly seen in massive election contests that pit the standard bearer of one political party against another. First president George Washington “was well aware that he had been given the power to shape the American presidency” understanding the need for precedent, because, “he needed to bring the executive branch to life in the republic he helped to found” (Presidential Precedents, 2016). Conversely, vice-presidents traditionally descend from the very presidents who pick them on somewhat non-descript days seldom memorialized by history, media, or popular culture references that rarely sustain over time. If a vice-president communicates about anything deemed important for media coverage, they are certainly only fulfilling the ritualistic roles of their station while offering a president’s view or perhaps chastising those who oppose the administration. A vice-president, limited in every capacity, rarely has freedom or convenience to share their own ideas. If such a number two takes a divergent position from the White House, a crisis is easily memorialized as a gaffe or obvious contradiction, and efforts must immediately ensure to



repair potential damage. The vice-presidency existing rhetorically in such a capacity then begins to emerge mundane, submissive to their executive, and secondary in all considerations.

Beyond the high visibility of both the rhetorical presidency and the vice-presidency, there exists another important narrative of shared national meaning that centers morbidly on the death of presidents and the subsequent rise of their successors. This unexpected rise from one office to another may occur from natural causes traditionally associated with age or on a far darker scale, grisly assassinations that publicly force a nation to grieve while confronting the macabre and conspiratorial. Such moments, widely shared by a national audience, quickly catapult a vice-president of a grieving nation into a more renowned place in national history. Gary Rodgers argues in the *Huffington Post* “JFK’s murder on November 22, 1963, might be the most significant, singular event that shaped modern history” while noting the event placed Vice-President Lyndon Johnson into the White House (Five ways the JFK Assassination Changed the World). The elevation into national office is further significant because historically, absent the death of the president, a number two so rarely graduates into the office merely on their own. Historically, while fourteen vice-presidents have made the leap into the higher office, a majority eight of them have done so based on the death of their predecessor and not simply of their own merit or popularity. Simply put, vice-presidents struggle to get elected president on their own merit. The contenders for and winners of the job, alike, have been categorized for their mediocrity and political failings which have often limited their presidential aspirations. History shows, absent the intervention of fate,

vice-presidents are stuck being vice-president, further demanding rationale for vice-presidential study.

An overall rationale for this paper is the need to better understanding Pence's influence on the rhetorical vice-presidency, particularly as we review the candidate's submissive and secondary role to the bombastic and overshadowing Trump. This need is reinforced by Donald Trump's unique place in history, as easily the most non-traditional GOP nominee in modern history, a feat setting further emphasis on the very nature of Pence as he grappled with the confines of the number two position following his own time in Congress and as a chief executive of an American state. Trump, better known in the last decade as reality-TV host of "The Apprentice" instead of as a politician, had repeatedly inflamed the public with incendiary remarks long before adding the more mild-mannered Pence to his ticket. Pence had quietly ascended into Republican politics by being everything Trump had not been, instead offering quiet and calm rhetoric on traditionally conservative views. Trump's remarks had inflicted shocking rhetorical insults on Mexicans, Muslims, and women, among many others, in the same brash style that he had deployed on national television. During the G.O.P. primary debate, Trump had shocked the nation when he "exploded with what was widely taken as Trump's insinuation that Kelly was hostile to him the in the debate because she was menstruating" (Fox anchor Megyn Kelly describes scary, bullying 'Year of Trump). Defying conventional political wisdom, Trump had still managed to get elected by large voting blocs in various regions of the nation, much to the mystification of politicians, like Pence, who had been cautious while methodically watching the White House. Repeatedly, Trump had stuck to his claims, refuting any evidence contrary to his assertions while

simultaneously blaming political enemies and the media who he asserted were simply telling his story incorrectly. Trump's repetitive unwillingness to accommodate opposing views or any dissention from any entity, had become famous by the time Pence was inching towards the vice-presidency. A vice-president, working in such a secondary position would need to defend and submit to the dominant Trump at any cost. Such occurrences, then become rich rhetorical artifacts available for scholarly understanding and dissection. This rationale demonstrates a need for further study of the rhetorical vice-presidency and the gendered terms it occupies.

## Literature Review

### Foundations of a Rhetorical Vice-Presidency

The office of the vice-president was not given a tremendous amount of hope when it was constrained in the Constitution to merely preside over the U.S. Senate and break a tie vote on the rare times of institutional indecision. Relyea & Arja (2002) describe the office as “something of an afterthought” which “came to the attention of the delegates to the constitutional convention in the closing days of their deliberations” in 1787 (p. 14). The position’s genesis, the authors note, reflects a compromise between the need for a strong national government and a balance with the supporting states in a federal system, with a vice-president presiding as check over those state’s designated representatives. Until modern times, questions still exist on what branch, if any, the position was truly assigned when it was crafted. Adkinson (1982) writing in “The Vice-Presidency: Retain, Reform, Abolish,” explains conventional wisdom, existing long into the twentieth century, firmly places the vice-presidency in neither the executive nor legislative branch with the author ultimately concluding, “as matters now stand, a vice-president is a full member of neither branch” (p. 5). This confusing reality and lack of institutional identity was not lost on inaugural holder of the office, John Adams. The founding father turned vice-president and later a one-term president, opined on his election that “my country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived” (p. 1). Neustadt (1997) argues that little other hope was given for such a role in its earliest day “subsisted on the margin of the legislative branch,” indicating that “while the president lived, they had no role” (p. 183). The reality of simply existing to settle the Senate’s disputes and then only at the direction

of the president as the executive's check on the legislative branch, was not an inviting or warm existence for prospective office holders.

In the early days of the Constitution, vice-presidents were twice the individual who came in second-place for the presidency and not a running-mate of any presidential candidate, like today. That such a bleak existence existed for the second-place finisher who was contesting the presidency, argues Sindler (1987), begs "how could persons of acknowledged presidential quality be persuaded to become vice-president" (p. 336). As chronicled by early historical biography, early occupants of the office were given nothing greater to do beyond the traditional ceremonial functions of presiding over the Senate. Such individuals chosen for the position were selected not on merit, but rather the material and strategic offerings that they could bring to the far greater presidential ticket. Because of such raw politics, Baumgartner and Crumblin (2015) describe officeholders as "less than exemplary statesmen" further noting "a list of vice-presidents and vice-presidential candidates that reads like a virtual Who's Who of political mediocrities" (p. 2). In fact, the meager duties and roles given to the position would later lead the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Vice-Presidency to issue a damning report in 1988. The group of civic and business leaders concluded "the vice-president's most important responsibility always has been to be prepared to be president at a moment's notice" and nothing else (p. 15). The task force urged both executive and legislative leaders to make critical plans to prepare future occupants for assuming the presidency through the sharing of information and key plans for transition. Since vice-presidents should be prepared to become president and had little else to do, the group argued, a need for tutoring was tantamount to growth in a future presidential position.

## **An Office Weak, for the Meek**

The early life of the vice-presidency featured the position as a sort of rhetorical trap in which occupants were hardly deemed quotable, consultable, memorable, or to be taken seriously for chroniclers of history. Dorman (1968) explains that “at first conceived, the vice-presidency was a weak office – but one expected to attract superior men... but it quickly became clear that truly able men would find it hard to accept the rigid confines of the vice-presidency” (p. 8). This trap was made more real by the requirement that this political station along with the presidency, were assigned to such rivals as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, founding fathers mandated to serve together after a brutal presidential campaign in which the latter came in second. An 1804 amendment to the Constitution changed this unreliable practice, thus officially marking the position to simply be “vote-bait in future nominating conventions and elections” upon which a presidential candidate could better craft a ticket garnering larger support from voting national audiences by using the popularity and geographic location of their vice-presidential running-mates (p. 17). Adams, a “blunt, stubborn, opinionated, vain” figure, who felt the vice-presidency perhaps more harshly than anyone else in history, conceded that while it was George Washington’s place to set precedent, it was his job to simply “serve in second place to Washington” (p. 392). Historical biographer David McCullough, noting the defects of the first vice-president, indicates that Adams “was the first, but by no means the last, vice-president to take abuse in the president’s place, though much of it, to be sure, he brought on himself” (p. 408). Adams would certainly not be the last vice-president to feature short comings or the miserableness of the position. In recounting the Van Buren years of office, Niven (1983) argues that “the

influence and importance of the vice-president were nil” and the miserable insignificance of such an office completely indescribable (p. 302). Still, this did not stop either Van Buren from taking the position on his long and storied quest for the presidency and ultimate power, much like the highly vain John Adams.

The concern about the mediocrity of the vice-presidency, particularly vexing for those inflicted with holding the office, only began to change when presidents began to experience mortality and ultimately die, thus propelling their successors into new territory not completely conceivable from their previously helpless perches. This affected more than a few elevated White House vice-presidents and none more than the beleaguered John Tyler, the first to do so. Upon the death of sitting President William Henry Harrison after just 30 days, much debate ensued in Congress on whether Tyler should be titled as president, acting-president, or not president at all and simply vice-president. Sindler (1987) indicates “amid debate that revealed confusion and disagreement over what the Constitution required, Vice President John Tyler successfully asserted a right – aptly symbolized by his taking the presidential oath of office – of full successorship for the remainder of the uncompleted term” a process that “successor presidents have held” (p. 335). With this very public assertion that a vice-president does in fact elevate to the presidency, Tyler secured precedent for the eight men who would follow in similar footsteps throughout American history. Tyler would certainly not be the last vice-president to elevate to the presidency, with eight additional men catapulted into the role by natural causes or the harshness of an assassin’s bullet. This narrative on presidential mortality and vice-presidential succession would be further etched into the American culture through movies, television shows, and books. The lingering security

concerns surrounding the offices would also be sustained by the grim imagery of the ever-present Secret Service agents who guard both positions. As a result of such potential for vice-presidential elevation, most modern-day discussion of such selectee's center on the concept that the individual may one day be president.

### **Introducing an Attack-Dog Function**

In the later years of the republic, circumstances began to change and an attack-dog function of the vice-presidency began to slowly emerge. This new concept transformed the office during the media-age from being a simple presiding officer of the Senate into a new and innovative way of keeping the position submissive to the presidency. This growing modern political theater, of which vice-presidents take active part, performed well in the media age and featured rabid running-mates who were called on to viciously attack opponents and vigorously defend the presidential candidates whom they served. This addressed the idleness of an office, in which Turner (1982) points out "the real problem... was that framers had prescribed no executive duties for it" (p. 6). The attack-dog, growing out of this modern need and time, then became an enhancement of the office's secondary type of submissiveness as it continued to relate and react with the presidency.

The attack-dog style, particularly suited to the number two position, allows vice-presidents to unleash rhetorical fury upon their opponents in an unceasing manner. Such a role corresponds well with personalities given to such a negative duty and highly rewards those individuals willing to defend their presidential running-mate and attack another. Black (2007) points to one such ideal personality when describing the "naked ambition" and "Cassius-like appetite for power" of Richard Nixon, a man who utilized "devious



tactics” while “hijacking... a great train robbery” in pursuit of the office, arguably “making him a logical vice-presidential candidate” (p. 185, 187). A vice-presidential rhetorician renders such highly-charged language in an ever-loyal fashion to the benefit of their ticket-mate, often at great personal expense of themselves. Appropriately summing up this dynamic, Nixon famously recalled his own days as Eisenhower’s vice-presidential “prat-boy,” a designation and occupation of which he did not object. After all, the 36<sup>th</sup> person to hold such an office observed that:

RICHARD NIXON: A vice-president... should always consider that he is dispensable and should do what the man wants to carry out the policy, because otherwise the man’s got to get down there in the ring... what happened to Richard Nixon when Eisenhower was president would be bad for me, wouldn’t matter that much maybe to the country... what happened to him (Eisenhower) could be disastrous. (CNN, 1982)

A need to keep the president away from the conflict while a vice-president embraces the negative tasks of an administration, fully embraces this attack-dog concept of a loyal secondary who is regularly prepared to engage the enemy and support the boss.

More recent examples of noteworthy and successful attack-dog vice presidential figures include Lyndon Johnson for John Kennedy, Spiro Agnew for Richard Nixon, and Dick Cheney for George W. Bush. The Texan politico Johnson would succeed to the presidency bearing a shrewd political acumen following Kennedy’s death, while Agnew would resign early in disgrace after being abandoned by Nixon, who fully understood that a vice-president was disposable. In recent history, Cheney would become the face for all that viewed the most insidious within Bush’s administration, including from being an energy insider to 9/11 conspiracies that suggested his own culpability in committing treason against fellow countrymen by making the World Trade Center collapse.

## **Bound to the Presidency**

The modern-day vice-president then, fully vexed by the nature and limitations of their position, must contend with not just the political realities of being the attack-dog for the administration, but are also bound to the negative ramifications associated with the president's incumbency should they seek the presidency on their own. If a president is popular, often so is the number two and thus, their fates become intertwined. As a result, vice-presidents are powerless to effect change on matters of public opinion autonomously and as some scholars point out, have less power than most of their political contemporaries. Cramer (1992) contends that "no vice-president was really number two, or even three or four: a chief of staff, secretary of state – any cabinet officer – a senator, even a congressman... hundreds of people had more legal and practical power over how things went in the country" as a comparison (p. 23). While logically it would make sense that the vice-president would hold more prestige and rank than a member of congress, it should be remembered that vice-presidents cannot appropriate funds, authorize national defense functions, or regularly cast a vote in the halls of the House or Senate. Due to the stark vacuum of power associated with the position, vice-presidents may find it difficult to escape the perils of an unpopular administration and powerless to do anything to effect change based on their own merits or abilities.

This reality for vice-presidents seeking the presidency becomes a problematic dilemma, particularly when such candidates are confronted with choosing whether to embrace or distance themselves from the previous president, to avoid being labeled with the proverbial third-term. Mansharamani (2003), while reviewing incumbent vice-presidents with higher aspirations, points out that "not only must they contend with an

opponent, but their relationship with the president also plays a complex role in the campaign process” as they seek to do battle on two fronts between a voting popular and their original running-mate (p. 605). The author argues that such vice-presidential hopefuls should “lean more towards a defense of the status quo... but in a case where the sitting president is unpopular and unlikable, the sitting vice president should offer a counterplan... make(ing) a major break from the president and his administration and offer new solutions to existing problems” (p. 613). This illustrative pattern demonstrating how vice-presidents exist at the whim of ever presidential reality begins to take shape as their political survival is often left to opinion polls based on the actions of others, while simultaneously far removed from anything they can reasonably control.

Historically, several good examples are illustrative of vice-presidents who found themselves made more vulnerable due to the popularity of the incumbent. Bostdorff (1991) notes, Hubert Humphrey, a vice-president who regularly found himself in the position of bowing to his powerful ticket-mate, Lyndon Johnson. The Minnesota statesman “humiliated himself publicly when he donned a cowboy outfit and then straddled a large and spirited horse for a photo session, simply because Lyndon Johnson told him to do so” (p. 2). Humphrey, a vociferous liberal twice denied the presidency in his own right in 1960 and 1968, kept his reservations to himself, rather than confront the more dominant Johnson, a rancher owner and Stetson-wearing chief executive. In a similar fashion, Vice-President George H.W. Bush, a man continuously labeled as weak, left his divergent opinions from the rhetorically strong Reagan behind upon agreeing to serve in the latter’s administration. This was despite their primary rivalry and

disagreement on a range of issues like tax cuts for the wealthy. Such references to weakness would frustrate the elder Bush for the remainder of his political career.

Ever on their own, vice-presidents are not judged in a political vacuum without a president or some presidential candidate being considered. Pointedly, Ulbig (2013) indicates “even when VP candidates take center stage in their own debates, there is little evidence that they do much at all to alter the political landscape” given the limited power and influence of the office (p. 9). This supports a belief that vice-presidents simply do not exist as powerful rhetorical figures offering communication and symbolism on any discernible national platform evident to audience members. Under law and customary practice, at various points in history the vice-presidency was not filled when the office became vacant due to the death or resignation of the office holder. Such vacancies were common-place well into the twentieth century when the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment was adopted in 1967. That such a prominent position would remain unfilled despite the myriad of presidents that had died in office, further lends support to an overall lack of focus on anything of substance regarding the vice-presidency, an office merely one heartbeat from the presidency. Clearly, the vice-presidency as afterthought and secondary range large in national consciousness not regularly considering the rigors and challenges of the office.

### **Women, the Vice-Presidency, and Gender Expectations**

Gender expectations of leadership roles are not new and particularly not to the vice-presidency. This has been further evidenced by the women who sought the office and the fact that no woman has ever been vice-president or president, for that matter. Both Geraldine Ferraro and Sarah Palin were selected by the two major parties as nominees and were serious contenders to attain the position, thus becoming a good

starting position when considering the intersection of gender and the vice-presidency. Ferraro and Palin, despite diametrically opposing positions on issues, had very similar experiences when attempting to navigate a path to the proverbial glass ceiling. Both candidates would understand and embrace a classically feminine experience of being a woman seeking traditionally male position and both were expected to fulfill their roles with heightened male expectations of leadership. Meeks (2012) argues that “the disconnect in America between women and political office is fed by the cultural premise that politics is a domain for masculinized behaviors, messages, and professional experiences” even in cases where women are candidates, such as was the case with Ferraro, the Bronx member of Congress and Palin, the Alaska Governor (p.176). The author goes further, arguing that “we construct gender stereotypes by attributing certain characteristics to women and men, and then employ those perceived attributes to process and easily recall meaning” with a result of “stereotypes...(that) become problematic when they dictate the roles people are expected to fulfill” (p.176). Such stereotypes do little to accommodate a feminine voice in a male-dominated field of American politics, further begging consideration if a female office holder will be perceptibly different from a male in the same position. The female candidate gets further imperiled in a double-bind when she then fails to successfully deploy the culturally expected attributes of her male counterparts, instead choosing to chart her own course at risk of group expectations. The gendered roles she is expected to reinforce demonstrate how candidates, whether they be male or female, are expected to perform given the political office they seek, regardless of their beliefs, experience, or ideas.

A great example of such role expectations can be found in the 1984 election. Geraldine Ferraro, notes Blankenship, Mendez-Mendez, Kang, and Giordano (1986), “was catapulted from being a little-known three-term congresswoman from Queens, New York to an instant celebrity on the national scene” when she was selected by former Vice-President Walter Mondale to be his vice-president (p. 378). The authors reviewed headlines, editorials, and columns from that time period, noting that such publications minimized her qualities in relation to Republican counterpart, George H.W. Bush, the incumbent vice-president. Such “editorials frequently neglected to tell readers that (Ferraro) had served three terms in Congress and frequently neglected to say anything of her committee service in the Congress” particularly noteworthy given her prominent congressional committee assignments (p. 382). Ferraro, measured by a male dominated political system, was not given fair treatment under male-written rules. Even the incumbent Bush refused to address Ferraro by her title during their debate, choosing to refer to her as “Mrs. Ferraro” instead. The incumbent Bush also insisted on tutoring the member of Congress from Queens on foreign policy and world affairs by adopting a form of mansplaining, or lectures from a man to a woman that include patronizing tones and excessive verbiage that assume the latter needs an education on issues she is likely to already understand. Such language, like the words used by Vice-President Bush, seek to diminish the credibility of Ferraro and other women, further reinforcing a false idea that women cannot possibly understand complex subjects like American politics.

A brief twenty-four years later and little progress had been made as Sarah Palin immediately recognized gender roles and expectations for the office of the presidency and vice-presidency, of which she had quickly become part of during the 2008

election. In a tribute to rival Hillary Clinton, the Alaska governor opined at her announcement with running-mate John McCain, “it was rightly noted in Denver this week that Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America” yet had still come away empty handed (Decker, 2008). Palin, referred to by her previously earned nicknames of “Hurricane Sarah” and “Sarah Barracuda” for being a fierce rival, further reinvigorated a conservative movement lulled by the economic crash and disillusion with McCain in the heat of the 2008 campaign (p. 84). She further fostered a notion that a woman with conservative credentials could attain executive office, but not without some verbal expectations on what that governing woman was expected to say and do.

During the campaign, Palin coined gender terms such as “hockey moms” in describing women like herself who could skillfully navigate home, aggressive work positions, or school. Despite her popularity among large swaths of the voting public, the candidate took on excruciating criticism for the way she conducted herself during media interviews in ways that a popular and male conservative successor, Donald J. Trump, never did. Palin also had to contend with gender stereotypes that were used against her relentlessly by members of the contemporary media, including women. Columnist Maureen Dowd insisted, “Sarah has single-handedly ushered out the ‘Sex and the City’ era, and made a sexy new model for America a retro one – the glamorous Pioneer Woman, packing a gun, a baby, and a Bible” (Dowd, 2008). Such language choices type-casted a serious political candidate as sex object and mom, regardless of her political experience or ability which are quickly moved to the side.

Other outlets like *Advertising Age* chose instead to place emphasis on Palin's physical attributes instead of other benefits she brought to the GOP presidential ticket. The magazine ran a cover, entitled "Why Sarah Palin is McCain's Camaro" comparing the vice-presidential candidate to the sleek and exciting sports car coveted by motor enthusiasts (p.1). Such examples place Palin's nomination in a gender-defined lens and objectify her role in American politics. Meeks (2012) found that among media stories of Palin versus other female candidates for other offices "revealed that gendered news gaps were consistently greater when women sought higher, more executive offices" (p. 187). These gaps centered on how such executive-office seeking female candidates will balance a political career and family. McCarver (2011) points out that "as people learned more about the details of Palin's family life – five children, the oldest in the military, the youngest a newborn with Down syndrome, and a pregnant teenage daughter – mothers, women, and men weighed in with their views of Palin as a mother and a candidate" in ways that have not been traditionally used for their male counterparts (p. 20). The idea that a woman should be questioned on family obligations as it relates to their political and career decisions, unlike their male counterparts who are simply permitted to make such decisions unfettered, begs immediate questions of fairness for all concerned.

### **Bostdorff and a Gendered Vice-Presidency**

Beyond these historical considerations when it comes to gender and the vice-presidency, other evidence exists that gender framing surrounds the rhetorical nature of the office. Such narratives, it would appear, exist all throughout the conventional rhetorical experience as evidenced by the vice-presidential artifacts that audience members consume daily. Foss (2009) argues that there is strength in such narratives, that



“organize the stimuli of our experiences so that we can make sense of the people, places, events, and actions of our lives” (p. 307). As a result, such narratives inform officials in these elected positions and audience members what actions are deemed appropriate in the vice-presidency. Bostdorff (1991) contends that the vice-presidency is distinctly different from the presidential half of the ticket, an office which has been rhetorically festooned with masculine language and attributes for centuries. In contrast, argues Bostdorff, exists the vice-presidency, the lesser-known occupant dictated to play the traditional feminine role of subservience to the powerful president, ever in service of supporting their ticket-mate husband in whatever way or fashion such duties are presented. This primarily feminine role expected of the office thereby contributes further to its rhetorical construction, limitations, and tendencies in a self-effacing way. Bostdorff contends that while “vice-presidents gradually have assumed more responsibilities” the reality that such duties “are largely ceremonial in nature...have reinforced the perceived impotence of the post” (p. 2). Impotence as used by the author, even when simply defined as the inability to take effective action, points to the nature of an office bearing little power or consequence. The men who find themselves in the unenviable positions of serving in the vice-presidential role are then forced by the stronger, rhetorically dominant president, to be on the receiving end of inferiority and inability.

The highly subservient gluttons of political punishment who have agreed to serve as vice-president, Bostdorff points out, include the previously described example of Johnson making Humphrey play dress-up. In the Humphrey example, a twenty-year Minnesotan public servant who had spent considerable time in the U.S. Senate crafting important legislation, was forced to play a ritualistic part by wearing the very clothes

selected by Johnson. This included dressing up like his presidential half in an ill-fitting Stetson while riding a horse, hardly in the normal for Humphrey. This is hardly different than Cheney clearing brush on the ranch of Bush in Texas. Such dramas of vice-presidential subservience also play out via the rhetorically symbolic actions that surround the vice-presidential selection process, much like what happened in 2016.

In such moments, the pairing of president and vice-president can take on romanticized tones that become notoriously like every day experiences of citizens. One can look no further than the divorce-like abandonment that occurs with certain vice-presidential candidates when speculation arises that they will be dumped from the ticket. Two separate vice-presidential victims of Franklin Roosevelt were both added and excised from the team for whimsical political purposes; John Nance Garner was dumped from the ticket in 1940 after two terms of disagreement with Roosevelt and Henry Wallace, the single-term darling of the left forced-out for a preferable Harry Truman in 1944. Truman himself, a man that held the vice-presidency for a scant 82 days, was left largely in the dark on White House activities particularly related to the Atomic Bomb. Such vice-presidential occurrences, as they happen, are relentlessly parlaned in terms that reflect more relationship than professional pairing when discussing the office. More recently, Joe Biden, the last vice-president, suffered the onslaught of getting ‘dumped’ from the Obama ticket in the 2012 re-election of the sitting president. During these moments, vice-presidential victims are both selected and discarded, often unaware of their own fates during long and harrowing national conventions and back-room negotiations completely beyond their control.

Such political acts, high in drama and emotional content, read more like the scripts of a soap-opera or romance novel rather than the conventional political warfare that they represent. During such processes, prospective candidates are examined for what they bring to the ticket, their value as a politician at the national level, and things like geographical location in the country, which read as physical attribute check-lists for vice-presidential contenders, defenseless to the judgement of others. Bostdorff hence labels vice-presidents as sex objects, saying “just as women traditionally have been controlled by the men around them, vice-presidents and vice-presidential candidates in recent times have been completely subordinate to the more powerful man around them, the president or presidential nominee” (p. 2). These helpless victims of their gendered circumstances then become reactive actors to the larger and more powerful masculine figures around them, who repeatedly review and cast judgement upon them.

Per this theory, vice-presidential candidates become more like paper-dolls than political contenders, free to be manipulated by whomever, whenever, “subject to the demands of political tradition and the president they serve” (p. 7). Such candidates exist in our national consciousness as irreparably powerless while simultaneously existing among powerful political figures. Bostdorff further sets such a political scene where “the public discourse of journalists, political figures, other citizens, and even vice presidents themselves portray occupants of and aspirants to the office as controlled completely by a scene, dominated by the person who is or would be president” (p. 2). Vice-Presidential figures, so trapped in this prevailing narrative, find themselves forever compelled to play by strict and confining rules that dictate their roles and actions. As a result, such candidates then follow scripted patterns of rhetoric that continuously define the vice-

presidential role in a self-effacing process. These actions then become what Bostdorff labels as four dramatic acts of vice-presidential narrative or strategies that utilize celebration, confrontation, vindication or resignation, and submission in fulfilling the roles and expectations of the office. Bostdorff contends these acts follow a chronological pattern, with confrontation and vindication connecting and overlapping, seen distinctly in a campaign season of vice-presidential rhetoric. As this thesis will later discuss, the rigidity of this chronological pattern was tested by the uniqueness of the campaign season and the rhetoric by and about Pence, particularly due to the nature of Trump, who used and inspired attention to confrontational rhetoric throughout the campaign.

During the act celebration, the vice-presidential actor “takes center stage” as “the new nominee is praised as an independent (and hence, still masculine) individual... (while) paradoxically, an implicit recognition also exists of the candidate’s ultimate subordination to the presidential nominee” (p. 8). Such praise of the independent vice-presidential figure during the celebration act indicates that the candidate has great credentials on their own and might even be worthy of being president, simply because they possess such skills requisite for that position. Nominees are saluted for the merits they bring to such a moment and their own presidential bona-fides are discussed in length while audience members begin to imagine the circumstances that could turn a vice-president into president.

After the initial euphoria of the celebration phase, the confrontation act begins where the “betrothed... vice-presidential nominees are expected to submerge their identity in the persona of the presidential candidate” as part of the ticket and confront those matters that have been noted to mark them different from their running-mate (p. 9).

In this phase, media, politicians, and organizations confront the candidate on all manner of areas where issues of compatibility may appear to exist and possess the potential for conflict between both ticket mates, scrutinizing and confronting “the second on issues, past or present, where compatibility does not appear to exist” (p. 9). The most basic form of this confrontation is the complications where both candidates in the ticket appear to possess key disagreement on notorious issues. History points to when vice-presidential running-mate George H.W. Bush had criticized Reagan’s tax plan as being voo-doo economics during their primary and was forced to reconcile this difference when joining the latter’s campaign. This moment of disruption to the Reagan and Bush unification remained a political and historical footnote to this day, often used to discuss the discord and difference between the two men and their eventual administrations. The confrontation act fully demonstrates that differences exist between the two candidates.

As a result of the act of confrontation, the vice-presidential candidate demonstrates that they are truly prepared for the office by offering up vindication or resignation in the third act. Here, candidates “prove their compatibility with the national ticket (and) demonstrate they are truly suited for the traditional female role” (p. 10). This stage is marked for difficult attempts to transport vice-presidential candidates from their former positions into the positions of their running-mates and is characterized by omission and abject denial that any differences exist. Bostdorff argues that “unlike tragic protagonists who must take personal responsibility for their actions, vice presidents... assert that any mistakes that have occurred are the result of a particular situation or misunderstanding of a situation” (p. 10). Bush, in explaining his previous disagreement with Reagan tax policy, attempted to explain the situation by saying that any difference

no longer mattered, simply leaving the author to argue that “like a traditional couple just newly engaged, their former tiff was no longer relevant” (p. 10). Through vindication, such candidates can explain away differences with their running-mate by allowing previous positions to fade from existence, as if vice-presidential candidate or their beliefs on important issues never mattered anyway. Those candidates that fail at this task suffer resignation, the counter to vindication, which “occurs when seconds fail their audition by communicating in a way that is inappropriate” (p. 11). Bostdorff refers to the most illustrative example of resignation when citing Thomas Eagleton’s withdrawal from the 1972 presidential campaign of George McGovern, after it was revealed he had been hospitalized for nervous exhaustion. Due to their resignation, such vice-presidential contenders are unable to offer the vindication necessary to fulfill the roles of the secondary position.

The process of acclimation not yet complete, an act of submission is the final stage for vice-presidential candidates to assume. In this phase, vice-presidential candidates “submit further to the presidential nominee by performing the communicative functions demanded of seconds... (while) public discourse gradually begins to focus more on the presidential hopeful and less on the vice-presidential nominee as an individual” (p. 12). As Bostdorff describes, stories begin to focus more on the presidential candidate and less on the vice-presidential aspirant since they have been deemed to matter less, anyway, based on an analysis of history and supporting rhetoric. Tightly honed messages contain visions of the unified ticket or presidential candidate and seldom the running-mate. Bostdorff contends that “if the ticket wins, the second’s subservient relationship with the presidential nominee becomes complete... just as a

married woman traditionally takes her husband's name, vice-presidents lose their individuality" and become a portion of an administration bearing the president's last name. Vice-presidents as minor points of historical trivia is a logical conclusion for rhetorical scholars who note the act of submission along with the greater processes by which such number twos fade into the legacy of their running-mate.

These acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission complete, a political marriage born to fruition with two candidates joined as one ticket, with the vice-president clearly not playing the traditional male role of determining or directing the fate of the ticket. This cycle that Bostdorff so aptly describes, fully encapsulates a process that becomes glaringly familiar to those political audience members watching a traditional American political process under gendered terms that are highly familiar to their experience. Vice-presidential candidate as traditional woman, the symbolic wife to his president, becomes apparent in a repeated cycle that reinforces traditional perceptions and beliefs regarding the proper role of man and woman in all manner of things, none more obvious than the political system.

## Methodology

### Research Question

After such a theoretical discussion, it becomes imperative for scholars and audience members alike to fully understand the ways in which those traditional gender expectations play in the rhetorical vice-presidency during the 2016 election cycle featuring Mike Pence as running-mate to Donald J. Trump. The rhetoric used and demanded of Pence requires a greater understanding of how such communication during the campaign lent itself to Bostdorff's theory of a gendered vice-presidency, leading to the following questions necessary to further that conversation:

Research question 1: To what extent does rhetoric by and about Pence demonstrate what Bostdorff argues is the traditional feminine role of a gendered vice-presidential candidate?

Research question 2: What does deployment of such vice-presidential rhetoric demonstrate about the opportunities and limitations of the role as it has been rhetorically constructed?

### Method

To answer these questions this paper will examine the rhetorical artifacts of Pence's interview alongside Donald Trump on *60 Minutes*, his nomination acceptance speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention, and his appearance in the vice-presidential debate against the Democratic nominee. There will be specific attention given to the rhetoric by and about the candidate, particularly his own words as rhetorical deeds that relate to the 2016 presidential election cycle, along with the candidate's reinforcement of the vice-presidency in gendered terms. This thesis applies Bostdorff's characteristics of a gendered vice-presidency with acts of celebration, confrontation,



vindication, and submission to the previously mentioned three artifacts. Due to the nature of the non-conventional campaign and its unique cast of candidate characters, each artifact was examined for evidence of acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication or resignation, and submission with the full assumption that unlike past application of the theory, evidence of each act may not appear in the chronological order.

The Pence vice-presidential announcement with Trump in New York was not selected as an artifact for this thesis, due to the overwhelming dominance of the presidential half of the ticket during the event and the Indiana Governor's limited role in speaking that day. Still, this does imply that the three artifacts discussed did not contain similar scenarios where Trump dominated those events. In fact, the New York announcement formed the basis by which I would examine these artifacts and allowed for their examination outside of the chronological order envisioned by Bostdorff.

Following analysis of the artifacts, the thesis assesses elements of Pence's rhetoric that did not conform to Bostdorff's characteristics to better explain these rhetorical phenomena as they occurred. Then, greater exploration will be given to Pence's deployment of vice-presidential rhetoric and reinforcement of a gendered vice-presidency to understand the opportunities and limitations of the role as it has been rhetorically constructed. This analysis will be followed by a discussion of findings and concluded with implications for future research benefiting future scholars and audiences.

## **Artifacts**

### **Pence and Trump on *60 Minutes***

The first artifact can be located in Governor Pence's interview on the television magazine broadcast of *60 Minutes*. The candidate appeared on the show alongside

presidential nominee Donald Trump in a segment entitled “The Republican Ticket: Trump and Pence” which aired on Sunday, July 17, 2016. The interviewer for the Pence appearance was Lesley Stahl, a veteran journalist with *60 Minutes* since 1991 and its parent network, CBS, since 1972. *60 Minutes*, a program created in 1968 by television producer Don Hewitt, features investigative journalism in the format of individualized reporter-centered segments which allow lengthy exploration of topics and deep probing of interviewees by a rotating group of career journalists. Over the course of its broadcast, *60 Minutes* has featured interview segments with artists, athletes, and political figures, along with a wide array of topics and subject matters.

### **Pence Nomination Speech at 2016 Republican Convention**

The second artifact is Pence’s nomination acceptance speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention, given on the third night of the proceedings, Wednesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>. Pence was the final formal speaker for the evening, following an ill-timed and late-running schedule that included Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who refused to formally endorse presidential nominee Donald Trump at the convention. The convention took place in Cleveland, Ohio from July 18 – 21 and featured 2,470 delegates and 2,302 alternate delegates representing 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories and was broadcast on major television and cable news networks. Pence spoke for 35 minutes following an introduction by House Speaker Paul Ryan, also a 2012 Republican vice-presidential nominee.

### **Pence Appearance in Vice-Presidential Debate**

The final artifact is Pence’s appearance in the 2016 Vice-Presidential Debate that was conducted at Longwood University, a higher education institution located in

Farmwood, Virginia, on Tuesday, October 4, 2016. Pence appeared opposite of his opponent Tim Kaine, the vice-presidential nominee and junior U.S. Senator from Virginia, formerly governor of the commonwealth and national party chair. The debate was approximately 92 minutes long and featured nine different, ten minute segments dealing with issues related to both domestic and foreign policy issues. The moderator, physically seated at a table with the two nominees, was Elaine Quinjano, a CBS anchor and correspondent formerly with CNN, who would become the first Asian-American to moderate a U.S. debate. Quinjano was also the youngest to serve in that capacity since 1988. A review of ratings would later reveal that the debate, the second of four in the entire 2016 presidential debate series, would reach 36 million American homes.

## **Analysis and Findings**

### **Analysis of Pence and Trump on *60 Minutes***

The appearance of running-mates Donald Trump and Mike Pence on the news magazine *60 Minutes* marked the first formal sit-down interview that the candidates would do together. This highly anticipated debut of the GOP running-mates before a national audience would allow members to see how the two would interact, whether Trump would dominate the conversation as he had during the debut of Pence on the ticket, and whether there would be room for accommodation of their highly differing backgrounds, beliefs, and values. Due to the nature of this artifact, it is also important here to consider the words of interviewer Stahl and presidential nominee Trump, along with Pence's, when considering Bostdorff's assertions on acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission.

#### **Celebration**

At the very onset of the interview, Pence attempts to be celebrated in the traditional ways described by Bostdorff. This includes efforts to be "praised as an independent (and hence, still masculine) individual" credible enough for the public to support (p. 8). It appeared to be difficult for a non-traditional candidate like Trump to allow any other political figure to exist at center stage, although the presidential nominee still half-heartedly manages to salute Pence in his own right, but does so by comparing and combining the Hoosier politician to himself throughout the interview. For instance, in the beginning when interviewer Stahl asks the duo about readiness to lead among the tumult of the world, Trump is quick to respond for both candidates, contending, "We're both ready. I've no doubt. We need toughness. We need strength" while alluding to the

dangers of the globe (*60 Minutes Interview*). Both he and Pence, Trump argues, have seen the world and have the only solution for battling the collective issues of globe, unlike opponents Obama and Hillary, who are relatively weak and unable to protect the nation. This contention fully aligns Pence with Trump, a candidate who had vigorously argued during the presidential campaign that no other politician could come close to comparing with his accomplishments as deal-maker or prospects for doing so on the international stage of public affairs. Such remarks reinforce Bostdorff's description of celebration, but do so by making the case that to celebrate Pence is to begin the alignment of thinking of the Indiana Governor on Trump-defined terms.

As would be the case repeatedly throughout the interview, Pence's opportunity to speak for himself would be severely limited by both Trump and Stahl as both presidential aspirant and veteran interviewer were fast to speak over and on behalf of the vice-presidential candidate. At times Pence struggled to verbalize any response, further allowing Trump to define a Pence position and vice-presidency. Despite his omission from the discussion, Pence still successfully managed to tout his own credibility and toughness in addressing conflict on the world stage. Pence in doing so, engages in acts of celebration of himself, makes the case that he is qualified for his position:

MIKE PENCE: You must remember I served on the Foreign Affairs Committee. And I'm very confident that when Donald Trump becomes president of the United States, he'll give a directive to our military commanders, bring together other nations, and we will use the enormous resources of the United States to destroy that enemy. (*60 Minutes Interview*).

Not only is the vice-presidential nominee carrying an impressive portfolio, Pence argues, but he is one of the only people who understands Trump and what precisely the presidential nominee will do as commander-in-chief. This distinction makes Pence then

highly unique, as a political actor with credibility while possessing distinct foresight into the unknown that has mystified a Trump-watching national audience.

The two candidates, seated in regal gold-trimmed chairs, take on a romanticized narrative throughout the interview and particularly when they are questioned on the nature of their relationship as two men existing not as separate, but as two candidates on the same ticket. At times, the back and forth between Stahl and the two candidates may remind audience members more of watching a romantic game-show comedy like *The Newlywed Game* instead of a news magazine. Twice, Trump turns to the beaming Pence and makes celebratory comments about the development of their new professional relationship that sound more like a narrative on how a person might meet a potential date:

DONALD TRUMP: I got to know him during the - when I was in Indiana during primaries... I got to know him very well and I gained great respect for him. And I looked at the numbers. Unemployment? What a great job he did. Jobs? What a great job he did. Triple-A rating on his bonds. (*60 Minutes* Interview)

Not only did Trump like what he saw in Pence, but indicates he is happy with the type of individual he has chosen to pair with for the remainder of the campaign. Pence is authentic, he contends, a fact Trump has observed while carefully considering the abilities, record, and attributes that such a candidate could bring to his campaign, not unlike the pageants he has famously judged and eventually owned:

DONALD TRUMP: Well, I went for the quality of the individual rather than I'm gonna win a state, because I'm doing very well in Indiana, and I guess I'm a lot up. And I think I'm gonna win Indiana. I have a great relationship and Bobby Knight helped me so much with Indiana. Indiana's a great place; great state.  
LESLEY STAHL: Why didn't you pick him? No, I'm joking - moving on  
DONALD TRUMP: He would've been very good. But he's a terrific guy. But - but I really like him as an individual. (*60 Minutes* Interview).

With such a conclusion that Pence was selected by Trump for his individual quality, rather than any routine vice-presidential political consideration, the nominee further celebrates the selection of Pence as an individual both special and highly unique in a crass political world. This language denotes that there is something about Pence that makes him not like the any of the other potential running-mates in the eyes of Trump. At the same time, the nominee concedes that Pence has firm establishment credentials among Republicans who are not yet ready to support Trump, which make him different than his rugged counterpart:

LESLEY STAHL: So, you must've considered, obviously, by the reaction to your choice, a lot of conservatives are very happy.

DONALD TRUMP: Very happy.

LESLEY STAHL: Was that part of the—

DONALD TRUMP: Yes, it was party unity. I'm an outsider. I am a person that used to be establishment when I'd give them hundreds of thousands of dollars. But when I decided to run, I became very anti-establishment because I understand the system—

LESLEY STAHL: Is he establishment?

DONALD TRUMP: --than anybody else. He's very establishment, in many ways, and that's not a bad thing. But I will tell you --

LESLEY STAHL: That's kind of interesting --

DONALD TRUMP: -- I have seen more people that, frankly, did not like me so much, and now they're saying, "What a great pick." You see the kinda reaction. He has helped bring party together. I understand. Look, I got more votes than anybody, but I also understand there's a faction --

LESLEY STAHL: Is it already unified, do you think?

DONALD TRUMP: I think it's very close to unified. And I will say -

LESLEY STAHL: Just because of this pick?

DONALD TRUMP: No, I think it's be—I think it was much more unified than people thought. You saw that with the recent vote where we won in a landslide. You saw that with the big vote, the primary vote. I think it's far more unified than the press lets on. But having Governor Mike Pence has really -- people that I wasn't necessarily liking or getting along are loving this pick, because they have such respect for him.

LESLEY STAHL: And that was --

DONALD TRUMP: And the party unity is OK. You know, I think it's OK to say I picked somebody, because I -- as one of the things. But I really believe the main reason I picked him is the incredible jobs he's done. Just look at the economics of Indiana. (*60 Minutes* Interview)

In this interaction, Pence, as establishment figure, is celebrated as unique from his own running-mate. This marks a special time in the 2016 election where being an insider rather than outsider is rhetorically celebrated, standing in contrast to a campaign season where highly charged rhetoric was used to attack experience or any length of public service that could be attributed to one candidate over the other. The implication of this celebration is that when necessary, Pence can play the part of the establishment figure in the room, a leader capable of bridging any gaps that may exist between the diverse players interacting within a potential Trump administration. Even more rare, Trump hints at his own weakness by denoting the inadequacies of his ability to conquer the presidency on his own without Pence. In doing so, Trump shows vulnerabilities not previously revealed by the GOP candidate. By the end of the exchange Trump seems to sense problems with what he has just conceded in mentioning his own weakness and reverses himself, quickly adopting instead an argument that Pence was selected in large part due to the high merits achieved in his home state in a record of fiscal accomplishments.

In the final act of noted celebration, Trump discusses whether he would accept counsel from Pence, particularly because he had been notably stubborn in his political positions and refused to accommodate other opinions from within his own team or party. In discussing his respect for the Indiana Governor, Trump publicly offers Pence entry into his exclusive team of brain trust that he regularly consults for large decisions:

DONALD TRUMP: I would absolutely want him to come in – if he thinks I’m doing something wrong. Mike, I would want him to come in and say, really, you’re doing, you gotta – and that’s OK. I accept that from my consultants and my people and if Mike came in and told me, you know, “I think you should do this or that... I would listen and very likely listen to him. (*60 Minutes* interview).



Once again, Trump's own words indicate that there is a specialty to Pence that makes him different than other potential candidates for vice-president. As a result, Pence can join the exclusive club of supporters that have Trump's ear and provide him input, correct his errors, and advise him on important affairs in the privacy of his office. Such a notion lends itself to a reality that Pence is to be celebrated for what he will bring to the nation in the way of leadership by receiving such a proud and unique distinction. The results of these acts of celebration are clear: Pence can readily be accepted as an advisor and is liked by his running-mate, seems to understand what Trump will do in office by the way of his vision, and has brought unification to the Republican Party. They work to celebrate the idea of a vice-presidency, defined by knowing Pence, before a large national audience viewing this interview and the two candidates for the first time.

### **Confrontation**

Interviewer Stahl serves as the main source of confrontation in the *60 Minutes* interview, a role that largely falls to media sources during such an act. Once again, Trump becomes the large focus of the artifact. During the act of confrontation, Bostdorff points out that media, politicians, and citizens confront vice-presidential candidates, "who are expected to submerge their identity in the persona of the presidential candidate" as part of the ticket (p. 9). Such confrontational moments help to draw attention to any absurd notion that the vice-president may want to disagree with their presidential counterpart and thus have an idea of their own that is not consistent with the new team. It is also an opportunity to display any true difference between the candidates. In playing her part during such a confrontation process, Stahl offers questions highlighting those differences that range from diverse experiences and political positions formed on various

national matters. Because of such differences, the veteran reporter turns to six separate divergences she hopes to illustrate better for the larger viewing audience. In this particular portion of the paper, certain portions of the artifact will be discussed in both the confrontation and vindication act sections, appropriate to their subject matter and due to the nature of such rhetorical phenomena.

During the 2016 election, Trump had routinely attacked any primary opponent that had supported the Iraq War. This extended military incursion, lasting from 2003 to 2011, had caused considerable consternation for former President George W. Bush and over time had eroded his popularity and national confidence in information provided by the intelligence community. While Hillary Clinton had supported the invasion as member of the Senate, so had then-Congressman Mike Pence, a reality Stahl notices:

LESLEY STAHL: But we did go to war, if you remember. We went to Iraq.

DONALD TRUMP: Yeah, you went to Iraq, but that was handled so badly. And that was a war – by the way, that was a war that we shouldn't have entered because Iraq did not knock down – excuse me

LESLEY STAHL: Your running-mate –

DONALD TRUMP: Iraq did not –

LESLEY STAHL: voted for it.

DONALD TRUMP: I don't care.

LESLEY STAHL: What do you mean you don't care that he voted for it?

DONALD TRUMP: It's a long time ago. And he voted that way and they were also misled. A lot of information was given to people.

LESLEY STAHL: But you've harped on this.

DONALD TRUMP: But I was against the war in Iraq from the beginning.

LESLEY STAHL: Yeah, but you've used that vote of Hillary's that was the same as Governor Pence as the example of her bad judgement.

DONALD TRUMP: Many people have, and frankly, I'm one of the few that was right on Iraq.

LESLEY STAHL: Yeah, but what about he –

DONALD TRUMP: He's entitled to make a mistake every once in a while.

LESLEY STAHL: But she's not?

DONALD TRUMP: No. She's not. (*60 Minutes* Interview)

This confrontation targets the absurdity that a vote in favor of the Iraq War was acceptable for Pence, but not Hillary Clinton, while disregarding that both figures were operating in the same situation with similar amounts of information regarding the exact same critical issue and notes a level of hypocrisy not lost on audience members.

Stahl also confronts the reality of whether Pence sought the vice-presidency or if Trump had to aggressively pursue the Indiana governor. This confrontation may speak to the general political perception that few politicians, other than Pence, would be willing to accept any position with Trump in the second place of his administration. In fact, aspirants like Christie and Gingrich were believed to be injured politicians in need of a rescue by Trump to save faltering careers. Conventional wisdom in Pence's home state also had the unpopular first-term executive slated to lose his own re-election due to his controversial first term. In following such a mindset around his impending gubernatorial doom, it made sense for Pence to actively seek the position of the vice-presidency. In explaining the process as he perceived it, Trump calls out those people wanting the job as politicians that "called me and came to me and wanted it badly... and you know, the press didn't report it" (*60 Minutes* interview). Pence, Trump points to in contrast, was not a desperate politician seeking the position as a rescue from an Indiana defeat, noting "I actually brought it up to him... I broached it... I would say that he thought about it a little bit" (*60 Minutes* interview). The implication is clear in Trump's choice of language that Pence was not like the other politicians begging for or rejecting a vice-presidency with him prematurely. Still, Trump does note that it only took Pence "two seconds" to make the decision to accept the offer (*60 Minutes* interview). During this confrontation with

Stahl, Pence says nothing to note whether he ever asked for the vice-presidency or if it were simply offered to him without his own request.

As previously noted in the discussion on celebration, Stahl vigorously confronts the candidates on whether Pence could be considered an outsider or an insider of the Republican party. This question compliments the election year, which featured rhetoric centered on the amount of experience of national politicians. Stahl's question demonstrates that Trump may be a hypocrite for picking and requiring a partner like Pence, since the presidential nominee had routinely indicated he could fix Washington by himself. As also discussed during the celebration discussion, Stahl's pursuit of details on the relationship between Trump and Pence gives voice to the disbelief that two such candidates could ever co-exist. The interviewer notes the difference between the two, saying "You don't really know each other that well. You're – at least I've read, a very low-key, very religious (to Pence), you're a brash New Yorker – (to Trump)" (*60 Minutes* interview). This confrontation seeks to explain through process of inquiry how two political figures that are diametrically different in every way imaginable, can possibly expect to work together in the future.

Going deeper into the root of other differences, Stahl confronts Pence specifically on his previously expressed views on the use of negative campaigning. In 1991 Pence, at the time a defeated two-time candidate for Congress, wrote *Confessions of a Negative Campaigner*, an essay in which he apologized to his opponent and spoke ill of the process of using such tactics to win an election. Trump, never reluctant to go negative on political opponents certainly had not come to such restraints and Stahl sought to highlight this:

LESLEY STAHL: I want to ask you though about something you've said about negative campaigning.

MIKE PENCE: Yeah.

LESLEY STAHL: You said negative campaigning is wrong, and a campaign ought to demonstrate the basic decency of the candidate.

MIKE PENCE: Right.

LESLEY STAHL: What that in mind, what do you think about your running mate's campaign and the tone and the negativity of it?

MIKE PENCE: I think this is a good man who's been talking about the issues the American people care about.

LESLEY STAHL: But name-calling?

MIKE PENCE: In that –

LESLEY STAHL: “Lying’ Ted?”

MIKE PENCE: -- in the essay that I wrote a long time ago, I said campaigns oughta be about something more important than just one candidate's election. And -- and this campaign and Donald Trump's candidacy has been about the issues the American people care about. (*60 Minutes* interview)

While this will be discussed later in the vindication portion of this paper, it is important to note that the Trump position on negative campaigning ultimately dominates the Pence dislike of the practice by explaining it away as a difference of personalities. Their matters of style appear to regularly supply the interviewer with moments of confrontation and conflict to be explored in the interview.

Stahl confronts Trump and Pence on their different comments and perceptions related to Senator John McCain, the former GOP nominee for president and more importantly, a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. Pence, long before becoming Trump's running-mate, had publicly disagreed with Trump's critique of McCain. In this exchange, Stahl seeks to get Pence to confront Trump's position on McCain getting captured by the Vietnamese, but not before Trump dismisses the line of questioning by providing his running-mate with instructions on how he is permitted to answer:

LESLEY STAHL: Do you think John McCain is not a hero because he was captured?

MIKE PENCE: I have a great deal of respect for John McCain, and –

LESLEY STAHL: Do you think he went too far?

DONALD TRUMP: You could say yes. I – that’s OK. (*60 Minutes* interview)

As will later be discussed in the vindication portion of analysis on the *60 Minutes* interview, Trump and Pence must explain this difference of opinion on John McCain the candidate, again presenting glaring differences between the two men.

Picking up on similarly stated differences of public opinion, Stahl contests areas where public disagreement had already been observed. She points out the Muslim ban that Trump had advocated for during the presidential primary. “Because there seems to be some daylight between you two, and we can just tick – go quickly through these.

Immigration. Mr. Trump, you have called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States. Do you agree with that?” (*60 Minutes* interview). In response Pence talks about his work as governor to ban the state’s participation in the Syrian refugee program. Not satisfied, Stahl goes on by specifically arguing to the vice-presidential designee “– in December you tweeted, and I quote you, “Calls to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. are offensive and unconstitutional” (*60 Minutes* interview). This marks the second time that Stahl uses words issued by either candidate to lay out a detailed confrontation point and indicate they have had serious disagreement on an issue. The focus again being more on the reactions of Pence on positions of Trump, than the other way around.

The final confrontation during the interview is marked by Stahl’s questioning of both men’s differences on free trade. Throughout the campaign, Trump had publicly distanced himself on trade policy from fellow Republicans, choosing instead to espouse more protectionist views. Pence, like countless Republicans to date, had not only publicly

supported free trade, but voted for such measures each time he was given a chance. These differences are pointed out during the interview, with little actual conflict emerging, as Stahl presses the governor that “you’re supporting the Trans-Pacific partnership that Mr. Trump says would rape this country. Now, are you gonna be able to go out and campaign in support of his protectionist positions?” (*60 Minutes* interview). Pence’s answers, discussed more in depth in the vindication segment describing the *60 Minutes* interview, quickly work to allude to an allegation that no difference exists at all. Any difference is inferred, per arguments of Pence, must exist purely in the imagination of the audience member who must not be observing the situation correctly.

### **Vindication**

Following close behind the confrontation stage, the opportunity for the act of vindication allows for vice-presidential candidates to address confrontation and explain away differences exposed in the confrontation stage. During this crucial and highly dramatic act to confront the confrontational, Bostdorff contends that, “vice-presidents embrace... principles of situational control through their explanation of previous incompatibilities or transgressions.... assert(ing) that any mistakes that have occurred are the result of a particular situation are the misunderstanding of a situation” (p. 10). In this way, the inexplicable is explained as audience members grapple with key differences on world affairs and matters of high issue significance. Such occurrences of this dramatic act take place generally following confrontation, often overlapping, and as “nominees attempt to prove their compatibility with the national ticket, vindication or resignation occurs” (p. 10). This was certainly the case with the appearance of Trump and Pence on

*60 Minutes* as the candidates struggled to explain their incongruity in the face of the confrontational Stahl who presented them with their noted differences.

Trump's explanation of the Pence vote in support of the Iraq War is one such example where the act of confrontation ultimately descended into an awkward form of vindication where the presidential nominee was called into question for choosing a running-mate who had made political misjudgment. Observing this segment of the interview closely, audience members accustomed to observing the presidential nominee's lambasting of Clinton's vote for war will note that Trump is slow to assign equal blame to Pence for his war vote. Trump first says he does not care about his running-mate's vote only to later point out that the vote was in reality, "a long time ago... and he voted that way and they were also misled. A lot of information was given to people" (*60 Minutes* interview). Only when it appears that Stahl will not leave the question behind does Trump begin to sum up a defense of his running-mate, concluding that "he's entitled to make a mistake every once in a while" (*60 Minutes* interview). During this discussion, Pence is never afforded the chance by Stahl or Trump to fully explain why he voted for the Iraq War and whether he agrees with his running-mate's assessment that the incursion was a mistake. Ironically, Trump is quick to point out that Clinton is simply not entitled to make a mistake but never explains why this double standard remains for her and not Pence. The question of Pence's vote on the War in Iraq ultimately puts into question Trump and his own selection of a running-mate who bears a same weakness as that of his opponent, Hillary Clinton. Trump, in his own unique way of offering an inarticulate response, ends up offering a weak vindication of Pence's decision to support the Iraq War and his own decision in choosing Pence to be his number two.



Following confrontation from Stahl on the chemistry between the two candidates, both Trump and Pence attempt to explain how much they have in common with each other, despite a lifetime of different experiences and political positions on a range of issues. The exchange turns into an awkward explanation of differences where Trump characteristically does most of the talking and Pence is allowed few words:

LESLEY STAHL: But what about the chemistry between you two? You don't really know each other that well. You're – at least I've read, a very low-key, very religious, you're a brash New Yorker—

DONALD TRUMP: Religious.

LESLEY STAHL: Religious?

DONALD TRUMP: Religious –

LESLEY STAHL: Are you?

DONALD TRUMP: Yea, religious.

LESLEY STAHL: -- you wouldn't –

DONALD TRUMP: Hey, I won the evangelicals. The evangelicals –

LESLEY STAHL: That doesn't –

MIKE PENCE: You know, nobody thought –

DONALD TRUMP: -- well, I think it means a lot. I don't think they think I'm perfect, and they would get up and they would say, "You know, he's not perfect," but –

LESLEY STAHL: They'd point to the –

DONALD TRUMP: -- they like me –

LESLEY STAHL: -- divorces –

DONALD TRUMP: -- but I won – I won states with evangelicals that nobody thought I'd even come close to –

LESLEY STAHL: Well, that's true –

DONALD TRUMP: -- and I won –

LESLEY STAHL: -- so you didn't (UNINTEL) –

DONALD TRUMP: -- with landslides –

LESLEY STAHL: -- need him for the evangelicals?

DONALD TRUMP: I think it helps. But I don't think I needed him, no, because – I won with evangelicals.

MIKE PENCE: But I think we have more in common.

LESLEY STAHL: Yeah, tell me –

MIKE PENCE: -- than –

LESLEY STAHL: -- what you think you have in common.

DONALD TRUMP: -- what might be immediately obvious.

LESLEY STAHL: Besides issues. Values and things like that.

DONALD TRUMP: I think we will have very, very good chemistry. I feel that. And I can feel that pretty early on. I don't think you need to be with somebody for two years to find that out. My feeling is –

LESLEY STAHL: Your gut feeling.

DONALD TRUMP: I knew him during the primaries, during many trips to Indiana, I'd be with him. I think we have a great chemistry.

(*60 Minutes* interview)

In this exchange, Stahl's pointing to differences on religion lead to Trump simply asserting that he is religious, in fact. Later, when Stahl points to the differences between the two men on their number of marriages and overall value of such an institution, Trump chooses to argue that the two candidates get along greatly, using terms that better explain partners in a relationship than running-mates. His explanation and use of the term chemistry denotes that the two have something more than a normal professional relationship and indeed are connected in ways more fathomable to the interpersonal of the dating world, than the staid men's club in the political arena. Trump doing most of the talking, and therefore vindication in this exchange, is reflective of the type of gendered rhetoric of the vice-presidency. Bostdorff argues this "feminine servility... portray occupants of and aspirants as controlled completely by a scene, dominated by the person who is or would be president" (p. 2). As always, it is all about Trump with little consideration for Pence or the words of the vice-presidential candidate.

Similarly, as mentioned earlier in the confrontation section, Pence must explain his earlier calls to avoid personal politics in his essay, *Confessions of a Negative Campaigner*, and how he reconciles his tone with the crass notes of the Trump campaign. After all, Trump had repeatedly lambasted fellow candidates in the Republican Party and media organizations, in ways that had never been fully expressed on a national political stage before. At one point, Pence attempts to explain his essay dating from the 90's as simply a tome "I wrote a long time ago" that clearly was a reference to a different time and circumstances (*60 Minutes* interview). His response also indicates that his role before

running with Trump was not important enough to defend, allowing himself to be defined “as the vice-presidential hopeful as a stereotyped woman who nervously waits for the phone to ring, and the presidential candidate as a suitor who “pops the question” (p. 3). Clearly frustrated that his thoughts in his essay and the reality of Donald Trump were irreconcilable, Pence seeks to explain his running-mate with simplified, intimate terms that audience members can understand in much the same stereotyped way. The governor defends Trump by arguing, “I think this is a good man who’s been talking about the issues the American people care about” (*60 Minutes* interview). This would not be the last time that Pence would adopt such a simplified explanation of Trump the man that only he intimately knows and understands. In being similarly confronted on Trump’s position on John McCain and whether he would counsel the presidential nominee against such harsh POW rhetoric, Pence defends the real estate mogul by again offering a simplified explanation of their so-called heart-to-heart relationship:

MIKE PENCE: I promise you that when the circumstances arise where I have a difference on policy or on presentation, I have – I can tell you in my heart, I know – I would have no hesitation, were I privileged to be vice-president, to walk into the president’s office, close the door, and share my heart. And I also know this good man would listen, and has the leadership qualities to draw from the people around him. (*60 Minutes* interview)

At other points, when confronted on Trump’s other choice of words that led to outrage on a potential Muslim ban, Pence attempts to explain Trump in a relatable way that he believes audience members will similarly understand. After all, Trump is someone that Pence understands more intimately than anyone, if only audience members could just understand what he sees in him. This explanation works to get past Trump’s controversial

rhetoric and instead wrap the presidential candidate in nothing but kind, positive intended language:

MIKE PENCE: You just asked me – if I’m comfortable with that –  
MIKE PENCE: -- and I am. What – what Donald –  
LESLEY STAHL: You’re on the same –  
MIKE PENCE: Which –  
LESLEY STAHL: -- page on that?  
MIKE PENCE: -- clearly – clearly this man is not a politician. He doesn’t speak like a politician –  
LESLEY STAHL: He’s done pretty well.  
MIKE PENCE: -- he – he speaks from his heart –  
DONALD TRUMP: Is that a good thing? I think that’s a good thing.  
MIKE PENCE: -- he speaks from his heart. And –  
LESLEY STAHL: Well, I –  
DONALD TRUMP: Well, I – I speak from my heart and my brain. Just so we understand.  
MIKE PENCE: Right. (*60 Minutes* interview)

Pence’s implication is clear in that all public officials, including himself, are likely insincere because they speak in politically correct ways that are not offensive to most audience members. Donald Trump, however, speaks honestly through direct, crass, offensive words that are simply telling the truth. More so, because Trump insists on speaking from his heart, his words are authentic and have greater meaning, with any bad intention or slight not to be taken seriously because it simply should be forgotten. Such an admission by Pence implies that his own ethics are less creditable than his running-mate, further diminishing his own record in favor of his running-mates.

This is not the only time that Pence tries to use an act of vindication through omission. Towards the end of the interview, Pence’s response on the disagreement between him and Trump on free trade are characterized up as simply not existing. Pence brushes past the controversy and indicates “I support free trade, and so does Donald Trump” (*60 Minutes* interview). This answer by Pence omits all of Trump’s very real

campaign language denouncing the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and most of all, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), all of which most Republicans traditionally supported. In many states, counties, and labor communities, Trump had succeeded in securing many votes against opponents because of his antipathy towards such agreements unlike his primary contenders. For such voters observing, there was little doubt that Trump was opposed to such deals and would block them if elected president. Yet again, Pence appears to have changed his mind on important issues or been silenced like the stereotypical woman who takes on her husband's identity only to lose her own. This action of omission and silence further supports the notion of a gendered vice-presidency that must submit fully to its presidential counterpart.

### **Submission**

At the very onset of Pence being named the vice-presidential candidate for Donald Trump, the Indiana Governor appeared to be eager and ready to please in the role for which he had been accepted. If there had been any hesitancy on the part of the Hoosier politician about taking the role of running-mate, it certainly did not show as the eager executive traveled across the nation only to be spotted by media in New York as he hurried to be by Trump's side. From the beginning, Pence found ways in which he could exhibit the act of submission required of the vice-presidency, as described by Bostdorff. The author points out "once candidates prove through vindication that they can meet feminine... expectations, they submit further to the presidential nominee by performing the communicative functions demanded of seconds" (p. 12). During this time, "public discourse begins to focus more on the presidential hopeful and less on the vice-

presidential nominee as an individual” as the number two candidate is mentioned more as a part of the administration and less as a political personage of their own identity (p. 12). This type of submission marks the vice-presidential candidate’s full ascension into the role they fulfill.

In the *60 Minutes* interview, Pence humbly accepts the role of being Donald Trump’s running-mate and proudly embraces the position, describing it in ways that embody the moment as a life-altering opportunity. When Stahl asks about the opportunity, Pence responds “It’s very, very humbling and I couldn’t be more honored to have the opportunity to run with, and serve with, the next president of the United States” quickly indicating that there exists no distance between he and Trump (*60 Minutes* interview). While the Indiana governor uses these words like other vice-presidents before him, this word choice, formally denotes the candidate’s ascension to the vice-presidency as a capstone to their political and national achievement rivaled by no other opportunity. This language seems to indicate that the vice-presidential candidate exists only for this moment to join with their running-mate and symbolically sends signals to the discerning public. Now, such language contends, the priorities of the presidential candidate are to be the only priorities give attention and narrative. The humbled vice-president is merely happy to help such priorities as they mature while playing his small part in that process.

This language of submission, traces Bostdorff’s theory further into the traditional feminine role expected of the vice-president. It allows language that echoes that of the traditional American wife, ever ready to defend her mate from critics and detractors. Pence aptly plays the part, defending Trump as brash husband, under siege from a violent

world and nation deeply in decline. The systems of the world have failed, argues Pence, and a Trump is needed to fix the mistakes of weak administrations. The vice-presidential candidate explains why he agreed to run:

MIKE PENCE: But I truly do believe that the larger issue here is American power in the world. I truly do believe that history teaches that weakness arouses evil and whether it be the horrific attack in France, the inspired attacks here in the United States, the instability in Turkey that led to a coup. I think that is all a result of a foreign policy of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama that has led from behind and that has sent an inexact, unclear message about American resolve. One of the reasons why I said yes in a heartbeat to run with this man, is because he embodies American strength, and I know that he will provide that kind of broad-shouldered American strength on the global stage as well. (*60 Minutes* interview)

Such submission narrative by Pence tells audience members to dismiss any discussion of himself as part of any global solution. In all actuality, Pence argues using masculine hero language, it will be the “broad-shouldered” Trump that saves the day from the evil that lurks in a dangerous world (*60 Minutes* interview). The vice-presidential candidate argues that with Trump, civilized society can be safe from fear, threat, and the confusion.

During the interview, there are times where Pence abandons addressing a line of questioning or reasoning that appears to make him feel uncomfortable. This abandonment compliments the silence and deferral that the candidate regularly offered his presidential running-mate during the *60 Minutes* interview. These moments of Pence avoidance and subject changing culminate into acts of submission as the candidate ultimately makes the decision to offer a statement unification of himself with Trump. This is highly evident during the confrontational line of questioning from Stahl on negative campaigning, one of many examples of how the two candidates greatly differ on issue, style, and background. Here, a beleaguered Pence offers a form of submission into the Trump ticket, despite their obvious stylistic differences:

MIKE PENCE: Look, I –

LESLEY STAHL: He’s laughing.

MIKE PENCE: -- it’s probably – it’s – it’s probably –

LESLEY STAHL: It’s OK.

MIKE PENCE: -- obvious to people that our styles are different. But I promise you, our vision is exactly the same. (*60 Minutes* interview)

There is no greater example during the interview, that better highlights Pence’s submission act, than in this moment when the candidate fully allows himself to be blended into Trump by looking past difference to accept his role with the ticket. While Stahl demonstrates that both candidates have historically exhibited different positions on issues, possess opposing styles, and arrive on the national stage with diverse backgrounds, Pence prefers to sum up the team using statements of a unified vision. This act of submission indicates to the larger audience that both candidates are truly one and the same, joined together by an assimilation of political personality, with any Pence deviations quickly left behind. Simultaneously, Trump is quick to take Pence into his proverbial clubhouse of trusted advisors and friends. In such a private place, away from the prying eyes of the public, the Indiana governor is free to offer candor and insight to the less experienced presidential nominee, particularly if the Hoosier thinks Trump “was doing something wrong” (*60 Minutes* interview). The language use of Trump implies that he has finally found a political partner worthy of keeping who not only defers to him, but will arduously defend the relationship and work they have together.

The ability of Pence to repeatedly gloss over offensive aspects of Trump’s political positions and rhetoric take on a unique act of submission as he assumes the vice-presidency while refusing to confront specifics during discussion on the Muslim ban. During such comments, Pence will not concede that there is a difference between the two candidates and instead relies on submissive, glowing praise of Trump’s character and



attributes. When pressed on the ban and the difficult realities of such a policy, Pence explains such things by indicating that Trump is just not a politician and instead “speaks from his heart” (*60 Minutes* interview). This response ignores the inhumane difficulties of a Muslim ban, while also indicating that any controversy felt by affected groups is not appropriate because Trump is a well-meaning benefactor only trying to do the right thing by his country and its citizens. Pence similarly passes on negotiating the difficulties of both candidates’ differing views on free trade. He attempts to justify ignoring the details of future trade policy by simply submitting to the impeccable attributes of his partner, who has figured out something no Republican politician has before him:

LESLEY STAHL: What do you think about NAFTA?

MIKE PENCE: You’re absolutely right. I’ve supported free trade throughout my career. But –

LESLEY STAHL: OK

MIKE PENCE: -- the truth of the matter is NAFTA has provisions in that law that call for it to be reviewed, that have never been – never been – initiated. What I hear Donald Trump saying is let’s – let’s look at these trade agreements and reconsider them and renegotiate them. And –

LESLEY STAHL: And you’re OK with –

MIKE PENCE: -- with regard to –

LESLEY STAHL: -- that?

MIKE PENCE: -- and with regard to other trade agreements, we’ve talked about this. I – I really do believe when the American people elect one of the best negotiators in the world as president of the United States, we would do well –

(*60 Minutes* interview)

Trusting in Trump, argues Pence, will set audience members free from the distractions of understanding specific policy proposals, dissent, and previous policy choices. Such a narrative of submission places the vice-presidential candidate and all others second to the overly dominative upper half of the administration’s equation, the president. Pence submits to Trump’s waterboarding position, too, explaining instead that Americans want a president who is strong on leading and short on specifics. His answer here again refuses

to contest either the details of this type of controversial torture. When pressed by Stahl, “I don’t think we should ever tell our enemy what our tactics are” going on later to explain, “...the American people expect the president of the United States to be prepared to support action to protect the people of this nation, and I know Donald Trump will” (*60 Minutes* interview). It’s not that Pence can’t answer these questions, but rather as if he feels them inappropriate for his role and besides, it is implicit for Americans to simply trust Trump and ignore his previous positions that offered a more compassionate or nuanced side of the world. By ignoring his past, silencing himself, and changing his positions, Pence applies the type of self-censorship expected of someone playing traditional feminine roles of the secondary.

Pence also chooses another type of submissive language to describe his running-mate intimately at the close of the interview. In this occasion, the governor reveals to audience members his own personal narrative on Trump the man, with focus given to why he is most honored to serve beside the presidential candidate who he has come to know quite well. Perhaps fittingly, this answer is chosen by *60 Minutes* to end the interview:

LESLEY STAHL: (Original question to Trump) As you think about – prospect of running this country in these tough times where the world is spinning apart – are you awed? Are you intimidated? Are you humbled by the enormity of this?

MIKE PENCE: (To Stahl, following answer by Trump) Talking with him in private settings, I love the words you used because this man is awed with the American people, and he is not intimidated by the world. And Donald Trump, this good man, I believe, will be a great president of the United States. (*60 Minutes* interview)

Here, Pence indicates less about Trump’s awe in the face of the larger nation but rather the vice-presidential candidate’s awe at submitting to his running-mate. Not only is the

Hoosier governor humbled to join this administration, but he is consumed in submitting in the wonderment that can only describe his unification with Donald J. Trump. Pence has seen the presidential candidate up close and understands him intimately, like the ways in which a traditional wife was expected to understand her husband and support him relentlessly. This also supports the numerous answers given by Trump in the interview on behalf of Pence, who in many cases was not able to get a word inserted during the discussion and often chose to change the subject when questioned directly. Pence submits to Trump by allowing Trump's language, policies, and vision to become his own. In such a way, two become one in administration matrimony, where the vice-president is consumed in submission.

Pence's appearance with Donald Trump on *60 Minutes* provided significant examples of rhetoric supporting acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission as described by Bostdorff. That said, each act revolved around Pence's relation to Trump and in some cases, featured language by or about Trump instead of the vice-presidential nominee. In almost all cases, Pence deferred to his running-mate, often permitting Trump to speak for him, with the presidential nominee offering self-vindication when the running-mates were confronted over issues centering largely on or about the aspiring commander-in-chief. Pence, in deferring to Trump, reinforced gender roles that were traditionally associated with women. By remaining largely silent, offering unconditional praise to Trump even in face of absurd opinions or policy positions, and downplaying his own ideas and experience after several years in public life, Pence lends overwhelming support to Bostdorff's conclusions about the vice-presidency and the traditional feminine roles the position offers.

If Pence were attempting to escape being drawn into this vice-presidential tradition, Trump's presence in the *60 Minutes* interview presented an insurmountable obstacle for him to surpass. As has been discussed, Pence relentlessly struggled to physically utter any word that did not risk interruption from Trump and in some cases Stahl, who devoted most of the interview to pressing the presidential nominee. The veteran interviewer focused on Trump and permitted him more speaking time, largely matching the wishes of most audience members who were focused on the unpredictable presidential candidate, not the mild-mannered Pence that they hardly knew. Still, the sheer presence of the presidential candidate guaranteed that yet another vice-presidential candidate would be overshadowed by an overly dominant counterpart. This Trump presence, much like the debut in New York, also dramatically influenced the order in which the rhetorical acts were presented and shattered the chronological pattern painstakingly described by Bostdorff. Pence, just two days publicly on the ticket, was denied an opportunity to bask in any act of celebration. Instead, the candidate saw any celebration crudely interrupted by celebration of Trump or acts of confrontation on or about the presidential nominee that required immediate vindication and ultimate submission. These moments, serving like proverbial on-the-job interview, tested the vice-presidential nominee on whether he could be defensive, supportive, or silent in supporting his new boss. This altered way in which the rhetorical acts of the vice-presidency were presented matched the odd announcement in New York where no lone act of celebration was presented on a national stage. It would not be until the nominee stepped onto the platform of the Republican National Convention, as will be discussed in the next artifact, that Pence would have an opportunity to truly go it alone, rhetorically.

## **Analysis of Pence's Nomination Acceptance Speech at 2016 GOP Convention**

The Pence speech at the national convention offered the candidate a first chance to stand outside the dominant rhetorical shadow of running-mate Trump. Until this time, Pence, a part of the team with Trump for less than a week, had only appeared with his top-of-the-ticket counterpart during his national debut in New York and the subsequent *60 Minutes* interview two quick days later. Both occasions would note the characteristic dominance of Trump, talking mostly about himself or his running-mate's relation to himself, answering all questions, and interrupting any moment of interchange as he saw fit. Outside of the Hoosiers who had come to know Pence as governor, few on the national stage had heard him expound on important issues and particularly the items that Trump had used to dominate the political hemisphere of 2016. Thus, several areas were up for discussion as Pence, and Pence alone, prepared to address the gathered Republican elites at their gathering in Cleveland. Political talking heads speculated how the Hoosier Republican would explain his support of Trump, their differences on the issues, and what sort of vice-president he would be. Such a speech in an unusual climate would not afford media a chance to confront the vice-presidential candidate and by that fact, would provide a unique challenge to Bostdorff's description of the rhetorical steps of the traditionally feminine vice-presidency; acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission.

### **Celebration**

The speech afforded Pence a chance to offer accolades touting his own credentials and independence without the voice of Trump to interrupt, demean, or distract from his mission. In keeping with Bostdorff's description of the act of celebration, Pence could

“take center stage” on his own while discussing the credentials that brought him to assembled Republicans (p. 8). During his time as Indiana’s governor, it had been often argued that the politically calculating Pence had groomed his resume for just such a moment where he might tout credentials earned in a lifetime of carefully viewed political policy arranged just to the right of the American mainstream. After all, the vice-presidency had come about after careful consideration of any politically risky scenario which might squander such a chance to the greater good of normal decision-making. Now, Pence could enjoy a moment to celebrate his reaching of this great American pinnacle of second place and more importantly, introduce himself in terms that might appeal to the viewing audiences. For the vice-presidential candidate, this would mean offering appeals to his background, family influences, and the results that he could argue put Indiana far ahead of other states.

The task of introducing Pence fell to Speaker Paul Ryan, a Republican stalwart and the 2012 nominee for the vice-presidency. Ryan, who had served in Congress with Pence, gave glowing praise to the man that would attempt to obtain an office which had alluded him. Pence utilized such an opening with his usual self-introduction honed from days on talk radio and as a leader of the most conservative wing of the Republican Party. The candidate thanked his “true friend... (and) great American leader” while pointing out, “but Paul knows the introduction I prefer is a little shorter. I’m a Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). This trademark introduction that Pence utilized to explain his hierarchy of personal priorities had long been a crowd favorite for those who could identify with both the political and religious meaning behind such language. By using such an approach

celebrating this aspect of his identity, Pence further gives those identifying with such choices, a greater meaning and satisfaction with this vice-presidential candidate.

At the same time, Pence also celebrates the unassuming characteristics that had marked him as national contender many years prior and which had propelled him to the front of a list of preferred Republican politicians. This humble persona, adopted and celebrated by Pence, had evoked strong images of humility and lack of ego, despite evidence of a very ambitious career politician. In addressing the assembled Republicans, Pence concedes that he is “new to this campaign” and “never thought I’d be standing here... yet, there I was a few days ago in New York City with the man who won 37 states” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). The magical imagery of Pence as common man on the street observing the heroic American theater of 2016 before getting swept up into the adventure by the valiant Trump, is not lost on audience members. Pence, further seeking to charm audience members with such imagery, contends that he “thought I’d be spending this evening with my friends in the Indiana delegation” as just one of the crowd observing the frenetic activity of a busy national convention (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). This further enshrines the notion of an average guy doing the more than average position in which he has been called to serve. This marks and celebrates Pence as something different than the other self-serving politicians who only look out for themselves, break their word, and don’t understand what the average citizen experiences.

Beyond the imagery of his humble personality, Pence also seeks to celebrate the roots of the family story that unfolded in his life. The Indiana governor offers a

discussion that fetes what he believes to be unique when compared to other politicians, but relieving to those seeking new leaders beyond those same, tired politicians:

MIKE PENCE: For those of you who don't know me, which is most of you. I grew up on the front row of the American dream. My grandfather immigrated to this country, and I was raised in a small town in Southern Indiana in a big family with a cornfield in the backyard. Although we weren't really a political family, the heroes of my youth were President John F. Kennedy and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. When I was young, I watched my mom and dad build everything that matters – a family, a business, and a good name. I was raised to believe in hard work, faith and family. My dad, Ed Pence, was a combat veteran in Korea who ran gas stations in our small town, and was a great father. If dad were still with us, I have a feeling he would have enjoyed this moment... and probably been pretty surprised by it. But it's my joy to tell you that my mother is here, still in shock over the news I called her with last week. Would you welcome my mom, Nancy? (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

First, Pence relies on the concept of the American dream to suggest that his family, like all others that immigrated to the nation, did so for a better life and a chance at success. This positive language involving immigration does not evoke any of the negativity often associated with cultural introduction and assimilation, so often conflated in modern immigration debates. The story of the Pence family immigration, this narrative celebrates, is one of glowing heroics absent messy details. Nor was the family caught up in the messiness of a previous generation's strife and battles, choosing to be apolitical in the eyes of their son, while worshipping at safe alters of such sacred national figures as Kennedy and King. The Pence story, he notes, is that of a family that served silently and without controversy, his father having been a Korean combat veteran and both parents having devoted their lives to creating such an opportunity that could snatch their son up into the vice-presidency and potentially more. The Pence family story is absent the heartbreak, discord, and displeasure common in all American families but absent from



most vice-presidential addresses, which are meant to be relatable and inspiring to audience members.

Pence also contends that it is not the vice-presidency or any public title of which he is the proudest, pointing instead to his family for such distinction. In this way, Pence celebrates the commonality of being a good dad, saying, “And regardless of any title I ever hold, the highest role I will ever play is dad... Karen and I are blessed to be the parents of the three greatest kids in the world... a writer named Charlotte, a college student named Audrey, and a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, Michael J. Pence” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). This role, putting children before his own career, resonates with audience members who have needed to make such choices themselves and reiterates to them that they have made the correct decision.

Pence also shifts to his time as Indiana governor to discuss the accomplishments he had secured on behalf of his state. This language, with ample statistics and evidence, celebrates what a good public leader can do when they are willing to work for their people and not themselves:

MIKE PENCE: In my home state of Indiana, we prove every day that you can build a growing economy on balanced budgets, low taxes, even while making record investments in education and roads and healthcare. You know, Indiana is a state that works because conservative principles work every time you put them into practice. The nation suffers under the weight of \$19 trillion in national debt, we in Indiana have a \$2 billion surplus. The highest credit rating in the nation, even though we’ve cut taxes every year since I became governor four years ago. We have fewer state employees than when I took office, and businesses large and small have created nearly 150,000 new jobs. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

The Pence experience, as this passage shows, is an achievable dream when politicians stick to fiscal and conservative principles designed to save money, not spend it. While a

nation is mired in debt, Indiana has prudently enacted conservative principles into policy that reflects the hopes and dreams of real people. Not only has that record worked, argues Pence, but it has delivered a surplus, new economic growth, and prosperity for all Hoosiers.

In keeping with pointing out those distinctions where he and other politicians differ, Pence looks to his faith to offer reassurances for audience members to further celebrate. While most politicians had demonstrated that they possessed strong faith, it is Pence that offers his own faith in a more intimate manner that is easily digestible. He assuages audience members by saying, “should I have the awesome privilege to serve as your vice president, I promise to keep faith with that conviction, to pray daily for a wise and discerning heart, for who is able to govern this great people without it?” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). This language informs audience members that like them, this is a leader who will be begging for divine providence and intervention in tackling the awesomeness of his position. Such calls for help from a higher power come not only from faith, but need, because as Pence readily admits, he is only human and capable of error and sin. While some public leaders may feign public religiosity, this theory would say, Pence is instead a man that offers a glimpse into what true faith can look like. By denoting his religious beliefs and practices, along with his humble attitude, family history, children, and public record, Pence demonstrates that he and his candidacy for vice-president is something that Americans can get behind and support because his story is like theirs, filled with hard work, rigor, and dreams.

## **Confrontation**

The traditional act of confrontation, as part of Bostdorff's description of the vice-presidency, becomes more difficult when analyzing this artifact. Since the step of confrontation usually involves a media source or political pundit actively doing the confronting, this task becomes slightly harder for rhetorical authors bereft of media, political pundits, or other critics engaging the vice-presidential candidate for the traditional differences or "mistakes that have occurred are the result of a particular situation or misunderstanding of a situation" (p. 10). Since media are not given an active part in engaging a public speaker at a national convention, such speeches become exclusive opportunities for the speaker to engage audience and the issues uninterrupted by the distractions of facts, contrary opinion, or any form of interjection. For Pence, this should have been an inviting opportunity, given that the candidate had never been alone on a national stage without the dominant Trump or an aggressive interviewer.

His solo appearance at the convention allowed Pence to enter a discussion centered on the differences between himself and Trump on matters of experience, politics, and personal beliefs and practices. In such moments, the controversial Trump served as the focus of the confrontation, with Pence entering that equation only as he related to the presidential running-mate. This was significantly different than Bostdorff's traditional view of the act of confrontation, where such moments largely center on moments of vice-presidential discrepancy. Here in this case, Trump was the subject of confrontational attack instead of his running-mate. Both candidates had appeared on *60 Minutes* just days before and reoccurring moments of coverage had continued to speculate on not only their differences, but how Pence would interact with the important

distinctions that separated the two men, largely based on the bombastic personality of Trump. Thus, Pence's speech to the convention was ripe with examples of how the candidate chose to address these moments of confrontation as he attempted to explain the differences between he and Trump on matters of policy, experience, and personality to the highly discerning national audience members. In such examples, Pence would choose to address such moments of confrontation both directly and indirectly in carefully crafted language designed to illustrate the positives of a future Trump administration.

All during the campaign, serious questions of skepticism had been posed about the seriousness of not only Trump's candidacy, but the chances that such a non-conventional candidate could have any hope of winning in the primary or fall against more experienced, traditional candidates. Even after Pence's addition to the ticket, doubt persisted among political pundits, members of the media, and a bi-partisan collection of skeptical politicians who did not expect for the American electorate who did not take Trump serious. Pence chose to address this doubt of the ticket directly by first assuming the mantle of "we" in speaking of the unified ticket, elevating himself to Trump's level and further embracing a role of invisibility for his part in the process. This gendered phrasing not only erased his role, but suggests there can be no difference between he and Trump, therefore nothing much to talk about. In the address, Pence insists that this unified presidential ticket could win, shaming anyone in his party who thought otherwise. He defied such doubt by pointing out in his address:

MIKE PENCE: We will win because we are running on the issues facing this country, and because we are leveling with the American people about the stakes and the choice. The American people are tired of being told. They're tired of being told that this is as good as it gets. Tired of hearing politicians in both parties tell us that we will get that tomorrow while we pile a mountain range of debt on our children and grandchildren. As

Ronald Reagan used to say, we're tired of being told that a little intellectual elite in a far distant capital can plan our lives better for us than we can plan them for ourselves. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Using such language, Pence accepts the unified ticket position of speaking to the same masses that had been criticized for earnestly supporting Trump and propelling the candidate to victory when so many had doubted his abilities to lead. The implication of Pence's words indicate that such doubt should be placed aside because Americans are fatigued by those cultural and liberal elites who had earnestly written off their realities. The groups supporting Donald Trump, a candidate who spoke to their fears and visions of the nation, did not have doubts about the Trump ticket. More importantly, the candidates could win the election because Americans also had similar concerns and fears and had grown tired of the hesitations of political correctness which had led to doubts of Trump.

Pence also chose to directly confront the identity of Trump, labeled as controversial, politically incorrect, and unacceptable as a commander-in-chief. In defending his ticket-mate as the moment of confrontation and not himself, the vice-presidential candidate acknowledges that there is divergent thought confronting candidate Trump and his credibility. By assuming this role of confronting and speaking for Trump, he further becomes invisible as vice-president and avoids his own identity and record. In his remarks, Pence is quick to offer reassurance that "Donald Trump gets it... he's the genuine article. He is a doer in a game usually reserved for talkers" (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). The negative language on the part of Trump, argues Pence, does not preclude Trump from the leadership post to which he seeks election. "When Donald Trump does his talking, he doesn't tiptoe around the thousand new rules of political correctness... he is his own man. Distinctly American. And where else would

an independent spirit like that find a following than in the land of the free and home of the brave?" (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). The problem, Pence argues, is not Trump and his language, but rather those that would be offended by the words of an upstanding American businessman who is simply being honest about the world that surrounds him. Such language responds to the American working-class who are tired of apologizing while confronting diversity, racism, and simultaneously existing in a world that has not been kind to their specific needs and general welfare.

Continuing this track of Trump centered confrontation, the vice-presidential candidate also acknowledges that he and Trump are very different candidates by confronting the very disparities in their speech. But unlike those critics that scoffs at the notion of a President Trump, Pence has seen a side of the candidate that no one else has and can readily vouch for his authenticity, abilities, and motivations on making America great again:

MIKE PENCE: Now, while Donald Trump was taking my measure as a possible running-mate, I did some observing myself. I have seen the way he deals with people who work for him at every level. I've seen the way they feel about working for him. I grant you, he can be a little rough with politicians on stage, and I bet we see that again. But I have seen this good man up close. His utter lack of pretense, his respect for the people who work for him, and his devotion to his family. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

This line of argument contends that Pence knows something that few others do and while they may be a little different in matters of style, Trump possesses endearing good qualities not unlike that of the vice-presidential candidate, himself. Deep within Trump is a good man seeking to do well for the country despite the rough exterior that must be forgiven if it clumsily pursues a goal of righting wrongs and fighting international enemies of freedom and democracy. If there is any doubt to Trump's benevolence, argues

Pence, just take his word and look at the countless legions of happy Trump employees who have come to know the business giant paycheck to paycheck. This Pence line of approach falls into a now familiar approach of describing the intimate relationship with Trump that only he knows. This line of rationale features the vice-presidential candidate as further playing the presidential wife, intimately knowing and understanding his presidential counterpart in ways that others do not.

During the campaign, Trump had given vociferous support for travel bans for Muslims seeking to enter the United States and building a wall to separate the United States from its Mexican neighbors, while simultaneously doing little to refute charges that he had engaged in sexual violence against women. In their totality, such claims lent support to the contention that his campaign did not have room for tolerance or diversity. Pence chooses to meet such confrontational claims directly by issuing some appeals that may resonate with two groups of traditional diversity discussions, African-Americans and Hispanics, who he argues have a place in a Trump Whitehouse. These two groups, argues Pence, have been left behind by a traditional left that has long since forgotten the cares of either demographic. Pence appeals to “African-Americans who remember generations of hollow promises about safe streets and better schools... (and) Hispanic Americans who respect the law (and) ...want jobs and opportunities for their families” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). He argues that white citizens are not the only people seeking to achieve their own personal advancement towards the American dream. Regardless of race, true Americans who cherish hard work and the law, argues Pence, can find a comfortable place in the promising world offered by a Trump administration. The trouble makers who may be confronting the rule of law in street protests and riots are not

included in this exclusive club of Americans of color who value the nation's rich traditions.

Pence further takes this line of reasoning by evoking the parties' national hero of history, Abraham Lincoln, a president widely known for contesting a civil war and freeing the slaves from the bondage of the south and their fellow countrymen. The vice-presidential candidate argues that the Republican Party "was founded on equality and opportunity" and much like the harrowing Civil War that Lincoln faced, "it will be our party and our agenda that opens the door for every American to succeed and prosper in this land" (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). Pence is exclusive in his remarks to only include those people who have obtained American citizenship through the traditional means envisioned by a limited perspective of America only he envisions, neglecting to include or consider Muslim or Mexican immigrants into a limited vision he has for the nation. In fact, Pence, a grandson of an Irish immigrant, says nothing in his speech at the Republican convention that accommodates any role, policy, or change benefiting Muslim or Mexican migrants. By failing to confront such issues and instead focusing on explanations around differences of style, beliefs, and personality between himself and Trump to speak in vague policies, Pence instead reinforces that there is confrontational discussion worthy for audience members but does so on neutral terms.

### **Vindication**

As a follow-up to Pence's avoidance in confronting differences between himself and Trump, the candidate also chose to explain such obvious occurrences of disparity by not addressing them at all, instead focusing on the self-proclaimed enemies of the ticket in ways that audience members might better comprehend. Such a list of rogues included



the Clinton campaign, the Democratic Party, members of the media which had highlighted negatives of candidate Trump, and Washington D.C., itself, a hotbed of liberal activism responsible for the many difficult days the nation had faced. Using this act of vindication, Pence used clever rhetoric to dodge credible criticism of the differences between himself and Trump and instead openly addressed the enemy. As Bostdorff describes, using this language, the vice-presidential candidate asserts “that any mistakes that have occurred are the result of a particular situation or... misunderstanding” and instead the two men faced a common bond in an enemy (p. 10). This can be seen earlier in history, when “Bush... claimed that his previous policy disagreements with Reagan no longer mattered; once the party selected Reagan as its nominee, the situation had changed, and the two men had a “common bond” as Republicans” (p. 10). Such a bond creating an “us,” as good-guy ready to do battle, must also require a “them,” the enemy that must be defeated. Pence’s use of vindication required for the candidate to strategically look past his many differences with Trump and instead point out those things in which both running-mates, and all Republicans, could agree.

Because of such thinking, a great enemy, largely understood by audience members who had vilified the politician for years, was presented in Hillary Clinton. Using this target, Trump and Pence sought to unify their ticket and win back the White House for a party sordid after losing the presidency in 2008 and 2012. The Indiana politician narrated a negative biography of Clinton for audience members:

**MIKE PENCE:** In the end, this election comes down to just two names on the ballot; so let’s resolve here and now that Hillary Clinton will never become President of the United States of America. Hillary Clinton essentially offers a third Obama term. The role is perfect for her. She championed Obamacare because years earlier she had all but invented it. The national debt has nearly doubled in these eight years, and her only

answer is to keep borrowing and spending. Like the president, she thinks that the path to a growing economy is more taxes and more regulation and more government. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

By ignoring the glaring differences of the Republican ticket and instead focusing on the enemy as the mutually shared opponent of general mankind, Pence allows for all other considerations, including the disparity between himself and Trump, to be ignored by audience members. The naming of the opposing enemy allows audience members to receive a salve of protection against the very dilemma that can prohibit extreme unification, such as confusion and disagreement over why he and Trump appear to be very contradictory candidates. Further, the enemy resides in Washington, D.C. where good ideas go to die amid bureaucracy and partisan rancor, which is grown freely and generously by politicians. Using such foils as targets rhetorically becomes advantageous to the running-mates and it further propels the teams towards a clear and immediate goal of prevailing in the election by using messaging that highlights their ticket, as opposed to the other side affixed in the nation's capital and heartless. Pence provides audience members with a simple message designed to resonate with their fears about the election and a victory by candidate Clinton and the liberal hordes she leads in Washington D.C.

Pence, as further acts of vindication, also seeks to remind voters that any perceptions of disunity in the Republican ticket can also be alleviated by conducting a careful examination of the opposing party. Several times during his remarks, the vice-presidential candidate reminds the audience that Clinton will be ultimately fulfilling the third term of incumbent president Barack Obama and his ill-intending party. Pence does not speak well for the opposing Democrats and blames them for problems of the nation, contending that the organization is wholly responsible for the discord and disunion felt by

helpless citizens that are defenseless against the liberal regime. The Democrats are joined in this endeavor by a media that is persistently ready to remain tone-deaf on the needs and beliefs of the average American citizen. Neither the Democratic Party nor the media, Pence argues, can begin to rival Trump because they fail to fully grasp why so many voters approve of the candidate:

MIKE PENCE: The funny thing is, the party in power seems helpless to figure out the nominee. The media has the same problem. They all keep telling each other that the usual methods will work against him. They keep thinking that they've done him in, only to wake up the next morning and find that Donald Trump is still standing and stronger than ever before.  
(Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Pence utilizes a narrative that casts both Democrats and media as out-of-touch elitists, routinely snickering at those struggling with the adversities of life, unable to comprehend the rigors of life affecting the American people. The problem, Pence contends by only addressing the enemy instead of differences with his running-mate, has nothing to do with the Republicans, their nominee, or the important points of which conservatives may have differences. Pence seeks to distract from the arguments against the Trump by instead refocusing on the liberal enemies. After all, the focus must remain on the problem; the Democrats and the media who have failed large segments of Americans as they began to ascend into smaller and smaller elitist circles not listening to the people. This distracting narrative is used by Pence to vindicate Trump, further allowing audience members to contest the confrontation they have been presented in his speech.

While Pence avoids pointing out differences between himself and Trump on matters of style and substance in his address, the candidate does labor to praise his running-mate for the many accomplishments he has achieved as a successful business leader and in doing so, uses celebratory language to help to vindicate his running-mate.

The persistence of Trump, argues Pence, has not only served to make a real estate titan, but beneficently brought along the countless workers he has employed. He argues, “The man just doesn’t quit. He is tough. He perseveres. He has gone about as far as you can go in business, but he has never turned his back on the working men and women who serve and protect us at home and abroad” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). As noted here, he also seems to equate Trump’s employees with military service members who are abroad in service to the United States. While it would be easy to explain this sentence as arguing that Trump will make a tough commander-in-chief, it is more plausible to understand this as a dig on the current administration with Pence contending that they have failed the nation. An implication is that Obama and the Democrats are quitters who can’t tough it out and thus, they leave behind countless good Americans who volunteered to “serve and protect” a nation. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). Trump, despite all his flaws and those things you might not understand about him, is vindicated by Pence through celebration language describing an incredible American who built his business empire the old-fashioned way with hard work and determination unlike the lazy liberal hordes that have not worked a day in their life.

### **Submission**

As envisioned by Bostdorff when describing the act of submission of vice-presidential candidates, Pence uses his address to the convention to subsume his identity into the larger Trump ticket and place himself squarely behind the presidential nominee’s persona. Pence deployed very humble communication to first accept the nomination and to speak powerfully about the type of president Trump would contrast with that of the enemy. The vice-presidential candidate’s ability to minimize his role in these events fully

embraced Bostdorff's description of the act, when arguing that such candidates "submit further to the presidential nominee" as "public discourse gradually begins to focus more on the presidential hopeful and less on the vice-presidential nominee as an individual" (p. 12). Such moments remove the identity of the vice-presidential candidate just as greater amounts of attention turn to presidential candidates.

The vice-presidential nominee points to the intimacy that only he shares with his running-mate, standing from a point of authority as a running-mate given access into the farthest reaches of Donald Trump, as a good man unknown to many save himself:

MIKE PENCE: But I have seen this good man up close. His utter lack of pretense, his respect for the people who work for him, and his devotion to his family. If you still doubt what I'm saying, as we say back home, you can't fake good kids. How about his amazing children? Aren't they something? These are the true measures of our nominee. Chosen by the voters as the right man for these times. This is the outsider, my running-mate – turned a longshot campaign into a movement. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Here, Pence fully adopts the place and rhetoric of spouse to Trump, describing a candidate that only he knows because he sees the presidential candidate up close. These are warm and supportive words for a vice-presidential candidate that had spent less than a few days in the company of his running-mate. This form of communication fits more with a first lady function than the rhetoric you would expect from a political contemporary or running-mate. Sheeler (2013) notes "the rhetorical power that first ladies command as they constitute identity—their own, the president's, and that of the nation" (p. 768). This is evident in the way that Pence explains his political husband, helping to translate the presidential candidate into a palatable alternative for voters and political consumers. Further, Pence discussing Trump in his father role, evokes images of the ways in which mothers communicate, and how they may know about home, father, and

children. By insisting on calling Trump a good man, an implication is given that despite abuse the presidential nominee had heaped on many during his strange candidacy, his nomination was suitable because Pence had seen him up close and liked what he saw.

Pence also offers at the onset of his speech words of humbling submission for the opportunity that has been given to him via the vice-presidency, along with surprise that such a responsibility and honor has fallen upon him, a Hoosier boy descended from the average Americans he makes note of in his speech. He notes that he is “deeply humbled... (accepting the nomination) on behalf of my family here and gone” (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). The imagery of the bombastic Trump versus the reluctant Pence looms large over the proceedings in such language, although the candidate works quickly to further subsume into his vice-presidential role by noting the strange set of circumstances and occasion that brought him to such a moment in a haphazard and comical fashion. At the same time, Pence notes his own modest attributes in the struggle to match up with the jet-setting Trump:

MIKE PENCE: Yet, there I was a few days ago in New York City with the man who won 37 states... faced 16 talented opponents and outlasted every one of them... and along the way brought millions of voters into the Republican Party. He’s a man known for his large personality, his colorful style, and his charisma – and, well, I guess he was just looking for someone to balance the ticket. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

The imagery of such language again borrows from first lady rhetoric, as the candidate seeks to evoke powerful metaphors on how the two appeared to magically meet in New York. The overly humble Pence is simply happy to be a part of the larger pageantry of the moment and out of all the candidates that could have been picked to hold such a vice-

presidential distinction, the good fortune has fallen to him to the humble favorite son of Indiana.

In describing Trump, Pence gives much respect and admiration to the man who bested all his political enemies in a raucous primary season. He explains to convention goers “you have nominated a man for president who never quits, who never backs down – a fighter, and a winner” quickly describing the actions and words of the boisterous Trump more as crusade than a crash of political realities (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). These words from the vice-presidential nominee help to validate the selection of Trump because after all, he is fighting on the good side of the battle. Pence further suggests in his remarks that while Trump could go it alone for the remainder of the primary, he shouldn’t have to do so, and now is the time for him to receive some help along the way. The vice-presidential nominee indicates that not only should he take part in an act of submission to Trump, but so should supportive Republicans everywhere in doing their part:

MIKE PENCE: Until now, he has had to do it all by himself, against all odds. But this week, with this united party, come November 8, I know we will elect Donald Trump to be the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.  
(Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Such romantically tinged language chides audience members who may still be straying away from supporting Trump along with the rest of the gathered GOP, further casting the presidential nominee as a scrapper. Now, argues Pence, Trump no longer must go it alone and with a new, loyal vice-president, there is hope to lead a unified party on to victory. Such language implies that Trump has been on a very lonely road to date, without friend, support, or reasonable allies.

Staying true to the act of submission, Pence takes on the part of the attack-dog by relentlessly describing the opponents of the Republican ticket in highly partisan and negative terms designed to annihilate the enemy and increase support for two candidates. First, Pence engages the direct enemy of their ticket, Hillary Clinton, by describing her in highly charged terms that poorly define the former secretary of state in a personal way, including her political beliefs and overall values:

MIKE PENCE: Over in the other party, the idea was to present the exact opposite of a political outsider. The exact opposite of a calculating truth-teller. On that score, you have to hand it to the Democratic establishment – they outdid themselves this time... People in both parties are restless for change, ready to break free from old patterns in Washington, and Democrats are about to anoint someone who represents everything this country is tired of. You know, Hillary Clinton wants a better title. And I would too if I was already America's secretary of the status quo. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Hillary Clinton cannot be trusted, goes the reasoning of Pence, and if audience members want more of the same things they despise about Washington D.C., then be sure to send her back to the capital so she can continue to not fix the country. Pence is also able to say that Clinton lies without overtly doing so, admitting she is responsible for the lack of achievement that has repeatedly found the nation under siege. Whereas Trump is direct at telling the truth to the chagrin of those that need vanquished, Clinton is so bad, argues Pence, “that she represents the field establishment of D.C.” a place already full of those individuals of the opposing party who routinely deceive the nation (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech). This line of thinking places blame squarely with the enemy and not the Republicans, particularly not Trump.

Pence further explains the travails that have besieged the nation since the Democrats came into office, further unifying audience members with an attack-dog



function that inflicts misery upon the team's political enemies. This rhetoric speaks of a divided nation that is clearly under attack due the immense failures of the left and policy that has jeopardized the country's general welfare. Pence does not dwell upon any year in which Republicans could be held responsible for holding national office or maintaining control of Congress, choosing instead to assign blame and disdain for choice in policies that led to the need for Trump's ascension into national politics:

MIKE PENCE: For years we have had fundamental problems in America that get talked to death in Washington D.C., but they never get solved. They even get worse. We've seen entire stretches of our country written off by bad economic policies in ways that are deeply unfair. We see relentless mandates from the executive branch. It seems like no aspect of our lives is too small for the present administration to supervise, and no provision of the Constitution is too large for them to ignore. Meanwhile, we have seen borders that go unrespected, a military that has been diminished, promise after ringing promise to our veterans promptly forgotten. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Per the aspiring vice-president, Democrats can be readily blamed for the decline in the labor force, governmental overreach, and disregard of the Constitution. The same party is to be blamed for being weak on not only borders, but those who would serve and protect to maintain a strong and free nation. Using this rhetorical act of playing the submissive attack-dog, Pence can consign Democrats to a weakened role of diminished or failed national leadership. From such a place, it becomes difficult to accept any consideration of any such party, including the Obama and prospective Clinton administrations, for further election to leadership of the republic.

By donning his submissive role as vice-president, Pence must also bring hope to audience members by lavishing further praise upon the better half of his team, Donald Trump. The Indiana politician is quick to point out that life under the real estate mogul will be filled by an America with true regard and respect for national institutions and

those people most in need of representation in Washington. The counterpoint Pence offers contends that Trump, despite all his faults, inexperience, and abrupt mannerisms, symbolizes the very thing which Clinton, Obama, and the Democrats are against, Americans. Pence narrates the decisions and leadership which will act as hallmarks that characterize a nation and Republican Party under a united Trump banner of steady leadership on a difficult national stage:

MIKE PENCE: America needs to be strong for the world to be safe, and on the world stage, Donald Trump will lead from strength. Donald Trump will rebuild our military and stand with our allies. Donald Trump will confront radical Islamic terrorism at its source and destroy the enemy of our freedom. (Pence Vice-Presidential Acceptance Speech)

Donald Trump, argues Pence, is strong whereas Democrats are not, further embracing a political polarization mentality in his speech. Images of an unsafe, unsavory, and embroiled nation are offered to readers confronted by the possibility that their very security is in dire jeopardy. In this part of the speech, Pence takes a different approach on Bostdorff's track towards submission by informing audience members that he has submitted and they must do so, too. Pence fully submits to a dystopian narrative that begs for a Trump authoritarian intervention to rescue a nation fraught with peril from itself. Things are so bad, argues the governor, that little choice is given to the voters who are now tasked with rectifying the situation by also submitting to a nation governed exclusively by Trump, the only candidate that can possibly understand and cure the ills of the world. This act of submission and invitation for the audience to do the same, fits in well with Pence's embrace of the attack-dog function against the opposing side and support of Trump as the solution to cure the world's ills. In keeping with the vice-

presidential duties given to him, Pence embraces the act of submission as a rite of passage of becoming vice-president.

Pence's appearance at the 2016 Republican National Convention permitted the vice-presidential candidate to finally appear on a national stage absent the presidential candidate that had dominated his previous debuts. Here in this artifact, each of Bostdorff's rhetorical acts of the vice-presidency were evident, although they were condensed and transformed by the unique circumstances of the campaign and the controversial Trump, who served yet again as a target of confrontation with need for rhetorical acts of vindication. Pence was able to celebrate his humble roots, the American dream that had catapulted his family into success and happiness, and the deep religious convictions that appealed to audience members. The vice-presidential candidate chose to vindicate Trump, the actual person being confronted, by offering unification language centered on attacking the enemy of the ticket; Hillary Clinton and a cohort of Democratic allies. Finally, Pence offered submissive language praising his running-mate and speaking about the accomplishments to be expected of a Trump ticket while utilizing the familiar first lady rhetoric associated with America's premier wife. While Pence would have the convention stage to himself, his appearance in the vice-presidential debate would change these circumstances tremendously as he faced a new confrontational opponent talking about similar Trump complaints.

## **Analysis of Pence Appearance in Vice-Presidential Debate**

Pence appeared with Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee Tim Kaine for their debate on the campus of Longwood University. Kaine, a veteran politico having served as a governor, senator, and national party chair, was expected by media and pundits to be a formidable match against the experienced, yet mild-mannered Mike Pence. In their 92-minute segment debate, the two candidates served as formidable adversaries as they engaged on a range of issues in the domestic and foreign policy arena. Elaine Quinjano, a CBS anchor and first Asian-American to moderate a U.S. debate, was also the youngest to serve in that capacity since 1988 and did a formidable job in getting both candidates to engage each other and fulfill the aggressive expectations of vice-presidential nominees, particularly the attack-dog function. As expected, the debate offered language ripe with examples of Bostdorff's description of the acts of the rhetorical vice-presidency.

### **Celebration**

Although much of the debate centered on the two vice-presidential nominees' running-mates, Trump and Clinton, the debate still allowed for candidates to offer words of celebration around their accomplishments. This means contending that they were, as Bostdorff describes, "independent (and hence, still masculine) individually" yet in fully keeping with the act of celebration, "an implicit recognition also exists of the candidate's ultimate subordination to the presidential nominee" (p. 8). Pence, much like his appearance at the convention, used the debate to talk about his own record in Indiana and the personal life story that had catapulted him from talk radio show host to member of Congress, eventually Governor of Indiana, and now vice-presidential nominee of the Republican Party. At the opening of the debate, Pence immediately spoke of his humble

background and record in the Hoosier state, further describing his origins, dreams, and the values that had brought him to this moment. His humble tone allowed for audience members to identify with not only the man, but the politician now standing before them:

MIKE PENCE: It's deeply humbling for me to be here, to be surrounded by my wonderful family and Senator Kaine, it's an honor to be here with you, as well...And I just, um, I also want to say thanks to everyone that's looking in tonight, who understands what an enormously important time this is in the life of our nation... I want to thank all of you for being with us tonight. I also want to thank Donald Trump for making that call and inviting us to be a part of this ticket. I have to tell you, I'm a small-town boy from a place not too different from Farmville. I grew up with a corn field in my backyard. My grandfather had emigrated to this country when he was about my son's age. My mom and dad built everything that matters in a small town in southern Indiana. They built a family and a good name and a business, and they raised a family. And I dreamt someday of representing my hometown in Washington, D.C., but honestly, Elaine, I never imagined, never imagined I would have the opportunity to be governor of the state that I love, let alone be sitting at a table like this, in this kind of a position... And that's to bring a lifetime of experience, a lifetime growing up in a small town. A lifetime where I've served in the Congress of the United States, where I've led a state that works, in the great state of Indiana. And whatever other responsibilities might follow from this, I -- I would hope and frankly I would pray to be able to meet that moment with that lifetime of experience. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

This same humble tone, familiar to audience members that have observed it in the previously discussed *60 Minutes* interview and nomination acceptance speech, allows for a grateful Pence to address the crowd not as a threat, but a highly identifiable friend. Further, while Trump may not present a face of humility, Pence promises to be just that, using his references to cornfields, small town origins, and work ethic driven family to relate to the gathering. Pence reminds audience members that the gravity of this moment in national history is tremendous, requiring greater action on the part of political figures like he and Trump along with other national politicians that have not fully received this message of urgency. Such men, he argues, not only understand the needs of an

economically impoverished country, but can lead the large assemblage that have suffered indignities from a liberal Washington D.C. that has left them behind, far too many times. Further, the Pence family story is filled with the American dream, offering reassurances about an immigrant grandfather who used high hopes and hard work to build a family enshrined with faith and persevering against all odds.

Pence also takes a moment in the debate to specifically tout his record in Indiana and the success he claims to have brought to the state, including tax cuts and a healthy budget surplus. The Indiana governor takes a chance to tout these accomplishments while simultaneously castigating Clinton, Kaine, and the entire Obama administration for failing to achieve any reasonable metric of success for the American people:

MIKE PENCE: I think the fact that under this past administration of which Hillary Clinton was a part, we've almost doubled the national debt. That is atrocious. I mean, I'm very proud of the fact that I come from a state that works, the state of Indiana has balanced budgets. We cut taxes, we've made record investments in education and in infrastructure, and I still finish my term with \$2 billion in the bank. That's a little bit different than when Senator Kaine was governor here in Virginia. He actually -- he actually tried to raise taxes by about \$4 billion. He left his state about \$2 billion in the hole. In the state of Indiana, we've cut unemployment in half, unemployment doubled when he was governor. But I think he's a very fitting running mate for Hillary Clinton, because in the wake of a season where American families are struggling in this economy, under the weight of higher taxes and Obamacare and the war on coal and the stifling avalanche of regulation coming out of this administration, Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine want more of the same. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

In this exchange, Pence turns wholeheartedly to a familiar message in Republican communicative politics: less government, less spending, and lower taxes. This is opposite of what he alleges Democratic administrations have done and can promise to continue to do, a claim he seeks to validate by comparing his record to that of Kaine and the Obama

administration. Throughout the debate, Pence repeats this claim in comparing the two tickets and the financial strength they present.

Further in the debate, moderator Quijano will ask both candidates about violence related to law enforcement shootings and race relations. Pence uses this opportunity to introduce his uncle, a police officer in Chicago who had a large influence on the vice-presidential candidate when he was growing up for his symbolism as a figure of law and order. The candidate informs the audience, “You know, my uncle was a cop, a career cop, on the beat in downtown Chicago. He was my hero when I was growing up... he would come out in his uniform, sidearm at his side,” ultimately contending that “police officers are the best of us” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). The candidate then goes on to point out that members of the fraternal order of police are endorsing Trump, not Clinton, and how wrong for former secretary of state had been when implying that bias existed on the part of law enforcement officers. By using his family, specifically his uncle, to help relate to audience members on the large national issue of police and race relations, Pence can connect with observers while also establishing his own credentials on the topic. His family can relate to those anxious law enforcement families’ who consistently do not know what will happen each day their family members “walk a beat” just like Pence’s unnamed uncle. Further, Pence celebrates that on the issues of law and order versus chaos and riots, the prospective Trump administration stands with the silent majorities who consistently are doing the right thing, instead of those that would upend America by introducing violence and disorder to the already unsafe streets. In doing this, Pence breaks from the traditional understanding that Bostdorff gives to the act of celebration in that he begins to use his families’ credentials on law enforcement to celebrate what his

running-mate will achieve. This act further unifies the ticket and alienates his own individuality by placing himself more in the shadow of the presidency.

Immigration, also a large issue during the campaign, made its way into the vice-presidential debate as a large issue looming over the American people. However, in the debate, rather than only focusing on the hypothetical policy choices presented by candidate Trump, the conversation turned to the merits of a plan that Pence introduced in Indiana concerning Syrian refugees seeking sanctuary in the Hoosier state. Specifically, Kaine chooses to highlight that Pence had in fact violated the Constitution by such action, a fact supported by a federal court ruling that struck down the Governor's order:

TIM Kaine: Or instead of you violating the constitution, by blocking people based on their national origin rather than whether they're dangerous--

MIKE PENCE: That's absolutely false.

TIM Kaine: That's what the 7th circuit decided-- We have different views on refugee issues and on immigration. Hillary and I want enforcement based on are people dangerous. These guys say all Mexicans are bad and with respect to refugees, we want to keep people out if they're dangerous. Donald Trump said keep them out if they're Muslim. Mike Pence put a program in place to keep them out if they're from Syria, and yesterday an appellate court with three Republican judges struck down the Pence plan and said and it was discriminatory--

MIKE PENCE: Those judges said --

TIM Kaine: And should focus on danger, not on discrimination.

MIKE PENCE: Elaine, to your point, those judges said it's because there wasn't any evidence yet, that -- that ISIS had infiltrated the United States. Well Germany just arrested three Syrian refugees on account that they're connected to ISIS --

TIM Kaine: But they told you there's right way and a wrong way to do it.

MIKE PENCE: If you're going to be critical of me on that, that's fair game. But I'll tell you, after two Syrian refugees were involved in the attack in Paris that is called Paris' 9/11, as governor of the state of Indiana I have no higher priority than the safety and security of the people of my state. So you bet I suspended -

TIM Kaine: But Governor Pence --



MIKE PENCE: And if I'm vice president of the United States and Donald Trump is president; we're going to put the safety and security of the American people first. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

Pence appears to relish the opportunity to make the case that he and Trump will make America safe again from outside threats. Pence also unifies himself with Trump on the ticket towards the end of this exchange and as a result, helps to both elevate his role but also bury it further in the Trump presidency while explaining their toughness on foreign policy. While he and Trump will be strong, his words conversely contend that liberals like Clinton and Kaine will only further endanger the nation by allowing the enemy safe harbor and further nurturing their terroristic natures. Pence's language further stokes the fears that Americans have about Islamic terrorism by focusing on the events of the terrorist attack in Paris to reinforce paranoia about migrants bearing ill-will against the United States. This further reinforces Trump and Pence as law and order candidates on both matters of domestic and foreign policy.

The Republican vice-presidential nominee also takes a moment to define his religious beliefs for audience members. This occurs during a question from Quijano regarding faith and what role such religious beliefs play into the formation of such public policy decisions like abortion and the death penalty. Pence offers to the audience that "my Christian faith is at the very heart of who I am. I was also raised in a wonderful family of faith. It was church on Sunday morning and grace before dinner... but my Christian faith became real for me when I made a personal decision for Christ when I was a freshman in college..." (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). This description by Pence celebrating his Christian faith is not unlike many of the experiences of other Americans who hold similar beliefs. Further, the vice-presidential candidate informs that such faith

has guided his decisions on larger issues that are presently before the country and to which he is known to take an active conservative position. “But for me I would tell you that for me the sanctity (of life) proceeds out of the belief... that ancient principle where God says, “before you were formed in the womb I knew you” and so for the first time in my public life I sought to stand with great compassion for the sanctity of life” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Pence goes on to say that such beliefs have guided him to lead the charge in his own home state for abortion nullifying measures meant to protect life by expanding counseling for women, non-abortion alternatives, and the promotion of adoption. Such language celebrating both his beliefs and credentials offers audience members a clear way to connect with the vice-presidential candidate on social issues they deem important in their own life and for the good of a country they morally envision.

In a larger discussion on abortion, Pence rejects that their ticket’s positions on abortion should ever be construed as an attack on women. Here, Pence celebrates his history as an anti-abortion crusader and elevates himself onto equal footing with Trump to explain their position on reproductive rights. The vice-presidential nominee instead denies that he or Trump would place such a woman in harm, legally or financially, simply for the reproductive choices made by the woman. This discussion, initiated by Kaine, is a reference to Trump’s comment earlier in the campaign that women might be found criminally liable for seeking abortions, a comment that Pence chooses to not address:

TIM Kaine: I think you should live your moral values, but the last thing, the very last thing, the government should do is have laws that would punish women who make reproductive choices and that is the fundamental difference between a Clinton/Kaine ticket and a Trump/Pence ticket that wants to punish women.

MIKE PENCE: It's really not. Donald Trump and I would never support legislation that punished women who made the heart-breaking choice to end a pregnancy.

TIM Kaine: Then why did Donald Trump say that?

MIKE PENCE: We just never would.

TIM Kaine: Why did he say that?

MIKE PENCE: He's not a polished politician like you and Hillary Clinton.

TIM Kaine: Well, I would admit that's not always a polished thought.

MIKE PENCE: I'm telling you the.

TIM Kaine: The great line from the Gospel: "From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks."

MIKE PENCE: Yeah. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate).

During this exchange, Pence praises Trump as not being a polished politician, particularly when compared to Clinton or Kaine, who he believes to have too much of the wrong political experience. The Indiana governor contends that what appeared to be a gaffe on the part of Trump was in all reality just the presidential nominee being an inarticulate speaker on the difficult subject of abortion. Pence's language contends that his own strong record is enough to vouch for Trump's conservative credentials on abortion. The vice-presidential nominee's submissive action to place he and Trump into the best public image, largely supports a rhetorical vice-president willing to shed their identity for a greater cause of the ticket.

### **Confrontation**

The nature of vice-presidential debates allows for more negative tones, much like any political event featuring rival candidates. Therefore, it is expected in such events that both candidates would contend that members of the other ticket are not qualified or possess weaknesses, fully allowing for the attack-dog function of the vice-presidency to

emerge as both sides seek to reduce the other's political standing. As expected, the 2016 debate of anointed seconds allowed for rivals Kaine and Pence to exchange negative attacks at each other and presidential candidates Clinton and Trump. Kaine, a veteran partisan having served as national chair, for his part stayed true to the attack-dog form by focusing more on Trump's foibles than Pence, but did manage to highlight poor aspects of the Indiana governor's record. In keeping with the act of confrontation, Kaine attempted to highlight those areas where the Trump and Pence record were incongruous and in discord. The following pages will focus on such moments of confrontation by Kaine, followed by a section discussing how Pence engaged the act of vindication to discuss such incongruity.

In his opening remarks, Kaine attempts to demonstrate that he and Pence, both fathers of armed service members, should be concerned about Trump, the proverbial loose cannon incapable of being trusted with the well-being and safety of the American people. Kaine jabs at Trump, saying, "I'll just say this, we trust Hillary Clinton, my wife and I, we trust her with the most important thing in our life. We have a son deployed overseas in the Marine Corps right now. We trust Hilary Clinton as president and commander in chief, but the thought of Donald Trump as commander in chief scares us to death" (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). This confrontation centers on Trump and his quickness to anger, pettiness over slights, and suspected instability in being able to separate the personal from the professional in the ways of slights, all of which make the nominee potentially unfit for office. Throughout the 2016 campaign, opponents of Trump had questioned his ability to be a leader on the national stage without letting his personal feelings and insecurities dictate his response globally. Pence, in stark contrast, seldom

had been known throughout his congressional or gubernatorial career to let such anger show and had seldom let his judgement cloud his words. Instead the vice-presidential candidate had acted in a highly prescribed manner, allowing words and actions to be carefully considered and vetted by political strategists dedicated to moving along a growing political career destined for further greatness. The calculating Pence stood in large juxtaposition against Trump in this regard as they symbolically stood before large national audiences.

Kaine also chose to confront Pence on Trump's insult driven campaign against opponents, a topic even moderator Quijano decided to give focus. Trump's insults had been unleashed on everyone, particularly Republicans, and was contrary to normal political practices and was well beyond the customs of even the most aggressive of GOP primaries. Many believed, especially Democrats, that such language had taken a toll on the American psyche. This was a belief that Kaine sought to expose in this exchange:

TIM KAINE: Donald Trump during his campaign has called Mexicans rapists and criminals. He's called women slobs, pigs, dogs, disgusting. I don't like saying that in front of my wife and my mother. He attacked an Indiana-born federal judge and said he was unqualified to hear a federal lawsuit because his parents were Mexican. He went after John McCain, a P.O.W., and said he wasn't a hero because he'd been captured. He said African-Americans are living in hell. And he perpetrated this outrageous and bigoted lie that president Obama is not a U.S. Citizen. If you want to have a society where people are respected and respect laws, you can't have somebody at the top who demeans every group that he talks about. And I just -- again, I cannot believe that Governor Pence will defend the insult-driven campaign that Donald Trump has run. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

The fact that few people had been spared from Trump's verbal wrath was not lost on audience members or the mild-mannered Pence, who more than once had to distance himself from the word choice of the presidential candidate before joining him on the

presidential ticket. By choosing to insult Mexicans, women, prisoners of war, and African-Americans, Trump had endangered himself politically with large swaths of the voting public. While Pence may not have had a perfect political career free from controversy, he had certainly shied away from needless rhetoric that would have drawn any sort of negative attention, instead drawing criticism for his policy choices rather than his words. In choosing to confront Pence on this difference with Trump, Democrats like Kaine hoped to illustrate a powerful rebuke from the number two Republican in the campaign for Trump's aggressive style not compatible with modern campaigns.

Kaine also chose to confront Pence because Trump had been slow to rebuke Russian President Vladimir Putin. Throughout the campaign Trump had indicated that only he could negotiate with the Russian federation and the freedom oppressing Putin because he knew how to make deals, pointing to evidence from his many successful days in the private sector. Pence allowed for Kaine to attack on this issue by indicating that Russia had gotten more aggressive during the Obama administration, forcing the Virginian to retort, "You guys love Russia... these guys have praised Vladimir Putin as a great leader" and further exploiting the weakness (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Later after some interruption of Quinjano, the subject of Russia again comes up and Kaine once again goes on the attack:

TIM KAINE: Donald Trump, again and again, has praised Vladimir Putin and it's clear that he has business dealings with Russian oligarchs who are very connected to Putin. The Trump campaign management team had to be fired a month or so ago because of those shadowy connections with pro-Putin forces. Governor Pence made the odd claim, he said inarguably, Vladimir Putin is a better leader than President Obama. Vladimir Putin ran his economy into the ground, and he persecutes LGBT folks and journalists. If you don't know the difference between dictatorship and leadership then you got to go back to a fifth-grade civics class. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

This line of attack on Russia would remain a constant theme throughout the campaign, further indicating that it was a line of weakness for the Republican candidates. The need for a defense on Russia was made further strange due to the GOP's hardline on the Soviets during the Cold War. Trump's weakness on Russia, which Pence inherited, seemed less important because the candidate was unconventional yet hawkish on every other issue. Still, Democrats saw that Trump was different than his predecessor Reagan who had invigorated the cold war in ways unlike any of his predecessors and chose to exploit this fact due to the apparent weakness.

Moderator Quijano also confronted Pence on Trump's failure to release his tax returns to the American people, a time-honored practice performed by countless candidates running for national office, including the GOP vice-presidential nominee himself. Pointing to Trump's failure to release such returns as discussed by the *New York Times*, Quijano points out that the nominee "could have avoided paying federal income taxes for years" agreeing with Trump's own admission that "he brilliantly used the laws to pay as little tax as legally possible" (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). The moderator asked Pence if he thought it had been fair for Trump to pay nothing in taxes when so many Americans had not had such an opportunity. Understanding that a revelation stating Trump had paid no taxes might be devastating to their campaign, Pence was placed in a difficult position of defending an American billionaire who was not at all like the regular audience members who paid their taxes on time.

Quijano also confronted Pence by asking him to explain Trump's economic plan by showing that like the Democrats' proposal, the Republican plan will increase

government spending with no offsets to reduce debt. The moderator adds, “according to the nonpartisan committee for a responsible federal budget, neither of your economic plans will reduce the growing \$19 trillion gross national debt,” grimly conceding, “your plans would add even more to it” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Such a charge poses a serious challenge to a fiscal conservative like Pence, who believes in exclusively only spending those dollars which are provided by the taxpayers without incurring further debt and has made a career of advocating for such traditionally conservative positions. Not only is Pence in danger of having a response to Quijano that deviates from his running-mate due to Trump’s non-conservative policy, but also at risk of being untrue to his convictions and past political performances. Beyond that risk, the Republicans are in further jeopardy because this line of questioning the moderator threatens to equate their fiscal prowess to that of the tax and spend Democrats. Such Democrats had been vilified by politicians like Pence for years due to such spending policies and big government.

### **Vindication**

During the act of vindication, the vice-president must respond to the differences that are presented regarding the two running-mates, including divergences on issues, values, and opposing background and experiences. The 2016 vice-presidential debate, a source of much attack-dog rhetoric regarding such points, saw Pence tasked with explaining some noted differences between himself and Trump that had been carefully presented by rival Kaine and moderator Quijano. Pence, who had by now become accustomed to these differences getting highlighted by Democrats and media members alike, had a unique and truly vice-presidential burden. The nominee, like his predecessors before him, was challenged with defending his running-mate, reconciling any differences



between himself and Trump, and remaining transparent before a national audience. This same audience contained Americans that were extremely wary of politicians in a bizarre political climate favoring outsiders over consummate insiders.

Pence was first challenged with Kaine's assertion that Trump was not fit to serve as commander-in-chief, particularly the Democrat's assertion that as fathers of Marines deployed overseas, both candidates should be wary of electing the reality TV star to such a responsibility. To answer this charge, Pence began the first of many efforts to avoid answering the remark at all, preferring to place direct attention on the mistakes of the current administration and Clinton. Pence uses a familiar cadence of pointing out that "for the last 7 1/2 years, we've seen America's place in the world weakened. We've seen an economy stifled by more taxes, more regulation, a war on coal and a failing health care reform come to be known as Obamacare and the American people know that we need to make a change" (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). The vice-presidential nominee chooses to use the explanation that observers are already familiar with; the problems of the nation and world should be heaped upon the Democrats. This then becomes a reassuring answer for audience members not ready to question faith in Trump from such a prominent fellow supporter or themselves.

Pence chooses to more directly answer assertions that Trump would be more insulter-in-chief than commander-in-chief, although still refusing to fully answer if he agrees his running-mate's remarks are offensive. The vice-presidential candidate fully embraces the attack-dog function by contesting Clinton to take the discussion away from defending Trump, a discussion he clearly does not wish to have in the debate:

TIM KAIN: And I can't imagine how Governor Pence can defend the insult-driven selfish me-first style of Donald Trump.

ELAINE QUIJANO: Governor Pence, let me ask you, you have said that Donald Trump is thoughtful, compassionate, and steady. Yet 67% of voters feel that he is a risky choice, and 65% feel that he does not have the right kind of temperament to be president. Why do so many Americans think Mr. Trump is simply too erratic?

MIKE PENCE: Let me say first and foremost that Senator, you and Hillary Clinton would know a lot about an insult-driven campaign. It really is remarkable, at a time when literally, in the wake of Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, where she was the architect of the Obama administration's foreign policy, we see entire portions of the world, particularly the wider Middle East, literally spinning out of control. The situation we're watching hour by hour in Syria today is the result of the failed foreign policy and the weak foreign policy that Hillary Clinton helped lead in this administration and create. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

Pence once again leads the confrontation away from Trump and instead focuses on Clinton. He does this by pointing out that it is the Clinton and Kaine campaign that is driven by insults, implying that the candidates are not being honest with the American people about the harsh reality of a nation now fully in decline on a global stage. This decline can be directly attributed to problems in the Middle East, Syria, and other areas around the world, all of which are the fault of the Obama Administration and his former secretary of state, Clinton. Pence also indirectly implies that there may be some validity to electing a president who is more direct, like Trump, a man capable of insulting evil doers wherever they may be in the world.

In a similar fashion, Pence addressed Kaine's assertions regarding Trump's weakness towards Russia by choosing to not address the issue at all. First, the vice-presidential candidate put off responding directly to Kaine's attack until later in the debate, making a larger point about Obama and Clinton's policy as it had developed on a world stage. The only thing Pence chooses to address heads-on is Putin, calling the Russian leader by name and belittling his leadership style:

MIKE PENCE: Hillary Clinton's top priority when she became secretary of state was the Russian reset. The Russian reset. After the Russian reset, the Russians invaded Ukraine and took over Crimea. And the small and bullying leader of Russia is now dictating terms to the United States, to the point where all the United States of America, the greatest nation on Earth, just withdraws from talks about a ceasefire while Vladimir Putin puts a missile defense system in Syria while he marshals the forces and begin -- look, we have got to begin to lean into this with strong, broad-shouldered American leadership. It begins by rebuilding our military and the Russians and the Chinese have been making enormous investments in the military. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

This contrast notes that it is the Democrats who are weak on Russia, not Trump or Pence.

In fact, Pence contends that his running-mate has strong leadership that will resist Russian incursions into parts of the world and certainly efforts to encroach upon the United States. By not addressing assertions of Trump's weaknesses towards Russia in detail, the vice-presidential candidate further avoids any embarrassment or mistakes that may do irreparable harm to his campaign and running-mate. The veteran Republican politician recognizes that he if were to address perceptions of Trump's weakness on Russia directly, such a moment in the debate would be recorded and replayed for viewing audiences during the rest of the campaign season.

Perhaps the best example of Pence employing the act of vindication to answer questions of confrontation during the debate, are his answers regarding Trump's tax returns. The vice-presidential candidate chose to answer the question directly and to take on assertions that Trump had engaged in something nefarious by not releasing his taxes to the American public. In the exchange, both Kaine and Quijano attempt to get Pence to address the overall issue of the missing returns and whether there is a good explanation on why they have not been released to the American public, as promised:

TIM KAINE: I am interested in hearing whether he'll defend his running mate's not releasing taxes, and not paying taxes.

MIKE PENCE: Absolutely, I will.

ELAINE QUIJANO: Governor, with all due respect, the question was whether it seems fair to you that Mr. Trump said he brilliantly used the laws to pay as little tax as legally possible.

MIKE PENCE: Well, this is probably the difference between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton and Senator Kaine. I mean, Hillary Clinton and Senator Kaine, and god bless you for it, career public servants, that's great. Donald Trump is a businessman, not a career politician. He actually built a business. Those tax returns that came out publicly this week show that he faced some pretty tough times 20 years ago. But like virtually every other business including the "New York Times" not too long ago, he used what's called net operating loss. We have a tax code, Senator, that actually is designed to encourage entrepreneurship --

TIM Kaine: But why won't he release his tax returns?

MIKE PENCE: Well, we're answering the question about the business thing.

TIM Kaine: I do want to come back on this.

MIKE PENCE: His tax returns showed that he went through a very difficult time, but he used the tax code just the way it's supposed to be used. And he did it brilliantly.

TIM Kaine: How do you know that? You haven't seen his tax returns.

MIKE PENCE: Because he's created a business that's worth billions of dollars.

TIM Kaine: How do you know that?

MIKE PENCE: And with regard to paying taxes, this whole riff about not paying taxes and people saying he didn't pay taxes for years, Donald Trump has created tens of thousands of jobs, and he's paid payroll-- (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

During this exchange in the debate, Pence never answers the question of whether Trump will release his tax returns, contending instead any leaked tax returns produced by the New York Times show Trump simply had business loss, much like any other entity. Such an answer demonstrates that while making millions of dollars, Trump had just as many losses as any other business-giant operating in the diverse economies of nearly half a century. It also normalized such behavior before the discerning public. Pence's language choice simplifies the acts of not reporting taxes and having millions of lost dollars as just another normal incident while doing business. This tells audience members that nothing

irregular has occurred and to the contrary, Trump is just an average American doing business in the United States.

Finally, Pence reacts to assertions by Quijano that he and Trump are going to increase the deficit with uncontrolled federal spending, much like the Democrats. As part of his response to this assertion in the vindication stage, the vice-presidential nominee chooses to look past the charge and once again point out that, “under this past administration of which Hillary Clinton was a part, we’ve almost doubled the national debt” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Similarly, Kaine is also responsible for doing damage to his home state by being a poor fiscal steward while Pence, on the other hand, “cut taxes... made record investments in education and infrastructure... still finish(ing) my term with \$2 billion in the bank” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). In this regard, Pence sounds like just any other politician who refuses to answer questions and instead pivoting to the mistakes and failures of their opponents, as he has done throughout the debate.

### **Submission**

The submission act of the rhetorical vice-presidency serves as the last stage of the rhetorical vice-presidency. As Bostdorff describes, “once candidates prove through vindication that they can meet feminine/comic expectations, they submit further to the presidential nominee by performing the communicative functions demanded of seconds” (p. 12). This equates into vice-presidential figures using language that subsumes their persona into that of their presidential other half. In the case of Pence, this meant talking about Trump’s vision and not his own. It also meant fully attacking Trump’s opponents and critics as they had personally slighted the vice-presidential candidate himself, a role

Pence would perform throughout the debate as he parried with rival Kaine. The goal of this phase, is like that of matrimony, “just as a married woman traditionally takes her husband’s name, vice-presidents lose their individuality and become part of an administration, identified by the chief executive figure” (p. 12). For Pence, this meant taking on Trump’s name and being on the same ticket with the larger-than-life candidate, as well as contesting his enemies as part of the overall act of submission.

Pence appears proud to be on the ticket with Trump, equally sharing his vision for the nation and the belief that with a united American people, they can truly make the country great again and defeat the enemies of the nation that would seek to tear it apart. The vision of the vice-presidential candidate starts with a nation unified in support of its own military and receiving respect on a world stage, instead of scorn:

MIKE PENCE: The American people want to see our nation standing tall on the world stage again. They want to see us supporting our military, rebuilding our military, commanding the respect of the world, and they want to see the American economy off to the races again. They want to see an American comeback, and Donald Trump's entire career has been about building. It's been about -- it's going through hardship just like a business person does, and finding a way through smarts and ingenuity and resilience to fight forward. When Donald Trump becomes President of the United States, we're going to have a stronger America. When you hear him say he wants to make America great again, when we do that I truly do believe the American people are going to be standing taller, they're going to see that real change can happen after decades of just talking about it. And when that happens the American people are going to stand tall, stand together and we'll have the kind of unity that's been missing for way too long. (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate)

The praising rhetoric of Pence makes his running-mate sound more like a superhero than what he is; a real estate mogul turned reality television star, and political novice. Pence also touches on those Americans who expect real change after decades of waiting for politicians on both sides of the aisle in Washington D.C. to do something to help a nation

besieged by terrorism and unfair trade policies. His words have a tinge of economic populism and social justice, not unlike those words offered by Trump himself, a candidate that had directly benefited from new voting blocks that redefined the presidential campaign and which helped him to win primary after primary in key states.

The other duty of the running-mate, as they continue to submit, is to speak relentlessly for their running-mate and defend the potential administration from those that would seek to attack it. This is a role that Pence also takes seriously, as seen during the debate. Pence is aggressive in serving as attack-dog against the equally rabid Kaine, defending the Republican ticket against accusations and insinuations made by the enemies of Trump. This includes assuming responsibility for defending Trump against aspersions that the presidential nominee was not fit to serve, had too often insulted opponents, and was dishonest for not releasing his tax returns to the American people as promised. At the same time, Pence was also required to answer serious charges that Trump was weak towards Russian president Vladimir Putin and negligent in offering an economic policy that would not bankrupt the nation with debt. This latter charge more palatable since a similar fate had befallen some of the real estate tycoon's business investments when they also went bankrupt years earlier. In filling such a duty of submission, Pence is also quick to attack the Democratic ticket, pointing to a national record he contends has left many in the nation behind personally and professionally.

Pence specifically raises concerns against Clinton by attacking her credibility due to the scandal involving the Clinton Foundation, an organization set up by the former secretary of state and her ex-president husband to further their causes around the globe. Like a school teacher, the vice-presidential candidate takes time to lay out specifically

how the complicated subject should be understood by audience members, educating observers on laws and practices related to foundations and foreign donors. The problem he points to is “they (foreign governments) cannot make financial contributions, but the Clintons figured out a way to create a foundation where foreign governments and foreign donors could donate millions of dollars” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). By relying on language that questions the very credibility of the Clinton family, Pence utilizes a familiar set of arguments that audience members will recall from previous days of the Clinton White House, including Whitewater, Travelgate, and the infamous impeachment trial over the Lewinsky affair that shocked a nation. While Pence is not the first candidate to benefit from a Clinton credibility gap due to scandal, he certainly is a sitting vice-presidential nominee that can successfully deploy it against Clinton in her latest political incarnation. He sums up the problem succinctly for the audience, indicating, “the reason the American people don’t trust Hillary Clinton... (because they’re looking at pay to play politics with the Clinton foundation” while “the Trump foundation is a private-family foundation. They give virtually every cent in the Trump foundation to charitable causes” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). In attacking the Clinton foundation and defending the Trump foundation, Pence also carefully sides steps Kaine’s challenge for him to defend misuse of funds on the part of the Trump foundation.

Pence further submits by offering validation of Trump in praising his immigration policy, a plan he alleges to be vastly different from the current administration’s role in allowing open borders, amnesty, and catch and release programs. The vice-presidential nominee recognizes that the poll tested immigration issue is important to audience members and plays to their fears on the subject. He offers that Trump has “laid out a plan



to end illegal immigration once and for all in this country” boasting large about a candidate that has divided the nation with his rhetoric on a just as divisive issue (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Pence contends that trump laid out the plan in Arizona itself, a site of much consternation regarding illegal immigration, important enough for the GOP nominee to visit in person to much media attention and supporter fanfare. He further praises Trump for the bona-fides the candidate has attained on the subject, offering the credential that “for the first time in the history of the immigrations and customs enforcement, their union actually endorsed Donald Trump as the next president of the United States, because they know they need help to enforce the laws of the country” (2016 Vice-Presidential Debate). Here, Pence adopts a familiar tone by alluding to disregard for the rule of law and the subsequent order it brings. The candidate also demonstrates that the subject matter is so grave, those with the common sense enough to understand the subject, such as border patrol officers, are flocking to support the hero Trump.

Pence’s appearance at the vice-presidential debate was the second time that he would appear without Trump on a large basis, although notably the candidate would share the appearance with his vice-presidential rival. Similar to his convention speech, the vice-presidential candidate was able to offer celebratory language about his family, experience in Indiana, and unlike Trump; credentials he had established as a foe of abortion. The candidate, however, was still confronted and required to vindicate Trump, particularly around the presidential candidate’s fitness to hold office and serve as commander-in-chief of the military. This would mark yet another example of Bostdorff’s traditional approach to confrontation and vindication that would go awry, largely due to

the presidential half of the GOP equation. Despite these obstacles, Pence would continue to submit as vice-presidential candidates are intended to do while speaking glowingly of Trump and applying the attack-dog function. In this submission, Pence renders invisible the identity he has crafted in a lifetime of public service in keeping with the acts traditional gender perspective for women. The evidence of such a gendered rhetorical act of this secondary office, along with the two previously discussed artifacts, provides the impetus for a greater discussion on the implications of this rhetorical vice-presidency under Pence.

### **Implications**

From my analysis of Pence's appearance in the *60 Minutes* interview with Trump, his subsequent acceptance speech at the Republican Convention, and then performance in the vice-presidential debate with rival Tim Kaine, it is possible to conclude that all three artifacts give support to Bostdorff's rhetorical acts of a gendered vice-presidency. This includes allowing for modification to the theory to accommodate for the appearance of the rhetorical acts in each artifact and as discussed earlier, a disruption to the chronological order in which the acts appear. In each analyzed artifact, evidence of acts of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission as generally envisioned by Bostdorff, were found to exist. In some specific difference to the original rhetorical acts of the theory, Pence celebrated Trump instead of himself, dealt with confrontation and vindication for the presidential candidate and not his own vice-presidential candidacy, and submitted fully within each artifact by allowing his running-mate to capture his voice and in some cases, speak solely for him. In doing so, Pence as central actor in this highly communicative and gender-driven rhetorical drama of

submission, further defined audience understanding of a gendered American vice-presidency differently than his predecessors. The vice-presidential nominee, acting consistent with expectations of this secondary position, lends further support to the traditional feminine gender roles that Bostdorff attributes to the office by further accelerating the level in which rhetoric focuses on Trump and not himself. As each artifact reinforced, these gender expectations further limit and define the vice-presidency and stifle opportunities for both office and occupants. Thus, vice-presidential candidates remain firmly overshadowed by presidential running-mates to which they remain forever in service, as was largely the situation with the mild-mannered Pence and the dominant Trump.

The first research question concerns the extent that the rhetoric by and about Pence demonstrates what Bostdorff argues is the traditional feminine role of a gendered vice-presidency. Bostdorff indicates, “just as women traditionally have been controlled by the men around them, vice-presidents and vice-presidential candidates in recent times have been completely subordinate to the more powerful man around them” (p. 2). Experiences with traditional portrayals of women, seen at home or in media, define how audience members understand, interpret, and reinforce femininity. The researcher goes on to further define gender differences, saying, “men are perceived as strong, independent, aggressive, confident, and individualistic leaders, while women are viewed as weak, dependent, passive, easily intimidated, and subservient followers” (p. 3). The vice-presidency, with all its characteristic identifiers around submissiveness, quickly begins to match such a feminine gender definition as fully evidenced in this review of Pence, a political actor that embodies these traditional feminine gender roles.

The vice-presidential candidate submits to this understanding of a diminished, feminine vice-presidency by allowing Trump to speak over and for him, as was highly evident and repeated in the *60 Minutes* interview. During the program, Pence struggled to speak on a variety of topics and instead remained largely silent throughout the interview. In the same interview, Pence also changed or altered his political positions, such as his stance on free trade, while verbally agreeing to accommodate Trump and his strictly anti-free trade opinions. This is not unlike the changes that Pence commits to while diminishing his previous positions on negative campaigning, a practice to which he largely regretted very early in his political career and wrote an essay. Pence, as essay writer holding forth on the ideals of running a virtuous campaign, fails to match vice-presidential nominee Pence, allied with a running-mate that is highly negative in tone and rhetoric. These reversals on political positions and beliefs reveal a candidate utilizing the rhetorical acts of the vice-presidency to submit to the beliefs and identity of a presidential running-mate who is aggressively a rhetorical dominant.

During the celebration stage described by Bostdorff, the vice-presidential candidate is celebrated for the attributes they bring to the national ticket. Such candidates are praised for independence and strength, hallmarks that designate such a candidate as a remarkable selection capable of leading the nation of their own accord. In the case of these artifacts, we find a bifurcated approach to who received the celebration. In some cases, Pence was celebrated for his family's life story and small town credentials that make for ideal historical and political biography. He was further celebrated for the record he had created in Congress and Indiana, noting achievements which had brought him acclaim for possessing conservative credentials regularly under fire from liberal

detractors. Pence's humility, given voice in his own words and the modest descriptions the candidate gave to his experiences, present a personality to which American audiences could respond and support. Such humility and modesty stood in sharp contrast to the boastful, masculine Trump, who was also celebrated in the artifacts. In fact, during the celebration stage, Pence regularly talks about the virtues of Trump, the billionaire's credentials, and the work that such an experienced business leader can bring to the nation. Here, Pence shares the spotlight and cuts short his own celebration, choosing instead to offer or allow such moments to be stolen by his running-mate. This type of rhetorical choice, whether intentional on his part or not, further reduces his role and the vice-presidency. It is also illustrative of the relationship that audience members had already experienced while observing his vice-presidential debut with Trump in New York where Trump barely permitted the Indiana Governor to speak.

The confrontation and vindication stage allow the vice-presidential nominee to reconcile beliefs, values, and experiences with that of their running-mate. This act serves as a sort of identity crisis for the vice-presidential aspirant, still redefining themselves after a lifetime that could be quite contrary to their own experience and time in public service. For Pence, such a reconciliation with Trump involved confronting their differences on issues, styles, and practices which were well documented in the three artifacts and pointed out by interviewers, moderators, and opponents. In all three artifacts, this meant that Pence was dealing with confrontation and vindication not of himself, but of Trump, his running-mate. Pence, when confronted by challenges to Trump, repeatedly insisted that he knew the truth about his presidential candidate, a good man who had often been misunderstood. Such vindication becomes a defensive posture for Trump,

rather than Pence. As Bostdorff points out, when vice-presidents fail at this stage, they are resigned from consideration as incompatible with their president and subservient role of service to the same. All along the way, vice-presidents encounter those in the media and political sphere who would test whether such a ticket bond will be strong enough to survive the challenge. Similarly, to manage vindication of the Trump team, as initially described by Bostdorff, Pence could offer a successful defense of his controversial running-mate at the convention and in the debate. This contrasted with the *60 Minutes* debate, where Trump largely dealt with or influenced such vindication himself.

The final stage for vice-presidents then becomes the act of submission, where the number two candidates permit their identity to be fully subsumed into that of their running-mate. In this act, Pence spoke of a nation that would be saved by Donald J. Trump, a business titan well versed in the art of the deal who would know what to do to lead the United States back from ruin. According to Pence, even when Trump had been charged with having done wrong, he was innocent. Further, those responsible for what was wrong in the world are the media and political opponents who are firmly fixed in the liberal seat of power, Washington D.C. Pence, in keeping with the attack-dog function of those doing the submitting, never hesitated to issue rhetorical blame on the enemy while further dodging any admission of guilt on the part of their ticket mate. With this submission stage, the political marriage is complete and their relationship is rhetorically cemented on a national stage before discerning audience members accustomed to this unique ritual of masculinity and femininity.

The second research question considers what deployment of vice-presidential rhetoric demonstrates about the opportunities and limitations of the role as it has been

rhetorically constructed. As was explained in the literature review, the role already has severe limitations given to it based on the legal and historical functions of the office. It is also important to mention the many unworthy occupants who further diminished or tarnished the position for audience members during the countless years of the Republic. History and tradition aside, the rhetorical vice-presidency and its gender defined characteristics, further serve to severally limit the office for those that take on the position. The vice-presidency does not similarly create opportunities for those in the office, aside from the occasional elevation to the presidency based on the death of one's predecessor. In the case of Pence, the limitations became quite evident in the three artifacts as the new vice-presidential candidate officially began his candidacy aside Trump.

First, from the very beginning, vice-presidential candidates begin a process of slowly adopting rhetorical silence on any matter related to their background, experience, or individual beliefs. Instead, such candidates growingly begin to speak only of their presidential ticket mates and the attributes, policy positions, and goals a prospective administration will bring to the nation. This was seen implicitly as Pence began to increasingly speak approvingly of Trump and his policies, including specific items like the Muslim ban and trade policy, of which he had previously disagreed. After all, even when vice-presidential figures like Pence have divergent opinions or experiences, extreme caution is warned to any daring second place office holder that might attempt to give voice to such dialogue on a larger rhetorical stage. While such candidates are first praised in the introductory celebration stage, gradually this brief period is replaced with constant dominance by the presidency as vice-presidents fade further into the

background. Likewise, Pence spent a good portion of the vice-presidential debate talking about life under Trump when law and order would be restored along with economic security.

Next, it is also important to remember that vice-presidential candidates are limited because they must unceasingly serve their presidential running-mate. This includes the role of defending their president and playing the attack-dog before large audiences. Little time is afforded for vice-presidents to talk about themselves and rhetoric, as was the case with Trump and Pence, remains largely focused exclusively upon the presidential half of this political equation. For instance, Pence had to use most his of time in the three artifacts responding to charges against Trump, attacking Clinton on behalf of his running-mate, or offering glowing praise for what a Trump ticket could accomplish for America. No doubt, if given a choice, Pence would likely have preferred to talk about himself than his running-mate's verbal insults of others and alleged ties with Russian president Vladimir Putin. In this way, the artifacts demonstrate that Pence does not even receive the distinction of being the actual focus of the rhetorical acts of the vice-presidency as envisioned by Bostdorff. Pence is never confronted or in need of any real defensive discussion. Instead, it is Trump yet again stealing Pence's space in the confrontation and vindication act, even though space is highly negative in nature. More so, Trump routinely influenced the outcome of the discussion and ultimately, Pence's role as a communicator.

In reality, the vice-president is never truly alone, joined and limited by a presidential running-mate that dominates the news cycle, policy positions, and occasionally, the very stage the number two candidate is physically occupying. When reviewing the *60 Minutes* interview, audience members see that the interview was



intended to focus on the debut of Pence and to record the candidate's reactions on various items that had previously only been discussed by a Trump who had not yet selected a running-mate. Trump's dominance of the subsequent interview prevented Pence from articulating answers to most questions given to him by interviewer Stahl. Instead, the presidential candidate spoke over Pence repeatedly, choosing to answer for his vice-presidential candidate and in one case, granting him permission to talk upon an issue. Even when reviewing the other artifacts where Trump was not physically present, it is abundantly clear that he still stands as a domineering giant over both the proceedings and his running-mate.

Finally, and most importantly, the vice-presidency is severally limited by the gender expectations of the office which are the subject of this study. By assuming the vice-presidency has inherently traditional feminine characteristics of being perceived as subservient to their masculine counterpart, the office instantly takes an inferior role to a highly dominant presidency. These feminine characteristics, defined by Bostdorff, of being "weak, dependent, passive, easily intimidated, and subservient," cast a stigma upon the vice-presidency and reinforces the masculinity of the presidency (p. 3). The Trump and Pence team embodied this dynamic by presenting a brash, macho presidential nominee and his more mild-mannered sidekick. Cast into this role, the limited Pence is unable to break free from stereotypes built around the vice-presidency. While Trump may be free to boldly contest his enemy, and say or take what he wants, Pence must worry about contradicting or criticizing his running-mate. For vice-presidential candidates like Pence, the degree to which feminine accommodation must factor into their rhetoric then further limits their role.

## Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the gender narrative surrounding the vice-presidency and the 2016 election. It was accomplished by reviewing the traditional feminine gender roles assigned to the position and as evidenced in Pence's participation in a *60 Minutes* interview, nomination speech at the 2016 national convention, and vice-presidential debate. Authors like Bostdorff, who argued "that the contemporary vice presidency is, in effect, a traditional feminine role" where vice-presidential figures and potential aspirants use strategies of celebration, confrontation, vindication, and submission to fulfill a gendered role in service to a more powerful, highly masculine presidency (p. 2). Other relevant literature was reviewed, supporting appropriate research questions to be answered exploring the rhetorical nature of the gendered vice-presidency and the limitations placed on the position.

To discuss a gendered vice-presidency, this paper used three actual events concerning the position and candidate Mike Pence. Pence became an ideal candidate due to his campaign with billionaire Donald Trump, a real estate titan turned reality TV star and then presidential candidate. The personality of mild-mannered Pence, an Indiana Governor, who patiently built a political career at home and in Congress as a cautious conservative, became a stark juxtaposition of vice-presidential femininity against presidential masculinity. The artifacts involving Pence allow for a greater understanding of how a gendered vice-presidency occurred during the 2016 election and in past elections.

The paper demonstrated that vice-presidents are first celebrated for the independence and leadership they individually bring to presidential tickets. Then, such

candidates are confronted with the areas of which they and the president hold differences on beliefs, values, or experiences. At that point, it becomes the duty of the vice-presidential candidate to explain such incongruity in an act of vindication where differences are explained successfully. There is also the possibility that differences are explained unsuccessfully, triggering a resignation or removal of the vice-president from the picture. In the final act of a gendered rhetorical vice-presidency, those in the position fully submit to their presidential counterparts by adopting their identity and as this paper demonstrated, supporting their ticket and attacking its enemies.

At the same time, this research supported the limitations inherent in the vice-presidency. First, the vice-presidential candidate is slowly silenced from talking about themselves, including their own beliefs, values, and experience. Instead, they exist only to serve the rhetorical presidency, a feat that is seen in their unceasing defense of the office and attack upon its many opponents that arrive from media and political sources. The vice-president is never fully alone, not even when such actors appear to be the only candidates on the stage. Instead, this number two position consistently is joined by a dominating presidential figure that fully envelopes the presidential scene and limits any capacity for freedom. Finally, this position is limited by gender assumptions about the position that assign it traditional feminine stereotypes of being weak, inferior, subservient, secondary, and ultimately silent. These stereotypes needlessly castigate the position by allowing for societal failures around fairness and equality to assign negative meaning to what is truly an important American political office.

While this theory is highly useful in this thesis for successfully addressing the vice-presidency and its rhetorical function, it better describes and predicts the rhetoric of

traditional secondary candidacies mentioned in the literature review which observe the chronological acts of the vice-presidency. In those examples, such as was the case with Bush and Reagan, separate stages of celebration, confrontation, vindication or resignation, and submission occurred and could be predictably explained through theory. While the Pence artifacts have traits of these rhetorical acts, each take a slightly different approach in application of the theory, which should be addressed. For instance, why does each artifact appear to contain a form of all four rhetorical acts in entirety? Bostdorff, while allowing for some overlap between acts of confrontation and vindication, believed the acts to be separate events of a vice-presidency going through stages. In my examples, an interview, speech, and debate all appear to contain both celebration and submission in addition to such acts of confrontation and resignation. Another question of theory deviation concerns the lack of a chronological order to the rhetorical acts situated in the artifacts. As seen repeatedly, moments of submission were followed by acts of celebration for no apparent reason. The evidence of a disruption to the chronological order of these rhetorical acts, including their presence in each artifact, suggests a narrative of social upheaval that altered shared meaning of the communicative vice-presidency.

To understand the reality of such a narrative, it is important to take a discerning look at the political year itself along with the circumstances in which Pence found himself. First, the compression of the vice-presidential announcement of Pence in New York dominated by Trump, the harsh rhetoric of the 2016 campaign by and about the non-conventional candidate, and differing experiences, beliefs, and personalities of the Trump and Pence dynamic, combine to reinforce such a rhetorical force that violates the

natural progression of discourse and debate. This force abruptly causes a type of rhetorical panic whereby participants and their words exist under fight or flight circumstances that attempt to make sense of narrative and shared meaning. In such a scenario, Pence must not only accept a place on the Trump ticket and praise his running-mate, but must quickly adopt Trump's positions and beliefs to survive communicatively and politically. What would normally appear to be a flip-flop of the vice-presidential candidate on major issues, is instead a candidate seeking to make sense of his circumstances and in a survivable manner, make sense of it to his audience. Similarly, multiple rhetorical acts may appear in a single artifact while participants and audience member use such devices to reinforce shared meaning and make sense of the phenomenon that is occurring. This act completely supports the subservience of the rhetorical vice-presidency.

Pence may wish to see himself celebrated, but the sheer volume of Trump controversial and nonsensical rhetoric mandates that the presidential candidate not only be confronted, but vindicated. Such events exist outside a true chronological nature because such order is not important while simple survival is crucial. In these panic moments reacting to this rhetorical force, Pence attempts to make shared meaning during such moments of uncertainty that feature a vice-presidential candidate ignored, interrupted, and confronted while required to offer vindication and submission for his running-mate's attention-getting rhetorical ways. This plays out in most rhetorical acts while audience members witness Trump's bombastic approach of over-the-top rhetoric as it silences any significant consideration of any other candidate or agenda, including the orderly nature of what should be Pence's orderly moment in the shadow. Specifically,

Pence as vice-presidential candidate, must struggle to gain notoriety and attention while the rhetorical force of Trump disrupts normal rhetorical considerations. Unfortunately, this rhetorical force that violates Pence's space also serves to reinforce traditional gender roles of women who were also the victims of highly masculinized situations. In this way, Pence and this vice-presidential example of 2016, further extends Bostdorff's theory of the rhetorical nature of the office and defines how the office may exist under such communicative crisis.

This author faced some true limitations in preparing this body of work on the American vice-presidency. First, while a gendered vice-presidency considers the relationship and personalities of a Pence and Trump, it does not explore other vice-presidential relationships like that of their immediate predecessors, Obama and Biden, who also appeared different from previous running-mate scenarios, were simultaneously described as brotherly friends. While this paper had no formal research on specifically the Biden vice-presidency, it could be observed to have different traits that call into question the notion of a gendered vice-presidency different than the experience of Pence. This could bear some future consideration given that Biden was the most contemporaneously recognized vice-presidential figure. A second limitation with this work is the author's current work and experience in the political field, a detail that may influence work as both audience member and researcher and account for preconceived notions influencing this project. This experience was crucial to understanding American political structures and the rhetoric surrounding the vice-presidency, but nonetheless, influencing. Finally, while this research may point to defensible theories on gender and the American vice-presidency, it does not account for similar secondary positions in business, industry, or

even other political positions and thus, conclusions are best limited to the potential of rhetoric surrounding the vice-presidency.

This work can be the source of greater research on the vice-presidency to better understand the position beyond officeholders like Pence, particularly when such figures encounter such harsh rhetorical running-mates like Trump, again. A nation as diverse and as storied as the United States will surely produce more vice-presidents and given their proximity to the presidency, has a need to fully observe these political actors. This work can also be the cause of greater understanding of how gender intersects politics, including more discussion on gender expectations of office holders. Such expectations, have defined and limited our American political experience so long that it may now be appropriate to fully grasp their effect on such a highly rhetorical system.

This author's fascination with the vice-presidency's unique nature has inspired research into the characteristics and functions of the office and the rhetoric that emerges because of such processes, including moments of rhetorical force that disrupted conventional theories on a gendered vice-presidency. Such a position, located in the shadow of the presidency and a potential victim of disruption, demands more attention than it has been often given in studies of politics and rhetoric. Further, some accounting for the gender expectations placed on not just the vice-presidency, but all occupations, activities, and other every day processes in society, is long overdue. For these reasons, knowledge on gender expectations related to the second highest office in the land become tantamount to a conversation seeking to understand these two-phenomena intersecting just one heartbeat away from the presidency daily.

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