

DEBATING PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP DISADVANTAGES: WHAT DOES THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE PROVE?

by David M. Cheshier

The Clinton disadvantage is the most popular policy argument on this year's education topic, as it was last year, and until Bill Clinton vacates the office next January (at which point we'll shift to arguing Bush or Gore popularity/focus/agenda links) this brand of political process position is likely to dominate the circuit. The availability of up-to-the-minute database evidence has increased our collective reliance on presidential popularity/focus/capital arguments, since efficient update work can produce timely impact and brink stories, not to mention late breaking horserace assessments.

Concerns about the widespread use of the Clinton argument are by now well known, but apart from some limited efforts to craft theoretical objections, few inroads have been made against its use or success. In the abstract I think most judges agree the most defensible explanations of likely fiat mechanisms can provide compelling affirmative link takeouts, but these have proven hard to win in practice, since negative teams who specialize in Clinton have developed a laundry list of defenses. The fiat debate (A: "Fiat takes out the link - Congress won't backlash to itself!" N: "Fiat assumes minimal means, which leaves room for the link!") has become something of a yes/no contest where few debaters are understandably willing to invest the rhetorical energy necessary to make their position compelling.

Another problem with the Clinton disadvantage, apparently well understood in the abstract but rarely decisive in practice, has to do with the often strained internal link story defended by the negative. If there is a connection between presidential unpopularity effects following a policy fight, there is rightful skepticism about the strength of the spillover to other major legislative contests. But as any observer knows, these objections also tend to carry little weight against the disadvantage. When internal link attacks are offered, a few cards from Bond and Fleisher (the now dated evidence asserting such a spillover) usually suffice.¹

In this essay I introduce some of the recent academic work on presidential power, especially on factors able to predict successful presidential leadership in the legis-

lative arena. To a large and surprising degree this work has not been greatly utilized by the debate community, maybe because it seems too heavily theoretical, too easily trumped by yesterday's assessment of the horserace. But my suggestion is that a closer reading of the proliferating work on the American presidency can substantially strengthen the affirmative's hand when it comes to undermining the internal link claims of the disadvantage, at least as commonly argued, because I aim to direct you to these literatures, I've footnoted my claims more fully than normal; these notes give some indication of the available work, old and new.



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A Quick Introduction to the Presidential Leadership Scholarship

If you've been debating Clinton a lot recently, you might naturally assume the major determinant of presidential success in the legislative arena is popularity, or the more amorphous concept of accumulated political capital. But the literature on presidential success does not emphasize the popularity issue, or even political capital, and many of the standard works do not even seriously consider these issues in a manner that would be recognizable to policy debaters.²

Consider three widely cited and relatively recent works on presidential success. One, by Marvin Olasky, emphasizes how presidential success mainly derives from a given president's capacity for moral leadership. Olasky believes the articulation of what he calls "moral vision" is the best predictor of capable political leadership.³ Another recent book by Robert Shogan makes much the same point.⁴ Or consider Philip Abbott's interesting application of literary

theory to presidential power. One prominent theory of literary success, advanced some time ago by Harold Bloom, argues that great writers succeed by triumphing over the "anxiety of influence." That is, they overcome the legacy of the great writers who precede them, in the process producing genuinely unique work, made possible by a willful misreading of their mentors. Abbott explores whether the same argument explains presidential success, and defends an argument that the historically great presidents succeeded by reacting to their strong predecessors.⁵ From the vantage point of presidential popularity scenarios, these accounts are interesting precisely because they omit day to day dynamics, and the ups and downs of public approval. Such work is typical in the sense that in accounting for leadership, it tends to credit longer term historical or characterological factors over the short term tactical variables which so dominate policy debates.

This has been true since the most influential accounts of presidential success were first written. The most cited work, by Richard Neustadt (which first appeared in 1960), equates presidential power with the power to persuade, but is not dominated by arguments over public opinion control. And this is true of other major works in the field, such as book by Richard Pious and Edward Corwin, both of which emphasize the president's managerial competence as the major predictor of success.⁶

By contrast to how presidential success is argued in typical debate rounds, academic research tends either to emphasize the institutional circumstances of leadership (e.g., does it occur in a time of crisis?) or the personal traits of the men who have served as president. For example, Clinton Rossiter's 1956 book used characterological analysis to divide presidents into two categories, "earth movers" and "earth smoothers." The great presidents were "movers" who made things happen. Erwin Hargrove used a similar strategy of classification, categorizing presidents as either leaders of "action" (like the Roosevelts, Wilson, and Johnson) or of "restraint" (such as Hoover or Eisenhower).⁷ More recently James David Barber's typology of presidential character has exerted an influence on

the academic debate, but here again the traits Barber singles out are those of disposition rather than perceived approval by the Congress or public.⁸

Institutional accounts vie with characterological theories; among the first and most influential of these was produced by Theodore Lowi. Lowi, in part responding to Barber but still influenced by work stressing the effects of a president's personal characteristics, nonetheless argued personal characteristics are dwarfed by "the tremendous historical forces lodged in the laws, traditions, and commitments of institutions."⁹ Contemporary work based in rational choice theory has tended to emphasize how members of Congress make their decisions out of perceived self interest more than out of deference to party leaders or presidents; that is, they will give a president what he wants only when they believe it advances their own purposes.¹⁰ In a more general sense, among the most impressive recent attempts to study all the available data on the complicated relationship between president and Congress, and organize findings around a comprehensive appreciation of the institutional complexities of the office, was produced last year by Steven Shull and Thomas Shaw.¹¹

Given this range of scholarly approaches, what then is the role of public approval, presidential agenda setting, and political capital in determining legislative success? And how might our debates be improved by taking account of such research?

Public Approval and Presidential Success

Much of the research on presidential leadership and approval ratings is anecdotal, for despite the wealth of available polling data, it can be difficult to draw generalizations regarding the relationship between popularity and success. A number of books offer very careful historical accounts about specific presidential administrations, but careful model construction has been difficult to accomplish. At the extremes one can easily reach common sense conclusions about the relationship: overwhelmingly popular presidents are more likely to achieve their goals than hated ones. In this vein the most common quotes come from Abraham Lincoln - "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed" - and Woodrow Wilson - "let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him,

no combination of forces will easily overpower him."

For many years debaters have quoted work by George Edwards, who has argued that "the greatest source of influence for the president is public approval."¹² Edwards found his strongest evidence in a apparent correlation between public approval ratings and presidential influence with members of Congress, findings often cited despite Edwards' own plain skepticism on the matter. In fact, Edwards' subtle argument is often lost in the give-and-take of policy debate. An example of this (which has more to do with how evidence is introduced in Clinton debates than any flaw in Edwards' work) is how affirmative evidence denying a popularity effect is often answered with "perception" evidence; that is, disadvantage defenders often read evidence saying if members of Congress perceive a president as popular, they're more likely to go along with his agenda, whether his power is real or not. While the insight is commonsensical enough, it takes only a moment's reflection to see that if such an effect exists, it should be showing up in the studies; thus if the studies show no effect, those results trump perception claims.

There are other problems with the claims of a popularity-to-legislation connection. One is the impossibility of proving that a bump of, say, five percentage points in the president's approval ratings translates to a specified increase in the odds of legislative passage. Compounding this is the fact that almost all scholars of the presidency agree approval is not a precondition or guarantor of success. As Plischke once put it, "over time, the attempt merely to please, unaccompanied by initiative and accomplishment, is likely to boomerang. In practice, a President may be popular without being prestigious."¹³ We might also recall the cautionary tale of Bill Clinton, who continued to enjoy historically high second term approval ratings while struggling mightily to secure passage of his still-ambitious policy agenda.

One important implication of the public approval research is that the likelihood of presidential success is less a function of a given program's popularity than of a president's salesmanship skills. Thus, our conventional method of explaining the approval disadvantage link ("Federal sex education mandates are unpopular. Thus having Clinton fight for congressional sex ed approval will undermine his approval; Clinton needs his popularity to secure WTO

admission") misconstrues the research, by ignoring a president's personal ability to shape the debate, adapt to the political climate, modify his proposals given nascent opposition, or deflect criticism by distancing himself from the most unpopular aspects of his proposals.¹⁴

Another factor to be considered is the extent to which members of Congress connect a president's general approval ratings with a perception that his support is based on his policies. As Barbara Sinclair has noted, "the purposive behavior framework predicts that only when members read the president's popularity as resting, at least in part, upon their constituents' support for his policy proposals is this popularity likely to significantly increase congressional support."¹⁵ This has implications for many policy debate rounds: it implies popularity is not likely to have much issue-to-issue crossover effect,¹⁶ and so-called context variables (the time of the term when debate occurs, the political balance in Congress, etc.) are likely to carry more weight than simple approval, even when connected to particular policy controversies.¹⁷ It also implies that if members of Congress believe public support is being orchestrated by a president (as opposed to reflecting a genuine groundswell of outrage), they are less likely to be moved to action, and may even backlash by attempting their own information campaigns.

These implications are confirmed by studies which downplay the influence of public opinion on congressional decisionmaking. A study carried out by Jeffrey Cohen found popular presidents are not significantly more successful in controlling the public agenda than less popular ones, and presidential efforts to impact opinion on particular issues produce gains that tend to fade fast.¹⁸ A more recent Cohen essay speculates that the Congress might well respond to public opinion in setting its agenda, but admits "no such study exists."¹⁹ In addition, there is strong evidence that popularity effects are very constrained under circumstances where government is divided (some point to the Democratic Congress' immunity to Bush's post-Gulf War popularity as evidence of this). The research also emphasizes the extent to which popularity effects lag; that is, a loss of popularity (or for that matter, a quick gain) takes time to percolate through the system. The standard 2NR story, which often says something like "voting for this unpopular plan today will derail WTO tomorrow" is simply

not supported by most research.²⁰

Presidential Agenda-Setting

The president, of course, wields considerable influence over the national agenda. One of the most cited books on this point remains Paul Light's *The President's Agenda*, which appeared in 1984.²¹ Light's basic premise is that the most important strategy for securing presidential power is successful control of the decisionmaking agenda. There is a certain logic in the view that, following Light's argument, a president will succeed or fail to the extent he creates an agenda and prioritizes his wish list to take full effect of the political situation.

As debated, the agenda-setting argument tends to undergo a not-so-subtle transformation. Presidential agenda-setting is often described this way by negatives: "Passage of policy Q is at the top of the president's agenda today. But here comes the plan, and passing it will require the president to divert his energy from policy Q advocacy. He will have to divert his valuable time away from policy Q and toward plan passage, thus a tradeoff link." But this argument is a significant distortion of the agenda-setting research, which emphasizes not the relative placement of one agenda item over or under another, but the timetable of presidential action. Paul Light argued that the basis of presidential success was speed in the first year of the term, when presidents can exploit their so-called "honeymoon" to advance pet programs more easily. Light claimed if a president failed to act decisively during the start of either of his terms, his programs would likely be overwhelmed by other unavoidable institutional forces (divided and fragmented government, inevitable media souring on presidential leadership, entrenched battle lines, and so on).

Indeed, if all it took to derail important initiatives was competition from other proposals, presidential power would be inevitably eviscerated, from day one of the president's term. After all, every day's newspaper conveys major new developments domestic and international which, if only temporarily, bump the president's priorities off the nightly news. Even when the chief executive devotes complete attention to one issue, as President Clinton did in March with his tour of South Asia, he is unlikely to successfully control the public opinion or political agenda (Clinton's visit, for example, was largely overshadowed by the Pope's tour of the Middle East, and to some extent by Clinton's own announcement of a last

minute meeting with Syrian leader Hafez el-Asad).

A president's ability to control or set the agenda is also a function of which party controls the Congress. When the president's party is in control, he is better able to coordinate the legislative agenda with the leadership. But, as in the current circumstances, the government is divided, a president's agenda is forced to contend with competing opposition proposals.

Presidential Political Capital

Anyone with experience debating the Clinton disadvantage knows the popularity of the so-called "winners win" argument. Advanced several times over the past few years by Norman Ornstein, the claim is that presidents benefit from legislative passage even if the substance of the law is unpopular simply by enjoying the afterglow of victory. Defeat taints a leader, reveals his Achilles' heel, thereby making subsequent victory less likely; victory, by contrast, makes leaders seem more intimidating to their opponents, and by enhancing presidential stature winning makes it easier to force agreement on opponents who mainly respect raw political power. "Winners win" is the logical extension of understanding that presidents have at their disposal a certain amount of "political capital," the resources required to get their way. These resources include chits (favors owed them by their colleagues), quid pro quo agreements (where a president gets something in return for giving up something else), the perception of power that comes from favorable approval ratings or good media coverage, and also the simple perception of success. The "winners win" claim usefully calls our attention to how such political capital is not static but can change over time, increasing and decreasing as the public's and Congress' impressions are altered over time.

The winners win position is also, of course, vulnerable on many fronts. It does not assume the peculiar dynamics of an election year, during which opponents are unlikely to be awed even by impressive displays of presidential suasion. Nor does it assume, Ornstein to the contrary, a context of divided government. Republicans controlling Congress are less likely to be awed by Clinton success than angered by it; the likely outcome of Democratic presidential success is reinvigorated opposition, not cowering concessions down the road. And the winners win claim is simplistic, in the sense that winning does not inevitably start a snowball effect of guaranteed future suc-

cess (nor for that matter does a single loss necessarily set the end of a presidency into motion); wins and losses are inevitable regardless of the office's occupant, and the effect of a win or loss on subsequent outcomes is easily exaggerated.

The political capital issue is another one easier to see in the extreme than at the margins. The insight that President Carter spread his available political capital too thin by overloading the Congress with initiatives (and declaring them all his highest priority) has now become conventional wisdom. But to what extent is presidential success a function of *changes* in political capital? Put more specifically, to what extent does adding one new proposal to the agenda subvert a president's influence? Interestingly, the most cited defense of presidential capital, offered by Paul Light, offers a broad definition of the concept that does include popularity, but which also defines it as a function of the number of partisan seats in Congress and the extent of the original electoral margin. These are variables over which a president, regardless of his skills, has little influence. If capital is a function of relatively unchanging environmental constraints, we might reasonably infer that political capital changes at the margin will tend to matter very little.

Arguing the Media Manipulation Internal Links

As Theodore Roosevelt so memorably put it, the United States presidency affords its occupant with a singular power to persuade, to make use of the "bully pulpit" to advance his causes, or as Ronald Reagan put it, to "go over the heads" of Congress and directly to the American people for support. This fact has induced many affirmative teams to argue against the Clinton internal link by stressing the president's institutional advantages in framing and controlling the national debate. The White House staff is increasingly organized to direct the country's conversation. Some affirmatives use this fact to argue the president can never really suffer from his actions; he will invariably find a way to spin the issue, blame his adversaries, or salvage victory even from defeat.

But, as with the relationship between high poll numbers and successful leadership, the media relationship is more complicated than our debating usually recognized.²² We know that a president's failure to effectively use the media will complicate his efforts to see his initiatives, but it does (*Chesier to page 60*)

(Cheshier from page 41)

not necessarily follow that the successful courting of media elites will produce success. We assume that as new media technologies proliferate, presidential efforts to use media outlets will intensify, but the historical record shows a surprisingly constant historical tendency for presidents to attempt media manipulation.²³ We accept as true the idea that presidents must be preoccupied with their coverage, but tend to ignore the backlash which results when presidents end up looking less like leaders and more like performers. We tend to believe skills presidents will always find a way to frame their programs successfully, but underestimate the extent to which the intrinsic limits of the relevant mass medium can constrain such efforts (consider, for example, how attempts to defend free trade are regularly subverted by the ease of showing images of trade's downsides - child labor abuses, environmental damage, and the difficulty of visually showing trade's benefits, like lower prices and heightened productivity). And the idea that presidents need only roll out their spinmeisters to direct public opinion their way ignores the typical climate of tension pervading the media's relationship with national politicians.

It is tempting to overstate the benefits of what Jeffrey Tulis first called the "rhetorical presidency" for occupants of the

office. It was this sentiment that led former Vice President Walter Mondale to claim the media had turned the presidency into the nation's "fire hydrant." Presidential scholar Mary Stuckey recently wrote that "the rhetorical presidency has created...a dramatic increase in public expectations...More resources mean heightened expectations, which require presidents to find more resources, which in turn raise expectations. The cycle is endlessly self-perpetuating, and is potentially dangerous for both presidents and for the system in which they are embedded..."²⁴

In short, the effects of intensive media coverage are mixed, and hardly unidirectional in the sense often claimed in Clinton disadvantage debates. As Cronin and Genovese put it, "television has both *enlarged* and *shrunk* the presidency."²⁵ Our debates will more accurately reflect the state of the academic research to the extent they acknowledge these mixed effects. Negatives teams are on solid ground when they bolster their internal link by noting that unpopular positions taken by presidents tend to be "piled onto" by the press, an effect which can multiply the risk. But when either team stakes out a position implying that either supporters or opponents of a particular policy will find it easy to shape public reaction, they are sliding around on thin ice.

Conclusion: Some Implications for Debating Clinton

This review of the theoretical literature on the American presidency has by no means been a comprehensive one. Nonetheless, one can easily drive several implications for debate over the internal links to the Clinton position.

First, *to the extent that affirmative responses can emphasize the complex context of presidential politics, they should.* The disadvantage can only succeed by emphasizing the singular importance of the plan, the novel commitment of time or political capital required by a president to see it enacted, and the total irrelevance of all competing issues. Negatives create such an impression by reading evidence that their impact issue is at the "top of the agenda," with the implication that a political capital tradeoff will necessarily connect the plan with a mega-impact (WTO, NTR, or in earlier times CTBT, NAFTA, CWC, or others). They read hyperbolic press releases from the White House stressing how the president is spending all his time wooing wavering members of Congress, with the implication that the enactment of any other policy will fatally divert the president from averting nuclear war.

But as a review of research on presidential politics establish, these claims are drastically exaggerated. The context for (Cheshier to page 63)

(Haig from page 31)

should be construed as personal attacks. Hopefully the post will spur some sort of response and potentially even a discussion.

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"I am speaking the language of exile. This language ... muffles a cry, it doesn't ever shout ... Our present age is one of exile. How can we avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger one's own country, language, sex and identity? ... Exile is a way of surviving in the face of the dead father ... of stubbornly refusing to give in to the law of death." — Julia Kristeva

(Asher Haig debates for Greenhill School, Texas. His post to the CX-L LCX-1 @ debate net, is used by permission)

(Glass from page 37)

convinced then ever as to why uniqueness is so critically important? Why on earth would you reject a case which reformed work conditions for slaves because of a criticism demonstrating that slavery was bad?? Wouldn't that be even more of a reason *TO* endorse the affirmative? And where is the warrant in the sentence "A non-unique case turn still serves as an absolute (that is, absolute) solvency take-out with at least a *risk* of uniqueness"? If the case turn is not unique, it is not a turn. If it is *absolutely* not unique, then there is *no risk* of uniqueness. If the case turn proves that the aff doesn't solve, then it's an absolute Plan-Meet-Need argument, for which uniqueness is irrelevant.

Mr. Haig agrees on the absurdity of the fiat debate, and doesn't answer the testing rationale for the concept; the notion of change happening as a result of criticism would work doubly well for the permutation, because the affirmative would be the

example of change within the context of the criticism. There would be no structure conceptualized by the affirmative, because the permutation would endorse the destruction of such a structure, while still doing some demonstrable good. The dichotomizing of the problem/solution mindset sets up a false distinction.

Finally, Mr. Haig's understanding of Foucault (see the section "Liberation and the Ability to Speak") nicely illustrates the silencing function of the Critique, within the Discourse of Policy Debate. The Critique is an instrument of regulation. It's advocacy is an appeal to silence. It's purpose is a grab for power. It's derivation is argument-forms which failed; it's purpose therefore is to succeed. The Critique is used to silence the affirmative, and is therefore precisely the sort of power-wielding that Foucault was thinking about.

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(Cheshier from page 60)

presidential decisionmaking is almost never monopolized by pursuit of a single goal; this is especially true given the decisionmaking and governance style of Bill Clinton, who prefers to pursue a hundred goals all at once. And the complexity of Washington decisionmaking will only increase given population growth, inattention to media coverage because of competition from other information sources, and the probably further weakening of political party discipline.²⁶

Current debating on presidential leadership tends to advance these claims through the vehicle of multiple uniqueness responses. A laundry list of alternative policy proposals, agenda items, and legislative action does help illustrate the contrived nature of most Clinton stories. But among the implications of scholarly research on presidential decisionmaking is that other internal link responses might have as much effectiveness as yesterday's uniqueness stories in revealing the more strained impact accounts.

Second, our *debates over presidential leadership do not adequately account for where in a president's term controversies are airing*. All of the variables we've considered, popularity, media influence, power to control the agenda, extent of political capital - vary substantially depending on what point in a presidential term we're in. Consider the popularity variable. As a general rule, presidents in the modern age have inevitably lost popular support over time. Even relatively successful presidents like Reagan and Clinton have showed slow erosion in position support over time (for Reagan this also translated into a slow diminution in personal approval, while Clinton seems to be escaping this fate). As Cronin and Genovese put it, "When news is good, the president's popularity goes down or stays the same; when news is terrible, popularity merely goes down faster and farther."²⁷ There are several explanations for this general trend. One emphasizes how presidents will inevitably lose support over time as it becomes clear they cannot match the expectations raised by their own rhetoric. Cronin and Genovese refer to this as the "popularity dilemma."²⁸ Another emphasizes the likelihood that media coverage will inevitably turn sour as a president gradually becomes "old news." Yet another stresses how opinions are likely to become settled over time, less susceptible to redefinition and manipulation.

The upshot for political process debates is a two-edged sword. At this late point in Bill Clinton's term, the connections between public approval, legislative success, agenda-setting, and media manipulation are most attenuated, and the disadvantage most contrived. But this conclusion also implies that, whoever our next president is, the popularity position will be especially viable during his honeymoon period. Debaters should offer arguments more carefully attuned to the rhythms of the presidential calendar.

Finally, our *debates should more fully reflect the growing body of research on presidential leadership*. The heavy emphasis on evidential recency has produced uninformed argument on the internal dynamics of popularity and agenda-setting. Just one example of this is the continuing reliance by some negative debaters on internal link evidence from Bond and Fleisher's 1990 book, where the more speculative sections and helpful anecdotes are quoted in apparent ignorance of the fact that the overall study finds *no effect* for presidential popularity on legislative support.

References

- ¹ The evidence most widely read on this issue comes from these sources: (1) Charles Ostrum and Dennis Simon, "Promise and Performance: A Dynamic Model of Presidential Popularity," *American Political Science Review*, 79 (1985): 334-358; (2) Douglas Rivers and Nancy Rose, "Passing the President's Program: Public Opinion and Presidential Influence in Congress," *American Journal of Political Science*, 29 (1985): 183-196; (3) Jon Bond and Richard Fleisher, "The Limits of Presidential Popularity as a Source of Influence in the U.S. House," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 5 (1980): 69-78; and (4) Bond and Fleisher, *The President in the Legislative Arena* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990). Less frequently cited is a newer addition to this literature: Ken Collier and Terry Sullivan, "New Evidence Undercutting the Linkage of Approval with Presidential Support and Influence," *Journal of Politics*, 57 (1995): 197-209.
- ² One of the best general introductions to the issues surrounding presidential power is a reader produced by Pfiffner and Davidson, James Pfiffner and Roger Davidson, eds., *Understanding the Presidency* (New York: Longman, 1997). Another good introduction is Robert DiClerico, *The American President*, 5th edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000), one of the popular textbooks on the subject.
- ³ Marvin Olasky, *The American Leadership Tradition: Moral Vision from Washington to Clinton* (New York: Free Press, 1999).
- ⁴ Robert Shogan, *The Double Edged Sword: How Character Makes and Ruins Presidents, From Washington to Clinton* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999).
- ⁵ Philip Abbott, *Strong Presidents: A Theory of Leadership* (Knoxville, Tenn.: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1996).
- ⁶ Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter* (New York: John Wiley, 1980); Richard Pious, *The American Presidency* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Edward Corwin, *The President: Offices and Powers, 1787-1957*, 4th revised edition (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1957).
- ⁷ Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1956); Erwin Hargrove, *Presidential Leadership* (New York: Macmillan, 1966). Hargrove recently published a major valedictory assessment of his own research on the presidency. Edwin Hargrove, *The President as Leader: Appealing to the Better Angels of Our Nature* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1998).

⁸ James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 3rd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985). Since this edition Barber has released at least one major revision.

⁹ Theodore Lowi, *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985).

¹⁰ The two most cited early studies in this tradition were produced by David Mayhew and Richard Fenno. Mayhew's work tended to emphasize how members of Congress act out of their singular desire to get reelected, where Fenno tended to emphasize multiple goals (reelection, the desire to enact good public policy, and the interest in improving their power in Congress).

¹¹ Steven Shull and Thomas Shaw, *Explaining Congressional-Presidential Relations: A Multiple Perspective Approach* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

¹² George C. Edwards, *The Public Presidency: The Pursuit of Popular Support* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 1.

¹³ Elmer Plischke, "Rating Presidents and Diplomats in Chief," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 15 (1985): 725-742.

¹⁴ On this last point, the last several years have produced significant scholarly attention. Cf., Richard Ellis, *Presidential Lightning Rods: The Politics of Blame Avoidance* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1994).

¹⁵ Barbara Sinclair, "Studying Presidential Leadership," in *Researching the Presidency: Vital Questions, New Approaches*, ed. George Edwards, John Kessel, and Bert Rockman (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 222.

¹⁶ "Indeed, support is specific to a policy and may appear and disappear quickly around critical legislative votes." Cohen and Collier, "Public Opinion," in *Presidential Policymaking: An End-of-the-Century Assessment*, ed. Steven Shull (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 52. They add: "While presidential popularity or prestige is a constant force that operates continually in the background, specific appeals for support on policies are sporadic, even for enthusiastic practitioners like Reagan." *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷ These effects are complicated, of course. Edwards and others have argued that members of Congress are likely to defer to a president's approval rating if only out of intimidation, since they can never be sure what the basis of popularity is, personality or program.

¹⁸ Jeffrey Cohen, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda," *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (1995): 87-107.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Cohen and Ken Collier, "Public Opinion: Reconceptualizing Going Public," in *Presidential Policymaking*, 41-58.

²⁰ An example of this is the long time it took for Richard Nixon's plummeting popularity to effect his legislative irritatives. As Cohen and Collier note, "Nixon's character-based popularity problems undermined his personal credibility and his general bargaining position with Congress, but Watergate had little to do with most votes that members cast." Cohen and Collier, "Public Opinion," 50. Another obvious example from the opposite direction is the difficulty George Bush experienced in converting his historically unprecedented, approval ratings after his Gulf War success into fast legislative accomplishments, although, as just noted, this may reflect partisan splits more than a time lag.

In fairness, of course, there is evidence to the contrary, some even offered by Cohen. An example is his passing assertion that, in fact, "prestige can garner the president some short-term victories," a point which both supports the fast time frame analysis of many negative teams and which lends some additional validity to the "winners win" claim discussed below. Jeffrey Cohen, *Presidential Responsiveness and Public Policy-Making: The Public and the Policies That Presidents Choose* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1997), 247. And with respect to the specific examples, some advocates of a popularity-legislation link point to the Congress' refusal to fund the Vietnam War as Nixon's popularity plunged.

²¹ Paul Light, *The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Carter* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984).

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