

A systemic model of presidential power: tracing presidential power research, 1940–1984

Abstract

Much research on the American political system has focused on presidential power. Yet, there remains a debate over how much constitutional features, political factors, and presidential personality impact actions and how they are perceived. This paper examines 55 studies of presidential power over six different periods between 1940 and 1984, finding that those studies which evaluated chief executives on a positive-negative scale were equally split. The current study bridges the gap in the literature by proposing a comprehensive systemic model of presidential power, in which primary and mediating factors along with responses can be tapped to predict resultant use of power. It likewise offers a plethora of ways to measure various sources of presidential influence.

Keywords: presidential power, presidential performance, American political context

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Introduction

In response to recent calls for improved measurement and better understanding of presidential power, this essay addresses the topic from several perspectives. Initially, a definition of executive power is proposed and its constitutional and extra constitutional bases are delineated.

Next, the literature on the subject is extensively delineated over several time frames, including 1940-1971, 1972-1976, and 1977-1984. The emphasis here is on sources of presidential power, strategic assessments of its use, and evaluation of presidential performance.

The study discusses the weaknesses, biases, and omissions of presidential power research, along with inherent problems encountered in studying the institution.

In the concluding section, an effort is made to integrate findings about the nature of presidential power into a comprehensive theoretical model with some empirical applications.

Defining the concept

Within the American political context, presidential power includes aspects of both power and authority; it treads the fine line between leviathan and legitimacy. Lewis¹ defines power as the possession of the means of influencing the will of others either by persuasion or threats, or by the application of Physical force. He identifies authority as power sanctioned and Supported by law. Halper² asserts power itself is not a thing but a relationship among people. He regards power to be the ability to influence the behavior of others, while authority is power exercised with the consent of those subject to it. Olsen³ describes power as an inclusive concept, with influence and control used to connote possible outcomes. He differentiates between potential (possession of resources and capability of employing them) and active (converting resources into deeds) power. Strum⁴ believes power involves participation in the decision-making Process controlled by political bodies.

Kessel⁵ brings together explanations of power and authority in his demarcation of the means through which one person may influence another. These sources/techniques include (1) legitimacy, resting on the belief that one ought to be obeyed because he has been duly elected or appointed to office (strengthened by custom); (2) identification,

referring to the respect a person has for another who is a member of the same group and who has been striving to attain Common ends; (3) expertise, a feeling of confidence an individual has in someone who possesses special knowledge about a subject or demonstrates that he or she is well-informed; and (4) sanctions, meaning compliance based on anticipation of reward or fear of punishment.

Presidential power, encompassing both power and authority as hitherto defined, represents a meshing of consent, tradition, and prerogatives. A classification of the types of executive power will serve to clarify this claim.

First, the president is granted constitutionally enumerated powers: some are delegated exclusively to him (commander in-chief of armed forces, grant reprieves and pardons for federal offenses, convene Congress in special session, receive ambassadors appoint officials to low-level government positions); some are shared with the Senate (make treaties, appoint ambassadors and Cabinet officials); and some are shared with Congress as a

Whole, such as approving legislation.⁶

A second type of presidential power is known as inherent power. It is defined as authority vested in the national government, particularly in the area of foreign policy, which doesn't depend on a specific grant of power in the constitution.⁷ According to the theory underlying these powers the national government may at times exercise the authority of a sovereign nation. Presidents can and have claimed the right to circumvent the constitution in an emergency (Lincoln, FDR), or have justified actions based on the assertion that their office represents the sovereign will of the American people. In addition to emergency powers, executive privilege the refusal of the president or executive officials to appear before or provide information to legislative committees is contended to be an inherent executive Power under the separation of powers doctrine and due to time-honored tradition, although the Supreme Court "s 1974 decision in U.S. vs Nixon recognized a limited constitutional base to the claim.

A third type of presidential power is implied power, or the authority possessed by the national government by inference from those delegated to it in the constitution. The two most cited phrases employed to justify this power are the opening sentence of Article II ("The executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America), and the Article II section 3 clauses "he shall

take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” Besides differing interpretations of these ambiguous phrases, various presidents have engaged in constitutional construction, or applying delegated powers in a way that suits their needs and interests.⁸ Military action without congressional consent, executive agreements, and presidential spending discretion are all examples of this type of presidential power.

Hamilton's Influence on the presidency

Six blueprints for the creation of the presidency were debated by the Founding Fathers at the Constitutional Convention of 1787: a renewal of state sovereignty under a revised Articles of Confederation; the New Jersey plan, advocating dual sovereignty with a clear-cut division between national and state power; the Virginia Plan, which would establish a “plural executive and thereby increase the power of the national legislature; the Madison-Randolph Plan, favoring a federal form of government in which power diffused between national institutions (Congress, the courts, and the presidency) as well as between national, state and local government; the Hamiltonian Plan, calling for a strong national executive who would be given independent power; and finally a plan proposing the abolishment of States and move toward nationalism.⁹

While most scholars agree that the constitutional provisions for the presidency indicate the Madison-Randolph Plan won the day, few realize the importance of Alexander Hamilton's influence on the establishment of the institution. Virtually all of the ingredients for an “energetic executive” which Hamilton outlined in *Federalist* 70 was subsequently included in the constitution (a single executive, competent Powers, an adequate provision for

Supports and no Limitation on the number of terms a president could serve). Thomas Jefferson defended the Hamiltonian presidential model when he contended that “the tyranny of the legislature is really the danger most to be feared, and will continue to be for many years to come. However, he also warned “the tyranny of executive power will come in its turn, but at a more distant period”.¹⁰ The literature review below furnishes insights as to whether Jefferson's last warning was prophetic or not.

Approaches in research

Edwards and Wayne¹¹ outline four approaches employed by scholars to examine the presidency. They will be used in this essay to describe basic assumptions about presidential power discussed by researchers, and to critique the Literature on the subject in general. Below is a summation of each perspective:

(1) Legal/ Formal Powers Approach-Sources of authority include the constitution, statute, and precedent; power

is limited by checks and balances as well as shared power between branches of government.

2) Institutional Approach-Consists of roles/responsibilities and structure/process sub approaches, emphasizes activity and influence rather than simply authority, concentrates on expanding functions and increasing demands of the office.

(3) Political Approach-Power is seen as a consequence of the political position of the president; focuses on electorate results, partisan Lineups in Congress, mobilization of public opinion, the executive's political abilities, and decision-making orientation.

(4) Psychological Approach-Assumes when personal needs are displaced on political objects, they become unconscious motivations for verbal and physical behavior.

Hypotheses about research on topic

Two assumptions about the nature of the literature on presidential power shall guide our analysis. Hugh Heclo¹² notes that, with Little variation, scholarly work on presidential power has generally followed cycles of reacting positively or negatively to experiences with the most recent occupant of the White House, “The Lessons emphasized in the Literature of presidential didactics change with the latest judgments about the merits and demerits of what “he” is doing to “US” states Heclo.

A second assumption is that the various approaches, levels of analysis, and methodologies employed by scholars to study presidential power necessarily affect the conclusions they arrive at,^{11,13} as does the researcher's own value System.¹⁴

Review of research, 1940-1971

Several early studies of presidential power set the standard for subsequent research. Laski¹⁵ emphasizes the American president must be given power commensurate with the function he has to perform. Laski regards power to be a dangerous thing, but concedes that “great power alone makes great Leadership possible, and provides the chance of restoring America to the peoples” On the other hand, Herring's (1940) work assumes presidential leadership is effective only with the support of the electorate. He observes that in normal times bargaining is characteristic of politics, whereas presidential powers in time of emergency rest on the imperative of events and need for political expediency. Herring describes the extra official, informal, and practical nature of presidential power below:

“We have created a position of great power but have made the full realization of power dependent on influence rather than legal authority the element of contingency in our system is inherent in the uncertainty of party programs and party discipline.”

Edward Corwin¹⁶ portrays presidential power in a negative fashion in his article, “Some Aspects of the Presidency.” Contending that the terms in which the chief executives powers are granted are the loosest and most unguarded of the constitutions Corwin identifies four factors which have enhanced executive power: (1) social acceptance of the idea that government should be active and reformist rather than simply protective of

the established order; (2) a breakdown in the principle of dual federalism as it relates to Congress” Legislative powers; (3) an accompanying breakdown of the separation of powers between Congress and the executive; and (4) an enlarged U.S. role in the international field. According to the author, “the growth of presidential power in the recent years confronts the American people with the problem of deliberate constitutional reform; otherwise what was the result of democracy may become democracy's undoing.”

George Milton's¹⁷ seminal work confronts the difficulties in measuring or predicting the outcome of presidential power. He asserts that “if the record has any core of meaning it is that the way the individual in the high office will use his presidential power is altogether unpredictable.” Milton does predict that regardless of which person is president, they would employ old powers in new ways or discover new sources of power.

Positive evaluations

Scholars reacting positively to presidential power (rating the incumbent's use of his power favorably and/or advocating more Power to the president) between 1940-1971 offered diverse reasons

for their position. Corwin, whose 1941 evaluation was followed by a subsequent negative opinion changed his outlook¹⁸ because he viewed an institutional adjustment of the presidency to the cold War, and seemed optimistic about improved relations between the chief executive and Congress. The latter Study is significant for its focus on the president “s formal (delegated) powers.

Brownlow,¹⁹ recalling the growing challenge of totalitarianism in the 1930’s, claims the president’s power is proof that a democracy can act swiftly in an emergency. According to Brownlow, the chief executive is a symbol of national unity precisely because his power derives from the peoples not from the Supreme Court or Congress. Heller,²⁰ echoing Hamilton’s demand for energy in the executive, defends the presidents implied

Political powers, especially in foreign policy.

Resister’s²¹ works *The American Presidency* is often Classified as both a positive evaluation of presidential power and a leading Strategic assessment of it. He advocates presidential activism by focusing on constitutional and extra constitutional roles as sources of Power. Rossiter notes the constitution grants the president certain powers, such as chief of state, chief executive, chief diplomat, commander-in-chief and chief legislator. He asserts that custom, Statute, and necessity have added to these the additional powers of chief of party, voice of the people, protector of peace, manager of prosperity, and Leader of the coalition of free nations It is the combination of at these functions that constitutes the power of the presidency, although personality and the ability of each president are also important factors, according to Rossiter. James¹⁴ proclaims that unlike Corwin, Resister’s analysis blends aspects of both conservative thought (characterized by hostility toward growth of the national government) and a Liberal outlook (organic relationship between individual and society). The two scholars likewise differ in their approach to studying a residential power: Corwin implements the legal perspective; Rossiter, though mainly focusing on the institutional approach, seems to include facets of the political approach as well.

Following Rossiter three other studies stand out as positive evaluations of presidential power during the 1940-1971 time frames. Warren²² argues for more executive maneuverability to confront the enlarged demands on the office. His thesis is inimical to Corwin’s early denunciation of presidential power: he believes that national development, the expansion of government responsibility, and the institutionalization of the Executive

Office renders the president more vulnerable to “debilitating pressures from within and without” than in the past.

Louis Koenig²³ veers from his earlier strategic assessment of presidential power,²⁴ when he described the presidency as an experience in practical politics) by offering several Proposals designed to strengthen the presidency. They include simultaneous elections for the House, Senate, and president to four- year terms, a line-item veto for appropriation bills, repealing the 22nd Amendment which limits presidential tenure to two terms, and revising the shared treaty power so that a majority rather than two-thirds vote is necessary for ratification in the Senate. His position is summed up in the statement, “we must disabuse ourselves of the notion that the president has too much power.”

Finally, Cunliffe²⁵ adopts Rossiter’s institutional perspective for analyzing presidential power in his discussion of the reasons against reforming the presidency. He determines that “neither the reformers nor the pragmatists are entirely correct in their estimates of the presidency; either Liberals or conservatives; neither optimists

nor pessimists.” The author also recognizes a curious paradox in evaluations of presidents: those considered as strong presidents have often been less popular during their incumbency than those labeled weak ones.

Negative evaluations

After Corwin’s initial interpretation, scholarly work did not significantly criticize presidential power again until 1960. But that year both Tugwell and Finer wrote that executive power must be stemmed. Tugwell²⁶ focuses on the way in which recurrent crises in the twentieth century have expanded presidential power and initiative; he likewise worries about the institutionalized staff System. However, eleven years later Tugwell²⁷ revised his thinking and defended presidential shortcomings against those who “expected them to do the impossible.”

Finer²⁸ contends “the modern president is given more advice than he can assimilate, and responsibility for more decisions than any single Person ought to possess.” He recommends the executive branch be restructured to consist of one president and eleven vice-presidents (who must all be present or Past members of Congress), who would together form a Cabinet. Finer’s work has fueled the fire for revisionist thinking about the Eisenhower Administration (that it was more powerful ‘and active than most contemporary scholars believed at the time).

In 1963,²⁹ James MacGregor Burns offered 8 strategic assessment of presidential power vis-a-vis the American political party System. Two years later³⁰ he stated that “we may have underestimated the long-term impact of presidential government on the whole. Structure of American government.” His criticisms of presidential power include: (1) that the president has absorbed the Cabinet, executive departments, and the vice-presidency; (2) presidential “aggrandizement has been even more marked in the sphere of party politics; (3) modern presidents have overturned old states” rights practices by extending their policy-making and enforcing power. According to Burns, the danger of presidential dominance lies not in presidential failure but in success “the incapacity of presidential government to turn to new human purpose.”

James’ work, the *Contemporary presidency* qualifies as both a negative evaluation and strategic assessment of presidential power. She depicts the presidency as an imbalanced institution which suffers from paradoxical power (too much in foreign affairs, not enough in domestic affairs). Beyond Neustadt’s³¹ earlier theory of the significance of bargaining advantages inherent in the presidential office, James identifies a sense of direction and style as components of effective presidential performance. The author’s recognition of the

Bureaucracy’s capacity to absorb and deflect executive initiatives is an important contribution to theories of presidential power which focuses on reactions to the exercise of power rather than simply its sources.

Reedy’s³² book, the *Twilight of the Presidency*, is based in his personal experience in the Johnson White House. Reedy thinks the president “s power and Pomp are incompatible with American tradition; he accuses the office of degrading individuals” political instincts and Liabilities. The author anticipates many post-Watergate attitudes toward abusive executive power.

Strategic assessments

Although there were a few notable strategic assessments of presidential power during the late 1950’s,^{33–35} the most influential works of this type appear in the 1960’s.

Neustadt's essay essentially redefined presidential power by casting it in political and personal terms rather than legal or institutional ones. He views the president as having to persuade other people to do what he wants if he wishes to be more than a "clerke. According to Neustadt's, the essence of a president's persuasion task is "to induce them (various constituencies) to believe what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their responsibilities requires them to do in their own interest, not his." Through the bargaining advantages inherent in his job (compliance mechanisms such as promises of rewards or threats of sanctions, appeals to legitimacy, loyalty, and affective considerations), expectations of others regarding the executive's ability and will to use various advantages, and estimates of his public approval, the author illustrates how the president maintains power and conveys political leadership. Neustadt's work has led to a closer look at the hierarchy of presidential decision makings as well as the political proclivities of incumbents.

Hirschfield³⁶ asserts that the personality and political philosophy (regarding the office and use of power) of the president are closely related to his democratic Leadership. Like Henning he believes the constitution and the Laws are the theoretical bases of executive power, but in fact the sources are democracy and necessity. The latter source serves to explain why, under critical conditions, there are no governmental Limits on presidential power, according to the author. Hirschfield describes several constraints on presidential power, including the federal system, the "power elite," administrative inertia, as well as judicial, legislative, and popular restraint. His Subsequent book assessing presidential power³⁷ emphasizes the pragmatic nature of the office vis-a-vis the American political System as a whole (which he states is flexible but tends to limit executive power).

Hargrove³⁸ employs the psychological approach to studying presidential power. Drawing from presidential papers and biographies, the author seeks to illustrate how political leadership derives from the chief executives conception of his role in the political system (including his predispositions, quality, and style). Six presidents are compared in terms of a model of political personality and a model of presidential roles. Two types of executives emerge: presidents of action, in the progressive tradition (two Roosevelt's, Wilson), and presidents of restraint,

in the conservative tradition (Taft, Hoover, Eisenhower). The presidents of action are labeled so not only because of the tradition they adhere to, but because of their technical skill, sense of timing, and empathy for public moods. Alternately, presidents of restraint are not driven by the need for personal power and hence don't develop the same leadership skills, according to the author. While personality is clearly regarded as the chief factor in shaping the behavior of each president, Hargrove proclaims both types of presidents have contributed to the continuity and strengthening of the office.

Both Roche and Levy³⁹ and Cornwell⁴⁰ recognize the interaction between presidential performance and public opinion. The former investigators State that the President is at once the catalyst and executor of public opinion. They claim presidential power varies enormously from time to time, with precedent being of little value. The latter scholar describes growing presidential use of the media, and its dual effect on the national government and frame of reference of the public. He states that while classic democratic theory makes little provision for Leadership by rulers, the president's role as opinion leader is critical for governmental survival.

Allison⁴¹ examines the U.S. response to the Cuban missile crisis using three decision making models: a rational actor models in which government action corresponds to choice with regard to objectives; an

organizational process model, where government action is determined by standard operating procedures and programs; and a bureaucratic politics model, where government action is the result of political bargaining. Allison likens the president's struggle for power to a game with players, rules, activity, and results. His approach emphasizes the environment in which president jail decisions occur, and hence illustrates how such factors as type of actor, time constraints, and organizational goals affect the success of presidential influence.

Finally, Polsby⁴² discusses the "machinery" of presidential powers which encompasses the white House Office and Cabinet, Office of Management and Budget, National Security Council, and various special expertise agencies. He sums up the potential and reality of presidential power below:

"Measured against the opportunities, responsibilities, and resources of others in the political system or in other nations, the powers of president are enormous. It is only when we measure these same powers against the problems of our age that they seem puny and inadequate."

A review of thirty-one works focusing on presidential power from 1940-1971 supports Heclo's¹² assertion: seven studies presented negative evaluations of executive power; eight portrayed presidential power in a positive fashion; and sixteen offered strategic assessments or descriptions of the sources, techniques, and/or outcomes of presidential power. The Literature over this duration is both explanatory and prescriptive.

Review of research, 1972-1976

However, an inspection of ten studies on presidential power undertaken between 1972- 1976 reveals a different trend: four negative evaluations and six strategic assessments, such a negative emphasis can no doubt be traced to the disillusionment surrounding presidential performance during the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

Negative evaluations

Schlesinger¹⁰ contends the American involvement in foreign wars aided the expansion of executive power; its use in domestic matters led to the creation of a plebiscitary or "imperial presidency." The author states that the presidency has grown out of control and badly needs new definition and restraint. He suggests "a Little serious disrespect for the office."

Commager⁴³ focuses on the role foreign policy has played in augmenting president jail Power. The advent of the nuclear ages, U.S. global commitments, and American participation in the United Nations have created conditions for the use of presidential power; once it increases, so does the subsequent tendency to employ it, according to the author. Commager qualifies his proposition by noting that "the abuse of power by presidents

is a reflection and perhaps a consequence of the abuse of power by the American people." Dunn⁴⁴ holds the presidency is at the apogee of its power both because of public distrust and authoritative reassessments of the value of continuing to strengthen the office.

Joseph Catifano's⁴⁵ book, A Presidential Nation, is perhaps the best known negative evaluation of the presidency during the 1972-1976 periods. The author is concerned with recapturing executive branch accountability and responsiveness, which he states have been eroded by the explosion of white House staff, the distorted rationale for the claim of executive privilege used by recent presidents, and the lack of constitutional checks on the chief executive. Among

the recommendations he proposes to reshape the counterparts of presidential power are: (1) a Presidential Powers Impact Statement, which would require the president and Congress to analyze the effect of every significant legislative program; (2) Congress should enact permanent legislation to require specific reports accompany the chief executives assessments of the state of the Union; (3) the president should be directed to develop and project five-year costs of all domestic programs; (4) access to information controlled by the president and his top aides must be opened; (5) continuing media coverage of the president and executive branch must be sharpened; (6) the Federal Reserve Board chairman's team should be aligned to coincide with that of the president; (7) the electoral structure should be amended. Califano concludes that "a strong presidency will be accountable, credible, and responsible only when independent, effective institutions are available to temper its exercise of power."

Strategic assessments

Hargrove,⁴⁶ concentrating on the consequences of the employment of Presidential power, traces the development of revisionist thinking about the presidency and decline of the heroic or "textbook" model. He believes both historians and political scientists have favored the Liberal, activist image of the office; likewise that values and normative views are explicit in research on the presidency. However, the liberal view of the office has been altered by a long-term decline in confidence in government, as well as by immediate events Such as Watergate and Vietnam. Hargrove states that President Nixon's resignation (amid threat of removal) demonstrates the inherent durability of the constitution vis-a-vis the executive. He predicts that current criticisms of presidential power will be followed by renewed calls for a strong presidency.

Mullen⁴⁷ analyzes the strong presidency argument, proposed reforms, and sources of presidential Power. He asserts, like Hargrove, that activist presidency prescriptions have dominated the Literature on presidential power and have definitely affected public views toward the office. According to the activist views, the creation of the welfare state, concomitant swelling of the federal government and perceptual crises demand a strong and vigorous chief executive. But Mullen observes the latter conception is being seriously challenged by recent events. Rejecting radical reforms which might permanently weaken the office, he advocates the regeneration of political parties, the restoration of meaningful participation in the selection of presidential candidates and operation of the government, and an aware questioning citizenry. Mullen cites the following sources of presidential powers the veto, patronage, control of information, budget prerogatives, and emergency powers.

Dye⁴⁸ attributes the growth of presidential power in the twentieth century to America's greater involvement in world affairs, the expansion of the executive branch, and to technological improvements in mass media which enable the president to mold public opinion. e delineates four psychological functions of the presidency based on Greenstein's formulation: (1) the presidency simplifies perceptions of government and politics; (2) its provides an outlet for emotional expression by citizens; (3) the office is a symbol of unity and nationhood; (4) the president himself is a symbol of social stability in that he provides people with a feeling of security and guidance.

Louis Fishers⁴⁹ book assesses executive spending discretion and its contribution to presidential power. The

Author identifies eight different ways the president can subvert the budget process, thwart Congress' constitutional authority, and redefine policy: lump-sum appropriations, contingency funds,

transfer authority (from one year to the next, or to another class of appropriations), accelerated spending, commitments, and impoundment. Fisher provides a historical back ground into each type of discretionary technique (especially President Nixon's use of impoundment); his approach combines several perspectives. To remedy what he regards to be a long standing weakness of legislative oversight in the Spending area, Fisher advocates the creation of a central Legislative body to compile analyzes and disseminate budget information to Congress, together with more accountability on the part of the legislative and executive branches alike.

Finally, two studies conducted in 1976 also describe contemporary sources of presidential power. Hoy and Bernstein⁵⁰ assert that the influence of presidential staff and proliferation of functional offices within the White House have altered the roles of the Cabinet and bureaucracy in the policy process. Despite recent executive assertiveness, the authors state that the irony of the American political system is that "our democratic form of government remains exposed to danger whether the president has too much Power or too little." Grossman and Rourke⁵¹ discuss the antagonism between the press and the executive, although they consider the exchange between the two as traditionally profitable to presidents, they cite trends in the organization and training of media personnel which could prevent further presidential domination.

Review of research, 1977-1984

Yet a third trend is observable in the Literature on presidential power from 1977 to 1984: of the fourteen works

Surveyed only one presents a clearly subjective evaluation of presidential power. It seems objective assessments have become the vernacular in research on the topic.

Shabecoff⁵² examines the impact of Vietnam and Watergate on presidential power by focusing on the Ford

Administration. He finds that the Presidency, despite traumatic events, "remains a powerful and vital institution; Likewise that the abuse of power has been curbed by Congress, the courts, and public opinion. The author suggests that ensuing presidents seek effectively.

James Barbers⁵³ study is probably the most widely known psychological approach to studying the presidency. (Like Hargrove, he claims that a president's personality determines the way in which he will handle the office. Barber formulates biographies of the personate background of many chief executives. Employing five psychological concepts (character, world view, style, power situation, climate of expectation), he develops two

baselines of analysis: an active-passive dimension throw much energy each man invests in his presidency), and a positive Negative dimension (how each man feels about what he does, i.e. his enjoyment or frustration in holding office Barber combines the two baselines to develop a four-fold typology of presidential characters Active-positive (consistency between much activity and enjoyment of it), active-negative (contradiction between great effort and relatively Little emotional reward), passive-positive (contradiction between low self-esteem and superficial optimism), and passive-negative (orientation toward dutiful service to compensate for low self-esteem).

Barber's prediction about how Richard Nixon would handle the presidency (that his compulsiveness and need for power would result in illegal activities) proved ominously correct, yet the implications of his typology for the candidate selection process are not realistic. Kessler⁵⁴ claims Barber's classifications bear a close resemblance to

the traditional activist (leadership-oriented=idealist (legalistic view of office and powers) conceptions of presidential power which equate success with (perceived) action.

Mantey⁵⁵ adopts a political approach by analyzing the Office of Congressional Relations, a White House lobbying agency. He describes the ways in which the OCR and the President seek to influence Congress, including favors, working with party leadership, muscle, and direct presidential involvement. According to Mantey, the record of the 1960's confirms that the institutionalization of the office has worked to constrain executive power, necessitating a close working relationship between the branches.

Di Clerico⁵⁶ emphasizes the factors giving the president leverage in foreign affairs, as well as recent reactions against unilateral executive action in that area. According to the author, presidential proposals submitted to Congress dealing with foreign policy issues were approved at a much higher rate than domestic proposals between 1948-1964 (70% to 40%). This discrepancy in legislative Success can be traced to several advantages the president has, including monopoly over information, Lack of public interest in foreign affairs, less pressure from various groups and individuals, and the inclination of the public to rally around the president in time of crisis. However, three congressional actions undertaken during the 1970's have challenged presidential autonomy in the area. These included the Case Act of 1972, a legislative reaction to the growing number of executive agreements Chaving the legal status of treaties under international Law but not ratified by the Senate), the 1973 war Powers Resolutions a move against presidential abuse of war power such as committing American troops to an undeclared war, and the Hughes-Ryan Amendment of 1974, which sparked investigations of clandestine CIA activities and subsequent calls for reform.

Di Clerico contends that while the president possesses many tactics of persuasion with Congress (constitutional authority, control of information, status of office, federal patronage), Congress has attempted to reassert its Power through greater use of the legislative veto (which has since been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court) and by revising the budget process. He concludes that presidential power can be isolated by examining the relationship which the executive has with other power centers in the system, e.g., Congress, the courts, the bureaucracy, and the public, and by delineating the factors that either enhance or retard presidential influence Over theme. Along these Lines, Strum⁴ proclaims it is the exercise of power which must be scrutinized since power itself is neutral. She relates how Watergate and the Vietnam War threw doubt upon the assumption

that increasing Presidential power is a good thing. "for an historical moment, it (Watergate hearings) turned some legislators into superstars and created a congressional mystique which temporarily challenged the presidential mystique, claims the author.

Pious⁸ attempts to construct a comprehensive theory of presidential power by combining two approaches: the format powers approach, placing presidential power in the context of the system of checks and balances, and the psychological perspective, emphasizing personality factors which might enable the president to lead. The author states constitutional ambiguity is at the heart of the problem of presidential power. The fusion of inherent and implied powers has created a "prerogative governments in which presidential decisions are made without congressional collaboration, decision are implemented by advisers, events are arranged by the white house rather than departments, and where public support is appealed for with claims of national security.

Pious specifies three possible outcomes prerogative government based on a manner in which president handles a crisis. The front lash effect occurs when the president effectively manages an issue or an event, thereby temporarily strengthening the office. A backlash effect happens when the crisis is managed successfully but public support wanes. Finally, if the executives legitimacy and power suffer an irrevocable setback, it is an example of the overshoot and collapse effect, according to the author. Pious's effort is commendable, but his theory of presidential power is incomplete because he discounts political factors in his analysis they are judged to be "the least significant in determining what a president can accomplished" Without integrating the Latter approach into his models, Pious furnishes us with sources of, and consequences for, the use of presidential powers but omits a detailed consideration of different measures of reaction to performance, a crucial intervening variable.

Cronin's two 1980 works address the paradox in presidential power. In the *State of the Presidency*,⁵⁷ he presents twelve inherent contradictions between executive actions and public expectations of the executive. In an article⁵⁸ on executive-congressional relations, he discusses actions taken by Congress to counteract contemporary presidential use of executive privilege. Besides the acts mentioned by DiClerico (op. cited, Cronin believes the 1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act, together with a dramatic increase in the number of legislative vetoes since 1970, illustrate Congress' intent to reassert authority. But the author clearly rejects a theory of cyclical power between the president and Congress Like that proposed by Dodd,⁵⁹ stating it "ignores the steady growth of presidential power."

Cronin also furnishes arguments made by former president Gerald Ford against congressional intervention in executive decision-making during a crisis Fords reasons included: (1) legislators have too many other concerns to be abreast on foreign policy; (2) It is impossible to wait for a consensus to develop in congress before taking action; (3) sensitive information supplied to legislators might be disclosed; (4) waiting for consultation could risk severe penalties for the president; (5) consultation with congressional leaders might not convince younger members.

Seymour-Ure⁶⁰ analyzes the speeches and memoirs of presidents from 1945-1980 to determine the extent to which executives' public communication affects their political power. He defines three types of public communication: (1) primary communications by which presidential activity is carded on for the purpose of communicating directly or through the news media; (2) secondary communication, where presidential activity is reported by the news media but not undertaken for the purpose of public communication; and (3) tertiary communication, which includes speculations comment, interpretations by news media that attributes opinions, intentions, or feelings to the president. The author finds that a model which attempts to explain presidential power by giving a central place to communications factors inclines toward a weak view of the presidency.

Although Seymour-Ure's emphasis on public communication is well-founded, he ignores political communication techniques (such as manipulation of language and development of symbolic settings) that may affect audience attitudes and behavior, hence presidential powers further, he makes no attempt to integrate aspects of public communication into a comprehensive theory of presidential power that could be applied across presidents. Finally, the author ignores the possibility that, as revealed in a recent study of eighteenth and nineteenth century executive messages,⁶¹ the extent of public communication may itself be influenced by political factors. We can hardly rate presidents' possession and exercise of power as strong or weak based on communication measures alone.

Wolfe's⁶² essay advocates transformation of the economy to achieve balanced and planned growth, as well as an effort to stabilize international relationships in order to “solve the puzzle of presidential power in the U.S.” His position is that there is an inconsistency between environmental conditions affecting presidential power and the “American people's grandiose vision of presidential Leadership.” However, Levine and Cornwell⁶³ claim the authority and power of contemporary presidents have increased due to their skillful blending of constitutional, statutory and political powers.

Galbraith⁶⁴ discusses the reasons why people miss judge the power of the presidency. Primary among these factors is what he calls the “illusion of power,” created by presidential appearances in front of a chosen, favorable audience and augmented by media coverage of what the president says instead of the impact of the act. Another factor likely to create misperceptions of power is the way in which those close to the president staff, Cabinet members, and reporters “freeload on the presumed power of the presidency. Galbraith refers to this phenomenon as the “sycophancy of power: that if the president is held to have powers a very large number of people believe they can share the pie; by enhancing the impression of presidential power, these groups seek to enhance their own image. The author asserts that the power in many everyday presidential decisions lies not with the executive himself but with the organization (bureaucracy), which together with circumstance are considered restraints on presidential power.

In the most recent study included in this analysis, Burns⁶⁵ diverges from the hitherto predominant trend of strategic assessments by arguing the president should be given more power in order to leads Such a return to positive evaluations of the presidency bears out Hargrove's³⁸ prediction.

Burns identifies the decline of political parties and tendency of our checks and balances system to create deadlocks as contributing factors in a historical decline of presidential leadership. He offers several suggestions about how to restructure government to produce a stronger and more effective president they include: (1) strengthening party and collective leadership in the House and Senate and between Congress and the president;

(2) making the major parties more “organized, disciplined, programmatic, and principled; (3) simultaneous election of the presidents, senators, and congressmen (team ticket); (4) enabling the president to choose senators or representatives for Cabinet membership without requiring them to give up their seats in Congress; (5) allowing impeachment of presidents when they have “dramatically and irremediably lost the confidence of the nation.”

Burns seems to have done an about-face since his works of two decades ago: instead of complaining of presidential aggrandizement, he chides the American constitutional systems for the paralysis and incapacity which its obsolescence has produced; rather than emphasizing the party's role in presidential campaigns, he now regards the qualities that make a good campaigner and a good president as not only separate, but dichotomous, Burns' proposals for “realigning power” are not new to the Literature just his revisionist attitude about presidential power which characterizes his latest effort. Table 1 below is a compendium/typology of the fifty-five studies of presidential power cited in our review.

From the results, we can surmise that Heclo's¹² assumption about the balanced nature of the Literature on presidential power is questionable. During the period between 1940 and 1971, there were an equal number of positive and negative evaluations of presidential

power vis-a-vis each administration. However, with the exception of Burns'²⁹ study, our review encountered only negative evaluations and strategic assessments since 1972. The second assumption about the literature on presidential power presupposes that the diverse approaches and methodologies employed by scholars, as well as their personal value system and ideologies affect the conclusions they espouse. Our review clearly substantiates this tendency: if presidential power is in the hands of someone with whose ideas and policies scholars agree upon then they are Likely to applaud the exercise of such power; if, on the other hand, the executive's actions are antithetical to their ideology, researchers are likely to condemn the use of power. Heclo states that because strategic assessments are affected just as much by immediate experience as prescriptions for presidential power, they fail to furnish in-depth empirical information about what is actually happening in the presidency as an institution.

Table 1 Compendium/typology of literature on presidential power

Time period	Sample size	Classification
1940-1944	4	1E-; 3SA
1956-1964	16	4E-; 5E+; 7SA
1965-1971	11	2E-; 3E+; 6SA
1940-1971	31	7E-; 8E+; 16SA
1972-1976	10	4E-; 6SA
1977-1984	14	1E+; 13SA
Totals	55	11E-; 9E+; 35SA

Abbreviations: (E+), positive evaluation of presidential power; (E-), negative evaluation of presidential power, SA, strategic assessment of the sources/ Techniques/ Outcomes of presidential power

Weaknesses and biases of research

By reviewing the weaknesses of the approaches to examining presidential power, we can begin to uncover biases inherent in theories on the topic. Edwards and Wayne¹¹ note that the scope of the president's power “has probably received more attention from those utilizing the legal perspective than has any other aspect of his authority.” But the authors fault proponents of the latter approach for not clearly distinguishing between

Constitutional/statutory authority and actual ability of to meet contemporary demands. Secondly, they claim that aspects of presidential leadership have been ignored by researchers adopting the legal/formal powers approach. Thirdly, Edwards and Wayne state that the legal perspective doesn't tend itself to hypothesis testing or theory-building.

The institutional approach, according to the above authors, tends to downplay political factors and submerge human qualities and needs. Although longitudinal methods for analyzing institutional relationships have produced general descriptions, they have little if any predictive power. Similarly, Edwards and Wayne criticize the political approach for assuming that only self-interest and conscious intentions guide presidential actions. They contend both political sub-approaches suffer methodological problems: the power concept is difficult to operationalize; the idiosyncratic level of decision-making analysis is not subject to systematic examination. Finally, the difficulty in discerning unconscious motivations and differentiating themes from external factors must be weighed against the benefits of implementing a psychological approach to studying presidential power, according to the aforementioned researchers.

It is evident that many of the criticisms about research on presidential power in particular can be applied to the study of the presidency

generally. Heclo¹¹ states that the current research deficiencies in the field include lack of basic research in primary materials, operational irrelevance, the preponderance of political scientists, and the dearth of financial resources for research. Edwards⁶⁶ recognizes certain constraints in the quantitative study of the presidency (failure to pose analytical questions, small number of cases, Lack of data), yet believes the time is right for such techniques: “professional standards call for it; the desire to explain relationships demands it; and relevant data waits to be exploited.” Edwards and Wayne¹¹ suggest conceptual awareness is important for analyzing the institution. But the lack of a rich theoretical Literature in the area, compounded by social science methodology’s tendency to impede empirically-based, inductively-built theory, has “left us with a discontinuous, semi-cumulative body of knowledge that has enlarged our comprehension of the presidency but not improved our capacity for studying it,” according to the authors.

Besides the shortage of quantitative studies discussed above, the biases found in the literature on presidential power have prevented the formulation of a comprehensive theory about its sources ensuing reactions to it and consequences for its employment. In effect, theories about executive power have become a captive of the approach and methodology used to analyze the concepts the result is that scholars have sought to predict the outcome of the use of presidential power by either concentrating on one source and generalizing to the entire populations or have assumed the exercise of power as well as its outcome is an all or-none proposition.

Various models of executive power have been proposed by presidential scholars (Neustadt’s model interpreted by Cronin, *op. cite*; Sperlich,⁶⁷; Riles,⁶⁸ Each of the above models views power as presidential initiative rather than performance (which encompasses discrete techniques, and presupposes executives exercise power when they react to events as much as when they start something); each employs selected sources of presidential power at the expense of others. Such faulty proclivities in theoretical construction have caused scholars to ignore mediating factors and actor reactions, both of which essentially affect the outcome of presidential performance. These deficiencies have likewise contributed to a traditional but erroneous strong-weak classification of chief executives based on how they employ some (researcher selected) sources of power. The current trend toward strategic assessments in research on presidential power, diverse executive attitudes about the exercise of power, and the contemporary responsibilities of the office argue against either comparing presidents on that basis or prescribing a stronger presidency.

A systemic model of power

In the remainder of this essay, we seek to overcome the aforementioned problems and deficiencies by presenting a systemic model of presidential power, inspired by the theories of Hargrove (*op. cite*) and Di Clerico (*op. cite*)y but employing or adapting the work of a number of scholars. According to Isaak,⁶⁹ the elements of a system are identifiable units, relationships among units, and boundaries. Mitchell⁷⁰ suggests political systems analysts measure inputs and outputs to “establish minimal ratios of these exchanges as a basis for predicting stability of systems and their capacity to achieve goals or provide satisfaction for their members.” He contends political systems have distinguishable boundaries and tendencies toward equilibrium.

Easton’s⁷¹ seminal work on political system analysis provides a fundamental guide for all subsequent applications of its theoretical constructs. Easton differentiates between a system in the general sense, defined as any set of variables regardless of the degree of

interrelationship among them, and a political system, designated as those interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society. He asserts political interactions in a society consist of a system of behavior; that the political system must be seen as surrounded by physical, biological social, and psychological environments’; and that systems must have the capacity to respond to disturbances and there by adapt to the conditions under which they find themselves. The authors flow model of a political system connotes his concern with analyzing the political system in dynamic tears. The elements of his model include the environment, inputs, the system itself output, and feedback.

According to Easton, the environment can be divided into two parts the intrasocietal and the extrasocietal. The former consists of the functional segments of society such as the economy, culture, social structure or personalities; the latter includes all those systems which lie outside the society itself, such as the international political system, the international economy, and the international cultural system. The author notes that in a developed political system, the system itself becomes part of the intrasocietal environment.

Inputs in a model of a political system are made of demands and support. Easton defines a demand as “an expression of opinion that an authoritative allocation with regard to a particular subject matter should or should not be made responsible for doing so.” Demands may be expressed or implied; they assume a political complexion when an effort is undertaken to make a binding decision for a society. Support constitutes those sentiments (covert) and actions (overt) which give persistence to political objects, whether they are the authorities, the regime, or the political community. Easton contends support becomes the major summary variable linking a system to its environment: it helps process demands into output, and ensures some kind of stability in rules and structures. Demands are analytically distinct from support, especially in advanced societies.

Outputs are those activities flowing from the authorities in a system; it is through them that persons who occupy the special roles of authority in a system are able to exercise some control or direction over other members of the system, states Easton. Outputs are analogous in function, at the output end of a system, to demands and support on the input side. As exchanges that take place between the political system and its environment, outputs encompass verbal statements and performances, according to the author.

Finally, Easton describes the notion of feedback in his political system model. Technically, feedback alone is the return of information to the authorities, whereas the concept of a “feedback Loop” is a way of identifying not only the information that returns, but a “set of processes, composed of information and related outputs and consequences, that enables a system to control and regulate the disturbances as they impress themselves on the system.” Easton proclaims that if feedback did not exist, the system would find itself exposed to the vagaries of chance.

The initial element in our model consists of the sources of president fat power. These include structural’ constitutional aspects such as the executive’s delegated, inherent, and implied powers, but likewise the influence of each presidential role (commander-in-chief, chief diplomat, chief administrator, chief legislator, party spokesman) and determinants of authority (customary practice and precedent).

Tatalovich and Daynes⁷² construct empirical determinants affecting presidential power by role. According to the authors’ power is the ability to achieve a specific goal, while a role is that set of expectations which define presidential responsibilities. They state that “the ability

to use power is both mandated and constrained by the mix of legal, customary, political and societal norms which define presidential roles where expectations are well institutionalized, presidential power is great, whereas in other roles where no consensus yet exists, power is still evasive.” Tatalovich and Daynes’ study furnishes an innovative paradigm for assessing the potential which various roles have in contributing to presidential power; however its preoccupation with these roles results in overemphasis of the president’s foreign policy concerns.

Other sources of presidential power delineated in the review which are pertinent to our model are political factors, personality, public opinion, and administrative skills, style, and experience. Depending on whether presidential actions take place in foreign or domestic context, in crisis or in peacetime, certain sources take on added significance. For instance, the presidents constitutional powers in the foreign policy area, coupled with traditional executive dominance in that sphere, means that structural/ constitutional sources of power are important for gaining consensus among actors in the political systems. Alternately, in domestic situations political factors and the president’s personality are indicators of how he will perform. The sources outlined above may be viewed as a synthesis of Easton’s demand and support inputs.

The second element in a systemic model of presidential power is a list of mediating factors that may influence actor reactions to presidential performance. The past level) of success that a president has had in dealing with an issue or policy, the current norms in the environment, type of actor anticipation to a president’s use of the sources of power, and the actual goals (stakes) which the chief executive and his administration set for themselves in any given action are components of this element.

The actors in the political system consist of institutions and individuals who invariably affect the outcome of presidential performance: Congress, courts, media, bureaucracy, public, Washington professionals, etc. Types of actor reactions, the third component of our systemic model, include consensus, or agreement among the various entities to presidential performance, no reactions some supports heavy opposition, and calls for the impeachment or resignation of the president.

Together, the mediating factors and actors in our model comprise the system and environment as specified by Easton. The interaction of inputs with system behavior produces the output component, which we shall call the resultant use of the president’s power. This final element of our model consists of three possible effects.

The positive effect occurs when there is a high level of agreement with the president’s performance among the various actors in the political system. Alternately, either a positive or negative effect could occur depending on other actor reactions. If there is very little reaction of any kind to executives use of his powers (because, for instance, the act was done secretly), it may temporarily strengthen his position unless the president had actively sought consensus. If there is some support of the president’s performance by the actors, again either a positive or negative effect is possible. Here the resultant use of power is greatly influenced by mediating factors such as past success, actor anticipations and the stake the president and his administration have placed in the action.

A negative effect, in which the executive’s power suffers temporary setbacks, is characterized by heavy opposition to his performance. The current norms in the political system, together with the expectations of various groups, are the mediating factors which best explain why

actors react so adversely to a particular presidential deed. Finally, when enough actors seriously challenge the incumbent’s use of power by demanding his impeachment or resignation, the collapse effect occurs essentially, this result renders the president ineffective for a prolonged period, most likely the remainder of his term. Custom and current norms play a key role in the formulation of unified opposition to executive abuses or attempts to expand power.

The framework of the last element of our model may seem to resemble Pious’⁸ theory, but is radically distinct in two respects. First, whereas Pious shuns political factors as sources of presidential power, these factors are emphasized in our delineation of the sources of executive power, and hence must be taken into account in every sequence of the model. Second, Pious omits discussion of mediating factors, and lumps actor reactions with outcomes, rather than assuming, as our model does, that types of actor reactions determine the outcome of the employment of power.

The notion of feedback is also contained in the model: that is the consequences for the employment of executive power subsequently affect its sources in a new context or situations. The model is applicable at two levels of analysis to a single issue confronting the president, or, in a few instances, to an entire administration.

The value of our model for measuring and understanding the presidential power concept is twofold. By delineating the interactions and influences within the political system, we can assess the dynamics adaptive capacity of the presidency as an institutions But because the office operates in a context which tends toward equilibrium, we can also evaluate the extent to which presidential performance in a given situation either perpetuates or lessens the stability of the system as a whole. Hence, the systemic model outlined above may be described as one of dynamic equilibrium, in which relations among actors/ institutions and the motivations of chief executives can be isolated and explained.

The next step in the development of this model is to attempt to predict the outcome of the use of presidential power by employing advanced quantitative techniques, such as probit analysis that procedure has already been implemented in studies of Congress in order to forecast the likelihood of success of various legislative proposals.⁷³ A related strategy which overcomes many of the aforementioned deficiencies is to predict the degree of presidential power vis-a-vis specific actors in the political systems Amlund⁷⁴ was one of the first

researchers to advocate quantitative analysis of presidential power in this manner. He created formulas for predicting the degree of success the president has with various actors in Table 2.

Numerous measures of executive power could be identified, quantified, and used to predict the extent to which each or to which all sources affect the degree of presidential influence with actors in the political system. A Listing of feasible measures, provided by this writer, appears below in Table 3.

The measures might also be employed to construct an aggregate power matrix for each president. Such a procedure would allow comparisons across administrations, thus preventing several problems which plague researchers in contemporary rating studies, including the question of what constitutes achievement or greatness, the fact that achievement is in the eye of the beholder, situational and perspective-based problems, the matter of unanticipated consequences, and the difficulty in determining who gets credit for actions.⁵⁶

The model and accompanying measures are not intended to provide an entirely empirical-based theory of presidential powers. For

ones the dynamic and ambiguous nature of the institution, together with the omnipresent human factor in politics, preclude static analysis of all facets of executive power. As Milton¹⁷ put it so aptly forty years ago, “in truth, change is the only sure constant of presidential

power. Secondly, the dearth of theory-building and conceptualization in research on the presidency requires intensive study of each aspect of presidential power before a synthesizing, systematic model can be obtained.

Table 2 Amlund’s formulas for predicting presidential power with specific actors

S.no	Formulas
1	Degree of presidential legislative success = $\frac{PAB + ECP + PAIPO + ACLPC + CAPSUPPUB}{CCOP \times CWOEP}$
2	Degree of presidential bureaucratic success = $\frac{PIAP + CAPACB + AIPCAS + DCIA + CAPINTSUP}{BURCAPOP \times BURWILOP}$
3	Degree of presidential interest group support = $\frac{DOPP + CAPOIG + ABESUPMAJC + CAPPBUR + ABPIGROP}{CAPINTRESIST \times WILNTGOP}$

PAB, presidential access to the bureaucracy; ECP, executive control over patronage and courts; PAIPO, ability to influence part organization; ACLPC, ability to control party leadership in Congress; CAPSUPPUB, capacity to gain public support for programs; CCOP, congressional capability to oppose president; CWOEP, congressional will to oppose president; PAIP, presidential involvement in appointment power; CAPACB, capacity to affect bureaucratic policy; AIPCAS, ability to influence appointees; DCIA, ability to curb legislative involvement in bureaucracy; CAPINTSUP, capacity to win interest group support for policy; BURCAPOP, bureaucracy’s capacity to oppose president; BURWILOP, bureaucracy’s will to oppose president; DOPP, degree of executive popularity when bill pending; CAPOIG, ability to get other interest group support; ABESUPMAJC, ability to win majority approval in Congress; CAPPBUR, capacity of president to get bureaucratic support; ABPIGROP, ability to influence opposing interest group; CAPINTRESIST, interest group capacity to oppose incumbent; WILNTGOP, interest group will to oppose president

Table 3 Measures of executive power by source

S.no	Measures of executive power
A	Constitutional /Structural Aspects
1	Length of time for ratification of constitutional amendments
2	Cases involving Federate legislation considered by Supreme Court
3	Presidential veto/congressional veto override ratio
4	Executive Supreme Court nominations ratified/Senate rejection ratio
5	Presidential Cabinet nominations accepted/Senate rejection ratio
6	Number of treaties and executive agreements
7	Military action by the president without congressional approval; president’s employment of emergency powers
8	Number of times president claims executive privilege
B	Political factors
1	Presidential proposals submit ted/percent approved by Congress
2	Non-mandatory presidential appearances before Congress
3	Victories on congressional votes where president took a clear-cut position
4	Vice-presidential activity and influence
5	Electoral trends: president’s popular and winning percentage of electoral victory in general election
6	Party makeup and Support in Congress
7	Executive’s bureaucratic and interest group support
8	President’s use of patronage
9	President’s use of media
C	Personality
1	Presidential character type according to Barber’s active-passive, positive-negative dimensions
2	Ideological and theological tendencies of presidents
3	Style: flexible v. inflexible; idealistic v. practical; decisiveness v. indecisiveness
4	Executive’s degree of charisma
D	Public opinion
1	Presidential popularity
2	Executive’s reputation with Washington establishment
3	Media Support for and/or endorsements of executive
E	Administrative skills, experience, and style
1	Prior experience in government
2	Intelligence of executive
3	President-Cabinet decision-making style

Conclusion

Both the literature review and systemic model presented in this essay denote the complexity involved in studying presidential power. Part of the reason stems from the flexible nature of the American political system and the institution's place in it.

"The presidency is the most pragmatic institution in a highly pragmatic governmental system...this greatest governmental institution is an experiment in constitutional democratic leadership," Cunliffe²⁵ reminds us. Indeed, the experiment is still unfolding before our eyes; because of this continuing process the analysis of executive power is subject to short-term subjectivity.

Greenstein's⁷⁵ essay on the Reagan Administration incisively addresses the interrelationship between ideological and cultural factors and executive style. Because the populace perceives a president's predecessor in a certain fashion, the incumbent would be use to adopt a strategy which either maintains or alters some of those characteristics as the case may be. On the other hands the political philosophy and style of the president affects his leadership orientation as well as public perceptions of performance. President Reagan's strong ideologically- based policy leadership yet detached demeanor focuses attention on the distinction between symbolic and administrative roles of the office; between who is responsible and who gets credit.

Moreover, there exists an inherent paradox between the power which a single executive wields, and the power of the presidency, which has historically increased and shows no sign of reaching its zenith in the near future. Permanent expansion in executive power and authority is attributable to the institution's adaptation to changes in the environment, whereas short-term concentrations of power often derive from attempts to renegotiate the social contract.⁷⁶ Ironically, the fission of power that characterizes the American political system as a whole is contrasted by the willingness of the people to grant enormous authority to a single man. Though the president is constrained by the government and political system he is a component of, the presidency is limited only by its own potential. Perhaps Whitman⁷⁷ conveys the inconsistency best:

"Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself (I am large, I contain multitudes)."

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