

THE PRESIDENCY AND THE CHALLENGE OF POLITICAL REGIME BUILDING:
SKOWRONEK REVISITED

By

Curtis W. Nichols
The University of Texas, Austin
Daniel Franklin
Georgia State University

Synopsis

*Stephen Skowronek's study of presidential leadership and recurring patterns of regime development in *The Politics Presidents Make* (1993) has added a significant amount of depth and richness to the scholarship of both the presidency and American political development. However, this line of analysis remains limited because of its inflexibility in regards to the cumulative evolution of the presidential institution. In this paper we reconceptualize the concept of "political time" one of the central constructs of Skowronek's work, by adapting the evolution of the presidency to the approach introduced by historian Arnold J. Toynbee (1939). In doing so, we better define the dynamics of 'regime building' by suggesting that presidents have a greater range of challenges and therefore meet them with a greater range of responses than has been previously thought. This allows us to correct for the deficiencies in Skowronek's work that have led him to suggest that we are at the end of "political time".*

The Problem of Evaluating the Presidency

In reviewing the existing literature on the presidency two observations become apparent. First, there seems to be a considerable amount of pessimism about the future of the institution. Second, the scholarship tends to separate into two schools of thought: the presidency as “great man” school (Emmet, 1973; McCullough, 1993, 2002; Morris, 2002) and the presidency as part of a “greater period” school (Schlesinger, 1973; Greenstein, 1978, 2000; Pfiffner, 1996b). We argue that the first observation may be related to misinterpretation of the second.

With titles such as *Twilight of the Presidency* (Reedy, 1970), “An Imperiled Presidency” (Cronin, 1978), *The President as Prisoner* (Grover, 1989), *American Presidency Under Siege* (Rose, 1997) and *The US Presidency in Crisis* (Campbell, 1998), one gets an immediate sense that there is concern about the future of the institution of the presidency. Some scholars argue (Schlesinger, 1973; Tulis, 1987; Patterson, 1990; Burns, Peltason, and Cronin, 1991) that the office of the president may be overstepping the limited powers upon which it was founded. Other scholars such as Neustadt (1960), Greenstein (1978), Groover (1989) and perhaps even Skowronek (1993) himself argue that, in essence, “presidents fail to be politically effective because of the restraints placed on them” (Greenstein, 1978; 68). Thus, for them, the problem is not too much but too little power with Skowronek viewing most presidents as encumbered by old regime leadership conventions that lead nowhere (1993; 446). However, with the presidency being perceived as being both too powerful and too weak, perhaps the problem is not so much rooted in the institution as it is in a crisis of expectations – expectations that

produce diametrically opposite conclusions depending on the method used to “benchmark” evaluations.

The “great man” school arrives at its conclusions through a historical emphasis on the individual (Skowronek, 1993: 4; Nichols, 1994: 9). Proponents of this approach seem to expect that strong, strategically inclined individuals, (Neustadt, 1960; Lord, 2003) who have nurtured certain crucial facets of their personality (Buchanan, 1987; Barber, 1992; Greenstein, 2000), are most likely to become successful presidents. While there are definitely descriptive advantages to such an approach, and it is certainly the case that given the unique nature of the presidency, specifically its heavy reliance on the actions and competence of a single individual, that case studies focusing on the “great presidents” contribute a wealth of detailed information, it may be too much to expect that all that is needed to create a strong presidency is to select the right kind of individuals.

Most significantly for our analysis, because the focus of such highly individualistic studies tends to be on the successful cases, the scholarship of the “great man” school tends to suggest that the performance of modern presidents pales in comparison to those of the past. Thus, a source of pessimism within the “great man” school comes from “benchmarking” the standard of presidential accomplishment on the most successful cases, while overlooking contextual factors that may contribute to the lack of success in others.

The methodology the “period” school can be seen as an attempt to address these shortcomings. Contextualists have tended to group historically congruent presidencies, which seem to share common characteristics, in an attempt to show that there are patterns in the challenges across time in the development of the institution. The idea of the

‘modern epoch’ in presidential studies is testimony to this ordering trend in presidential studies. The “period” school provides an improved methodology for presidential studies by framing questions within certain historical contexts.

However, the “period” school is not without shortcomings as well. As Skowronek writes:

(Scholars) have grouped historically contiguous incumbents together and gleaned from the shared elements of their situations a sense of the parameters of the political system at that time. From this they derive the characteristic resources available to meet those demands. Once the problem of political action within the period has been set in this way, presidential leadership becomes a function of relative skill at manipulating politics-as-usual (1993: 4).

In the “period” school, once the distinctiveness of the period is identified both the nature of the challenge and the technique for responding become “benchmarked.” With context held constant, presidents are, then, rated against this established standard. This, of course, may do violence to the reality that environments change.

Thus, when the “period school” measures presidential performance against the standard of the greatest possible success (of the period) the tendency then is to judge all other presidents as failing to achieve the artificially set, period bound, ‘best’ results. All that is left is a slow decay from the optimum, which is perceived as a deviation from the ‘wisdom’ of the past or a slow accumulation of hindering properties to the present. The period school would then seem to have an inherent bias within its methodology towards a pessimistic reading of history. This weakness of the “period” school, however, is not fatal as the method can still be said to offer improvement over some of the arbitrary problems presented by the “great man” approach.

It is at this point that Skowronek presents his corrective theory. By focusing on those endogenous challenges that periodically derive from a president's relationship to the political regime order, *The Politics President's Make* 'discovers' the challenge of "political time." (1993, 3-15).¹ It then becomes improper for a president to be measured against either the benchmarked response of past great presidents or against the benchmarked challenge of a static period. Skowronek thus contributes a framework in which success, can be understood within the logic of reoccurring political challenges, with each president facing different challenges based on their political relation to the regime and the strength of the regime's warrants as it goes through the life-cycle like phases of disjunction, reconstruction, articulation / preemption, and eventual disjunction. New insights can thus be gleaned through inter-periodic and intra-periodic comparisons. Indeed, as Skowronek points out, much can be gained by comparing presidents of different times who share the same endogenous regime challenges or "political time." As such, Skowronek's conceptual approach to thinking about how to evaluate the presidency is quite empowering.

Nonetheless, there is a continued strain of pessimism within Skowronek's improved methodology, such that he writes:

We are witness to a mounting confusion and progressive distortion of political purposes engendered by our own attraction to the warrants of (political time)... The classic claims of leadership authority that have endured despite their growing irrelevance (1993, 31).

This leads us to suspect that Skowronek himself has fallen victim to an improper benchmark bias. In attributing the inability of presidents to exercise authority --and presumably to tackle the issues of the day-- to their inability to escape the endogenous challenges of political time, Skowronek has judged the success of perhaps more

constrained modern, reconstructive presidents by the 'benchmark' of other less encumbered, past, 'regime builders.' In doing so, Skowronek may have erred by assuming that the reconstruction of a political regime is an abstract rather than particular challenge, thereby comparing political regimes that were constructed in response to differing historical challenges by an inappropriate standard of success.

Furthermore, in Skowronek's construct, there is an apparent historical disconnect between regime development and presidential led advancement and legitimization of new structures of power (53). The misreading of this interaction points to a conceptual problem in Skowronek's methodology. In Skowronek conceptualization, change in institutional presidential power structures is totally de-linked from the process of 'regime building.' Skowronek appears content to play down the relationship between how presidential power structures develop and the ability that only reconstructive presidents have to legitimize their use towards fundamentally new ends. This disconnect, however, does not seem likely given all Skowronek teaches us about the power of the reconstructive presidency and its ability to both disrupt and reorder the institution along with the regime, establishing distinctive institutional arrangements and approaches, as well as political values.

This disconnect between regime building and structural development of the institution seems even more unlikely given that the movement between modes of presidential power very closely coincides in time with two of the periods of political time Skowronek finds hardest to describe: the early progressive era, from the second presidency of Grover Cleveland through Theodore Roosevelt, and the modern era, since 1980, including the somewhat enigmatic regime building accomplishments of Ronald

Reagan (1993, 1998). Thus, it appears that part of Skowronek's difficulty in attributing clear reconstructive success to these two periods of regime building is linked, to the setting of and comparison to improper regime building "benchmarks." While Skowronek's construct has shed much light on presidential studies, giving scholars a new tool for comparing presidencies, its' failure to adequately address the ongoing development of the presidency in relation to regime building points towards a weakness of his theory. In the simplest of terms— Skowronek's regime theory isn't cumulative and therefore benchmarks incorrectly. So, even as the "great man" school of presidential studies overestimates the role of agency, and the "period" school corrects for this deficiency but fails to take into account the repetitive, endogenous, nature of the regime challenge, Skowronek's de-linked cyclical reading of presidential development has 'fixed' some of the shortcomings of its predecessors while presenting a unique set of problems of its own.

No sooner had Skowronek published his book than the controversy began concerning the determinism inherent in his analysis (Lieberman, 2000; Riley, 2000; Hoekstra, 1999; 1999a; Skowronek, 1999). The presidency is a unique institution in American politics in that a purely institutional explanation may never be entirely adequate. There is no question but that explanations at the individual level of analysis are crucial as well. However, Cronin is absolutely correct in his assertion that Americans tend to expect more from their presidents than is possible to deliver (Cronin, 1980:1 – 25). What determines the fate of a presidency, whether it be a success or a failure, probably lies somewhere in between the individual and the institution (Hargrove, 2001).

There are those who argue that predicting the actions of an individual, especially within the presidency, with any precision is nearly impossible so that we are left with little more than the prospect of description and analysis (Smith, 2000; Polsky, 2000). However, as social scientists we have ways of predicting the interaction of individuals with their environment, even presidents. Presidents *can* be judged by their differing levels of skill and effectiveness (Bell et.al., 1999; Greenstein, 2000a, 2000b). In this paper we present our own model of presidential leadership, one that builds off the many advancements of Skowronek's work (1988, 1993, 2002) but corrects for the systematic deficiency of his benchmark bias. By reconceptualizing and broadening our understanding of regime 'reconstruction,' we replace an abstract concept of the challenge with a cumulative and particular one. We model our approach, one that captures both the importance of institutional context and the impact of agency, on the work of historian Arnold J. Toynbee.

Toynbee's View of History

Toynbee's multivolume *A Study of History* (1939) is nothing if not expansive in its exploration of the cyclical and cumulative aspects of the rise and fall of civilizations. The intent of the whole series has, perhaps, best been summed up as a "search for the patterns of genesis, growth, and breakdown of civilization" (Gargan, 9).² In doing so, Toynbee attempts to do no less than "to reexamine the method of historical study." In *A Study of History*, Toynbee not only tracks the development of over twenty civilizations, he postulates a unified theory of history.³ According to Toynbee within every society's developmental cycle, a cumulative series of sub-cycles propel the movement of

civilization through time. This cumulative, serial, progression is the process of “challenge and response,” which, he describes as the interaction of a multitude of causative variables, and likens to a complex encounter rather than the simple interaction of two inhuman forces (vol. I, 271).⁴ It is this methodological instrument that can be applied to Skowronek’s theory to correct for the ‘benchmarking bias’ in his work.

In some ways, Toynbee’s concept of challenge and response is quite compatible with Skowronek’s concept of regime theory. Both are focused on institutional transformation from the evolutionary perspective of time. Thus, according to Toynbee, the growth and breakdown of civilizations can be understood only in terms of a cyclical temporal logic that is very close to Skowronek’s idea of political time. Therefore, Skowronek’s model of the disjunctive and reconstructive cycle of the political regime can be seen as analogous to an iteration of the cycle of Toynbee’s challenge and response. In addition, Toynbee and Skowronek both form their approaches to address the defects of the overly biographical ‘great man’ school and the overly myopic ‘period’ schools of history.

Toynbee states unequivocally that it is a great mistake to make the biographical method, a “peg” on which to hang historical evaluation (vol. I, 447). Biography, Toynbee argues, necessarily employs the technique of fiction to integrate the volumes of data obtained in the study of personal relations, and is therefore an inappropriate vehicle for evaluation of historical patterns or formulation of general laws.

Similarly, Toynbee critiques the conceptual inadequacy of the methodology of “periodization.” He calls the propensity to divide progress into ‘periods’ an “oversimplified” way to view the true evolutionary process of growth. History does not

develop in a single series of end-to-end sections. Yet, because we often conceive of history as if it does, we are susceptible to what Toynbee calls the “egocentric illusion,” or the propensity of modern analysts to judge historical transitions in singular terms of we view as relevant to today. Among its many shortcomings, the period perspective misses the fact that development is often cut short by events, only to proceed forward in a myriad of new directions. Most of these new paths lead to failure, while others shoot off at different angles and succeed, only to be cut short and go through the process again.

Toynbee asks:

Have we not been guilty of applying to historical thought, which is the study of living creatures, a scientific method of thought which has been devised for thinking about inanimate nature? (vol. I, 271)

Toynbee therefore offers an alternate approach to historical analysis that captures the multiplicity of causative factors and developmental paths.

He promotes a method that employs science as a tool,⁵ but does not attempt to employ scientific technique outside its province. Rather, Toynbee invites us to view historical development as a series of encounters. What is distinct about each encounter is that, within it, the reaction of actors to their environment is in part decided by psychological factors that are inherently impossible to weigh and measure (vol. I, 300-301). The only way, then, to capture the essence of the encounter is to think of it in terms of what Toynbee terms “challenge and response.”

In describing his idea of challenge and response Toynbee writes:

The effect of a cause is inevitable, invariable, and predictable. But the initiative that is taken by one or other of the live parties to an encounter is not a cause; it is a challenge. Its consequence is not an effect; it is a response. Challenge-and-response resembles cause-and-effect only in standing for a sequence of events. The character of the sequence is not the same. Unlike the effect of a cause, the response to a challenge is

not predetermined, it is not necessarily uniform in all cases, and is therefore intrinsically unpredictable. (Toynbee, 1972; 97)

Thus, challenge and response is about the growth that carries an institution from challenge through response to further challenge. It is a process, echoing a language similar to Skowronek's, which cycles an institution from differentiation, to integration, to differentiation again.⁶

What is especially important to note is that the challenge and response sequence has both cumulative and relative properties. Consequently we can say that the challenge of a particular day may be similarly situated to the challenge of the preceding day but it is not exactly the same challenge (Vol. III, 125). Furthermore, the nature and relative severity of a challenge greatly affects the nature and extent of the corresponding response. Thus any evaluation of a particular response must take into account the particular challenge(s) that inspired it.

Integration

It is the repetitive but cumulative logic of challenge and response that forces us to see the challenge of regime building in a fuller context and corrects Skowronek's de-linked, improperly benchmarked, methodology. Paradoxically, where Skowronek's logic fails is in its conception of the regime in ahistorical terms. In his focus on the rhythm of the endogenous challenges of political time, Skowronek ends up treating a political regime as a reoccurring but fundamentally abstract entity, that "remain(s) a surface and instrumental thing" (Orren and Skowronek, 1998). He therefore ends up "period-izing" the development of the regime, falling prey to Toynbee's 'egocentric bias.'⁷ This suggests that any corrective analysis of political regimes would interpret

their development in terms of the cumulative responses and relative challenges of history. A preceding political regime may leave a great challenge for the following reconstructive president, resulting in the exogenous shock of a looming civil war or of an intractable economic depression. While, at other times, a merely enervated regime may limit the nature of the following challenge; perhaps leaving a reconstructive president with a lesser, but still imposing, challenge of perfecting the apparatus of power, which may be only possible through the change in regime values. Thus, the 'would be' regime builder of Skowronek's presidency model may not always be challenged to repudiate all major aspects of the previous political regime.⁸

Based on the logic of Toynbee's challenge and response methodology, the challenge of reconstruction may not always be to sweep aside all the commitments and interests of the previously dominant partisan political regime. It may be enough for a president to provide a 'course correction' that fundamentally alters and partially replaces the ideology and interests of the old regime; reenergizing the ability to manage the macro political system.

Thus, given the variety of challenges to any particular regime, we identify another, broad type, of response. Borrowing from Skowronek's own observations as to the nature of the challenge that faced President Jimmy Carter in 1976, a president may be challenged to "save the old regime from its own self-destructive impulses... restoring viability by making the engines of power (of government) run more smoothly" (1988: 152). Paramount to this problem, and hence paramount to the solution, is overcoming the tensions created by outmoded approaches to problems that encumber and distort a ruling regime's ability to govern. This 'incongruence' between a president's means of

restoring vitality to the regime and their need to do so, is both an exogenous and endogenous challenge, which is met through an endogenous regime building response.

The endogenous political need, to fill the ‘gap’ between a president’s means and his ability to respond, can drive a president to reconfigure and legitimize new power structures to fit his goals. This is an attempt to restore vitality and direction to an enervated regime. Thus, the question ‘when does the new ‘mode’ of governmental operation begin’ becomes *not* a matter of when new technological or organizational sources of power become available, or even when these tools are first intermittently used. Rather, the new ‘mode’ only truly begins when these instruments become legitimized, as the dominant and indispensable means of exercising institutional authority, through their use as tools of reconstruction. It takes the work of a regime builder to shatter the legitimacy of the old mode of government operations and reestablish a new one.

Using this conceptual approach compels us to adjust Skowronek’s dating of the beginning of the distinct modes of governance in at least two instances (Chart 1). The beginning of the pluralist mode of operations should be dated 1904 when Theodore Roosevelt was elected in his own right and began to use his reinvigorated power structures to legitimize the new but “never quite progressive” Republican agenda (Orren and Skowronek 1998, 699). Similarly, the beginning of the plebiscitary mode of operations should be dated 1980, when President Reagan, not Nixon, was the first to use institutional innovations *successfully* to build a comprehensive legislative program to reenergize the presidency.⁹ .

While each case is unique, they share the same logic and thus Reagan’s example serves to outline our argument. Although Presidents Nixon through Carter had access to

the same plebiscitary mass communication technologies as did Ronald Reagan and attempted use them to ‘go over the head of Congress,’ they were not

Chart 1. Skowronek’s Emergent Structures of Presidential Power

Mode of Governmental Operations	Period of Prominence	Characteristic Presidential Resource	Typical Presidential Strategy
Patrician	1789-1832	Personal reputation among notables	Stand as national tribune above faction and interest
Partisan	1832-1900	Party organization, executive patronage	Manipulate distribution of executive patronage to party as broker
Pluralist	1900-1972	Expanding executive establishment, attending to new nationalized interests	Bargain with leaders of all institutions as steward of national policymaking
Plebiscitary	1972-	Independent political apparatus and mass communications technologies	Appeal for political support over heads of Washington elites directly to the people

Skowronek, Stephen, The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush

The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993, 53.

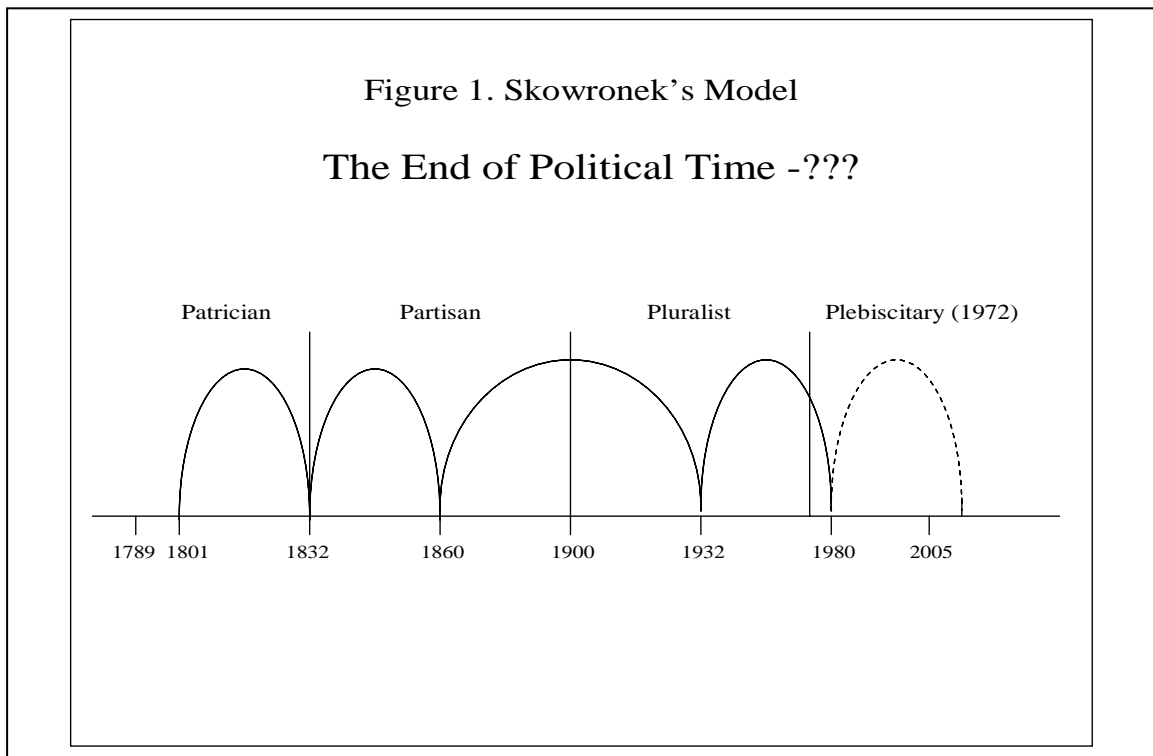
fully effective in doing so. President Reagan earned the moniker ‘great communicator’ not simply because of his rhetorical skills but because he established, through reconstructing the existing political regime plebiscitary power structures that would become the ‘new’ dominant instruments of authority. Therefore, it is difficult to argue

that Carter and Reagan operated under the same set of power structures, even though both had access to the same technologies and most of the same internal organizational strategies. Reagan may have found the plebiscitary power structures lying at his feet, but only his regime building response structured and legitimized their use and made them an indispensable and lasting feature of the modern presidency.

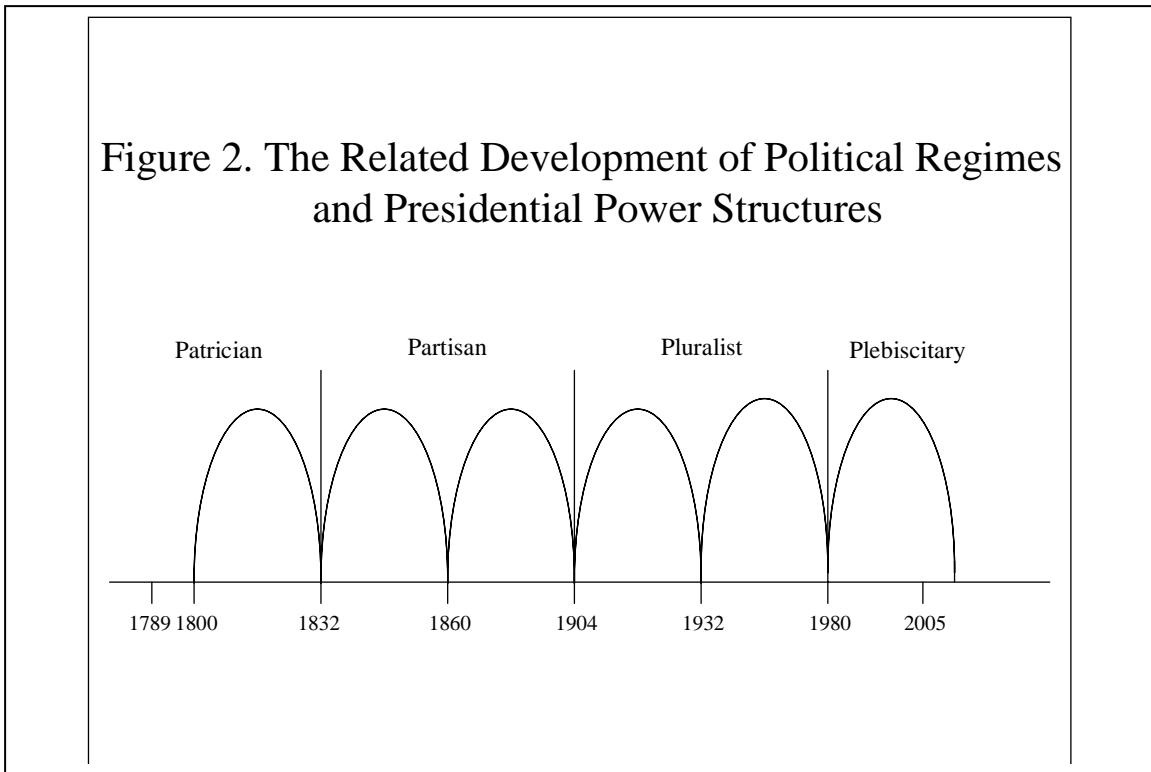
Regime builders such as Reagan, may not always be challenged to radically alter the political landscape. Nevertheless, these presidents are still regime builders in the sense that they have been challenged to make institutional corrections to the presidency to provide energy to a new regime, which replaces the previous one that has been rendered impotent by the dissipation of its effectiveness. And they do so by tactically and creatively rearranging, consolidating and enshrining the use of dominant new power structures. Consequently, these presidents are just as much regime builders as are the ones identified by Skowronek in the *Politics President's Make* (1993). These presidents essentially reconfigure and update the ideology and interests of already existing 'constitutional' regimes.¹⁰

Figure One illustrates Skowronek's view of how presidential power structures develop outside the influence of presidential regime building. Arches represent individual political regimes and perpendicular lines divide the different power structure 'eras.' Figure 2 represents our modification of the continuum, which is derived from our expanded view of regime building. Accordingly, Theodore Roosevelt should be considered a regime builder whose efforts legitimized the advance of power structures between the partisan and pluralist modes. Similarly, Ronald Reagan should be seen as

the regime builder whose efforts legitimized the advance of power structures from the pluralist to the plebiscitary mode.



Therefore, the “failure,” as it is seen from Skowronek’s perspective, of these two presidents to found dominant, new, partisan regimes on a par with the presidencies of a Lincoln or FDR, is attributable only to their lack of the challenge to do so. They were obliged instead to make limited changes to previous commitments of ideology and interest. Their response to the challenge was to perfect new institutional power structures. Consequently, they gave new energy to a presidency and government that were not challenged to make great changes but rather to make substantial ‘course corrections.’



Theodore Roosevelt's challenge was greatly complicated by the fact that he was a member of the partisan coalition that was already in power, and therefore had to repudiate the regime of which he was a part in order to establish new commitments. Thus, the political constraints upon his response were substantial. That is why his regime building efforts mainly legitimized new presidential power structures that served the fundamentally altered commitments and interests of a new system.

Ronald Reagan's regime challenges were similarly constrained. Reagan's challenge derived from the rise of global capitalism, which brought with it new economic realities that began to drag on and enervate Franklin D. Roosevelt's political regime. Reagan's efforts to advance new power structures should then be read within the context of reform of a bloated government. Whatever one thinks of his policy prescriptions;

Reagan's market centered reforms did seem to meet the challenge of the day and certainly legitimized new plebiscitary power structures.

A Cumulative View of Environmental Challenges~ Case Studies

The challenge of political regime building is more than the sum of its abstract parts. More is happening than just an adjustment to a 'disjunctive episode'.¹¹ Regime building, therefore, is better conceived of as a recurrent, but always particular, political response to the sum of environmental challenges. When a presidential 'regime builder' is challenged to advance power structures, he tailors his response in an effort to deal with the unique order shattering, order establishing, and order enshrining requirements of this challenge as well. Thus, the 'mode' of power structures does not advanced outside, but rather within, the regime building response.

Theodore Roosevelt-- Challenged!

Admittedly, there are clashing strands of evidence concerning the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt promised to both "continue absolutely unbroken" the policies of his predecessor while simultaneously attempting what one paper of the day called, "the most amazing program of centralization that any President of the United States has ever recommended" (Gould, 1991, 159). Thus, as unique and innovative as Roosevelt's initiatives were, his efforts in office were to preserve the dominance of the same Republican Party that had established the commitments of last political regime-- under Lincoln.

Yet, Theodore Roosevelt still was a regime builder because he met the following challenges:

- 1) He responded to the crisis surrounding the ‘disjunctive’ period of the 1890s by establishing new governmental commitments in an attempt to meet new socio-industrial realities.
- 2) He responded to the coalition building issues of the realignment of 1896, in expanding his party’s interests in an attempt to include those of the Progressive wing.
- 3) He responded to the incongruence between his desire to affect change and his means of doing so by advancing new power structures; and
- 4) He responded to the challenge of constructing a political regime that, while under the same party banner as before, pursued modified ideological values.

Ultimately, Roosevelt’s response legitimized not only a new governmental mode of operations, a realigned Republican coalition, but a new regime of expanded governmental interests and commitments as well. While he was not challenged to direct a change in the constitutional regime, as was Lincoln or his cousin Franklin Delano, nor was he situated to follow the collapse an existing party alignment as were Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, FDR, and Reagan, he was challenged in terms of expanding new governing values.¹²

To understand the value shift of Roosevelt’s regime building we must go back to at least the late 1880s when pressures from industrialization, immigration, and urbanization were beginning to build to the point where there was general dissatisfaction with the status quo (Clubb, Flanigan, Zingale, 1980; McCormick, 1985).¹³ Republicans, as regime affiliates, felt the brunt of this dissatisfaction more pointedly at first. In the off-year election of 1890 they lost 78 seats in the House to go from holding a narrow majority (166 to 159) to becoming an outright minority (88 to 235 seats). Then the Democrats continued the rout in 1892 by capturing the Senate and the Presidency on the ticket of Grover Cleveland. Consequently, many scholars have concluded that, with

discontent running high and the Democrats leading their first united government since before the Civil War, Cleveland had the opportunity to exercise what we now term reconstructive politics (McSeveney, 1972; Clubb, Flanigan, Zingle, 1980; Crockett, 2002). Even Skowronek accepts this possibility (1993, 48).

However, Grover Cleveland missed his chance to construct a new Democratic led regime. Due partially, perhaps, to his inability to judge the opportunity that “political time” afforded him and adapt the leadership style that had served him so well as an opposition president from 1884-1888, Cleveland’s presidency self-destructed in the aftermath of the Depression of 1893 (Welch, 1988; Crockett, 2002). By 1894 there was open opposition to Cleveland from within his own party, and the Republicans roared back into the majority in the House winning 113 seats. By 1896, so deep were the disjunctive chords within the Democratic Party that many in the eastern wing of the party irrevocably split from those from the south (Merill, 1957). Drove of new voters from the Midwest joined the Republican ranks (Wanat and Burke, 1982). Then, after nominating William Jennings Bryant, on a non-compromising, inflationary, ‘free-silver platform,’ the Democrats lost the presidency, the Senate, and the Midwest’s vote for a generation (McCormick, 1986; Crockett, 2002).¹⁴

Thus, a ‘disjunctive period’ did occur just before Roosevelt assumed the presidency in 1901. However, this turn of events left the nation in an odd position. While the realignment of 1896 reconfirmed the political dominance of the Republican Party, consigning the Democrats to minority status again, it did not provide much of a substantive response to the exogenous environmental challenge of new socio-industrial realities of the early 20th century (McCormick 1986, 328-329, Tulis, 95-116). Thus, in a

very real sense, the realignment of 1896 merely won the Republicans an endogenous challenge to reconstruct the values of a new coalition.

The contradictory nature of Roosevelt's presidency must be evaluated in the context of this particular set of circumstances. Roosevelt was challenged both to maintain the hegemony of the Republican party, while at the same time he was challenged to change the status quo in response to environmental pressures, which called for different kind of values altogether. As Roosevelt himself stated in his 1905 Inaugural Address:

Though the problems are new, though the tasks set before us differ from the tasks set before our fathers who founded and preserved this Republic, the spirit in which these tasks must be undertaken... remains essentially unchanged (quoted in Tulis, 110).

Therefore while Roosevelt did many things to reinforce the old partisan order, his equally important efforts to advance new power structures accomplished a lot more than just rearticulating established commitments and interests.

Consequently, it is hard to support Skowronek's assessment that Roosevelt's efforts, while helping birth the modern nation state, were, otherwise, mainly full of sound and fury and did not signify regime building (Skowronek 1993; 259, Orren and Skowronek 1998; 699).¹⁵ Within the context of a wider concept of 'regime building' many of Roosevelt's actions can be better understood as tactical efforts, to wield the disruptive authority of the reconstructive presidency. As much as Roosevelt strained to maintain Republican hegemony, he also sought to establish a new order, whereby weaker elements of society were protected through the restraint of corporate power (McCormick 1986, 329). For Skowronek this does not amount to a change in government's basic commitments of ideology and interest. However, evaluating regime building isn't just a

matter of judging the results, but rather of evaluating the response in context to the challenge.

For example, when Roosevelt took the initiative in mediating the dispute between striking labor and the corporate owners of anthracite-coal mines, he not only advanced the use of new power structures but also indicated that new groups outside the 'old' Republican fold would be served. Qualitatively this might not have been a great change, but the true significance of the event lies in Roosevelt's attempt to advance new regime level values. In forcing management to accept both the legitimacy of their rivals' claims and in establishing mechanisms for addressing labor's grievances, Roosevelt responded to the challenge of staking out and servicing a new Republican constituency. This, act transcends the normal endeavor of rearticulating an established vision; it represents an attempt to fundamentally add new values. The radical nature of this attempt may be best evidenced by the GOP's ultimate failure to expand upon this reformulation, and the subsequent significant contribution labor made to the next Democratic regime, which did.

Maneuvers to change values would have been impossible had Roosevelt's context not presented an opportunity for him to do so. Roosevelt took advantage of electoral victories in the House in 1902 and his own decisive reelection in 1904 to build a mandate for his own personalized brand of presidential power (Gould, 1991; 145).¹⁶ Railroad regulation, at this time, was one of the chief concerns of the newest supporters of the Republican regime, new Mid-western voters (Wanat and Burke, 1982). Furthermore, the issue was seen as being "a moral issue" and that prompted fundamental "regime-level debate" (Tulis, 102). Because this issue pitted eastern, old guard Republicans-- the owners of the railroads, against Midwestern, Progressive Republicans-- who were

shippers, this battle became symbolic of the entire struggle of old versus new interests. Since railroads themselves symbolized, “more than any other industry of the day, the popular apprehension regarding the impact of business consolidation on the nation,” (Gould, 1991; 150) Roosevelt’s focus on the railroads had major significance in promoting what the Roosevelt Administration called a ‘Square Deal’ for all (Tulis; 102-106).

Unless one makes a hard and fast rule that a new regime can only follow a partisan alternation in power, this case suggests that the Roosevelt’s ‘time’ was ripe for regime building. Therefore, the political obstacle that Roosevelt faced was not just the abstract challenge of Skowronek’s politics of articulation. Roosevelt could not attempt to “fit existing parts of the regime together in a new way” (1993, 41). The Midwesterners were not an integral part of the pre-1896 Republican coalition as they were in 1904, and the threat of class war had not existed in Lincoln’s day. Roosevelt’s challenges were such that he was positioned at a reconstructive conjuncture, while simultaneously being burdened with more crosscutting and limiting challenges than any other reconstructive president in history.

Unlike Lyndon Johnson, who clearly tried to rebalance power between two established blocks of FDR’s coalition-- in his case the Liberals and Southerners, Roosevelt acted after a realignment to rebalance power between new power blocks.¹⁷ Indeed, Roosevelt was trying to add a new set of values to a Republican coalition that had completely lost its southern wing and was dominated by ‘old-guard’ eastern conservatives. Additionally, in trying to recapture the radical roots of the Republican Party, Roosevelt was essentially inventing new commitments because the earlier ones

were pre-industrial in their outlook and scope. Therefore, Roosevelt was trying to find a way to fundamentally expand and alter his party's basic commitments, by touting the return to familiar sounding roots while aiming at creating a new regime that accommodated all of its members' interests.

By proposing that the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) be given the power to arbitrate and reset disputed railroad rates, Roosevelt was clearly siding with Midwestern shipping interests by placing the burden of challenging ICC rulings, in court, on the rail owners. He, himself, spelled out the realigning importance of this bill by stating that:

(the country would not) ...permanently tolerate the use of vast power conferred by vast wealth, and especially by wealth in its corporate form, without lodging somewhere in the Government the still higher power of seeing that this power, is also used for and not against the interests of the people as a whole (Quoted in Gould 1991, 152).

Thus, through railroad regulation Roosevelt set out to tactically shatter the values of the old order, and construct new ones that would preserve Republican partisan dominance. We remind that because of the turn of events in the 1890s, the new regime hailed under the same partisan banner as the previous one but through the advancement of new power structures, it would have to be made to accommodate other groups too.

Here we see how new power structures secured Roosevelt's new regime. The invigoration of the ICC represented a means of expanding Roosevelt's authority through administrative fiat. While presidential commissions and executive agencies certainly were not invented by TR, Roosevelt's full term marks an assertive use of executive agencies to achieve new ends, both in scope and in function. Roosevelt was able to overcome the incongruence between his means and ends by adapting the growing

administrative state and converting it into a presidential resource for shaping policy. The result was a “precedent of real importance” (Arnold, 1986; 24). It closed the gap between the constraints of the nineteenth century office and the president’s ability to implement his agenda. Therefore, Roosevelt’s use of administrative innovation, not only advanced future presidents’ means of responding to challenges; it advanced the progressive values embedded in many of the new executive agencies (Carpenter, 2001).

While conservative elements within the Senate scuttled Roosevelt’s attempts to pass a railroad regulation bill in the post election congressional session of 1904-1905, Roosevelt was able to keep a focus on the subject through the use of the bully pulpit. Then, despite continued opposition from Senators in his own party, which initially forced him to attempt to pass the railroad bill with only Progressive and Democratic support, Roosevelt compromised and secured passage of a somewhat watered down version of reform, the Hepburn Act. He then claimed it was “just what he had wanted all the time,” and swung credit back to the Republican Party. This distressed many of his erstwhile bipartisan coalition partners, while giving others the impression that he had failed to “lick the Senate” (Gould, 1991; 163). It is because Roosevelt did not get all he wanted that Skowronek questions Roosevelt’s credentials as “steward against the interests,” (1993, 249).

However, Roosevelt himself saw it differently and felt that what was significant about the process was “the demonstration of how a president could utilize the power of his office to push legislation through congress,” (Gould, 1996; 80). As Jeffery K. Tulis suggests, the Hepburn Act was the forum that Roosevelt used to frame and respond to the ‘crisis’ of his times, and therefore it must be considered a resounding success (1987,

113). In terms of pure policy it was a compromise. In terms of advancing the new regime-level principles, the passage of the Hepburn Act was a watershed event. What is most important in evaluating Roosevelt is, as always in a cumulative reading of history, determining which challenges were there to be met. Seen only as a response to the endogenous and abstract challenge of partisan regime maintenance—a challenge to merely articulate Republican hegemony--Roosevelt's railroad regulation did leave the G.O.P. far more divided going into the 1906 election than anyone could have expected after the landslides of 1904. It therefore does demonstrate the limits of Roosevelt's accomplishment. However, as seen as a response to the particular exogenous environmental challenge of ameliorating socio-industrial pressures through expanding governmental commitments, Roosevelt's efforts in railroad regulation are seen as representative of his success in legitimizing the modern presidency as the first administration to support the values of the welfare state.

Ultimately, railroad regulation was just one of many policy battles Roosevelt waged simultaneously to expand governmental interests and commitments through administrative means. In his annual address of December 1905 Roosevelt also called for expanded use of the Department of Commerce and Labor to investigate child labor, he endorsed pure food and drug legislation, along with governmental supervision of insurance companies. Additionally, Roosevelt's, only somewhat successful attempts to get federal authority to investigate labor disputes, and his foundational efforts to enact land conservation measures reinforced the same pattern (Gould, 1991, 1996; Dinunzio 2003). And while the legislative success was not always there, the language and values of government had changed. To understand Theodore Roosevelt's regime is to

understand how he met his multiple challenges through the advancement of new commitments and power structures. Thus, the true legacy of his presidency was the legitimization of the path towards expanded governmental interests and commitments. While not a total departure from the partisan past, this new direction clearly represents a new regime.

Ronald Reagan— Challenged!

Even with the second generation of scholarship allowing some degree of separation between subject and observer, Ronald Reagan's legacy and the assessment of his success remains controversial. In 1993 Skowronek asserted that Reagan offered a "gross caricature" of classic leadership postures, while at the same time admitting:

Whatever the limits of Reagan's reconstruction, no president in recent times has so radically altered the terms in which prior governmental commitments are now dealt with or the conditions under which previously established interests are served (409-411).

Again, the key to understanding this apparent contradiction, and evaluating if Reagan's response was that of a regime builder, is to first consider what challenges he was forced to confront.

Ronald Reagan was a regime builder because he met the following challenges:

- 1) He responded to the crisis surrounding the 'disjunctive' period of the 1960s to 1970s by redefining governmental commitments in an attempt to meet the new socio-economic realities of global capitalism.
- 2) He responded to the coalition building issues of the sixth generation 'party system' realignment,¹⁸ defining his party's interests in such a way as to attempt to include both secular and religious conservatives.
- 3) He responded to the incongruence between his desire to affect change and his means of doing so by advancing new power structures; and
- 4) He responded to the challenge of constructing a political regime after Carter's disjunctive presidency that, while falling far short of his rhetorical aims to

dismantle the welfare state, modified the ideological values of the previous regime.

Ultimately, Reagan's response legitimized not only a new governmental mode of operations, but new interests and commitments.

Skowronek's analysis of Jimmy Carter's disjunctive presidency contains within itself enough evidence to document the 'disjunctive episode' in the late 1970s from which Reagan's reconstruction gained its impetus (1988, 1993). However, understanding Carter's disjunction is only part of understanding the unmet challenges to which Reagan had to respond. Reagan was challenged by more than endogenous problems within the regime cycle. He was challenged to do more than just take the partisan opportunity to practice reconstructive politics.

Reagan responded to the exogenous challenge of reforming a bloated, unresponsive, government that, while acting as a drag on the economy, none-the-less engendered wide public support for many of its entitlement programs. At the same time he responded to the challenge of the realignment of Republican electoral fortunes in the Northeast and South; creating a new party centered on conservative market, military, and social values. To do all of this, he also had to overcome the exogenous institutional challenge of 'power incongruence,' which left a division between his desire to achieve his goals and his means of obtaining them.

To summarize the full range of challenges that existed within Reagan's environment is to point out that in addition to needing to respond to oil shocks, unusually slow rates of productivity growth, high inflation and unemployment, and ever increasing federal outlays and taxes, Reagan had to politically maneuver within the constraints of a large bureaucracy, and a long established political regimen. With millions of recipients

of federal largesse, and well organized and powerful special interests groups ready to mobilize and protect specific programs, the success of Franklin Roosevelt’s regime commitments, challenged Reagan to walk a fine line in demanding spending cuts from Congress without pushing too hard to incur the wrath of a country that liked its own particularistic benefits (Schick, 1982, 22).

Furthermore, with the successful incorporation of liberal commitments to civil rights, by LBJ, -- and the break this caused in Democratic ranks, Reagan was challenged and presented with an opportunity to cobble together support from a party system that was undergoing a protracted and shifting partisan realignment.¹⁹ This is illustrated in Table 1, where the gradual decline of Democratic Party strength in its Southern, Border, and Rocky Mountain bastions is partially offset by the counter realignment in New England and the Pacific Coast. Thus, unlike ever other regime builder before him, Reagan faced the additional challenge of leading a party that would never hold majority status in the House of Representatives under his tenure. He therefore would be the only regime builder to attempt to reconstruct the values of the political regime during eight years of divided government.

**Table 1. Democratic Party Strength in the Congress
As a % of Total Regional Delegation**

	South	Border	New England	Mid-Atlantic	Rockies	Pacific Coast
1948	98	86	39	49	75	36
1960	94	84	50	49	73	51
1980	64	68	64	54	39	56
2000	42	38	77	55	25	62

Source: (Stanley and Niemi 2003, 7-11).

South = TX, AR, LA, MS, AL, FL, GA, TN, SC, NC, VA; Border = OK, MO, KY, WV; New England = CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME; Mid-Atlantic = MD, DE, NJ, PA, NY; Rockies = AZ, NM, CO, UT, NV, WY, MT, ID; Pacific Coast = CA, OR, WA, HI, AK.

Lastly, Reagan had to contend with the perception that the presidency had grown too big for any man. To analysts of the day, it seemed that no one could take the reins of and gain control over the government (King, 1983; Spitzer, 1983; Genovese, 1993). The partisan mode of operations seemed to have become hopelessly deadlocked. While the people called for change, the power structures of the day seemed only to lead to battles over pork. Reagan therefore was challenged to fundamentally alter these power structures. All other progress was dependant on finding new ways to make government work.

Thus, the challenges faced by Reagan were far more complex than the reoccurring and fundamentally abstract challenge of reconstructing a new political regime. Some elements of FDR's old regime, such as the ideology and economic leadership of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and their vision of social and-business relations with government, were open to repudiation. However, commitments to the basic welfare superstructure, and the millions of interests it served, as well as to the end of southern apartheid, were not.

Reagan's presidency therefore must be evaluated in the context of this unique set of challenges. The fact that Reagan offered what many progressives consider retrenchment does not make his approach less distinctive or less deserving of the title of regime builder. Reagan most certainly did set out, from the beginning, to propose an alternative public philosophy to that of FDR's. His civics extolled the virtues of less generous social insurance and greater discretion for business. This followed from his core belief that centrally administered government tended to weaken a free people's

character, and that the “real destroyer of liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations, and benefits” (Scaife, 1983, 4-5).

Thus, when Reagan announced, in his first inaugural address, “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem,” he was proclaiming his order shattering warrants (Nelson, 1999). However, in context to his challenge, this statement is more accurately read as an annunciation of principles, and rallying cry, rather than as an actual plan to eliminate government. Reagan did call for an assault on big government, but because of the very real constraints of his particular situation, he would be forced to focus his efforts on tactically winnable battles that would nevertheless reset the commitments and interests of government.

Like Theodore Roosevelt before him, Reagan sought to use new power structures. He would use innovations in administrative resources and refurbished plebiscitary communication techniques to attack the old order and establish a new regime. While his approach may not have matched his rhetoric, his response did match the scope of his challenge. Thus, Reagan’s politics were more than rhetorically reconstructive, as Skowronek originally suggests (1993, 32).

Perhaps the best example of Reagan’s reconstructive approach was the case of the 1981 budget. In fighting for his budget, Reagan did not just aim at trimming expenditures while nudging up defense spending, he aimed at a more fundamental reformation of entitlement formulas, the recalibration of regulatory relationships, and significant changes in monetary and tax policy. In short, he aimed to reset the values of the prevailing regime.

The 1981 Budget Battle

Immediately after being elected president, Ronald Reagan set out to radically overhaul the lame duck, budget of Jimmy Carter. The complexity of the task, along with inherent political obstacles weighted against such an audacious move. Furthermore, time was short. As Reagan's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director, David Stockman, later wrote, "the window for successfully launching sweeping change... would be exceedingly brief" (Stockman 1986, 83). Thus, the budget was designed to be the centerpiece battle and vehicle that quickly transmitted Reagan's disruption of the existing order. He aimed to take advantage of the far-reaching scope of the modern Federal budget to touch virtually every aspect of the government's operations.

While the budgetary process gave tangible powers and real influence over the state, in FDR's regime it was thought that Congress wielded at least equal power to the President in determining these matters. However, with Congress' disjunctive inability to control deficit spending, Reagan sought to use reconstructive warrants, in conjunction with new tactical procedures, to gain hold of the budget and its' inherent agenda setting powers. The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 became the ideal instrument for pursuing the President's ambitions. Although it had not been intended to be used this way, actually being designed to thwart president Nixon's impoundment of funds, Reagan's team saw that by using the Budget Act's rescission procedure Congress would be forced to vote on an overall budget policy at just the time the President was at the height of his popularity.

Furthermore, Reagan coupled the budget struggle to a comprehensive 'administrative strategy' (Nathan; 1975, 1983) in pursuit of his agenda. Paramount to

this strategy were management tools internal to the White House, namely the OMB and the Executive Office of the President (EOP). They were to be the main institutional levers used to regain bureaucratic responsiveness to the president's agenda through centralization of control and partisan loyalty (Nathan, 1983; Moe, 1985; Hogan, 1988; Waterman, 1989). Although Nixon's White House can be credited with 'inventing' many aspects of this strategy, Watergate interceded and Skowronek's (1993, 53) 'new plebiscitary mode of presidential power structures,' which relied on independent political apparatus and mass communication technologies to appeal for support directly to the people, was left to Reagan to exploit and legitimize.

To assure that his Cabinet was on board his administrative strategy bandwagon, Reagan made it clear that all those appointed were to be ideologically committed to his agenda (Turner, 40). Reagan summed up his position saying:

Crucial to my strategy of spending control will be the appointment to top government positions of men and women who share my economic philosophy. We will have an administration in which the word from the top isn't lost or hidden in the bureaucracy. (Nathan 1983, 72).

This represented a significant departure from the old 'progressive' administrative paradigm, where competence rather than accountability had been the watchword of the Civil Service. Ultimately, in pursuit of his agenda, Reagan would thoroughly politicize the bureaucracy, often sacrificing experience and expertise for loyalty and responsiveness (Moe, 1985).²⁰

In addition, Reagan took full advantage of his powers of appointment. In some cases Reagan purposely delayed appointing second tier administration officials. With many political appointments temporarily unfilled, there was no one for the careerists in the departments to go to for support in fighting cuts (Pfiffner, 105). Also, the White

House took advantage of changes in the Civil Service Act of 1978 to impose some control over approximately 1,300 Schedule C appointments and 700 other senior civil servants affected. Those in the Senior Executive Service who would not help advance the Reagan agenda were transferred and removed from key positions in the bureaucracy. Additionally, 'Reductions In Force' (RIF's) were ordered, in an effort to 'behead' agencies and programs that could not be entirely cut, (Nathan, 1983; 74-76). In these and other ways, the attempt was made to overcome bureaucratic resistance to the proposed budget and new order.

Simultaneously, Reagan assaulted the old order through the use of new tactical structures in the form of mass communication technologies that he utilized as never before; to "go public," over the heads of Congress. Reagan's mastery of the politics of the "spectacle" set new standards and means for presidential communication. As Bruce Miroff writes in describing Reagan's "triumph":

The basis of this success was the character of Ronald Reagan. His previous career in movies and television made him comfortable with and adept at spectacles; he moved easily from one kind to another. Reagan presented to his audience a multifaceted character, funny yet powerful, ordinary yet heroic, individual yet representative. He was a character richer even than Kennedy in mythic resonance (Miroff, 2003; 284).

On January 29th 1981, nine days after taking office, Reagan underscored his focus on fighting inflation and curtailing "runaway government," while asking for Americans to support him in his battle. And support him they did. Gallup surveys conducted January 30th through February 2nd revealed that an astounding seventy-three percent of those polled cited "inflation and the high cost of living" as the most important problem facing the nation (Smith, 1990; 143-145, 193).

On March 10th 1981, the Administration sent a detailed budget revision proposal to the Congress asking for \$48.6 billion in cuts for FY'82 alone. Reagan's strategy in pushing his package through was relatively simple. First, he would capitalize on the just won majority status of the Republicans in the Senate, and the newfound unity Reagan's reconstructive moment had inspired in it,²¹ and second, he would overcome the 52-seat deficit that his party faced in the House of Representatives through coalition building. This entailed wooing conservative, mainly southern Democrats. He'd have to persuade these Democrats to vote for his budget while retaining the support of the fewer than two dozen moderate "gypsy moth" Republicans who were cross pressured by their mainly Northeast and Midwest constituencies. Key to Reagan's plan was its emphasis on 'going public,' to build support and apply external pressure (Schick, 18).

Both Reagan's focus on using new power structures and the style of his personal appeals signaled a clean break from politics of the past. Even as Reagan's approval ratings began to drop during the Feb-March 1981 period, and leaders of the Democratically controlled House came to Reagan offering to work on compromise, Reagan refused. He would stick with his plebiscitary power resources rather than go back to the pluralist method of horse-trading to pass his budget (Schick, 18-25). Over the next two months Reagan would speak to reporters nine times and address the nation on television, directly, twice and one more time in front of a joint session of Congress. Telling the country that they faced "the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression," Reagan relentlessly used his own version of the bully pulpit to pound home his vision of budget and tax cuts (Kernell, 115).

Counterbalancing the disruptive force of this rhetoric was his enshrinement of his new commitments defined as restoration of original values. This gave the Reagan vision the same character of the earlier Jeffersonian and Jacksonian ‘conservative revolutions.’ Reagan’s agenda was framed in an essentially negative manner, in terms of rolling back governmental expansion, in the name of liberty and equality (Landy and Milkis, 222). Reagan sold his plan in the language of continuity with the wisdom of the past. For example, one researcher, comparing presidential papers, found that Reagan used the terms “founding fathers” and “framers” more times than every president between Hoover and Carter combined (Franck, 2004).

Coincidentally, a few weeks after submitting his budget, Reagan received a ground swell of popular support after he was shot. With the first crucial vote on the budget upcoming, his team decided to take advantage of this new found political capital by orchestrating an in-house, carrot and stick, campaign to take the president’s agenda to those southern Democrats who Reagan had targeted for support. Over the Easter break, members of the Republican National Committee and other ‘inside players’ spread out at the grassroots level traveling to these members’ districts to work up pressure to support the president. Local corporations, campaign contributors, and trade associations were recruited to help the cause. Letter writing campaigns were put together and business interests were asked to take out ads in newspapers and magazines supporting the budget. This strategy was to take advantage of the fact that many southern Democrats had run behind Reagan in their own districts. Equally important was the implicit promise that if southern Democrats supported the president on his budget, they would “receive a pass” during the next mid-term election (Pfiffer 1996a, 106).

The culmination of this ‘Southern Blitz’ was Reagan’s triumphant return to the spotlight, after his brush with death, in a nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress on April 28, 1981. Having demonstrated his ability and willingness to go over the heads of the Congress to the American people, he reminded Congress, in a demonstration of his reconstructive warrants, that he had pledged loyalty to “We the people...” when he set out to save America from its present economic mess. And that to fail by not passing his budget would “kindle a wrath (in the people) which burns like a consuming flame” (Reagan 1982, 118).

On May 7th, 63 Democrats defected and the administration backed budget package known as “Gramm-Latta” passed the House 253 to 176. By the 14th House and Senate conference committee agreed to a resolution including reconciliation instructions that would provide \$36 billion in budget cuts to the last Carter budget. Finally, on June 26th the House voted 232 to 193 in favor of an omnibus reconciliation package that cut \$35.1 billion from the budget for FY’82. Reagan’s budget had passed.

In budgetary terms there is still considerable debate if Reagan’s budget cuts represent a victory or as Stockman later put it, “there is less there than meets the eye” (Schick, 33). It is true that even from the beginning most entitlement program spending, representing over forty percent of the budget was put out of bounds by Reagan. Since national defense and interest payments on the national debt were also largely beyond reach of the budget reductions, much of the savings in FY’82 came from cutting government operations. Thus if rolling back ‘welfare programs’ was the intent of the budget battle, one may conclude it represented a shallow victory. Furthermore, if the intent of the budget battle was to control deficit spending one can easily conclude that

budget cutting failed. Increases in defense spending coupled with tax cuts more than overwhelmed the comparatively meager budget cuts, skyrocketing the national debt. However, in the final evaluation, the importance of Reagan's budget battle did not lie in purely budgetary terms. Ultimately, the 1981 budget must be judged in terms of the larger thrust of Reagan's entire project—as a response to his entire environment of challenges.

In these terms there is much to be said in support of an alternative interpretation, whereby:

Reagan's battle in 1981 was not really against the federal budget or against the deficit. His target was an active, meddling federal government that got into matters it should not have. (Thus) he would rather have a smaller government with a larger deficit. He would rather have the government spend more as long as it did less domestically. He was not against helping the poor but really believed that they would do better by casting their lot with an expanding economy than with an expanding bureaucracy (Schick; 42).

Whether through intent, or serendipitous flaw, by altering spending priorities and generating a massive deficit, Reagan slowed the growth of entitlements, further limited the ability of government to regulate business, and essentially guaranteed that government could no longer afford new social welfare initiatives. Growth of government may not have stopped under Reagan but its pace and direction was dramatically altered. This along with his supply side tax cuts and tight monetary policy resulted in expansive growth of the economy, control over inflation, and it did succeed in generating an economic recovery.

Additionally, seen as a response to the coalition building challenge of the long sixth party system realignment, the budget battle not only united Republicans in the short term, but it also accelerated the polarization of American politics. This realignment

further drove conservative southern Democrats into the Republican Party, where their conservative military and social values were better represented, which led to the eventual collapse of Democratic hegemony in Congress and many southern statehouses. Thus, Reagan's partisan response must also be judged as a success in terms of constructing a majority, conservative, Republican, coalition.

Finally, there is little doubt that Reagan advanced power structures through his use of administrative strategies and plebiscitary mass media tactics. In being the first president to put all of these elements together, he gave the presidency much better top-down powers of control over executive bureaucracies and is therefore among the most important administrative innovators in the history of the institution. Within a little more than 100 days after taking office, Reagan had used these instruments to reorder the basic values and interests served by government. These means, and his ends, are still dominant today under George W. Bush, the rearticulator of the Reagan faith.

Therefore, in response to Skowronek's conclusion that Reagan's use of the budget and new power structures to reconstruct was a "corruption" --that amounted to a "subversion" of their normal operations, and a "trashing" of their standards of legitimacy (1993, 423), we offer a different interpretation. Reagan's advancement of innovative power structures was part of a successful response to the challenges of his environment. Reagan overcame the inability of previous presidents to act in an enervated regime, enacting reforms by embracing new values and creating new means to transmit this order.

Case Study Coda

Our emphasis on capturing responses that are related to challenges, reconstructs the concept of ‘regime building’ and affords a more parsimonious and nuanced reading of Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan’s presidencies. Both presidents responded to the same general set of environmental challenges. They met:

1) The exogenous challenge of the disjunctive era / immediate crisis;

--Roosevelt: Began reordering business / governmental relations to account for new industrial realities.

--Reagan: Began reordering business / governmental relations to account for the new realities of global capitalism

2) The challenge associated with coalition rebuilding ;

--Roosevelt: Expanded interests to include Midwestern elements.

--Reagan: Polarized interests to build a majority conservative coalition.

3) The challenge of power structure advancement / overcoming incongruence, which gave them the means to reconstruct;

--Roosevelt: Legitimized the dominant use of the Pluralist mode.

--Reagan: Legitimized the dominant use of the Plebiscitary mode.

4) The endogenous challenge of political regime building, which repudiates old commitments of ideology and interest, establishes new ones, while enshrining them as restoration of original American values;

--Roosevelt: Initiated the ‘modern’ departure.

--Reagan: Initiated the modern ‘course correction.’

While the first three factors can be classified within Skowronek’s terminology as emergent or historically particular challenges and the last as a recurrent or fundamentally abstract challenge, the cumulative nature of history renders every new combination of the four into a singular and unique set of challenges. Therefore, while all the reconstructive

presidents may have shared the challenge to build a new regime, the context of each challenge was particular and differing. It makes perfect sense then that their responses differed as well. Their means, methods, and relative success in altering prior commitments and interests must be judged in relation to their particular environmental challenges.

Therefore, it is not a sign of 'waning political time' that Ronald Reagan failed to construct the same kind of regime as did FDR. The fact that his regime, like that of Theodore Roosevelt's, did not totally repudiate the dominant political regime that came before it, does not bear testimony to Reagan's failure, but of the great success of FDR's response to dire challenges, which left a lesser challenge for his regime's successor even as it 'thickened' the institutional matrix of government and 'layered' a welfare state apparatus on top of older constitutional structures.²² However, both Reagan and Theodore Roosevelt's 'tactical' responses had anything but minor results. Changes that were thought nigh impossible, such as expanding the scope of government to balance the power of business under Roosevelt and reversing the trend in growth of government under Reagan, became possible as a result of their respective efforts. So, whatever the limits of these regime builders may be, it is impossible to conceive of the presidency or the political order after them outside the terms of the ideological commitments, interests, and power structures they established.

Skowronek is unable to properly categorize the Roosevelt and Reagan presidencies because his standards of evaluation are 'benchmarked' against an abstract response to the purely endogenous challenge of political regime building. He therefore views the challenge of 'political time' as existing temporally separate from emergent

challenges. While he sees that exogenous challenges often crosscut and burden political ones, Skowronek fails to appreciate the full dynamic between the two.

Conclusion

To judge Roosevelt and Reagan's accomplishments without proper regard for their particular and restricting exogenous challenges is to demonstrate the limits of an insightful yet, inflexible and overly abstract underlying theory. Still, neither the challenge and response dynamic nor our interpretation of regime building, such as is demonstrated by the cases of Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, questions Skowronek's central awareness about the importance of the endogenous challenges of "political time"—our model, in fact, enlarges and preserves it.

First, from a standpoint of methodology, with a more expansive understanding of the relationship between agency and environment the proper balance between the challenge of the 'period' and the response of the 'great man' is finally achieved. This then leads to a cumulative and particularistic perspective in evaluating presidential leadership, and avoids overly pessimistic 'benchmarking' tendencies. Second, our model demonstrates that Skowronek's flawed interpretation of the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, and his subsequent misdiagnosis about the 'waning of political time' are theoretical and systematic in nature and origin. This should rejuvenate the debate about how endogenous political challenges will continue to shape responses within the American presidency.

While Skowronek is right and "governmental norms and institutional modalities" are increasingly contributing to a 'thickening' of the state (1993, 418), it a mistake for

him to confuse this condition with a need to give up on the idea of regime building altogether. As Toynbee reminds, to abandon the process of challenge and response is to succumb to the internal failure of nerve that results in the loss of self-determination (vol. IV, 245-261). Presidents must, periodically, attempt to respond to their entire panoply of challenges by building either the constitutional or popular structures that overcomes the cycle of stasis.

Concluding that the development of political regimes is ended is analogous to a determination that the process of 'challenge and response' is ending. As this only occurs when the growth phase of an institution ends, we disagree strongly with Skowronek's assessment that it may be time to 'discard' the reconstructive premise of leadership (1993, 443).²³ If the constitutional and policy environment is too 'thick' to allow change through reconstructive politics-- because of interests, authorities, and defending institutions, then this thickness has itself become the penultimate challenge of the modern presidency. This is also true, if the commitments and interests served by the regime make its values too 'precious' to reform or disturb. Thus, even the most progressive commitments and interests can challenge growth if they are resistant to all change. However, the greatest challenge of all is if presidents were to fail to respond to the 'thickened state'. It is this potential for an abdication of responsibility that we ultimately challenge through our expanded process for the evaluation of presidential leadership.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, Bruce. 1991. *We the People: Foundations*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Aldrich, John and Richard G. Niemi, 1996. "The Sixth American Party System: Electoral Change, 1952-1992" in *Broken Contract: Changing Relationships Between Americans and Their Government*. ed. Stephen C. Craig. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Arnold, Peri E. 1986. *Making the Managerial Presidency: Comprehensive Reorganization Planning 1905-1996*. second ed. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- . 2003. "Effecting a Progressive Presidency: Roosevelt, Taft, and the Pursuit of Strategic Resources." *Studies in American Political Development*. Vol. 17 (1) Spring (61-81).
- Barber, James David. 1992. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bell, David S., Erwin C. Hargrove and Kevin Theakston. 1999. "Skill in Context: A Comparison of Politicians," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29.3 (1999): 528.
- Buchanan, Bruce. 1987. "Presidency-Relevant Character" in *The Citizens Presidency*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 137-187.
- Burnham, Walter Dean. 1970. *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- . 1991. "Critical Realignment: Dead or Alive?" in *The End of Realignment?: Interpreting American Electoral Eras*. ed. Byron E. Shafer. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- . 1999. "Constitutional Moments and Punctuated Equilibria: A Political Scientist Confronts Bruce Ackerman's We the People." *The Yale Law Journal*. New Haven. Vol 108. (8) 2237-2278.
- Burns, James McGregor, J.W. Peltason, and Thomas E. Cronin. eds. 1991. *Government By the People*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Burton, David H. 1997. *Theodore Roosevelt, American Politician: An Assessment*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University of Presses, Inc.
- Campbell, Colin. 1998. *U.S. Presidency in Crisis: A Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Carpenter, Daniel P. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Clubb, Jerome M, William H. Flanigan, and Nancy H. Zingale. 1980. *Partisan Realignment: Voters, Parties, and Government in American History*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Conley, Richard S. 2003. "Comparing the Legislative Presidencies of Eisenhower and Reagan: The Lessons of Political Time and Congressional Eras." in *Reassessing the Reagan Presidency*. ed. Conley, Richard S. Lanham, Maryland. University Press of America.
- Cooper, John Milton, Jr. 1990. *Pivotal Decades: The United States 1900-1920*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Crockett, David A. 2002. *The Opposition Presidency: Leadership and the Constrains of History*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.
- Cronin, Thomas E. 1975. *The State of the Presidency*. New York: Little, Brown and Co.
- . 1978. "An Imperiled Presidency." *Society*. 16 (1).
- Dinunzio, Mario R. 2003. *Theodore Roosevelt*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Dowding, Keith and Desmond King, eds. 1995. *Preferences, Institutions, and Rational Choice*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Durant, Robert F. 1992. *The Administrative Presidency Revisited*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Eldridge, Niles and Stephen Jay Gould. 1972. "Punctuated Equilibria: An Alternative to Phyletic Gradualism" in *Models in Paleobiology*. ed. J.M Schopf.
- Emmet, John Hughes. 1973. "The Office is What You Make It." in *The Presidency: The Power and the Glory*. ed. Mary Klein. Minneapolis: Winston Press.
- Fisher, Louis. 2002. "A Dose of Law and Realism for Presidential Studies." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 32: 672-692.
- Franck, Mathew. "Originalist Thinking: Reagan Revived the Founding," *nationalreview.com*, accessed June 9, 2004.
- Gargan, Edward T. ed. 1961. *The Intent of Toynbee's History*. Chicago: Loyola University Press.

- Genovese, Michael A. 1993. *The Presidency in an Age of Limits* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993)
- Gerring, John. 2003. "APD From a Methodological Point of View." *Studies in American Political Development*. Vol. 17 (1) Spring (82-102).
- Gersick, Connie J. G. 1991. "Revolutionary Change Theories: A Multilevel Exploration of the Punctuated Equilibrium Paradigm." *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 16 (1), 10-36.
- Gould, Lewis L. 1991. *The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- . 1996. *Reform and Regulation*. 3rd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Graber, Doris. 1993. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.
- Greenstein, Fred I. 1978. "Change and Continuity in the Modern Presidency," in *The New American Political System*, ed. Anthony King. Washington D.C: American Enterprise Institute.
- . ed. 1983. *The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 2000a. "The Qualities of Effective Presidents: An Overview from FDR to Bill Clinton," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 30 (1): 178
- . 2000b. *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Styles From FDR to George W. Bush*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Groover, William F. 1989. *The President as Prisoner: A Structural Critique of the Carter and Reagan Years*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hargrove, Erwin C. 2001. "Presidential Power and Political Science," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31 (2): 245.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1984. *Creativity in American Philosophy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Heclo, Hugh and Rudolph G. Penner. 1983. "Fiscal and Political Strategy in the Reagan Administration," in *The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment*. ed. Fred I. Greenstein. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hoekstra, Douglas J. 1999. "The Politics of Politics: Skowronek and Presidential Research," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29.3 (1999): 657

- . 1999a. "Comments on Theory and History, Structure and Agency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29.3 (1999): 682
- Hogan, Joseph J. 1988. "The Office of Management and Budget and Reaganomics: The Rise and Decline of a Presidential Staff Agency." in *Reagan's First Four Years: A New Beginning?* ed. John D. Lees and Michael Turner. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Howell, William G. 2003. *Power Without Persuasion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kelly, Sean Q. 1994. "Punctuated Change and the Era of Divided Government" in *New Perspectives on American Politics*. eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Calvin Jillson. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.
- Kernell, Samuel. 1986. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.
- King, Anthony. ed., *Both Ends of the Avenue: The Presidency, the Executive Branch, and Congress in the 1980s* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1983)
- Landy, Marc and Sidney M. Milkis. 2000. *Presidential Greatness*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Lieberman, Robert C. 2000. "Political Time and Policy Coalitions: Structure and Agency in Presidential Power," *Presidential Power: Forging the Presidency for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Robert Y. Shapiro, Martha Joynt Kumar, and Lawrence R. Jacobs (New York: Columbia University Press) 276.
- Lord, Carnes. 2003. *The Modern Prince: What Leaders Need to Know*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- McCormick, Richard L. 1985. "Political Parties in the United States: Reinterpreting Their Natural History." *The History Teacher*. 19 (1): 15-32. November.
- . 1986. *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McCullough, David. 1993. *Truman*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- . 2002. *John Adams*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- McSeveney, Samuel T. 1972. *The politics of depression; political behavior in the Northeast, 1893-1896*. New York: Oxford Universtiy Press.

- Merrill, Horace Samuel. 1957. *Bourbon Leader: Grover Cleveland and the Democratic Party*. ed. Oscar Handlin. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Miroff, Bruce. 2003. "The Presidential Spectacle" in *The Presidency and the Political System*. ed. Michael Nelson. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. 278-304.
- Moe, Terry M. 1985. "The Politicized Presidency" in *The New Direction in American Politics*. ed. John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Montagu, M.F. Ashley, ed. 1956. *Toynbee and History: Critical Essays and Reviews*. Boston: Porter Sargent.
- Morison, Elting E. ed. 1954. *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Morone, James A. 1990. *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Morris, Edmund. 2002. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House.
- Nathan, Richard P. 1975. *The Plot that Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- . 1983. *The Administrative Presidency*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Nelson, Michael, ed. 1999. "Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address," in *The Evolving Presidency: Addresses, Cases, Essays, Letters, Reports, Resolutions, Transcripts, and Other Leading Documents, 1787-1998*, Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 218-224.
- Neustadt, Richard E. 1960. *Presidential Power*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Nichols, David K. 1994. *The Myth of the Modern Presidency*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Ornstein, Norman J. ed. 1982. *President and Congress: Assessing Reagan's First Year*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Orren, Karen and Stephen Skowronek. 1998. "Regimes and Regime Building in American Government" *Political Science Quarterly*, 113 (4): 689-702.
- . 2004. *The Search for American Political Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Patterson, Thomas E. 1990. *The American Democracy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Pfiffner, James P. 1996a. *The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- . 1996b. *The Modern Presidency*. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's Press.
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics" *The American Political Science Review* 94 (2) June, 251-267.
- Pierson, Paul and Theda Skocpol. 2002. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science" in *Political Science: State of the Discipline*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Polsky, Andrew J. 2000 "The New "Dismal Science"? the Lessons of American Political Development for Politics Today," *Polity* 32 (3): 303.
- Reagan, Ronald. 1982. "President Reagan's April Address on Economy," in *Reagan's First Year*, Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc. 118.
- Reedy, George E. 1970. *Twilight of the Presidency*. Cleveland: World Publishing Co.
- Riley, Russell L. 2000. "The Limits of the Transformational Presidency," in *Presidential Power: Forging the Presidency for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Robert Y. Shapiro, Martha Joynt Kumar, and Lawrence R. Jacobs (New York: Columbia University Press) 446.
- Rose, Gary L. 1997 *American Presidency Under Siege*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Rossiter, Lawrence C. 1960. *The American Presidency*. New York: Harcourt and Brace.
- Scaife, Richard M, ed. 1983. *Ronald Reagan Talks to America*. Old Greenwich, CT: Devin Adair.
- Schick, Allen. 1982. "How the Budget was Won and Lost." in *President and Congress: Assessing Reagan's First Year*. ed. Norman J. Ornstein. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. 1973. *The Imperial Presidency*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- . 1974. *The Age of Roosevelt*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- . 1980. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- . 1988 *The Age of Jackson*. Boston: Little Brown and Co.
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1982. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities 1877 -1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1988. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." In *The Presidency and the Political System*, ed. Michael Nelson. Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988, 115-159.
- . 1993. *The Politics President's Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- . 1999 "Theory and History, Structure and Agency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (3): 672
- . 2002. "Presidency and American Political Development: A Third Look." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 32 (4). 743-753.
- Smith, Carolyn. 1990. *Presidential Press Conferences: A Critical Approach*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Smith, Rogers. 2000. "The Conditions of Their Choosing," *Polity* 32 (3): 339
- Spargens, William. 1979. *The Presidency and the Mass Media in the Age of Television* Washington D.C.: University Press of America.
- Spitzer, Robert J. 1983. *The Presidency and Public Policy: The Four Arenas of Presidential Power*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Stanley, Harold W. and Richard G. Niemi eds. 2003. *Vital Statistics on American Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.
- Stockman, David. 1986. *The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed*. New York: Harpercollins.
- Sundquist, James L. 1983. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- Teten, Ryan L. 2003. "Evolution of the Modern Rhetorical Presidency: Presidential Presentation and Development of the State of the Union Address." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 33 (2) 333-346.
- Thompson, Kenneth W. 1985. *Toynbee's Philosophy of World History and Politics*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

- Toynbee, A.J. 1939. *The Study of History*, Vol. 1-6. London: Oxford University Press.
- . 1946. *The Study of History*, abridgement of Vol. I-VI by D. C. Somerville. London: Oxford University Press.
- . 1957. *The Study of History*, abridgement of Vol. VII-X by D. C. Somerville. London: Oxford University Press.
- 1972. *A Study of History: The First Abridged One-Volume Edition*. New York: American Heritage Press.
- Tulis, Jeffrey K. 1987. *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Turner, Michael. 1988. "The Reagan White House, the Cabinet and the Bureaucracy." in *Reagan's First Four Years: A New Beginning?* ed. John D. Lees and Michael Turner. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Wanat, John and Karen Burke. 1982. "Estimating the Degree of Mobilization and Conversion in the 1890s: An Inquiry into the Nature of Electoral Change" *The American Political Science Review* 76 (2) June. 360-370.
- Waterman, Richard W. 1989. *Presidential Influence and the Administrative State*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press.
- Weiler, Michael and W. Barnett Pearce. eds. 1992. *Reagan and Public Discourse in America*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press.
- Welch, Richard E. 1988. *The Presidencies of Grover Cleveland*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Winetroun, Kenneth. 1975. *Arnold Toynbee: The Ecumenical Vision*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- Wood, B. Dan and Waterman, Richard W. 1991. "The Dynamics of Political Control of the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review*. 85 (3): September.

NOTES

¹ See Skowronek, 1993, 36 for his typology of the cycle. We have borrowed the conception of the 'political regime' and the phrase 'regime building' from Orren and Skowronek's (1998) 'Regimes and Regime Building in American Government: A Review of the literature on the 1940s.' The work draws heavily from the insights of *The Politics President's Make* (1993) but does not resolve the issue over the regime building status of Theodore Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan either. Thus, we work from the idea that the regime is an institution that "facilitates some higher level of management... accommodating the simultaneous operation of several incongruous orderings of authority" (1998, 701) while trying to better explain the interactive effects of such an institution with the presidency.

² In Toynbee's 'plan of the book' he subtitles volumes: II= The Geneses of Civilizations, volume III = The Growths of Civilizations, and volume IV = The Breakdowns of Civilizations.

³ A good treatment of Toynbee's place within the literature and tradition of universal history is provided in Friedrich Engel-Janosi's essay: "Toynbee and the Tradition of Universal History" in *The Intent of Toynbee's History*, Ed. Edward T. Gargan, 1961, Loyola University Press. (47-72).

⁴ We note the affinities between Toynbee's view of causation with those of the 'new' historical institutional school who stress that path dependencies, unintended consequences, and highly interactive variables make cause and effect much more complex than behavioralists sometimes assume (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002; 710-713).

⁵ Vol I, p 446. "while I have criticized them (historians) for trying to apply the technique of science outside its province, I have never objected to their employing the sciences in a menial capacity as hewers of wood and drawers of water."

⁶ Regime building depends on the cycle of disruption or breaking away from long-established political-institutional regimes, followed by consolidation of new forms of control; whose effectiveness eventually dissipates and gives cause for the next disruption... ie: Toynbee's 'differentiation, integration, and differentiation' (1988,118-119; 1993, 4-17, 49-52; 1998).

⁷ Egocentric bias: Skowronek defines the regime using limited (non-cumulative) temporal parameters that are narrowly constructed and are derivative of his own main focus on the disruptive character of presidential leadership.

⁸ Orren and Skowronek come to a similar conclusion in 1998, however, they still show considerable inconsistency in defining just when regime construction has occurred. They variously include and exclude episodes of regime building in their 'set' of occurrences without ever settling the issue, demonstrating that the problem with Skowronek's interpretation of the presidential role in regime building still lies at the theoretical level (699-701).

⁹ In a sense Reagan consolidated Nixon's 'administrative presidency.' Yet he, like every other regime builder, also used new power structures in order to break with old governmental systems (primarily economic ones). The simultaneous regime building efforts of Reagan's presidency, consolidating gains and breaking with the past, are just another example of the effect of what Orren and Skowronek call the 'tortured, often stalemated course of regime construction over the last few decades' (1998, 770).

¹⁰ According to Ackerman's (1991) 'Constitutional Moments' are events that reconstruct both 'constitutional' and 'political' regimes. The fact that Jefferson and Jackson were not constitutional regime builders, but were political regime builders buttresses the argument that there are different ways of building a political regime.

¹¹ Both Cleveland and Nixon had the opportunity to exercise reconstructive warrants in their second terms. Abstractly, they must then be ‘expected’ to do so. The fact that they did not demonstrates that the ‘actor’s response to the challenge when it comes’ is still of paramount importance.

¹² Lawson who writes “a regime has less to do with power per se than it does with the way in which power is used... regimes embody the norms and principles of the political organization of the state” (1993, 187). Thus, a key to defining a ‘regime’ may be the values that are embodied in it. Ultimately we believe it is possible for there to be an internal change in regime values that occurs under an unchanging dominant political party. We thus argue that the values that prompted the constitutional level changes embodied in the 16th through 19th amendments were new and not part of the value system of Lincoln’s Republican regime.

¹³ We do not ignore Skowronek’s view of Theodore Roosevelt as a master ‘state builder’ (1982), nor argue against Orren and Skowronek’s observation that “for all (the early 20th century reformers) creativity in rearranging institutions (they) never dismantled any important one” (1998, 699), we merely suggest that the incremental building and lack of deep breaks with the past can be explained in the context of the partisan continuity of power. This partisan continuity obscures the fact that a whole new layer of progressive values were added to the mixture. That they were not dominant is of less import than the fact that they were added.

¹⁴ This turn of events became very well known as the ‘Realignment of 1896.’ Even though the Republicans maintained power, there were well-documented shifts in the electoral patterns that give this realignment its legitimacy. Suddenly, voter turnout dropped, split ticket voting increased, and the Midwest region became part of the ‘rock solid’ Republican east-west axis, politically isolating the south until the New Deal. Following the realignment theory of Burnham (1970), Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1980), and the critique of McCormick (1985) it is possible that realignment policy preferences changed as well. Furthermore, since T. Roosevelt’s presidency advanced the administrative power structures that ultimately resulted in lasting regulatory programs and reform, this suggests that presidential regime theory shares many affinities and has a place within the larger context of realignment theory.

¹⁵ Even sympathetic biographers have concluded that T. Roosevelt’s presidency was ‘a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing.’ (Morison, 1954) However, too much ink has been spilled investigating this ‘nothing’ to convince us that anyone has pronounced the final word on the subject. We suggest that appraisal based on the ‘challenge and response’ rather than a assessment of effort and effect is the only way to get beyond this glass is ‘half-full’ versus ‘half-empty’ debate.

¹⁶ Due to reapportionment and the creation of additional seats in the House of Representatives in 1902, the Republicans gained 11 seat and the Democrats gained 27 for a 208 to 178 Republican majority. This was considered a great victory due to the normal losses incurred by the president’s party in off year elections during this period. Additionally, Roosevelt was elected with 336 electoral votes and by a popular margin of 7.6 million votes to 5.1 million votes; again, landslide margins by period standards.

¹⁷ As always in a cumulative view of history, the sequence of events plays an important part in the difference between T. Roosevelt and LBJ’s context. Roosevelt acted *after* the collapse of the Democratic opposition in the realignment of 1896, and LBJ acted before a realignment. Thus, Roosevelt was challenged to balance newly established blocks to get what he wanted and LBJ was challenged to upset long established blocks. See Pierson (2000) for more on the effect of ‘when’ things happen.

¹⁸ Consistent with past literature, here we use the term ‘party system’ as Clubb, Flanagan, Zingale (1980), Sundquist (1983), Aldrich and Niemi (1996) do to denote the ‘long generation’ electoral and party configurations to which the American polity seems to be prone. Once more rigorously specified, Orren and Skowronek’s (1998) term ‘political regime’ might be a better way to conceptualize this phenomenon.

¹⁹ Like the realignment of 1896, the sixth generation realignment (1964-1972), was precipitated by national unrest that resulted in a sudden ‘puncture’ of the electoral behavior status quo followed by a quantifiable

shift and reestablishment of a new, relatively stable, equilibrium. Between 1960-1972, political participation declined by 10%, split-ticket voting doubled, candidate centered elections replaced party machine driven elections, and regional blocks started to realign with the 'solid' south becoming competitive, and the liberal coasts becoming more Democratic (Aldrich and Niemi, 1996). A strong case could be made that Johnson's full term was both reconstructive and disjunctive, and therefore Nixon's 1972 landslide could have become a critical realigning election had he been able to pursue reconstructive politics. In this reading, Watergate set back the beginning of the conservative regime that Reagan eventually created. The effect this temporal dislocation had in separating realignment from regime construction certainly affected the nature of the challenge in 1980. It is noted that, as responses to national crisis, the separation in time between the regime building efforts of Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt and their respective 'realignments' were compressed in time.

²⁰ Central to the 'progressive' conception of the civil service is the idea of 'disinterested competence.' However, as Theodore Roosevelt's administration demonstrated, competence was not as disinterested as reformers choose to believe. The 'disinterested competence' of TR's railroad regulating ICC decidedly favored the Progressive interests of his regime. Toynbee's reminder to be on the guard against 'sciencism' could thus be evoked to support Reagan's insight as to the inherent bias of bureaucracy lead by 'experts.'

²¹ As Schick (1982) notes, the Republicans averaged only two defections per vote on a series of Democratic sponsored amendments. With only a 6 seat majority, Reagan could ill afford more. Here is perhaps one case where the historical contingency of agency is under appreciated. Had Majority Leader Howard Baker not decided to throw his lot in with president Reagan, "deciding to mobilize the Senate into an instrument of presidential power," and instead kept the Senate a bastion of liberal spending attitudes, Reagan may have met with failure (18).

²² As Toynbee suggests, robust challenges evoke robust responses and limited challenges evoke limited responses. However, this does not mean that the challenge of managing change in a mature welfare state will always be a lesser challenge. Indeed, the 'intercurrence' ~to borrow Skowronek's term (2004), between constitutional structures and welfare state apparatus may become a great challenge if it prevents presidents from periodically leading the reconstruction of politics.

²³ As long as the American political system is subject to the cycle of stasis and change (Burnham, 1970, 1991, 1999; Aldrich and Niemi 1996), the president will be forced to respond to its challenge.