## \*\*\* Political Capital

### Yes Political Capital Key

#### Only a risk PC works – agenda setting – Klein, Edwards, and Lee are all wrong

Drum 3-12. [Kevin, political blogger, “Presidents and the Bully Pulpit” Mother Jones -- http://motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/03/presidents-and-bully-pulpit]

Do presidents really have the power to persuade? Citing the work of political scientists George Edward and Frances Lee, Ezra Klein writes in the New Yorker this week that they don't. Not much, anyway. When presidents talk, he argues, all they really do is polarize: instead of persuading, they simply make partisan divides even starker. So if you didn't have much of an opinion about contraceptive coverage a month ago, you probably do now — and thanks to President Obama's intervention, you're now for it if you're a Democrat and against it if you're a Republican: Edwards’s work suggests that Presidential persuasion isn’t effective with the public. Lee’s work suggests that Presidential persuasion might actually have an anti-persuasive effect on the opposing party in Congress. And, because our system of government usually requires at least some members of the opposition to work with the President if anything is to get done, that suggests that the President’s attempts at persuasion might have the perverse effect of making it harder for him to govern. ....The question, [Paul] Begala says, is: What is the alternative to Presidential persuasion? “If you don’t try it at all, it guarantees you won’t persuade anybody,” he says. “And, to put it simply, your people in Congress and in the country will hate you if you don’t.” That’s the real dilemma for the modern White House. Aggressive, public leadership is typically ineffective and, during periods of divided government, can actually make matters worse. But passivity is even more dangerous. In that case, you’re not getting anything done and you look like you’re not even trying. The entire essay is worth a read. It's surprisingly persuasive. And yet, that bolded passage makes a key point: even if presidential speeches don't accomplish much, we really don't know if shutting up would be any better. After all, we've never had a modern president who specialized in shutting up. And since it's not a trait likely to lead to the Oval Office, we probably never will. I also think that Ezra doesn't really grapple with the strongest arguments on the other side. For one thing, although there are examples of presidential offensives that failed (George Bush on Social Security privatization), there are also example of presidential offensives that succeeded (George Bush on going to war with Iraq). The same is true for broader themes. For example, Edwards found that "surveys of public opinion have found that support for regulatory programs and spending on health care, welfare, urban problems, education, environmental protection and aid to minorities increased rather than decreased during Reagan’s tenure." OK. But what about the notion that tax cuts are good for the economy? The public may have already been primed to believe this by the tax revolts of the late '70s, but I'll bet Reagan did a lot to cement public opinion on the subject. And the Republican tax jihad has been one of the most influential political movements of the past three decades. More generally, I think it's a mistake to focus narrowly on presidential speeches about specific pieces of legislation. Maybe those really don't do any good. But presidents do have the ability to rally their own troops, and that matters. That's largely what Obama has done in the contraception debate. Presidents also have the ability to set agendas. Nobody was talking about invading Iraq until George Bush revved up his marketing campaign in 2002, and after that it suddenly seemed like the most natural thing in the world to a lot of people. Beyond that, it's too cramped to think of the bully pulpit as just the president, just giving a few speeches. It's more than that. It's a president mobilizing his party and his supporters and doing it over the course of years. That's harder to measure, and I can't prove that presidents have as much influence there as I think they do. But I confess that I think they do. Truman made containment national policy for 40 years, JFK made the moon program a bipartisan national aspiration, Nixon made working-class resentment the driving spirit of the Republican Party, Reagan channeled the rising tide of the Christian right and turned that resentment into the modern-day culture wars, and George Bush forged a bipartisan consensus that the threat of terrorism justifies nearly any defense. It's true that in all of these cases presidents were working with public opinion, not against it, but I think it's also true that different presidents might have shaped different consensuses. Maybe I'm protesting too much. I actually think Ezra has the better of the argument here. But even if public opinion can rarely be directly challenged and turned around, it can be molded and channeled. Presidents and their party machines can influence which latent issues stay dormant and which ones become national obsessions. They can take advantage of events in ways that others can't. After all, talking is what human beings do. It's hard to credit the idea that it never really accomplishes anything.

#### PC theory true- empirics prove deal making matters- Klein is overly pessimistic

Mandel 12

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I want to offer Klein one more note of optimism. He writes: Back-room bargains and quiet negotiations do not, however, present an inspiring vision of the Presidency. And they fail, too. Boehner and Obama spent much of last summer sitting in a room together, but, ultimately, the Speaker didn’t make a private deal with the President for the same reason that Republican legislators don’t swoon over a public speech by him: he is the leader of the Democratic Party, and if he wins they lose. This suggests that, as the two parties become more sharply divided, it may become increasingly difficult for a President to govern—and there’s little that he can do about it. I disagree. The details of the deal matter, not just the party lines about the dispute. There is no way the backroom negotiations Clinton conducted with Gingrich over social security reform could have been possible if we had prime ministers, instead of presidents. The president possesses political capital Congress doesn’t. History tells us there are effective ways to use that capital. One lesson: quiet action on domestic policy, visible and audible leadership on national security.

#### Pc matters (Dickinson concludes neg)

Dickinson ‘09 (Matthew, professor of political science at Middlebury College. He taught previously at Harvard University, where he also received his Ph.D., working under the supervision of presidential scholar Richard Neustadt, We All Want a Revolution: Neustadt, New Institutionalism, and the Future of Presidency Research, Presidential Studies Quarterly 39 no4 736-70 D 2009)

Small wonder, then, that initial efforts to find evidence of presidential power centered on explaining legislative outcomes in Congress. Because scholars found it difficult to directly and systematically measure presidential influence or "skill," however, they often tried to estimate it indirectly, after first establishing a baseline model that explained these outcomes on other factors, including party strength in Congress, members of Congress's ideology, the president's electoral support and/or popular approval, and various control variables related to time in office and political and economic context. With the baseline established, one could then presumably see how much of the unexplained variance might be attributed to presidents, and whether individual presidents did better or worse than the model predicted. Despite differences in modeling assumptions and measurements, however, these studies came to remarkably similar conclusions: individual presidents did not seem to matter very much in explaining legislators' voting behavior or lawmaking outcomes (but see Lockerbie and Borrelli 1989, 97-106). As Richard Fleisher, Jon Bond, and B. Dan Wood summarized, "[S]tudies that compare presidential success to some baseline fail to find evidence that perceptions of skill have systematic effects" (2008, 197; see also Bond, Fleisher, and Krutz 1996, 127; Edwards 1989, 212). To some scholars, these results indicate that Neustadt's "president-centered" perspective is incorrect (Bond and Fleisher 1990, 221-23). In fact, the aggregate results reinforce Neustadt's recurring refrain that presidents are weak and that, when dealing with Congress, a president's power is "comparably limited" (Neustadt 1990, 184). The misinterpretation of the findings as they relate to PP stems in part from scholars' difficulty in defining and operationalizing presidential influence (Cameron 2000b; Dietz 2002, 105-6; Edwards 2000, 12; Shull and Shaw 1999). But it is also that case that scholars often misconstrue Neustadt's analytic perspective; his description of what presidents must do to influence policy making does not mean that he believes presidents are the dominant influence on that process. Neustadt writes from the president's perspective, but without adopting a president-centered explanation of power. Nonetheless, if Neustadt clearly recognizes that a president's influence in Congress is exercised mostly, as George Edwards (1989) puts it, "at the margins," his case studies in PP also suggest that, within this limited bound, presidents do strive to influence legislative outcomes. But how? Scholars often argue that a president's most direct means of influence is to directly lobby certain members of Congress, often through quid pro quo exchanges, at critical junctures during the lawmaking sequence. Spatial models of legislative voting suggest that these lobbying efforts are most effective when presidents target the median, veto, and filibuster "pivots" within Congress. This logic finds empirical support in vote-switching studies that indicate that presidents do direct lobbying efforts at these pivotal voters, and with positive legislative results. Keith Krehbiel analyzes successive votes by legislators in the context of a presidential veto and finds "modest support for the sometimes doubted stylized fact of presidential power as persuasion" (1998,153-54). Similarly, David Brady and Craig Volden look at vote switching by members of Congress in successive Congresses on nearly identical legislation and also conclude that presidents do influence the votes of at least some legislators (1998, 125-36). In his study of presidential lobbying on key votes on important domestic legislation during the 83rd (1953-54) through 108th (2003-04) Congresses, Matthew Beckman shows that in addition to these pivotal voters, presidents also lobby leaders in both congressional parties in order to control what legislative alternatives make it onto the congressional agenda (more on this later). These lobbying efforts are correlated with a greater likelihood that a president's legislative preferences will come to a vote (Beckmann 2008, n.d.). In one of the most concerted efforts to model how bargaining takes place at the individual level, Terry Sullivan examines presidential archives containing administrative headcounts to identify instances in which members of Congress switched positions during legislative debate, from initially opposing the president to supporting him in the final roll call (Sullivan 1988,1990,1991). Sullivan shows that in a bargaining game with incomplete information regarding the preferences of the president and members of Congress, there are a number of possible bargaining outcomes for a given distribution of legislative and presidential policy preferences. These outcomes depend in part on legislators' success in bartering their potential support for the president's policy for additional concessions from the president. In threatening to withhold support, however, members of Congress run the risk that the president will call their bluff and turn elsewhere for the necessary votes. By capitalizing on members' uncertainty regarding whether their support is necessary to form a winning coalition, Sullivan theorizes that presidents can reduce members of Congress's penchant for strategic bluffing and increase the likelihood of a legislative outcome closer to the president's preference. "Hence, the skill to bargain successfully becomes a foundation for presidential power even within the context of electorally determined opportunities," Sullivan concludes (1991, 1188). Most of these studies infer presidential influence, rather than measuring it directly (Bond, Fleisher, and Krutz 1996,128-29; see also Edwards 1991). Interestingly, however, although the vote "buying" approach is certainly consistent with Neustadt's bargaining model, none of his case studies in PP show presidents employing this tactic. The reason may be that Neustadt concentrates his analysis on the strategic level: "Strategically the question is not how he masters Congress in a peculiar instance, but what he does to boost his mastery in any instance" (Neustadt 1990, 4). For Neustadt, whether a president's lobbying efforts bear fruit in any particular circumstance depends in large part on the broader pattern created by a president's prior actions when dealing with members of Congress (and "Washingtonians" more generally). These previous interactions determine a president's professional reputation--the "residual impressions of [a president's] tenacity and skill" that accumulate in Washingtonians' minds, helping to "heighten or diminish" a president's bargaining advantages. "Reputation, of itself, does not persuade, but it can make persuasions easier, or harder, or impossible" (Neustadt 1990, 54).

#### Ideology doesn’t outweigh – presidential success dictates votes

Lebo, 2010 (Matthew J. Lebo, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Stony Brook University, and Andrew O'Geen, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Stony Brook University, Journal of Politics, “The President’s Role in the Partisan Congressional Arena” forthcoming, google)

In many ways, the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches in the constitution is mirrored in the way the two institutions are studied. Even as the study of parties in Congress continues to deepen our understanding of that branch, the role of the president is usually left out or 3 marginalized. At the same time, research that centers on the president’s success has developed in parallel with little crossover. The result of this separation is that well developed theories of parties in Congress exist but we know much less about the important interactions between the executive and the legislature and the parties that connect them. For example, between models of conditional party government (Rohde 1991; Aldrich and Rohde 2001), cartel theory (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005), and others (e.g. Lebo, McGlynn and Koger 2007; Patty 2008), we have an advanced understanding of how parties are important in Congress, but little knowledge of where the president fits. As the head of his party, the president’s role in the partisan politics of Congress should be central. Keeping this centrality in mind, we use established theories of congressional parties to model the president’s role as an actor within the constraints of the partisan environment of Congress. We also find a role for the president's approval level, a variable of some controversy in the presidential success literature. Further, we are interested in both the causes and consequences of success. We develop a theory that views the president’s record as a key component of the party politics that are so important to both the passage of legislation and the electoral outcomes that follow. Specifically, theories of partisan politics in Congress argue that cross-pressured legislators will side with their parties in order to enhance the collective reputation of their party (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005), but no empirical research has answered the question: "of what are collective reputations made?" We demonstrate that it is the success of the president – not parties in Congress – that predicts rewards and punishments to parties in Congress. This allows us to neatly fit the president into existing theories of party competition in Congress while our analyses on presidential success enable us to fit existing theories of party politics into the literature on the presidency.

#### **Political capital is crucial- political science research and history proves**

Beckmann and McGann ‘8

(http://jtp.sagepub.com Journal of Theoretical Politics DOI: 10.1177/0951629807085818 2008; 20; 201 Journal of Theoretical Politics Matthew N. Beckmann and Anthony J. McGann Navigating the Legislative Divide: Polarization, Presidents, and Policymaking in the United States, MATTHEW N. BECKMANN is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Irvine. He is currently working on a book-length project that explains and tests a new theory of presidents’ inﬂuence on Capitol Hill, 1953–2004. ANTHONY J. MCGANN is Associate Professor of Political Science at theUni- versity of California, Irvine and Reader in Government at the University of Essex.)

A second question focuses on presidents’ role in polarized politics. Even as empiricists have cited presidents as key legislative players – in agenda setting as well as coalition building (Rossiter, 1956; Neustadt, 1960; Covington, 1987, 1988; Sullivan, 1988, 1990; Edwards, 1989; Bond and Fleisher, 1990; Peterson, 1990; Covington et al., 1995; Cameron, 2000; Edwards and Barrett, 2000) – to date the theoretical models have largely conﬁned presidents to a reactive role, that of a veto player.7 **Below we incorporate presidents as strategic players into the theoretical models of lawmaking** when proactively promoting preferred poli- cies. In doing so, we not only specify elements of this strategy but also examine the conditions under which they will be effective. Finally, what does this mean for the policies that the president ultimately signs into law? The foremost implication of the preference-based models is that all congressional paths funnel toward the center of congressional members’ pre- ferences. But listening to the Capitol’s so called ‘centrists’ suggests federal laws **frequently deviate from their preferences**. Seemingly pivotal **lawmakers regularly pronounce a bittersweet** **assessment** of their chamber’s products – better than nothing but far from ideal. Our ﬁnal question, therefore, examines whether all lawmaking involves moves toward the center of the ideological spectrum or whether some conditions enable presidents to pull outcomes away from the phil- osophical middle and toward the ideological extreme. Overcoming the Ideological Divide To this point it has been argued that polarization tends to promote gridlock. Par- tisan polarization does so inasmuch as it encourages lawmakers to put posturing ahead of negotiating, and ideological polarization does so inasmuch as it reduces the range of issues where pivotal voters can agree to pass any new law over the status quo. Here we build from this theoretical baseline to examine the effect of incorporating two important stylistic features: presidents and polarization. The Wellsprings of Presidential Power In his seminal work on the presidency, Richard Neustadt (1960) cited the ofﬁce’s informal levers of power – not its constitutional levers of power – as central to understanding presidents’ role in American politics generally, and federal lawmaking in particular. For Neustadt, these informal powers were rooted in the presidency’s unrivaled perspective and prestige; for Sam Kernell (1993), they stem from presidents’ **unique capacity to rally public pressure against otherwise recalcitrant lawmakers** (see also Canes-Wrone, 2005). And beyond personal persuasion and ‘going public’, presidents and their aides **also enjoy a distinct ability to engage in what political scientists call vote-buying** and Washington insiders call ‘horse-trading’.8 Whatever the president’s tactical choice – private persuasion, public pressure, or vote buying – they all ﬁt under the same strategic umbrella; each reﬂects the president’s allocation of president-controlled resources to alter lawmakers’ posi- tions. As such, we employ the omnibus concept of ‘presidential political capital’ to capture this class of presidential lobbying. More precisely, we deﬁne presidents’ political capital as the resources White House ofﬁcials can allocate to induce changes in lawmakers’ position on roll-call votes.9 This deﬁnition of presidential political capital comports well with previous scholarship (e.g. Groseclose and Snyder, 1996) as well as contemporaneous accounts of White House lobbying. For example, after watching the administration’s recent **effort before a vote on an important trade** bill, the next-day’s Washington Post article described the situation: So many top Bush administration ofﬁcials were working the Capitol last night that Democrats joked that the **hallways looked like a Cabinet meeting** . . . The last-minute negotiations for votes resembled the wheeling and dealing on a car lot . . . Members took advantage of the opportunity by requesting such things as fundraising appear- ances by Cheney and the restoration of money the White House has tried to cut from agriculture programs. (Blustein and Allen, 2005: s. A) Nearly 20 years earlier, Ronald Reagan’s OMB 251), described a similar scene: ‘The last 10 percent or 20 percent of the votes needed for a majority of both houses on the 1981 tax cut had to be bought, period’. Applying the well-known vote-buying models (see Snyder, 1991; Groseclose, 1996; Groseclose and Snyder, 1996) to this setup, we show how **presidents can strategically target their political capital to legislators** to the end of **inﬂuencing** lawmakers and the **policies they pass.** From there we incorporate polarization into the model to show how it conditions the president’s inﬂuence. The Basic Model To start, let us consider a simple vote-buying game. There are two types of players: a president who seeks to buy votes such that the Senate passes legisla- tion more to his liking than it otherwise would, and senators, who must balance the utility they derive from voting in line with their default ideal with the beneﬁts that the president offers. Hence we assume that the legislative outcome can be described as a point on the Real number line. The president’s utility function is: Up = Aðo, pÞ − B where o is the outcome, p is the president’s ideal point and B is the sum of poli- tical capital the president spends. Let us assume that p ≥ o ≥ status quo (i.e., that the president wishes to move the outcome to ‘the right’.) Furthermore, assume that A (o, p) is a function of the distance between the outcome and presi- dent’s ideal – increasing as the outcome (o) approaches his ideal (p). The utility function of a senator is a function of whether they vote yea or nay, and whether they support the proposal sufﬁciently to vote for it absent any presi- dential pressure or bribe: If si ≤ o: Yea: Ui = Ci ðo, si Þ + bi Nay: Ui = 0 If si ≥ o Yea: 0 Nay: −Ci ðo, si Þ + bi where bi is the political capital offered to each individual senator, si is the sena- tor’s ideal point and C (o, si Þ is a function of the distance between o and s i – with senators’ utility increasing as the distance between the outcome and their ideal decreases. One interpretation of senators’ ideal points is the most extreme outcome a senator will support without a bribe. Senators for whom si ≥ o will support proposal o without being lobbied, and indeed would have to be lobbied not to support it, whereas senators for whom si < o will not vote for proposal o unless the president expends some political capital on them. Like Groseclose and Snyder (1996), we assume senators derive utility from their revealed prefer- ence over policies, not just the outcome. As a ﬁrst point, it is worth stating the obvious: **the greater the president’s political capital, the greater his ability to inﬂuence legislators’ votes**. If bi = 0 – either because the president chose not to get involved or because he lacks politi- cal capital to spend – then the White House is limited to the familiar role of veto bargaining (see Cameron, 2000). Indeed, when unwilling or unable to spend the political capital that presidential lobbying demands, the president and his team **cannot push a proactive legislative agenda**. By contrast, as bi increases, the administration’s ability to ply any particular member increases, thereby granting presidents a positive role in the policymaking process.

#### Political capital key to agenda—empirics

Schier 09

Schier 09 (Steven E., professor of political science at Carleton College, “Understanding the Obama Presidency”, The Forum, Vol. 7, Issue 1, http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1283&context=forum)

At the center of the conflict lies the desire of presidents to create political “regimes” supported by popular approval and constitutional authority (Schier 2004, 3). A regime is a stable authority structure that reworks Washington power arrangements to facilitate its own dominance. Presidential power is intimately tied to presidential authority, defined as the “expectations that surround the exercise of power at a given moment; the perception of what it is appropriate for a given president to do” (Skowronek 1997, 18). Authority, to Skowronek, rests on the “warrants” drawn from the politics of the moment to justify action and secure the legitimacy of changes. The more stable a president's grant of authority, the easier his exercise of power. If a president claims more authority than he actually possesses, however, he invites challenges from rivals that can reduce his authority and power. Obama, initially at least, has broad grants of power and authority. Yet as his political capital drops, the authority of his office will surely shrink. That has been the case with all recent presidents, and will occur during Obama’s time in the oval office. As adverse events arrive, as they inevitably will, he will find that his warrant of authority will fade first, long before his direct presidential powers face serious challenge.

#### Political capital determines the agenda – above anything else

Light 99

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In chapter 2, I will consider just how capital affects the basic parameters of the domestic agenda. Though the internal resources are important contributors to timing and size, capital remains the cirtical factor. That conclusion will become essential in understanding the domestic agenda. Whatever the President’s personal expertise, character, or skills, capital is the most important resource. In the past, presidential scholars have focused on individual factors in discussing White House decisions, personality being the dominant factor. Yet, given low levels in presidential capital, even the most positive and most active executive could make little impact. A president can be skilled, charming, charismatic, a veritable legislative wizard, but if he does not have the basic congressional strength, his domestic agenda will be severely restricted – capital affects both the number and the content of the President’s priorities. Thus, it is capital that determines whether the President will have the opportunity to offer a detailed domestic program, whether he will be restricted to a series of limited initiatives and vetoes. Capital sets the basic parameters of the agenda, determining the size of the agenda and guiding the criteria for choice. Regardless of the President’s personality, capital is the central force behind the domestic agenda.

### No Political Capital Not Key

#### PC fails during election season

Lebo and O'Geen '11 (July 2011, Southern Political Science Association, Matthew J. Lebo, Stony Brook University, Andrew J. O'Geen, Davidson College, "The President’s Role in the Partisan Congressional Arena", ms.cc.sunysb.edu/~mlebo/The%20Presidents%20Role%20in%20the%20Partisan%20Congressional%20Arena.pdf//Aspomer)

The president’s copartisans in Congress have electoral incentives to help him win legislative victories and those that oppose him have an interest in seeing him defeated. This is true even when we take into account the relative ideological preferences of parties, congressional leadership, and the president. Starting with the consequences of success instead of its causes is a distinctive way to begin but provides the needed setting for the hypotheses of partisan politics to follow. Principally, we assume members are motivated by a desire for reelection (Mayhew 1974). We further assume that members will act in a manner toward the president’s agenda that is going to provide them the most benefit. Studies have found that, for members of the president’s party, electoral fortunes are tied very closely to the popularity of the president (Abramowitz 1985; Cover 1986; Gronke, Koch, and Wilson 2003; Jacobson 1997). Our expectation is therefore that the members of the president’s party will act to support his agenda above and beyond what one might expect simply from preferences alone. Borrowing hypotheses central to conditional party government and cartel theory gives us a framework within which to work here. First, we perceive a congressional party as wanting to improve its collective reputation in order to enhance members’ electoral fortunes (Cox and McCubbins 2005). Second, members of Congress see legislative outcomes as keys to these reputations. Third—and here we depart from the cartel model—the victories/losses that member of Congress expect voters to reward/punish are those of the central actor in American politics, the president. The president’s victories should rally voters to his copartisans and his defeats should drive voters from them. From the perspective of voters, Cartel Theory’s hypothesis that party reputation depends mostly on the success of parties in Congress seems questionable. We might instead expect voters’ opinions about the president to be the primary variable that affects their opinions about parties in Congress and elsewhere. If Cox and McCubbins miss the exact connections here, they are not alone. Research on the sources of opinions about Congress fails to specify a role for the legislative success of the president (e.g., BoxSteffensmeier and Tomlinson 2000; Durr, Gilmour, and Wolbrecht 1997; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995; Kimball and Patterson 1997; Patterson and Magleby 1992; Rudolph 2002). More recent work has shown that opinions about Congress have less to do with the day-to-day working of the institution and more to do with a general evaluation of the political climate and presidential evaluations (Lebo 2008). We expect that, because of his central role, the public is more likely to score wins and losses as they relate to the president, not to the parties of Congress. This should not be surprising in a country where less than a majority of people can identify the Speaker of the House.3 Legislators should see their own electoral fortunes changing with the success level of the president. The polarizing effect of the president when he enters the legislative arena can also heighten levels of partisanship in Congress (Lee 2009). When a president sticks his neck out and is defeated, the media’s attention is captured and the opposition is more easily able to paint the president as ineffective. As the single most visible member of his party, this should have a serious impact on his party’s electoral success. Edwards (2009, 187) points to George W. Bush’s abilities to champion and then pass Medicare Reform in 2003 and his failures on Social Security and immigration reform in 2005–2006 as examples of a president working within and outside the constraints of his strategic position. Where President Bush failed legislatively, he did so by failing to keep his copartisans in Congress squarely behind him. Thus, among the concerns of cross-pressured members of Congress, they must consider the harm to their party label when their president fails or the benefit their party can reap from a successful president and, perhaps, from his coattails as well. Our expectations certainly fit with conventional wisdom. In the world of Washington politics, a common notion is that a direct line can be traced from the president as head of his party to the electoral outcomes of his co-partisans in Congress. This is one lesson taken from or reinforced by the 1993 failure of health care reform and the 1994 elections that followed. If the public in fact reacts to presidential success in their votes for members of Congress we should have support for our initial hypothesis: H1: The level of presidential success over a congressional term will be positively related to the electoral success of his party’s members in the elections that follow. Thus, contrary to Cartel Theory, we expect that MCs will see helping a president of their party or defeating a president of the opposition as the best way to bolster their collective reputation. And, importantly, party reputation can help a legislator not only by individual electoral gain. Increasing her party’s chances of maintaining or gaining majority status are additional reasons for working for the good of the party. In fact, even MCs who are electorally safe may work harder for the benefits of their party or will at least be more likely targets for party leadership seeking roll-call support (Carson et al. 2010). Since the importance of collective party reputation stands as a main tenet of Cartel Theory, discerning the relative rewards of successful parties and successful presidents may serve as an important revision here. But thinking about the benefits of presidential success is also useful in conceptualizing the causes of success in the partisan arena. We assume that the president’s power is constrained by his position in the party system and that his role should be viewed as that of an actor in the legislative process. Our focus on the environment in Congress as a key to presidential success follows the work of Bond and Fleisher (1990) and others (e.g., Peterson 1990; Rudalevige 2002). Of particular importance are the preferences and actions of members of the president’s party (whether they are in the majority or not). Here there is a great deal to be borrowed and adapted from the literature on congressional parties. When the president enters the legislative arena he is subject to the same forces that describe inter-party dynamics. The factors that affect his chances of success should be those that measure his place within the partisan environment. How large is his party in the House? How cohesive are preferences within the parties? How unified are parties in their voting behavior? How similar are the preferences of the president and congressional leadership? What do parties gain and lose by pushing members to pass legislation? Just these five simple questions carry us a long way in explaining the dynamics of presidential success. For one, the theory of conditional party government (CPG) (Aldrich, Berger, and Rohde 2002; Aldrich and Rohde 2001; Rohde 1991) argues that parties are active and efficacious in Congress. Specifically, party members will delegate authority to leadership under conditions of ideological homogeneity within the parties coupled with ideological heterogeneity between the parties. We would adjust CPG to say that leaders will use the power delegated to them in order to help (or hurt) a president from their (the opposition) party. If true, a high degree of CPG would mean that the president could rely on members of his party to support agenda items important to the party, thus increasing his rate of success. A given level of CPG allows a delegation to affect the president’s agenda for the dual reasons of advancing preferred policies and improving the party’s collective reputation. These reasons motivate our second hypothesis: H2: As the conditions of CPG are increasingly met, the success rate of a president of the majority (minority) party will increase (decrease). Next, the ability to affect the president’s success and thereby affect party reputations should motivate the voting of members of Congress even beyond what the level of CPG would suggest. Cross-pressured MCs choosing their party is explainable in terms of their hopes for improving party reputation and thereby improving chances for electoral success. Party unity is thus an important tool for presidential success: H3: An increase in unity from the president’s party will increase his level of success. This differs from Fleisher, Bond, and Wood who ‘‘...do not expect party unity to directly affect presidential success. Instead we expect party unity to condition the effects of public approval and party control" (2008, 202). In contrast to that article, we conceive of unity in terms of the president’s party rather than the chamber as a whole and expect it to have a significant impact. Next, the size of the president’s party should be a key to success. With more members, the level of unity required for victory goes down (Lebo, McGlynn, and Koger 2007; Patty 2008), but victory is still the goal. Both Fleisher, Bond, and Wood (2008) and Bond et al. (2003) find that beyond majority status the size of the president’s party has no effect. Fleisher, Bond, and Wood explain that: ‘‘Substantively, this finding suggests that having the president’s partisans control committees and the floor agenda is more important than incremental changes in the number of copartisans in the chamber’’ (2008, 202). In contrast, Rudalevige (2002) uses party size and finds effects. Our methodological approach and new complement of variables allow us to sort out these competing findings, as well as others. We do expect an effect for party size in addition to majority status: H4: A president will have a higher success rate when his party holds the majority. H5: Even when taking into account majority/minority status, an increase in the size of the president’s party in Congress will lead to an increase in his success rate. Beyond the preferences, behavior, and distribution of Congress’s members, the level of agreement between leaders of Congress and the president should matter to the president’s success. This makes sense during periods of both divided and unified government. Certainly a wider gulf should exist ideologically under divided government but the degree to which this is so should matter as well. Further, within each of the parties there is enough ideological breadth so that a president and majority leader (or Speaker) of the same party may still find much to disagree about. Our sixth hypothesis summarizes our expectation here: H6: When ideological agreement between the president and the majority leader (or speaker) increases, the president’s success rate should rise. Finally, once accounting for the distribution of preferences and party behavior, the popularity of the president should play a marginal role in his success: H7: Higher levels of approval will be associated with a higher success rate for the president. While these last six hypotheses tell us what factors will determine presidential success, it is the first that tells us why parties are interested in the outcome. Having laid out our principal hypotheses, we now turn to a discussion of our data, methodology, and results. Data We use three sets of analyses to test our hypotheses. For the first two, data were compiled from numerous sources and consist of one observation for each year from 1953 to 2006, inclusive. The dependent variable is the percentage of votes that the president won in the House of Representatives in a given year. This value is compiled by Ornstein, Mann, and Malbin (2008, 144–45) from analysis of CQ Weekly Reports. It is calculated by simply dividing the number of votes in the House supporting the president’s position by the total number of votes on which he took a position.4 For the third set of analyses, we are interested in the electoral consequences of legislative outcomes. As such, we rely on data in the same time range but with one observation for each Congress. The dependent variable for these analyses is the percentage of seats held by the Democrats in the House for a given Congress. Thus, changes in the dependent variable from one Congress to the next will reveal the changing electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party. Next, we describe our independent variables beginning with those we specify as determinants of presidential success.

#### 8% chance of the internal link

Beckman and Kumar 11

Matthew Beckmann and Vimal Kumar 11, Associate Professor of Political Science at UC Irvine, econ prof at the Indian Institute of Tech, “Opportunism in Polarization”, Presidential Studies Quarterly; Sep 2011; 41, 3

The final important piece in our theoretical model—presidents' political capital—also finds support in these analyses, though the results here are less reliable. Presidents operating under the specter of strong economy and high approval ratings get an important, albeit moderate, increase in their chances for prevailing on “key” Senate roll-call votes (b = .10, se = .06, p < .10). Figure 4 displays the substantive implications of these results in the context of polarization, showing that going from the lower third of political capital to the upper third increases presidents' chances for success by 8 percentage points (in a setting like 2008). Thus, political capital's impact does provide an important boost to presidents' success on Capitol Hill, but it is certainly not potent enough to overcome basic congressional realities. Political capital is just strong enough to put a presidential thumb on the congressional scales, which often will not matter, but can in close cases.

#### Wont spend PC on democrats

Chait 11

Jonathan Chait, staff writer, 12-29-2011, “Obama Hates Congress,” NYMag, nymag.com/daily/intel/2011/12/obama-hates-congress.html

There has always been a distinct chilliness between President Obama and official Washington. Even ideologically sympathetic Democrats in Congress tend to quietly, and sometimes not so quietly, complain that he is ignoring them. Helen Cooper reports today in the New York Times that there's a reason members of Congress feel that Obama ignores them — he hates them: More noteworthy than Mr. Obama’s spending the short flight calling his longtime aide is what he did not do: schmooze with Washington politicians. No one from the New Hampshire Congressional delegation traveled with Mr. Obama on the plane, a perk that presidents often offer to lawmakers to foster good will. Mr. Obama, in general, does not go out of his way to play the glad-handing, ego-stroking presidential role. While he does sometimes offer a ride on Air Force One to a senator or member of Congress, more often than not, he keeps Congress and official Washington at arm’s length, spending his down time with a small — and shrinking — inner circle of aides and old friends.

#### Empirical studies proves

Rockman 09

Bert Rockman, Purdue University Political Science professor, 2009, “Does the revolution in presidential studies mean "off with the president's head"?,” Presidential Studies Quarterly, v. 39, is. 4.)

Although Neustadt shunned theory as such, his ideas could be made testable by scholars of a more scientific bent. George Edwards (e.g., 1980, 1989, 1990, 2003) and others (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990) have tested Neustadt's ideas about skill and prestige translating into leverage with other actors. In this, Neustadt's ideas turned out to be wrong and insufficiently specified. We know from the work of empirical scientists that public approval (prestige) by itself does little to advance a president's agenda and that the effects of approval are most keenly felt--where they are at all--among a president's support base. We know now, too, that a president's purported skills at schmoozing, twisting arms, and congressional lobbying add virtually nothing to getting what he (or she) wants from Congress. That was a lot more than we knew prior to the publication of Presidential Power. Neustadt gave us the ideas to work with, and a newer (and now older) generation of political scientists, reared on Neustadt but armed with the tools of scientific inquiry, could put some of his propositions to an empirical test. That the empirical tests demonstrate that several of these propositions are wrong comes with the territory. That is how science progresses. But the reality is that there was almost nothing of a propositional nature prior to Neustadt.

#### Presidential leadership’s irrelevant

Jacobs and King 10

Lawrence Jacobs and Desmond King 10, University of Minnesota, Nuffield College, 8-2010 “Varieties of Obamaism: Structure, Agency, and the Obama Presidency,” Perspectives on Politics, 793-802

But personality is not a solid foundation for a persuasive explanation of presidential impact and the shortfalls or accomplishments of Obama's presidency. Modern presidents have brought divergent individual traits to their jobs and yet they have routinely failed to enact much of their agendas. Preeminent policy goals of Bill Clinton (health reform) and George W. Bush (Social Security privatization) met the same fate, though these presidents' personalities vary widely. And presidents like Jimmy Carter—whose personality traits have been criticized as ill-suited for effective leadership—enjoyed comparable or stronger success in Congress than presidents lauded for their personal knack for leadership—from Lyndon Johnson to Ronald Reagan.7 Indeed, a personalistic account provides little leverage for explaining the disparities in Obama's record—for example why he succeeded legislatively in restructuring health care and higher education, failed in other areas, and often accommodated stakeholders. Decades of rigorous research find that impersonal, structural forces offer the most compelling explanations for presidential impact.8 Quantitative research that compares legislative success and presidential personality finds no overall relationship.9 In his magisterial qualitative and historical study, Stephen Skowronek reveals that institutional dynamics and ideological commitments structure presidential choice and success in ways that trump the personal predilections of individual presidents.10 Findings point to the predominant influence on presidential legislative success of the ideological and partisan composition of Congress, entrenched interests, identities, and institutional design, and a constitutional order that invites multiple and competing lines of authority. The widespread presumption, then, that Obama's personal traits or leadership style account for the obstacles to his policy proposals is called into question by a generation of scholarship on the presidency. Indeed, the presumption is not simply problematic analytically, but practically as well. For the misdiagnosis of the source of presidential weakness may, paradoxically, induce failure by distracting the White House from strategies and tactics where presidents can make a difference. Following a meeting with Obama shortly after Brown's win, one Democratic senator lamented the White House's delusion that a presidential sales pitch will pass health reform—“Just declaring that he's still for it doesn't mean that it comes off life support.”11 Although Obama's re-engagement after the Brown victory did contribute to restarting reform, the senator's comment points to the importance of ideological and partisan coalitions in Congress, organizational combat, institutional roadblocks, and anticipated voter reactions. Presidential sales pitches go only so far.

#### Staff writers misrepresent Political Capital – votes are ideological -

Dickinson '09

(Matthew Dickinson, 5/26/09, "Sotomayor, Obama and Presidential Power", blogs.middlebury.edu/presidentialpower/2009/05/26/sotamayor-obama-and-presidential-power//)

What is of more interest to me, however, is what her selection reveals about the basis of presidential power. Political scientists, like baseball writers evaluating hitters, have devised numerous means of measuring a president’s influence in Congress. I will devote a separate post to discussing these, but in brief, they often center on the creation of legislative “box scores” designed to measure how many times a president’s preferred piece of legislation, or nominee to the executive branch or the courts, is approved by Congress. That is, how many pieces of legislation that the president supports actually pass Congress? How often do members of Congress vote with the president’s preferences? How often is a president’s policy position supported by roll call outcomes? These measures, however, are a misleading gauge of presidential power – they are a better indicator of congressional power. This is because how members of Congress vote on a nominee or legislative item is rarely influenced by anything a president does. Although journalists (and political scientists) often focus on the legislative “endgame” to gauge presidential influence – will the President swing enough votes to get his preferred legislation enacted? – this mistakes an outcome with actual evidence of presidential influence. Once we control for other factors – a member of Congress’ ideological and partisan leanings, the political leanings of her constituency, whether she’s up for reelection or not – we can usually predict how she will vote without needing to know much of anything about what the president wants. (I am ignoring the importance of a president’s veto power for the moment.) Despite the much publicized and celebrated instances of presidential arm-twisting during the legislative endgame, then, most legislative outcomes don’t depend on presidential lobbying. But this is not to say that presidents lack influence. Instead, the primary means by which presidents influence what Congress does is through their ability to determine the alternatives from which Congress must choose. That is, presidential power is largely an exercise in agenda-setting – not arm-twisting. And we see this in the Sotomayer nomination. Barring a major scandal, she will almost certainly be confirmed to the Supreme Court whether Obama spends the confirmation hearings calling every Senator or instead spends the next few weeks ignoring the Senate debate in order to play Halo III on his Xbox. That is, how senators decide to vote on Sotomayor will have almost nothing to do with Obama’s lobbying from here on in (or lack thereof). His real influence has already occurred, in the decision to present Sotomayor as his nominee.

#### Obama doesn’t know how to use political capital

Newsweek '10

("Learning from LBJ", 3/25/10, Evan Thomas, www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/03/25/learning-from-lbj.html)

It's called "the treatment." All presidents administer it, one way or another. The trick is to use the perks of the office and the power of personality to bring around doubters and foes. LBJ was the most outlandish and sometimes outrageous practitioner. With three televisions blasting in the background, Johnson would get about six inches away from the face of some beleaguered or balky senator or cabinet secretary. Sometimes LBJ would beckon the man into the bathroom and continue to cajole or harangue while he sat on the toilet. Air Force One is a favorite tool presidents use to inspire and overawe. With much guffawing and backslapping, recalcitrant lawmakers are led to a luxurious cabin where they are granted a presidential audience and bestowed with swag, like cuff links with the presidential seal (Johnson gave away plastic busts of himself). Dennis Kucinich, seven-term congressman from Ohio and potential vote-switcher for health reform, was invited aboard Air Force One a couple of weeks before the climactic vote in the House. He had dealt with Presidents Clinton and Bush before, but Obama was different. The president was sitting in shirt sleeves behind a desk, computer to one side, notepad and pen at the ready. "He doesn't twist arms," recalls Kucinich. Rather, the president quietly listened. He was "all business," and sat patiently while Kucinich expressed his concerns, which Obama already knew. Then the president laid out his own arguments. Kucinich wasn't persuaded by the president, he told NEWSWEEK. But he voted for the bill because he did not want the presidency to fail, and he was convinced Obama would work with him in future. A president's first year in office is often a time for learning. The harshest lessons are beginners' mistakes, like the Bay of Pigs fiasco for JFK. The real key is to figure out how to use the prestige of the office to get things done: when to conserve your political capital, and when and how to spend it. Judging from Obama's campaign, which revolutionized politics with its ability to tap grassroots networks of donors and activists, many expected President Obama to go over the heads of Congress and mobilize popular passions to achieve his top priorities. But on what may be his signature issue, that wasn't really the case. Obama came close to prematurely ending his effectiveness as president before finally pulling out the stops. In the last push for the health-care bill, he reminded voters of Obama the candidate, fiery and full of hope. But during the health-reform bill's long slog up and around Capitol Hill, Obama was a strangely passive figure. He sometimes seemed more peeved than engaged. His backers naturally wondered why he seemed to abandon the field to the tea partiers. The answer may be that at some level he just doesn't like politics, not the way Bill Clinton or LBJ or a "happy warrior" like Hubert Humphrey thrived on the press of flesh, the backroom deal, and the roar of the crowd. That doesn't mean Obama can't thrive or be successful—even Richard Nixon was elected to two terms. But it does mean that the country is run by what New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd wryly called "the conquering professor"—a president who leads more from the head than the heart, who often relies more on listening than preaching. Obama entered politics as a community organizer, and as a presidential candidate he oversaw an operation that brilliantly organized from the ground up. So it was a puzzle to Marshall Ganz, a longtime community organizer, that Obama seemed to neglect the basic rule of a grassroots organizer: to mobilize and, if necessary, polarize your popular base against a common enemy. Instead, President Obama seemed to withdraw and seek not to offend while Congress squabbled. "It was a curiously passive strategy," says Ganz, who worked for 16 years with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers and now teaches at Harvard's Kennedy School. In a way, he says, Obama's "fear of a small conflict made a big conflict inevitable."

#### Obama’s capital is useless. No-one wants to be with him because failures sticks to him and anyone he’s with

Washington News 10

(Obama Termed "The Velcro President.", 7/30/10, Lexis)

Under the headline "Obama The Velcro President," the Los Angeles Times (7/30, Nicholas, Hook, 776K) reports, "If Ronald Reagan was the classic Teflon president, Barack Obama is made of Velcro." Despite efforts by "White House aides" to "better insulate Obama," the President "remains the colossus of his administration -- to a point where trouble anywhere in the world is often his to solve." Yet "what's not sticking to Obama is a legislative track record that his recent predecessors might envy." Eddie Mahe, "a Republican political strategist," tells the Times on an interview, "Stylistically he creates some of those problems. ... His favorite pronoun is 'I.'" The Times adds that "a new White House strategy is to forgo talk of big policy changes that are easy to ridicule," but "at this stage, it may be late in the game to downsize either the president or his agenda." RCP Average Has Obama Job Approval At 46.1%. The RealClearPolitics average of recent polling on President Obama's job approval has the President's approval at 46%, and disapproval at 48.7%. Approval is up 0.1% since yesterday; disapproval is up by 0.2%. A Fox News poll of 900 "registered voters" (7/27-7/28) finds the President's job approval at 43%, and his disapproval at 50%. The latest Gallup poll of 1,500 "adults" (7/26-7/28) shows the President with a 45% approval rating and 49% disapproval. Rasmussen's automated survey of 1,500 "likely voters" (7/26-7/28) finds Obama's approval at 46%, with 53% disapproving of his performance. Democrats Want Obama's Fundraising, Not Campaign Appearances. The Christian Science Monitor (7/29, Feldmann, 48K) reports, "It hurts, but it's true: When you're an unpopular president, candidates from your own party would rather see you raising money for them than standing beside them at a campaign event. Those photo ops with candidates in tight races often turn into attack ads by the other party." President Bush "went through that, and now it's...Obama's turn." The Monitor adds, "Even though some pundits suggest Obama would be better off with a Republican-run House, making the GOP a better foil for his 2012 reelection bid, the White House is making good on its promise to raise money for the House Democrats."

#### Political capital theory isn’t true with this congress

Bouie 11

(Jamelle, graduate of the U of Virginia, Writing Fellow for The American Prospect magazine, May 5, [prospect.org/csnc/blogs/tapped\_archive?month=05&year=2011&base\_name=political\_capital)

Unfortunately, political capital isn’t that straightforward. As we saw at the beginning of Obama’s presidency, the mere fact of popularity (or a large congressional majority) doesn’t guarantee support from key members of Congress. For Obama to actually sign legislation to reform the immigration system, provide money for jobs, or reform corporate taxes, he needs unified support from his party and support from a non-trivial number of Republicans. Unfortunately, Republicans (and plenty of Democrats) aren’t interested in better immigration laws, fiscal stimulus, or liberal tax reform. Absent substantive leverage—and not just high approval ratings—there isn’t much Obama can do to pressure these members (Democrats and Republicans) into supporting his agenda. Indeed, for liberals who want to see Obama use his political capital, it’s worth noting that approval-spikes aren’t necessarily related to policy success. George H.W. Bush’s major domestic initiatives came before his massive post-Gulf War approval bump, and his final year in office saw little policy success. George W. Bush was able to secure No Child Left Behind, the Homeland Security Act, and the Authorization to Use Military Force in the year following 9/11, but the former two either came with pre-9/11 Democratic support or were Democratic initiatives to begin with. To repeat an oft-made point, when it comes to domestic policy, the presidency is a limited office with limited resources. Popularity with the public is a necessary part of presidential success in Congress, but it’s far from sufficient.

#### Political capital does not guarantee agenda passage- Clinton Proves

Jones, University of Virginia political science professor, 2K

(Charles Jones is the Professor of Political Science, University of Virginia, Hawkins Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, John Olin Professor of American Government, Oxford University, Non-resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution, President, American Political Science Association “Reinventing Leeway: The President and Agenda Certification” Presidential Studies Quarterly Volume 30, Issue 1, pages 6–26, March 2000)

President Clinton’s political status on inauguration was tenuous. He entered with limited political capital, more like that of Carter or Kennedy than Johnson or Roosevelt. Still, enthusiasm among Democrats ran high following the election. Expectations among party government advocates were particularly strong given that the Democrats had recaptured the White House and retained majorities on Capitol Hill. As one such advocate observed early in 1993, “The stars are really aligned right for the next four years. The country has finally gotten back to unified government. For the first time in twelve years, somebody is going to be responsible” (Sundquist 1993, 25). The extravagance of these expectations and the reality of limited political capital suggested the need for President Clinton to moderate, not elevate, anticipations. He did the reverse. Specifically on health care, the president chose his wife to head a task force charged to submit legislation to Congress within one hundred days of the inauguration. The task forceworked mostly out of public view to formulate a far-reaching plan. The president promised bipartisanship and yet announced that “This is going to be an unprecedented effort. And let me say, in general, we’re going to set up a workroom, kind of like the war room we had in the campaign ” (Clinton 1994, 14-15). The Democratic National Committee later announced the intention to launch an advertising campaign to build public support for the health reform initiative (Balz 1994).A public campaign for a proposal designed behind closed doors by a Democratic White House did not strike Republicans as bipartisan.

#### No internal link – political capital doesn’t affect policy making

Edwards, 9 – Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University, holds the George and Julia Blucher Jordan Chair in Presidential Studies and has served as the Olin Professor of American Government at Oxford [George, “The Strategic President”, Printed by the Princeton University Press, pg. 149-150]

Even presidents who appeared to dominate Congress were actually facilitators rather than directors of change. They understood their own limitations and explicitly took advantage of opportunities in their environments. Working at the margins, they successfully guided legislation through Congress. When their resources diminished, they reverted to the stalemate that usually characterizes presidential-congressional relations. As legendary management expert Peter Drucker put it about Ronald Reagan, "His great strength was not charisma, as is commonly thought, but his awareness and acceptance of exactly what he could and what he could not do."134 These conclusions are consistent with systematic research by Jon Bond, Richard Fleisher, and B. Dan Wood. They have focused on determining whether the presidents to whom we attribute the greatest skills in dealing with Congress were more successful in obtaining legislative support for their policies than were other presidents. After carefully controlling for other influences on congressional voting, they found no evidence that those presidents who supposedly were the most proficient in persuading Congress were more successful than chief executives with less aptitude at influencing legislators.135 Scholars studying leadership within Congress have reached similar conclusions about the limits on personal leadership. Cooper and Brady found that institutional context is more important than personal leadership skills or traits in determining the influence of leaders and that there is no relationship between leadership style and effectiveness.136 Presidential legislative leadership operates in an environment largely beyond the president's control and must compete with other, more stable factors that affect voting in Congress in addition to party. These include ideology, personal views and commitments on specific policies, and the interests of constituencies. By the time a president tries to exercise influence on a vote, most members of Congress have made up their minds on the basis of these other factors. Thus, a president's legislative leadership is likely to be critical only for those members of Congress who remain open to conversion after other influences have had their impact. Although the size and composition of this group varies from issue to issue, it will almost always be a minority in each chamber.

## \*\*\* Public Popularity

### Yes Public Popularity Key

#### Public popularity key to political capital

Knecht and Weatherford '06

(International Studies Quarterly, T. Knecht, University of Denver professor, M. S. Weatherford, UC Santabarbra professor, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: TheStages of Presidential Decision Making"//Aspomer)

Presidents consider the potential reactions of the public when making foreign policy decisions for several reasons. The most prominent is that leaders in democracies are held accountable in regular elections. Research on elections and voting shows that a substantial portion of the public takes foreign policy issues and accomplishments into account in choosing between candidates, and the literature on audience costs integrates the idea into a larger theory of foreign policy making (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Ninic and Hinckley 1991; Fearon 1994; Smith 1998). The president’s need to maintain or increase political capital can also influence foreign policy decisions (Neustadt 1960; Light 1982; Sullivan 1991; for an opposite view, see Edwards 1991). The key component in political capital is approval ratings, as presidents able to maintain high levels of approval are likely to be more influential in dealing with Congress. Unpopular foreign policies can quickly erode political capital and weaken the prospects for the administration’s foreign and domestic agendas alike. Public opinion is also important to lame-duck presidents. A president worried about his place in history may use the last years of his tenure to enhance his public support or to set the electoral stage for his heir apparent by initiating popular foreign policies. Having good reasons to take the public’s views into account does not yet clarify how presidents would go about estimating the electoral impacts of their foreign policy choices. It is, for instance, often the case that the general public has only vaguely formed preferences on the concrete aspects of overseas issues at the time the White House must select a policy course. Moreover, it is not the public’s current views that are critical to politicians’ calculations, but the potential that the public will respond negatively when the next election rolls around. Rather than assuming that the public’s policy preferences are fixed, and asking what impact those preferences have on presidents’ decisions, instead we might question how policy makers’ anticipation of future preferences shape their decisions.3 Arnold (1990:11; cf. Kingdon 1989:60–68) introduces the notion of ‘‘potential preferences’’ and emphasizes that politicians’ skill at ‘‘estimating . . . potential policy preferences is more art than science. Although experts in public opinion can show how to use scientific methods to measure current preferences, legislators rarely employ such methods outside of electoral campaigns.’’

#### Public support is key – Obama’s agenda rests in reclaiming them

The Hill 09

The Hill, ‘9. “Analysis: July has been disaster for Obama, Hill Dems,” 7-27, <http://thehill.com/leading-the-news/analysis-july-has-been-disaster-for-obama-hill-dems-2009-07-27.html>.

The other misstep that has bogged down the administration on healthcare specifically is Obama's inability to communicate effectively to the American people, Light said. While it is shocking to consider that Obama is anything less than one of the best communicators in modern political history, when it comes to healthcare, he simply has not been able to make the sell to people who do have health insurance. And Wednesday night's primetime press conference was a "disaster," Light said. Light said that for the president to regain political momentum, he needs to reclaim his agenda from Congress and start connecting with the public. "He needs to take this over and own it," Light said.

### No Public Popularity Not Key

#### Public appeals aren’t even the main source of capital – your article’s generalizations are wrong.

Dickinson 9. [ Matthew, Professor of Political Science - Middlebury College, “We All Want a Revolution: Neustadt, New Institutionalism, and the Future of Presidency Research” Presidential Studies Quarterly Volume 39 Issue 4 -- December – p 736-770]

If higher approval ratings can augment a president's persuasive power in select cases, Neustadt remains skeptical that presidents can substitute "going public" for bargaining as a general means of influence. "Public appeals," he argues instead, "are part of bargaining, albeit a changing part since prestige bulks far larger than before in reputation" (Neustadt 1990, xv). A key reason why presidents cannot expect to rely on prestige to augment their power is that approval levels are largely governed by factors outside their control. "[L]arge and relatively lasting changes [in Gallup Polls measuring popular approval] come at the same time as great events with widespread consequences" (81).

### Reputation Outweighs Horse-trading

#### Reputation key to political capital – outweighs horse-trading.

Dickinson 9 – Matthew, We All Want a Revolution: Neustadt, New Institutionalism, and the Future of Presidency Research, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Oct

Most of these studies infer presidential influence, rather than measuring it directly (Bond, Fleisher, and Krutz 1996, 128-29; see also Edwards 1991). Interestingly, however, **although the vote “buying” approach is** certainly **consistent with** Neustadt's **bargaining** model, none of his case studies in PP show presidents employing this tactic. The reason may be that Neustadt concentrates his analysis on the strategic level: “Strategically the question is not how he masters Congress in a peculiar instance, but what he does to boost his mastery in any instance” (Neustadt 1990, 4). For Neustadt, **whether a president's lobbying** efforts **bear fruit in any** particular **circumstance depends** in large part **on** the **broader pattern created by a president's prior actions** when dealing **with** members of **Congress** (and “Washingtonians” more generally). **These** previous interactions **determine** a president's professional reputation—the “residual **impressions of** [a president's] **tenacity and skill” that** accumulate in Washingtonians' minds, helping to “**heighten** or diminish” a president's **bargaining advantages**. “Reputation, of itself, does not persuade, but it can make persuasions easier, or harder, or impossible” (Neustadt 1990, 54).