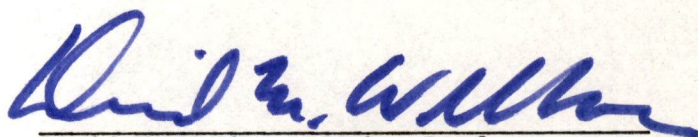
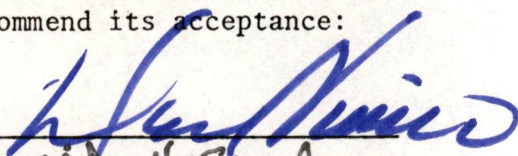
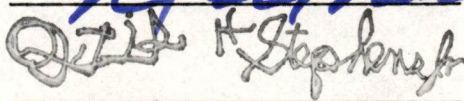


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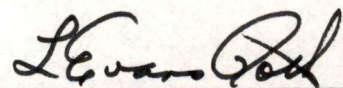
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We have read this thesis and
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PARTISANSHIP AND PARTY LEADERSHIP IN THE
CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Roger G. Brown

December 1978

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ABSTRACT

One of the many roles which have traditionally received obligatory attention in scholarly descriptions of the American Presidency is that of the President as leader of his political party. Many recent studies are in essential agreement that less attention is being paid to party matters by contemporary Presidents, but little systematic research has been reported which describes how or why incumbents are avoiding the duties of party leadership.

The purposes of this thesis were: (1) to provide an historical overview of the ways in which past Presidents have exercised party leadership and (2) to describe in detail the party-related activities of the five most recent Presidents, John Kennedy through Jimmy Carter. A fundamental distinction was made between the concepts of "partisanship" (an attitudinal predisposition toward party loyalty) and "party leadership" (active presidential participation in the organization and policies of the national party).

Party leadership of recent Presidents was assessed on the basis of three indicators: (1) the amount and nature of contact between the incumbent and the leadership of the national party, (2) the extent of the President's personal involvement in mid-term congressional campaigns, and (3) the percentage of major presidential appointees from the incumbent's own party. A general working hypothesis was advanced suggesting that strong partisanship in Presidents will tend to be associated with strong party leadership, while weak tendencies toward party loyalty will be accompanied by a correspondingly weak performance of the party leader role.

The data on which the study was based were gathered from presidential memoirs and public papers, memoirs of close advisors, presidential biographies, and works on the Presidency by scholars and journalists. From these data, a nominal classification was made of each President as either a "strong" or "weak" actor on the dimensions of partisanship and party leadership. A summary typology was developed listing the classifications of the five Presidents whose activities were studied.

The major findings of the research were: (1) among the five contemporary Presidents examined, the activities attending partisanship and party leadership have been of relatively minor significance in the context of the total Presidency, and (2) the evidence presented supports the general hypothesis that strong partisanship is related to strong party leadership and weak partisan tendencies with weak party leadership.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In scholarly descriptions of the American Presidency, the concept of "roles" has often been employed to describe coherently the complex of interconnecting, overlapping, and often conflicting job demands with which a President is faced. One of the many roles which receive obligatory attention in presidential texts is that of the President as leader of his political party. Although an emphasis on party leadership is seldom viewed with the same public favor as presidential involvement in international diplomacy or the initiation of social programs, party-related activity by Presidents has continued to command much attention from social scientists, journalists and other systematic observers of the Presidency who see such activity as useful and important.

While still the president of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson wrote:

[A President] cannot escape being the leader of his party except by incapacity or lack of personal force, because¹ he is at once the choice of the party and of the nation.

Thus, one of the first practitioners of modern political science placed a high premium on the activities of party leadership. As

¹Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), p. 67.

President, Wilson put this philosophy into practice and became one of the nation's most effective party leaders.²

However, recent studies are in essential agreement that less attention is being paid to party matters by contemporary Presidents, possibly due to the decline of party identification among voters and the increasing use of direct media exposure of the President's views.³ While this lessened emphasis on party leadership has been well-noted by political analysts, little research has been reported which describes in a comparative fashion "how Presidents are conducting (or avoiding) party business and how this situation may have been developing over the years."⁴

The purposes of this thesis are: (1) to provide an historical overview of the ways in which Presidents have exercised party leadership and (2) to describe the party-related activities of the five most recent Presidents, John Kennedy through Jimmy Carter. The following questions served to guide research: How have recent Presidents perceived their roles as leaders of the national party? How much time have they spent on such party matters as fund-raising, organization, and candidate endorsement? To what extent have they used appointments for partisan purposes?

²James MacGregor Burns, *The Deadlock of Democracy: Four-Party Politics in America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), pp. 142-143.

³Hugh Heclo, *Studying the Presidency: A Report to the Ford Foundation* (New York: The Ford Foundation, 1977), p. 16.

⁴*Ibid.*

Analysis will be focused on presidential relations with the national party organization rather than with congressional party leaders, in order to distinguish between the role of party leader and the broader range of activities described collectively as legislative leadership. The former will be used here in the narrow sense of activity aimed at strengthening and promoting a particular party and its policies, while the latter can also include a high degree of bipartisan or nonpartisan presidential behavior, as congressional approval is sought for administration proposals.

The distinction between party leadership and legislative leadership admittedly becomes blurred in practice, since the President can ill afford to respond exclusively to the expectations which accompany one role, while neglecting other equally important job demands.

According to V. O. Key:

In the fulfillment of his role as leader in the legislative process, he may act on one occasion as President; at another moment he may operate as leader of his party; or he may play both roles simultaneously as he seeks to obtain enactment of his legislative program.⁵

But even though the two roles are not neatly separable, analytical clarity is enhanced when they are treated as distinguishable. Of primary interest in this study will be those activities predominantly concerned with leadership of the "presidential party."

The existence of separate national party systems, presidential and congressional, is argued extensively in James MacGregor Burns'

⁵V. O. Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, 5th ed. (New York: Crowell, 1964), p. 657.

description of "four-party" politics in America.⁶ Because Senators and Representatives are accountable to localized and fragmented constituencies, Burns contends, they are not bound by political necessity nor by conscience to support the policies of the chief executive, even one who shares the same party affiliation. So appeals to party responsibility within Congress are of limited utility to the President, who relies instead on congressional coalitions which often cut across party lines. As many analysts have pointed out, such barriers against unified party government of the type seen in parliamentary regimes were not merely accidents of historical development. Rather, controls on potential abuses by organized factions solidarity were included by the Founding Fathers in such basic constitutional principles as separation of powers and checks and balances among the federal branches.⁷

Despite the Framers' initial attempts at limiting the influence of nonelected political organizations, parties have come to be regarded as not only desirable but essential in modern democracies. According to Clinton Rossiter:

It is the great purpose of political parties . . . to bring the struggle [among groups and individuals in the political process] under control: to institutionalize it with organization, to channel it through nominations and elections, to publicize it by means of platforms and appeals, above all to stabilize it in the form of that traditional quadrille in

⁶James MacGregor Burns, *The Deadlock of Democracy: Four-Party Politics in America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

⁷See, for example, Key, *op. cit.*, pp. 654-657; E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1942); and Stephen K. Bailey, "The Condition of Our National Political Parties," in Peter Woll, ed., *American Government: Readings and Cases* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), pp. 180-186.

which the Ins and Outs change places from time to time on a signal from the voters.⁸

This appraisal is echoed by Seymour Lipset, who states, "Parties are by far the most important part of the representative structure in complex democratic societies."⁹ Even though the national parties in this country have been characterized as weak and sporadic in their activity, their presence remains one of the most salient features of our political system. "Party government is what we are said to enjoy in the United States. Every little boy or girl is born either a Democrat or a Republican."¹⁰ Given the widely recognized importance of political parties and of the President's potential for party leadership, a systematic description of the party leadership role in the contemporary Presidency is needed for an improved understanding of the governmental process.

For purposes of analysis, a fundamental distinction will be made between the closely related but separable concepts of "partisanship" and "party leadership." Though often employed interchangeably in discussions of presidential party activities, the two terms contribute to a more meaningful analytical framework when viewed as distinct phenomena.

⁸Clinton Rossiter, *Parties and Politics in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 27.

⁹Seymour M. Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 288.

¹⁰Cornelius P. Cotter and Bernard C. Hennessy, *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), p. 1.

Partisanship will be defined here as an attitudinal predisposition to view a given political party favorably, resulting in perceptions of affiliation and loyalty toward that party. The concept can be further characterized as affective, i.e., the exhibiting of a preference for a party and its policies in a general rather than specific sense, as the following will illustrate:

I am glad to come here as a Democrat and express my pleasure to speak as a Democrat. . . . This is a great Democratic county, in a great Democratic area, in a state which I am convinced is going to be Democratic in 1964 in a Democratic country.¹¹

These remarks were made to a welcoming crowd by President Kennedy a few days before his assassination, and they offer more evidence of a President's partisanship than for his party leadership. Partisan tendencies, then, can be thought of as pre-conditions for party leadership behavior.

Party leadership, as used in this study, requires the active participation of a President in the organizational development of his party and the use of his "titular leadership in the promotion of party policies and solicitation of popular support for the party."¹² Thus, defined, the party leadership of recent Presidents will be assessed on the basis of three indicators: (1) the amount and nature of contact between the incumbent and the national party (chairman or

¹¹John F. Kennedy, Remarks at Miami International Airport, November 18, 1963, from *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1963* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 871.

¹²Ralph M. Goldman, "Titular Leadership of the Presidential Parties," in Aaron Wildavsky, ed., *The Presidency* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 387.

committee) regarding administration objectives or the party's organizational and policy development, (2) the extent of the President's personal involvement in mid-term congressional campaigns, and (3) the percentage of major presidential appointments from the incumbent's own party.

The rationale for choosing the first of these indices of party leadership is stated effectively by Cornelius Cotter and Bernard Hennessy: "The national party committees are obscure, changeable, pragmatic, and hard to define, yet surprisingly permanent." In spite of their tenuous nature, "They are our chief symbols of party government, our nearest approximation to party responsibility, the conservators of a national heritage of peaceful change in national politics and administration. . . ." ¹³ So interaction between a President and the leadership of the national party in the periods between presidential elections has, at a minimum, symbolic importance. The significance of this indicator is further underscored by Hugh Bone:

The President, if he desires, holds the key to his national party and is bound to have much influence over the national committee. At times the committee is little more than his creature and becomes one of his public relations instruments. ¹⁴

As for the second indicator, off-year congressional campaigns offer the President an opportunity to openly wear the hat of party leader with less of the role conflict described by Louis Brownlow:

¹³Cotter and Hennessy, pp. vi, 4.

¹⁴Hugh A. Bone, *Party Committees and National Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), p. 205.

Just after (a President) takes the oath of office, many of us . . . tend to forget that he was first a party choice and a party leader. More than that we seem at this particular stage to regret the necessity for party machinery, and exhibit displeasure at any sign of partisan activity by the President.

At this stage we insist . . . that the President is not the President of a party, but the President of all the people. . . .¹⁵

This conflict is at the heart of the difficulty faced by Presidents who seek to strengthen or expand their role in national party leadership. But it has become an accepted fact of political life that mid-term congressional races serve as a "payment due" notice to the incumbent from the party which helped elect him. Therefore, the greater his personal involvement and the more extensive his use of presidential influence on behalf of members of his party, the more likely he is to be viewed as an effective party leader. This is not to say that a President's involvement is an automatic plus for his party's candidates. On the contrary, the administration party almost invariably loses congressional seats in off-year contests, but this fact has not removed the expectation of active presidential participation in campaign activities. The point is made forcefully by Louis Loenig: The

President, as party leader, is expected to assist the campaigns of Congressional candidates indiscriminately, including the campaigns of those whose election would injure his program more than their opponents' victories would.¹⁶

¹⁵Louis Brownlow, "What We Expect the President To Do," in Wildavsky, p. 36.

¹⁶Louis W. Koenig, *The Chief Executive*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975), p. 137.

Finally, patronage as an indicator of party leadership by Presidents has a long history in the American political system. Thomas Jefferson, whose political activity has been widely recognized as the model for effective party leadership,¹⁷ became expert at dispensing jobs in return for legislative favors and executive loyalty. The power of patronage was dealt a serious blow by the Civil Service Act of 1883, which removed many federal jobs from the reach of political strategy. Subsequent refinement of the protections for tenured federal employees has further reduced the number of positions with which a President may bargain for support. Still, those appointments which remain at the incumbent's disposal have become all the more desirable by their scarcity. High level executive posts and federal judgeships continue to provide an important opportunity for the President to advance governmental control by his party. It has been argued that expertise and professional qualifications are much more influential than party affiliation in the modern executive selection process.¹⁸ But qualified candidates from the presidential party are seldom so scarce as to require the appointment of a member of the opposition party. So the percentage of appointees chosen from among members of the administration party is yet another measure of a President's strength in party leadership.

¹⁷ See, for example, Koenig, p. 127, James MacGregor Burns, *Presidential Government* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), and Edward S. Corwin, *The President: Office and Powers, 1787-1957* (New York: New York University Press, 1957), pp. 18-19.

¹⁸ Hugh Heclo, *A Government of Strangers* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1977), pp. 65-68, 80-99.

At this point, some basic assumptions inherent in the concept of role as an analytical approach and in the definitional distinction between partisanship and party leadership need specification. In conceptualizing the Presidency as an interwoven network of roles, this approach assumes that the President is able to perceive in each role the behavioral expectations of his various publics (members of his administration, members of Congress, the electorate at large, etc.) and to take those perceptions into account in the performance of any particular role. Further it is recognized that the perceptions and behavior associated with one role can never be totally separated from those associated with others except in an analytical and descriptive sense, as intended here.

The partisan-party leader distinction is based on the assumption that attitudinal dispositions, such as beliefs, values, and ideologies, are in large part, preconditions for an individual's observable behavior. Harold Lasswell has developed this affective-instrumental relationship extensively in his studies of political power and influence.¹⁹ Lasswell argues that political behavior is heavily dependent upon the values held by a given actor; that is, behavior is shaped by the relative importance assigned by the participant to such "base values" as power, wealth, respect, or affection.²⁰ Thus, the affective domain of beliefs, attitudes, and values relates closely

¹⁹ Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936), and Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

²⁰ Lasswell and Kaplan, pp. 74-102.

Lasswell contends, to observable political behavior. In this context, a President's partisanship is viewed as the affective disposition which may influence the nature of his instrumental party leadership.

An awareness of attitudes as potential influences on overt actions was urged as early as 1908 by British political analyst, Graham Wallas. He wrote that in the course of a day, "only a small proportion" of one's activities is "directly produced by an intellectual calculation."²¹ So, he reasoned, much of a political actor's behavior is predisposed by attitudes, both conscious and unconscious.

More recent study of the influence of psychological factors on an individual's political behavior lends support to Wallas' contention. "There is a great deal of political activity which can be explained adequately only by taking account of the personal characteristics of the actors involved."²² Attitudes, values, and other personality characteristics have been considered in descriptions ranging from analysis of "why the American common man believes what he does"²³ to studies "predicting performance in the White House."²⁴

From one such study comes the definition of attitude which is used here: "A predisposition of an individual to evaluate some aspect of his world in a favorable or unfavorable manner, that is,

²¹Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 47.

²²Fred Greenstein, "The Impact of Personality on Politics: An Attempt to Clear Away Underbrush," *American Political Science Review* 61 (September, 1967), p. 629.

²³Robert Lane, *Political Ideology* (New York: Free Press, 1962).

²⁴James David Barber, *The Presidential Character* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

a predisposition to approve or disapprove, like or dislike, some social or physical object."²⁵ Thus, it is suggested in this thesis that a predisposition, namely a President's partisanship, will tend to influence his behavior as party leader; but this suggestion does not imply a direct causal or deterministic linkage between the two concepts. Other factors besides partisanship, such as environmental constraints or competing personal values, may operate to influence a President's party leadership. Nevertheless, to identify partisanship as one of perhaps several influences on presidential behavior in relation to party will hopefully enhance general understanding of this important aspect of American politics.

From the foregoing assumptions, two general working hypotheses were developed for examination in this research: (1) strong partisanship in Presidents will tend to be associated with a strong emphasis on party leadership, due to a clearer and more positive perception of the party leader role; and (2) a significant difference will be observable between the strengths of party leadership on the part of majority Presidents (those whose party controls Congress) and minority Presidents (those whose party is in the congressional minority), due to a stronger perception on the part of minority incumbents of their roles as consensus-building, bipartisan chief legislators.

The first of these hypotheses was suggested by the attitude-behavior research just discussed; while the second was based on the

²⁵Lewis Froman, *People and Politics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 20.

intuitive suggestion that a President, forced to deal with a Congress dominated by the opposition party, could be expected to place less emphasis on party-related behavior, as he attempts to establish bipartisan legislative coalitions in support of administration proposals. Even large congressional majorities from the incumbent's own party do not assure him of consistent legislative cooperation, but without a common party affiliation, the President and the congressional majority have proved even less likely to build a positive working relationship. According to V. O. Key:

Presidents have never been able to carry through notable legislative proposals with Congress in the hands of opposition majorities. . . . Common partisan control of executive and legislature does not assure energetic government, but division of party control precludes it.²⁶

With such a built-in disadvantage, then, Presidents of the minority party might reasonably be expected to downplay the party leadership role in favor of a more productive bipartisan stance. Koenig argues: "Bipartisanship is attractive to the President whose party lacks or barely enjoys a majority in Congress."²⁷

Evidence for or against these general hypotheses was sought in both primary and secondary sources on the American Presidency since 1961. To determine the ways in which Presidents have perceived themselves as leaders of their parties, an examination was made of selected memoirs and public papers of the incumbents, memoirs of close advisors, presidential biographies, and works by scholars and

²⁶Key, p. 688.

²⁷Koenig, p. 174.

journalists. The assessment of presidential partisanship was necessarily qualitative, since it was based on the stated perceptions of Presidents and observers, rather than on a quantifiable testing procedure. Data on the indicators for party leadership were gathered from presidential documents, newspapers, and periodical accounts in which information was available on presidential communications with party representatives, mid-term campaign activity, and executive appointments made during each administration being studied.

On the basis of the available data, the activities of each of the five Presidents were classified as either "strong" or "weak" on the dimensions of partisanship and party leadership, as illustrated by Figure 1. This typology offers a convenient schematic representation of the findings to be presented in Chapters III and IV. Since most of the data used to categorize each President's party-related activity were nominal level and therefore not easily subject to quantification, a two-by-two classification scheme was preferable to an attempted ranking of the incumbents' performances by relative strength. Only the percentages of appointees from the presidential parties were properly subject to placement on an interval scale. A median percentage of all such appointments was calculated to provide one basis for judging the relative strength of each President's party leadership. However, since that indicator was used along with two qualitative ones for the overall assessment of party leadership, no strict ranking was deemed appropriate.

Further, the classification scheme chosen illustrated clearly the applicability of the first hypothesis discussed earlier. If the

Party Leadership of Recent Presidents	Partisanship of Recent Presidents	
	Strong	Weak
	Strong	
	Weak	

FIGURE 1

TYPOLOGY OF PARTY-RELATED ACTIVITIES
OF RECENT PRESIDENTS

suggestion is correct that the strength of a President's partisanship (the independent variable) is closely related to his performance of the party leader role (the dependent variable), then one would expect the classifications to fall into either the upper left or the lower right cell of the diagram (Figure 1). In other words, a weak partisan should also be a weak party leader, and one with strong partisan tendencies should exhibit strong party leadership.

In view of the nominal level of the data used for classifying presidential party activities, exact cut-off points between a "strong partisan" and a "weak partisan" and between a "strong party leader" and a "weak party leader" could not be established. Therefore, the decision for categorizing the strength of each incumbent's partisanship was based on an examination of multiple sources of evidence ranging from self-descriptive presidential statements to journalistic observations. Thus the data for each placement were mutually corroborative. In those instances where one or more sources indicated a different classification from the one made, those divergent sources were reported as well. Similarly, the indicators for strength of presidential party leadership did not allow a precise demarcation between strong and weak performance of the role; and again the classifications were based upon a composite of data sources which, taken together, provided cross checks on the accuracy of each placement decision. Contradictory evidence was noted in an effort to make the descriptions as complete and accurate as possible.

Before the presentation of findings, an historical overview of the development of presidential party activity will be given in

Chapter II. In Chapter IV, the current status of the party leadership role will be assessed, both on the basis of current scholarly research, and as the role has been interpreted by President Carter. Finally, Chapter IV will include a summary of the study and conclusions which may be suggested.

CHAPTER II

ROOTS: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PRESIDENTIAL PARTY LEADERSHIP

Although the role of party leader is nearly as old as the nation itself, the relationship of President to political party evolved in spite of, rather than in response to, the intentions of our Founding Fathers. James Madison cautioned against "the mischiefs of faction" and offered suggestions for controlling them in a republican government. He did not equate factions with political parties, but he implied that parties could give rise to destructive factions if left unchecked in a democracy.²⁸ The lack of a constitutional endorsement failed to prevent parties from forming during President Washington's tenure, but he studiously ignored them with stately nonpartisanship and "devoted much of his Farewell Address to warning his countrymen against 'the dangers of party in the state.'"²⁹

But Thomas Jefferson recognized the power of party leadership as a political tool and used it in a manner "unsurpassed in the authority he asserted as party leader and in the fealty he commanded from state and local party organizations."³⁰ Jefferson's performance

²⁸James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10," in Jacob E. Cooke, ed., *The Federalist* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), pp. 56-65.

²⁹David S. Broder, *The Party's Over* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. xx.

³⁰Koenig, p. 127.

and success as party leader proved difficult to match, although many of his successors made concerted efforts in that direction. According to one writer, it was not until Woodrow Wilson that another President achieved "primacy in this field of presidential activity . . . and, when compared on the basis of the success with which they carried out their legislative programs, the leadership of these two Presidents approaches an equality."³¹ But what are the dimensions of this role for which Jefferson's activity served as the early prototype?

The primary tasks of a party leader, says Edward Corwin, have been (1) to recruit and consolidate party resources in support of administration policies, and (2) to gain renomination or be able to influence the party's selection of a successor.³² To accomplish these broad objectives, widely varying techniques and leadership styles have been employed by individual Presidents, as they responded not only to the expectations of the role, but to the exigencies of the immediate situation and to their own diverse personality characteristics. Three indicators for effective party leadership were briefly described in Chapter I, but other facets of the role may be identified.

As previously noted, a President's relationship with the national party organization has been an important element of his leadership efforts, both before and after election. The national convention has

³¹Norman J. Small. *Some Presidential Interpretations of the Presidency* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1932), p. 172, q. in Corwin, p. 19.

³²Corwin, p. 20.

provided the nominee with his earliest opportunity to exercise leadership of the party through such activities as oversight of the final drafting of the party's platform and attempts to unite and reconcile disparate party factions. Though largely symbolic in practice, official party platforms have served as the rallying point for those identifying themselves as supporters. "The parties are supposed to stand for something; in the minds of their more vehement adherents, they are supposed to, and do, stand for something which is enduring and right."³³ So presidential influence on what the party publicly stands for has been a notable source of public relations material, during and following the campaign. At the 1976 Democratic National Convention, for example:

By negotiating, cajoling, and occasionally strong-arming, Carter's forces under Stuart Eizenstat, his issues chief, brought an uncontroversial platform to the convention. . . . Eizenstat praised [the compromise document] as a "clear message to the country that the Democrats are prepared to unite in a way that we have not been united in a long time."³⁴

Also, working through the national party organization, the President-elect has often found it necessary to mend party fences which have been ravaged in the heat of the pre-convention campaign. One need look no further in retrospect than the 1976 Republican National Convention to find a prime example of the necessity for such intra-party diplomacy. It may be speculated that Gerald Ford's

³³Cotter and Hennessy, p. 191.

³⁴Jules Witcover, *Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency, 1972-1976* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), p. 357.

failure to accomplish a prompt reconciliation between his supporters and the wing of the party backing Ronald Reagan's nomination contributed substantially to his election defeat.

The mediation of conflicting demands from party factions has continued to be a part of the leadership role after the Presidents have assumed office. One analyst points out that opposing sides on the issue of slavery presented President James Polk with a major challenge as party leader:

It is indicative of President Polk's role as a genuine party chieftain that he regarded antislavery David Wilmot's "Proviso" [a congressional amendment aimed at insuring that all new territory be nonslave] a "mischievous and foolish amendment" at the same time that he considered proslavery Calhoun "the most mischievous man in the Senate." He opposed the extremists on each wing of the party. . . .³⁵

Intra-party conflict proved to be of critical importance again when "President Cleveland's titular leadership was marred by the widening division between silver and gold Democrats."³⁶ This schism resulted in the formation of a separate party by disgruntled Democrats who refused to support party nominee William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 presidential campaign. The feud ultimately enabled Republican nominee William McKinley to gain office and to establish an enduring Republican era.

Another facet of the party leadership role was well-illustrated by McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt, when he dominated the

³⁵ Wilfred E. Binkley, *The Man in the White House: His Powers and Duties* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), p. 121.

³⁶ Goldman, p. 393.

selection of the man who would follow him as the Republican standard-bearer.

. . . President Roosevelt virtually handpicked William Howard Taft as his successor. He used the Federal machine with its patronage to pack the National Nominating Convention. . . . So active did the President become in the campaign, that candidate Taft became relatively inconspicuous. President Roosevelt had busied himself as if he were Taft's campaign manager.³⁷

So effective party leaders have been able to rally support for their own re-election bids and to exert a strong influence on the choice of subsequent leadership.

As already noted, it is impossible to describe presidential party leadership without considering those activities directed toward gaining legislative enactment of administration proposals. Many party leadership activities have this objective in common, but some involve presidential-congressional relations in a more direct fashion. For instance, the incumbents have become actively involved in recruiting and lending campaign support to candidates who appear likely to agree with presidential objectives. Binkley points out that as Jefferson sought to build and maintain a favorable congressional majority, he "busied himself writing letters to likely Republican leaders encouraging them to run for Congress whenever a competent leader retired."³⁸ Perhaps the best known example of such activity is Franklin Roosevelt's attempted congressional purge during the mid-term

³⁷ Binkley, pp. 130-131.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

elections of 1938. Convinced of his popular mandate by his landslide victory two years earlier and annoyed by Congress' stand against his 1937 court-packing plan, Roosevelt set out to help defeat members of his conservative congressional opposition.

. . . the President, out of patience with party conservatives and perhaps nettled by the victory of the anti-New Deal Senator, Guy Gillette in Iowa, broke his silence. He denounced the "Copperheads" in the party, and claimed the right to intervene in elections wherever there was a clear issue of principle. . . . The New Dealers had attempted to nationalize the party institution, to transform a decentralized party, responsible only to a local electorate, into an organization responsive to the will of the national party leader and the interests of a national electorate.³⁹

This blatant attempt to use presidential influence to purge opponents of New Deal policies backfired, bringing accusations of megalomania against Roosevelt and resulting in a significant Republican victory in the elections. The role of party leader had been played in disregard of other expectations for presidential behavior, and the mistake caused severe damage to Roosevelt's credibility and political power.⁴⁰ Despite this lesson in role conflicts, though, mid-term campaigning has continued to be an important part of the President's party leadership and will serve as one of the indicators on which the activities of recent incumbents are assessed in the following chapters.

³⁹William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 268-269.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

Besides campaigning, the President has attempted to influence congressional partisans through his relationships with the leaders of his party in the House and Senate. Included in this group have been the party's floor leader and the party whip for each house, all chosen by their respective party caucuses, as well as the Speaker of the House if the President and the congressional majority were of the same party. In addition, the members of certain influential committees, such as House Rules, have been included in the congressional party leadership with whom past Presidents have worked to build party solidarity between the legislative and executive branches. Key points out that:

. . . Presidents find it desirable to schedule frequent, usually weekly, conferences with the legislative leaders of their party. These sessions serve, to some extent, to link legislature and executive and to develop agreement on party program and strategy.⁴¹

Such cohesion by no means remains constant, however. Instead, the President's leadership of the congressional party has been a continuing process of bargaining and negotiation for mutually satisfactory action from each branch.

Although this study is limited primarily to the leadership of national parties, the party leader role has historically included efforts by the President to influence state and local party policies and elections as well. Abraham Lincoln, characterized by Burns as having gone further toward arbitrary expansion of executive authority

⁴¹Key, p. 664.

"than any other important American politician,"⁴² kept a powerful hand in gubernatorial contests during the Civil War.

President Lincoln maintained a continuous interest in state politics, particularly the election of what came to be called the "war governors," that is Republican or Union party state governors. . . . Lincoln had no hesitation about asking generals in the field to furlough soldiers to go home, to vote in close elections. . . .⁴³

More recently, John Kennedy became actively involved in intra-party struggles in New York and other states, as he sought to bring the Democratic Party under more unified national control. This situation is described more fully in the next chapter.

Finally, the President has exercised party leadership through his use of patronage in its many and varied forms. Rossiter wrote in 1960: an incumbent,

through the careful distribution of the loaves and fishes of Federal patronage, keeps the party a going concern. The loaves and fishes are not so plentiful as they were in the days of Jackson and Lincoln, but the President is still a wholesale distributor of "jobs for the boys."⁴⁴

Of course, patronage means more than the appointment of fellow party members to federal jobs, the form of patronage used in this study as an indicator of party leadership. It has also meant the selective allocation of presidential support and approval for so-called "pork barrel" programs such as river and harbor projects, federally

⁴²Burns, *Presidential Government*, p. 34.

⁴³Binkley, pp. 124-125.

⁴⁴Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1960), p. 31.

subsidized building programs, and aid for regional industries. Such visible and desirable federal assistance is of utmost importance to the political standing of congressmen in their home districts. Therefore, by backing the programs of favored legislators, the President has been able to encourage cooperation and compromise from those legislators when their support was needed for administration proposals.

The preceding discussion has been an attempt to sketch generally the role of party leader in historical perspective and to illustrate other facets of the activity beyond those to be used for the assessment of recent Presidents in this study. The listing of activities is not presented as an exhaustive one. Based on their effectiveness in these and other party leadership activities, past incumbents have been rated by several analysts. Besides Jefferson, Rossiter identifies five other Presidents who "were especially skillful party leaders": Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

By playing the politician with unashamed zest the first of these gave his epic administration a unique sense of cohesion, the second rallied doubting Republican leaders and their followings to the cause of the Union, and the other three achieved genuine triumphs as catalysts of congressional action.⁴⁵

Echoing the assessment of Jackson as a strong party leader, Stuart Brown also credits "Old Hickory" with the first purely partisan campaign tour by a President, when he journeyed from Washington to New Hampshire in 1833, "meeting political supporters, receiving tributes,

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

and boosting the Democratic Party and Vice-President Martin Van Buren, whom he had already chosen to succeed him."⁴⁶

Franklin Roosevelt's party-related activity resembles Jefferson's in that both men sought tighter governmental control through party leadership. Roosevelt made effective use of party machinery to gain sweeping legislative successes. And still unsatisfied, he attempted to handpick even the members of his own congressional party to expand and consolidate his control. The abortive 1938 purge resulted in a loss for Roosevelt of much legislative respect and friendship, but his overall efforts at party leadership were a huge net gain for the Democrats. According to Koenig,

despite Roosevelt's failure . . . he did shake his party at its roots and transform it through his own great political talent. . . . He had found the Democratic party a minority party. His graftings upon it of new group allegiances left it the instrument of the majority.⁴⁷

Of course, not all Presidents have possessed the combination of ability and predilection for party leadership necessary for such far-reaching impact. In a typology of Presidents by their preferences and accomplishments concerning this role, Ralph Goldman categorizes four Presidents, William Henry Harrison, Taylor, Grant, and Eisenhower as "nonpartisan," or those who attempt to stand above party in the George Washington mold. In addition, he lists six Presidents, Pierce, Buchanan, Hayes, Arthur, Taft, and Harding as "subpartisans." These men drew their party leadership roles so

⁴⁶Stuart Gerry Brown, *The American Presidency: Leadership, Partisanship, and Popularity* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 30.

⁴⁷Koenig, p. 133.

narrowly, they became identified with mere factions and thus found it "difficult to pull the party together or to do very much with its organization and management."⁴⁸

So historically, the role of party leader has been intermittent and widely variant in its uses and effectiveness. The lack of scholarly consensus on the importance of the role in the context of the total Presidency is demonstrated by the following statements by political analysts, both written in the same year: "All that I have said points to the importance of the President as a party leader. . . . To avoid or evade his responsibilities as party leader is in effect to abdicate his leadership as President."⁴⁹ This view conflicts with the equally forceful assertion that"

Our recent Presidents, armed with newer weapons of mass communication, have relied on methods that bypass party structures and appeal directly to the electorate. . . . This technique has served to make the President a person "above" party.⁵⁰

This collection of mixed views by Presidents and scholars on the historical place of the party leader role indicates the difficulty of defining the boundaries of, and assigning relative importance to, any single presidential activity in isolation from all others. On the other hand, an attempt to simultaneously describe all the job

⁴⁸Goldman, p. 386-389.

⁴⁹Peter H. Odegard, "Presidential Leadership and Party Responsibility," *The Annals* 307 (September 1956), p. 77.

⁵⁰Lester G. Seligman, "The Presidential Office and the President as Party Leader," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 21 (Autumn, 1956), pp. 732, 734.

demands confronting a President, in the absence of an organizing framework, would likely result in a confusing collage of impressions difficult to report and still more difficult to understand.

What must be reemphasized in the analysis of isolated roles, however, is that while a President is interpreting the expectations of one role, the demands accompanying others do not go away. This caveat appears to be especially true of the President's job as leader of his political party.

[O]ur constitutional system makes the President the only officer whose sole responsibility is to represent the interests of the nation. . . . While he has loyalties to party and to interests that supported his election, he cannot bow to those without considering the reactions in the great national constituency composed of many and varied interests.⁵¹

When the incumbent ignores, or is unaware of, the possibility of role conflict, he risks serious consequences, as illustrated by Roosevelt's disastrous congressional purge attempt. "He must at times give higher priority to his calling as leader of the nation, facing needs and goals greater than those of his party."⁵²

To summarize briefly, several dimensions of the presidential party leadership role have been identified, all of which are aimed ultimately at securing support for administration policies, gaining renomination, or gaining influence in the selection of a successor.

⁵¹Emmette S. Redford, *Democracy in the Administrative State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 120-121.

⁵²Koenig, p. 146.

To accomplish these ends, a President may (1) seek to guide public opinion through statements of official party policy; (2) serve as mediator between divergent party factions, both before and after his election; (3) campaign for his own re-election or to elect his choice for successor; (4) recruit or lend support for national, state, or local candidates likely to agree with his objectives; (5) work through congressional party leaders to improve party unity in the legislature; and (6) distribute patronage in the form of presidential appointments or support for pork barrel funding.

The three indicators for strength of party leadership described in Chapter I were drawn from this listing of activities. The choice was based on (1) the prevalence of these activities in previous descriptions of the role and its interpretations, and (2) the availability of data for a meaningful analysis.

CHAPTER III

CAMELOT TO WATERGATE: PARTISANSHIP AND PARTY LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEMPORARY PRESIDENCY

Based on an examination of available evidence, both the partisanship and party leadership of the five Presidents since 1960 were categorized as either "strong" or "weak," and the results of that classification are summarized in Figure 2. This typology tends to support the earlier suggestion that a strongly partisan President will exercise strong party leadership, while one with less commitment and loyalty to a particular party will be correspondingly less concerned with party leadership. However, the data led to qualification of the hypothesis in certain individual cases, which will be discussed as the findings are presented.

The second general hypothesis, that a minority party President will tend to exert less party leadership than one with a legislative majority from his own party, was neither supported nor refuted by the evidence examined. It should be noted, however, that for the period studied, only Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford were forced to deal with an opposition Congress and, while both men might have been expected to deemphasize party activity in an attempt to build bipartisan support, each exerted strong party leadership in certain individual instances. As the second hypothesis suggests, Nixon proved to be a weak party leader when his activities were assessed on the basis of his relations with officials of the national Republican

Partisanship of Recent Presidents		
	Strong	Weak
Party Leadership of Recent Presidents	John Kennedy Gerald Ford	
	Weak	Richard Nixon Jimmy Carter Lyndon Johnson

FIGURE 2

TYPOLOGY OF PARTY-RELATED ACTIVITIES
OF RECENT PRESIDENTS

Party and his overall negative influence on the party's well-being; however, his performances on the indicators of mid-term campaign activity and appointment of Republicans to key posts were much stronger. Ford, too, refused to back away from his duties as Republican Party leader despite a sizable Democratic legislative majority. So congressional makeup appears to have less impact on an incumbent's party leadership than was suggested by the second hypothesis.

As Figure 2 indicates, the party-related activities of recent Presidents have not followed, for the most part, a pattern of strong party leadership, as it was described in the previous chapter. In the 18-year period examined, only the five years during which John Kennedy and Gerald Ford held office were shown to be periods of strong presidential party leadership, based on the indicators employed in this study. And, as will be elaborated later, the highly unusual circumstances of Ford's incumbency make especially difficult any assessment of his performance by normal standards. Thus, for most of the nearly two decades since Kennedy's inaugural, partisanship and party leadership have appeared to be of relatively minor importance in the contest of the total American Presidency.

The ambivalence of both scholars and incumbents on the desirability and necessity for party-related activity leaves the role more open to individual interpretation--and thus more susceptible to the personal characteristics of particular Presidents--than are other roles with more clearly defined expectations. Lyndon Johnson, for example, could defend his failure to actively lead the national Democratic Party by asserting his duty for nonpartisan, unifying,

consensus-building; while John Kennedy could openly exhibit his party loyalty, pointing to the traditions of the American two-party system and to such successful party leaders as Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt as role models. Despite this latitude for interpretation of the role, only Kennedy and Ford could be categorized as strong leaders of their parties. And, as will be seen, Ford's sense of party loyalty may have proved far more costly than its potential benefits could justify.

The remainder of this chapter and a portion of the next will consist of a presentation of the evidence on which the typology in Figure II is based. First, the partisanship of each President since 1960 will be described with the help of statements by the incumbents, observations by close advisors and assistants, and reports by journalists and scholars concerning the degree of party loyalty exhibited by each man, both before and during his tenure in office. Then, an effort will be made to justify the classification of each President as a strong or weak party leader, using as evidence the available data on (1) presidential relations with the national party, (2) presidential involvement in mid-term congressional campaigns, and (3) the percentage of presidential appointments which placed fellow party members in top-level executive and judicial positions. The analysis will proceed in this chapter with an assessment of the party leadership of Presidents Kennedy through Ford on each of the three indicators in turn. Finally, the partisanship and party leadership of Jimmy Carter will be described in Chapter IV, as part of a discussion of the party leader role in today's Presidency.

John Kennedy demonstrated the strength of his partisanship repeatedly during his abbreviated term, beginning with his first public remarks to the Democratic National Committee, one day after his inaugural:

I believe in strong political organizations in our country. . . . The party is the means by which programs can be put into action--the means by which people of talent can come to the service of the country. And in this great free society of ours, both of our parties . . . serve the interests of the people.⁵³

In his political activity before and after assuming the Presidency, Kennedy exhibited a commitment and loyalty to the Democratic Party, which brought both praise and criticism from observers. In a speech prepared for delivery on the evening of November 22, 1963, the day of his assassination, Kennedy had planned to tell Democrats in Austin, Texas:

The Demodratric Party is not a collection of diverse interests brought together only to win elections. We are united instead by a common history and heritage. . . . It was the policies and programs of the Democratic Party which helped bring income to your farmers, industries to your cities, employment to your workers, and the promotion and preservation of your natural resources.⁵⁴

As further evidence of this partisanship, Ted Sorensen, Kennedy's close friend and advisor, recalls a 1956 ceremony in which Harvard

⁵³ John F. Kennedy, Remarks at a meeting of the Democratic National Committee, January 21, 1961, from *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1961* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 4, hereafter referred to only as *Public Papers of the Presidents*.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents*: 1963, p. 895.

University presented then Senator John Kennedy with a citation which included the phrase, "loyal to party, he remains steadfast to principle."⁵⁵ Sorensen adds that Kennedy made no secret of his loyalty and pride toward the Democratic Party, even in campaign rhetoric where emphasis is usually placed on nonpartisan appeals.

Indeed, James Sundquist argues, it was precisely Kennedy's allegiance and faithfulness to the activism and progressivism of the Democratic-Rooseveltian tradition which voters in 1960 responded to and endorsed. "The election cannot be interpreted as a clear endorsement of all of the specific policy proposals in the Democratic program. But it was a clear endorsement of an approach to domestic problems, of a governing temper-and tempo."⁵⁶

Not all observers of Kennedy's political attitudes place him as squarely in the strong partisan category. One historian argues that Kennedy was largely responsible for the trend toward personal staffs and direct media exposure of presidential activities as a means of influencing public opinion, a process which "dwarfed politicians, party, and Congress." In this way, the case is made, Kennedy failed to demonstrate party loyalty and support but rather "contributed to the personalized and plebiscitic Presidency."⁵⁷

⁵⁵Theodore C. Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Bantam, 1966), p. 79.

⁵⁶James L. Sundquist, *Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1968), pp. 466-470.

⁵⁷William G. Carleton, "Kennedy in History: An Early Appraisal," *The Antioch Review* 24 (No. 3, 1964), pp. 277-299.

Another interpretation of Kennedy's approach to political leadership is equally persuasive, however. His heavy reliance on a personalized organization, both for his election bids and for his executive policy formulation, reflected not a disloyalty to the Democratic Party as an institution, but rather was an attempt to bring new emphases and principles to the old line, machine-controlled party he sought to lead.

. . . [H]e was a partisan Democrat. . . . But his partisanship had not been sufficiently blind or bitter to endear him to some of the "professional" party leaders, "pols," hacks and hangers on in Massachusetts.⁵⁸

So, Kennedy's refusal to associate himself with the bosses of Massachusetts' Democratic organization, may be seen as an effort, in Sorensen's words, to shift party activity from "smoke-filled hotel rooms" and into "vote-filled poolrooms."⁵⁹ And from this view, his later moves to intervene in party feuds on the state level indicate a commitment to rebuild and strengthen the organizations along more progressive lines.

Such partisanship is easily understood given Kennedy's family background, especially the strong influence of his parents' long-established ties with the Democratic Party. "This product of an unusually political family, representing the most political of

⁵⁸ Broder, pp. 23, 29.

⁵⁹ Sorensen, p. 79.

cities,"⁶⁰ could hardly have been expected to break the familial traditions of party loyalty.

David Broder concedes the extent of Kennedy's partisanship during the White House years but questions the President's motives. "While Kennedy always thought of himself and was considered a partisan Democrat, he held back from ever being an 'organization man' . . . Clearly, what dictated Kennedy's emphasis on party labels and party loyalty . . . was not any intellectual commitment to the doctrine of responsible party government but his acute sense of his own urgent political problems." But Broder confirms, even with his qualifications, that Kennedy was the recent prototype of strong partisanship, in his pervasive use of party and party policies as bases for political judgments. ". . . Kennedy wrapped himself in his party cloak . . . parading the names and symbols of party loyalty."⁶¹ It is the contention here that these feelings of loyalty and affiliation to party preceded and tempered Kennedy's interpretation of his party leadership role.

It would be hard to imagine a clearer contrast than the one between President Kennedy's insistence on party labeling and the emphasis his Vice-President and successor placed on nonpartisanship in presidential roles. As with Kennedy, Johnson's own words provide the best clue to his attitudes on party loyalty. In his White House memoirs, Johnson expressed his feeling, shortly after taking office,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

of the need for "consensus throughout the country," an idea which became the watchword for his total domestic program:

To me, consensus meant, first, deciding what needed to be done regardless of the political implications and, second, convincing a majority of the Congress and the American people of the necessity for doing those things.⁶²

Johnson goes on to say, ". . . I never questioned the capacity or the sincerity, or the ability of a man because he belonged to a different political party." This nonpartisan attitude appears repeatedly in the speeches Johnson delivered as President.

During one of his numerous outpourings of congratulations to the Democrats of the 89th Congress for its prolific passage of Great Society programs, Johnson chose to temper the highly partisan atmosphere with these remarks:

For it is not as Democrats, and it is not as partisans, and it is not as members of factions that we shall prove ourselves worthy of the public's trust, but it is only as free men and only as Americans first.⁶³

Biographer Doris Kearns points out that this perspective on party politics was a long-standing philosophy for Johnson, not one assumed along with the Presidency. As Senate Majority Leader, Johnson had admired the nonpartisan values of President Eisenhower, with whom he worked closely and cooperatively. "Johnson saw the attraction of the Eisenhower optimism: the appeal of a President who

⁶²Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), pp. 27-28.

⁶³Lyndon Johnson, *Public Papers of the Presidents: 1965*, v. 2, p. 330.

limited his statements to the enunciation of lofty principles that seemed to purge his leadership of partisanship."⁶⁴ Together with Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn, also a Texas Democrat, Johnson led a bipartisan legislative effort in support of Eisenhower's foreign policy, as the two consummate congressional leaders consolidated their joint control of the Congress.⁶⁵ Johnson received criticism from some Democratic regulars for his "petticoatin' around with Eisenhower," to which he replied:

If you're in an airplane, and you're flying somewhere, you don't run up to the cockpit and attack the pilot. Mr. Eisenhower is the only President we've got.⁶⁶

Again, Johnson's commitment to nonpartisanship was underscored.

Further, Johnson saw the fragmented, decentralized national party as preferable to a more tightly organized and responsive party with its necessarily narrowed base and issue orientation. Speaking in 1956, he said, "A party that is overly partisan, overly quarrelsome and obsessed with politics will lose."⁶⁷ So Johnson brought to the presidential role as party leader a predisposition to downplay party affiliation and loyalty while stressing broad principles of agreement across social, economic, and party lines.

⁶⁴Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 154-155.

⁶⁵Goldman, pp. 403-406.

⁶⁶Kearns, pp. 143-144.

⁶⁷Lyndon Johnson, Remarks to the United States Senate, *Congressional Record*, January 16, 1956, p. 629. Citation from Kearns, p. 411.

Both Broder and Koenig attribute much of Johnson's aversion to partisanship to his political origin in a one-party state. The Texas Democratic Party held a nearly complete monopoly on the state's public offices during Johnson's rise to national prominence and power. "A one-party state, by definition, precludes indulgence in the arts of partisanship."⁶⁸ Oil barons and millionaire cattlemen can share party affiliation with poor dirt farmers, Chicanos, and blacks, only where the party's ideology, programs, and loyalty are vaguely defined, argued Broder.⁶⁹ Therefore, the nonpartisan nature of Johnson's leadership was only a natural extension of his political experiences.

The partisanship and party leadership activities of Richard Nixon, however, proved much more difficult to assess than those of Kennedy or Johnson. Although he demonstrated a high degree of party loyalty before assuming office, he failed to follow through with an effective interpretation of the demands of party leadership. As Figure 2 (page 32) indicates, his was the only performance among recent Presidents to result in a classification of "strong" on partisanship but "weak" on party leadership.

The roots of Nixon's partisanship were in California politics, where, according to Theodore White, the Democrats "were little more than a sect," until the mass infusion of blue collar workers in the 1930's and 1940's. "California was thus Republican by inheritance";

⁶⁸Koenig, p. 141.

⁶⁹Broder, p. 66.

and, when Nixon ran for the House of Representatives in 1946, the "Democratic Party was a shambles, a shuffling non-organization."⁷⁰ White goes on to explain that California politics also taught Nixon the art of public relations campaigning, an expensive tool used first by the well-heeled California Republicans.

But party commitment came late to Nixon. His family background left no clear identification with either Democrats or Republicans, his mother and father voting at various times for members of both parties. "Richard did not register to vote until he was 25; sought as a Republican candidate in 1946, he said he guessed he must be a Republican, having voted for Dewey in 1944."⁷¹ Once in politics, however, he became an unswerving team player--that is, until he interpreted his presidential mandate as an unlimited license to ignore traditional controls on his authority. Since the Republican Party organization represented one of those potential controls, its influence was reduced to a minimum during Nixon's tenure as President.

There can be little question of the strength of his attitudes of loyalty to the Republican Party. As a member of Congress and as Vice-President in the Eisenhower Administration, he was openly, and sometimes bitterly partisan. A sympathetic biography published for the 1960 presidential campaign includes these remarks by candidate Nixon:

⁷⁰Theodore H. White, *Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 51-56.

⁷¹Barber, p. 406.

In an election campaign, party unity is essential. If I were asked how I can go out and support all Republican candidates for Congress if, in some instances, individual Democrats are better qualified, I would be very frank to answer that ours is not a government of individuals.⁷²

Such instances of unquestioning party loyalty won Nixon the support of the national party leadership and the contempt of his political opposition. He advocated fierce partisanship and total subordination of individual viewpoints to party decisions. In an ironically prophetic warning to those who would not follow party discipline, Nixon said, "Anyone who attacks his own party will get publicity at the moment. But in the end, if his party or his administration goes down, he will go down with it."⁷³

Nixon's autobiographical account of *Six Crises* in his life explains the difficulty he had in rising above his partisan image enough to attract "five to six million Democrats to leave their own candidate and vote Republican" in his presidential bid against John Kennedy. He received a strong warning from Eisenhower to keep his speeches nonpartisan and to avoid sharing the campaign platform with other Republican candidates in traditionally Democratic districts. Nixon writes:

But I saw the candidate for President as leader of the party, with an obligation to do everything possible to build up his party. Consequently, in all my stops throughout the country, I appeared on the platform with each local Republican candidate who desired it, and I endorsed all the major candidates by name.⁷⁴

⁷²Earl Mazo, *Richard Nixon: A Political and Personal Portrait* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 296.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 304-322.

Nixon's toil in the party vineyards continued following his defeat by Kennedy. It was he who received the lion's share of credit for the large Republican gains in the 1966 Congressional elections. While President Johnson was touring Asia and ignoring his party leadership, Nixon "campaign[ed] tirelessly"⁷⁵ for Republican candidates and regained the titular leadership of the GOP, exhibiting again the extent of his party loyalty. But as President, Nixon saw the need to play down his membership in the minority party in favor of his role as legislative leader. Surprisingly few references were made to the Republican Party in his speeches. More typical of his public stance was the statement made on the eve of the 1970 Congressional elections: "It is customary as we get close to an election to speak of voting Republican or voting Democratic. But the issues this year are too important to speak in partisan terms."⁷⁶ While unable to be openly partisan in his dealings with a Democratic Congress and an electorate whose predominant affiliation was with the opposition party, Nixon chose instead to be "superpartisan-- that is, aggressively majoritarian . . . , "as he sought to bring together the Silent Majority."⁷⁷

Nixon's party leadership cannot be analyzed with the same certainty as his party loyalty. Although he made a determined effort

⁷⁵*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, November 11, 1966, p. 2773.

⁷⁶*Public Papers of the Presidents: 1970*, p. 1063.

⁷⁷William Safire, *Before The Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 309.

to enlarge the base of the Republican Party, both in the electorate and in the ranks of the federal government, his total exclusion of professional party staff from meaningful policy input and from his re-election campaign aided the demise of his administration and severely damaged the party he led. Theodore White makes this assessment of the immediate effects of the Watergate scandals:

. . . I found all home politics changed, for all systems were now cocked against the President to challenge his leadership of the state. Not only the news system, the universities and scholars, too. The business system was divided; so was the Republican Party itself.⁷⁸

and it was this divided party that Nixon bequeathed to Gerald Ford.

The circumstances under which Ford assumed the Presidency were so unusual as to make an analysis of his performance by the same criteria as those used for other recent incumbents uncertain and tentative. Lacking an electoral mandate outside his home district in Michigan, he faced not only an opposition Congress, but also a party which had been drastically divided and weakened by the spectacle of a Republican President driven from office in disgrace. His status as a caretaker President placed him under constraints which prevented full development of his own style in leadership, including his role as party chief. Nevertheless his performance of the task was surprisingly strong.

The extent of Ford's partisan loyalty was proven during a long and successful career in the House of Representatives. Elected in

⁷⁸White, p. 274.

1948, he rose to leadership of House Republicans by his consistent adherence to party principles. The roots of his loyalty, according to former Press Secretary Jearld terHorst, were the longtime supremacy of the Republican Party in Michigan politics and Ford's personal aversion to Roosevelt's New Deal. As a Yale law student, he was attracted to the presidential candidacy of Wendell Willkie, the anti-Roosevelt choice "among independents, college students, and 'good government' Republicans."⁷⁹ In addition, his step-father, Gerald Ford, Sr. was active in the local Republican party, serving for a time as county chairman. From these beginnings, Ford's sense of affiliation and commitment to party remained evident throughout his political career. Broder reports that the nonpartisan Johnson felt Ford, as House Republican Leader, was the essence of what he considered "dangerous" partisanship.⁸⁰

Indeed, one journalist argues that it was precisely this reputation for party loyalty which put Ford at the top of Nixon's list for the vice-presidential nomination following Spiro Agnew's resignation.

Joining an administration already on the skids was considered at the time the sort of thing only a political lightweight, or a good party soldier, would do . . . , and the vice-presidency was regarded as a pleasant way for Jerry Ford to end his political career, to be a footnote in American history.

⁷⁹ Jerald F. terHorst, *Gerald Ford and the Future of the Presidency* (New York: Third Press, 1974), p. 7.

⁸⁰ Broder, p. 67.

The same writer assesses the difference between the partisanship of Richard Nixon and that of Gerald Ford: ". . . they were fellow Republicans, both fiercely partisan. The difference was that Nixon, for all his fawning attempts to veil it, hated Democrats with a passion, while Ford was remarkably free of malice." Unlike Nixon, Ford's partisanship foreshadowed a strong attempt at reviving and strengthening the party he had inherited. Even before his predecessor left office, he began "touring the country to speak at Republican fund-raising affairs, and holding the clammy hand of a sick party."⁸¹

Ironically, the one political action which did more harm than any other to Ford's bid for a national electoral mandate may have been, in part, a product of his deep sense of party loyalty. His dramatic pardon of Nixon cost him support from Democrats and Republicans alike, and provides another illustration of the far-reaching effects of role conflict in the Presidency. Regardless of his true motives, Ford was seen by many as being more concerned with "helping the party in its time of travail"⁸² than with insuring equally-applied justice. Koenig notes that:

Ford's ultra-secrecy in preparing the pardon, and his failure to follow customary procedure and consult with the Justice Department, inspired accusations that a "deal" existed with Nixon. In the blanket protection it accorded Nixon from federal indictment, the pardon was a cover-up of the ex-President's cover-up of Watergate.⁸³

⁸¹Whitcover, p. 37-38.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁸³Koenig, p. 75.

President Ford's approval rating in public opinion polls declined precipitously following the pardon, "a knell of impending political doom to Ford, who already had declared his intention to seek a full term in 1976."⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in both his partisanship and party leadership, he exhibited a strength beyond what might have been expected in the volatile and precarious political environment of post-Watergate.

It has become fashionable to describe Ford's successor as enigmatic and difficult to assess, but the clues to Jimmy Carter's perceptions of party loyalty are quite clear. In his campaign autobiography, he describes the party atmosphere in Georgia when he first ran for the state senate in 1962:

I began to realize how vulnerable our political system was to an accumulation of unchallenged power. . . . The dishonest could band together to produce and divide the spoils, and they could easily elect officials who most often seemed respectable but who would cooperate in order to gain a title or office.⁸⁵

This negative view of party organization may be understood in the context of Carter's initial political foray. After blatant voting irregularities were discovered which had cost him the Democratic nomination by a slim margin, he appealed the decision through party channels. However, the "local Democratic machinery laughed at his

⁸⁴Witcover, p. 44.

⁸⁵Jimmy Carter, *Why Not the Best?* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), p. 85.

efforts to reverse the decision."⁸⁶ After obtaining a reversal of the election results from a reluctant circuit court judge, Carter was declared the primary winner.

But under a recently passed state law, a technicality was discovered. It permitted an appeal back to the local Democratic Executive Committee dominated, of course, by the county political boss! My opponent's appeal was predictably successful, and so he was again declared the winner.⁸⁷

Ultimately, Carter was successful in having the election re-scheduled, and he won on a write-in vote. But to a man guided by a strict sense of morality and ethics, this introduction to party politics could not have been easily forgotten. In Carter's words, "I really learned a lot from this first experience with politics."⁸⁸

Thus began an evident avoidance of partisanship and reliance on organized party machinery which remains a part of Carter's political makeup. In the absence of a commitment to party control, his party leadership has proven equally lacking, as will be explained more fully when his administration is analyzed in the next chapter.

This sketch of the partisan tendencies of recent Presidents indicates the widely varying attitudes which help shape the style and substance of presidential leadership. With the potential for individual interpretation which the office permits, it is not surprising that the subsequent party leadership activities of the

⁸⁶James Wooten, *Dasher: The Roots and the Rising of Jimmy Carter* (New York: Summit, 1978), p. 244.

⁸⁷Carter, pp. 80-85.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 85.

contemporary Presidents were correspondingly divergent. The strong partisanship of Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, and Ford foretold attempts at strengthening and broadening the base of their respective parties; while the nonpartisan attitudes of Presidents Johnson and Carter have been associated with the avoidance of their party-related duties.

Again, the President's own words provide the insight into Kennedy's perceptions of his expected behavior as party leader. During a 1961 speech, he referred to an exhibit in President Truman's Independence library, built around the various responsibilities of the President: "But one of these responsibilities--and I think all of our Presidents, our great Presidents, in both our political parties have recognized it--is also to be head of a political party. . . . I have come here tonight as the leader of the Democratic Party."⁸⁹ And Kennedy translated this rhetoric into substantive behavior. He actively pursued a course of strong party leadership, as is evident from an examination of his performance on the three indices described above.

Kennedy not only took an active interest in the affairs of the national party organization, he used the Democratic National Committee as a vehicle for intervention in the affairs of state and local parties, particularly in the New York power struggle between Tammany boss Carmine De Sapio, state chairman Michael Prendergast, and a group of reformers led by former U.S. Senator Herbert Lehman and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. While publicly declaring neutrality in the

⁸⁹Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents*: 1961, p. 695.

intra-party war, Kennedy pointedly snubbed De Sapio and Prendergast both socially and with respect to patronage appointments. And in his first press conference as President on January 25, 1961, Kennedy responded to a question about his stance in the New York Democratic split by saying, "I have asked Mr. (John) Bailey, the new Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, to lend a helping hand in attempting to alleviate some of the distress."⁹⁰ The dispute was ultimately settled when De Sapio and Prendergast were replaced by Peter Crotty and Charles Buckley, men who had been given the Kennedy stamp of approval. Administration influence was also exerted in party affairs in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Ohio, Florida, and Michigan, as the new President sought to consolidate party factions and make the Democratic organization nationally effective.⁹¹

Besides this behind-the-scenes maneuvering, Kennedy provided more visible party leadership by his appearance at numerous fund-raising events on behalf of the national Democrats. He spoke at eight such gatherings in his first year alone,⁹² a sharp contrast to the nonpartisan Eisenhower years. "He achieved a degree of success, despite the protest of many congressional Democrats, in centralizing the party's fund raising in the Democratic National Committee and

⁹⁰*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, January 27, 1961, p. 135, and February 10, 1961, p. 239.

⁹¹Herbert S. Parmet, *The Democrats: The Years After FDR* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), p. 202, and Koenig, p. 139.

⁹²Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents: 1961*.

using those campaign funds as a tool of executive leadership in behalf of candidates committed to the party program."⁹³

Kennedy's efforts at making the role of party leader more than a textbook designation turned toward reform of the national party convention procedures shortly before his death. Sorenson explains that the President supported a reapportionment of delegates which would have liberalized the national convention and more accurately reflected Democratic strength in the various states.⁹⁴

Kennedy's relations with the national party organization were not always harmonious, however. Chariman Bailey, while enjoying more access and communication with the President than many of his predecessors in the position, was still disappointed in the amount of difference between his and Kennedy's perceptions of the role.⁹⁵ Much of the liaison work between the White House and the Congressional Democratic leadership was handled by Kennedy's personal staff member Larry O'Brien, rather than through party channels.⁹⁶

Bailey was once publicly repudiated by the President for a statement the chairman had made about the racist tendencies of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, a likely candidate for the 1964 Republican presidential nomination. Kennedy stated he had seen no evidence

⁹³Broder, p. 38.

⁹⁴Sorensen, p. 848.

⁹⁵*New York Times*, October 16, 1961.

⁹⁶Sorensen, p. 399.

of racial prejudice on the part of Rockefeller, and jokingly added he hoped some of the Republican National Chairman's statements about him would be "similarly repudiated by leading Republicans."⁹⁷ The incident illustrates the fine line between the President's roles as party leader and as the nonpartisan leader of the people. Kennedy apparently felt in this instance that the embarrassment of his national chairman was overridden in importance by the need to display a more "presidential," nonpolitical attitude toward another public leader.

On the first of the three indicators used here to measure activity in the party leader role, Lyndon Johnson's performance is vastly weaker than Kennedy's. Johnson not only avoided a close relationship with the national party organization, he saw it as a useless and extraneous expense and believed the partisanship it elicited to be "the enemy, not the servant, of responsible government."⁹⁸ He grudgingly fulfilled the nominal obligations of fund-raising speeches and appearances, attending only three Democratic dinners in 1965 as compared to Kennedy's eight in 1961.⁹⁹ A small but telling bit of evidence concerning the national party's standing within Johnson's priorities is the fact that Democratic National Committee Chairman Bailey, a Kennedy holdover, is mentioned only once in the presidential memoirs--a footnote describing Bailey as a spectator in a successful 1964 Johnson campaign tour.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Cotter and Hennessy, p. 89.

⁹⁸Broder, p. 68.

⁹⁹*Public Papers of the Presidents: 1965*, v. 2, pp. 299, 329, 330.

¹⁰⁰Johnson, p. 107.

From the national committee's perspective, it would have fared much better had it been the victim of benign neglect on Johnson's part. Instead, following his landslide victory over Senator Barry Goldwater in 1964, President Johnson

ordered a drastic cutback in the activities of the Democratic National Committee; he slashed the committee's budget in half, reduced the staff by two-thirds, and removed the long-distance telephone lines.¹⁰¹

Johnson sought to exercise party leadership, not to promote party policy and further popular support, but to subordinate the national party and replace it with his personal staff. As Broder reports, Johnson summed up his appraisal of the national committee, "I'm damned if I can see why one guy and a couple of secretaries can't run that thing."¹⁰²

The three indicators of party leadership provide a mixed picture of Nixon's performance in that role. Although clearly partisan and committed to enlarging the base of the National Republican Party, he assembled one of the most insulated and personalized administrations ever seen in this country. The national party organization was increasingly by-passed and ignored as Nixon's White House Staff assumed absolute power over domestic policy.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Kearns, p. 245.

¹⁰²Broder, p. 65.

¹⁰³Koenig, p. 331; Thomas E. Cronin, *The State of the Presidency* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), pp. 144, 149; White, p. 104.

But during his first term as President, Nixon provided strong leadership when he "strove to restructure his party by enlisting sufficient numbers of new adherents to transform it from a minority party into the majority party of future decades." His strategies included (1) the recruitment of large numbers of blue-collar workers who shared his social and fiscal conservatism, and (2) an attempt to spread Republicanism from the centers of affluence to the middle-class suburbs.¹⁰⁴

The Republican National Committee played no part as the vehicle for his party policies, however. After the controversial appointment of his friend Rogers Morton to replace Ray Bliss as committee chairman, Nixon proceeded to ignore the party machinery entirely.

Approximately one month after Morton became chairman, Bob Haldeman told fellow Presidential aides that the National Committee was not going to amount to anything, ever. . . . The fears of state party leaders that Richard Nixon, party man par excellence, was about to ignore the party . . . were now confirmed. . . .¹⁰⁵

The President's relations with the National Committee did not improve substantially, and in preparation for the 1972 re-election campaign, the party organization was totally circumvented by formation of the now-infamous Committee-to-Re-elect the President. Morton's successor as national chairman, Senator Robert Dole, was unable to even speak with Nixon during the campaign, and his status was made

¹⁰⁴Koenig, p. 144.

¹⁰⁵Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Nixon in the White House* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 74.

clear when an anonymous White House caller told him he could see the President by turning on the television set.¹⁰⁶

The nation's first politically appointed President did not hesitate to define his perception of the party leader role. During fund-raising and candidate endorsement efforts in 1975, President Ford was asked whether he were not actually campaigning for the 1976 presidential nomination at the expense of the public. He replied that the President has three functions which need to be taken into consideration: (1) as President, he must attend public and civic affairs, (2) as a candidate his own election committee must pay the costs, and (3) "he has another responsibility as head of a political party--and in those cases, of course, the . . . Republican National Committee assumes the cost."¹⁰⁷

A few days later, Ford spelled out more clearly what the role of party leader meant to him. Explaining that in dozens of appearances at Republican rallies and dinners he had raised over \$2 million for the party at both the state and national levels, he added:

As President and as a member of the Republican Party and the leader of the Republican Party, I have an obligation to try and strengthen and rebuild the Republican Party organization in many, many states.¹⁰⁸

On the second of the indices for party leadership, involvement in mid-term Congressional campaigns, Kennedy's performance must again

¹⁰⁶Koenig, p. 145.

¹⁰⁷*Presidency 1975* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1976), p. 85-A.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 87-A.

be rated as strong. White House announcement of campaign plans boasted a schedule more active than "any President or Vice-President has been in the last century."¹⁰⁹ From late July to November, 1962, Kennedy and Vice-President Lyndon Johnson campaigned in over a dozen states each, in an all-out attempt to prevent traditional mid-term losses for the Democrats in Congress. During the lively contests, in which both former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower also took vigorous parts, Kennedy did not shy away from an open stand as leader of the Democrats:

I do not intend to conceal the differences between our two parties. . . . If the Democratic Party is charged with disturbing the status quo, with stirring up the great interests of this country, with daring to try something new, I plead "guilty" and if the Republican Party is charged with wanting to return to the past, with opposing nearly every constructive measure we have put forward, then they must plead "guilty" and the American people will make their judgment.¹¹⁰

The results of the 1962 campaign proved even more impressive than the President's energetic participation. Instead of the projected loss of 39 House and 5 Senate seats,¹¹¹ the Democrats lost only two Representatives and actually added four Senators, while remaining even in governorships. Overall, the showing had been the best for any Administration party since 1934 and demonstrated the potential benefits of active party leadership by the President.

¹⁰⁹ *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, October 19, 1962, p. 1969.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1973.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

By contrast, Johnson's participation in 1966 mid-term congressional campaigns did little to strengthen his performance as party leader. After saying it might be possible to visit all 50 states on behalf of Democratic members of that "wonderful 89th Congress,"¹¹² Johnson made a good start on the schedule, with 28 campaign stops between July 23 and October 13. But with an abrupt change of plans, he scheduled fall visits with foreign leaders both in Washington and as part of a 16-day Asian tour.¹¹³ Rather than resume campaigning in the week between his return and the elections, Johnson decided to undergo minor throat surgery. In the meantime, "Johnson made no endorsement of any Democratic candidate," even when prompted by journalists.¹¹⁴

Whether the President was to blame or not, the 1966 elections were disastrous for the Democratic Party. Republicans gained 47 seats in the House, three in the Senate, and eight new governorships. And, according to the *Congressional Quarterly*, the gains left the GOP "in a position of new power and relevance on the national scene."¹¹⁵ Needless to say, relations between Johnson and Democratic Party leaders, from both the national organization and Congress, suffered further damage as a result of his seeming indifference during the mid-term campaign.

¹¹² *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, October 21, 1966, p. 2608.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1966, p. 2718.

¹¹⁴ Koenig, p. 143.

¹¹⁵ *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, November 11, 1966, p. 2773.

As a campaigner in mid-term elections, President Nixon attempted to repeat his 1966 success, with an intensive effort on behalf of Republican candidates. He traveled to 23 states during the month of October and sent Vice-President Spiro Agnew on a two-month crusade against Senate "radical-liberals." But the results were not as positive for the Republicans as had been the outcome of Nixon's earlier assistance. The Democrats picked up nine House seats and 11 governorships, in the best gain in statehouses since 1938. Two Senate seats were gained by the Republicans, but they remained the minority party there.¹¹⁶ Even though he was blamed by some Republicans for the poor showing, Nixon had provided one of his few instances of strong party leadership in his active campaign participation.

Ford's well-defined image of his party leader role was translated into action during the 1974 mid-term elections, only months after he had taken the reins of a government in shambles. Despite this, he campaigned in 20 states for 33 Republican candidates and "warned repeatedly in his campaign appearances that election of too many Democrats would result in a runaway, 'veto-proof' Congress."¹¹⁷

His efforts did not overcome the devastating effects of Watergate and the Nixon resignation, though, as the Democrats gained a net total of 2 governorships, 4 Senate seats, and 43 seats in the House. The House Democratic majority became its largest since

¹¹⁶ *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, November 6, 1970, p. 2755.

¹¹⁷ *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, November 9, 1974, p. 3091.

Johnson's 89th Congress. For Ford, the loss was even more personal because of the defeat of Republican Paul Goebel in the 5th District of Michigan, Ford's home district for 25 years.¹¹⁸

On the basis of his active participation in the affairs of the national party organization, including fund-raising and organizational development, and his active involvement in off-year congressional races, President Kennedy must be categorized as a strong party leader. The third index of leadership, percentage of presidential appointments from the incumbent's party, serves to reinforce the categorization.

It must first be reiterated that patronage positions in the Executive Branch have become increasingly fewer, and as Heclo argues, the selection process has tended away from political favoritism and toward merit appointments. Despite this trend, however, policy-level positions in the executive departments, independent agencies, regulatory commissions and executive office staff, along with federal judgeships still account for several hundred presidential appointment decisions each year. A compilation of such appointments during the Kennedy Administration is presented in Table 1.

While the aggregated percentages clearly show the attention paid to party affiliation in the selection of major Kennedy appointees, a further breakdown of the figures by departments is necessary for a meaningful analysis. Table 2 lists the party affiliations, by

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE KENNEDY
ADMINISTRATION (BY YEAR)¹

Year	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
1961	315	77	7	16
1962	155	70	14	16
1963	<u>113</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>42</u>
Totals	583	70	9	21

¹Major appointments are defined by the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* as cabinet, sub-cabinet, and other policy-level positions in the Executive Branch, along with federal judgeships, and posts in quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial commissions and agencies. Each appointee's party affiliation is listed in the *Almanac* when available, and when it was not listed, the appointee was included here as "Undesignated or Independent." It should also be noted that in the case of some positions, particularly in the regulatory commissions, there are specifications for the ratio of party affiliations among appointees. Therefore, an appointee publicly designated as "Independent" may actually be a regular party member whose affiliation is not announced to avoid such restrictions.

Source: This table and those showing party affiliation among major appointees during the Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter (first year) Administrations, were compiled from the annual summaries of confirmed Presidential appointments in the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.), volumes 17-33, 1961-1977.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE KENNEDY
ADMINISTRATION (BY DEPARTMENTS)

	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
Supreme Court Justices	2	100	0	0
Federal Judgeships	152	90	7	3
Executive Office	49	63	10	27
Departments:				
Agriculture	13	77	0	23
Commerce	17	71	5	24
Defense	44	48	14	38
HEW	11	73	0	27
Interior	13	54	0	46
Justice	19	68	5	27
Labor	10	100	0	0
Post Office	10	100	0	0
State	85	64	6	30
Treasury	22	55	23	22
Other agencies and commissions	137	61	13	26

percentage, of major Kennedy appointees who received Senate confirmation during the years 1961-1963. These percentages, along with those for the succeeding administrations, indicate some interesting patterns which invite speculation.

The first and most obvious pattern is the heavy preponderance of presidential party appointees to posts in the federal judiciary. Thus, the "least political branch" is still the largest single source of patronage plums for the President. Since federal judgeships are life-tenured, high paying, and prestigious posts, they offer considerable bargaining power in the President's job pool.

Patronage enables the President to strike at the legislator in his home district, to attract or alienate local groups on whose support he depends. For the favor of his juicy patronage plums, the Chief Executive can exact a quid pro quo. Many a President, before handing out jobs, first checks the voting record of the interested Congressman on the administration's legislative program.¹¹⁹

Secondly, the percentage of fellow party members appointed to top-level positions in the Kennedy Administration was the highest among recent Presidents, with the exception of Richard Nixon. The Kennedy and Nixon records are identical as to the proportion of partisan appointments. So on this index of party leadership, both Presidents appear strong. However, some analysts point to the fact that in Nixon's case, the selection process--like much of the domestic policy during his tenure--was turned over to the "palace guard" of personal staff members.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Koenig, p. 124.

¹²⁰Evans and Novak, p. 66, and Dan Rather and Gary Paul Gates, *The Palace Guard* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

Finally, the number of appointees listing either no party affiliation or "Independent" status is relatively high for all recent administrations. This fact appears to agree with the suggestions of less emphasis on party loyalty in the appointment process and more weight on such factors as professional qualifications or the more personalized criteria set out by individual Presidents, their staffs, and their department heads.

The percentage of partisan presidential appointments, furnishes more evidence of weak role performance during Johnson's tenure. Table 3 shows that of the 702 highlevel posts filled by the President from 1964-1968, only 56 percent were given to persons with a Democratic Party affiliation. This figure is the lowest for any of the Presidents included in this study. The patterns of party identification shown by the departmental breakdown in Table 4 seem to indicate that the only sizable block of patronage positions which was used systematically to reward party loyalty in the Johnson Administration was the federal judiciary.

According to Heclo, Johnson had less personal influence on the selection of top appointees in his Administration than most other recent Presidents. A "professional staff service" functioned to organize and evaluate applicants for executive positions, with any patronage requests handled through the "disciplined use of White House personnel channels."¹²¹

¹²¹Heclo, *Government of Strangers*, p. 91.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE JOHNSON
ADMINISTRATION (BY YEAR)

Year	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
1964	89	52	4	44
1965	176	52	13	35
1966	170	55	7	38
1967	153	56	12	32
1968	<u>114</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	702	56	10	34

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE JOHNSON
ADMINISTRATION (BY DEPARTMENTS)

Department	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
Supreme Court Justices	2	100	0	0
Federal Judgeships	175	84	4	12
Executive Office	35	43	3	54
Departments:				
Agriculture	5	80	0	20
Commerce	31	65	10	25
Defense	53	32	2	66
HEW	19	53	5	42
HUD	7	86	0	14
Interior	14	50	7	43
Justice	17	65	12	23
Labor	4	75	0	25
Post Office	9	78	0	22
State	131	34	5	61
Transportation	15	27	13	60
Treasury	15	67	0	33
Other agencies and Commissions	169	51	24	25

In contrast to this procedure, the Kennedy selection process made regular use of the Democratic National Committee and extensive patronage files as a basis for political recruitment.¹²²

While Johnson's selection methods effectively avoided the blatant misuse of patronage to reward unqualified partisan applicants, they also contributed to the demise of another traditional link between a President and the national party structure. With the reduction in interdependence between the two institutions, a measure of control over presidential power was lost.

On the surface, another area of strength in Nixon's party leadership was the appointment of Republicans to major executive and judicial posts. As noted above, only the Kennedy Administration equalled his in the percentage of high-level partisan appointees. What the figures in Table 5 and Table 6 do not show, however, is the indecision in the Nixon White House over the middle-level selection process and the use of patronage as a means of reward to boost Republican loyalty in the vital areas. Journalists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak report that after turning over the filling of 2500 middle-level political positions to his department heads with instructions to consider ability first, Nixon remarked privately, "I just made a big mistake."¹²³ He apparently saw too late the necessity of patronage as a promotion of party unity and control. White House

¹²²*Ibid.*, pp. 90-93.

¹²³Evans and Novak, p. 66.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE NIXON
ADMINISTRATION (BY YEAR)

Year	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
1969	298	6	66	28
1970	141	7	79	14
1971	157	10	78	12
1972	97	10	65	25
1973	198	9	66	25
1974	<u>85</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>19</u>
Total	976	8	70	22

TABLE 6
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE NIXON
ADMINISTRATION (BY DEPARTMENTS)

Department	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
Supreme Court Justices	3	33	67	0
Federal Judgeships	237	7	86	7
Executive Office	31	0	68	32
Departments:				
Agriculture	16	0	81	19
Commerce	38	0	82	18
Defense	78	6	56	38
HEW	29	0	66	34
HUD	23	1	78	21
Interior	29	0	86	14
Justice	40	5	68	27
Labor	25	8	80	12
Post Office	9	11	56	33
State	153	1	51	48
Transportation	33	3	70	27
Treasury	38	5	79	16
Other agencies and commissions	195	24	64	12

political aide, John Sears, recognized the value of executive appointments in broadening the Republican base, but Nixon failed to support him emphatically enough, resulting in numerous Democratic holdovers and a not-quite-Republican Administration at the crucial middle-management political level.¹²⁴

The third index of party leadership is largely inapplicable in the case of Gerald Ford. Although Table 7 shows a 61 percent rate of Republican appointments to high-level posts, Ford had not been given the opportunity for the well-planned selection strategy which a normally elected president follows. This left him with a mixture of staffing techniques by both Nixon holdovers and members of his own staff.

Ironically, Ford also lost ground because he refused to quickly fire or otherwise rid himself of many former Nixon aides. It seemed initially that Ford just did not know people to recruit and that he was unable to develop a strategy for recruitment.¹²⁵

The total number of major Ford appointees for most departments in Table 8 is too small for meaningful patterns to be established.

In summary, the dimensions chosen as indicative of President Kennedy's partisanship and party leadership point clearly to his strength on both characteristics. His strong feelings of loyalty to the Democratic Party were expressed in direct participation in the national party organization and in party support via campaign assistance and a high percentage of executive appointments.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 66-70

¹²⁵Cronin, p. 61.

TABLE 7
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE FORD
ADMINISTRATION (BY YEAR)

Year	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
1974	61	15	66	19
1975	167	12	60	28
1976	<u>133</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>26</u>
Total	361	14	61	25

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING THE FORD
ADMINISTRATION (BY DEPARTMENTS)

Department	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
Supreme Court Justices	1	0	100	0
Federal Judgeships	68	19	81	0
Executive Office	11	9	73	8
Departments:				
Agriculture	4	0	100	0
Commerce	14	0	64	36
Defense	31	3	52	45
HEW	11	37	45	18
HUD	8	0	100	0
Interior	10	0	100	0
Justice	10	0	80	20
Labor	6	17	50	33
State	62	3	31	66
Transportation	10	0	70	30
Treasury	7	14	43	43
Other agencies and commissions	109	13	59	28

By contrast, Johnson's attitudes of mistrust and disdain for open partisanship were followed by his nearly complete abdication of the party leader role as measured by the three indices. He moved the office far down the road toward a totally personalized Presidency, subject to the whims and personality characteristics of a single person. "Once in the White House, he had further stretched and refined to new dimensions the powers of an office inherently more powerful than any in the world."¹²⁶

As the evidence indicates, Nixon clearly deserves placement in the "strong partisan" category, but as President his intermittently strong party leadership was coupled with an effort to surround himself completely with buffers against the necessary controls on his power, including the control made possible by a strong national party. While giving the appearance of leadership in the appointment of high-level Republicans and by enthusiastically joining the mid-term Congressional fights, he systematically deprived the national party machinery of its traditional functions.

"[P]rofessional Republicans were distressed by the President's newly conceived role as party leader, which he had redefined virtually to the point of its disappearance."¹²⁷ Nixon's total reliance on a personalized and unsupervised White House staff severely damaged the National Republican Party organization and played a large part in his eventual resignation. According to White:

¹²⁶Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 573.

¹²⁷Koenig, p. 145.

Faced by a hostile Congress, a hostile intellectual world, a hostile vanguard of the press/television system, a recalcitrant party of his own and a Democratic Party committed by definition to opposition, he abandoned all the old conventions of party politics.¹²⁸

Considering the severe limitations of his mandate and the shattered condition of the national party he inherited, in contrast, Gerald Ford made an exceptionally strong showing as party leader. His continuing loyalty to party was evident in his extensive fund-raising and campaign efforts as President and head of the Republican organization. And even his election defeat by Jimmy Carter has not stopped his efforts at titular leadership of the Republican Party, a party which he may well seek to lead as presidential nominee once again in 1980. However, attempts at strong party discipline and loyalty at the presidential level have come to appear increasingly anachronistic in present-day politics, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Beyond the partisan attitudes and personal backgrounds already described, the political environment with which each President dealt on a daily basis appeared to have a shaping influence on his style of party leadership. For example, Broder argues that Kennedy's emphasis on party activity was a survival effort in the face of powerful congressional opposition to New Frontier programs. Much of that opposition came from conservatives in the President's own party, so Kennedy was forced to appeal to party unity rather than to sell each program on its merits. In addition, other Democratic candidates had run much

¹²⁸Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1972* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. xvic.

stronger than Kennedy himself in 1960, due in large part to the bias expressed by many against electing the nation's first Catholic President. "For the first time in his political life, he found himself asking not what he could do for his party, but what his party could do for him."¹²⁹

Following Kennedy's assassination, Erwin Hargrove suggests, public sentiment shifted to the support of his domestic programs, enabling Johnson to shepherd a phenomenal number of programs through a willing Congress, without the necessity for strong partisan appeals.

The irony is that [Kennedy's] death provided the crisis and catharsis that permitted a great public awareness of and support for his programs. President Johnson pleaded for passage of the civil rights bill and tax cut in the name of the fallen President and in 1964 accomplished the [electoral] victory, which permitted the third great burst of legislative action for social reform in this century.¹³⁰

Johnson's overwhelming electoral mandate in 1964 brought many Democrats into the Congress who thereafter may have felt an obligation to support the man whose coattails they had ridden. Further, Johnson's skill as a legislative coalition-builder had been honed to a fine edge during his successful Senate career. Both of these factors contributed to the atmosphere which allowed Johnson to take party support for granted as he practiced his nonpartisan style of leadership.

¹²⁹ Broder, p. 30.

¹³⁰ Erwin Hargrove, *The Power of the Modern Presidency* (New York: Knopf, 1974), p. 196.

During Nixon's tenure, his increasing reliance on a personalized administration which would allow him to concentrate on his foreign policy objectives, together with the constraints imposed by dealing with a congressional majority from the opposition party, may have contributed substantially to his avoiding party leadership duties. Added to this was his background in California-style media politics. Despite his background of strong partisanship, Nixon bypassed the established party organization in favor of his own professional public relations staff. His 1972 re-election campaign headquarters in New York is a case in point:

It ignored the structure of party regulars and the Republican National Committee. . . . The party was expected to take its orders from New York, do what New York wanted, mobilize the faithful and PR men.¹³¹

The political environment into which Gerald Ford was propelled has already been described. He faced not only an opposition Congress, but a party which was deeply divided by the Watergate trauma and a public turned suspicious and cynical of politics in general and White House politics in particular. It is not surprising, then, that Ford attempted to return to the political style which he knew best and which was the furthest from the personalized and insulated environment fostered by Nixon. Ford's only secure base of national support was the Republican Party which he had served so faithfully in the past, so he returned to that source by practicing open partisanship and party leadership. As already noted, however, his pardon of

¹³¹White, *Breach of Faith*, p. 98.

Nixon was perceived by many as one step too far in the direction of party loyalty; and the party he led was in too weak a condition to help him overcome both the Watergate legacy and the grass roots populism of Jimmy Carter.

CHAPTER IV

BORN AGAIN? PARTISANSHIP AND PARTY LEADERSHIP TODAY

In this chapter, the role of party leader will be described in the context of today's American political process by first examining recent assessments by scholars and political observers and then by considering President Carter's interpretation of the role to date. The data presented in Chapter III indicates a relatively minor emphasis on party activity by recent Presidents, but is the trend a temporary one, and will Carter go further than his immediate predecessors in assigning the importance to party leadership which Woodrow Wilson saw as inescapable?

The following review of recent scholarly opinion regarding party-related behavior in the contemporary Presidency is offered as a further indication of the lessened emphasis on party leadership today. These students of the office all agree with the assessment offered in Chapter III that other demands and political necessities of the Presidency have displaced party leadership from its once critical level of importance.

Theodore White traces the decline of traditional party politics at the national level to the increasing use of media campaigning, first used extensively in the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon battle for the Presidency. By 1972:

The parties no longer controlled loyalties as they once had; the parties no longer delivered responses as they once had; the parties no longer related to

government as they once had. . . . The stage of politics was changing as television became its most important platform of action. . . . All the while, too, education, joining television, was freeing more and more millions of Americans from unquestioning obedience to past tradition, their union begetting what has been called the age of ticket-splitting.¹³²

And, of course, with the loss of a meaningful role for the national parties, White's argument implies, went the necessity for presidential concern with reviving or strengthening the party organizations.

Instead, each President has become more or less dependent on public relations techniques and advertising philosophies to elicit support for administration goals. Such "Madison Avenue" operations are more efficiently carried out by personal staffs responsible only to the incumbent than by the established channels of party organization.

This appraisal is seconded by Hargrove who also describes the trend away from party identification among voters. "A new kind of Independent, who is well informed and issue-oriented but who feels no identification with either party, is becoming very common and obviously very important."¹³³ The 1976 campaign for the Democratic nomination lends support to Hargrove's thesis. Appeals like California Governor Jerry Brown's "lowered expectations" and Jimmy Carter's non-partisan calls for "government as good as the people" were apparently aimed at just this type of independent electorate rather than one in which party loyalty and responsibility are rallying cries. Hargrove refers to such campaign efforts as "social movements . . . which

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

¹³³ Hargrove, p. 197.

appeal to voters from both traditional camps and which reflect genuine discontents in the society," and he adds they are "a further force to weaken the party system."¹³⁴

The implications for party leadership are clear, says Hargrove. An electorate which places little value on party identification could hardly be expected to appreciate the need for presidential involvement in party activity.

It may very well be that many voters are coming to see the presidential office as above partisan politics. . . . The same trend is seen in regard to Congress with the increasing emphasis upon personal view or issue rather than party appeals.¹³⁵

Although he laments the passing of traditional party controls on presidential authority, Louis Koenig agrees with the view held by the previous two analysts. Party politics are rapidly being "replaced by candidate politics, campaign management firms, television, financing by fat cats, and direct-mail drives, and the tasks of getting out the vote are handled by bands of dedicated volunteers." Because of this, the President can no longer be a strong and effective party leader. "A variety of forces and pressures compel him to temper and contain his partisanship."¹³⁶

Finally, Thomas Cronin attributes the decline of party leadership to the role conflict brought about by an overly partisan Chief Executive.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 204.

¹³⁶Koenig, pp. 146-148.

Many Presidents become timid about using the resources of the presidency for partisan leadership. The reason for this, of course, is that a President wants above all to be President of all the people, and yet even an outstanding performance as a symbolic chief of state cannot relieve a President from the responsibility of educating his party about his objectives.¹³⁷

So, recent incumbents have been able to avoid some of the role conflict by paying less attention to party-related activities, Cronin argues.

The campaign and subsequent leadership of Jimmy Carter provide further evidence of the greatly diminished party leader role in the contemporary presidency. It was suggested in the previous chapter that Carter's attitudes toward strict party loyalty are largely negative, and his record so far shows that party leadership is not a priority for his administration. It can be argued that his lack of strong partisan tendencies, coupled with the reduced demands of today's party leader role leave him little incentive for vigorous party activity.

In fact, some observers feel it was Carter's avoidance of party affiliation and the debts which party support entails that enabled him to gain an electoral victory.

Unlike Mondale, Carter was no child of the party, and while Mondale might have recognized that the party was no longer as significant as it had once been, it would have been difficult for him to change. He had always run on his identity as a part of the party. . . . Carter's great asset was his lack of great loyalty to the party.¹³⁸

¹³⁷Cronin, p. 254.

¹³⁸Wooten, p. 41.

Another journalist saw the same avoidance of party ties in Carter's campaign and spoke with the President about it:

Carter was also hurt by the fact that he ran as an outsider in the primaries and then found himself in the general election having to embrace, and being embraced by, all the old Democratic Party hacks. . . . "That caused me horrible trouble," Carter said in our Oval Office conversation. ". . . I had run a kind of lonely campaign up to the convention; that's my nature and that's part of my political strength. . . ."139

Of course, Carter is not wholly without a background of Democratic affiliation. In his autobiography, he cites his leadership of the Georgia Young Democrats, his election as a Democratic state senator, and his campaign for governor on the Democratic ticket during a "bad time for Democrats in South Georgia."¹⁴⁰ In addition, Carter was appointed by Democratic National Committee Chairman, Robert Strauss, to head up the 1974 mid-term congressional campaign committee. Rather than seeing the appointment as a reward for Carter's party loyalty, however, Strauss seemed surprised that anyone would so willingly and enthusiastically take on the thankless task. "Strauss didn't think he was giving anything much to him; Carter was not a particular favorite of his. But Carter made the most of it."¹⁴¹ It was learned later of course, that plans were already being carefully laid by Carter and his aides, Hamilton Jordan and Jody Powell, for Carter's presidential candidacy. So, rather

¹³⁹Witcover, p. 645.

¹⁴⁰Carter, pp. 85-95.

¹⁴¹Witcover, p. 117.

than a sacrifice for the party's sake, the post proved to be a head start by Carter on establishing the necessary contacts for an election bid of his own--an election bid which virtually excluded the regular Democratic organization.

One factor which may have eased the way for Carter's extra-party campaign efforts was the implementation for the first time of the 1974 Campaign Finance Reform Act providing for federal subsidization of campaign expenditures prior to the nominating conventions.¹⁴² This rich, new source of campaign funds may have operated to reduce still further Carter's dependence on the Democratic organization for financial support. An alternate view which should be noted, however, is that matching federal campaign funds may remove some of the competition which exists between presidential candidates and their party organization for scarce financial resources. In this way, public campaign financing could make candidate-party cooperation easier during future campaigns.

The ease with which Carter subordinated partisanship to promote an image of highly moral, uncompromised principles of leadership was an early sign of the difficulty he would face as party leader in the first year and a half of his presidency. His relations with the national party organization were practically nonexistent in 1977, the major reason given for the resignation of his Democratic National Chairman, Kenneth Curtis, late in the year. In his own defense,

¹⁴² Joel H. Goldstein, "The Influence of Money on the Pre-Nomination Stage of the Presidential Selection Process: The Case of the 1976 Election," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 8 (Spring, 1978), pp. 164-179.

Carter explained the precedence given in his first year to "familiarizing himself with the problems of government."¹⁴³

When the President and his staff did turn their attention to party policy in the form of presidential primary reforms, it was interpreted as a self-serving move in preparation for Carter's 1980 re-election bid. Several changes, such as a shortened primary season and an escalating vote percentage requirement, were seen as moves to help insure a Carter renomination. According to press reports,

Any Democrat thinking of challenging President Carter for the party nomination two years from now can find little to cheer about in the work of the party's special panel on delegate selection. . . . White House staff and friends dominated important votes by the commission.¹⁴⁴

After assuming his post, the new national chairman, John C. White, immediately made an effort to correct the deficient Carter image in party leadership by outlining major presidential plans for fund-raising and participation in the 1978 mid-term elections. Included were the following promises: "Mr. Carter will see to it that his national chairman sits frequently at his elbow, providing counsel on political issues"; a special effort will be made to bring together the President and state party leaders; and "the President will be on call to campaign or help out wherever the party needs him next year."¹⁴⁵ If kept, the promises would amount to a major change in the trends of presidential party leadership since 1960.

¹⁴³ *Washington Post*, January 28, 1978.

¹⁴⁴ *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, January 23, 1978.

¹⁴⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 1978.

However, David Broder remained convinced halfway through 1978 that the promises had not been, and could not be, made good. He pointed out that "17 months after Carter took office, the White House finally got around to the basic courtesy of having the Democratic state chairmen and national committee members in for a drink and a chat."

He continued by stating that the efforts to reestablish party ties had come too late to "let Jimmy Carter and his agents make much of a positive contribution to the November campaigns." In the absence of presidential leadership, he wrote, the state parties and congressional hopefuls had gone ahead with their own fund-raising and organization plans and were "separating themselves from those Carter policies that are poison in their states and districts."

Broder concluded with the prediction:

A Democratic mid-term victory to which the White House contributed little would only tend to increase the political independence of those reelected governors and members of Congress. A serious defeat would inevitably bring severe scapegoating of Carter and his policies.

Either way, the neglect of party affairs the past year will exact a price from the President.¹⁴⁶

Plans for mid-term campaigning were put into action early in 1978, as Carter began a snowy February swing through New England. One report stated:

Carter's politicking was partly the result of some urgent advice from Vice President, Walter Mondale and other White House strategists: mend your fences with the Democratic

¹⁴⁶*Washington Post*, June 14, 1978.

Party and Congress--quickly. . . . Anxious party pros at the Democratic National Committee and dissident Democrats in Congress also complain that Carter has little understanding or sympathy for their constituencies or political vulnerability.¹⁴⁷

Carter promised 15 to 20 days of campaign traveling by the November elections, in addition to numerous trips by Mondale, members of his cabinet, and family emissaries.

But the campaign activity was not welcomed with grateful hearts by Democratic Congressmen. Open statements were made by both newcomers (such as senatorial nominee, Bill Bradley of New Jersey) and incumbents (like Senator Floyd Haskell of Colorado) asking Carter not to appear in their states during the campaign, since they considered his help a liability.¹⁴⁸ The disastrously low public approval ratings for Carter's job performance was the obvious reason for such statements. By late July, the situation had deteriorated to the point of provoking a response by Chairman White advising Democratic candidates to stop taking "cheap shots" at Carter. "The Democratic Party, White said, 'encourages dissent and disagreement' on issues, but considers personal attacks on the President out of bounds."¹⁴⁹ Such negative responses to Carter's attempts at party leadership seemed likely to result in still further estrangement between him and the national party in the remainder of his tenure.

¹⁴⁷ *Newsweek*, February 27, 1978.

¹⁴⁸ *Washington Post*, July 28, 1978.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

As for the final indicator of party leadership, the question of patronage appointments provided the largest source of party criticism of the new titular head. The much-publicized Carter Administration talent search, organized to scientifically identify and recruit the best qualified executive appointees, apparently worked much better in theory than in practice.

In fact, the ranks of the Carter administration have been filled according to no discernible pattern or philosophy. The new President delegated much of the appointive power to the senior associates he chose himself, and they filled jobs more or less as they wished.

The final results of the staffing process were so unsatisfactory to campaign loyalists, Democratic congressmen, and state party organizations that the Democratic National Committee in 1977 drafted a resolution criticizing Carter's approach to patronage.¹⁵⁰ Both Table 9 and Table 10 show that even among top-level appointees, fewer members of the presidential party were included in the Carter Administration than in either the Kennedy or Nixon Administrations.

Just as with the primary reform measures described above, when Carter did attempt to make use of patronage in the form of pork barrel concessions on flood control projects and military base spending in return for legislative support, he was criticized for becoming too political. Columnist Jack Anderson, reported that after promising to curtail needless federal expenditures on construction of dams and other river improvements, Carter used such projects as

¹⁵⁰ *Washington Post*, June 6, 1977.

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING PRESIDENT
CARTER'S FIRST YEAR

Year	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
1977	323	64	6	30

TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG MAJOR
PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES DURING PRESIDENT
CARTER'S FIRST YEAR (BY DEPARTMENTS)

Department	No. Appointees	Percent Democrat	Percent Republican	Percent Undesignated or Independent
Federal Judgeships	32	84	0	16
Executive Office	16	63	0	37
Departments:				
Agriculture	10	90	0	10
Commerce	11	75	0	25
Defense	23	52	4	43
Energy	12	50	25	25
HEW	14	50	0	50
HUD	12	92	0	8
Interior	7	71	0	29
Justice	18	44	6	50
Labor	12	58	0	42
State	66	45	2	53
Transportation	11	75	0	25
Treasury	17	76	0	24
Other agencies and commissions	62	73	23	4

bargaining capital. "However marginal the benefits may be to the landscape, it is essential to political development." Similarly, Anderson notes, Carter exchanged a decision not to close an outmoded Air Force base in Maine for an assurance of support for the Panama Canal treaties from Maine Senators, Edmund Muskie and William Hathaway.¹⁵¹ Anderson's implicit criticism of Carter's use of patronage, a long-established technique of party leadership, is another illustration of the "damned if he does--damned if he doesn't" conflicts which face an overtly partisan or political President.

It also serves as a further indication of the changes the party leader role has undergone in the past two decades. Expectations from the President's various publics have tended away from those described as traditional elements of party leadership and toward a stance outside of party.

This point is further underscored by the following scholarly exchange on Carter's avoidance of party responsibility. In a 1976 pre-election article, Walter Dean Burnham remarked on Carter's extra-party campaign and offered a warning of the possible implications:

Carter's capture of the Democratic party was the most strikingly personal victory in our modern electoral history. We may well wonder if the stage is not being set for a decisive--and this time final--liberation of the presidency from all organized coalitions or other external constraints. . . . Parties and their traditional power-broker leaders did not come into being to give even the most charismatic Presidents a blank check. . . . What will Jimmy Carter do with his blank check if we give it to him in November?¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Washington Post*, March 28, 1978.

¹⁵² Walter Dean Burnham, "Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Crisis," *The New Republic* (July 3 and 10, 1976), p. 19.

In a reply to Burnham, Carter analyst, T. McN. Simpson points out that although parties may be declining as a control on presidential authority, other constraints are already in place which will act to prevent any unchecked abuse of power. The state and local party organizations, state and local governments, and a free and vigorous press are some of the alternative checks listed as potential controls on executive authority. Simpson goes on to express an optimistic view of the President's nonpartisanship, based on personal conversations held with Carter in 1974. Even if Carter sees political parties as merely additional elements in the interest group process, it is argued, he continues to hold himself accountable to his national constituency:

Jimmy Carter does not see himself, in other words, as first and foremost a party leader, and especially he would not be the leader of a coalition of interest groups. So far, Burnham's anxieties may be justified. Carter sees himself as a leader of all the people.¹⁵³

So this analysis of the Presidency of Jimmy Carter reinforces the assessment offered at the beginning of the chapter that partisanship and party leadership are no longer considered major political assets by Presidents or their constituents. Attempts to exercise party leadership have sometimes resulted in a net loss of political support or of public approval for the incumbent, which may have discouraged further partisan activity.

¹⁵³T. McN. Simpson, III., "Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Opportunity," unpublished article, University of Tennessee, 1977.

The increased activity by Carter in the 1978 mid-term campaigns and his more frequent use of pork barrel funding as a political tool may be attributed less to his awareness of party responsibility or loyalty than to his precarious political environment as he approached the midpoint of his term. The image of a tentative, uncertain, and politically naive administration haunted Carter far beyond the usual grace period allowed a new President. Public perception of glaring mistakes and reversals in international diplomacy were combined with a very poor working relationship with Congress, as one proposal after another for comprehensive legislative action on a wide range of domestic problems met strong resistance in an incrementally-oriented Congress.

To make matters worse, even administration successes, like the Senate's ratification of treaties relinquishing control of the Panama Canal, were followed by public outcries and dismally low ratings of Carter's leadership in public opinion polls. In this atmosphere, Carter had little choice but to seek support from any available source--even from the Democratic Party whose banner he had reluctantly carried on his quest for the Presidency. Thus, the lack of partisanship was intermittently and temporarily overridden by the political expediency of symbolic party leadership.

The purpose of this study has been to analyze that part of the contemporary American Presidency dealing with an incumbent's party relations and to suggest both possible influences on, and effects of, those relations. After an examination of available data on the partisanship and party leadership of each President since 1960, the

research has supported the "widespread . . . view that the President's party role has generally atrophied."¹⁵⁴ On the indicators chosen, only John Kennedy and Gerald Ford could be rated as strong party leaders, and Ford's party loyalty may have contributed substantially to his electoral rejection in 1976.

Despite the lessened emphasis on traditional party activity, however, the study has shown the continued use of some techniques of party leadership, such as mid-term congressional campaigning and the use of patronage to consolidate and expand party support for administration objectives.

Within the more limited sphere of party activity still exercised by contemporary Presidents, the data have supported the broad hypothesis that a President's interpretation of the party leadership role is influenced significantly by his degree of partisanship, or attitude of loyalty to his party. All of the Presidents included in the study with the exception of Richard Nixon, were categorized identically for both partisanship and party leadership. That is, strong partisans tended to exert strong party leadership and those with less predilection toward party loyalty were more likely to avoid party responsibilities once in office.

No conclusive findings were possible on the suggestion that a minority President will exert less party leadership than one with a partisan congressional majority. The Nixon years provided evidence

¹⁵⁴Hugh Heclo, *Studying the Presidency*, p. 16.

in agreement with this suggestion, but Gerald Ford continued to openly rely upon his party leadership to garner support, in spite of the opposition Congress with which he dealt. Thus, other factors such as the incumbent's immediate political needs appear to influence the strength of the party leadership to a greater degree than does the partisan congressional makeup.

Recalling the typology presented in Figure 2 (page 32) at the beginning of Chapter III, the party-related activities of four of the five Presidents studied have supported the suggestion that the strength of an incumbent's partisanship is related to the strength of his party leadership. The evidence presented indicates that John Kennedy and Gerald Ford were both strong partisans and strong party leaders, while Jimmy Carter's and Lyndon Johnson's weaker predispositions toward party loyalty and affiliation foreshadowed their corresponding weakness in the party leader role. On the other hand, Richard Nixon's activity as leader of the Republican Party did not qualify him for classification as strong performer of that role, despite his clear tendencies toward strong partisanship. The definition for party leadership offered in Chapter I requires that a President promote his party's policies and solicit popular support for the organization. The overall assessment of Nixon's performance offered here has been that he failed to satisfy either of those role requirements. Therefore, it must be noted that other factors, such as the personality characteristics of individual Presidents or the political environment in which an incumbent operates, may override partisanship as an influence on the performance of the party leader role.

Heclo's suggestion for research into "how Presidents are conducting (or avoiding) party business" has served as the touchstone for this study. It has been argued that among recent incumbents, party-related behavior has occupied a place of minor significance in the overall Presidency. The traditional function of parties as disseminators of the presidential viewpoint on policies and programs has been nearly completely taken over by the professional public relations staff which has become an integral part of the executive institution. Parties continue to serve as agencies for the recruitment and support of presidential candidates. But as has been pointed out, even that function has been diminished in importance by the campaign spending reforms which enabled Jimmy Carter to go outside the regular party channels to seek financial and electoral support via direct popular appeals and federal subsidization. Thus, recent Presidents have avoided party business partially because it is no longer a profitable expenditure of time and energy in terms of the expected returns from such activity.

Due to the periodically turbulent political and social circumstances which have impacted upon the post-Eisenhower American Presidency, only Richard Nixon has sought re-election to the office. Nixon's bid for re-election demonstrates, perhaps better than any other simple activity, the lack of importance assigned to party support in the contemporary Presidency. It was noted in Chapter II that, historically, one major consideration in an incumbent's role as party leader has been to secure his party's assistance in achieving

renomination and re-election. Based on Nixon's performance, even that facet of the role is no longer a critical one. In fact, of the activities described in Chapters I and II as traditional party-related behavior, only mid-term congressional campaigning has been pursued by recent Presidents in a consistently vigorous fashion across administrations. And Lyndon Johnson's aloofness from the 1966 campaigns makes even that observation a qualified one.

In conclusion, the evidence presented here supports the frequent suggestions of a weakened party role for modern Presidents. However, the experiences of virtually unchecked executive power under Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon may still provide the impetus for a gradual return to traditional controls on presidential power, such as the more independent Congress Jimmy Carter now faces. It is possible that the same impetus will eventually operate to revive the weakened national party system and to make future Presidents authentic party leaders once again.

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