

The Impossible Leadership Situation? Analyzing Success for Disjunctive Presidents

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This paper argues that the way we measure and understand presidential success should be different for presidents in different contexts. It provides the first systematic analysis of success for Skowronek's "disjunctive" presidents and finds that, particularly when these presidents engage in policy experimentation they play an important role in preparing the way for a later reconstruction. Although the presidents of disjunction are particularly constrained, they are capable of "success" as long as we judge them by realistic criteria. We explore this contention by examining some aspects of the presidencies of Herbert Hoover and Jimmy Carter as examples of the varying degrees of success available within the contextual constraints of a disjunctive presidency and a faltering political regime.

Studies directly analyzing success in US presidential leadership are surprisingly scarce. This inattention stems from the difficulty of success as a concept, and from the difficulty of analyzing something as complex and varied as an entire presidency (t Hart 2011). The few existing analyses of presidential success tend to assume that all presidents are comparable and that each has equal opportunities to succeed. Often they acknowledge that historical context can be important, but their methods for analyzing success rarely reflect this in a systematic way (Neustadt 1980; Simonton 1987, 227; Rockman 1984; Landy and Milkis 2000). More often in presidential studies, success is implicit or discussed as a secondary focus. Some presidential studies rely on a concept of "greatness", which is both under-defined and necessarily out of reach for most presidents. Such under-definition is most obvious in what Richard Pious termed the 'parlor game' of presidential rankings (Pious 2003). Ranking efforts have become an almost annual endeavor in recent decades (e.g. C-SPAN 2009; Siena 2010; United States Presidency Centre 2011) however deeper analysis has

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generally found their reliability and usability to be limited, despite their popularity (see Bose and Landis 2003). The often shallow analysis of presidential success encourages an unsophisticated understanding of the concept.

Alternatively, if we acknowledge the contextual advantages and disadvantages of various historical contexts as we examine presidential performance, it is clear that success is possible for all presidents although it must be understood differently in different contexts. This article uses Skowronek's conception of the presidency as a contextually sensitive avenue to the systematic study of presidential success (1997; 2008). Skowronek describes four types of president, defined by their distinct historical contexts and opportunities. The types are based on the relationship between presidents and "regimes", defined as the dominant collection of ideas and institutions in national politics, supported by a coalition of political elites and social groups (Skowronek 1997, 9-10). The strength of the regimes presidents inherit and presidents' affiliation with, or opposition to, these regimes shape presidents' authority as well as their opportunities and constraints.

Skowronek's first type, reconstructive presidents, oppose a regime that is vulnerable and failing and therefore have the greatest structural opportunities to act. They remove the prior regime and develop a new one based on novel ideas that endure and influence the course of future decisions and programs. Reconstructive leaders typically exercise active leadership that creates major changes and leaves an enduring legacy. As such, they meet the scholarly literature's most frequent criteria of presidential success or greatness (Burns 1978; Neustadt 1980; Rockman 1984; Landy and Milkis 2000). Landy and Milkis' description of "great" presidents closely approximates Skowronek's description of reconstructive presidents (Skowronek 1997, 36-39; Landy and Milkis 2000, 3). Reconstructive presidents regularly outperform other types in rankings studies (Nichols 2012), suggesting that much of the greatness these scholars observe reflects structural advantage rather than superior performance. Furthermore, it is worth questioning whether this type of leadership is most appropriate in other circumstances when regimes are stronger.

The three other leadership types (see Table 1) are generally less fortunate. Presidents of articulation are affiliated with regime ideas and supporters when the regime is resilient and

unlikely to collapse. They build upon their reconstructive predecessors' work, but without the same towering authority. Pre-emptive presidents oppose a resilient regime. Their opposition is generally rebuffed by regime adherents in public and political spheres. When pre-emptive presidents use their power aggressively the resulting showdowns usually end controversially and leave presidents with diminished reputations. Finally, disjunctive presidents, in whom this paper is primarily interested, are affiliated with a decaying, vulnerable regime. These presidents have the least authority to act and history usually judges them as incompetent failures. Skowronek calls theirs 'an impossible leadership situation', implying that they cannot succeed at all (1997, 365). The regime's political answers are no longer effective but these presidents lack the authority, and often the ideological inclination, to reconstruct politics and build new regimes. The vast differences among these presidential types suggest that individual presidents should be analyzed within types rather than across them. Such an approach allows us to judge presidents by standards they can realistically meet and to examine their skill in relation to their historical context.

Regime	Opposed leader	Affiliated leader
Vulnerable	Reconstruction	Disjunction
Resilient	Pre-emption	Articulation

Table 1: Recurrent structures of Presidential Authority (Skowronek 1997, 36).

Although the opportunities for disjunctive success may be limited, once we understand these limitations we can define success for leaders operating within these contexts. It also allows us to observe which presidents have best worked to shape their context and define it to their advantage (see Riker 1986; 't Hart 2012). Skowronek named John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Hebert Hoover and Jimmy Carter as disjunctive presidents. Subsequent political time studies have suggested the addition of Grover Cleveland's second term to this list (Nichols and Myers 2010; Laing 2012). The merit of this paper's focus on disjunctive presidents is two-fold. While the other types of presidency have received attention from other scholars since Skowronek's work was first published (for example, Harris 1997; Crockett 2002; Nichols and Myers 2010; Crockett 2012), there is little specific study of disjunctive presidents. Additionally, demonstrating that there is such a thing as success for these least celebrated of presidents, makes the strongest

argument for using a contextual approach to analyzing presidential performance, and for reimagining which presidents we consider to have been successes and failures.

This paper makes an original theoretical contribution to our understanding of presidential success defining three forms of presidential success: personal success, partisan regime success and normative success, and shows that these are differently available to presidents in different historical contexts. The paper shows that this success is available for Skowronek's most difficult context – disjunctive leadership – providing the first systematic approach to assessing success for such presidents.

The Three Forms of Presidential Success

Assigning the label “success” to presidents of any historical context is difficult, as single presidential actions regularly contain elements of success and failure. Some presidents' actions may appear successful in the short-term but later have negative consequences (Masciulli, Molachinov and Knight 2009, 10). Additionally, in a complex political system, we cannot even be certain that particular outcomes we observe are actually the result of presidential action ('t Hart 2011, 324). The blurring of success and failure is only more evident when examining entire presidencies. Despite these difficulties, the task of understanding presidential success is worth pursuing, not least because a nuanced understanding of the concept allows us to encourage better presidential performance.

Success is typically seen either as objective, with endeavors judged successful if they achieve desired outcomes, or it is seen as constructed and purely a matter of observers' interpretations. However, as McConnell argues in his work on policy success, these two forms of success co-exist (2010, 30-31; also Marsh and McConnell 2010). Policies, or in our case presidents, can achieve certain desired outcomes but that does not ensure people will judge them as successes (McConnell 2010, 39). True success is both material and interpretive, and the interaction between these two is imperative. Material success makes rhetorical success easier to achieve, as interpretive success encourages people to support a policy, making it more likely to become a material success. Therefore, both decision-making and presidential rhetoric are crucial in shaping public opinions of actions as presidential

successes. Presidents must make good decisions, but must also win a rhetorical contest with political opponents to define their actions (Tulis 1988; Zarefsky 2004).

We argue that there are three forms of presidential success and both the material and interpretive realms are essential to each. The availability of these forms varies for the four different presidential contexts and according to the president's willingness to adapt to different times. Table 2 shows the availability of the three forms of success to presidents of disjunction and according to the adaptive or resistant nature of presidents' responses to the changing times. A more adaptive stance involves presidents realizing the difficulties of maintaining the regime and seeking to move with the times and experiment with new ideas, whereas a resistant stance involves clinging to the old orthodoxy despite mounting evidence of its failure. Naturally, most disjunctive presidents fall somewhere between these positions, and a president may begin with a resistant stance, but gradually become more adaptive as the difficult regime circumstances become apparent.

Personal Success

The first form of success is personal success, in which presidents effect outcomes they consider desirable and for which they gain credit. Personal success is usually more short-term. It can be assessed through the attainment of policy goals, the maintenance of personal popularity, and re-election. Few, if any, personal successes are exclusively the result of a president's actions, but they redound to the president's benefit

Political achievements are usually team achievements, but these are "personal" successes as they involve significant presidential action and presidents gain credit for them. Disjunctive leaders often suffer here because as regimes lose credibility so do regime adherents, putting them at a disadvantage when attempting to link positive developments with presidential authority. This is a particular disadvantage when it comes to domestic politics, as disjunctions usually see presidents relying upon weakening and transient coalitions with congressional and state leaders. Not only does this limit their capacity for action, it often means that disjunctive presidents become scapegoats for regime problems they have inherited.

Where executive action is freer, especially foreign policy, there is far more potential for presidents to achieve personal success. Jimmy Carter's disjunctive politics did not, for example, prevent him from negotiating the SALT II treaty or the Camp David Accords, the latter ranking as one of the most important achievements of presidential diplomacy. Similarly, presidents are able to achieve personal success through executive orders, a route that is especially popular with presidents in more constrained situations (Mayer and Price 2002).

Generally, disjunctive presidents receive less credit for their achievements than other types of president do. Their limited capacity to gain interpretive success means that disjunctive presidents' material successes often belie their reputations. By contrast, reconstructive presidents' outstanding reputations mean that they are often personally credited with achievements that may not have been their own. As, for example, early steps towards economic intervention against the Great Depression carried out by Herbert Hoover have been often overlooked or attributed to Franklin Roosevelt.

Partisan Regime Success

The second form of success is partisan regime success. This refers to how presidents interact with the regime, either strengthening or weakening it to situate their parties and ideological coalitions for future achievement. Partisan regime success is harder to observe than personal success, but is often more enduring. It usually leads to future success for the president's party, but as presidents' actions influence the strength and longevity of the regime, it also has a considerable effect on the nation's future. Depending on their affiliation with or opposition to the regime, presidents must advance and update, or attack and discredit regime ideas and institutions, as well as strengthening or weakening the coalition that supports them.

Although Skowronek's three other types of president are able to achieve partisan regime success, this form is very limited for disjunctive presidents. The regime dies during their tenure and this creates societal disruption. As leaders affiliated with the regime, they would prefer to see it endure but cannot ensure that this is the case. These leaders cannot be considered regime successes because their best chances of achieving partisan goals are tied

to the regime itself. Thus, the regime's weakness is what undercuts the platform for presidential action. However, presidential action is not meaningless within this arena, and how a president responds to the crisis of their partisan regime can have an impact on the timeline of the affiliated party's decline and recovery.

More resistant presidents may maintain party authority in the short-term but risk marginalizing their party even further in the public eye, increasing the severity of electoral defeat and length of recovery. More adaptive presidents are better placed to prepare their partisan coalition for change and get a head-start on the process of partisan rebuilding, but risk their own authority in the process as the majority regime adherents and 'true believers' revolt. The better strategy may in part be dictated by the strength of competing factions and groupings within the coalition. However, there is also an opportunity for presidents to persuade their coalitions of different approaches.

Normative Success

Normative success is an elusive but essential concept. If presidents achieve their desired policy outcomes but harm the population, or damage the office of the presidency, they have failed as national leaders. Normative success has two elements, one being the need for presidents to improve and preserve society and work for the common good (see Hargrove 1998); the other is to preserve and uphold the Constitution and the office of the presidency. This dual nature of normative success reflects an ambivalence of executive power which sees the executive having to resolve competing expectations of acting with propriety – even modesty – in the face of constitutional and legal norms, yet also delivering on expectations on the improvement of people's lives, even if it requires recourse to means outside of the president's constitutional ambit (Cronin 1980, 120-125; Mansfield 1989). Disjunctive presidents have particular difficulty balancing these two tasks, often because the very meaning of the Constitution and the role of government is questioned during disjunctions.

Political actors' understandings of the common good differ with their political beliefs. Examining normative success from presidents' points of view avoids making the observer's ideology the standard for judging presidents. This allows presidents to succeed normatively regardless of their party affiliation, provided that their actions are not harmful and are

designed to further the nation. To achieve this latter point, presidents must act with respect for all citizens' rights (Thompson 2010, 25-26). Assuming that presidents believe their preferred path is best for the people; affiliated leaders should defend or strengthen the regime, while opposed leaders should weaken and overthrow it. However, disjunctive presidents are a special case in that the probability of achieving their own visions of a good society are remote and instead they are more likely to aid their nation by attempting something new than by applying orthodox solutions. Thus, there is a normative imperative for disjunctive leaders to experiment with policy alternatives.

The second, constitutional element of normative success requires that presidents preserve public trust in the office of the presidency and in the broader system of government. Presidents should preserve or improve the constitutional character of the office and the democratic character of society (Thompson 2010, 24). They must act with respect for due process and the traditions of national government (Thompson 2010, 26-27). The Constitution provides much of the legitimacy that enables presidential action, and the other institutions of government help prevent presidents' ethical failings (Kane and Patapan 2012). Therefore, preserving these institutions is paramount in ensuring future good leadership.

Disjunctive presidents' limited interpretive success often leads to an impression that they are ineffective and therefore that they lack authenticity and principle. As their oppositions are typically strong, disjunctive leaders are held to account more than other types. Additionally, their divided supporters are not entirely committed to defending them. Disjunctive leaders tend to fail in terms of encouraging trust in the institutions of government as their leadership appears to prove institutional failure. We should have modest expectations of disjunctive presidents on this task, for disjunctive presidents a neutral effect on perceptions of the institutions of government can be quite an achievement.

Even in ethical terms disjunctive presidents are at a disadvantage. When people consider leaders to be effective, they are more likely to judge them as ethically correct (Ciulla and Forsyth 2011, 233). Disjunctive presidents' perceived ineffectiveness means that minor

incidents, such as the questionable behavior of Jimmy Carter's brother, Billy, were treated harshly by opponents and media. By contrast, reconstructive presidents like Ronald Reagan were able to overcome many more serious indiscretions, such as the Iran-Contra scandal, the Savings and Loan Crisis and corruption within several executive departments (Sloan 1999, 42-43).

Degrees of Success in Disjunction

More than the other three types of president, presidents of disjunction are subject to contradictory pressures. If they maintain the existing orthodoxy, their success in each of the three forms is limited by the fact that these ideas do not cope with the economic and societal problems of the time. If they depart from the orthodoxy, they find it difficult to bring the political actors within their coalition along with them. There is a path to success between these pressures, but it is a difficult one.

Erwin C. Hargrove's typology of presidential leadership, which like Skowronek's is based on irregular historical cycles, provides a starting point for defining tasks for disjunctive presidents. Hargrove divides presidents into three categories: presidents of achievement, of consolidation and of preparation (Hargrove 1998, 63). Although his description of presidents of preparation elaborates little beyond this title, the idea that presidents of preparation are important in the subsequent creation of regimes is invaluable. For Hargrove, presidents of preparation are of accidental utility. For example, Carter attempted 'to bring the Democratic coalition back to the ideological and programmatic center and unwittingly paved the way for Ronald Reagan' (Hargrove 1998, 63). However, disjunctive presidents can make purposeful contributions. Carter and Hoover³ both engaged in policy experimentation that preceded and assisted reconstructive change. Disjunctive presidents' experimentation allows reconstructive presidents to build on their advances. This experimentation is typically borne of a pragmatic response to new problems that the old regime is unable to solve, rather than an ideological departure from the old regime, although it is worth noting that Carter was more economically conservative than most Democrats at the time. Furthermore, Skowronek

³ Curiously, Hargrove considered Hoover a president of consolidation, although he acknowledged that Hoover helped prepare the way for Roosevelt's achievements.

argues that disjunctive presidents often had weak ties to the ideology of the regime from the outset and came to power as outsiders (1997).

As the long-term national benefit of a presidency of disjunction lies in experimentation, these leaders should provide adaptive leadership that explores multiple possibilities. It is difficult to compare the quality of experimentation between disjunctive presidencies, but the quantity of experimentation is important. The earlier disjunctive presidents discern the nature of their position and begin experimenting, the better for their successors and potentially for their own ability to influence their successors' course.⁴ However, it is difficult firstly, to understand the limitations of the disjunctive situation and secondly to act vigorously in directions not agreed to by the president's own party and coalition. As Table 2 postulates, the opportunities for disjunctive presidential success are limited but an adaptive strategy is far superior to a resistant one, especially in normative terms.

President of Disjunction	Personal	Partisan Regime	Normative
Adaptive stance	Some, but concrete rather than interpretive.	Unclear, but limited.	Possible through experimentation.
Resistant stance	Limited.	Unclear, but limited.	Very limited without substantial experimentation.

Table 2. Availability of forms of success to presidents of disjunction.

As well as responding to long-term normative imperatives, the adaptive approach provides greater opportunities for shorter-term personal success. The experimentation means more opportunities for policy successes than a resistant approach creates. Legislative aspects of that agenda will not necessarily be easy to achieve, but to the extent that executive action is an important part of the experimentation, the opportunities for personal success grow. Both resistant and adaptive approaches have limited opportunities for interpretive aspects of success as divisions within the governing party mean that it is hard to create a coalition that is willing to credit the president with success.

⁴ For a discussion of the importance of the skill of discernment in presidential leadership see Hargrove (1998: Pages).

Hoover and Carter's Success and Failure in the Impossible Leadership Situation

We have identified four major criteria on which disjunctive presidents can succeed and these feed in to our assessments of their three forms of success. In normative terms, their primary contribution is in experimentation that aims to solve the problems of the day by new, innovative methods. It is also important that they seek to preserve the constitutional and institutional integrity of their office and of the US government more broadly. In personal terms disjunctive presidents are capable of considerable legislative and foreign policy successes. While the scope for partisan regime success is limited, there are advantages to good party management. However, at least two of these types of success are generally more available to disjunctive presidents who take an adaptive strategy than those who take a resistant stance. This section illustrates the framework described above by through the case examples of Herbert Hoover and Jimmy Carter.

Normative Success

The first way for disjunctive presidents to succeed is policy experimentation, through which disjunctive presidents seek to resolve problems that orthodox political ideas appear no longer able to solve. This is the criterion that is most closely tied to the need for an adaptive strategy and can create long-term normative success, as it aids the national reinvigoration that comes of a subsequent reconstruction. However, such success can have the drawback of being damaging for the disjunctive president in partisan terms, as the subsequent reconstructive president receives credit for the success of the disjunctive president's experimental measures, often helping consign the president's party to years of defeat at presidential elections.

Herbert Hoover was much criticized for doing nothing to combat the Depression (Romasco 1974), but he substantially experimented with new approaches to economic policy that formed a precursor to FDR's New Deal. Early experiments were only slightly more interventionist than the prevailing ideology of his regime, however they created a pathway to significant long-term change. For example, the National Credit Corporation (NCC) in 1931 was established to provide loans to struggling banks (though still managed at the behest of

the major banks). The NCC bankers (in some regards stalwarts of the flailing regime) proved too conservative, loaning too little to make a difference (Butkiewicz 1995, 199). The failure was important however, as it convinced Hoover and other members of his party that more interventionist measures were needed, such as the subsequent establishment of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) in 1932 (Rothbard 1972, 300-301; Gup 2004, 20-23). The RFC was to make major loans to states, municipalities and corporations, and provide an injection of much needed funds to the economy. Hoover insisted the funds be for self-liquidating projects, and the politics of the collapsing Republican regime compromised much of its work due to disagreements over mission and scope, limiting the RFC's effectiveness (Sautter 1986, 83; also Butkiewicz 1995). Nevertheless, Hoover expanded its authority in his last days in office in 1933 and it succeeded in providing much needed capital to troubled economic sectors its early years (Gup 2004, 24-25). Later Roosevelt further expanded the RFC and it became a key institution of the New Deal. Similarly, Hoover's creation of the Federal Farm Board and introduction of the Agricultural Marketing Act, whilst operating only for a short time, set the precedent for mass agricultural subsidies and collective marketing that would eventually be enshrined in the Farm Credit Agency and Agricultural Adjustment Act under Roosevelt. These measures became pillars of the New Deal's approach to agriculture.

These and other Hoover experiments only chipped away at the larger problem of the Great Depression, but they were crucial foundation stones to the New Deal policy regime. The early years of the New Deal benefitted from the institutional design of Hoover programs, expanding their operations and capacity (Todd 1992, 25-26). As Rexford Tugwell, key architect of the New Deal reflected, 'practically the whole New Deal was extrapolated from programs that Hoover started', a sentiment echoed by other key architects like Raymond Moley. However, Hoover received very little credit for these early policy experiments until much later (Rothbard 1972, 209-214; McElvaine 1993, 67-71). Indeed, some authors have credited Hoover as the first president to lead an economic mobilization effort of national scale in the United States, albeit within the strict constitutional confines of the office (Myers and Newton 1936, 3-4).

Carter was more aware of the danger of inflation than most Democrats in Congress (Hargrove 1988, 69). In his last two years, Carter clearly prioritized inflation over unemployment. He publicly admitted that his administration was trying several anti-inflation measures with no certainty that any would work (Morgan 2004, 1018-1019). Carter's anti-inflation program of October 1978 created a problem typical of disjunctive presidencies; the difficulty of balancing regime commitments with situational needs. This program presciently specified wage restraint as a cornerstone to aggressively tackle inflationary pressures but suffered because of organized labor's lack of support (Biven 2002, 190-191; Dark 2001, 114-117).

However, experimentation did ensue. Unable to authoritatively suppress wage inflation without further fracturing its shaky partisan base, the Carter administration instead pursued an 'accord' agreement between unions and the administration over wage rates. Although novel, its measures were routinely subverted or simply ineffective at wage control (Dark 2001, 115-120). Other measures during Carter's leadership demonstrated the key dilemma of disjunctive presidents knowing their regime policies are increasingly ineffective but being unable to repudiate them. The Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1978 was passed simultaneously with the earlier described anti-inflation program, however this act was unabashedly committed to Keynesian approaches to creating full employment through government intervention, entirely contradicting the administration's attempts to cut spending and reduce inflationary pressures (Dumbrell 1995, 100-101). Pressured by the black segments of the Democratic Party, Carter was obliged to support the bill but tried to negate its effect through executive inaction (Dumbrell 1995, 101-102). Carter's administration found repeatedly that external political constraints prevented economic policy innovation (Hargrove 1988, 86-87). In part, this reflects the need for disjunctive presidents to convince legislators, and particularly their own parties, that their innovative approach is necessary.

Carter also experimented with industrial relations policy, questioning the effectiveness of the traditional centralized 'big-government' responses. The Youth Unemployment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 was an explicitly experimental program advanced by Carter to tackle youth and minority unemployment. It greatly departed from the core tenets of the Democratic regime by decentralizing management, partnering with private enterprise

and minimizing public sector employment reliance (Kaplowitz 1998, 188-189). Carter's economic experimentation also touched upon deregulation. Administration insiders like Alfred Kahn and industry lobbyists advanced proposals for deregulation of the airlines and trucking industry, which both Carter and the Democratic Party ultimately supported (Derthick and Quirk 1985, 111-113; Kaufman 2009, 245-246). Indeed, despite the novelty assigned to Reagan's later positions against 'big government', Carter and Gerald Ford before him had both started to address what they and economists identified as overly burdensome economic regulation and bureaucracy. Biven credits Carter's airline deregulation as "one of the most important experiments" in economic policy of the era (2002, 222). However, the coalition fractured over Carter's modest proposals to deregulate the oil industry. This plan met with fierce resistance from Carter's own base as well as from liberal Democratic challenger Ted Kennedy, who by contrast promised to nationalize the industry completely (Anderson 2000). Unexpectedly, Carter's deregulation efforts, not originally part of the anti-inflation strategy, were the most effective in reducing inflation. Other policies such as price guidelines and fiscal restraint had no real effect (Morgan 2004, 1023-1024).

Carter's experimentation, although frequently compromised and poorly implemented, laid critical foundations for the economic paradigm shift instituted by Reagan (Anderson 2000). Simply having the issue of deregulation on the agenda as a result of his predecessor's actions assisted Reagan in assembling a new partisan coalition, some of whom were the Congressional Reagan Democrats who became early converts to the new regime (Mikva 1990, 524). Furthermore, Carter's push towards spending restraint in many areas of social policy created a platform for Reagan's efforts. For example, the Carter administration tightened the requirements for receiving Disability Insurance, meaning that the Reagan administration was able to use Carter's framework, but apply it more rigorously to drastically reduce spending in this area (Pierson 1994, 141). The changing economic policy continued into the Reagan administration, with further deregulation and monetary restraint central elements of Reagan's strategy. Reagan benefited from Carter's experimentation and policy changes, but had the experimentation started earlier and had Carter garnered more support within Congress for it, arguably that benefit would have been greater.

Personal Success:

Disjunctive presidents can achieve much in material terms that can be categorized as personal success. Some of this is legislative, although the interpretive side of such success is far harder to achieve. House Speaker, Thomas P. O'Neill considered Carter's first hundred days among the most productive he witnessed (Skowronek 1997, 380). Hoover also secured most of his major legislative proposals (Burner 1974, 54). However, each received little credit for these efforts because they struggled to control the public understanding of their actions.

Hoover's presidency came as the development of radio as a major medium altered political communication. Hoover's staid and sometimes dour persona compounded his appearance of inactivity and tied him in the public imagination with the tired laissez-faire regime of the old guard Republican Party (Clements 2010, 414-417; Jeansonne 2012, 389-390). This narrative continued to develop over Hoover's final years and the 1932 election campaign, with scant attention paid to his legislative or economic achievements. Over time, attacks on Hoover became increasingly personal in nature, linking the worst exigencies of the Depression to poor character and mindset on the part of Hoover rather than simply policy failure (Clements 2010, 414-417; Jeansonne 2012, 389-390).

Hoover's initial response of relative calm and silence during the stock market crash of 1929 was regularly criticized for insufficient effort. However, later interpretations see his silence as a rhetorical attempt to convince people that there was no crisis and to spur normal financial behavior (Houck 2000). His strategy succeeded modestly and briefly, but as evidence of the crisis mounted Hoover's apparent absence undermined the confidence he sought to instill (Houck 2000, 156). The predominant narrative of the period (and then for some time in historical retrospect) was of Hoover the laissez-faire president, with press and historians alike branding the President as aloof and inactive in the face of national calamity (Leuchtenburg 2009, 104; Jeansonne 2013, 89). Although some in Hoover's administration, such as Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, proposed largely inactive approaches to handling the depression (see McElvaine 1993, 76), Hoover himself left behind a relatively active legislative legacy and no shortage of policy innovations.

Carter's problems of rhetoric and personal appeal were obvious in his 'Crisis of Confidence' speech in July of 1979. Evolving out of discussions at Camp David that summer, Carter attempted to improve his personal image and connect directly with the public, whilst simultaneously initiating efforts to purge his administration of malcontents and lead more decisively. Carter broke with many of the perceived norms of political rhetoric, offering philosophical observations and personal appeals in an attempt to bypass the failing legislative politics of his era and build a new movement behind himself. In the short term, opinion polling indicated that the public made the connection and supported the President's agenda (*New York Times*, July 18 1979). Ultimately though, this unusually thoughtful and honest speech had limited effect – within months it was largely forgotten and Carter could not harness the good-will he had generated (Ceaser et al. 1981; Janis 1987, 3-4). Carter's problems with his own party undercut public confidence in his leadership when in the weeks after the 'crisis of confidence' speech he sacked half of his cabinet (*The Spokesman Review*, July 23 1979). The speech and its policy agenda were continually opposed by Congress and sections of Carter's own party, and were reframed from an earnest appeal into 'scolding' from an incapable president (see Mattson 2010, 167-195).

Constrained presidents have greater chance of achieving personal success in foreign policy. The president's powers and authority are far more secure in this arena, as foreign policy tends to operate separately from the domestic regime (Resnick and Thomas 1990; Goldstein 1991). Hoover, despite being hamstrung by the management of the Depression, had a number of foreign policy achievements. He extended the disarmament program set out by the Washington Naval Treaty with the London Naval Treaty in 1930, and made a number of reductions in the military capacity of the US with a clear policy setting towards further disarmament and isolationism (Jeansonne 2012, 173). Perhaps Hoover's most important foreign policy achievement was the change in the US stance towards Latin America through the bundle of initiatives known as the Good Neighbor Policy. Hoover's tour of Latin America in 1928 led to a spate of changes in foreign policy settings, including a revision of US policy regarding military intervention in the region (Leuchtenburg 2009, 120-122). Hoover's personal intervention in the long running Tacna-Arica dispute led to a resolution and the signing of the Treaty of Lima in 1929, which Secretary of State Henry Stimson considered Hoover's "greatest personal triumph" (Rhodes 2001, 76). He progressively reduced

American military presence in Latin America, and continued to build better relations (see DeConde 1947). However, the Depression overwhelmed any attention that might be spared for Hoover's foreign policy accomplishments. Indeed, the Good Neighbor Policy, which was continued and expanded upon by Roosevelt, would soon be assumed (not unlike previously discussed aspects of the New Deal program) to have been the exclusive product of the Roosevelt administration. Hoover's persistence in maintaining an active foreign policy agenda despite a hostile Congress and negative public sentiment secured significant material personal success.

Jimmy Carter provides a stronger example of the potential for foreign policy success amidst a moribund domestic political regime. He personally advanced foreign policy goals, often in the absence of or in conflict with regime priorities and coalition support. Perhaps most striking was Carter's successful conclusion of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties in 1977, which handed control of the Panama Canal to Panama and dissolved the American zone adjoining it. The move was a major achievement of the administration, as Carter won over Congress on a policy which the American public opposed. Indeed, three previous administrations had failed to obtain Congressional approval to modify the canal treaties (Hastedt 2009, 382; Moffett, 1985). But while Carter had engineered a sharp turn in US policy towards Latin America, but he failed to institutionalize any long-term change. The treaties proved a rallying point for conservatives, and ultimately the incoming Republican regime departed from Carter's trajectory (Skidmore, 1993). Furthermore, the interpretation placed on the treaties cast Carter again as weak and vacillating, despite the determined leadership required to broker the treaties (Moffett, 1985). Carter also acted boldly in East Asia with the normalization of Chinese relations, prevailing against strident opposition from Republicans and some quarters of his own party and cabinet (Hargrove 1999, 130-133; Gregor 1986, 128-132)

With regards to the Cold War, Carter preempted the major reorientation that came about under Reagan. Although Carter was frequently criticized as weak towards the Soviet Union, he ultimately heralded the transition from détente to confrontation. Most significant was the change of policy in the Middle East, through which Carter achieved several breakthroughs. Though his plan for a comprehensive settlement eluded him, Carter's role in

brokering the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty opened up possibilities for a US bloc in the Middle East that included both Israel and Arab partners. Carter supported this through major arms exports to Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt – a policy that angered the Soviet Union but would ultimately pay dividends for the US later (see Powaski 1997, 216-218). Carter took a more assertive stance by boycotting the 1980 Moscow Olympics and embargoing grain sales in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, while still successfully brokering agreement on arms reductions. Although the SALT II agreements were never ratified by the Senate, their provisions were nonetheless adhered to by both sides (Powaski 1997, 203-210).

Carter's many foreign policy accomplishments contributed little to his public image or the attribution of success. For example, despite the signing of the Camp David Accords and the significant positive personal coverage Carter received locally during his visit to the Three Mile Island nuclear accident site in March and April of 1979 (Lusted 2012, 78-79), it was a photograph of the President being 'attacked' by a swamp rabbit near his home town that received the most enduring media attention for some months, reinforcing the narrative of an enfeebled president (Beinart 2010, 204-205; Berkowitz 2007, 122-125). In the public eye, Carter's foreign policy record was diminished by the prolonged negotiations to release American hostages in Iran, despite their successful conclusion.

Both Hoover and Carter demonstrated the potential for disjunctive leaders to achieve personal success through foreign policy endeavors despite the intractable collapse of their position within the domestic political landscape. Although it is unlikely to generate a positive narrative for presidential action, or increase domestic authority (indeed, it arguably decreased it further in Carter's case), or rally the failing partisan regime; it is a space in which presidents can maintain authority and provide effective leadership.

Partisan Regime and Party Management

At best, presidents of disjunction can achieve limited partisan regime success, and this is predominantly determined by their party management. The cracks in the coalition run through the president's party and mean that presidential action, be it resistant or adaptive, tends to upset one or other faction within the party. The better presidents do at convincing

legislators to follow new and adaptive paths, the more opportunity they have for interpretive success.

Hoover's experimentation with intervention into the marketplace soon butted up against an unenthusiastic party. There were limits to how much Hoover could deviate from the political regime which had produced him. Indeed, in many areas of economic policy Hoover rigidly adhered to past practice. He refused to abandon the gold standard or balanced budgets. Maintaining the increasingly narrow core base of the party (the 'Old Guard') rested on maintenance of the Republican creed of limited and conservative economic measures based on the gold standard which had dominated Republican economic policy since the 1890s. Even after the 1932 election Hoover attempted to prevent FDR from deviating from these practices (Eichengreen and Temin 2000, 203-204).

Although Hoover was willing to experiment with incremental change to the Republican regime to speed economic recovery, ultimately he resisted its wholesale reform and maintained tight control. The result was a somewhat contrarian 'limited interventionism' (Hoover 1952, 30-31; Sundquist 1983, 200-204). As a result, the national convention of 1932, rather than featuring a vigorous debate between party wings over the policy course for the Republicans, was virtually deserted with only a third of seats occupied when Hoover was re-nominated. Much of the progressive wing of the party had defected to support Roosevelt or was in the process of doing so (Jenner 2010, 49-52), while other Republican Congressmen were increasingly distancing themselves from Hoover and charting independent courses (Leuchtenburg 2009, 93).

Hoover's efforts did ensure that he maintained authority over the party during his presidency. However these efforts, at best, delayed break-up and reformulation within the party, with the conservative wing progressively losing control to the moderate wing throughout the 1930s and 1940s (Sundquist 1983, 214-239). Indeed, Hoover continued to resist wholesale change and maintain adherence to the traditional Republican regime after office, marshalling forces to defeat progressive challenges to the leadership of the party for several years (Best 1983).

The partisan regime undergirding Carter's efforts was weak and party cohesion withered despite Carter's efforts to tread a middle ground as Hoover had done before him. However Carter was more adaptive and pragmatic than Hoover in his approach to the partisan ideology of the party, and was willing to experiment with deregulation and monetarist economic ideas, both of which directly confronted the traditional Keynesian economic platform of the Democratic Party. Carter was also a relative outsider within the Democratic Party and this status allowed him a degree of political independence, though it also left him without the strength of Democratic elite support his predecessors had enjoyed.

Ultimately Carter's efforts undermined his own authority and fomented infighting within his administration. A number of defenders of the Democratic regime attempted to save it from Carter: Ted Kennedy challenged strongly in 1980, leading to a bitter national convention, with Kennedy standing as the defender of the Democrats' traditional liberal 'Great Society' platform (Kaufman 2009, 249-250). Carter's dramatic sacking of five cabinet members in mid-1979 publicized party divisions. Carter was facing open subordination from traditional progressives like Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano and from conservatives like Treasurer Werner Blumenthal (Dumbrell 1995, 33-35). Their removal eased the way for a more harmonious administration but badly damaged Carter's public image and highlighted the rifts in the partisan regime.

Carter's adaptation to change no better protected the partisan regime from electoral defeat and collapse than the more resistant efforts of Hoover, however arguably it laid the groundwork for major change and anticipated the reforms of the Democratic Party that would occur throughout the 1980s. Whilst Hoover played a major role in resisting change and slowing the reform of the Republicans in the 1930s, Carter as the antecedent of the 'New Democrat' movement began the process of refocusing the party's priorities and moving away from the faltering New Deal regime (Kaplowitz 1998). Although this did not prevent the old guard within the Democratic Party from maintaining dominance throughout the 1980s, Carter's adaptive responses and lesser interference with party operations after his departure from the White House arguably removed at least one obstacle to the party reinventing itself towards the Third Way style politics of the 1990s relatively quickly.

Conclusion

Skowronek's conception of political time may seem a strange basis for analyzing presidential success. Presidential success by its nature implies agency, and Skowronek has attracted criticism from some who considered his periodization deterministic (Arnold 1995; Hoekstra 1999). There is, however, considerable space for agency within political time. Furthermore, Skowronek's attention to structure allows us to observe that where historical contexts differ, the capacity for agency and therefore for success differ. This allows us to explore how success varies in different situations and to avoid conflating presidents' structural advantage with successful performance.

Presidents of disjunction are particularly constrained in their ability to be seen as successful, but their capacity for material success is indisputable. Furthermore, the investigation of presidents' interactions with the actors, particularly legislators, within their coalitions demonstrates that the more these presidents can convince these actors to follow a new and more adaptive strategy, the more they can restructure the situation to allow for their own personal and normative success.

While we are accustomed to the argument that the opportunities for action are limited for leaders in certain historical circumstances, this has had minimal effect on how presidential success is analyzed. Presidents in different historical contexts should be assessed as qualitatively different; we should not expect them all to perform similar actions and obtain similar outcomes. When success is divided into its personal, partisan regime and normative forms, it is apparent that in certain situations different aspects of success are unavailable. While this paper has shown that there are various ways in which presidents of disjunction can succeed, there is clearly more work needed to establish reliable methods to compare and contrast the achievements of different disjunctive presidents so that we can more confidently evaluate their relative success.

This examination of the role of presidents of disjunction leads us to realize the importance of this type of president in perpetuating the subsequent regime, even if they would not choose to reconstruct politics in the way it occurs. Disjunctive presidents have an essential

role in the cycle of political time, and thus we can define their role so that we can distinguish better and worse performance.

Understanding presidential success differently in different contexts is not just important for analytical purposes. All presidents wish to be considered successful, so public expectations can influence presidential actions. If we judge all presidents by standards appropriate to Franklin Roosevelt's situation we encourage them to act in a way that will frequently contribute to their failure. More realistic public and expert expectations of presidents can lead to more realistic presidential attitudes. This diminishes the chances of presidential failure and diminishes the prospect of significant negative outcomes for citizens.

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