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What is This?

Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered: Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, and the Rise of Polarized Politics

Daniel J. Galvin[1]

Abstract

Extant research has given little consideration to the conditions under which presidential partisan behavior might vary. This has undermined comparative analyses and obscured important partisan behaviors in earlier periods simply because they took unfamiliar forms. This article develops theoretical expectations to aid in the detection of different varieties of presidential partisanship. Illustrative case studies then examine one type—sub-rosa partisanship—observed in the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford presidencies. Though not overt partisan displays like those that are common today, their efforts to build southern party organizations made important contributions to American political development and to evolving modes of presidential partisanship.

Keywords

presidential partisanship, party organization, southern GOP, polarization

Presidential partisanship is a widely used but woefully undertheorized concept. It can refer to many different things, from a president's feelings of loyalty to his party, to his policy choices, to his style of rhetoric, to his party organizational leadership, to a range of other activities. There is nothing inherently wrong with this conceptual breadth. Problems arise, however, when a particular subset of behaviors is chosen, without theoretical justification, to serve as the basis for comparing and evaluating different presidents' degrees of "partisanship." Why those behaviors, and not some others? Seldom is the unit of analysis justified or motivated by theory. I argue that this is because virtually no systematic consideration has been given to the conditions under which we would expect to observe different types of partisan presidential behavior. This has resulted in "I know it when I see it" tests of partisanship, indeterminate comparisons across presidencies, and high substantive costs for our understanding of the phenomenon we wish to study.[1]

Consider the emerging consensus among scholars and journalists that presidential partisanship has been on the rise since Ronald Reagan's presidency (Bond and Fleisher 2000; Pfiffner 2006; Milkis and Rhodes 2007; Skinner 2008; Douthat 2010; Klein 2010). Recent presidents are said to have presented more partisan images of themselves to the public, campaigned more vigorously for fellow partisans,

used more combative rhetoric toward the opposition party, worked harder to strengthen their party organization and mobilize their base, pushed for policies that unabashedly "deliver the goods" to their party's core constituencies, and/or adopted administrative strategies that openly seek to serve their party's interests. The prevailing view is that we have entered a new era of presidential partisanship, distinct enough from past patterns to be dubbed "the partisan presidency" or "the polarized presidency" (Cameron 2002; Cronin and Genovese 2006; Skinner 2008; Newman and Siegle 2010).

Clearly, something about presidential partisan behavior *has* changed in recent years. But without well-specified, theoretically grounded expectations of how presidents are likely to act under different conditions, it is hard to know what to make of these observations. After all, during precisely the same period of time, partisan polarization swept across the American political system and became the dominant feature of electoral and legislative politics. Is it any surprise that under highly polarized

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conditions, presidents have appeared to act in a more partisan fashion, especially when presidential partisanship is defined as consisting of these behaviors?

To be sure, studies of the contemporary "partisan presidency" do not ignore the dramatic rise in systemwide polarization—it is usually central to the narrative. But seldom is it built into the analysis in a systematic or meaningful way. Although the "denominator"—the baseline of partisanship in American politics—began to change in the late 1970s and never returned to midcentury levels, presidents from before and after the shift are compared and evaluated as if they had served simultaneously. The possibility that prevailing partisan norms or other contextual factors might have deterred earlier presidents from vigorously and publicly promoting their party's goals is not seriously considered. The problem is that by not taking contextual factors into account, analyses of presidential partisanship are unable to say with any certainty what is really being measured: is it the president's behavior or his context (of which his behavior is merely an artifact)?

This might be chalked up to a "mere" measurement problem, were it not for the significant substantive costs incurred by proceeding in this manner. Because we have used the behavior of recent presidents as our yardstick, we have failed to observe numerous acts of presidential partisanship in earlier periods simply because they took different forms. Specifically, we have overlooked an entire set of activities undertaken by Republican presidents predating Ronald Reagan that aimed to advance the fortunes of the Republican Party but were carried out without much fanfare and largely out of the public eye.

Because these earlier behaviors do not fit contemporary definitions of presidential partisanship—they were not overt acts of partisanship like those that are so common today—they have long gone undetected. But as the following pages show, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford worked assiduously to help build Republican Party organizations in the South, taking numerous behind-the-scenes steps to make the GOP more competitive in that region. These were fully partisan acts, designed to boost their party's electoral standing at the expense of the opposition party, but they conformed to the more muted partisan norms of the pre-polarization period that were especially prevalent in the South.

They were no less significant, however, for their lack of publicity. The party organizations these presidents helped to build were integral to the partisan transformation of the South, the gradual strengthening of the Republican Party's competitive standing nationwide, and the rightward ideological drift of the GOP. In these ways, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford's *sub-rosa* acts of partisanship were instrumental in helping to bring about the polarized conditions in which later presidents would feel increasingly compelled to engage in *overt* acts of partisanship. Thus, not only were these deeply partisan behaviors that the concept of presidential partisanship should be able to capture and accommodate, but they had important consequences for the changing shape of American politics and for the evolving nature of presidential partisanship itself. Before discussing these broader implications, however, we must begin by better specifying the conditions under which we would expect presidential partisanship to vary.

Varieties of Presidential Partisanship

Political behavior is usually conceptualized as a product of incentives and constraints, or, if one prefers, as part motive, part context. There is little reason to believe that partisan presidential behavior would be any different. Presidents may have stronger or weaker incentives to advance the fortunes of their parties, and they may face stronger or weaker environmental constraints. Depending on how these incentives and constraints align, different types of partisan behavior should be anticipated. This section begins with a consideration of where these incentives and constraints might come from, sorts through some potential configurations, and lays out some theoretical expectations.

Incentives. One of the foundational premises of presidency research is that each incumbent brings his own unique "sense of purpose" to the White House and pursues it with his own distinctive style, skills, strengths, and weaknesses (Neustadt 1960, 167-72; Greenstein 2004). Individual traits and proclivities thus constitute one plausible source of variation in presidential motivations: a president's background, personality, or psychological predisposition might generate stronger or weaker incentives to act in a partisan fashion. Yet this does not exhaust the possibilities: presidents, after all, may derive their personal preferences from a wide variety of sources, and indeed, may be motivated by different factors at different times.

Consider, for example, one of the most well-known and reliable motivators of political behavior: the electoral incentive (Downs 1957; Mayhew 1974). A long tradition of scholarship has found that "losing" parties, variously defined, have strong incentives to adapt, innovate, rebuild, and reach out to new groups (Downs 1957; Dahl 1966; Riker 1962; Lowi 1963; Panebianco 1988; Finegold and Swift 2001; Shepsle 2003). "Winning" parties, in contrast, tend to be more complacent. Clearly, presidents are not parties and cannot be assumed to act in a strictly Downsian fashion. But they are not immune to electoral pressures either, and may be more susceptible to them than we often realize (Galvin 2010). Thus, the weaker the

party's relative competitive standing, the more we might expect the president to engage in innovative, constructive acts that aim to bolster his party's electoral prospects; conversely, the stronger the party's competitive standing, the weaker the president's partisan motivation may be.

Alternatively, presidents might be more or less inclined to undertake partisan activities simply by virtue of the party with which they are affiliated. Numerous scholars have shown that deeply rooted cultural, coalitional, attitudinal, and ideological differences divide the Democratic and Republican parties (Nexon 1971; Freeman 1986; Mayhew 1986; Bruzios 1990; Klinkner 1994; Gerring 1998; Bernstein, Bromley, and Meyer 2006; Galvin 2010). Different characteristics are emphasized in different accounts, but most distinguish between the Republicans' greater coalitional homogeneity and emphasis on hierarchy, order, and businesslike efficiency and the Democrats' greater heterogeneity and commitment to flattened hierarchies, internal debate, inclusiveness, and procedural equality. These characteristic differences, whether by "selecting for" certain types of presidents or by acting as a set of constraints, might shape presidents' behaviors in predictable ways. Republican presidents, for example, might view partisan projects as more feasible than their Democratic counterparts, who might perceive them to be more trouble than they are worth. Or Democrats might be more likely to adopt a consensus-building approach that emphasizes themes of inclusion than Republicans, who might view the pursuit of partisan objectives as more of a "mission."

Still another possibility is that presidents might derive their partisan dispositions from their party's basic orientation toward government. Since the New Deal, the Democratic Party has identified as the "party of government" while the Republican Party has tended to assume the role of "party of opposition" (Milkis 1993). Throughout most of the nineteenth century, those roles were reversed, with the Whigs/Republicans as the primary defenders of government and the Democrats as the antiestablishment insurgents. Nevertheless, this basic dichotomy—one party defending the programmatic commitments and institutional arrangements of the state, the other seeking to dismantle them—could very well motivate different partisan presidential behaviors. Given the centrality of collective action to the politics of opposition, presidents from insurgent parties might be drawn more toward partisan mobilization projects than presidents from pro-government parties, who might treat extragovernmental activity as a second-order priority behind policy making.

Any of these factors—individual motives, electoral incentives, party culture, or orientation toward government—could plausibly generate stronger or weaker incentives for presidents to act in ways that advance their parties' interests. Indeed, as discussed below, all of them appear as plausible motivating factors in Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford's party activities. The objective here, therefore, is not to choose between them, since they may not be mutually exclusive. Rather, it is to call attention to the fact that some presidents might have stronger partisan motivations than others and to suggest that this variation should be more systematically built into the terms of analysis.

Constraints. Just as presidents may have stronger or weaker incentives to undertake partisan acts, they may face stronger or weaker constraints in what they can do and how they can do it. Depending on the conceptualization, these constraints can include anything from the Constitution and the laws to the president's limited time in office to the limits of his own political skills. The focus here is on the contextual constraints most pertinent to partisan activities: prevailing partisan norms and standards of legitimacy, which as numerous scholars have shown, have acted as a kind of boundary condition on presidential partisan behavior throughout American history. Whether presidents were elected *because* their partisan styles fit contemporary standards or they adapted their styles to fit their times, their behaviors have tended to track changes in these environmental constraints.

For example, "Patrician Era" norms from the 1780s to the 1820s strongly proscribed overt acts of partisanship, and as a result the first six presidents labored to emulate the "above party" posture of George Washington (Ketcham 1987; McDonald 1994). During the "Party Period" between the 1830s and 1890s, more public displays of partisanship were considered legitimate and were even expected of incumbents; presidents responded by openly serving the interests of their parties (R. L. McCormick 1986; R. P. McCormick 1966). During the Progressive Era, the spirit of antipartism encouraged presidents to tone down their partisan pursuits, assert greater independence from their parties, and make overtures toward reform (Arnold 2009; Ceaser 1979; Croly 1914; Milkis 2009). This more ambivalent, inhibited model of partisanship persisted through the postwar "consensus" period until around the 1980s, when the rise of partisan polarization saw the return of unabashed partisan displays last seen in the Gilded Age (Cameron 2002).

This historical rendering explains a good deal of the variance in presidential partisan styles over the course of American history, but taken by itself, it may obscure more than it reveals. If Thomas Jefferson stood "above party," then much of his action as president is incomprehensible; indeed, we now know that his nonpartisan public posture concealed many behind-the-scenes political activities (Cunningham 1963; Johnstone 1978; Bailey 2007). Likewise, Woodrow Wilson may have bespoke antiparty norms during the Progressive Era, but he is famous for some of the greatest achievements in programmatic party leadership (Link 1954; James 2000; Arnold 2009). In

Table 1. Varieties of Presidential Partisanship

		Incentives to promote party interests	
		Weaker	**Stronger**
Contextual constraints	**More partisan era**	Post-partisanship	Overt partisanship
	Less partisan era	Anti-partisanship	Sub-rosa partisanship

other words, even as prevailing partisan norms bid them to stand above or apart from party, presidents found ways to act in a partisan fashion. The periodization synthesis thus highlights some of the major contextual constraints that similarly situated presidents have shared over the course of American history, but it says next to nothing about the variable incentives that might have shaped presidential behavior *within* each period. Taken by themselves, then, neither incentives nor constraints are sufficient to explain variation in presidential partisanship.

Rather than view them as contradictory, it may be more useful to treat incentives and constraints as separate axes that, in interaction with one another, produce distinctive types of presidential partisanship. In Table 1, one axis denotes the relative strength of presidential *incentives* to engage in partisan activities; the other denotes relative differences in partisan *context*, taking into account prevailing norms and standards of legitimacy. Since presidents with stronger or weaker motives can be elected during more or less partisan eras, four different "ideal types" of presidential partisanship emerge as possibilities, with different behavioral expectations accompanying each.

Presidents with stronger partisan motives serving under more partisan conditions (top-right cell) want to undertake partisan projects and have license to do so openly. Consequently, they should be expected to engage in *overt* acts of partisanship. George W. Bush, whose oft-stated goal of establishing a "permanent Republican majority" was paired with unconcealed efforts to aid his party's fortunes, seemed to play to this type (Bass 2004; Edwards and King 2007; Skinner 2008; Rae 2009; Coleman and Price 2009).

Presidents with weaker incentives to promote their party's interests serving during more partisan times (top-left cell) face pressures—from party activists, from their opponents, from citizens—to engage in partisan combat, contrary to their wishes. Under these conditions, they should be expected to acknowledge the heightened partisanship of their day but attempt to transcend or move beyond it. Given that partisanship structures the political scene, however, this may result in a conflicted and ambivalent partisan posture. Barack Obama's struggle to

practice *post-partisanship* would seem to fit the bill (Milkis and Rhodes 2010).

Presidents with weaker partisan motives serving during an era of more muted partisanship (bottom-left cell) do not seek to undertake highly partisan acts, and with partisanship at a low ebb, they are not expected to. Under these conditions, they may try to use the prevailing ambivalence toward parties to their advantage, expressing more openly their lack of enthusiasm for partisanship while neglecting, exploiting, or undermining their parties. A good example of this *anti-partisan* behavior might be Lyndon B. Johnson, who sought to practice consensus politics while curtailing his party's organizational activities and slashing its budget (Savage 2004; Galvin 2010).

Finally, more strongly motivated presidents serving during less partisan times (bottom-right cell) want to take proactive steps to advance their parties' fortunes but are constrained by prevailing norms proscribing strong partisanship. Under these conditions, rather than promote divisive policies or issue partisan rhetoric or act in other ways that mark them as out of step with their times, they should be expected to seek out ways of building their party's strength without attracting too much attention. Their less conspicuous partisan behaviors, consequently, may go unappreciated. This category includes the *sub-rosa* acts of partisanship undertaken by Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford in the South, and it constitutes our main topic of interest and investigation here.

Of course, presidents do not fit neatly into boxes, and any attempt to squeeze them in is inherently hazardous.[2] Presidents are strategic actors whose behavior is subject to change, sometimes even on a daily basis. Table 1 is thus not meant to pigeonhole presidents but to identify tendencies and generate theoretical expectations that can guide further research. Variation within categories, in other words, should be expected. For example, across American history, the same *mode* of partisanship has been expressed through very different activities, depending on available technologies of partisanship. During the Gilded Age, for instance, *overt* partisanship primarily entailed distributing government jobs and contracts to partisan supporters; during the current polarized era, it tends to emphasize combative rhetoric, base mobilization strategies, and the stimulation of donor support. Or consider the *sub-rosa* partisan activities undertaken by Thomas Jefferson, who, unlike Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford, had no mass party organization to strengthen and mobilize; instead, he quietly sponsored partisan presses and engaged in person-by-person coalition building (Cunningham 1963). The specific activities a president chooses to undertake, therefore, are subject to change, even as the four basic modalities of presidential partisanship are expected to hold across time.

Furthermore, while presidents may adopt partisan strategies that "fit" with their times, this does not mean that they will leave the political environment as they found it. Their actions may have repercussions along both dimensions, influencing the motives of their successors and contributing to changes in prevailing partisan norms and practices. This is precisely what we see in the following case studies. By helping to make inroads for the Republican Party in the South, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford contributed to the emergence of a more polarized politics in subsequent years, thereby altering the incentives and constraints facing their successors.

The Sub-Rosa Partisanship of Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford

Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford are not usually seen as particularly partisan presidents. On the contrary, Eisenhower is typically viewed as a "president above party" (Ketcham 1987, 231); Nixon is widely depicted as reproachful of, and even harmful to, his party (Schlesinger 1973, 255); and Ford's partisanship tends to pale in comparison to that of his more ideological rival Ronald Reagan (Mieczkowski 2005, 307). If one considers only their public displays of partisanship—public statements, campaigns for fellow partisans, and so on—then these presidents probably do appear less partisan than their successors.[3] But if a wider range of activities is allowed to count in the analysis—and if one digs a bit deeper than usual to find them—a fuller and more nuanced picture of their partisanship may begin to emerge. As the following case studies demonstrate, these three presidents were determined to help advance their party's fortunes, but they opted to do so in quieter, less conspicuous ways. Given prevailing partisan norms and other political considerations, this was probably the most appropriate strategy for them to take.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, American politics was far less polarized than the contemporary era. Policy debates were heated, but they often divided the parties internally, and "cross-partisanship" was common (Jones 1994, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Theriault 2008). In the context of cold war foreign policy consensus, general acceptance of Keynesian economics, and deeply rooted ideological and geographical heterogeneity in both party coalitions, there was less obvious benefit—and probably greater cost—to unabashed displays of presidential partisanship. Moreover, the region in which these presidents sought to make the most significant inroads for their party was particularly inhospitable to partisan Republican appeals. Between the Civil War and the 1950s, the Republican Party lacked any meaningful political presence in the South; the GOP was essentially a "shadow organization that existed solely for the

purpose of providing delegates" to national party conventions (Gould 2003, 167; De Santis 1959; Key [1949] 1996; Mayhew 1986, 104-42). Boosting the party's fortunes in this region was therefore not a matter of mobilizing a latent constituency, as in other regions. It was a delicate process of party germination: of planting the seeds for the party to grow in an area where it did not previously exist and was generally unwelcome. In this context, adopting a sub-rosa partisan strategy was not only appropriate, but necessary if these presidents were to make any headway.

The following case studies illustrate how this particular mix of incentives and constraints was manifested in the presidencies of Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford. They are not, however, general histories or exhaustive registries of each president's partisan activities; rather, the cases are designed to illustrate, economically, a particular type of partisan behavior that has largely flown under the radar, and to begin to sketch its effects. Each case begins with a brief discussion of the president's incentives and constraints, and then, drawing on declassified documents from presidential and party archives, presents evidence of numerous sub-rosa partisan activities. The ensuing section then considers the significance of these efforts in light of the complex relationship between presidential action, southern party organizations, and partisan polarization.

Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Launch of Operation Dixie

Despite his professed ambivalence toward partisanship and his "above party" public posture, primary sources reveal that Dwight D. Eisenhower had a strong desire to advance his party's fortunes. It is impossible to know with absolute certainty why Eisenhower felt so motivated to aid his party, but several of the incentives discussed in the theoretical section above would seem to apply. Personal ambitions, for example, were evident: Eisenhower hoped to remake the GOP into a "Modern Republican" party that would reflect his personal brand of politics and perpetuate his commitments long after he left the White House (Ambrose 1983; Cotter 1983; Wagner 2006; Galvin 2010). He also felt electoral pressures: as the leader of the ostensible minority party, he hoped to leverage his high public prestige to boost fellow Republican candidates' chances. Finally, his interest in slowing the expansion of government may have encouraged him to emphasize political organization over policy making as a means of achieving his goals. Whatever propelled him, it is clear that Eisenhower entered office determined to rebuild the Republican Party.

However, he faced numerous constraints. As discussed, midcentury conditions were less hospitable than

the contemporary period to unabashed displays of partisanship. Eisenhower's contemporaries expected this apolitical former general to be a statesman, not a partisan; in many ways, his rise to the presidency was owed to his "fit" with this moment of relatively muted partisanship in American history. What is more, Eisenhower knew that in the South—the region in which the GOP had the most work to do—an overtly partisan approach was likely to backfire. If his party was to make inroads in that region, his involvement—and that of the Republican National Committee (RNC)—would need to be kept largely out of sight. This mix of incentives and constraints thus encouraged Eisenhower to take a less conspicuous approach in his partisan activities.

Immediately after his election in 1952, Eisenhower confidentially directed his political advisers to form a "Committee on the South" that would develop a "long range program for expanding the Republican party in the South."[4] But because the Republican "name [was] still not a vote lure" in the South, the committee was to be "established as a civic foundation," not a partisan entity. It would "cooperate closely with the President's advisors, the Republican National Committee, and regular [party] organizations in the states," but do so in an inconspicuous manner. Eisenhower's role in its formation was to remain concealed. The plan was to vigorously promote the idea of a "two-party system" in the South because "any argument for a two-party system," Eisenhower's team argued, "is automatically an argument for the Republican Party."[5]

How to pursue a thoroughly partisan project in an ostensibly nonpartisan manner proved to be challenging, however, and confusion over leadership responsibilities created multiple delays. This irritated Eisenhower, who ordered the RNC chairman to get "the whole project on the rails" quickly so that it could plan "succeeding moves in that region."[6] By November 1953, the RNC had quietly asserted more direct control over the operation and begun to survey state laws, meet with local activists, and recruit new party chairmen.[7]

Eisenhower was keenly aware that the desegregation cases pending before the Supreme Court could "forever defeat any possibility of developing a real Republican or 'Opposition' Party in the South," but he vowed that his "convictions would not be formed by political expediency."[8] He agreed with the argument that Republicanism in the South "had to be based on the separation of conservatism from racism," and encouraged the committee to focus its efforts in urban and suburban areas, especially in the Peripheral South, where young businessmen and new migrants were seeking to take advantage of rising economic growth (Lamb 1968; Otten 1958).[9] The starting point was to be the 70 percent of upper-income urban whites who voted for Eisenhower in 1952 (Black and Black 2002, 257).

Candidate recruitment proved to be the biggest challenge. Not only was winning election as a Republican in the South an uphill battle, but it was not necessarily worth it—candidates faced the near-certain prospect of being stuck in the minority if they reached Congress (Lublin 2004, 66-94). The best lure for prospective candidates—even in "hopeless districts," as Eisenhower called them—was the promise of organizational assistance in the form of campaign support and resources from the state party.[10]

But when Meade Alcorn assumed the RNC chairmanship in the spring of 1957, he found that in most southern states, there was still "no Republican organization. . . . No office, no staff, no telephone, no program of party action, no effort to develop candidates, no effort to do anything" except to provide delegates to the quadrennial national convention.[11] To redress the situation, Eisenhower directed Alcorn to launch a more aggressive organization-building program called "Operation Dixie." The president's behind-the-scenes support for such an operation was critical, Alcorn recalled, because "if this thing were undertaken, it would more likely succeed if he endorsed it, and . . . never could get off the ground if he didn't."[12]

The principal objective of Operation Dixie was to quietly but determinedly lay an organizational foundation for the GOP in the South. Once an organizational presence was established, new headquarters were set up, new leaders were installed, and new strategic plans were designed, candidates would be easier to recruit and a "feeling of respectability about being a Republican" was expected to gradually emerge.[13] Then, one campaign at a time, Republican candidates would soften the electorate's view of the GOP and build a voter base that could be expanded in subsequent elections. "Even if, at first, he gets only a small percent of the vote," Eisenhower told Republicans in Louisville, "he helps to encourage the growth of the two-party idea. He becomes known in his community, and the next time he runs he probably will increase his vote."[14] This was how Operation Dixie sought to build the Republican Party in the South: incrementally and relatively inconspicuously.

But when Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock to enforce *Brown v. Board of Education* in September 1957, he found that organizational investments could not compensate for the ire he had raised among states'-rights southerners. The staff director of Operation Dixie complained that forced integration set the party's expansion plans for the South back fifty years. Alcorn received calls from the most "stalwart" supporters of Operation Dixie "saying, 'I guess we've had it. We might just as well forget it.'" But "to the everlasting credit of the President," Alcorn recalled, Eisenhower insisted on staying the course, and within a few months, the program was back on track.[15]

By 1960, Eisenhower's sub-rosa organization-building strategy seemed to be paying off. Every southern state

party finally had a headquarters, a long-term strategic plan, and candidate recruitment programs in the works.[16] It was still "unfashionable and sometimes unprofitable to be a Republican publicly" in the South, but Operation Dixie had successfully "brought forth a bumper crop of GOP candidates" to stand for Congress in 1960 (Mazo 1959; *Washington Post* 1960; *Wall Street Journal* 1960).

After Eisenhower stepped down, Operation Dixie lived on. In fact, as Philip Klinkner (1994, 53-55) has shown, it became the central front in the GOP's party-building efforts during the early 1960s. By 1964, the RNC was spending almost a third of its total expenditures on Operation Dixie, more than 87 percent of the counties in the South had a Republican chair and vice-chair, the circulation of its newsletter *Republican Southern Challenge* had increased eightfold in two years, and regional conferences were being held to train southern party activists in campaign techniques. The Southern Division of the RNC was described by *Congressional Quarterly* as the best funded and most active party division.

Yet RNC chairman William E. Miller and Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign used Operation Dixie to pursue different political purposes from those envisioned by Eisenhower. In the 1950s, Operation Dixie primarily sought to recruit candidates who emphasized fiscal conservatism and federalism but shied away from hot-button civil rights topics. In 1958, for example, most southern Republican candidates sought to "avoid taking a stand on touchy race questions. When they do speak out, it's usually a veiled attempt to lure what they hope is a growing body of moderates" (Otten 1958). By 1964, candidates still emphasized conservative economic and social issues, but they were now more likely to make "distinctly conservative and segregationist appeals" (Otten 1958; Perlstein 2001, 167-69; Black and Black 2002, 209).

Eisenhower and his team regretted the political conversion of Operation Dixie. "Its whole purpose was perverted," Alcorn said. "Through our efforts to mold a modern, forward-looking, progressive Republican organization in those Southern states . . . we had set up headquarters," hired "staff people," and developed candidate recruitment programs. The new party leaders in the early 1960s simply "took over the Operation Dixie machinery and attempted to convert it into a lily-white Republican organization. They did succeed in some states, I'm sorry to say."[17] The operational success of Operation Dixie thus unwittingly laid the groundwork for Eisenhower's more conservative successors to move the party in a direction he had not intended for it to go. By helping to create "empty vessels" that could easily be captured and politically converted, Eisenhower's sub-rosa partisanship had contributed to the rightward drift of the GOP (Katz and Kolodny 1994).

Richard Nixon and the Organizational Side of the "Southern Strategy"

Like Eisenhower, Nixon had multiple reasons to support the growth of GOP organizations in the South. He immodestly hoped to build a "New Majority" for the Republican Party that would bear his stamp and advance his policy agenda for a generation or more, and a partisan realignment of the South figured prominently in this plan (Dent 1978; Mason 2004; Galvin 2010). These grand ambitions thus involved a mix of personal goals, electoral pressures, collective partisan objectives, and programmatic concerns. Each was evident in Nixon's efforts to help grow Republican organizations in the South.

Yet Nixon's behavior was puzzling. Even as he pursued thoroughly partisan goals, he often expressed feelings of antipathy toward his party and even took several actions that were detrimental to his party's fortunes. Why the disjuncture in his behavior? While we cannot discount the possibility that Nixon was sincere in his stated feelings about his party, it may be useful to view his behaviors in the context of the partisan constraints he faced. With the Republican Party far less popular than he, facing an increasingly "dealigned" electorate with a growing distaste for partisanship, and targeting a region in which the Republican Party was largely inchoate, Nixon knew that overt partisan displays were likely to be counterproductive. Even if he had been an enthusiastic party booster, he would have had reason to be concerned that his own political prospects would be damaged by too close of an association with his party. In other words, whatever his personal feelings, it was rational for Nixon to downplay his partisan affiliation in public while pursuing his partisan goals through back channels.

In fact, this was his chosen approach. Nixon intentionally skipped opportunities to promote Republican candidates and party projects in public, and in 1972 he labored to disassociate his presidential campaign from congressional and state Republican campaigns, even going so far as to mobilize groups of voters who were likely to cast presidential votes for him but down-ballot votes for Democratic candidates (White 1973). Yet as this section demonstrates, he was also persistent in his efforts to build GOP organizations in the South.

At issue, therefore, is the publicity of his actions. Where the public spotlight shone the brightest, Nixon recoiled from his party. But when he discovered opportunities to strengthen his party in a less visible manner, he worked vigorously to do so. This is most evident in sub-rosa South, where Nixon perceived the imperative to downplay his partisanship to be strongest. In that region, he undertook some of the most deeply partisan acts of his presidency, but did it as inconspicuously as possible. Indeed, only when we consult previously classified documents

does a more complete picture of his sub-rosa partisanship begin to emerge.

In the literature on Nixon's "southern strategy," most attention has understandably been given to the exploitation and exacerbation of racial tensions that lay at the heart of the plan. Consequently, Nixon's efforts to invest in southern Republican Party organizations have flown largely under the radar. This, of course, was precisely Nixon's intent. He found merit in Kevin Phillips's (1969) much-discussed analysis and agreed with his advisors that the "white reaction" to "a decade of extremely rapid social and economic progress by American Negroes" afforded the administration a unique opportunity to "garner votes in large blocs" in the South. But to "capitalize" on these developments without setting off a public relations backlash, Nixon believed it prudent to "disavow Phillips's book as party policy" and avoid overt displays of partisanship.[18] Instead, he would focus on building the organizational capacities of state Republican parties. This would move the GOP's southern party-building project forward without attracting much attention in the mainstream press.

Behind the scenes, Nixon and his deputies led a "coordinated effort by the White House, the Hill Committees and the RNC" to invest in "the critical areas of candidate recruitment, financing and campaign management."[19] Their belief was that so long as the work was done "quietly and effectively," it would be possible "to get more switchovers throughout the South."[20] Financial resources were thus sent to state parties, earmarked for the provision of logistical assistance and material support for upstart candidacies.

To encourage southern party chairmen to make the best use of their new resources in building the GOP's strength, Nixon's top political aide, Harry Dent, told them to "forget the idea of trying to build a party on the basis of patronage," and instead to "go out and start a grassroots campaign to register more Republicans, switch [the party affiliation of] local and Statewide office holders," and emphasize the accomplishments of the Nixon administration.[21]

Throughout Nixon's first term, his administration ensured that southern parties continued to receive direct material assistance from the RNC.[22] Task forces lent logistical, strategic, and material support to state party organizations; task forces assisted with activist recruitment, voter identification, registration, get-out-the-vote, and redistricting initiatives; and the best campaign managers from 1968 were placed on retainer and readied for future campaign work.[23] They also ran dozens of training sessions in southern states and opened an RNC field office in Atlanta to "provide better liaison with the state parties" in the South.[24] Rogers Morton, Nixon's first RNC chairman, told southern state chairmen to think of

the RNC as "a service organization" that would assist them but remain largely in the background.[25] Indeed, these and other sub-rosa organizational activities rarely made it into the newspapers. But they put fledgling party organizations in the South on sounder footing and gave further impetus for their growth.

After his landslide reelection in 1972, Nixon contemplated how to turn his vast electoral support into a durable new majority in American politics. Continuing to expand the party's appeal in the South would be crucial, but Nixon recognized that it was still difficult to win office as a Republican in that region. This struck the president as an argument for redoubling the party's commitment to "candidate development," the provision of better campaign services, and campaign management training. Rather than emphasizing partisan themes and attacking Democrats, Nixon argued that Republicans in the South should focus on finding fresh, young faces who "know how to talk . . . to the Democrats" and offer them organizational support.[26]

Throughout 1973–74, new RNC chairman (and future president) George Bush dutifully carried out Nixon's request to nurture southern party organizations and assist with their candidate recruitment, campaign management, group outreach, and voter mobilization efforts.[27] The Watergate scandal, however, quashed any hope of building a "New Majority" in Nixon's image. But Nixon's sub-rosa acts of partisanship had their effect: despite his political downfall and resignation in August 1974, the strong push he gave to party organizational development in the South generated momentum that his successor could build on.

Gerald Ford and the Rising Republican South

Gerald Ford's ambitions were more modest than Nixon's: rather than initiate a full-scale partisan realignment, Ford simply sought to help his party recover from the Watergate scandal, rebuild after major congressional losses in 1974, and generate some momentum for his presidential campaign in 1976. Continuing to make organizational investments that directly benefited southern state parties served these purposes well; it enabled Ford to build on the programs Nixon had sponsored and to develop friendly relations with southern party chairmen, whose support he needed to secure his party's nomination in 1976. His partisan activities, in other words, would seem to have been motivated by multiple concerns simultaneously.

In the mid-1970s, the partisan political climate began to change and public expressions of partisanship began to increase in frequency, particularly in Congress (Rohde 1991; Sinclair 2002). Ford still tended to choose less

conspicuous party organization-building strategies over more overt displays of partisanship, but he was less constrained than his predecessors. This was evident in his greater willingness to issue partisan public statements and in his public fund-raising expeditions for state parties, described below. One can also observe the shifting partisan landscape in Ford's interactions with southern party leaders. Whereas Eisenhower and Nixon were engaged in veritable yeoman's work in building southern GOP organizations, Ford discovered that southern party leaders, by the mid-1970s, had become power brokers in their own right. The president now needed their support at least as much as they needed his.

In his first month in office, Ford signaled his commitment to growing the GOP in the South. He told the RNC membership, "When I came to the Congress 26 years ago, the Republican Party was practically prohibited from having an impact politically in a number of our States in the South. Patiently, constructively, and effectively, today the Republican Party is viable. It is constructive in every one of our fifty states."[28] Ford then pushed for a "reactivation" and "intensification" of Nixon's plan to provide institutional support and resources to state and local party organizations and candidates directly.[29] This, Ford believed, was the best way to improve the party's candidate recruitment efforts—still the GOP's greatest challenge in the South, and now even more difficult in the wake of Watergate.[30]

To show southern party chairmen that the RNC's service-oriented initiatives were aimed largely at them, Ford invited them to the White House for an "informal, wide-ranging discussion of the state of the Party, with emphasis on rebuilding efforts in the Southern States and prospects for the 1976 elections."[31] Clarke Reed of Mississippi, the influential chair of the Southern State Chairmen's Association, reacted with enthusiasm to Ford's party-building program: "It's the best program to come out of the National Committee since I've been on the scene. . . . It's a real quantum jump for the RNC in the area of services to the states" (*First Monday* 1975a).

But the organizational investment plan was as costly as it was ambitious. In 1975 alone, the new programs were estimated to cost almost $12 million. Consequently, Ford's willingness to undertake significant fund-raising for the RNC was deemed essential.[32] What was more, almost two dozen state parties were deep in debt in early 1975, still reeling from the 1974 elections, and they looked to Ford for help.[33] Ford obliged, devoting considerable time to speaking at fund-raisers, where 100 percent of the funds went directly to state party treasuries. The ability to raise large sums of money, Ford said, was "the one thing that a President can do best for state parties" (Beckman 1975).

Throughout most of 1975, Ford's fund-raising efforts did not attract much attention; indeed, his administration did not seek to publicize his partisan behavior. With the Republican Party at such a low ebb, doing so would have had little political upside for Ford. But by the fall, newspapers could not help but notice that Ford had single-handedly brought twenty state Republican Parties out of debt (Naughton 1975). Ford explained that he wanted local party leaders to use their newfound financial strength to undertake "vigorous organizing" in their communities to "build a stronger Republican Party all across the country."[34] By March 1976, Ford bragged that in his brief presidency, he had traveled to twenty-three states to raise more than $6 million for the party (Naughton 1976).[35]

Ford's increasingly public partisan activities were clearly meant to help his party regain its competitive strength, but they also served his own political purposes. His political advisers noted that his fund-raising efforts for state party organizations would "help raise needed funds for state organizations and enable the President to pick up political I.O.U.'s which can be cashed during the delegate selection process." Ford's fund-raising appearances were thus made on the basis of two criteria: "the state party's need for funds" and Ford's need for delegate support.[36]

Despite his best efforts, however, Ford found that it was difficult to completely win the allegiance of southern party leaders. Many still hoped that the more ideologically conservative Ronald Reagan would emerge as the party's nominee in 1976 (Evans and Novak 1975). In a demonstration of the South's importance in internal Republican Party politics, Ford removed liberal Republican Vice President Nelson Rockefeller from the ticket and announced that Howard "Bo" Callaway, a prominent conservative from Georgia, would serve as chairman of the President Ford Committee. According to Ford's former press secretary, Ford's strategy was "carefully designed to keep Southern Republicans from lusting after a golden ox from California named Ronald Reagan" (ter Horst 1975). Reed applauded the moves and viewed them as indications that Ford would move further to the right in his policy positions. Other southern chairmen offered private assurances that they would support Ford over Reagan (Broder 1975).

Had Ford not made these overtures to southern party leaders, there is a good chance he would have failed to secure the Republican nomination (Averill 1976). As it was, the nomination contest went all the way to the Republican National Convention, and Ford won but a narrow victory over Reagan. By the end of Ford's presidency, it was clear that the South had become a veritable veto player in Republican Party politics, as it had once been in the Democratic Party. Most important, the growing strength of southern Republicans had helped to nudge the GOP to the right. As Ford discovered during the primary campaign, it now paid to sharpen, rather than blur, the distinctions between Republicans and Democrats.

Presidents, Southern Party Organizations, and Polarization

To be sure, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford were not the only actors making contributions to organization building in the South, and they were not likely the most important. Republican candidates, local activists, and state party chairmen probably compete for that distinction. But they did play a crucial role in sponsoring, supporting, and cultivating southern party organizations. They fought for the southern party-building project when it was in its infancy, directed the national committee to prioritize it, raised vast sums of money to bankroll it, and leveraged their prestige and institutional resources to encourage its further development. Though they could have easily set the project back by refusing to dedicate funds, lowering its priority, or simply sitting on the sidelines, they took proactive steps to push it forward. Without their intervention and continued interest in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the GOP in the South would almost certainly not have grown when or in the way it did.

Part of the reason their contributions have been overlooked is that their involvement was often intentionally hidden from public view. As the previous pages have shown, only the examination of once-confidential memos, letters, reports, and other archival documents enables the researcher to uncover them. Yet these sub-rosa acts of partisanship were no less significant for their inconspicuousness: Eisenhower was far more important in getting the southern party-building program off the ground than is commonly realized, and Nixon and Ford played more important roles in nurturing its development than most extant research acknowledges.

Yet there is still much we do not know about these party organizations and how they operated. Despite a growing body of research in this area, the historical record remains spotty, especially in its coverage of these early decades (Aistrup 1996; Lublin 2004; Hadley and Bowman 1995, 1998; Black and Black 2002; Steed, Moreland, and Baker 1980, 1990, 1997; Steed 1998; Gibson et al. 1983; Cotter et al. 1984; Clark and Prysby 2004). Typically, southern party organizations are described as outgrowths of Republican electoral success rather than as ingredients in that success. Yet there is some evidence that they did have an independent impact. Cotter et al. (1984, 35, 103-4), for example, find that Republican gubernatorial candidates performed better in states where the existing GOP organization was stronger than the Democratic organization, as was the case in states across the South; other studies have shown that the efforts of state GOP parties to organize conservative activists benefited down-ballot candidates as well (Hadley and Bowman 1995, 1998; Steed 1998).[37] Aside from aggregate-level findings like these, however, the precise relationship between growing organizational strength and the party's electoral gains is unclear. At present, we simply cannot say how much these party organizations mattered in the broader, multicausal story of partisan electoral change in the South.

We do know, however, that southern GOP organizations helped to recruit Republican candidates (oftentimes against the odds), support their campaigns, and build an electoral base of Republican voters where none previously existed. Without overstating the case, then, it seems safe to treat these party organizations as facilitating factors in the growth of the southern GOP. By providing an increasingly reliable organizational foundation for Republican candidates' campaigns over the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, they became constitutive of (though not determinative of) the party's growing electoral success.

Equally important was the role these party organizations played in the GOP's rightward ideological drift. As discussed in the Eisenhower and Ford cases, organizations initially designed to accommodate politicians of different stripes became, over time, vehicles for increasingly conservative Republican candidates; the electoral success of these candidates, in turn, helped to fuel the rise of partisan polarization nationwide (Rohde 1991). The relative significance of these developments in the broader story of rising polarization is, of course, a matter of some dispute. Although the partisan transformation of the South almost always makes an appearance in accounts of polarization (whether as a contributing factor, a concomitant, a symptom, or simply a site in which a number of critical developments occurred), few would argue that it was the primary cause, since polarization occurred in other regions as well (Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995; Bond and Fleisher 2000; Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani 2003; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006; Sinclair 2006; Theriault 2008; Mellow 2008; Levendusky 2009). But there is no need to exaggerate the relationship: it suffices to say that by the late 1970s and early 1980s, Republican Party organizations in the South helped conservative Republican candidates to "hit the ground running," as it were.[38] For this reason, they probably deserve more attention, if only to illuminate one of the mechanisms driving partisan electoral change during a transformative period of American history.

To repeat, these organization-building initiatives were not the main causes of electoral change in the South or of partisan polarization more broadly. But they were integral to these broader political developments and should not be overlooked. Indeed, by bringing them to the fore, we are better able to understand how the *sub-rosa* partisanship of one period could help to create the conditions in which *overt* partisanship would become much more prevalent in subsequent years.

Conclusion

As the preceding case studies demonstrate, specifying the conditions under which presidential partisanship is likely to vary is a theoretical exercise with substantive significance. It enables us to detect partisan presidential activities that might otherwise go unnoticed and to uncover some of their effects. Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford's efforts to build southern GOP organizations in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s contributed to the party's electoral gains in the region, enhanced its national competitiveness, and helped to push its ideological commitments rightward. By contributing to the highly polarized partisan conditions in which we live today, their efforts were not only historically significant but also instrumental in altering predominant modes of presidential partisanship.

By allowing the concept of presidential partisanship to accommodate different types of activities under different conditions, and indeed by allowing it to change in form over time, we can move past the nonfinding—the absence of overt displays of partisanship in earlier periods—and begin to investigate the causes and consequences of different varieties of partisanship that have long passed under the radar, simply because they took different forms in different periods.

But the measurement question remains: if the terms of analysis change over time, how should we compare presidents from different eras? Is Eisenhower's partisanship simply rendered incomparable to George W. Bush's? Clearly, that would be unsatisfactory. More prudent, and fruitful, would be to build differences in presidential incentives and constraints directly into the analysis. That is, rather than selecting an arbitrary set of partisan behaviors with which to compare presidents, incumbents may be evaluated on the basis of their success in achieving their partisan goals, given the constraints they face. How much did they accomplish of what they set out to accomplish? This has been the formula for wide-ranging scholarship on the presidency (Neustadt 1960; Cohen 1982; Bond and Fleisher 1990; Shapiro, Kumar, and Jacobs 2000; Edwards 2003), and there is no reason why such a method of analysis cannot be applied to the study of presidential partisanship as well.

Yet this article also argues for expanding our evaluative criteria slightly. Presidents have long been judged on their style, abilities, and accomplishments within fixed constraints; their political *impact*, however, has not been as well integrated into our standards of evaluation. Yet appreciating the effects of presidential behaviors—both intentional and unintentional—would seem to be essential for any assessment of their broader significance. According to most historians, for example, Eisenhower "failed as a party leader" (Broadwater 1991). To be sure, Eisenhower failed to transform the GOP into a more "middle-of-the-road" party, as he had hoped; but his efforts should not be discounted or ignored simply because they were unsuccessful. Indeed, as we have seen, his partisan activities were both numerous and consequential, both for his party's organizational development and for its rightward ideological drift.

Presidents, in other words, can (and often do) influence their parties' future trajectories and alter the partisan environment in which their successors operate. Yet these effects seldom enter the debate over presidential partisanship. Perhaps this is because any attempt to measure *impact* forces us to reckon with the thorny methodological issues involved in demonstrating partial causes, contributing factors, and necessary but not sufficient conditions, and to confront other challenges inherent in process tracing and related enterprises (Collier, Brady, and Seawright 2004; Goertz 2006; Mahoney, Kimball, and Koivu 2009). Yet if we are to develop a full and accurate portrait of each president and his significance as a partisan actor, it would seem necessary to hazard the attempt. Whatever Eisenhower's public posture, Nixon's feelings of concern for his fellow Republicans, or Ford's ideological profile, their sub-rosa acts of partisanship made important contributions to the changing shape of party politics in America, and to the evolution of the president–party relationship. To understand *presidential partisanship* in all its entirety, these sorts of considerations must be better built into our standards of evaluation.

Notes

1. Justice Potter Stewart, concurring opinion in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964).
2. And in any case, that is not the point of typologies, which is to delineate the universe of cases to be compared and to generate theoretical expectations. See Brady and Collier (2004, 57, 111, 202-3); for prominent examples in the

presidency literature, see Barber (1977) and Skowronek (1997).

3. But see Coleman and Manna (2007) for a more nuanced and revealing analysis.

4. "Committee on the South," Southern Situation 1953-54, box 166, RNC Office of the Chairman Records, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (henceforth, DDEL); also see "Wisdom to Hall," September 26, 1953, Southern Situation 1953-54, box 166, RNC Chairman, DDEL; and "To Herbert Brownell, Jr., Personal and Confidential," March 13, 1953, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., 21 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970–2001), 14:97 (henceforth, *Eisenhower Papers*).

5. "Memorandum," 1954-1959-RNC-Campaign Director (1)-(9), box 12, Humphreys Papers, DDEL.

6. "Memorandum for the Record," August 19, 1953, RNC [1953–57], box 30, Whitman File, DDEL.

7. "Report on the Southern Committee Meeting," and "McKillips to Chairman," November 24, 1953, in Southern Situation 1953–54, box 166, RNC Office of the Chairman Records, DDEL.

8. "Diary," July 24, 1953, in *Eisenhower Papers*, 14:415.

9. On the distinction between the Peripheral and Deep South, see Black and Black (1987, 14), Lublin (2004, 56).

10. "Eisenhower's Telephone Message to Republicans in Louisville," *New York Times*, May 11, 1957.

11. Meade Alcorn Oral History, DDEL, 89-90.

12. Ibid., 91.

13. Ibid., 92.

14. "Eisenhower's Telephone Message to Republicans in Louisville," *New York Times*, May 11, 1957.

15. Meade Alcorn Oral History, DDEL, 98.

16. Ibid., 93.

17. Ibid., 89, 98-99.

18. "Dent to the President," October 13, 1969, The President, box 2, Harry Dent Papers, Clemson University Library, Clemson, SC (henceforth, HDP).

19. Ibid.; "Dent to Cole," October 28, 1969, WHSF: Dent: 1969 Staff Memos, no. 1, box 5, Nixon Presidential Returned Materials Collection: White House Special Files: Contested Materials, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives, Yorba Linda, CA (henceforth, NLYL); "Dent to Allison," November 4, 1969, Staff Memos, box 3, HDP.

20. "Dent to the President," November 17, 1969, WHSF: Dent: 1969 Southern GOP, box 5, NLYL.

21. "Dent to the President," December 8, 1969, Memos to the President, box 2, WHSF: Dent, Nixon Library, College Park, Maryland.

22. See, e.g., "Morton Talking Points," folder 3, box 202, Rogers C. B. Morton Papers, University of Kentucky Archives, Lexington, KY (henceforth, RMP).

23. "Remarks by Rogers C. B. Morton on Mission 70's Party Organization Program," at RNC Executive Session, January 15, 1971, in Paul L. Kesaris, ed., *Papers of the Republican Party*, *Part I: Meetings of the RNC, 1911–1980, Series A: 1911–1960* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1987, 1986) (henceforth, PRP).

24. "Chairman's Report, 1970," box 262, RMP; Broder (1971); "Evans to Bush," December 22, 1972, Papers from RNC 12, 1972–79, 1974 [1], box 1, Personal: RNC, George Bush Library, College Station, TX (henceforth, GBL).

25. "Notes," Southern Regional GOP Conf., box 202, RMP. On the concept of "party-in-service," see Aldrich (1995), Herrnson (1988).

26. Conversation Number 822-06, December 13, 1972, Oval Office, Nixon White House Tapes: December 1972, NLYL.

27. "November 25, 1972," Diary Entry, Personal Notes: October 1973-August 1974 [1], Personal: RNC, GBL; "Remarks by RNC Chairman-Elect George Bush," January 19, 1973, PRP.

28. "Remarks of the President," September 16, 1974, RNC (1), WHCF Name, Gerald Ford Library, Ann Arbor, MI (henceforth, GFL); "Qs & As / Republican National Committee," August 1974, RNC (1), box 7, Burch Files, GFL.

29. "Smith to Burch and Rumsfeld," October 10, 1974, and "Smith to Ford," October 30, 1974, RNC, box 7, Burch Files, GFL; also "Smith to Burch and Rumsfeld," November 22, 1974, White House Memos, box 72, Mary Louise Smith Papers, Iowa Women's Archives, Iowa City, Iowa (henceforth, MLS).

30. "Remarks of the President," September 8, 1975, RNC Reception, box 28, Hartmann Files, GFL; also see *First Monday* (1974). Also see Ford (1974).

31. "Meeting with Republican Southern State Chairmen," November 9, 1974, PR 7-1, November 6, 1974–November 11, 1974, WHCF, GFL.

32. "Smith to Ford," October 30, 1974, RNC, box 7, Burch, GFL; "1976 Program," box 66, MLS.

33. Ibid.; *First Monday* (1975b).

34. "Remarks of the President," September 8, 1975, RNC Reception, box 28, Hartmann Files, GFL.

35. Also see "Anderson to Ford," November 12, 1975, White House Memos, box 72, MLS.

36. "Anderson to Ford," April 28, 1975, Memos-President (1), box 131, Hartman Files, GFL.

37. Cotter et al. (1984, 35) also show that Republican parties in the South made the most dramatic gains in organizational strength, relative to Democratic or Republican parties in any other region, after 1960. By 1980, they were stronger than Republican parties anywhere outside the Midwest (and stronger than Democratic parties anywhere; also see Hadley and Bowman 1995, 1998).

38. Ronald Reagan's campaign in 1980, for example, took advantage of his party's growing organizational strength in areas (like the South) where Republicans had experienced great difficulty building support in the past. For Reagan, it was the combination of candidate, ideology, and

organization that proved particularly potent (Busch 2005; Milkis and Rhodes 2007; Schaller 2006).

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