

DECISION-MAKING IN THE SINGULAR PRESIDENCY AUTHORITY, INITIATIVE, AND UNITY OF PURPOSE*

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Abstract: This paper develops a theory of presidential initiative. The theory emphasizes three elements: constitutional regime, organizational routine, and authority. In this model, the president and a single subordinate make choices about how much effort to invest in pursuing a policy outcome. The president has control over whether the Executive engages and who takes the initiative. The theory comports with the data from a large simulation used to assess the consistency of six operational results: a limited presidential agenda, a lack of interest in exclusive (unilateral) powers, the centrality of delegation, and a persistent subordinate disappointment with delegation, generating an organizational crisis. It estimates the potential for presidential unity of purpose as a defense against congressional power. It also proposes an operational solution to a form of agency costs and suggests a routine designed to bolster organizational continuity, a routine that clarifies the often cited notion of a presidential “vision thing.” [abstract: 149 words]

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DECISION-MAKING IN THE SINGULAR PRESIDENCY

AUTHORITY, INITIATIVE, AND UNITY OF PURPOSE

When the American founders settled on a “singular” presidency, they chose an institutional setting for institutional reasons. Both the New Jersey and Virginia plans had proposed an Executive Branch overseen by a committee — an institution inevitably defined by *legislative* dynamics. That both these storied proposals agreed on such a legislative form for Executive authority attests to that idea’s familiarity. The founders had initiated their revolution from legislative berths, after all; most had experienced the revolution only *as* representatives; and in forming their revolutionary councils and, then, their free constitutions, they had repeatedly applied a legislative form to all branches [Wood 1969]. Indeed, many of the critical elements of their new constitution — separation, a unicameral judiciary, legislative bicameralism, majority rule, quorum, vetoes, etc. — occurred in both the two proposals because each reflected this common, legislative experience among the founders. Given this familiarity *and* ubiquity of prior application, deciding instead to abandon such a familiar legislative form and to create, in its place, a *singular* presidency constituted a signal institutional choice.¹

The leading advocate for this innovation, James Wilson, suggested choosing singularity would open the door to new dynamics, exclusively executive in nature. In particular, Wilson predicted singularity would underscore the distinction between primary and derivative authorities and, then, in turn, that distinction would require finding a way to blend these differences into a common pursuit [Madison 1966, especially June 1]. When he had folded Wilson’s convention argument into *The Federalist Papers* (especially #71; #72), Alexander Hamilton paired singularity with his own version of political motivation, what he called the “love of fame.”² He argued that combining singularity with fame would generate the institutional wherewithal necessary not only to realize the presidency’s prerogatives but also to protect it from likely legislative encroachments. Hence, James Wilson’s singularity and its derivative, unity of purpose represent signal accomplishments in America’s invention of and continuing experiment with *presidential* government.

Scholarship has focused considerable attention on those institutional choices particularly familiar to the founders — e.g., separation of powers (e.g., Hammond and Miller 1987), the executive negative (e.g., Cameron 2000) and so on — the study of what one might call “relative institutional advantages.” A substantial scholarly interest has also concentrated on familiar legislative routines like “reciprocity,” “deference,” and “expertise” (e.g., Wilson 1885; Matthews 1960; Fenno 1966; Mayhew 1966; Manley 1970; Mayhew 1974; Sullivan 1976; Shepsle 1979; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Weingast and Marshall 1988; Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). Yet, political science has spent little time on how the extraordinary choice of singularity affects executive functions or on how the founders provided a defense from domination by altering institutional dynamics rather than simply awarding the Executive a relative institutional advantage. So, what dynamics occupy an executive process? What routines would facilitate Wilson’s executive unity, itself residing within singularity’s asymmetry of primary and derivative authorities? And, can Wilson’s unity of purpose defend the Executive against the substantial powers lodged in the “Legislative vortex?”³

¹ A “singular” executive (James Wilson’s term), describes a structural arrangement and juxtaposes it with the term “unitary” executive, characterizing the scope of presidential authority. Derived from the unusual language of the initial clause in Article II, some (including President George W. Bush) have argued that the founders intended that language to convey the President’s complete control of all entities Executive *and their actions*, thereby fusing responsibility but also nullifying contradictory mandates and delegations. Cf. Corwin 1957.

² Others call it “esteem,” see Abraham Lincoln, Samuel Chase, or William Seward describing their motives [Goodwin 2005].

³ Madison [#48] coined this characterization: “The legislative department is everywhere extending the sphere of its activity, and drawing all power into its impetuous vortex.” Hamilton continued the theme in his *Federalist* #71. On other congressional dynamics, see Cox and McCubbins 1993; Jones, Baumgartner, and Talbert 1993; Talbert, Jones, and Baumgartner 1995; Baumgartner, Jones, and MacLeod 2000, as well as Mathews 1960 and Fenno 1966.

This paper addresses these questions by modeling one dynamic seemingly central to singularity, its unity of purpose, and, indeed, most other executive dynamics: assigning and then deploying initiative. It proposes an “initiative theory” highlighting the difference between the Executive’s “shared” and “exclusive” powers, its two “regimes.” In the theory, the president makes two decisions: to deploy the Executive (thereby assigning responsibilities by choosing operational routines) and, then, to invest personal effort (thereby triggering a subordinate response as unity of purpose). The theory generates a number of expectations. Some encompass practitioner tradecraft. The theory, for example, derives Sam Rayburn’s advice that initiative spurs effort. Some expectations lend a simpler institutional logic to those common ideas (e.g., James Baker’s advice to limit the agenda) that other analysts arrive at by making more complex assumptions about presidential resources. And, the theory generates several seemingly “controversial” conclusions. It implies, for example, a reluctance to use exclusive powers (which “unilateral” powers model). It suggests a presidential fascination with issues subordinate “experts” would not pursue, thereby reducing the impact of subordinates on agendas. Finally, initiative theory identifies an agency cost *to subordinates* rather than to principals that, in turn, poses a new threat to effective operations.

Because it models executive initiative as a standard game of sequential leadership (like asymmetric oligopoly), the theory also lends itself to using a standard, low-tech, and well-known solution — von Stackelberg’s. That solution, in turn, implies (at equilibrium) a straightforward measure of executive unity. Using this measure of unity demonstrates that Executive initiative *could* match its Legislative rival, as Wilson and Hamilton had hoped, allowing for mounting an effective institutional defense of the presidency through an exclusively executive dynamic. A final section considers the use of a new theoretical construct, “affinity,” as modeling a presidential chestnut — “the vision thing” — and recommends its use in improving White House operations.

INITIATIVE THEORY

Two choices define presidential initiative: whether to deploy the Executive and how to employ authority. Both decisions have a common denominator — presidents make them exclusively and without contradiction. So, a theory about initiative constitutes a reasonable starting place for an understanding of presidential decision-making, singularity, and unity of purpose.

Other Approaches to Initiative

A number of disciplines model organizational dynamics associated with executive decisions. Economics, to take one example, models something like initiative and unity within the dynamics of principals and their agents, treated as a variation on the asymmetric information game. That approach has four important characteristics. First, organization determines a strict division of labor that assigns each actor a distinct responsibility, making each an element of something like a “production function” — a device that generates and distributes private compensation. Second, actors’ motivations reflect only those private benefits engendered by the production function, and for which they compete — one’s rewards or advantages taken almost completely at another’s expense. Third, “agency cost” — the difference between the principal’s compensation if the subordinate carried out “perfect” agency and the principal’s compensation received from the subordinate’s “rational” action — constitutes the only costs invoked. In its way, then, the inverse of agency costs represents its model of unity. And, fourth, subordinates possess an information advantage over their superiors as the model’s approximation of initiative, i.e., the principal cannot tell if the agent has taken the initiative or not [cf. Miller 1992]. Of these four elements, economic theory concentrates almost entirely on what subordinates know that

their principals do not (expertise) and how those principals, aware of this asymmetry, try to rebalance private compensation to draw subordinates back into their fold, i.e., improving unity of purpose.⁴

By comparison, executive governance involves different elements. First, it treats disparate individual efforts as essentially the same input (like the “anonymity condition” on social choice functions, cf. Schwartz 1986): who does what matters far less than that someone invests the effort at all. Call this characteristic “substitutability.” Economic models do not allow for such substitutability, instead preferring to highlight personal competition constrained by the production function. Second, those in governance rarely experience the possibility of receiving or employing a recalibrating compensation scheme. Indeed, eliminating the motivating force inherent in private compensation schemes constitutes a hallmark of the American progressive movement (see Knott and Miller 1987). Instead, governance produces utilities for individuals with a substantially “public” component: utility that does not diminish another’s share by the size of one’s own; an assumption similar to Hamilton’s sense of fame. Third, governance evokes genuine decision costs, not having the theoretical luxury of assuming a price mechanism to “clean out” management “inefficiencies.” Finally, the relationship between individual actions and outcomes does not always afford the subordinate an information advantage. Often, presidents know more than their subordinates do, especially about context, often about processes and even substantive intelligence (see Sullivan 2010b). They also control most of what subordinates want. So, initiative and unity have a direct connection with each other in governing, not through compensation, but through authority.

While they seem suggestive and intellectually engaging, then, economic theories diverge substantially from the details of governance.

Some of management theory addresses initiative. A car company CEO, to take a common example, considers making tinted windows a “standard” feature by first considering whether to apply his own judgment or to delegate to someone with stronger credentials but without the CEO’s perspective. These models consider those two decision-makers as substitutable. But, they retain competitive, private compensation schemes and they invoke difference in expertise in the same ways as economic models. Moreover, because the CEO faces only a *decision* to delegate and the subordinate faces only a *decision* to tint — both subsumed under a price mechanism — neither’s work accumulates real costs, as if neither would exert any real effort to reach their decision.

Thus, like economic models, management models emphasize the advantages of expertise while ignoring the substantial, ameliorating influences of unity, costs, or authority.

In theoretical public administration, analysts have taken three separate tacks. First, while traditionally focused on the relationship between authority and responsibility (see Weber or Parsons), mainstream public administration theory now considers the question as only a tradeoff between authority and the advantages of expertise (cf. Gulick; Hammond and Miller 1985; or Miller and Whitford 2007). This approach pivots to principal/agency theory, again, returning to non-substitutability, reducing initiative to a side issue in an information asymmetry dominated by expertise, and ignoring unity of purpose and costs. A second tack (e.g., Hult and Walcott 2004) traces out the institutional elaboration of authority but concentrates on detailing structural innovations rather than the work routines that likely flow from those innovations. Hence, they ignore costs like oversight and much of unity of purpose. Lastly, some have applied to authority the “structural model” commonly used to assess checks and balances (see Hammond and Miller 1987 or Cameron 2000)⁵ or bargaining

⁴ See Miller’s [1992] discussion of compensation’s weaknesses and follow that literature’s advances in Miller 2005. Banks and Sundaram [1998] focus instead on increasing principal’s knowledge of the firm’s production function.

⁵ Researchers also include Thomas Hammond (cf. Hammond and Knott 1996), Jonathan Bendor [2004], Kathleen Bawn [1995], David Epstein (1990; Epstein and O’Halloran 1999) and Mathew McCubbins (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; McCubbins *et al* 1987). See also Weingast and Moran 1983, Kiewiet and McCubbins 1988, Calvert *et al.* 1989, Ingberman and Yao 1991, McCarty 1997, Cameron 1998, McCarty 2000b, Volden 2002.

(Baron and Ferejohn 1989).⁶ And, while these approaches have amassed a literature, little of it has direct empirical application, none has passed empirical testing, and most of it presents an unreasonable version of the relevant routines (cf. Johnson 2003; Bendor and Meirowitz 2004; Bendor *et al.* 2001; Miller and Whitford 2002; Laver, *et al.* 2010; Sullivan 2010c; Sullivan and de Marchi 2011).

In sum, then, scholarship needs to fill some substantial gaps in understanding presidents as public executives, their subordinates, the nature of the authority they wield, and the dynamics of their interactions. The theory proposed here replaces a strict division of labor with substitutable efforts while highlighting the difference between primary and derivative authorities. It replaces private rewards and complex, competitive compensation schemes with a simple motivation in fame emphasizing its “public” nature, and it replaces the universal leveling effect of the price mechanism with a range of decision-specific costs. The theory captures these characteristics by utilizing five building blocks: institutional authority (\mathcal{A}), operational routines (\mathcal{R}), opportunities (\mathcal{O}), priorities (\mathcal{B}), and costs (\mathcal{F}).

Singularity as a Regime and Routine

This section describes singularity’s institutional and operational settings. Assume four actors (nature, the President, an Executive subordinate, and a legislative proxy) and a multistage policy process that raises and then channels a policy issue. Assume that Nature begins by raising a policy question assigned to a “regime” drawn from \mathcal{A} , those defined sequences of actions that, if completed, result in an *authoritative policy choice*.⁷ Assume only two “regimes” in \mathcal{A} . In the first, \mathcal{A}^I , policy-makers *share* authority much like that articulated in Article I, Section 7 of the US Constitution. So, the Executive only *affects* outcomes but cannot dictate them. In a second regime, \mathcal{A}^{II} , the president exercises “exclusive” authority and effects outcomes no other constitutional actor can alter. This second regime resembles that created in Article II and particularly Section 2 (along with its associated court cases). Under some special restrictions, the so-called “unilateral” powers [Moe and Howell 1999a,b] also model this \mathcal{A}^{II} regime (but see below). A characteristic of each regime that helps clarify its meaning involves the likelihood the president’s favored outcome i occurs without deploying the executive ($O_i^k \in \mathcal{O}$, $0 \leq O_i^k \leq 1$). \mathcal{A} and \mathcal{O} have the following relationship:

\mathcal{A}^I (= Article I, §7) [1] $0 \leq O_i^I \leq 1$ “shared powers”	\mathcal{A}^{II} (= Article II, §2) [2] $O_i^{II} = 0$ “exclusive powers”
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In \mathcal{A}^I , some outcomes become policy even if the president chooses to take no action [1], because the other policy makers act. Any executive effort, of course, always improves the likelihood of success in \mathcal{A}^I . In \mathcal{A}^{II} , an outcome does not occur when the president chooses not to act [2]. And since other policy makers cannot act, executive effort in \mathcal{A}^{II} transforms probabilities into *certainties*.

Considering Unilateral Action in Theoretical Context. Terry Moe and William Howell, individually (Moe 1993; Howell 2003, 2005) and together (1999a,b), have highlighted the use of “unilateral” action (cf. Mayer) — acts that shift the *status quo ante* (in sequenced systems with unidimensional, single-peaked preferences) without congressional consent. These might resemble exclusive powers, but that resemblance hides serious theoretical differences.⁸ If the governing majority’s reaction in Congress or in the Judiciary effectively yields no alternative to presidential initiative, these practices *look* like

⁶ This kind of analysis also includes McKelvey and Riezman 1992; Baron 1996; McCarty 1997; Banks and Duggan 2000, 2006; McCarty 2000a, 2000b; Snyder, *et al.* 2005.

⁷ For now, assume no detail as to how issues arise or that no actor can affect how issues map onto regimes or arise in context. The latter assumption severely restricts what many consider a presidential advantage (e.g., Kingdon 1984).

⁸ For one, the theory here makes no restrictions on the dimensionality or the underlying matrix of preferences or alternatives.

they belong to \mathcal{I}^{II} , or at least they *model* issues in \mathcal{I}^{II} . But this resemblance to issues under \mathcal{I}^{II} rests not on an issue's constitutional characteristics but on an additional array of assumptions that, once added render moot any normal congressional (or even judicial) response. These additional assumptions, however, lay outside the constitutional strictures of authority and, thus, *transform* regime as defined here. In effect, the conditions fostering unilateralism create a Baron/Ferejohn bargaining regime where the perfectly informed President goes first — an awesome opportunity in theory. Throughout, the analysis will keep in mind this seeming isomorphism between going first under \mathcal{I}^{I} with additional assumptions, and deploying the Executive under \mathcal{I}^{II} , without the burden of these additional assumptions.

Introducing Routine. Having observed the circumstances of an issue and its regime, the president then decides whether to deploy the Executive by selecting one of three operational “routines” from \mathcal{R} . These routines define who takes lead responsibility (initiative) and, thus, they lay the foundation for choosing equilibrium efforts (next subsection).

The president can choose, firstly, to “do nothing” — not to deploy the Executive. Alternatively, the president can deploy the Executive by taking personal responsibility for leadership (following Neustadt [1960], call this choice “counsel”) or, third, taking action but by assigning the subordinate lead responsibility (call that choice “delegation”). Subscripts “o,” “c,” and “d,” denote these choices or versions of initiative.

Translating Initiative into Effort. The president's selection of routine defines who leads and who follows. Those who follow can set their efforts after observing the lead effort. This response constitutes the heart of unity of purpose. In turn, those who take the initiative, in equilibrium, consider the likely response of those who would follow. Thus, distinguishing primary and derivative authority in this way invokes a leadership sequence, and generates an equilibrium that defines each actor's effort, and, in turn, their unity of purpose.

Each form of effort, whether leading or following, contributes to executive utilities more or less equally (i.e., satisfying substitutability). Call the returns derived from one's own efforts “direct” and those derived from another's efforts “indirect.”

Under \mathcal{I}^{II} , choosing to deploy the executive and committing any executive effort ends the policy process, always producing the president's preferred outcome and generating returns. This positive result from *any* effort constitutes the operative meaning of “exclusive” powers. By contrast, those policies in the more complex \mathcal{I}^{I} regime require two further stages, each involving the standard legislative policy-making processes — with bargaining, agenda setting, lobbying, procedural maneuver, and voting — all touting a substantial scholarly literature [Sullivan 1984, 1990a, 1990b; 2010c; Jeong *et al* 2009; Krehbiel 1987; Beckmann 2008, 2010; Sullivan and de Marchi 2011].⁹ Continuing under \mathcal{I}^{I} , those charged by the president's choice with following will commit two sets of effort: First, they engage in “follow-through,” actions meant to supplement initiative. Then, reacting to give and take, they engage in “follow-up.” For now, and to limit the increasing complexity of the theory, assume the level of follow-up effort mirrors the level of follow-through: in following, one can only “redouble” one's effort.¹⁰ Despite assuming equality, these two forms of following will generate different returns and costs.

Applying Fame, Affinity, and Costs

This section steps through three substantive assumptions that finalize expected returns and costs for both the president and subordinate. While the presentation uses only the counsel routine under \mathcal{I}^{I} ,

⁹ Of course, the theoretical representation of that process can have its simplifications, in particular it can exclude bicameralism and vetoes [cf. Hammond and Miller 1987 or Cameron 2000] and it can exclude those collective action considerations that undermine congressional responsiveness to unilateral Executive action.

¹⁰ As one might imagine, the equality of follow through and follow up reflects holding the standard legislative policy processes constant with respect to effort and routines — clearly a simplification.

the appendix describes the costs and returns of all routines bearing designations to identify them with that routine: [3.x] counsel (c), [4.x] delegation (d), and [5.x] do nothing (o).

Utilizing Hamilton's Fame. Consider the fame that Hamilton described as a politician's "proof of one's deserts." For presidents and their subordinates, fame rests on what they achieve, i.e., the value of the outcomes *their* efforts secure. Under \mathcal{A}^I , the limited opportunities to affect outcomes and realize priorities means presidents and subordinates find the most return *from* their efforts in situations when they can decisively tip the balance toward realizing an outcome they favor. Modeling fame in this way combines opportunities (O) and priorities, $B_{ij} \in \mathcal{B}$ $0 \leq B_{ij} \leq 100$ and suggests presidents and subordinates pursue opportunities according to $(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{ij}$. Using this version of Hamilton's fame, executive interest (from their utilities) peaks for policy outcomes when O_i^I nears even, or 50/50. An extra parameter, " ζ " ($0 < \zeta < 1$), modifies this statement, limiting any actor's efforts to less than their "full" potential.¹¹

Applying fame to circumstances (excluding costs for the moment) yields [3.1] which describes the president's returns (Y_{pc}^I) after choosing the counsel routine (c) under \mathcal{A}^I and committing to an equilibrium effort at E_{pc}^I . Following, the subordinate reacts with an equilibrium effort equal to E_{sc}^I .

	Unity emphasizes...		Opportunity results in ...		Return From
	limelight	fervor	effort	winning losing	
[3.1] $Y_{pc}^I \equiv$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \\ + \text{affinity}_L \\ + \text{affinity}_L \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{affinity}_F \\ \text{affinity}_F \\ \text{affinity}_F \end{array} \right.$	E_{pc}^I	$[(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pi}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pi}))]$	A. direct effort
			E_{sc}^I	$[(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pi}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pi}))]$	B. follow through
			E_{sc}^I	$[(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pi}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pi}))]$	C. follow up

In [3.1], each line describes the president's returns derived from the separate efforts of leader and follower under counsel. The first line (A.) reports direct returns from the president's own equilibrium effort taking the initiative. The second and third lines report "indirect" returns to the president from the subordinate's follow-through (B.) and then follow-up (C.).

Unity of Purpose and Executive Affinity. In [3.1], placeholders highlight two new aspects: *limelight* and *fervor*. These represent manifestations of a new concept, "affinity" (α : $0 \leq \alpha_i < 1$) the anticipated similarities between any two utility functions connected by singularity's authority.

Though the specific meanings of affinity would differ between institutions a congressional example can provide an informative analogy. Hailing from similar (e.g., nearby) districts, representatives stand to benefit more or less equally from any policy outcome, their common rewards deriving from and reflecting the close fit between each other's district (e.g., their common demographic profiles). Those common characteristics tie the two representatives together in a common fate, and the benefits they both get from this public good casts them both in a shared, favorable limelight, reflecting those public benefits, regardless of whether they have worked for that outcome.

In addition, because of those commonalities, one representative also can better assess the other as a "reliable" coalition partner, based on the other's anticipated fervor for a particular policy, an important asset when pursuing successful accommodations.¹²

¹¹ Sullivan [2009] has described the details of presidential effort demonstrating that presidents and their subordinates move from one issue to another in rapid succession through a day (even during a crisis) never spending more than a seemingly small amount of time on any given activity, *even during a crisis*.

¹² Legislative "cohesiveness," itself, reflects this presumption of reliability generated by close associations, although that measure typically focuses on the *partisan* basis of affinities, a presumably weaker force than constituency similarities.

Executive affinity parallels these legislative manifestations. First, like representatives, executive actors share common benefits, a *reflected* esteem based on their joint involvement in outcomes. Each stands in the *limelight* cast by the others' efforts and potential successes, similar to the public nature of policy rewards among similar congressional districts. Designate this limelight effect as "affinity_L," and, the president's affinity for the subordinate (μ) will model limelight.

Second, in the legislative setting, affinity implies a willingness to work in concert, a likely commitment to a common endeavor. Designate such fervor as "affinity_F." In the next section, the subordinate's association with the President (σ) models fervor.

In the executive setting, though, affinity diverges from the simple correlation between district characteristics useful in the legislative setting. It differs in that the President's affinity with the subordinate (μ) can differ from the subordinate's affinity (σ) towards the President.¹³

Applying affinity transforms [3.1] into [3.2]. Because of fervor, the subordinate's anticipated follow-through effort under the counsel routine (E_{sc}^I) will parallel to some extent the president's initiative (E_{pc}^I), found in line B. as $(\sigma E_{pc}^I) E_{sc}^I$.

		Unity emphasizes...		Opportunity results in ...		Return		
		limelight	fervor	effort	winning	losing	from	
[3.2]	$Y_{pc}^I \equiv$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left(\frac{B_s}{B_p} \right) (1-\sigma) \\ \sigma E_{pc}^I \end{array} \right.$		$E_{pc}^I [(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pj}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pj}))]$		$E_{sc}^I [(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pj}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pj}))]$	A. <i>direct effort</i>	
	+			μ	$E_{sc}^I [(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pj}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pj}))]$		B. <i>follow through</i>	
	+			μ	$E_{sc}^I [(\zeta(O_i^I - (O_i^I)^2)B_{pj}) + (\zeta((1-O_i^I) - (1-O_i^I)^2)(-B_{pj}))]$		C. <i>follow up</i>	

Subordinate follow-up, on the other hand, complements the president's initiative, modeled here as the extent the two actors see policy implications the same. So, in line C., "Affinity_F" models the subordinate's viewpoint, first, as a ratio between the two priority statements (suggesting the relationship between their views) and, second, how well the president can anticipate the subordinate's commitment, taken here as the additive inverse of affinity ($1-\sigma$). Hence, the subordinate's expected

level of follow-up equals $\left[\left(\frac{B_s}{B_p} \right) (1-\sigma) \right] E_{sc}^I$. Note that while affinity will appear in counsel and delegation routines under both \mathcal{A}^I and \mathcal{A}^{II} , it plays no role in the do nothing routine. See the Appendix.

Decision Costs. Of course, a president's decision about which routine to choose also depends on costs. These come in three varieties: immediate, burden, and duty.

Assume *immediate* costs reduce one's benefits at a relatively high rate: E_{pc}^I yields an immediate cost equaling $-(E_{pc}^I)^2$. *Burdens* result from the potential drag inherent in exercising unity of purpose. For example, shortly after arriving on President Lyndon Johnson's staff and under the president's delegation, Joseph Califano negotiated a legislative deal with Senator James Eastland. Califano (2000) recalls that after reporting his "finalized" deal, the President called him to the Oval Office for a dressing down. The President then called Senator Eastland and, with Califano listening, negotiated a new deal, dispatching Califano to finalize *that* agreement.

For the President, his burden reflected how well he could have counted on Califano, taken here to equal the inverse of Califano's fervor ($1-\sigma$). Call that cost the president's "supervisory burden." Under counsel, the supervisory burden from subordinate's effort at follow-through (E_{sc}^I) equals $-(1-$

¹³ One can imagine that the often-described "loyalty" found in administrations models μ .

$\sigma)E_{sc}^I(E_{pd}^I)^2$. Subordinates, of course, also bear similar costs associated with their role as followers, captured by the inverse of the president’s affinity for the subordinate, or $(1-\mu)$. Hence, the subordinate’s “commitment burden” equals $-(1-\mu)E_{pc}^I(E_{sc}^I)^2$.

Lastly, Sullivan 1990b demonstrated that because of fame, presidents would regularly pursue issues that present the administration with far fewer commitments than required to win. Taking on such challenges involves converting non-supporters by expending resources from an available capital stock of favors (F_i). As a simple approximation, assume the duty inherent in an issue declines as the initial likelihood of success increases: $F_i \equiv \sin(1.5-2O_i^k)$.¹⁴

Adding these three costs to [3.2] yields [3.3], now a full utility statement, with losing $(-B_{ij})$ normalized to 0. Again, the appendix includes the complete catalog of equations for both regimes, all routines, and both actors.

$$\begin{aligned}
 [3.3] \quad U_{pc}^I &\equiv \left[E_{pc}^I + \mu((\sigma E_{pc}^I) E_{sc}^I) + \mu\left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right)(1-\sigma) E_{sc}^I \right] \zeta(O_i - O_i^2) \quad B_p \quad \left. \vphantom{U_{pc}^I} \right\} Y_{pc}^I \text{ (Return)} \\
 &- \left[(E_{pc}^I)^2 + (\sigma E_{pc}^I)(E_{sc}^I)^2 + \left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right)(1-\sigma)(E_{sc}^I)^2 + \sin(1.5-2O_i) \right] \quad B_p \quad \left. \vphantom{U_{pc}^I} \right\} C_{pc}^I \text{ (Cost)} \\
 &\quad \text{Immediate} \quad \text{----- Oversight Burden -----} \quad \text{Duty} \quad \text{Priority}
 \end{aligned}$$

Initiative’s Complexity

Although they look complex, these choices reflect the shape of primary and derivative authority and the considerations inherent in the president’s decisions about initiative. For example, presidents surely consider their own commitments against estimates of the opportunities that present themselves and the priorities they have. The staff’s fervor for the president’s vision must figure in, and, this fervor surely would prompt subordinates to follow their president’s lead. Complex though they appear, then, these statements belong in any theory of initiative.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL OPERATIONS

A von Stackelberg solution produces the equilibrium effort for leading and following and the utilities necessary to identify a rational, presidential choice between the three possible routines. In turn, these results suggest a series of conclusions about how the singular presidency operates: about the president’s reach, about the relative attractiveness of the president’s constitutional powers, and about agency and the difference between primary and derivative authority. Eventually, these implications become the foundation for assessing the founders’ ambitions for their signal, institutional innovation.

Reach: Deciding to Deploy the Executive

Initiative begins with the president’s basic decision to deploy the Executive. The president would do nothing when

$$[6.0] \quad U_{po}^k \geq U_{pc}^k \quad \text{and} \quad U_{po}^k \geq U_{pd}^k$$

¹⁴ Hence, $F()$ will decline between $O_i=0$ and $O_i=.75$ and $F=0$ for $O_i>.75$, i.e., once policy becomes relatively certain, potential presidential favors become scarce.

Taking fame’s focus on circumstances where $O_i^k \approx 0.5$ and the typical distribution of such opportunities, few circumstances would satisfy [6.o]:

H1. *Narrowed Focus*. Under \mathcal{A}^I , a disproportionately large number of circumstances will result in choosing “do nothing.”

Commentary — Baker’s Rule. Political scientists (e.g., Edwards 2003, 2009; Pfiffner 1996; Light 1999; Moe and Howell 1999a,b) have concluded that presidents can match their opportunities to their declining resources only by narrowing their ambitions. Light [1999], for example, asserts “it is resources that shape the President’s agenda,” (p. 14) and that such “capital begin to decline from the moment of first election” (p.33).¹⁵ These prescriptions found throughout the standing literature resemble H1. Initiative theory, however, does not assume inherent limitations nor such a temporal limit to presidents’ effective reach. Rather, H1 derives cleanly from the complexities of presidential choices alone without the additional assumptions used in these other models.

Several White House chiefs of staff have informally codified this implication, using it to guide their behavior and regularly describing it in terms consistent with initiative theory and without reference to differential or declining resources. They only refer to the plethora of complex opportunities. President Reagan’s first chief, James A. Baker III, has all but trademarked this reaction as: “First and foremost, your job is to say, ‘No, not this week.’” Call H1, “Baker’s Rule.”

The Appeal of Exclusive Powers

Under \mathcal{A}^{II} , for [6.o] to hold, [3.3] reduces to:

$$[6.01] \quad B_{ip} E_{pc}^{II} (1 - E_{pc}^{II} + \mu \sigma E_{sd}^{II} + (-1 + \sigma) \sigma E_{sd}^{II}) < 0 \quad \text{[foregoing counsel]}$$

$$[6.02] \quad B_{ip} E_{sd}^{II} \left(\mu + (\mu - \mu \sigma) E_{pd}^{II} + (-1 + \sigma) (E_{pd}^{II})^2 - \mu E_{sd}^{II} \right) < 0 \quad \text{[foregoing delegation]}$$

If $B_{pj} > 0$, the left hand sides of [6.01] and [6.02] cannot drop below 0 unless some effort or some affinity violates the theoretical restriction that their values remain in the unit simplex. Therefore, under every circumstance, when the president places any priority on any issue falling under \mathcal{A}^{II} , taking some action (*do something*) would dominate do nothing:

H2. *The Appeal of Exclusive Powers*. Under \mathcal{A}^{II} , if $B_{pj} > 0$, either $U_{pc}^{II} > U_{po}^{II}$ or $U_{pd}^{II} > U_{po}^{II}$

Between the two available forms of “do something,” delegation dominates counsel in \mathcal{A}^{II} :

H3. *In the Exclusive Regime, Delegation dominates Counsel*. Under \mathcal{A}^{II} , if $B_{pj} > 0$, $U_{pd}^{II} \geq U_{pc}^{II}$.

Commentary. Whenever the president cares at all about a particular outcome under \mathcal{A}^{II} , delegation always dominates counsel, because any effort produces a positive outcome for the President and given substitutability, the president’s minimal effort will occur under delegation.

Use of Authority: Initiative Spurs Effort

Given the utility functions for both presidents and subordinates, the theory concludes:

$$[6.1] \quad \text{If } U_{pc}^k > U_{pd}^k \text{ and } U_{pc}^k > U_{po}^k \text{ then } E_{pc}^k > E_{pd}^k, \text{ while} \\ \text{if } U_{pd}^k > U_{pc}^k \text{ and } U_{pd}^k > U_{po}^k \text{ then } E_{sd}^k > E_{sc}^k$$

These relationships suggest,

¹⁵ Hence and in addition, presidents must “move it or lose it,” with respect to their dwindling power resources. See Sullivan 1991a, b for an alternative, empirical model.

H4. *Initiative Spurs Effort*. Under similar circumstances, the responsibility to lead evokes greater effort at equilibrium than following.

Commentary — Rayburn's Rule. As with Baker's Rule, this implication appears elsewhere in alternative models of leadership, especially among management schools (cf. *The Harvard Business Review*), but requires additional assumptions that initiative theory does not use.

When he first told his colleagues in Texas he intended to ascend to the speakership there and then pursue that same goal at the national level, Sam Rayburn explained his ambition by saying that authority and responsibility always went together. He wanted, he said, the responsibility that having power entailed [Hardemann and Bacon]. Rayburn, the politician, evoked a direct association between his ambitions and the outcomes derived from his efforts. Call H4 "Rayburn's Rule," then, suggesting that his positive linkage of ambition to effort constitutes a *general dynamic*.¹⁶

Use of Authority: Commitment Burden

For the subordinate, the commitment burden can hinder satisfaction with the initiative that delegation entails.

$$[6.2] \text{ For some } O_i^k, U_{pd}^k > U_{pc}^k \text{ and } U_{pd}^k > U_{po}^k, \text{ and } E_{sd}^k > 0 \text{ and } U_{sd}^k < 0$$

Suggesting:

H5. *Agency Costs to Subordinates*. A non-empty set in \mathcal{O} evokes both rational presidential delegation, a positive presidential utility, and at equilibrium effort, a negative subordinate utility from initiative.

Commentary — Creeping Entropy. Note that in those circumstances satisfying [6.2], the subordinate does not shirk even though that effort generates negative returns. Obviously, no organization can sustain such a situation. Hence, H5 explains the extraordinary rate of White House turnover, which in turn implies that presidents would lose operational effectiveness over time rather than gain it, contrary to Light's proposed dynamic of "increasing effectiveness" [1999: 34].

In the theoretical framework here, this creeping entropy itself implies what will become a useful operational consequence:

H6. *Affinity Shapes Commitment Burden*. In presidential delegation, when the subordinate takes the initiative, affinity orders the distinction between negative and positive subordinate utilities.

Commentary. In standard agency theory, a lack of affinity suggests agency costs only for the principal, because agents go first or they employ expertise (the equivalent of going first in those models). In the case of the Presidency, the assumptions involved in these models now appear excessive. Presidents exercise a substantial number of advantages over their subordinates, e.g., whether a subordinate gets to participate in future decisions rests on a subordinate's reputation for usefulness. In addition, while subordinates might possess some forms of expertise, presidents both control decisions and subordinate authority, as well as possess substantial intelligence that subordinates do not have.

ASSESSING OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The theory of executive initiative has produced six implications, some with a resonance in practitioners' own accounts of their work. Others stand on their heads standard characterizations of executive dynamics. All, however, share a common problem: they suggest patterns not easily observed in standard data resources. Lacking these data, assessing the theory will rely upon "proof by

¹⁶ H4 echoes the "first principle of [public] administration" (see Simon, *et al* 1950): authority must match responsibility.

demonstration:” a simulation, which suggests the consistency of the theory with its implications. If found consistent, then, the theory should seem like a good candidate for further application to the operational problems that plague presidencies. The simulation assigns random values to each variable in producing more than 65,000 situations in each regime, and a von Stackelberg equilibrium effort for each actor, the reaction function between leading and following, and the resulting equilibrium utilities.

Deploying the Executive

Assessing H1 — Baker’s Rule. Recall, H1 implies a rational, narrowed focus. For \mathcal{A}^I , the simulation reported in Table 1 suggests that applying [6.0] narrows the data from 65,000 potential cases to some 600 (the sum of the top two cells in the right hand column). Hence, the evidence from the simulation suggests H1 matches the theory: given an enormously varied set of potential situations, presidents rationally deploy the executive in a very narrow set, derived cleanly from the executive’s operational dynamics under singularity and at equilibrium. This result suggests a narrowing of the president’s agenda regardless of the state of current resources or prior experience.

Table 1. Presidential Utility & Executive Efforts, by Regime & Routine

Regime	Routine Responsibility	\bar{U}_p^k	\bar{E}_j^k	s. e.	n satisfying [6.0]
\mathcal{A}^I (shared authority)	Counsel	1.41		.010	355
	<i>President initiates</i>		.393	.005	594
	<i>Subordinate follows</i>		.152	.004	
	Delegation	346.41		27.662	239
	<i>President follows</i>		.209	.006	
	<i>Subordinate initiates</i>		.641	.024	
\mathcal{A}^{II} (exclusive powers)	Counsel	—		—	0
	<i>President initiates</i>		—	—	65,532
	<i>Subordinate follows</i>		—	—	
	Delegation	7.21		.026	65,532
	<i>President follows</i>		.250	.001	
	<i>Subordinate initiates</i>		.510	.000	

Source: compiled by author.

Rational Fame and the Non-Obvious. Table 1 also suggests something about the dynamics of a president’s leadership in \mathcal{A}^I . By comparison with delegation, situations in which the president chooses counsel produced substantially lower presidential utilities. So, among those policies for which the president engages the Executive, those that generate the most benefits, presidents prefer to turn *that* work over to their subordinates while fame encourages the president to pursue issues that subordinates, alone, would not choose. In effect, this result suggests something of what it must mean “to see only what a president sees” (cf. Sullivan 2009) and that such a singular vantage means the presidency will pursue more than just what subordinates would prefer.

Assessing H2 — the “Expansive Appeal” of Exclusive Powers. Under \mathcal{A}^{II} , the simulation results also report that when $B_{pj} > 0$, delegation returns universally positive presidential utilities, as suggested. These results on \mathcal{A}^{II} mirror Moe and Howell’s analysis accounting for the seeming popularity of unilateral presidential actions, recalling the caveats that properly place unilateral action in \mathcal{A}^I as a restricted case. Table 1 can also suggest something of another caveat about exclusive powers (and those reservations about unilateral action). Given the simulations and the assumptions underlying the theory here, under \mathcal{A}^{II} and if $B_{pj} > 0$, delegation yields utilities ranging from 0 to near 32, averaging around 7. With the same

values for the basic elements of the simulation, if $B_{pj} > 0$, delegation in \mathcal{T}^I yields a range of presidential utilities averaging 346. By comparison, then, \mathcal{T}^{II} (and possibly its cousin in \mathcal{T}^I , unilateral action) yields far *less* attractive presidential utilities. So, quite consistent with the simple presumptions of Hamiltonian fame, and constrained only by the character of that fame, these results suggest presidents choose to *struggle* to make history in policy (high potential payoffs set initially on the cusp) rather than produce footnotes to it (surety under exclusive powers). The only actual data on presidential activities and routines, Sullivan's [2010a] accounting of the 100 days minute-by-minute over four decades shows those presidents spent almost none of their workdays on exclusive powers.¹⁷

Assessing H3 — the Dynamics of Delegation. Also consistent with Sullivan's [2010a] findings, Table 1 reports that, consistent with H3, delegation strictly dominates counsel for *every* situation under \mathcal{T}^{II} . This implication, of course, suggests something of a “hubris” problem: presidents who take up exclusive powers on their own accord (those who choose counsel under \mathcal{T}^{II}) probably will suffer from this irrational behavior. Often, for example, the most controversial pardons result from presidents seeming to short-circuiting the delegated pardon process to take their own initiative.

Initiative and Unity

Assessing H4 — Rayburn's Rule. H4 suggests a distinctive pattern to effort based on responsibility for initiative. Table 1 reports the average equilibrium effort (\overline{E}_j^k) associated with leading and following. Under \mathcal{T}^I , both executive actors commit more effort when taking the lead than they do when they follow. Presidents invest about 15% more effort under counsel, while subordinates invest almost 400% more effort under delegation.¹⁸ Given standard statistical significance (at 0.01), the results in \mathcal{T}^I clearly suggest Rayburn's Rule: those charged with leading invest more effort than when following.

The simulations for \mathcal{T}^{II} also mirror this pattern, but in the unique manner associated with exclusive powers (equilibrium results only under delegation), i.e., when the subordinate leads. In those situations, the subordinate clearly invests more effort than does the president and by a factor similar to that observed for \mathcal{T}^I . Hence, the evidence suggests that Rayburn's Rule might reflect a general dynamic, one sufficiently robust to cross institutional boundaries.

Assessing H5 — Creeping Entropy. H5 implies that rational delegation regularly generates negative subordinate utilities at equilibrium. Obviously, prolonged exposure to such disappointing situations would undermine subordinate fervor, causing organizational entropy. Figure 1(A) illustrates the simulation data on all rational \mathcal{T}^I delegations, graphing the subordinate's utilities against the initial probability for success, O_i . In the figure, dots identify those delegations from which the subordinate also receives positive utility, while pluses indicate $U_{sd}^I < 0$. Clearly, the simulation demonstrates that a substantial proportion of presidential delegations lead to this troubling subordinate disappointment, even though these situations yield positive utility for the president and substantial subordinate effort in equilibrium. The subordinate suffers from a rational commitment burden, the equivalent to the “agency cost” found in standard principal/agency theories *but for the subordinate*.

Assessing H6 — Affinity in Operational Relief. H6 suggests how presidents could delegate without driving away the subordinates they need to exercise their authority (and thereby foster Hamilton's *energetic* executive)? Many management theories fail to suggest useful responses to this problem. For example, the Harvard School of Business exemplar analysis on this topic (1998) redefines the problem as one in which employees faced with delegation, will attempt to “give back” their initiative, trying to “return” that delegation. Their analysis argues that this reluctance results from a psychological discomfort with wielding authority — a motivational problem. Maybe enterprise subordinates

¹⁷ This assessment includes assessing presidential reading found in the “Handwriting Collection” at the presidential libraries.

¹⁸ This difference reflects their relative importance as Executive decision makers: a stand-in for primary versus derivative authorities. Given the scale of their responsibilities, presidents can alter their efforts only slightly (see the discussion on “resilience” in routine-rationalized systems in Sullivan 2010b).

experience this discomfort but the theory here presumes *political subordinates want authority*. These delegations, then, do not present a challenge arising from motivation. Hence, management recommendations designed to “push” initiative onto unwilling subordinates would have no useful application here.

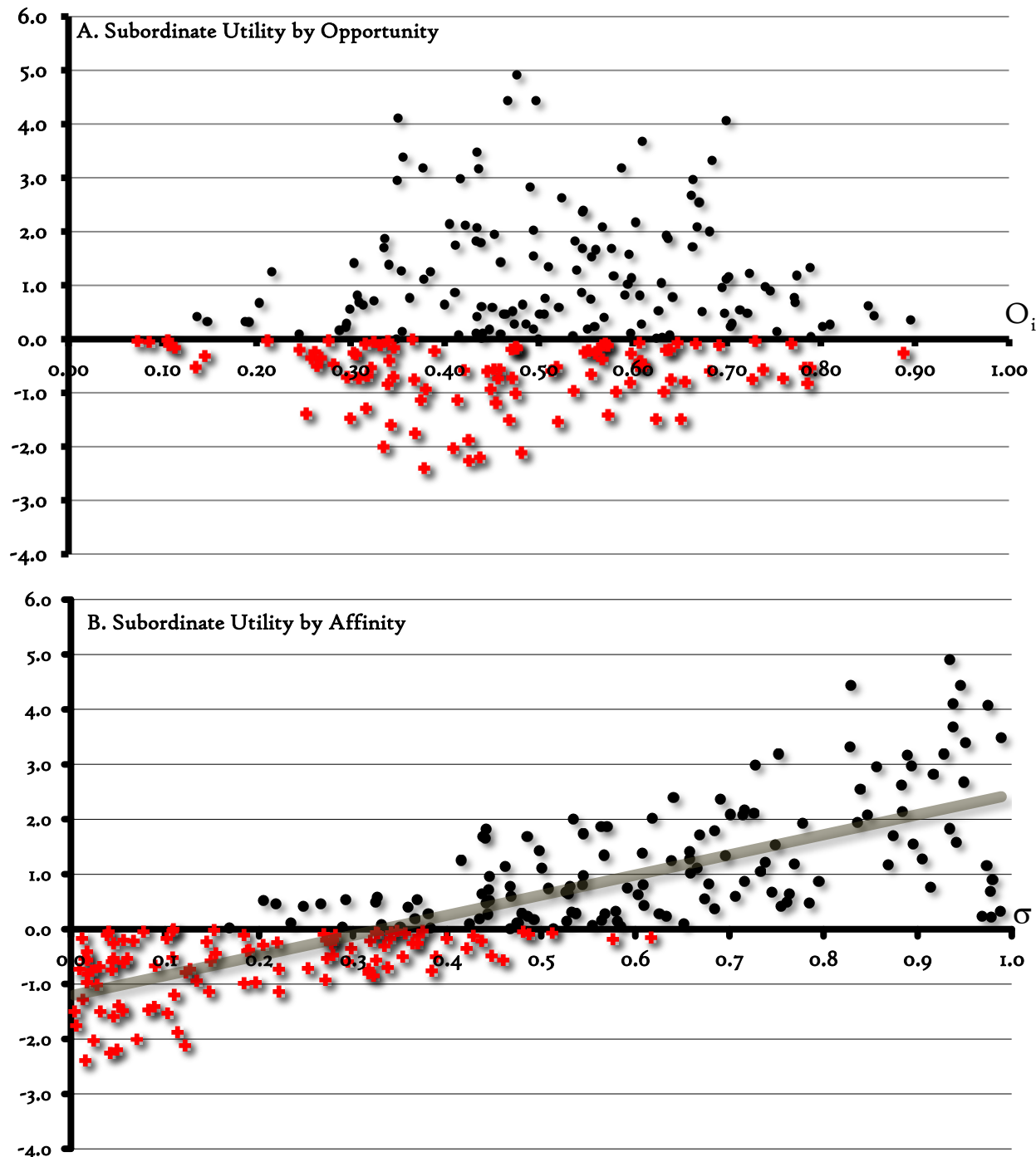


Figure 1. Subordinate Utility under τ^1 Delegation

Instead, H6 suggests the challenge from executive delegation derives from subordinate maximizing behavior given their affinity. To see this connection, consider the simulation data presented in Figure 1(A), now recast along an x-axis according to subordinate affinity in Figure 1(B). Negative utility under delegation diminishes dramatically as subordinate affinity increases, with a turning point around $\sigma=0.4$, a relatively low association with the President.¹⁹ This simulation evidence presents an almost linear relationship between increasing affinity and subordinate utility in delegation, accounting for three-quarters of the explained variance. These data then confirm H6, the relationship between executive actors constitutes a critical, if not *the* critical, organizational variable: continuity rests on affinity.

INSTITUTIONAL AMBITIONS & AFFINITY

The simulation results suggest that the initiative theory creates a useful platform from which to address the questions posed earlier: Does the difference between primary and derivative authority generate unique executive dynamics? Can routine realize the founders' ambitions for unity of purpose as a defense against the legislative power? And, if it does, can other routines maintain that unity from dissolving into entropy?

The founders' chose a singular presidency to promote routines and organizational dynamics based not in deliberations among equals, as in the legislative or judicial, but emphasizing a *focus* crystallized by the pull of centralized authority. It turns out that exclusively executive dynamics created by singularity include a sharply drawn focus, a strict discipline on the use of exclusive powers, and a basic reliance on authority to spur initiative, all the direct products of a far less elaborate set of assumptions than found in the existing literature, with just one final hiccup about entropy.

The founders also chose the singular presidency as defense from congressional ambitions [Madison, *Federalist* #51]. Of course, singularity represents only one defense. Other, better understood choices include those associated with legislative dynamics: the veto, to generate an anticipated reaction from the Legislative, and the basic separation of political estates, creating a sequence to consideration. Beginning with Hammond and Miller (1985), the extensive analysis of bicameralism and the veto clause suggests these provisions provide little in the way of a robust defense for a presidential policy role. Their results, now common across a number of subsequent analyses, downplay the president's role in policy-making in favor of the congressional advantage afforded by going first under Article I, §7.

In analyzing past presidential initiatives, Matthew Kerbel [1991] has reported that presidential successes correspond to situations in which both presidents and their subordinates espoused the same positions, i.e., when primary and derivative authority had effected Wilson's unity of purpose.²⁰ Kerbel's suggestion of a defense has two drawbacks, however. First, an encroachment from the vortex would most often involve an issue of the legislative's choosing rather than the broad range of issues covered in Kerbel's data, many (most) of which involved executive proposals. Second, Kerbel's analysis demonstrates only that within legislative *deliberations*, the presidency's unified position presents a focal point around which to rally supporters. The statutory requirements of the Budget Act of 1921 suggest a similar executive advantage. But, the key to all of these institutional relationships rests in their origins in the weaknesses of a legislative dynamic, and so not on any purely executive characteristic.²¹

For it to present an effective, executive defense, then, unity must present two characteristics: First, it must exhibit a *feasible* defense generally. Because it constitutes an institutional dynamic, unity in the executive must outstrip its legislative analogy in "cohesion." So, this section shall propose a measure

¹⁹ The ratio of positive to negative subordinate utilities equal 1:2 between 0.35 and 0.4 while it equals 2:1 from 0.4 to 0.45.

²⁰ For the contrary anecdotal exemplar, see Neustadt's [1960] chapter on the Eisenhower budget.

²¹ The most detailed and relevant assessments of budgetary decisions in the Congress also reflect on the inability to distinguish between *ex ante* and *ex post* legislative advantages for the presidency (Berry, *et al*; McCarty 2000a, b).

of unity (T) to compare with an analogous measure of legislative cohesion. Second, it needs an internal logic that makes unity viable as a long-term defensive mechanism.²² Understanding the impact of delegation on entropy suggests such a logic.

The Feasibility of Executive Unity

A proper measure of executive unity rests on the difference between primary and derivative authority in action, while emphasizing the president’s preeminence. When the president leads, then, T reports the subordinate’s *following* efforts compared with the president’s, thereby stressing subordinate fervor. When the president delegates, T reports the ratio of the subordinate’s level of effort to the president’s level of effort leading in similar situations, stressing, then, subordinate reliability.²³ An overall unity score (\bar{T}^a) equals the average for each regime and routine \bar{T}_r^a weighted by how often the president would rationally deploy that type, as reported in Table 1.

Equation 7.0 reports the composite averages \bar{T}^a drawn from the simulation. In \mathcal{I}^I , where \bar{T}_c^I and \bar{T}_d^I clearly reflect Rayburn’s Rule: $\bar{T}^I=0.85$. In part, that score reflects the impressive disparity between subordinate commitment under delegation and the president’s parallel commitment under counsel. At equilibrium, subordinates clearly have more effort to commit when assigned the initiative than does their president when taking the lead.

$$[7.0] \quad T \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \begin{cases} \frac{E_{sc}^I}{E_{pc}^I} & \text{if } \mathcal{I}^I \text{ } \vartheta \text{ counsel (using subordinate } \textit{fervor}) \\ \frac{E_{sd}^I}{E_{pc}^I} & \text{if } \mathcal{I}^I \text{ } \vartheta \text{ delegation (using subordinate } \textit{reliability}) \\ \frac{E_{sd}^{II}}{E_{pc}^I} & \text{if } \mathcal{I}^{II} \text{ } \vartheta \text{ delegation (using subordinate } \textit{reliability}) \end{cases}$$

$\bar{T}_c^I=0.37$
 $\bar{T}_d^I=1.75$

$\bar{T}^I=0.85$

$\bar{T}^I=0.83$
 $\bar{T}_d^{II}=0.44 = \bar{T}^{II}=0.44$

Developing \bar{T}^{II} poses a challenge, of course, because the relatively small utilities under \mathcal{I}^{II} make improbable the president’s engagement there, hence no reasonable weights. Yet, using some values from \mathcal{I}^{II} seems a conservative approach, since White Houses (although maybe not their presidents) do resolve administrative ambiguities, provide policy instructions, and issue pardons — all using exclusive powers. So, the overall \mathcal{I}^{II} -unity score (\bar{T}^{II}) will include the most valuable cases: two hundred cases (of the 65,000) generating the \mathcal{I}^{II} regime’s highest presidential utilities under delegation ($U_{pd}^{II} \geq 28.98$). With these, $\bar{T}_d^{II} = \bar{T}^{II} = 0.44$.

Though conservative, this approach to \mathcal{I}^{II} contributes to an overall $\bar{T} = 0.83$.

Whether this score suggests the required disparity with respect to the Legislative depends on what that challenge might look like. Obviously, the legislative dynamic of accommodation and the constitutional provisions for nominal equality among legislators likely work against any legislative unity of purpose (cf. Roberts and Smith 2003; Morris and Munger 1998), but the requirement here dictates the executive hold a substantial disparity over legislative cohesion. Within the extensive literature assaying congressional cohesion, Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins (1991) have argued that asking what level of floor voting supports the majority party agenda (thereby creating a legislative “leadership” support score) represents the best measure of such cohesion. For the post war congresses, they report this cohesion score averages 0.5. Because cohesion has an upper limit at 1.0, the comparison between these two scores will rely on a summary lambda statistic. Given 0.5 for legislative cohesion,

²² Others (e.g., Kleinerman, p. 87) suggest “...the checks are less important to balance than the vigorous pursuit of legitimate functions.”

²³ Under \mathcal{I}^{II} , fervor has no meaning since no circumstances make counsel rational. So, T^{II} only employs reliability.

the executive unity score at 0.83 represents a $\lambda=0.666$, a substantial improvement. This score suggests that the executive initiative modeled here reflects the kind of competitor the founders had imagined: considerably more unified than the legislative on those few issues the president chooses to take up.

Entropy and Vision — the logic in unity

So, the Executive can exhibit considerable unity of purpose. Yet, the results on H5 suggest that prolonged operations would undermine that unity. To suggest that entropy *can* prey on a presidency, consider that one-third of all White House chiefs have taken over in mid-administration or that the median tenure of White House senior staff equals less than two years [Sullivan 2004b]. Hence, the foundations for unity of purpose always need shoring up, especially to reduce these subordinate agency costs. Because the Congress maintains an almost constant membership (especially during any single term), the Legislative Branch has no parallel to this rational discontinuity, hence, the Executive possesses a systematic disadvantage, a byproduct of singularity, if it cannot reduce entropy.

“*Vision*” in *White House Operations*. Initiative theory can suggest a routine that could meet this organizational challenge, one which depends upon the president “handling” staff, presumably a tradecraft common to successful politicians and which rests on affecting affinity, already identified as critical to providing continuity.

Deprived of detailed or meaningful observations from behind the scenes, pundits, critics, and competitors often repair to chiding a sitting president for not having “the vision thing.” While this evaluation often substitutes for a more substantial, substantive analysis, the “vision thing” *does* have an important operational role in solving continuity, and hence a meaningful role in governing. To see how, distinguish between two versions of vision, each evoking a separate notion of presidential attractiveness. The most common notion of vision resembles “ideology:” a coherent statement connecting collective policies and individual benefits. In campaigns, candidates employ such vision, emphasizing how various government policies (choices controlled by the candidate *if elected*) would affect their lot. The candidate argues that the voters should support that candidate’s vision of how to make those choices. Call this the “alliance version” of vision — it rests on an exchange: votes for actions that improve voters’ private utilities. The typical complaint by pundits refers to this version.

Shaped by the ubiquity of their campaign experiences, presidents and their principal advisors could easily conclude that bolstering organizational unity would involve an analogous enterprise, altering the sense of “stake” subordinates have in their president’s success. That instinct, born in campaigns, has a parallel with the recommendations found in both management and principal/agency theories. Both recommend shaping private “compensation” as a mechanism for altering subordinate effort. For example, many have noted that President Reagan kept a Robert Woodruff quotation on his desk, suggesting adherence to its prescription: “There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit” [Wallison 2003]. A recent memoir notes that President George H. W. Bush considered such subordinate initiative as key to his own leadership style [Popadiuk 2009]. And, possessing a Harvard MBA, George W. Bush considered such delegations critical to his leadership routine [Bush 2010].

Typically, though, campaign-like White House events aimed at subordinates fall flat, as does the application of decentralization or increased delegation. The theory here can explain why. In such situations, the subordinate has already achieved equilibrium effort, and that optima still produces negative subordinate utility. So, this disappointment cannot originate in tweaked compensation, however described, and, certainly, increased delegation will not remedy the problem.

These events and approaches fail, the theory here suggests, because presidential subordinates appreciate such events in a different way, described as a second version of vision. The theory here connects subordinate utilities to the president’s success not through private, material rewards, the kind emphasized by an alliance. Instead, it links subordinates to presidents through reflection (i.e., through the limelight). That connection rests on identifying with the president, or with *an association*, and on the public utilities limelight produces. Obviously, the president’s success generates material (private)

rewards for subordinates, through favorable policy outcomes, prospects of continued employment, and advertisement for their futures. These kinds of private benefits, however, pale by comparison to the rewards a subordinate reaps through mere association with *their* president's successes. No one really thinks that when standing next to the President, a senior advisor gets the same sense of reward that the CEO of a government contractor gets when standing next to the same President. The subordinate reaps the rewards of association, basking in the limelight, while the contractor reaps the direct benefits of an alliance, a payoff: one hitches a wagon to a star while the other gets a return on an investment.

Instead of talk about rewards, what the subordinate needs to hear from the President emphasizes a *shared* duty, a *common* destiny, and a role *together* in making history. These presidential statements would make the point to subordinates that, as LBJ used to say so often as an entreaty, "I can't run this country by myself" [Sullivan 2010c].

Compounding Operational Mistakes. Conceived of in alliance terms, then, a hardnosed chief of staff would properly consider any proposed staff interactions with their President as a drain on presidential time. Consistent with this interpretation, the chief's response would rely on Baker's Rule: *no, not now*. Andy Card, President Bush's long-serving chief, for example, described his response to this staff scenario, referring to his *basic rule* for dealing with subordinates: "just because you *need* to see the President," he would say, "doesn't mean you *get* to see the President" [interview with author 2001]. Initiative theory, however, suggests that because *these* interactions do not resemble other normal dealings, applying Baker's Rule would overlook an operational necessity. Instead, the theory recommends chiefs appreciate such requests as an associational moment, as something that builds organizational capacity.

In what has become something of an insider tradition, outgoing chiefs of staff pass on a mangled bicycle wheel to their successor, symbolizing the predictable attraction to and then an evolving dissatisfaction with the so-called "spokes in the wheel" or Alexander George's (1981) "collegial" staffing model. While their dissatisfaction develops for understandable reasons having to do with costs, this bequest creates an over-extended metaphor working against the chief's interests and ultimately against unity.

Instead, initiative theory recommends chiefs follow a "life-cycle" with principal subordinates, initially permitting increased access for a wide arc of subordinates on a broad base of situations, often including issues outside their formal purviews. With such access, the president would naturally build affinity and, with that, presidential control.²⁴ Over time, the chief would decrease that access as subordinates become more fervent, recognizing this increasing reliability makes access relatively less important and the drag on the president's time caused by it relatively more important. In the end, however, the chief will have tapped the subordinate's own sense of fame through association while realizing the potential sewn into the fabric of an executive built to emphasize and utilize unity through initiative.

The Theoretical Weakness in Reach

Of course, the theory proposed here presents a foundation not a final edifice. It has established a rationale for pursuing this approach. It also suggests that political science has invested too much attention in theories emphasizing the advantages of subordinate expertise and its influence over principals (the typical version of agency costs) and not enough attention to a principal's irrepressible control and substantial advantages.²⁵

²⁴ Other research (Sullivan 2010b) suggests that hierarchy (vs. the spokes of the wheel) provides many advantages.

²⁵ Banks and Sundaram (1998) decried what they saw as a concentration on expertise advantage and instead suggested concentrating on the ameliorating effects of principals' improving information about production, developed by watching expertise take advantage. Control and intelligence, suggested in this paper, constitute different forms of principal advantages.

In addition, the theory has to expand its conception of fame and, within it, the nature of circumstance's influence. The current theory represents fame as responding to circumstances but without fully rendering the idea. Making a difference begins with initial circumstances, no doubt, but only for \mathcal{A}^I , since in \mathcal{A}^{II} only priorities matter. And in \mathcal{A}^I , genuine fame resides in *anticipated* effects of proposed efforts on potential circumstances — in the anticipated differences generated by Executive effort. The business of leaders surely includes predicting what possibilities lay beyond current circumstances. Call this more complex version of vision, “reach,” and hold it relative to a “horizon.” The theory here does not include these elements, but elsewhere both these ideas play a role in an improved theory of presidential bargaining (Sullivan and de Marchi 2011), yet another part of a developing theory of the singular presidency. Incorporating reach into initiative theory would thereby unify two of the critical elements of the modern presidency.

In addition, the model presented here affords Nature the role of selecting issues locked into regimes. Obviously, presidential authority to pursue an issue can create some opportunities for utilizing exclusive authority on issues normally considered as involving shared powers, as Moe and Howell have suggested. As indicated earlier though, these types of issues, jammed into different regimes by way of additional assumptions, likely reduce the potential for effectiveness of the president's decisions to engage. Even when executing these “end-around” policy maneuvers, presidents typically attest to preferring to employ the policy process than to pursue the reduced consequences of applying their more limited exclusive powers versions of those powers. The model here suggests these presidential protestations have the ring of truth when it comes to making a difference.

October 23, 2015

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APPENDIX: FULL UTILITIES & VON STACKELBERG SOLUTIONS²⁶

[3.3] Regime I (Shared Powers) & Counsel Routine

Response under Routine			Circumstance			
Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority		
$U_{pc}^I \equiv \left[E_{pc}^I + \mu((\sigma E_{pc}^I) E_{sc}^I) + \mu\left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right) (1-\sigma) E_{sc}^I \right]$			$\zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$	B_p	Y_{pc}^I	
$- \left[(E_{pc}^I)^2 + (\sigma E_{pc}^I) (E_{sc}^I)^2 + \left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right) (1-\sigma) (E_{sc}^I)^2 \right]$			$+ \sin(1.5 - 2O_i)$		B_p	C_{pc}^I
$U_{sc}^I \equiv \left[\sigma E_{pc}^I + \sigma(((1-\mu) E_{pc}^I) E_{sc}^I) + \sigma\left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right) (1-\sigma) E_{sc}^I \right]$			$\zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$	B_s	Y_{sc}^I	
$- \left[\sigma (E_{pc}^I)^2 + (1-\mu) E_{pc}^I (E_{sc}^I)^2 + \left(\frac{B_s}{B_p}\right) (1-\sigma) (E_{sc}^I)^2 \right]$			$+ \sin(1.5 - 2O_i)$		B_s	C_{sc}^I

$$\Gamma = \frac{\sigma}{2} \zeta(O_i - O_i^2); E_{pc}^* = \frac{\zeta(-O_i + O_i^2)(-4 + \zeta\sigma^2(-2\mu + \sigma)O_i - \zeta(2\mu - \sigma)\sigma^2 O_i^2)}{8}; E_{sc}^* = \frac{\sigma}{2} \zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$$

[4.3] \mathcal{A}^I & Delegation

Response under Routine			Circumstance			
Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority		
$U_{pd}^I \equiv \left[\mu E_{sd}^I + \mu(E_{sd}^I (1-\sigma) E_{pd}^I) + \mu\left(\frac{B_p}{B_s}\right) (1-\mu) E_{pd}^I \right]$			$\zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$	B_p	Y_{pd}^I	
$- \left[\mu (E_{sd}^I)^2 + (1-\sigma) E_{sd}^I (E_{pd}^I)^2 + \left(\frac{B_p}{B_s}\right) (1-\mu) (E_{pd}^I)^2 \right]$			$+ \sin(1.5 - 2O_i)$		B_p	C_{pd}^I
$U_{sd}^I \equiv \left[E_{sd}^I + \sigma((\mu E_{sd}^I) E_{pd}^I) + \sigma\left(\frac{B_p}{B_s}\right) (1-\mu) E_{pd}^I \right]$			$\zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$	B_s	Y_{sd}^I	
$- \left[(E_{sd}^I)^2 + (\mu E_{sd}^I) (E_{pd}^I)^2 + \left(\frac{B_p}{B_s}\right) (1-\mu) (E_{pd}^I)^2 \right]$			$+ \sin(1.5 - 2O_i)$		B_s	C_{sd}^I

$$\Gamma = \frac{\mu}{2} \zeta(O_i - O_i^2); E_{sd}^* = \frac{4 + 2\zeta\mu^2\sigma O_i - \zeta\mu^2(3\mu - 2\sigma)O_i^2 + 2\zeta^2\mu^3 O_i^3 + \zeta^2\mu^3 O_i^4}{8}; E_{pd}^* = \frac{\mu}{2} \zeta(O_i - O_i^2)$$

[5.3] \mathcal{A}^I & Do Nothing

Response under Routine			Circumstance	
Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority
$U_{po}^I \equiv$			$O_i B_p$	Y_{po}^I
$U_{so}^I \equiv$			$O_i B_s$	Y_{so}^I

²⁶ Utility functions where: $-B^* = 0$, reaction curve (Γ), and equilibrium efforts (E^*).

[3.4] Regime II (Exclusive Powers) & Counsel Routine

	Response under Routine			Circumstance	
	Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority
$U_{pc}^{II} \equiv [E_{pc}^{II} + \mu((\sigma E_{pc}^{II}) E_{sc}^{II})]$				B_p	Y_{pc}^{II}
$- [(E_{pc}^{II})^2 + \sigma E_{pc}^{II} (E_{sc}^{II})^2]$				B_p	C_{pc}^{II}
$U_{sc}^{II} \equiv [\sigma E_{pc}^{II} + \sigma((1-\mu) E_{pc}^{II} E_{sc}^{II})]$				B_s	Y_{sc}^{II}
$- [\sigma (E_{pc}^{II})^2 + (1-\mu) E_{pc}^{II} (E_{sc}^{II})^2]$				B_s	C_{sc}^{II}

$$\Gamma = \frac{\sigma}{2}; E_{pc}^* = \frac{-2 - \mu\sigma^2}{(\sigma - 1)\sigma^3}; E_{sc}^* = \frac{\sigma}{2}$$

[4.4] \mathcal{A}^{II} & Delegation

	Response under Routine			Circumstance	
	Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority
$U_{pd}^{II} \equiv [\mu E_{sd}^{II} + \mu(E_{sd}^{II}(1-\sigma) E_{pd}^{II})]$				B_p	Y_{pd}^{II}
$- [\mu (E_{sd}^{II})^2 + E_{sd}^{II} (1-\sigma) (E_{pd}^{II})^2]$				B_p	C_{pd}^{II}
$U_{sd}^{II} \equiv [E_{sd}^{II} + \sigma((\mu E_{sd}^{II}) E_{pd}^{II})]$				B_s	Y_{sd}^{II}
$- [(E_{sd}^{II})^2 + (\mu E_{sd}^{II}) (E_{pd}^{II})^2]$				B_s	C_{sd}^{II}

$$\Gamma = \frac{\mu}{2}; E_{sd}^* = \frac{1}{8}(4 - \mu^3 + 2\mu^2\sigma); E_{pd}^* = \frac{\mu}{2}$$

[5.4] \mathcal{A}^{II} & Do Nothing

	Response under Routine			Circumstance	
	Initiative	Follow-through	Follow-up	Opportunity	Priority
$U_{po}^I \equiv$				\circ	Y_{po}^{II}
$U_{so}^I \equiv$				\circ	Y_{so}^{II}