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**PRESIDENTIAL WORK DURING
THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS**

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PRESIDENTIAL WORK DURING THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

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Abstract: This report covers the presidential work schedules of Presidents Dwight Eisenhower through George H. W. Bush during their first 100 days in office. It reports on patterns of work carrying out presidential responsibilities and reviews a number of strategies for expanding the president's discretion and using that discretion to affect policy. The report concludes that adopting an hierarchical White House organizational structure, one commanded by a White House Chief of Staff, improves the president's workday, finds more opportunities for discretion, and broadens the cadre of the president's "inner circle." It identifies a number of opportunities for increased presidential discretion beyond controlling the numbers of ceremonial events on the president's schedule. It concludes that presidents commit a limited amount of time to communications and it demonstrates how coordinating with the congressional leadership, regardless of party, and emphasizing cabinet coordination improves presidential effectiveness.

In 1991, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* called around to verify that then President George H. W. Bush "spent more time on foreign policy than any previous president." Although both Franklin Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had each managed a global war and likely spent more time on that issue than anything else, the reporter's question really spoke to just the "modern presidency," those administrations after mid-20th Century and therefore exempted from comparisons with the likes of Wilson and FDR. To his surprise, however, even on this more limited question, no political scientist could speak authoritatively to his inquiry, though of course he wrote a story anyway.

At that time and outside the National Archives Records Unit, the Secret Service, and the White House Appointments Secretary, no one actually knew what any president did all day, let alone how they worked out the balance between national security, diplomacy, budget management, or domestic leadership. Indeed, this reporter learned only that the myriad of questions involving presidential comparisons had but one answer: "we have no earthly idea."

Comparisons about presidential output, on the other hand, have a long tradition with precise answers, especially those comparisons invoking the vaunted "100 days," the period that now runs from inauguration through April 29th. Modern presidents live inescapably in this shadow, partly because of the extraordinary success of FDR's 1933 transition, but as Richard Neustadt (2001) has noted, also because new presidents invariably embrace and encourage others to use that comparison.¹

¹ Richard Neustadt, "The Presidential 'Hundred Days': An Overview," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, March, 2001: 121-125.

The lack of systematic observations on presidential decision process and activities during this transition period and this emphasis instead on output measures has serious repercussions, of course, both for understanding how presidents work and how they use their executive institution. For example, the absence of scholarly knowledge about the president's activities does not leave a hole in public understanding. Instead, popular mythology and misinformation rush in to fill such a void. Chris Matthews, a popular television commentator with a respectable background in national political affairs, wrote in his book *Hard Ball* that a politician's detailed knowledge of others plays an important role in their success at the national level. As an example, Matthews described how once President Lyndon Johnson had learned that his Attorney General Robert Kennedy, a potential competitor for the 1964 Democratic Party presidential nomination, regularly stayed up very late discussing policy with his entourage, LBJ made a point of always calling on or meeting with Kennedy *early* in the morning. An examination of the 96 encounters between Johnson and Kennedy (either in phone calls or in meetings) from the time LBJ took office until Kennedy's resignation as AG reveals that only one of them occurred before 10:00 AM. Although attractive as an anecdote, Matthews' story about Johnson turns out to have utterly no basis in fact.

Though Matthews might still have a point (that national politics often turns on seemingly minor details and the advantages they project in the hands of political masters), the application of such lessons to practical politics really ought to reflect evidence of what politicians actually do rather than what we wished they did. And when they don't fit any facts, do such stories actually convey anything useful of the political process? Again, though, one can hardly blame Matthews for producing such a *reasonable*-sounding story because, in the absence of any evidence, a good story surely will do.

That political actors have available only such inferior information to guide their activities represents something far more troubling, though, than an epistemological affront. Indeed, given the absence of facts, practicing politicians regularly turn for guidance to whatever *sounds* good. For example, for both the 1980 Ronald Reagan and the 2000 George W. Bush presidential transitions, the respective presidential campaigns undertook a serious effort to estimate presidential activities during the first hundred days. Other campaigns have carried out similar planning efforts. Both the two campaigns specifically mentioned (and probably the others, as well) relied on public records for their studies and, in turn, used those studies to develop extensive plans for what their respective, new presidents would attempt in the way of leadership. As Sullivan 2004 points out, however, these estimates based on public records often missed the mark by substantial margins. Both the Reagan and Bush studies, to take one example, wildly underestimated (by hundreds of percentage points) the amount of contact President Carter had had with congressional leaders.

Missing the mark on the historical records of previous administrations has significant operational consequences. Consider one example: bolstered by these studies, new administrations often underestimate the demands for their president's time, and hence, when they finally arrive, they get caught off-guard by the seeming flood of unexpected and legitimate requests for attention. Karl Rove unflatteringly called it the feeling of "being a fire hydrant in a world of dogs."² This hail storm of requests comes not simply from interest groups and those trying to gain recognition on the president's policy agenda but also from organizational and institutional actors the new president would have a hard time ignoring. The latter includes the congressional leadership so badly underestimated by the studies. Faced with unexpected demands for time from such legitimate sources, what can a president's staff do to accommodate them but bump from the president's schedule those with similar demands for time or make room by extending the president's workday? In any eventuality, facing these choices, especially when presented to them in this formative period of the transition after the inauguration, means first and foremost that the president's staff has already failed to do their jobs in orchestrating the president's schedule and decision-making. From the beginning, then, the president and the president's team has fallen behind the curve.

Surprised by these claims and presented with these options, White House Chiefs of Staff, for example, quickly realize the their primary operational responsibility, as James Baker has noted, "is to

² Interview with author, 2002.

say, 'No, not this week.'"³ Put in these situations of reacting to unexpectedly high demands, of course, tells an unflattering story about the administration to those Washingtonians constantly alert to signals about the new administration's competencies.

Absent accurate information about what other transitions have faced, a president-elect's staff must turn to other decidedly limited resources, like previous White House staffs, for advice. In a conversation with incoming Chief of Staff James Baker, for example, then recent White House Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld suggested it would help the new president if Baker could limit the president's circle of contacts to those who would normally see the president three or four times a week.⁴ And while this advice might seem learned, no one can know how wide that circle could become, and hence, no one knows whether Rumsfeld's advice offered useful guidance. His own personal observations, after all, derived from his work in President Gerald Ford's White House and while those experiences represent one of but a handful of similar experiences, they hardly derive from what would constitute a normal test-bed likely to produce observations of "normal" patterns to presidential behavior. Yet, without available information on what constitutes "normal" behavior (based on systematic observations over many administrations), practitioners will rely on whatever previous experience they can acquire through the partisan channels available to them. And, rationally, why shouldn't they rely on what they can get when knowing something seems better than knowing nothing at all?

Of course, seeming to know something may *in fact* provide worse guidance than knowing nothing at all. The mistaken statistical summary of Carter's contacts with congressional leaders, for example, reinforced the widely held notion that Carter treated the House and Senate like state legislatures and generally botched opportunities to mobilize his own congressional supporters. Taking that view of Carter's plight suggested to the Reagan planners that their president could adopt a dramatic strategy of outreach to the congressional leadership and thereby reap significant rewards. Knowing instead that Carter met very often with congressional leaders and started each day with a congressional briefing might require rethinking an explanation for Carter's congressional ineffectiveness and by implication whether they really had identified a useful strategy.

Finally, not knowing the correct distribution of activities across presidential responsibilities (like diplomacy and budget management) provides misinformation on how to shape the president's "discretionary time." Presidents surely do not come to office to get swamped by the responsibilities inherent in a "singular" American Executive. Yet, no one really knows how much of the president's time gets absorbed by just such responsibilities.

In his own evaluation of the hundred days phenomenon, Richard Neustadt's concern derived from what he saw as the inevitable lack of opportunity to meet FDR's standard given the circumstances presented modern presidents. One particularly important circumstance Neustadt noted involved three kinds of "ignorance:" of circumstances, of processes, and of each other. The first two, Paul Light has noted make up his "cycle" of "declining inexperience."⁵ In it, increasing experience with the internal workings of government and the president's role and the presidency's operations finally affords the new president an opportunity to succeed just about the time that the window of opportunity generated by the election's result begins to close tight. Having a wider range of experience before landing in the White House, or simply having a more thorough appreciation for the realities of the institutional processes they must engage improves presidential prospects. According to most observers, this kind of explanation accounts for why President Carter failed, for lack of congressional contact, while President Reagan succeeded because of his exemplary pattern of contact and respect.

³ Quoted in Terry Sullivan, *Nerve Center: Lessons on Governing from the White House Chiefs of Staff*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

⁴ Baker handwritten notes of conversation with Rumsfeld on White House operations and staffing. Papers of James A. Baker III at Rice University Archives, (used by permission).

⁵ See Paul Light, *The President's Agenda*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 3rd edition.

ASSESSING THE PRESIDENT'S 100 DAYS

This paper explores these questions by describing and then surveying a new dataset drawn from the National Archives' Presidential Daily Diaries for the six elected presidents from Dwight Eisenhower through George H. W. Bush. These constitute the most comprehensive dataset available for research.⁶

The last kind of ignorance, Neustadt argued, FDR could avoid because he had four months to get to know his cabinet and agency policy-makers before he recalled the congressional majority to Washington to follow his lead (or not) in confronting "the crisis."⁷ That modern presidents have little to do with their cabinets and often search for ways to bypass rather than work with their own executive branches, Neustadt thought, probably hampered the possibility for performance early on when (additionally) modern presidents faced an already *en camera* Congress. The challenge then, or the expectation then, of this "familiarization" effect might appear in presidential relations with their cabinets: those presidents with more cabinet contact would expect a more "unified purpose," to use James Wilson's summary phrase for the president's constitutional secret weapon, than those with less contact.

Evaluating these kinds of speculations on presidential circumstances and their relationship to the hundred days and to the practice of politics, etc. depends upon better understanding what presidents do. And, in turn, that assessment initially requires grasping the basic patterns to presidential work in time. Questions about the nature of that work and time include:

- Do presidential workdays really differ across administrations (e.g., in average length or the distribution of activities) or do institutional forces create a common experience?
- If presidential days differ, do these differences reflect organizational differences, e.g., whether the president utilizes a Chief of Staff?

The first two questions consider whether the presidency requires a degree of regularity: whether the so-called presidential "clerkship," with its array of delegations and duties placed on the presidency, has significantly constrained the president's work and schedule. In political science, the distinction between the institutional demands on the job and those characteristics defined by the unique characteristics of individuals distinguishes between "presidency-" and "president-centered" forces, respectively.

Additionally, the structure of presidential work also includes the distribution of contact across the president's subordinates (including the cabinet). No one knows how wide a circle Rumsfeld's seemingly trivial standard would define. Hence,

- How many executive subordinates see the President four times a week on average?
- How many subordinates see the President once a day?

The impact of tenure on work

Questions about general structure of presidential work also include the pattern of that work over the transition. If, as Neustadt has suggested, ignorance characterizes presidential transitions, then administrations presumably adjust to their circumstances with improved efficiency over time. In the past decade, political scientists have played an increasingly important role in presidential transition.⁸ The developing secondary analysis resulting from this practical contact has underscored that campaign transition planning groups regularly underestimate the demands they will face for presidential engagement when they take office (cf. Sullivan 2004). Once in office, the scope of these demands quickly triggers a scramble to put in place routines to protect the president's time by

⁶ Both the diaries for Bill Clinton and George W. Bush currently fall under the penumbra of the Presidential Records Act.

⁷ For some confirmation of Neustadt's point about how the Twentieth Amendment made congressional support less likely, see John Frendreis, Raymond Tatalovich, and Jon Schaff, "Predicting Legislative Output in the First One-Hundred Days, 1897-1995," *Political Research Quarterly*, 54.4(December 2001):853-70.

⁸ See Martha J. Kumar and Terry Sullivan, *The White House World: Transitions, Organization, and Office Operations*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

limiting access, to structure more closely the materials destined for the president's attention, and to focus more narrowly the president's agenda.

An alternative pattern would suggest that organizations do not typically respond to circumstances with innovation but instead just do what they do only more of it. Either response would suggest a pattern to the president's day in which activities improve or the overall length of the president's day extends to accommodate new reactions. Questions on tenure include:

- Over the 100 days, do activities (especially policy meetings) get shorter with efficiency or does the White House operation simply extend the president's day?
- If differences exist in how presidents adjust to tenure, do these differences reflect organizational characteristics?

The nature of presidential responsibilities

While governing and leadership go hand in hand, they also require choices about priorities. Those who have carried out presidential transitions often comment on the challenging Washington environment of policy advocates, all looking to hijack the new president's agenda. Gaining the president's attention requires occupying the president's schedule. How the president's day gets divided between responsibilities, then, becomes the subject of and mechanism for finding the administration's own course. Questions about the nature of presidential commitment to these responsibilities include:

- Do presidents commit their time in proportion to their constitutional responsibilities?
- In the modern era, which have become more important as presidential responsibilities?
- Do presidents have a clear delineation in their work between differing responsibilities, e.g., diplomacy (the *Wall Street Journal* question), as commander in chief, legislative leadership, and general management?

THE RANGE OF PRESIDENTIAL CONTACT

In a government of people, carrying out responsibilities entails contact with others. When he advised keeping a tight rein on the president's contacts, Secretary Rumsfeld's advice had implications for the president's decision-making as well. Critics of presidential policies often blame those decisions on the absence of conflicting advice, especially that from policy experts. Questions about the range of these presidential contacts include:

- How often do presidents meet with outside interests by comparison with government officials?
- How often do president draw on the expertise of sub-cabinet officers and the uniform military?
- Does the selection of organizational structure promote more contact with outside advice?
- How often can a new president expect to meet with the Cabinet?
- How often can a new president expect to meet with the congressional leadership? With members of the Congress in general? With the opposition leadership?
- How often can a new president expect to meet with the national security team? With the National Security Council? With foreign heads of state?

FINDING AND USING PRESIDENTIAL DISCRETION

Organization should make freedom of choice possible. Presidents, then, use their own operational choices to eek out a modicum of discretion. No other presidential responsibility competes with presidential discretion like the ceremonial duties associated with presidential responsibilities as the head of state. Common questions associated with presidential choices intended to generate presidential discretion reflect this expectation:

- What percentage of the president's effort involves ceremonial responsibilities as head of state?
- Do ceremonial responsibilities come in clusters as a potential mechanism for minimizing them?

Of course, one response to declining presidential discretion would involve adjusting the balance mentioned earlier between increased efficiency in White House operations over time and simply expanding the length of the president's day:

Eeking out discretion in the president's day has but one use — making a difference. Do the presidents' activities affect their opportunities for successfully pursuing their own agendas and responsibilities during the first hundred days? Paul Light and others argue that the nature of national influence and the speed with which new administrations fit into the Washington community combine to require presidents to act quickly, to “move it or lose it.” This recommendation derives precisely from the presumed character of the presidential honeymoon as a measured pause in partisan opposition that only a well-prepared transition can take advantage of in a timely way. Neustadt, on the other hand, suggests that presidential success in the hundred days depends less on a measured pause and more on advanced preparations. Hence, questions about the connection between presidential activities and policy outcomes include:

- Do presidential activities seem to affect the success of presidential recommendations?
- Does concentration on legislative responsibilities or on cabinet coordination lead to quick resolution of the president's recommendations?

USING THE PRESIDENTIAL DAILY DIARIES

To answer these questions, the analysis employs data from three organizations. These include the President's Appointments Secretary, the Secret Service, and the White House Ushers. On a regular basis, the National Archives combines these separate logs into a comprehensive record commonly called the “President's Daily Diary.” Each presidential library maintains these records and has released them through the G.H.W. Bush presidency. The data for this paper derive from these archival collections, the most complete data currently available.

The data report one observation for each person recorded in the diary, along with all the information provided in the diary and additional information on several “atmospherics,” e.g., presidential approval. Some administrations provide incomplete records, especially for those days spent at Camp David or other presidential retreats. During his hospitalization at George Washington Hospital, following an assassination attempt, the Reagan Diary reported few details of the President's days. And lastly, some diaries redact information: typically, records of national security briefings and the names of Secret Service personnel. The dataset excludes these incomplete days or redacted data.

Reliable Comparisons

Questions about presidential work styles suffer the same problems as understanding other aspects of this institution: the combination of limited access and small numbers. Typically, observing institutional actors or processes with standard analytic techniques requires a broad range and a large number of observations. Given the possibility of recording errors, the latter assures the *reliability* of conclusions, while a broad range of observations allows for separating subjects into *useful* comparisons, e. g., assessing the impact of having a Chief of Staff.

Table 1. Descriptors of the President's Day, Elected Presidents

President	Observations		Work Day ^a			Trend over 100 Days of Length of Day				
	days	cases	Begins	Ends	Length	Intercept	Slope	Effect	Difference ^b	
Dwight Eisenhower	89	4,653	8:37:33	18:20:04	9:42:21 (3:15:06)	9:09:22	0.05	10:21:22	1:12:00	8.08%
John Kennedy	98	5,809	9:34:57	19:40:07	10:00:17 (3:11:07)	9:26:12	.05	10:38:12	1:12:00	8.24%
Richard Nixon	100	7,691	8:28:28	22:40:19	14:11:51 (2:28:57)	15:20:27	-.09	13:10:51	-2:09:36	-24.9%
Jimmy Carter	100	7,019	6:37:15	23:37:11	17:04:40 (1:41:12)	16:40:13	.03	17:23:25	0:43:12	9.8%
Ronald Reagan	87	8,169	8:44:12	22:10:44	13:26:32 (2:34:46)	13:26:33	.00	13:26:36	0:00:03	0.0%
George H. W. Bush	76	9,118	6:54:54	21:34:48	14:39:54 (2:16:39)	14:28:54	.02	14:57:42	0:28:48	5.04%
<i>Dispersion</i>			1:08:53	1:58:40						

Source: Compiled by author.

Notes: ^a data in parentheses represent sample standard deviations

^b percentages in this column represent Kruskal- λ calculations.

Table 1 presents basic data for the first 100 days of the elected presidents. As the table makes apparent, the dataset includes a useful number of daily observations, ranging from a minimum of 76 days to a maximum of 100. These numbers of daily observations for each president allow for making reliable estimates of each president's activities. In turn, these reliable comparisons permit useful comparisons between presidents.

In addition to good estimates across presidencies, the large number of observations *within* each presidency also makes it possible to draw conclusions with a high degree of confidence about each administration's organization of work. For example, as indicated in Table 1, the dataset ranges from a low of 4,653 individual observations (Eisenhower) to a high of 9,118 (G.H.W. Bush), a total of 42,459 individual observations. These individual encounters with the President aggregate into some 16,001 events ranging from working alone through public events. These aggregates range from a low of 1,200 during the Eisenhower presidency to a high of 3,400 during the Nixon administration. The current dataset, however, presents a smaller set of events because staff did not always properly record events, sometimes failing to note when an event ended. The data presented here, however, represents 88% of the event data and does not appear to present any adverse pattern of selection.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRESIDENT'S DAY

This section covers the most basic details of presidential workdays. It begins by considering basic descriptive information on the presidential daily schedule and the variation across administrations. It then considers the impact of tenure on these basic elements. Finally, this section explores the balance between various responsibilities and how those responsibilities change over tenure, including the discretionary advances generated by more efficiency or longer workdays.

THE GENERAL STRUCTURE

In addition to describing the database itself, Table 1 summarizes the average length of presidential workdays as well as the trends in those days over the transition period. These data address the first set of questions about the 100 days.

Presidency versus Presidents

Table 1 makes clear that on overall length, individual presidents have similar work schedules. The standard deviations reported verify that each summary accurately portrays the president's work schedule.⁹ The reliability of these descriptions then allow for making accurate comparisons between administrations. Eisenhower's day, for example, clearly differs from his immediate successor's, but only by twenty minutes. The range across Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, again, shows similar differences (around thirty minutes apiece) but a striking difference from the earlier presidents. At 17 hours, only President Carter's first hundred days differs substantially from his immediate predecessors and successors. Since a workday has a more or less fixed length, Carter's increase in length over the others constitutes a genuinely significant difference: a 30% lengthening of the workday. Carter's immediate successors, however, returned to the more modern average of around 13 hours.

Noting the beginning and end of presidential days and the dispersion across these estimates affords some idea as to what affects length. More of the length of the workday depends on when the day ends than when it begins. The variation between the presidents on endings represents a little less than twice the variation between them on when the day beginnings. The longer days result more,

⁹ In statistics, the standard deviation (a measure of dispersion around a mean) divided by the square-root of the number of observations used produces an estimate of reliability, called a "standard error."

then, from presidential choices about when to end rather than on when to begin the workday.¹⁰ The former decision probably results from the demands placed on the presidency during the day or the efficiency with which the president's organization addresses these challenges. Both these represent institutional forces partly beyond the president's control.

Table 1 suggests a further institutional effect. Holding out the extraordinarily long Carter day, these data on average length lend support to the popular observation that since the end of World War II the president's activities have increased substantially. As an approximation of this pattern, consider the average length of day for the first two and the last two presidents. These two averages differ by four hours and twelve minutes. Assuming a limit of 24 hours, this four-hour difference represents a substantial, 30% increase in the president's workday.¹¹

Table 2 reports on the average number and length for events. The bottom two rows describe a comparison between the first two and last two presidencies in the data. These proportions suggest mostly the similarities between these two groups and the longer presidential day resulted primarily from doing more of the same. The two groups differ however in a few significant areas. For example, Presidents Reagan and Bush spent far less time in one-on-one meetings than did their predecessors thirty years earlier. Indeed, the pattern over the thirty-five years constitutes a clearly monotonic decline that reduced the president's workday by about 1½ hours.

Conversely, Presidents Reagan and Bush spent considerably more time in two categories. In the first category, working alone, the later presidents spent about 1¼ hours longer working alone than their predecessors. The amount of time spent working alone reached a high mark during Presidents Nixon and Carter's presidencies partitioning the workday with 12 20-minute periods. Although they reduced the length and the numbers of these partitions, Presidents Reagan and Bush expanded the amount of time in each period.

A second area of difference involves public events. Despite the fact that these events typically remained around 20 minutes in length, the later presidents scheduled significantly more such events per day than earlier presidents. The additional public events added an additional hour to the average day's length.

In sum, then, the president's day has increased substantially both shifting time away from individual meetings and expanding the president's day. These changes made room primarily for more public events and more time working alone. Assuming that the president's time alone involves studying briefing documents and carrying out duties associated with memoranda and other communications, the historical trends have substituted personal contact with advisors with other modes of communications. Together these two changes added 2¼ hours to the workday, about 60% of the historical pattern of change.

¹⁰ The president's workday fluctuates somewhat (on the upper end) with the length of the day itself: the longer the average day, the less variation. This relationship reflects the fact that, as the founders noted, unlike the congressional institution, the singular presidency must rest. As the average day lengthens, that physical fact puts a statistical limitation on possible variation, at least on the upper side. Carter, for example, could not increase his day much longer than the 17 hours it already averaged: he had no more hours in the day to use. Hence, the standard dispersion on the length of Carter's day has smaller values than the dispersions of other presidents with shorter days.

¹¹ With the measure employed (Kruskal's lambda), a difference greater than 10% constitutes a "significant" difference. Since Eisenhower's and Reagan's ages approximated each other, these differences in length do not result from age.

Table 2. Distribution of Work per Administration Day

President	Recorded Days	Amount of Work by Type on Average Day (number of meetings and average length)							
		On the Phone ¹²	Working Alone	Meetings with...			Public Event	Personal	Travel
				One Person	Small Group	Large Group			
Dwight Eisenhower	89	—	.7	4.6	2.2	1.6	1.8	2.4	.6
			0:46:41	0:22:51	0:32:25	1:11:34	0:37:52	0:03:12	0:31:10
John Kennedy	98	—	6.5	5.5	3.6	1.4	2.3	1.4	2.0
			0:20:37	0:18:06	0:25:32	0:54:22	0:24:46	0:33:28	0:19:21
Richard Nixon	100	5.3	12.1	4.5	3.9	1.5	2.1	2.6	2.5
		0:04:40	0:20:28	0:18:59	0:27:22	1:09:05	0:40:48	0:16:48	0:22:35
Jimmy Carter	100	8.8	12.2	4.2	4.0	1.9	4.2	3.6	1.5
		0:03:19	0:20:29	0:16:50	0:23:50	0:46:47	0:25:49	0:05:51	0:14:51
Ronald Reagan	87	4.5	7.0	1.4	2.7	1.5	3.0	3.2	1.2
		0:03:28	0:16:18	0:18:45	0:24:40	0:46:00	0:24:58	0:02:53	0:17:42
George H. W. Bush	76	10.1	6.8	4.3	5.0	2.7	4.1	3.4	2.2
		0:03:55	0:14:26	0:10:12	0:21:27	0:32:02	0:25:49	0:11:13	0:20:08
% of Total Day	<i>First Two</i>	—	17%	20%	16%	19%	12%	5%	6%
	<i>Last Two</i>	6%	22%	7%	18%	16%	19%	5%	7%

Source: Compiled by author.

¹² Presidential diaries for Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy did not note phone conversations.

Table 3. Distribution of Work per Administration and Time Saved, by organizational choice

White House Organization	Average Number of Events by Type over 100 days average length per event						
	Working Alone	Meetings with...			Public Event	Personal	Travel
		One Person	Small Group	Large Group			
Spokes of the Wheel	683	477	373	166	224	189	169
Avg. length	0:20:33	0:17:28	0:24:41	0:50:35	0:25:17	0:19:39	0:17:06
Hierarchal	598	326	300	156	236	255	141
Avg. length	0:24:28	0:17:42	0:26:28	0:54:40	0:32:22	0:08:31	0:22:54
<i>Time Saved</i> (hours:minutes)	-9:55	42:40	21:19	-2:24	-9:45	20:52	4:52

Source: Compiled by author.

Impact of Organization

Another kind of choice that presidents can make involves organizational structure. This section focuses on how the president’s organizational choices affect work. It concentrates on two standard distinction made between organizational choices. The first emphasizes easy access to the President and supporters sometimes call it the “spokes of the wheel” organization, suggesting the President constitutes the hub and each of the spokes a point of access. In this system, presidents determine their own schedules and requests for access come directly to the President for scheduling decisions. In addition, a wider range of advisors have an opportunity to provide competing advice. The second operation, typically referred to as a “hierarchal” system, relies on a White House Chief of Staff to structure the president’s work and control access. Not surprisingly, when utilizing an hierarchal system, White House Chiefs typically consider orchestrating the president’s day as their primary responsibility [Sullivan 2004].

From the data, the impact of choosing an hierarchal White House organization, with a Chief of Staff, seems clear. Consider the length of the president’s workday. Presidents using a Chief of Staff to organize their operation have significantly shorter average workdays. The day for the four presidents with a Chief averages 10 hours, 24 minutes while the three presidents eschewing a Chief of Staff (data from LBJ included for better approximations) averaged 13 hours, 26 minutes.¹³ This result of having no Chief of Staff appears to result in a 22% increase in the president’s day.

According to former Chiefs, this difference results from a President’s natural inability to fend off direct requests for time. Even when they have already committed to allowing their Chiefs to control their scheduling, presidents still will respond favorably to direct requests for time, proffered at inopportune times precisely to skirt the Chief’s control function. Presidents want, the Chiefs argue, to offer their administrations an “open door” and those presidents without a gatekeeper apparently get something very much like that.

Table 3 details some of the other effects associated with selecting a Chief of Staff (or hierarchical) organization. These figures report the averages for types of “events” over the first 100 days. Events range from working alone through different sized meetings to public events and then personal time. Since the Eisenhower and Kennedy operations did not log the President’s phone calls, to report phone use statistics by organizations would report the “average” for a single administration.

From the results in this comparison, it appears that adopting a Chief of Staff operation results in substantial changes to the total time used by the presidents during their 100 days. For example, using a Chief of Staff, the president chaired fewer meetings with individuals and small groups, saving about 43 hours and 21 hours, respectively. On the other hand, Chief of Staff organizations staged

¹³ Though LBJ eventually brought in a Chief of Staff in 1965, his first hundred days retained the Kennedy organizational structure.

about 10 hours more public events for the president's involvement. In addition, the advent of a Chief of Staff increases the amount of time that the President has working alone, by about 10 hours and reduces the amount of personal time by about 21 hours. Recall, of course, that these "savings" resulted in a shorter workday (and considerable more sleep) for the president rather than a reallocation between presidential responsibilities. All tolled, the selection of a Chief of Staff resulted in a savings of about 54 hours over the 100 days.

One operational dilemma that Chiefs of Staff say they face involves whether the White House operation utilizes all its potential, maximizing its use of time immediately to achieve the president's agenda, or saves out some capacity for long-term planning and to commit to the inevitable, though unpredictable, crisis [see Sullivan 2004]. Few administrations ever deal successfully with the question of long-term planning, so great their day-to-day operational challenges. Some administrations, however, have tried to side-step this balance between commitment and crisis by bringing in outside expertise to handle crises when they arise, leaving the White House to handle its not-inconsequential, "routine" duties. As Clinton administration Chief of Staff Leon Panetta has noted, this approach tries to keep the White House staff at their posts focused on their specific responsibilities rather than running to the "ball," where inevitably the president's immediate interests lie. Congressman Panetta described the latter approach as a White House that looks unflatteringly like a schoolyard soccer game, everyone running to the ball and no one maintaining their position on the field of play [Sullivan, 2004].

An alternative approach, however, would simply ratchet down the president's schedule and thereby reduce those parts of the White House operation that key off the president's work schedule. These offices would include the central control functions responsible for orchestrating the president's schedule and decision process (the Chief of Staff's operation, the Cabinet Secretary's, the Staff Secretary's), the communications operations that speak for the President (the Press Secretary's office), and the National Security Advisor's operation. Clearly, the evidence would suggest that Chiefs of Staff opt for maintaining this balance between pursuing the President's work yet maintaining a spare capacity by taking this last approach, reducing demands on the president's time.

In addition to reducing the demands on presidential time, the use of a Chief of Staff operation, also reallocates presidential time among executive subordinates. This pattern to presidential work reflects one of the principal reasons presidents opt for a spokes of the wheel operation. Consider the

Table 4. Distributing Contact among the Executive Branch

Organization	During 100 Days, Average Number of Presidential Meetings with...		
	White House Staff	Cabinet Ranked	Agency Staff
Spokes of the Wheel	161.3	29.7	31.3
Hierarchal	128.5	27.0	27.8
<i>Improvement</i>	25.6%	9.9%	12.9%

Executive Branch as three concentric circles around the President. The White House staff occupies the first ring closest to the President. The second ring includes the Cabinet and cabinet level officers, the latter including such as the Budget Director. The third ring includes senior appointees, senior executive service officers, and the professional staffs in the line agencies, including the military. Table 4 reports the distribution of contact with these three rings and how organizational structures affect it. In each category, selecting a spokes of the wheel operation increases contact at all levels with subordinates. Increasing the president's workday generates part of this increase in contact. The two operational systems however have no effect on the distribution across the three circles. In both organizational structures, 70% of the president's contact comes from the closest circle of the staff. In both organizations, senior agency and cabinet level appointees share equally the remaining 30% of contacts. As a gatekeeper, then, the Chief of Staff has no discernible impact on who sees the President, just how often.

The President's Inner Circles

Rumsfeld's advice quoted earlier directly addresses the range of presidential access suggesting the Chief ought to limit that access to a small number of "inner circle" subordinates, those with as little as four contacts a week with the President. Table 10, found in the Appendix, describes just how narrow a group Rumsfeld recommendation entails. It lists three sets of subordinates, ranked in terms of how often they had contact with the President during the 100 days. The first group has wide-ranging contact with the President (some averaged multiple daily contacts with their presidents), but limited to no fewer than one contact a day on average. The second group fits Rumsfeld's original definition of the inner circle with at least four contacts a week. The third group in the table lists those prominently associated with the administration who had fewer than three contacts a week with their presidents. Regardless of organizational structure, it seems clear that while they see an enormous number of people each day, presidents see almost no one in particular.

For most presidents in this dataset, the numbers of people (excluding family members) having "regular" weekly contact with the president and at Rumsfeld's level amounts to about 11 people per administration.¹⁴ Typically, within that compact group, another five people might have contact with the president as least 7 times a week. Almost without exception this inner, inner circle includes the Chief of Staff or Staff Director, chief domestic advisor, the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, the Vice President, and then typically either the Director of Congressional Relations or the President's Press Secretary. While Secretaries of Defense and Treasury and Budget Directors typically see their presidents four times a week, they rarely rise into the closer circle.

The table includes four prominent variances under Rumsfeld's standard. All these irregularities have to do with the earlier presidencies. First, James Hagerty, President Eisenhower's storied Press Secretary had very limited contact with the President in the first 100 days. Second, only the Kennedy Administration had regular enough contact with the Speaker of the House to include the Speaker into the president's inner circle. Third, despite the popular notion that he suffered as Kennedy's Vice President, Lyndon Johnson appears on Kennedy's list of inner, inner circle, having daily contact with the President. Indeed, among Vice Presidents, only Richard Nixon did not enjoy this kind of closest association with the President. Fourth, Robert Kennedy, President Kennedy's brother, campaign manager, and Attorney General did not break into either of Kennedy's inner circles, even Rumsfeld's.

These latter surprises suggest something about spokes of the wheel systems: it shrinks the president's inner circle. Purportedly adopted to increase access to the president, the lack of some central orchestration actually results in fewer subordinates having regular presidential contact. This consequence probably results from what would seem like a cacophony of requests for the president's time. Given the presidential penchant to relent on requests for time or to encourage access, the resulting pattern to that access spreads the president's time among a very wide group of people. Even more than usual, spokes of the wheel presidents see no one in particular.

In sum then, choosing a hierarchal staff operation creates more time for the president and associated core staff with a potential impact on better responses to crisis and more planning. It also has meant additional public events for the president and transferring some work time to personal time. Chiefs also reduce the total number of meetings of all types but increase slightly the length of those that remain for the president. And lastly, hierarchal operations increase the size of the president's inner circle.

THE IMPACT OF TENURE AND ORGANIZATION

Table 1 also describes how the president's day progresses as the first 100 days unfold. Almost without exception, the 100 days lengthens the president's workday. Even President Carter, whose day already had pushed the limit, increased slightly as his administration matured. Understanding this growth and its components illustrates the impact of a White House operation on the president's time.

¹⁴ Contacts include phone conversations and group meetings as well as individual meetings.

Table 5. Impact of Organization Choice on Length of President's Workday

Variables	Effect	Reliability of Estimates		
		Standard error	t	Level of Significance
<i>Constant</i>	21413.119	8357.891	2.562	.011
Org Impact of Choice	13653.104	2658.583	5.135	.000
<i>Main Effects</i>				
Historical Trend	0.00005	.000	15.038	.000
Org Impact on Historical Trend	-0.00003	.000	-9.716	.000
Tenure	46.640	23.915	1.950	.052
Org Impact on Tenure	-25.831	31.245	-.827	.409
<i>Controls</i>				
Popular Approval	-783.706	10467.357	-.075	.940

Source: compiled by author.

Note: Summary Statistics: Adj. $R^2 = 0.413$ 6 and 584 df.

The growth in the president's workday has three components. The first component involves the specific starting points most appropriately associated with the individual choices of presidents. As noted earlier, while we can have confidence in the presumption that presidents set their own pace, only slight differences in work schedules separate them. These differences have an impact though in terms of where they start and how much they can adapt. A second component involves the historical trend in presidential responsibilities also noted earlier that has continued through the end of the Twentieth Century. A growing list of responsibilities has pressured each successive White House, and these growing responsibilities have had a discernible impact on the president's schedule regardless of the administration's structure or agenda. The impact of these forces takes effect over a long period and has a small, though nevertheless real, per-day effect. A third component involves a "within period" trend specific to each presidency and its own early organizational challenges. Compared to the over historical effect, the tenure effect appears more potent.

Table 5 reports on these effects along with the president's level of popular approval, the latter typically considered as an important control variable in understanding presidential activities. One might expect, for example, that independent of organizational choices, presidents might devote more and more work time in response to decreasing popular approval of how they have performed. The available dataset includes enough cases for each administration to have relatively high confidence that the estimated effects reported here capture reliable and non-zero influences on the president's day. In addition, by social science standards, the overall statistical equation presented in this table does a very good job of describing the data with the few variables it employs.¹⁵

In explaining the length of the president's day, first consider the control for the president's popular standing: it plays absolutely no role in determining the length or the progression of the president's day. The first effect, the variation in presidential choices, appears in the statistical model as part of the starting point or "constant." An interactive effect for organizational choice of a Chief of Staff illustrates how the choice of a Chief creates a completely different starting point for those presidents choosing that organizational structure. The fact that the president's organizational choice has a positive and significant coefficient suggests that the line predicting the effect of historical trends both within an administration and across time will appear less steep for hierarchal systems.

The two trends affecting the president's day appear in the model as the variables "Historical Trend" and "Tenure," respectively. Both appear to have significant effects on the president's day (as

¹⁵ Social science typically deals with processes more difficult to observe and more prone to cross-cutting influences, which together make for more difficulty in coding observations, hence, more error prone observation.

previously suggested in the discussion).¹⁶ Both have positive coefficients suggesting that as time progresses the president’s workday lengthens both within an administration’s first hundred days and across the range of administrations. White Houses do not appear to respond with more efficiency in the early stages, shortening meetings or public events. Instead, both seem only to respond to the historical and secular challenges by requiring the president to work harder.¹⁷ Because the historical trend stretches over a significant amount of time, it has a far smaller coefficient. Introducing an hierarchal organization has an effect on these forces. Using a Chief of Staff seems to cut in half the impact of both the historical trend and the secular trends lengthening the president’s schedule.

Though clearly the selection of a hierarchal organization slows the growth of the President’s duties and workday, even the application of that organizational force does not stop the progressive lengthening of the President’s day.¹⁸ In terms of the potential organizational reactions to growing (and possibly unexpected) demands on the president’s time, it seems clear that administrations have opted universally for making room in the president’s schedule by making the day longer.

In effect, then, during their first 100 days, administrations reel under the pressures that confront them upon taking office. The choice of the president’s schedule matters and the choice of whether the president allows a Chief of Staff to orchestrate the workday matters. Both slow the impact of the historical and secular trends on presidential work. Possibly because presidents and their subordinates do not know what to expect, seriously underestimate what they will face, and then have few tools with which to react, the potency of these pressures remain despite the choices made by presidents.

TAKING ON RESPONSIBILITIES

As just noted, facing presidential responsibilities represents a daunting task for presidents. This section addresses the range of responsibilities found on the president’s schedule. This historical record, of course, does not approximate the demands made on the White House, as only investigating the archival records can identify the range of requests from which the White House has chosen. Hence, it does not allow for an adequate examination of presidents’ decisions to commit effort because the data do not describe the pool of options from which they choose. But an examination of what duties presidents carry out will afford at least a reasonable expectation of what other president-elects have done and what a new one can expect as typical. Table 6 describes presidential workdays and distributes that time among eleven areas, ranging from working alone (and where exists no adequate description of the subject matter) to acting as the head of party.

Some findings in this area seem unremarkable, at least by comparison with the received wisdom. For that reason, these findings lend an additional degree of credibility on top of their undeniable statistical reliability. For example, the two “war presidents” in the dataset (Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon) spent a good deal of their time on the role of commander in chief. President Kennedy, who faced a military fiasco in Cuba beginning day 81 also spent a substantial amount of time as commander in chief, i.e., on average, 41 minutes per day. By contrast, two of the three “peace” presidents (Presidents Carter and Reagan) dedicated very little of their average day to this function. This general reduction of almost forty-minutes could clearly constitute the “peace dividend” applied to the president’s time.

¹⁶ Because of multi-colinearity, the reliability measures underestimate the significance of the Tenure and Chief-Tenure variables but other available tests assure their significance.

¹⁷ The Nixon presidency managed a slight down tick in the length of the president’s day.

¹⁸ A simple regression of the length of small group meetings on tenure, for example, generates the following results:

Variables	Effect	Std. Error	Significance
<i>Constant</i>	1760.572	143.073	.000
<i>Main Effects</i>			
Tenure	-3.233	3.013	.284
Org impact on tenure	3.713	2.663	.164

Table 6. Distribution of Responsibilities per Administration

President	Total Number of Events by Responsibility over 100 days										
	Average time per day										
	Working Alone	Personal	Travel	Speeches & Press	Ceremonial	Commander in Chief	Diplomatic	Legislative	Economic	Executive	Party Leader
Eisenhower	59	217	52	54	94	135	175	133	61	137	66
	0:30:57	3:01:06	0:18:13	0:16:58	0:39:51	0:59:38	1:00:57	1:07:06	0:27:51	0:56:58	0:52:40
Kennedy	632	136	191	118	139	126	243	119	188	155	33
	2:14:50	1:49:50	0:39:55	0:26:21	0:31:22	0:41:18	1:19:17	0:37:49	1:00:38	0:45:13	0:13:53
Nixon	1,209	262	245	79	166	417	477	93	435	129	33
	4:07:26	2:01:13	0:55:19	0:12:51	0:44:14	1:20:41	2:18:39	0:24:37	2:16:45	0:30:47	0:19:05
Carter	1,222	359	153	244	178	229	214	255	224	175	32
	2:31:55	1:35:54	0:22:03	0:40:32	0:37:37	0:33:36	0:48:25	0:40:41	1:25:48	0:19:38	0:11:23
Reagan	607	280	101	127	162	69	112	155	205	43	23
	1:59:51	3:21:32	0:20:32	0:25:12	0:45:48	0:20:21	0:30:32	0:24:18	1:25:48	0:19:38	0:11:23
Bush	517	261	167	151	228	311	262	160	116	91	17
	1:38:54	2:17:38	0:43:44	0:27:05	1:17:19	1:21:26	1:11:27	0:31:48	0:44:47	0:22:43	0:11:12
<i>Means</i>	2:10:39	2:21:12	0:33:18	0:24:50	0:46:12	0:52:50	1:11:33	0:37:30	1:06:39	0:36:31	0:20:15

where...

Working Alone

entails...

Time the diary does not account for, typically found in the Oval Office. In the residence, working alone includes any periods sandwiched by other periods of designated work, e.g., between a series of phone calls to members of Congress.

Personal

Time with family and friends or with subordinates in what clearly involves personal activities, e.g., a birthday party for the First Lady or bowling.

Travel

Time in a motorcade, Marine or Army 1, or Air Force 1 or on the presidential yachts and not clearly associated with a specific task.

Speeches and Press

Time attributed to presentation of the president's position or time allocated for preparing for such presentations.

Ceremonial

Time allocated to events in which the President acts as Head of State.

Commander in Chief

Time allocated to matters of national security.

Diplomatic

Time allocated to a range of activities associated with carrying out the foreign policy of the United States or its diplomatic affairs, including state dinners and receiving diplomatic envoys.

Legislative

Time allocated to contact with members of congress or with congressional relations staff.

Economic

A variety of activities associated with the governments functions in the economy.

Executive

A variety of activities involving management of the executive branch.

Party Leader

Activities associated with the party organization, the previous campaign, party finances but does not include leading the congressional party.

President Bush represents the clear exception to this pattern, devoting the most time on average to this function of all the presidents, including Eisenhower and Nixon. While his hour and twenty-one minutes on average rivaled that of Nixon's, President Bush accomplished the same amount of time in one-quarter fewer total encounters during the 100 days (311 vs Nixon's 417).

Some findings afford reliable answers to questions heretofore unapproachable. At one hour and 11 minutes a day, for example, President Bush spent more time than his immediate predecessors on foreign policy, the *Wall Street Journal* question, but spent only the third greatest amount of time during the last of the 20th century, the heretofore unknown answer for the *WSJ* question. Both Presidents Nixon and Kennedy spent more time on diplomatic relations during their first hundred days (as did Johnson) and even President Eisenhower's one hour on average came close to President Bush's average and in far fewer encounters. In all then, President Bush did not spend more time on foreign policy than any other modern president, just more than his two immediate predecessors. Additionally, on combining the commander in chief and diplomatic functions into a "national security" function, President Bush still did not spend the most time on national security. As expected, President Nixon, embroiled in a difficult and divisive war, took that dubious distinction.

Some findings afford unexpected results. One such result involves measuring legislative responsibilities. In this area, Presidents Eisenhower and Carter's records stand out among the elected presidents.¹⁹ These two presidents, neither noted for their legislative interest or acumen, devote more of their days to legislative responsibilities than any others of the presidents. This pattern, particularly for Carter, clearly goes against the grain of contemporaneous reporting which detailed what seemed like significant legislative troubles for President Carter, especially given the fact that his party held the largest partisan congressional margins in history. This level of commitment to legislative affairs probably reflects the fact that both Presidents Eisenhower and Carter managed relationships with brand new congressional leaderships, newly elected Speakers Joseph Martin and Tip O'Neill, in the House, and newly elected Senate Majority Leaders Robert Taft and Robert Byrd, respectively. All four of these new leaders had not held the job before nor served as the minority leader in the previous congress. These numbers then probably reflect two conditions. First, the president needed to create and then cement a standard for a relationship with the congressional majorities they ostensibly led. Developing such a relationship, of course, would require a focus that only the president could underscore. Undoubtedly, the White House staff followed up on the president's lead, but the president had to first make this relationship a reality. Additionally, these two patterns of commitment on legislative affairs could directly reflect demands from their congressional partisans to lend the president's imprimatur to these new congressional leaders. Indeed, no other president during the 20th Century faced these kinds of immediate leadership changes as Presidents Eisenhower and Carter did.

Another unexpected finding involves the growth of presidential communications. Despite the seemingly overwhelming importance of presidential communications and the pace of advances in technologies to make communications easier,²⁰ the President's communications commitment did not grow during the period. Nor did communications increase during the first 100 days. As a portion of the president's day, devising communications strategy, preparing for speeches, preparing for press conferences, delivering speeches, and encountering the press through the range of question and answer sessions and photo opportunities, amounts to about 2% of the total time used during a typical day. Excepting the president's very limited time spent on campaign and other political party organization matters, presidential communications amounts to the smallest of all responsibilities in which presidents invest their time. They spend almost twice as much time on ceremonial events during the typical day. This apparent lack of committed time, of course, does not imply that communications does not occupy an important place in White House operations. That a huge

¹⁹ President Johnson, of course, during his first 100 days spent far more time on legislative affairs and had far more contacts with members of Congress than any of the other presidents in this dataset: 577 individual encounters and one hour and eight minutes a day. The large number of contacts, of course, comes from a huge number of phone calls.

²⁰ See Martha Kumar, *Managing the President's Message*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

percentage of the White House staff engages in communications suggests both its importance and that presidents leave this function to their subordinates. This evidence also underscores that governing greatly differs from campaigning and that adjusting to this particular contrast between the two presidential environments presents a significant challenge to White House operations. Presidents simply abandon this campaign oriented element of their work life.

In addition to national security activities and legislative leadership, presidents spend a great deal of time (more than on commander and chief) in economic management. Other than Presidents Eisenhower and Bush, every late 20th Century president spent at least an hour and some as much as an hour and a half a day on economic management matters. In addition to his later vulnerability in the 1992 election, President Bush's meager attention to the economy (at 44 minutes) originated in the earliest days of his administration. These data suggest the truly significant role of the economic advisors (Budget Director, Council of Economic Advisors, Treasury, and even the Federal Reserve) in shaping the administration's work. By contrast, other than President Eisenhower, presidents typically invest twenty minutes a day in managing the Executive Branch.

THE RANGE OF PRESIDENTIAL CONTACT

Of course, presidential contact represents just a metaphor for the substance of those contacts. Seeing the president provides an opportunity to affect the president's decision-making through providing an opportunity to provide useful advice. The White House operation exists to effect that decision-making. The range of presidential contact, then, also describes the range of presidential advice. This section describes the range of that presidential contact during the hundred days as a reflection of those demands and as a measure of the advice the president gets. Eventually, then, carrying out responsibilities involves the president coming in contact with a range of others.

The Un-Importance of External Advice

Advocates and advocacy might have an organizational component, as well. As noted earlier, recommendations for the "spokes of the wheel" organization often argue that its use increases the amount of external advice the president receives. By increasing the amount of competitive advice and thereby reducing the chances for creating a "palace guard" around the president, the spokes system allows other interests to interject themselves into the president's considerations. Reportedly, President Johnson, in a cryptic and maybe apocryphal metaphor, told President-elect Nixon that he should pay special attention to the fact that his Oval Office windows would have three-inch thick glass because they cast a particularly pleasant hue on everything the President could see.

Table 7. External Advice and White House Organization

President	External Advisors	% of Day Spent with...			
		White House Staff		Cabinet	
		Senior	Other	Secretary	Sub-
Dwight Eisenhower	7.0%	9.7%	1.0%	18.5%	6.2%
John Kennedy	1.9	17.1	4.6	13.3	5.3
Richard Nixon	1.2	17.8	3.4	7.9	8.4
Jimmy Carter	1.3	10.7	0.8	4.0	3.3
Ronald Reagan	0.6	23.3	9.3	3.6	2.2
George H. W. Bush	0.7	29.8	0.0	5.7	7.7
Spokes of the Wheel	1.3	13.9	2.7	8.6	4.3
Hierarchal	2.4	20.1	3.4	8.9	6.1

Source compiled by author

The dataset here on the hundred days provides an excellent opportunity to test the extent to which presidents get external advice and whether the selection of organizational structures affects that advice-getting. Table 7 reports the average percentage of the president's day taken up by contact with three categories of advisors. The first summarizes outside advisors, those unassociated with government including business leaders, labor leaders, interest groups, and academics. The second group includes two groups of White House staff, all those staff commonly thought of as "senior" staff (Chief of Staff, Domestic Advisor, National Security Advisor, and Press Secretary²¹) and other subordinate staff, even if the specific White House consider that staff as "senior." The third group includes two elements of the president's executive subordinates: cabinet level subordinates, including secretaries of departments, and sub-cabinet staff including professional agency staff and the uniformed military (excluding military aides).

Clearly, the data indicates that presidents see few external advisors. These percentages of the president's day spent in meetings with such advisors averages in the single digits while senior staff and time with the White House staff, by comparison, average in the mid-teens. For example, President Bush took a mere 7/10th of one percent of his day to consult with external advisors. By contrast, the President spent 30% of his day with his senior staff. In other words, President Bush invested 42 times more of his White House day with senior staffers than with independent advisors. And while President Bush had these high walls around his presidency, the ratio of internal to external advice remained high for other presidents as well. President Nixon, for example, saw his senior staff considerably less (18% of the average day), but that amount still represents 18 times more attention to senior staff than outside advisors. Again, with the historical trend the amount of concentration in the president's core staff increased rather than the base of advice getting broader. As the 20th Century closed out, presidents became more and more dependent on their central staff.

This independence of external advice differed little by which organization the White House utilized. Table 7 makes clear that the two organizational systems had much in common with each other in how they treated "external" advisors, either independent advisors or executive branch advisors. In general, presidents have spent about 17% of their day with these kinds of external sources of information during the first hundred days.

Surprisingly enough Table 7 also suggests that the spokes of the wheel organizational structure produced mixed results. The spokes system reduced the president's dependence on *senior* staff by around 26% and it reduced the dependence on other White House staff, as well, in this case by about 30%. But, in general, the spokes system also reduced contact with sources of advice in general.

The Broader Range of Contacts

Table 8 reports on the range of presidential contact during the hundred days. These data extend the information in Table 7 to include cabinet, congressional, heads of state, and formal meetings. The first three columns, External Advisors through Other White House Staff, repeat the data with encounters that Table 7 described in terms of percentages. Except for President Eisenhower, who had a relatively small proportion, the bulk of presidential contacts involves an overwhelming proportion of contacts with the White House core staff. These contacts have increased significantly as the president's day has lengthened with the historical trend.

Contact with the core Cabinet officers (the Attorney General, the Secretaries of Defense and State) represents the only other group that rivals the president's attention to the White House staff.²² Since the Appendix on the inner circle makes clear that the range of contact does not really include the Attorney General, these contacts concentrate in the persons of the two other Secretaries.

²¹ This definition of "senior" staff coincides with the president's inner circle based on the range of contacts reported in the appendix.

²² The Attorney General, Secretaries of State and Defense represent the president's core constitutional functions: magistracy, diplomacy, and defense.

Table 8. Range of Presidential Contact during First 100 Days

President	Presidential Contacts with Various Actors											
	External Advisors	White House Staff		Cabinet Level			Congressional ^a			Heads of State	Formal Meetings	
		Senior	Other	Core	Other	Sub-	Leaders	Oppostn	Members		Cabinet	NSC
Dwight Eisenhower	113	120	39	149	47	112	18	10	115	10	13	16
John Kennedy	44	419	14	115	63	120	23	19	96	52	8	6
Richard Nixon	28	864	29	126	135	50	31	16	62	77	6	20
Jimmy Carter	69	647	20	160	84	66	14	2	251	70	16	8
Ronald Reagan	22	598	11	78	59	24	11	9	144	69	13	9
George H. W. Bush	33	898	7	130	102	60	15	16	145	105	3	9

Source: Compiled by author.

Notes: ^a Numbers on members include contacts with whips and below in both parties and in both houses and House majority leaders.

Formal Meetings

One clear indication of the president's responsibilities come from the more or less formalized meetings on the president's schedule. These include the presidential meetings with the congressional leadership, meetings with the Cabinet, and meetings with the National Security Council. The significance of all these meetings lies not simply in their constitutional meanings but also in the fact that as formal meetings they last considerably longer than other large meetings and thereby consume large portions of the relevant presidential day.

As a simple measure of their regularity, the hundred days typically takes thirteen weeks. Hence, all of the presidents, but President Reagan averaged a little less than a weekly meeting with his congressional leadership, and he spent very little time with the opposition. Given his reputation for congenial relations with the opposition, "disagreeing without being disagreeable," these data suggest President Reagan did not deserve the reputation, either as a leader of his own congressional party and definitely not with respect to the opposition.

His successor had far more contact with congressional opposition than President Reagan. Several other presidents, however, maintained almost weekly contact with their opposition congressional leadership as well as with their own partisans. Only President Carter made no attempt to keep up contact with his congressional opposition. His lack of contact may have resulted from the fact that his partisans held an overwhelming majority in both houses. President Eisenhower, often described as more closely aligned philosophically with Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson, clearly did not seek out contact with these opposition leaders during his hundred days. Again, for Eisenhower and Carter, part of their lack of effort with respect to partisans surely resulted from their attempts to underwrite the stature of their newly minted majority party leaders, as discussed earlier. In this respect, given the fact that a new Senate majority came in with him, President Reagan's disregard for the congressional leadership *en toto* provides ample evidence that at least initially the Reagan White House had little to do with the congressional leadership.

President Eisenhower maintained a schedule of once weekly meetings with both his Cabinet and NSC. Presidents Carter and Reagan also maintained such weekly schedules, but only with their cabinets. Only President Nixon, engaged simultaneously in a hot and cold war, maintained anything like a weekly schedule with the NSC. Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, and Bush eschewed cabinet meetings for the most part, with President Bush holding essentially fewer cabinet meetings than he did press conferences during the hundred days. While Nixon's reputation for eschewing his cabinet in favor of a more closely held policy-making process, President Bush's reputation does not include such a narrow core though, in fact, he had far less regular cabinet relations than President Nixon.

Contact with foreign heads of state constitutes the last area of essentially non-discretionary relations with others. These contacts represent one of the elements of historical change, the first two presidents averaging 31 and the last two averaging 87. To some extent, of course, presidents can put off contact with foreign governments but only with some difficulty. Like the congressional leadership, these leaders present a challenge to the president's schedulers. While many of these contacts involve courtesy calls near the beginning of the hundred days, just as many involve substantive policy relationships. The vast majority of President Nixon's 62 contacts result from a State visit to the NATO alliance in the middle of his hundred days. This trip, the only presidential travel to leave North America, involved contact with heads of state in Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Holy See, and the UK. Both Presidents Reagan and Bush had intense consultations with the Ottawa governments representing the only other "foreign" travel during the hundred days.

FINDING AND USING PRESIDENTIAL DISCRETION

For most of the country's history, the institutional clocks of the Congress and the Presidency maintained the same time. The close of World War II coincided with the end of this coincident institutional time. The twenty-second amendment, along with a maturing congressional seniority system begun during the 1920s, made the initiation of the president's time in office critical in many ways. More than the lamentable comparisons with FDR's shadow, the time constraints ticking down the president's tenure and the growing congressional strengths in creating permanent forms of accommodation while spreading institutional authority have placed an inordinate interest in a president's first hundred days. The president's activities have become not just a signal about the administration's future intentions but also its modal competencies. Using those first hundred days to their fullest and to the president's policy advantage redounds to institutional advantage and policy leadership. To accomplish this focused treatment of the president's time means maximizing control over discretionary time, those periods which the White House operation could devote to the president's agenda.

This section reports on two aspects of this question about presidential discretion. From the current findings, it identifies a range of opportunities for more presidential time. Then, it reviews previous analysis of how this discretion can have an impact on the president's advantage.

THE SEARCH FOR DISCRETION

Within the context of the transition, many presume that the easiest source of increasing discretion derives from limiting the president's ceremonial responsibilities. Averaging around five percent of the most recent presidents' daily activities, the analysis here suggests that ceremonial responsibilities do present a possibility. Additional ceremonial events and public events, remember, account for a large portion of the 2¼ hour increase in the historical component driving longer presidential days. But the analysis also suggests that ceremonial responsibilities represent but just one of many opportunities for expanding presidential time. This section reviews all those identified in the previous analysis.

Avoiding External Forces Shaping Transitions

Some of the opportunities for additional presidential time depend upon avoiding "distractions," some of which confront the president within a particular historical challenge. Presidents Nixon and Reagan, for example, faced significantly unstable diplomatic environments. President Nixon took office in the midst of a growing Viet Nam war and its roots in the broader Cold War conflict. He needed an opportunity to restructure diplomatic relations. President Reagan needed an easy way to divert attention from the context of diplomatic embarrassment of a great power literally held hostage until and through his own presidential transition. Both of these presidents found it useful to embark on high-profile foreign trips, which consumed considerable presidential time and energy. The absence of such needs, of course, provides for an easy "expansion" of presidential time, but one which the president's team would probably not consider as an opportunity, *per se*.

Knowing for certain what to expect from the first few days in office provides another of these negative opportunities to better manage the president's work. Knowing, for example, that a new congressional leadership, whether the president's party holds the majority or not, requires additional presidential attention. Knowing, for example, to expect a weekly meeting with that leadership and at least a bi-weekly outreach to the opposition, especially where they maintain the majority, reduces the amount of dislocation in the president's schedule generated by trying to reconciling these demands for time. And finally, knowing how and remaining committed to diverting outside pressures for presidential involvement remains the most significant transition task for any White House trying to

preserve the president's time. As Secretary Baker has noted, a White House Chief of Staff has to learn to say, "I appreciate your position, but right now, we are concentrating on one, two, and three."

Organizational Strategies

Short of avoiding these negative opportunities, carving out more presidential discretion depends upon both positive and creative strategies. Selecting a hierarchical staff organization constitutes one major strategy. It creates a number of opportunities for affording the president more time. In general, it shortens the president's day, which, in turn, creates something of a spare capacity that presidents can commit to their own use. Of course, a president can always create this kind of time by simply choosing to say "no" and thereby making the time. Adopting the hierarchical staff organization, however, allows a president to side-step that choice by never bringing it to the Oval Office. The hierarchy not only protects the president's time but it reduces the amount of time that the president fields requests for time and attention. Both changes improve the workday.

A hierarchical staff organization reduces the number of meetings thereby generating additional discretionary time. In the past, presidents have used this additional time to stage additional public events, increase their involvement in communications. Limiting the regularity of cabinet meetings and national security council meetings suggests another reduction possible for the president. Clearly, Presidents Bush and Carter took this approach although limiting these formal meetings afford small opportunities for changing the workday and may adversely affect the president's success (see below).

Choosing an hierarchical organization, however, also requires pressing for a broader distribution of participation. To some extent, having a Chief of Staff seems to increase the president's inner circle by an additional three or four subordinates, but even broadening further that circle to include the executive and external advice would require a conscious effort. The recent wider use of the rank of "Counselor" in both the Clinton and Bush administrations might constitute just such a conscious effort. These subordinates, with ranks that parallel the Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor, may have had the effect of broadening the range of the president's most common contacts.

Operational Strategies

A few changes in operations could also afford the president additional opportunities for discretion. Shifting ceremonial events, for example, from the middle of the president's day to the early evening would also afford additional time. Some public events constitute parts of elaborate strategies for influencing the congress or other public decision-makers and for that reason must remain in the middle of the president's workday where they can garner immediate attention. Where the administration intends these events to create a long-run impact, then setting them in the early evening would do just as well.

USING DISCRETION

In the end, the use of the president's time has but one motivation — making a difference on policy. This section investigates the relationship between presidential influence and the first hundred days as suggested by Neustadt and others and introduced earlier. The connection they propose has to do with whether the administration can take advantage of its relatively strong position during the transition by forging and then employing a unified operation.

Their comments suggest, but do not demonstrate, that the success of the president's program rests upon the mustering out and use of the Executive Branch and thereby placing into play its substantial resources.

Table 9. Range of Presidential Contact during First 100 Days

President	Number of Contacts with President and with...						Day Agenda Completed
	External	Leaders	Congressional		Cabinet		
			Opposition	Members	Secretary	Staff	
John Kennedy	44	23	19	96	8	120	98
Richard Nixon	28	31	16	62	6	50	116
Jimmy Carter	69	14	2	251	16	66	94
Ronald Reagan	22	11	9	144	13	24	145
George H. W. Bush	33	15	16	145	3	60	205
Correlation	-0.53	-0.36	0.26	-0.08	-0.59	-0.40	

Source: Compiled by author.

Table 9 reports measures of such a linkage between effort and effectiveness. The measure of effectiveness describes the length of time necessary to bring to legislative fruition the main elements of the new president's agenda. This measure derives from extensive research of the president's agenda and reporting about it found in *Congressional Quarterly's* almanacs for the relevant years. For a variety of reasons having to do with the reliability of the *Congressional Quarterly's* earliest reports, the table excludes, as not comparable data, President Eisenhower's recommendations.

The measures of effort come from previous estimates of presidential activity. Efforts at building legislative support include organizing the legislative leaderships of both parties: first to get partisans to support the administration's efforts and then to get the opposition to consider the risks entailed in trying to defeat the president's program. Building legislative support also involves contacts with individual members providing services for which they will become beholden and engages them with persuasive appeals. Coordinating the executive branch includes meetings with the cabinet and subcabinet appointees.

Because of data limitations, the analysis will rely on Pearson correlation measures, which compare the patterns of change in and between two targeted variables. In this case, the last row of Table 9 reports the relationship between change in the relevant activity measure and change in the effectiveness measure. While this approach cannot establish a causal relationship, rarely does such causation exist without a commensurate correlation. Hence, this evaluation constitutes a first step in evaluating the effect of changing activities on managing effectiveness. Given the inherent difficulties with these kinds of data, correlations worth considering must exceed an absolute value of 0.4.

As the table indicates, few of the activity variables reach the appropriate correlations. For example, while coordinating with the congressional leadership has a value close to the relevant standard, close enough to consider worth noting, the other "contact" measures on the congressional side do not fall in the relevant range at all. The data for this one congressional measure suggests that as an administration dedicates more of its efforts at contacting the congressional leadership, even if the majority hails from the other party, the quicker the president's agenda gets considered and concluded. Except for the relative strength of this association, at -0.36, this data would lend support to the notion that preparing the president's agenda for an early release and thereby permitting intensive administration lobbying at just the right time, provides an excellent opportunity for administration effectiveness.

Note that using these two measures, of coordination and effectiveness, the data do not support the relationship often described as between Presidents Carter and Reagan and their relative early successes or failures. As indicated earlier, President Reagan actually spent far less time working with the opposition leadership than many argue. Indeed, he had the second smallest number of contacts with the majority, opposition leadership of any president. In addition, at 145 days, President Reagan's effectiveness score suggests a mediocre performance, well below the median and quite near the bottom. And while overall, Carter spent a relatively small amount of time in coordination with the

leadership (he did have at least weekly contact with them) his agenda did receive very prompt attention from the Congress: his agenda moved through Congress 35% faster than Reagan's.

One disappointing (or puzzling) relationship involves the range of contact with those members of Congress outside the leadership or opposition. These contacts have almost no association with effectiveness. This result may reflect the varied reasons for these congressional contacts and also the complex relationships inherent in presidential persuasion. For example, president regularly contact members in order to persuade them to support the administration, but because of the complex considerations that go into persuasion and commitment of the president's time, these contact often involve the most difficult cases for persuasion. Hence, presidents will not likely have impressive conversion effects when considering these contacts and the relationship between these kinds of contacts and eventual legislative success will seem remote at best.

On the other hand, it appears that the data suggest a reasonably strong association between cabinet coordination and effectiveness. The association has a correlation of -0.59. The more new presidents consult with their cabinets, the quicker their agendas get considered and concluded. Given the trend over time to reduce presidential investment in the Cabinet as a policy instrument (as opposed to an administrative instrument), this finding seems very intriguing. As discussed earlier, part of Neustadt's concern with employing the hundred days standard derived from the fact that FDR enjoyed what no post-22nd president has had, an opportunity to prepare a completely unified administration position to present to Congress. If substantiated by more causal analysis, this finding about cabinet coordination would refocus attention towards transition efforts to better prepare the cabinet agencies to present a unified and coordinated front on early administration policy proposals. It would also mean that the White House has a bigger job still to do in coordinating these agencies into a more unified front.

This advice to refocus transition efforts could underscore two practices used in previous transitions but not universally. In one approach, as it identified and recruited its cabinet officers, the transition team would present each potential nominee with a "play book," a series of agency-specific policy commitments the President intended to pursue. Accepting the President's agenda, then, becomes a *sine qua non* for nomination. But more important than assuring a prior commitment to the administration's policies, this program also probably set in motion planning at the cabinet officer's level for how the agency could support the new agenda.

Second, some transitions have focused their appointments program on first identifying what the new president would want to pursue and then stacking the nomination process deep in nominations relevant to pursuing that specific agenda. Rather than pursuing a horizontal approach to nominations, moving from one agency to the next on the same level filling positions before moving down in an organization, the administration would pursue a vertical strategy taking all available appointments in a particular cone of agencies critical the president's immediate agenda. Taking up these nominations then in the Senate would simultaneously play a role in highlighting the president's agenda and filling out the policy-government necessary to present a unified executive front on that policy agenda. The early nomination process, where presidents likely receive the least resistance, then becomes an additional sounding board for the new agenda.

TRANSITION OUTPUT

While most of the previous research has focused on presidential operations, on the presidential process within the White House, transitions have legacies as well. First, of course, they produce on-going operational patterns. White Houses, either through their Chiefs of Staff or through presidential edicts, institute procedures during the 100 days that lay down or adjust what become relatively permanent patterns of White House procedure. Second, transitions produce outcomes. Some of these involve others in the policy-making process, e.g., a message to the Congress which engages potential majorities, while some involve entirely the exercise of exclusive executive powers. These latter outcomes include the issuance of executive orders or memoranda of administration both of which carry the force of law. Third, transitions produce presidential pronouncements. These

include the plethora of materials that originate in the Press Office and the communications offices but they also include the speeches, remarks, and radio broadcasts which involve the president's own words. These also include the myriad of encounters with the press, including formal press conferences but also those less formal interchanges between press and president and even photo opportunities with the press that often evoke presidential pronouncements.

Table 11, in the Appendix, lists a range of presidential outputs and describes these for each of the new presidents. The patterns of these outputs do not seem as clear as those in presidential activities, and will remain for future work. For example, presidential outputs do not seem to reflect the general increase in activity found by looking at the length of the president's day or other measures in Table 1 and elsewhere.

APPENDICES

These appendices present useful data on a number of topics, including total numbers of events during the 100 days and the range of subordinates with inner circle access across administrations.

Table 10. Identifying Inner Circles by Administration

President and the Inner Circle	
...includes	...notably excludes
Dwight Eisenhower	
9	
John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State	
Sherman Adams, Chief of Staff	

Wilton Persons, Congressional Relations	Joseph Dodge, Director of Bureau of the Budget
Charles Wilson, Secretary of Defense	Gabriel Hauge, Domestic Advisor
Robert Cutler, National Security Advisor	C. D. Jackson, Special Projects ²³
Herbert Brownell, Attorney General	Oveta Culp Hobby, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare
Harold Stassen, Director Emergency Preparedness	James Lay, National Security Council
George Humphrey, Secretary of Treasury	James Hagerty, Press Secretary
Richard Nixon, Vice President	Allen Dulles, Director CIA
John Kennedy	
9	
Kenneth O'Donnell, Staff Director	
McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor	
Dean Rusk, Secretary of State	
Lyndon Johnson, Vice President	
Ted Sorenson, Domestic Advisor	

Pierre Salinger, Press Secretary	Douglas Dillon, Secretary of Treasury
Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House	David Bell, Director of Bureau of Budget
Chester Clifton, Air Force Aide	Robert Kennedy, Attorney General
Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense	

²³ C. D. Jackson did not join the president's staff until February 16, 1953. Even in the limited time, however, Dodge did not satisfy Rumsfeld's standard.

 President and the Inner Circle

...includes

...notably excludes

Richard Nixon

13

Henry Kissinger, National Security Advisor

Bob Haldeman, Chief of Staff

John Ehrlichman, Domestic Advisor

Bryce Harlow, Domestic Advisor

William Rogers, Secretary of State

Rosemary Woods, staff

Ron Ziegler, Press Secretary

Spiro Agnew, Vice President

Melvin Laird, Secretary of Defense

Arthur Burns, Domestic Advisor

John Mitchell, Attorney General

Patrick Moynihan, Domestic Advisor

Walter Tkach, Military Aide

Robert Mayo, Director OMB

David Kennedy, Secretary of Treasury

Jimmy Carter

9

Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security
Advisor

Hamilton Jordan, Staff Director

Jody Powell, Press Secretary

Frank Moore, Congressional Relations

Walter Mondale, Vice President

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Stuart Eisenstat, Domestic Advisor

Jack Watson, Cabinet Secretary

Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense

Bert Lance, Director OMB

James Schlesinger, Domestic Advisor

Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of Treasury

Griffin Bell, Attorney General

Ronald Reagan

13

James Baker, Chief of Staff

Michael Deaver, Communications Director

Edwin Meese, Domestic Advisor

George H. W. Bush, Vice President

Richard Allen, National Security Advisor

Max Friedersdorf, Congressional Relations

James Brady, Press Secretary

Alexander Haig, Secretary of State

David Fisher, Executive Assistant

David Stockman, Director OMB

Martin Anderson, Domestic Advisor

Helene VonDamm, Executive Assistant

Donald Regan, Secretary of Treasury

David Gergen, Deputy Chief of Staff

Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Defense

William F. .Smith, Attorney General

President and the Inner Circle

...includes

...notably excludes

George H. W. Bush

12

John Sununu, Chief of Staff

Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor

Dan Quayle, Vice President

Marlin Fitzwater, Press Secretary

Robert Gates, CIA

James Baker, Secretary of State

Andrew Card, Deputy Chief of Staff

Nicholas Brady, Secretary of Treasury

Timothy McBride, Executive Assistant

Richard Darman, Director OMB

Boyden Gray, White House Counsel

Frederick McClure, Congressional Relations

Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense

Source: compiled by author.

Table 11. Some Measures of Presidential Output

President	Numbers of Outputs over 100 days				
	Speeches and Remarks	Press Encounters	Executive Orders	Messages to Congress	Proclamations
Eisenhower	23	31	7	4	0
Kennedy	47	71	23	37	20
Nixon	23	56	2	29	1
Carter	75	169	16	38	22
Reagan	86	41	18	19	26
Bush	67	81	11	13	31

Source: Compiled by Author.

Table 12. Distribution of Events per Administration

President	Recorded Days	Number of Events by Type							
		On the Phone	Working Alone	Meetings with...			Public Event	Personal	Travel
				Individual	Small Group	Large Group			
Dwight Eisenhower	89	—	59	406	193	142	159	217	52
			0:46:41	0:22:51	0:32:25	1:11:34	0:37:52	0:03:12	0:31:10
John Kennedy	98	—	632	542	352	141	229	136	191
			0:20:37	0:18:06	0:25:32	0:54:22	0:24:46	0:33:28	0:19:21
Richard Nixon	100	526	1,209	446	390	149	213	262	245
		0:04:40	0:20:28	0:18:59	0:27:22	1:09:05	0:40:48	0:16:48	0:22:35
Jimmy Carter	100	875	1,222	422	403	192	420	359	153
		0:03:19	0:20:29	0:16:50	0:23:50	0:46:47	0:25:49	0:05:51	0:14:51
Ronald Reagan	87	395	607	124	236	130	260	280	101
		0:03:28	0:16:18	0:18:45	0:24:40	0:46:00	0:24:58	0:02:53	0:17:42
George H. W. Bush	76	767	517	328	379	202	310	261	167
		0:03:55	0:14:26	0:10:12	0:21:27	0:32:02	0:25:49	0:11:13	0:20:08
<i>Averages</i>		641	708	378	326	159	265	253	152
<i>% of total of events</i>		22	25	13	11	6	9	9	5
<i>Average length</i>		0:02:41	0:18:49	0:16:20	0:21:10	0:45:03	0:24:10	0:09:01	0:16:31
<i>% of average day taken up by event type</i>		3	25	15	16	17	14	4	6

Source: Compiled by author.

THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION PROJECT



WHERE TO GET HELP

At this time, few in the public and private policy apparatus have anything like the substantial information resources necessary to understand the appointments process, to balance the tension between nominees, those charged with governing, and those charged with protecting them. While many have opinions about reforming the process, few have taken into account all of the forces involved and few have the information resources at their command to find useful, finely tuned reforms.

In the academic community, some research has focused on the confirmation side of the appointments process but its data resources suffer from having only a partial view of the process and, hence, cannot easily assign the right weights to the various forces involved (see McCarty and Razaghian).

Those interested in reform can avail themselves of three useful resources, however. First, the White House Transition Project maintains an analytic capacity associated with its *Nomination Forms Online* software program. Intended to further the development of useful software to assist nominees, WHTP archives hold a detailed assessment of nominee inquiries. Its website, whitehousetransitionproject.org, contains many of these reports.

Second, the Department of Agriculture maintains a substantial resource in its programming unit, capable of bringing considerable expertise to bear on any project to assist nominees in filing out forms.

Finally, the collective experiences of White House Counsels and White House Directors of Presidential Personnel provide a useful compendium of observations on the demands of the personnel system. Many of these observations appear in the briefing books on these two office developed in 2000 by the White House Transition Project and available through its website, whitehousetransitionproject.org and its publication *The White House World*.

THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION PROJECT



WHAT WHTP DOES

The White House Transition Project unites the efforts of academic institutions with those of the policy community and private philanthropy into a consortium dedicated to smoothing the transfer of governing essential to a functioning American republic. It manages two related programs, one on institutional memory and best practices and one on presidential appointments. In both programs, the White House Transition Project brings to bear the considerable analytic resources of the world-wide academic community interested in the viability of democratic institutions on those problems identified as critical by those experienced hands who have held the unique responsibilities for governing. As such, the White House Transition Project brings ideas to bear on action.

The White House Interview Program

A common problem of the democratic transfer of power, the White House has no mechanism for maintaining an “institutional memory” of best practices, of common mistakes, and needed background information. Partisanship and growing complexity of the selection process exacerbate the natural tendency to avoid passing from one administration to the next the vital experiences necessary to carry on governing from one administration to the next. The lack of an institutional memory, then, literally turns the hallmark of the American constitutional system, its peaceful transfer of power, into a breathe-taking gamble. The White House Interview Program bridges the gaps between partisanship and experience by providing a conduit for those who have borne the extraordinary responsibilities to pass on their judgments to those who will enter the American nerve center. Its briefing materials compile these lessons from the practitioners with the long-view of academics familiar with executive organizations and operational dynamics. Provided to the transition planners for the national presidential campaigns and then to the president-elect’s newly appointed management team, these materials provide a range of useful perspectives from those who have held the same positions and faced the same problems that they cannot get on their own or from government resources.

Nomination Forms Online Program

Detailing the complex problems involved in nominating and then confirming presidential appointments, the WHTP’s Nomination Forms Online program provides the best available expertise on the nomination and confirmation process. Its software, *NFO*, constitutes the only fully-functional, open-architecture, completely reusable software for making sense of the morass of government questions that assail presidential nominees. In one place, this software presents nominees with all of the some 6,000 questions they may confront. Provided free as a public service by WHTP, *NFO* prompts nominees for needed information and then distributes and customizes answers to all of the forms and into all the questions that the nominee must answer on a subject.

HOW TO HELP SMOOTH THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Originally funded by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts, WHTP manages its operations with the help of private philanthropy. To assist in that effort, please contact WHTP at WHTP@unc.edu.