

Institutional partisanship

Aaron T. Walter ¹

Abstract

The balance of power between the legislative and executive branches of government in the United States has held firm despite the evolution of each branch. Moreover, as the primacy of one branch succumbed to the dominance of the other there remained a constant variable. Partisanship existed since the American founding, however, the importance of Congressional partisanship in the later half of the nineteenth century and rise of the imperial presidency in the twentieth century highlight the formidable challenges of divided government in the United States. The following paper utilizes rational choice theory in political science to explain decision making of American political leaders though inclusion of casual and descriptive examples highlight certain choices within

Keywords: partisanship, Congress, president, rational choice theory.

INTRODUCTION

The word institution and partisanship are quite different. One is an established official organization holding an important role within a country, such as the legislature; the other is pure prejudice in favor of a particular cause. This bias has existed within the political experience of western nations for centuries. When applied to the democratic process within the United States the two have formed arguably a dysfunctional relationship where the primacy of one branch often succumbs to the dominance of the other only to supplant and regain primacy.

It arguably can be said that divided government may be interpreted as ensuring moderation in government policy preventing either a move to a more liberal direction or too far in a conservative direction if Republicans are in control. While this is reasonable, the rational choice of American political leaders in their decision making is at odds perhaps with the definition of the term. Yet, ultimate goal fulfillment, otherwise expressed as personal, self-interest clearly shows the effectiveness of rational choice in the context of institutional partisanship in the evolution of power in U.S. government.

1 RATIONAL CHOICE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The parliamentary level of government is attractive for the purposes of this work because it presents a level of government that is present in all the countries concerned. It is no surprise that the different types of government in the Middle

¹ Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Ss. Cyril & Methodius in Trnava. Buciarska 4/A, 917 01 Trnava, Slovakia. Email: aaron.walter@ucm.sk

East, everything from democracies to republics to monarchies to authoritarian regimes, are of various hues and calibers, but that they all share parliamentary elements in which the national law-making depends on.

In addition, this study will cover countries in the Middle East and Arab Countries. The societies and peoples in these countries are of a wide variance do to characteristics like geography and culture that gives the Muslim world its multifaceted character.

The recommendations to be made in the latter part of this work are to act as policy guides, rather than ultimate objectives that if not carried out or followed will spell disaster.

This means that the recommendations made here, while comprehensive and functional, are not the only possible avenues to achieving the desired goal of incorporating women in a greater share of the decision-making processes of national governments in Muslim countries. This point must be understood because of the heterogeneity of the Arab and Muslim world, in that some recommendations will work better in some states than others.

2 A HISTORY OF PARTISANSHIP

An analysis of the American government in the early nineteenth century, a period also called the First Party era, saw choice theory and partisanship play a relevant part in early American politics. Since, the American presidency was originally conceived as secondary to the legislative branch, most of the early battles in the realm of politics occurred within Congressional inter-party relations or as is the case between Jeffersonian Democrats and the Federalists who controlled the Supreme Court. A notable case is President Jefferson himself and Justice Samuel Chase who had irked the president by a highly charged partisan attack on his character. The result was a highly politicized and publicized impeachment trial of Chase.² It was the self-interest of both President Jefferson and his Party who controlled both Congress and the presidency to put through policy initiatives that the Federalists where opposed to such as the repeal of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Likewise during the Second Party era from the 1820s through the 1850s, Henry Clay became the dominant Congressional leader and Speaker. It was Clay's Whig party that nationally opposed the Democrats. The most blatant use of partisanship was Congressional control by the radical Republicans during the American Civil War and Reconstruction period of 1861-1870. The later half of the nineteenth century saw bitter partisanship battles between Democrats and Republicans fight over control of Congress and the presidency as economic

2 Justice Samuel Chase holds the distinction of being the only Supreme Court justice impeached by Congress.

depressions, corrupt elections (1876) and the heavy influence of the Party organization, referred to as “machine” politics control urban and rural life. As section 2.1. discusses this period, during the 1880s and 1890s saw influential committee speakerships where individuals such as Thomas Reed and Joseph Cannon wielded considerable power, authority, and influence. Green and Shapiro in their explanation of rational choice in certain legislative behavior.

Interestingly enough an analysis of the twentieth century shows that for the first fifty-five years the government was divided only eight of those years. Moreover, strange enough as it appears, some of the most successful administrations of this century were part of divided governments, for example Republican Ronald Reagan and Democrat Bill Clinton while eras of unified governments, such as Democratic dominance in the 1930s and 1960s led to charges of governmental excess. However, a system needed to be created first that could allow for such a charge to given, and both the American Constitution and individual Congressional leaders assisted in this endeavor.

2.1 A Party Structure Is Created

Political party divisions appeared from the First Congress, however the formal structure of inter-party leadership widely accepted is a relatively modern development. Still, Constitutionally specified leaders such as the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate were identified early. Other posts and their usages are nineteenth and twentieth century creations. There have been scholars of Congress who acknowledge that an informal “positional leadership” system had emerged as early as 1811 under Speaker Henry Clay who named the chairmen of the standing committees. This authority offered considerable power to the Speaker and his principle floor lieutenants because the influential Ways and Means Committee and after 1865, the Appropriations Committee saw the majority of important legislation came from them. Interesting enough, in this early period, the Speaker would at times chose a rival to chair one of the committees. This was usually done to resolve intra-party disputes, a practice³ exercised well into the 1880s.

As the political scientist and future president Woodrow Wilson pointed out, the Senate developed an identifiable party leadership later than the House. There are few existing records of the early Senate period, though actual positions of leadership carried very little authority. It was not uncommon for Senators to declare publicly that within the Senate parties there was no single leader (Wilson 1885, p. 223). Instead, through the turn of the 20th century, individuals who 3 Republican leader Thomas Brackett Reed, achieved his position of influence within the House by service on other committees, in Reed’s case, the Rules Committee

led the Senate achieved their position through recognized personal attributes, including persuasion and oratory skills, a tradition modeled upon ancient Rome. And while romantic in the allegory sense of history, it was this tradition that saw the most benefit to individual actions. A maximization of outcomes for the intrepid Senator.

Still, two positions in both chambers were designated in the U.S. Constitution. The position of Speaker is constitutionally specified in Article 1, Section 2. and is the only party leader who is chosen by a roll-call vote of the full House of Representatives, which occurs after each party has nominated a candidate for the position when a new Congress convenes. House rules give the Speaker various formal duties and considerable power. Crucially, each party conference cedes additional powers and responsibilities to a Speaker from its own party, including influence over the makeup of certain standing committees.⁴

And pursuant to Article 1, Section 3, of the U.S. Constitution, the President pro tempore of the Senate, is the chamber's presiding officer in the absence of the President of the Senate (the Vice President of the United States). The President pro tempore is elected by the full Senate as the formal institutional leader and, in current practice, is the longest-serving member of the majority party. Until 1890, the Senate elected a President pro tempore whenever the Vice President was not in attendance. This meant whether for a day or permanently, as in the case of the Vice President's death or resignation. This changed in 1890 when the Senate made the position elected on a permanent basis during absences of the Vice President. The President pro tempore's formal powers are as such, appointing conferees; appointing certain Senate officers; and serving on, or appointing others to, working groups, commissions, and advisory boards, but in modern times, the direction of Senate business, has been undertaken by the majority leader.

While the first half of the nineteenth century saw party partisanship it was the late nineteenth century that saw both the development of a modern-styled House leadership and position-based partisanship. While a majority leader was established it was not until the post-Reconstruction era (1880s onwards) that a nascent minority leadership emerged. The succession of Speakerships from Democrats John Carlisle and Charles Crisp through that of Republicans Thomas Reed and Joseph Cannon. So, from 1883 through 1911 modern Congressional leadership and its corresponding partisanship politics was forged.

It is important to note that while from different political parties, Carlisle and Crisp, Reed and Cannon shared a common idea that the Speaker could be of

⁴ For more information, consult CRS Report 97-780, *The Speaker of the House: House Officer, Party Leader, and Representative*, by Valerie Heitshusen, and CRS Report RL30857, *Speakers of the House: Elections, 1913-2015*, by Richard S. Beth and Valerie Heitshusen.

his Party, yet still, when necessary, remain above it; the Speaker also should seek to impose his own political vision upon the whole House. In this regard, following Stocker and Marsh main theme in their writing on choice theory. To act selfish, using reason to get what they want. Therefore, not merely be the leader of his Party but if the Speaker had to, at times, be brutal to Congressmen of his own Party. The result was a precedence elevating the Speakership above a mere functionary in the legislative process and marrying the position with the person in a very national way as visible as the President of the United States.⁵ For example, while Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, and Benjamin Harrison are viewed as weak presidents, many legislative accomplishments were accomplished. However, as the executive was weak, Congress was dominant in this period of American government action. Additionally, it is important to note that for Cleveland, his two non-consecutive elections occurred in the era of Republican political domination dating from 1861 to 1933. The visibility of a Speaker can be seen as early as the 1820s with maximizing the outcome of a political situation as ideal for the Speaker. As such the national dialogue at that time over free state and slave state was not led by the executive rather it was Congress. The most influential being the aforementioned Henry Clay and the Missouri Compromise.

The result was to make the Speaker of the House a national leader and in the early century more visible than the President of the United States. It is important to remember that the House of Representatives at that time in American history was the only chamber of Congress directly elected by the people,⁶ so with a powerful Speaker, a designated “agent” on the House floor utilizing the title Majority leader, who from 1899 onwards, was separate from the Speaker. Though an attempt to return to pre-elected Speakership occurred after the 1918 midterms, Speaker Nicholas Longworth who replaced Frederick Gillett re-established the visible role of Speaker on the national stage not only as the Party’s true leader in the House.

As with all positions, the efficacy of the Speakership has varied from Congress to Congress dependent upon the dynamism of the political persona and, key to both rational choice theory and the argument put forth in this paper, whether or not the Majority Party in the House is also the Party holding the White House.⁷ So, the powerful chairmanships of Joseph Cannon and Champ Clark and their

5 It is not a coincidence that Speaker Thomas Reed was called ‘czar’ or that with this precedence, dynamic Speakers in modern times such as “Tip” O’Neill or Newt Gingrich held commanding positions when the President was of the Party other than the Majority.

6 Senators were chosen by State Legislatures in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

7 Please see Congressional Leadership at: <http://www.thegreenpapers.com/Hx/CongressionalLeadership.html>

power of legislation in Congress for example are set against the occupants of the White House during their periods in office.

The Senate did not see a formal leadership structure emerge until the second decade of the twentieth century. By 1890, Vice Presidents were no longer regularly attending sessions, instead being present only when a close vote made their attendance necessary to break a potential tie-vote. Furthermore, since the Senate unlike the House is a continuing body, two-thirds of its membership return to a new Congress without having to have been re-elected allowed for a loose association of powerful Senators generally referred to as a “cabal” to run the Senate. Another key example of rational decisions being made in a selfish manner by a limited number of individuals to get what they wanted. It was not until after 1911 that Party floor leaders were chosen and not until 1915 a Senate leadership organization was in place. With the decline of the cabal-nature of the Senate and strong House chairmanships the ascent of divided government characterized today took place. A division based not only upon party partisanship but also party preference.

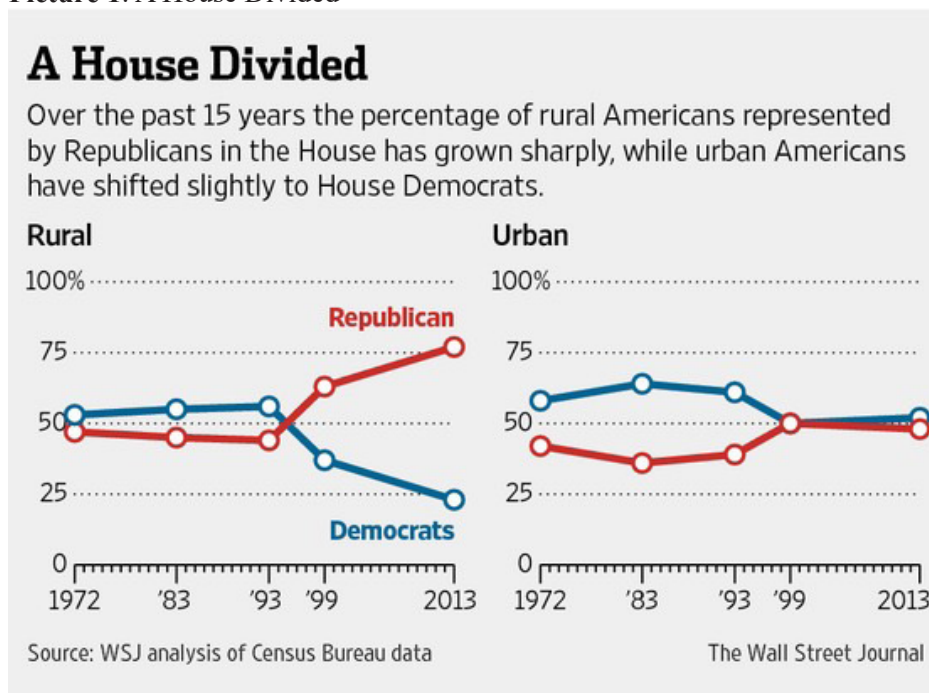
3 DIVIDED GOVERNMENT

Alexis de Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America* is first to speak to the idea of Township Democracy and the fact that there is a divide between urban and rural Americans. Much has occurred since Tocqueville’s visit in the 1830s, but on the topic of divided government in the United States, there are some truths that have remained. Furthermore, while in previous decades a centuries the partisanship were observed between specific legislative and executive branch individuals, increasingly since the 1930s the conflict has occurred between the collective branch. For example “Congress” verses the “president” or the “president verses the “House”. Such conflict is intensified between ideological differences too.

Updated to the twenty-first century, polling supports such a division. The division is not only political but also cultural as opposing views indicate “red” Republican regions and “blue” Democratic ones on issues such as the role of government and values have exposed not only political issues, but also the color map of modern-divided America. While Democrats have dominated U.S. cities over the past forty years, Republican strength in rural areas have allowed it to hold control of the lower chamber in Congress and remain competitive in presidential elections.⁸ So, the critique of Green and Shapiro’s review of rational choice explanations prove accurate

⁸ see article in Wall Street Journal at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303636404579395532755485004>

Picture 1: A House Divided



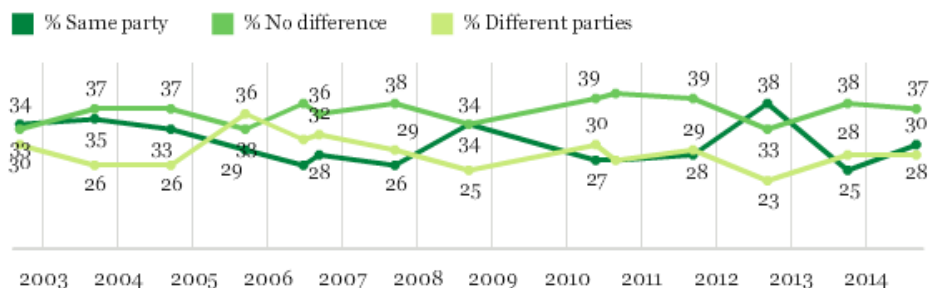
Source: The Wall Street Journal

3.1 A pattern develops

According to an analysis by the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. divide was not always this severe. In a form of irony uniquely American, rural America was part of the Democratic base until the early-mid 1990s, which meant that for the majority of the twentieth century rural Americans, those not living in cities were represented in Congress by a Democrat. This has significantly been altered partly due to political messaging and issue-voting, a prominent feature of late twentieth century American voting. In 2013, 77% of rural America was represented by a House Republican. And despite a Republican advantage of a thirty-seat majority, congressional Republicans represented slightly less than half of residents in urban areas, which includes both cities and suburbs.

Graph 1: Party Preference 1

Do you think it is better for the country to have a president who comes from the same political party that controls Congress, does it make no difference either way, or do you think it is better to have a president from one political party and Congress controlled by another?



GALLUP

Source: Gallup

The division is more stark when an analysis of presidential elections are observed. While the trend of urban areas voting Democrat had emerged by 1992⁹, by the re-election of Barack Obama in 2012 the advantage had increased 38 points. In contrast, Republican advantage in rural areas had tripled since 1992 so that Republican candidate Mitt Romney received 53 points in comparison to President Obama.

While there is a lack of consensus on if divided government is the most wise, it has been the standard for the last forty-five years, with one party controlling both Houses of Congress and the presidency for only a combined 12 of those years: 1977-1980, 1993-1994, 2003-2006 and 2009-2010. In fact, if one corresponds those years with presidential election years and midterm elections an extra pattern emerges where the electorate choice is a divided government. So, contrary to prevailing response, 28% of people polled say divided government is better, 37% says it makes no difference¹⁰, it nevertheless is clearly the choice. In the midterm elections of 1994, 2006, 2010, the public was dissatisfied with a single party controlling Congress and the presidency.

Interestingly enough, however Gallup asked the same question since 2002

9 Democrat Bill Clinton beat Republican George Bush in the 50 densest counties (most urban) by 25 percentage points, while Bush won the least-dense (most rural) by 18 points.

10 See article and full list of graphs at online at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/178550/no-preference-divided-one-party-government.aspx>

and Americans have not shown a clear preference. The highest percentage response has been “makes no difference”. Though it is necessary to note the irregularities of the poll in 2012 that registered the highest percentage of one-party government and the poll of 2005 that saw the highest percentage of divided government. While, still under fifty percent, it may be pertinent to ask what additional variables influenced those responses.

Table 1: Party Preference 2

*Preference for Party Control of Congress and the Presidency, by
Political Party and Presidential Administration*

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
	%	%	%
OBAMA PRESIDENCY (2009-2014)			
Same party	26	22	42
Different parties	34	33	15
Makes no difference	34	39	38
Same party - different parties (pct. pts.)	-8	-11	+27
BUSH PRESIDENCY (2001-2008)			
Same party	45	21	28
Different parties	18	35	34
Makes no difference	35	39	34
Same party - different parties (pct. pts.)	+27	-14	-6

GALLUP

Source: Gallup

The results listed above are from Gallup’s annual Governance poll, conducted September 4-7, 2014.¹¹ The results while confusing to the novice is confirmation

¹¹ Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Sept. 4-7, 2014, with a random sample of 1,017 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Moreover, Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability, nonresponse, and double coverage of landline and cell users in the two sampling frames. They are also weighted to match the national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, population density, and phone status (cellphone

of the continued partisan nature of American politics in the twenty-first century.

2: Party Preference 3

*Preference for Party Control of Congress and the Presidency, by
Political Party*

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
	%	%	%
Same party	24	23	47
Different parties	33	32	18
Makes no difference	38	39	33
Same party - different parties (pct. pts.)	-9	-9	+29

Sept. 4-7, 2014

GALLUP

Source: Gallup

3.2 *The Devil You Know*

A possible answer to the broader question of partisanship and the specific attempt to explain the apparent paradox between polling results, as indicated above, and electoral results is American opinion on their favored party. Therefore it may not be a theoretical or normative preference, rather which party is favored with the most power. As the poll and response shown below indicate, for example, since a Democrat is currently president, Americans may now equate one-party government with a 'Democratic' one-party government. Simply put: partisans' preferences influenced by Party of President. Republicans have stated their agreement on divided government 33% to 24% while Democrats favor one-party government by a substantial twenty-nine point margin at 47% to 18%. Not surprising Democrats who now prefer one-party government under President Obama had under the Bush 43 administration favored divided government. Likewise, Republicans favored one-party government when George W. Bush was president, but now favor divided government.

This perhaps should not be surprising. During distinct periods of the twentieth only/landline only/both, and cellphone mostly). Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. population. Phone status targets are based on the most recent National Health Interview Survey. Population density targets are based on the most recent U.S. census. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting.

century the charge of presidential over-reach has accompanied calls amongst Congress and academics to contain both the influence and extra-constitutional authority taken by the president. This was seen the most in decisions on foreign policy where the work of Walt (1999) and Zagare (1990) provide some insight in the continuing debate over rationality and psychology during the Cold War era. Indeed, it was during the twentieth century that the power of Congress weakened and the rise of a strong president occurred bringing forth the accusation of an imperious and domineering presidency where reason, a certain bounded rationality (Jones, 1999) prevailed, allowing decision makers to be intendedly rational; goal-oriented and adaptive. Early examples in the twentieth century may be FDR during World War II and Bush 43 and Obama in the twenty-first in America's war-on-terror.

3.3 Imperial presidency

Divided government while proven already to be a historical tradition has the added benefit to be a block against the excess of presidential power that borders on abuse. Chief executives, arguably have sought to interpret constitutional powers broadly. Jefferson's purchase of territory of Louisiana, Lincoln's actions during the American Civil War, FDR's actions during both the Great Depression and Second World War serve as examples. And while Lincoln is usually given a pass by most presidential historians (though admittedly not constitutional or legal scholars on his suspension of habeas corpus), much of his actions from 1861 until his death in April, 1865 showed certain ingenuity in the interpretation of both power and authority. The same can be leveled at Franklin Roosevelt. From using executive actions in the first one-hundred days of his presidency to the grievous oversight in his 1937 "court-packing scheme" a confirmation of presidential broad interpretation of constitutional authority. In short, the ambitious president can choose from an array of strategies for expanding executive control.

This points to the fact that the presidency has supplanted Congress as the center of federal power during the twentieth century. While the justification for this has been increased presidential staff and presidential authority, the dominant relationship over Congress acquired over the past seventy years, roots can be found with Theodore Roosevelt, who, not Congress established the legislative agenda in the early 1900s. Not incidentally, while the majority of Congress was overwhelming Democratic during his cousin, FDR's terms in office, from 1933 onwards, Roosevelt faced inter-partisan conflict with Southern Democrats and had to contend with Speaker Sam Rayburn.

As conflict with the partisan Congress continued after World War II, executive agreements, substituting the treaty-approval power of the Senate to a direct president to foreign nation relationship. The president also gained power to take military action, though Constitutionally only Congress holds the authority to declare war. As it has been mentioned in previous paragraphs that Lyndon Johnson used the imperial presidency, it was Richard Nixon who concentrated powers further, guaranteeing partisan pushback in Congress. By claiming executive privilege, broadening the authority of cabinet positions, and made decisions during wartime without consulting Congress, Nixon laid the background for the War Powers Act enacted by Congress.

The idea that previous administrations had been honest in actions and statements were seriously questioned during the late-1960s as the Vietnam War and the Johnson White House slowly eroded the American people's faith and trust. Keith Olson's book *Watergate: the Presidential Scandal that Shook America*, illuminates how the Nixon Presidency wiped away any remaining remnants of public trust in the integrity of their elected leaders.

A credibility gap had emerged between the executive branch and the American people when Johnson left office in 1969. Four decades after Franklin Roosevelt harnessed the power of the presidency, expanding its influence, and providing subsequent administrations justifications for expanding powers, by the 1970s Nixon had inherited an environment and distrust that grew once the public became aware of dishonesty over America's role and involvement in Vietnam¹². This was compounded by Richard Nixon's repeated public denials of White House involvement and later the cover-up over the Watergate burglary by utilizing the prerogative of Executive Privilege. It was on this point, executive privilege, that highlights the peak of the apt named imperial presidency¹³ that for Nixon and the subject of the White House tapes in 1974 shifted the burden of proof to the president and led many Republicans to turn against their party leader. A key example of this is Senator Edward W. Brooke statement on national television that, "The President had lost the country's confidence and should resign" (Olson 2003, p.124). The call for resignation came from newspaper companies and well-known and widely read magazine publicans. Additionally, media outlets that had supported Nixon such as the *Chicago Tribune*, *Manchester Union Leader*, and the *Salt Lake Tribune*, were all now calling for him to resign. Echoes by mainstream media voicing both displeasure over Watergate and Presidential behavior were found in *Time* and the *National Review* as well.

12 The watershed moment was when Defense Department employee, Daniel Ellsberg, released to the New York Times the "Pentagon Papers".

13 Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote The Imperial Presidency out of two concerns: that the U.S. presidency was out of control and that it had exceeded constitutional limits.

It is arguable that Watergate was either the symptom of the disease of the imperial presidency or just of one isolated president, in 1973, over presidential veto, Congress passed the War Powers Act, which required future presidents to obtain authorization from Congress to use military force more than 90 days. Accordingly, the president has 48 hours to report to Congress this action and because of the Watergate scandal a special prosecutor is assigned to investigate accusations of illegal activities directly from the Justice Department. Moreover, Congress created a budget office to reassert its budget-making authority, additionally Congress began providing public financing of presidential elections, public disclosures of funding sources during campaigns, and allowed an independent Federal Election Commission to enforce campaign finance laws. Furthermore, while Congress opened more committees and allowed public and press to request declassified government documents under the Freedom of Information Act, actions by presidents during the 1980s, 1990s, and the first decade of the 2000s showed both the weakness of Congressional authority as the imperial presidency is clearly observed. So, it is natural that the pendulum of power swings from one center of influence back to another.

As Zachary Karabell wrote in *The Atlantic* magazine, “The imperial presidency has some justification in times of acute peril. The immediate aftermath of 9/11 certainly justified some degree of unilateral executive action, as did in its way the financial crisis in the fall of 2008. And few would argue that at times of all-out war, with the country fully mobilized to fight a genuine threat such as Germany and Japan during World War II, ceding powers to the executive branch is imperative” (Karabell 2013). However, the ascent of the imperial presidency or at the very least the altered nature of the traditional check and balance between Congress and the president was seen soon after the enactment of the War Powers Act. While legal constraints exist, presidents since the law enactment continue to exploit certain loopholes within the understanding of the text. Moreover, there can be made an argument that the influence of media and the internet have strengthened the position of the executive branch to exert its authority and power in both traditional and new ways. Correspondingly, the party presently in control of the White House supports such unilateral power.

Presidents since Ronald Reagan have engaged the U.S. military abroad only to withdraw them before the statute of 90 days had expired. Good examples of this are American military intervention in Lebanon and Grenada and Panama. The exceptions being the Bush 41 administration in the 1991 Gulf War and the Bush 43 administration in 2001. Also recently, an example can be drawn from President Obama’s decision to look for congressional authorization to use military force in Syria while greeted with surprise, hides the more impressive

actions by President Obama. The use of, and expansion of the drone warfare program without congressional approval heralds a new chapter in excessive presidential power and authority. Further proof is the maintenance of the Bush-era national security architecture put into place since September 11, 2001. And a more aggressive executive behavior in the pursuit of domestic policy goals on health care, climate change, education, and recently immigration.

Likewise as presidential authority in making foreign policy decisions has increased so has partisan criticism. However, as scholars investigating psychological effects on such decisions, following the method established by Kaufmann (1994) it is possible to reconcile the rational with the psychological as in humanitarian efforts explained in U.S. interventions in Bosnia or Somalia and in Iraq both in 1991 and 2003. A better example to prove both Kaufmann's method and Opp (1999) in his justification for rational action could be the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001.

CONCLUSION

A pew research poll conducted in 2014¹⁴ indicated a not entirely surprising truth. Americans are more partisan now than at any time previous. Not only do Americans have specific party preference during elections but also the openness to compromise or seek accommodation with the opposition is negatively expressed.

Divided government may be interpreted as ensuring moderation in government policy preventing either a move to a more liberal direction or too far in a conservative direction if Republicans are in control. Additionally, it is key to stress the nature of checks and balances on the power held by two important government institutions. However, as the polling information sourced show very clearly moderation is no longer the sole intent. Here the employment of choice theory is the stark preference. Selfish legislative procedures and election tactics for partisan gain is increasingly being used with rhetoric as well.

Institutional partisanship within the U.S. government will continue. Partisan animosity has increased to a great extent over the same period. In each party, the share with a highly negative view of the opposing party has more than doubled since 1994, according to Pew Research.

This has the cross-over effect into policy promotion and various legislative agendas. Whereas in a previous century or prior decades the partisanship existed

¹⁴ see detailed interactive graphs and explanations from a poll of 10,000 adults at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/12/7-things-to-know-about-polarization-in-america/> and U.S. Policy and Politics explanation at <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

between the institutions nowadays such partisanship has the added layer of partisanship within the institutions as well. So on domestic policy such as health care or the budget and foreign policy issues such as immigration and conflict in the Middle East an intensely partisan fight occurs that extends beyond election cycles.

The evolution of the institutions within the United States government and intense partisan brinkmanship of recent decades indicate both a historical pattern and, supported by polling, preference for this kind of democracy despite its apparent dysfunction.

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