Accessibility to decision making and implementation is always a problem in studying the presidency. Nevertheless, if we do not ask the right questions, we are unlikely to arrive at the right answers. There is nothing more important to study than decision making. Aside from their consequences for the nation, decisions are what make presidents unique.

The field is wide open, and I envy the possibilities available to younger scholars.

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REFLECTIONS ON EDWARDS

Karen M. Hult, *Virginia Tech*

It is an honor to have been invited to reflect on George Edwards's contributions to presidency scholarship and to our field more generally. Like many, I have benefited from George's mentorship, intellectual challenges, and professional guidance. He is a treasured colleague, role model, and friend.

I welcomed the excuse to return to the *APSR* article with which we were asked to begin – "Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress and the Media?" (1999). It has the hallmarks of all of George's works: the research and analysis are careful, clear, systematic, nuanced, and insightful. The work reminds us as well of the changes that have followed its publication: parties and politics have polarized, party coalitions have transformed, and the links between mass and elites have frayed and altered. Even so, its variables (if not its values and specific relationships) and analysis are sturdy.

Like virtually all of George's scholarship, this article has been influential: A Google scholar search (using the keywords "presidential influence," "Congress," and "presidential prestige") produced 99 cites from 1977 through 2015 in multiple scholarly journals (including *APSR, AJPS, JOP, PRQ, APR, Presidential Studies Quarterly* and *Congress and the Presidency*); excluded were the numerous books that also draw on the article. Meanwhile, how he (and we) study the presidency and the political system in which it is embedded and that it reflects, and shapes, has evolved. We use different measures and statistical techniques, more systematically incorporate qualitative evidence, and include other policy areas and political systems.

More generally, George's 1976 article heralded what has become a broadening and deepening of scholarship on the US presidency. First, we have more cumulative research. Among the myriad examples are work on the dynamics, generalizations, and lessons of presidential transitions and on the patterns of legislative, presidential and executive branch relationships at multiple points of the policy process and across policy arenas.

Second, presidency scholars are among those exploring influences on and the implications of change and stability. Works on the "unilateral presidency," for instance, have traced its evolution to the founding, probed contemporary presidents' strategic employment of specific tools (e.g., Obama's shift to "quasi-proclamations"), compared influences of its use and achievement of presidential objectives, and raised concerns about its frequency, constitutionality, and lasting effects. Others examine how presidencies try to cope with increasingly diversifying and fragmenting media, their growing reliance on social media, and the seemingly relentless contraction of space in which presidents can be heard, much less try to influence others. As George has highlighted, the primary narrative is one of presidential facilitation, not direction, and of tactical adjustments.

Third, since the 1970s, presidency research has been enriched by access to greater amounts and more diverse types of data. Archival materials continue to be digitized; the American Presidency Project, the Miller Center, and NARA remain scholarly treasure troves; social media archives and associated "Big Data" analytics point to promising opportunities. Of course, like other social scientists we wrestle with ongoing challenges of measurement validity and of shifts in use and meaning (e.g., "executive orders," "dual vetoes").

Fourth, presidency research now relies on a broader range of research designs and methodological approaches, including survey experiments, process tracing, and comparative case analyses. Meanwhile, scholars employ increasingly sophisticated statistical techniques and game theoretic and other formal modeling.

Where do we go from here? Like Ian Shapiro, I value problem-driven scholarship. That said, paying attention to theoretical and methodological foci clearly is critical as well. Theoretically, it appears to me to be useful to begin as Edwards and Terry Moe do, with a view of presidents as strategic, purposive actors. Deserving consideration as well, though, is how such an actor (viewed variously as an individual and as an institution) is embedded in and influenced by complex, dynamic, and overlapping networks.

This in turn underscores a need to self-consciously model specific types of context. Key contexts might encompass several important, if not as fully studied areas. These evidently include intergovernmental arenas in the US (e.g., presidential direct action in granting waivers, policy dynamics when states and nonprofits are contractors in areas of presidential priority). Researchers also might continue to explore relationships inside the federal executive branch much as Rudalevige (2002) and

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Lewis (2008) have done. A systematic emphasis on decision-making in differing contexts, albeit challenging, appears valuable as well.

One also might compare executives within the US (and possibly other federal systems, like Australia, Canada, Germany, and Mexico); one could probe the generalizability of hypotheses from presidency research about, for instance, the impact of formal powers, evolution of staffs.

Inevitably, issues of contemporary governance occupy at least some of our attention, much as George has usefully joined conversations about the Electoral College and presidential impact on approval levels. Our scholarship raises concerns about both presidential weakness (in responding to climate change, in addressing gun control) and overreach (e.g., using the state secrets doctrine, employing drones).

Challenges remain.

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REFLECTIONS

Richard Waterman, *University of Kentucky*

For many years, historians attempted to identify the so-called "great presidents." At the recent Southern Political Science Association meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, I had the honor of serving on a panel with three of the great scholars of the American presidency: Karen Hult, William Howell, and the main subject of the panel, George Edwards. The particular focus of the panel was to remember and honor the 40th anniversary of George Edwards' seminal *APSR* article on presidential/congressional influence. In that article, Edwards not only presented an empirical analysis, he also identified the goals for a quantitative study of the American presidency. The article was an amazingly prescient work that surely encouraged other scholars to follow in George Edwards' illustrious footsteps.

Over the past forty years no one has done more to advance the quantitative study of the American presidency than George Edwards. His *APSR* article did so by demonstrating that quantitative methods could be used to examine presidential influence, as well as pointing scholars toward a new direction in the study of the American presidency. Since then, in a series of books and articles, George Edwards developed a theoretical model of the American presidency, as a facilitator-in-chief, that is both compelling and edifying. In an accomplishment that was quite rare for its time, he continued to publish research on the American presidency in top political science journals such as the *APSR*, as well as writing a highly influential series of books. In such works, Edwards has impacted scholars and officials at the very highest levels of government and created new paradigms for research in American politics.

Yet George Edwards' research, while certainly sufficient to justify a reputation as a great scholar of the American presidency, is merely the tip of the iceberg regarding his continuing influence on our profession. Over the years, as a teacher, he mentored a number of excellent graduate students who have become influential scholars in their own right. Additionally, his editorship of the *Presidential Studies Quarterly* utterly transformed that journal, making it a home for important empirical and theoretical writings on the presidency. George Edwards also has been kind and generous to young, emerging scholars. Over the years, he provided constant support and encouragement for my own work. I therefore see myself in many ways as a disciple of George Edwards.

No matter how many honors George Edwards receives, they will pale in comparison to the impact he has engendered on the study of the American presidency.

A WORD OF THANKS TO GEORGE EDWARDS

William G. Howell, *University of Chicago*

I was indebted to George Edwards long before I knew him. For me, as for so many others, George laid the groundwork for a kind of scholarship on the American presidency that now seems commonplace—one that relies on the tools, standards, and sensibilities of modern social science; and one that largely eschews personal ideology, biography, and narrative. George didn't erect the methods of social scientific inquiry. But with steadfast determination, he brought them to our subfield. And we are all better for it.

Without George, the standards and methods of modern social science still would have come to studies of the American presidency. It is difficult to see how our corner of the discipline, which for so long took pride in the deft deployment of a snappy anecdote for every observation about politics, could resist the undercurrents shaping the larger discipline. Such deterministic accounts of disciplinary change, however, overlook the controversies that can erupt along the way, just as they miss the unique contributions that individuals stand to deliver. It takes hard work and keen insight to redirect the gaze and self-understandings of a community of scholars. For decades, George offered both.

Through his scholarship, his advocacy, and his unbridled spirit, George shone a bright light on the benefits of quantitative methods for studying executive politics. He demonstrated how new datasets could be assembled and analyzed in order to reveal important new dimensions of presidential behavior. He illustrated how we might systematically evaluate claims about when presidents can advance a policy agenda, and when institutional constraints on their power keep them from doing so. He encouraged us not merely to adopt and refine inherited truths about the relevance of a president's reputation or prestige, but to carefully assess the evidentiary basis for believing them. And perhaps most consequentially, he argued against those who insisted that the presidency was fundamentally personal in nature and that, as a result, all knowledge about the subject was at once provisional and idiosyncratic.

In his pursuit of progress, George pushed against longstanding scholarly traditions and the scholars who upheld them. During the 1970s and 80s, George rose the ranks of a subfield whose power brokers had very different sensibilities about how knowledge accumulates—indeed, about what knowledge even is. Then, the foundations of presidency scholarship were built upon the testimonies of former politicos, the observations of historians, and the textual readings of constitutional law scholars. Little space was afforded to positivism; and even less for theory building and hypothesis testing.

How things have changed. Because of George and his compatriots, the field of presidency studies has been reconstituted from top to bottom. Scholarly papers on the American presidency