

The book's methodology is sound, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis presents the reader with a considerable amount of material to consider when thinking about presidential attempts to rally the public.

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Galvin, Daniel J. *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2010. 352 pages. \$27.95.

Conventional wisdom holds that presidents are to parties as fleas are to felines. Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton. Parasites all! Alternatively they are described as party predators—tearing what they want from the carcass and leaving little but the skeleton of an organization.

But is it true? That is the important question that Daniel Galvin asks in *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush*. Galvin's rich and systematic empirical analysis examines presidential party building and "party predation" along six dimensions: provision of campaign services, development of human capital, recruitment of candidates, mobilization of voters, financing of party operations, and support of internal activities.

The results are surprising. Each Republican president scores high on each of the six dimensions of party building (with the partial exception of George H. W. Bush, who did not invest in party mobilization of voters) and none qualified as party predators (with the partial exception of Richard M. Nixon who showed signs of party predation on two of the six dimensions). In contrast, every Democratic president was almost exclusively a party predator and did almost no party building. The only real exception to this partisan pattern was Bill Clinton, who during his second term (but not his first) was a party builder rather than a party predator.

So what explains these consistent differences between Republican and Democratic presidents? Are Republican presidents inherently more concerned with party organization than Democratic presidents? Galvin thinks not. He argues instead that the differences are best explained by the "very different competitive environments in which Democratic and Republican presidents found themselves" (14). That is, Republican presidents behaved as party builders because their party was in the minority, while Democratic presidents behaved as party predators because their party was in the majority. Favored with "deep and durable majorities," Democratic presidents did not believe they needed "to make forward-looking investments in their party organization" (247). In contrast, Republican presidents, "their party stuck in the perpetual minority," viewed party building as a necessary "means of building a new majority" (247, 14).

Galvin's focus on the importance of competitive environments is persuasive, particularly prior to the 1980s when the Democratic Party was clearly in the majority. After the 1980s, however, it is much less clear which party, if any, warrants the label of majority party (255). This leads Galvin to accent the "importance of perception" (230; also 23–5) in accounting for presidential party building and party predation. Galvin notes that Clinton "continued to play the part of the majority-party president" (245) even after the 1994 midterm elections in which Republicans not only assumed control of the House of Representatives (for the first time since 1954) and the United States Senate but also secured control of a majority of state legislatures (for the first time in about a half century) and governorships (for the first time in more than 20 years). According to Galvin, Clinton persisted in party predation despite the transformation in the competitive environment because he and other Democrats mistakenly viewed 1994 as "little more than a temporary setback" (230). Only in his second term, as the new competitive reality sank in, did Clinton begin to engage in sustained party building.

It makes sense that perception becomes more important when a party's competitive standing is ambiguous rather than a self-evident social fact. But while Galvin draws our attention to this aspect of contemporary party politics, he does not provide a theory that explains or predicts variation in perceptions. Clinton's party predation during 1995–1996 is attributed, in a rather ad hoc fashion, to a "lag" in perceptions (245). At the same time, Bush's "aggressive" party-building efforts, despite nearly continual Republican control of both houses of Congress between 1995 and 2007, is explained by the fact that the Republican Party's "competitive standing was not strong enough to satisfy [Bush's] ambitions." (255) Perhaps so, but that invites the question of why? Perhaps there are some inherent cultural differences between the two parties after all.

An alternative theory for explaining the Clinton pattern of first-term party predator and second-term party builder is that first-term presidents are focused more on the short-term objective of reelection whereas second-term presidents can afford to think about longer-term goals of party building. Galvin dismisses this hypothesis, arguing that it can easily be "refuted" because Republican presidents have consistently engaged in party building in their first terms (249). But while the first-term party building efforts of Republican presidents suggest that term in office is not a sufficient explanation of presidential party building, Galvin's data provide more support for the second-term hypothesis than he acknowledges. Every case of party predation occurs in a president's first term and the only second-term Democrat in Galvin's study—Clinton—behaved as a party builder. Moreover, Republican presidents appear to have devoted more attention to party building in their second term than their first term. Certainly Galvin finds that Nixon's "most ambitious and comprehensive party-building efforts . . . are to be found in his second term" (71).

Presidential scholars are indebted to Galvin's seminal study not only for the new light it sheds on past presidential party building but also for the way it invites

us to think afresh about the future of presidential party building. If we have entered a new “era of competitive uncertainty,” then Galvin’s theory predicts that presidents from “*both* parties will remain intently focused on party building” (262). Obama’s presidency—particularly if he is fortunate enough to serve a second term—may provide a crucial test of Galvin’s central hypothesis. If Obama consistently acts as a party builder, that is strong support for Galvin’s theory about the importance of the competitive environment. If Obama acts as party predator, then we still need to know more about why Democratic presidents behave so differently from Republican presidents. Finally, if Obama acts as a party predator in his first term but party builder in the event of a second term, then the second term hypothesis deserves a second look. Whatever the future may hold, however, there can be no doubt that Galvin has given us the finest empirical study yet of presidential-party relations in the latter half of the twentieth century.

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