

In Pursuit of Energy Conservation: President Carter's Attempt to Change American Culture and Pass a Transformational and Non-incremental National Energy Policy

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Jan, who supported me through this long endeavor. The many hours I spent on this project were hours that we did not spend together. Her understanding and patience are greatly appreciated.

## Acknowledgments

This dissertation was ultimately the result of the work of several people. At the earliest stages, Dr. Gorman - Kirchoff was instrumental in setting a direction for the study, and she also provided me with the encouragement that was essential to create the momentum for such a vigorous undertaking.

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## Abstract of Dissertation

### In Pursuit of Energy Conservation: President Carter's Attempt to Change American Culture and Pass a Transformational and Non-incremental National Energy Policy

The success rate of modern U.S. presidents in passing significant, non-incremental policy initiatives, that involved transformational change, has been much slower than the rate at which unresolved, major issues (e.g., energy, deficits, and immigration) have been accumulating. Since congressional leaders play a major role in ensuring the passage of non-incremental legislation, understanding the leadership approaches used by U.S. presidents with congressional leaders could provide insights into the challenges faced in passing non-incremental legislation. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative, historical case study was to explore President Carter's leadership approach in his attempt to gain the support of the two congressional leaders – Thomas “Tip” O’Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert Byrd, the Majority Leader of the Senate in his quest to pass a comprehensive energy policy.

The following research question guided this study: What was the nature of President Carter's leadership approach as evidenced by direct communication with the two congressional leaders during his attempt to pass a comprehensive energy policy between January 20, 1977 and November 8, 1978? This historical case study was conducted at the Carter presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia. Written documents, as well as audio and video recordings provided multiple sources of data and allowed for data triangulation. In the instance of this energy legislation, President Carter rarely engaged in transactional exchanges and primarily limited his attempts at transformational leadership to public speeches; nearly to the exclusion of all other methods of direct communication.

The president's limited use of other traditional presidential leadership tools (private meetings, letters, and the use of reciprocity or bargaining) was perhaps the reason that he was unable to secure the enthusiastic support of Senate Majority Leader Byrd. Unlike the House, which had passed the president's proposal nearly intact, the energy bill was eventually dismembered in the Senate and only a shell of the original plan was enacted. Presidents should give special attention to their working relationship with the congressional leaders and utilize both transactional and transformational leadership approaches.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The United States became a great nation because of the leadership skills of the Founding Fathers. Whether it will remain a great nation will depend, in large part, on the leadership skills of those in power today. Historically, great nations have risen and later fallen in large part as a result of the success or failure of their leadership (Sternberg, 2007, p. 1).

The purpose of this qualitative, historical case study is to explore President James E. “Jimmy” Carter’s leadership approach in his attempt to gain support of the two congressional leaders in his quest to pass his comprehensive energy plan (a significant, transformational, and non-incremental legislative initiative), as evidenced in his direct communication with the two leaders from the time of his inauguration to the time of the congressional vote.

Transformational leaders are “those who appeal to the moral values of their followers, trying to mobilize them to affect a major change in society” (Roberto, 2011, p. 19). In theoretical terms, the leadership literature describes the existence, characteristics, and many examples of transformational leadership by former U.S. presidents. In recent presidential practice however, such leadership remains only a theory and not a recurring event (Burns, 2006).

The problem prompting this study is that over the past few decades there has been an acute lack of effective transformational presidential leadership which has been able to inspire large groups of American voters to adopt the notion of supporting national goals which might cause personal sacrifice or cost, but which might also contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole. Energy is a prime example of such an issue. While

most major transformational policies are phased in incrementally over a period of time (e.g. welfare reform and, gas mileage standards), significant, non-incremental, legislative proposals which would be transformational in nature, such as immediate enforcement of all immigration laws or a requirement to balance the federal budget, have either not fared well, or have not been pursued. Instead, partisan gridlock has increasingly become the norm and is controlling the legislative agenda.

Some transformational acts such as the Interstate Highway System in the 1950's did transform the American culture incrementally over a period of several years after the proposal had become law, and were perceived by most to be a positive change. This example did not have a dramatic, immediate, and non-incremental effect as would have been the case if the bulk of President Carter's energy bill had been enacted. It is important to differentiate between incremental and non-incremental because the leadership necessary to achieve these types of legislation is not the same. What President Carter proposed specifically in his legislation was an immediate and drastic change in the American lifestyle, and in a way that was perceived by the vast majority of citizens as draconian. The negative transformation in life style would have been immediate and not incremental.

Burns first introduced the concept presidential transformational leadership in his seminal work *Leadership* (1978), and expanded it in subsequent works, especially *Transforming Leadership* (2003). Special attention is paid to Burn's work because of the transformational nature of President Carter's energy bill. The necessity of significantly transforming the feelings and attitudes of the American people about their uses and choices of energy in ways that would have benefitted the country as a whole but that

would require a personal sacrifice, would have required the effective use of a special dimension of presidential leadership; one that could motivate citizens to reach for a higher collective goal, instead of the common everyday transactional leadership that is essentially just a barter system (Burns, 1978, 2003).

Burns is considered by many to be one of the seminal thinkers in the study of contemporary transformational leadership. The central figure and object of a majority of his initial research was President Franklin Roosevelt and Roosevelt's unique capabilities as a presidential leader:

It was only years later, when I came to study FDR's war presidency for a second volume of my biography, that I found 'transactional' leadership an inadequate tool of analysis for the broader and deeper dimensions of his actions. He had become what his example inspired me to call a *transforming* leader, just as Lincoln had midway through the Civil War (Burns, 2003, p. 23).

Burns (1978, 2003, and 2006) studied this uncommon element of leadership and has described its distinctiveness to a point where it is useful as a lens to observe certain instances of leadership. However, it is important to note that with the exception of declaring war or in the most extraordinary circumstances, the everyday give and take of transactional leadership will also be necessary to round up the congressional votes even for a transformational issue.

### **Context**

In 2013, the United States and the 200 or so other countries on planet Earth are all attempting to deal with rapid population growth, finite supplies of many commodities such as oil and water, the impact of unprecedented technological advances, the friction of

religious and cultural differences, the challenges of pollution, climate change, and genocide, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and multiple wars - etc. On the domestic front, energy, healthcare, high unemployment, massive deficits, national security, and numerous other issues demand realistic and affordable solutions, all of which will require effective leadership (Gergen, 2006, Bennis, 2007).

Yet the American people, not to mention the politicians who represent them, remain sharply divided philosophically and appear to lack anything close to a common vision or consensus on many significant issues. “The underlying dynamic is that today’s Republican and Democratic parties have effectively no ideological overlap” (Rauch, 2010, p. 71). The ability to transform a significant number of detractors into supporters, non-followers into followers, and non-believers into true believers will be the challenge for future presidents who attempt to effect significant social and cultural change.

The number of serious issues (both domestic and international), and the complexities of those issues have grown at a much faster rate than the abilities of most contemporary American presidents to resolve them. Only a few post-World War II presidents, such as Lyndon Johnson, have been effective in generating wide-spread public support that they then were able to leverage into assembling a healthy majority of bi-partisan congressional support, and thus be able to pass major pieces of non-incremental legislation which were transformational in nature. However, those legislative successes were the exception rather than the rule. Most modern presidents have had minimal legislative success, relative to the number of critical issues that remained unresolved at the end of their tenures and which continue to accumulate (Aberbach and Rockman, 1999).

Many seemingly intractable problems such as energy have been clogging the national agenda for decades. President Carter's failed attempt to legislate a comprehensive national energy plan is an excellent and illustrative example of the challenges facing modern presidents when they attempt to enact solutions to pressing problems—even when their party controls both houses of Congress.

In November 1976, Americans were still reeling from the Arab oil embargo in 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) oil price hikes in 1975, the Vietnam conflict, urban riots, and Watergate. It had been a very tough few years, and the country's confidence had been shaken. Nothing contributed more to the feeling of unease than the realization that countries on the other side of the planet had Americans in the "proverbial grip," and were beginning to squeeze. Americans who took pride in their sense of independence were shocked, angry, and terrified to find that they could be held hostage by a handful of Arab oil ministers.

The mood of the country was primed for strong leadership. Americans wanted solutions and they wanted them quickly. Clearly, a leadership opportunity was at hand. "Virtually all economists, energy experts, politicians, and business leaders agree that the nation must change its consumption habits and reduce its dependence on foreign oil" described the context of the late 1970's (Barrow, 1996, p. 41).

In 1976, after eight years of divided government (in which Republican presidents -Nixon and Ford - faced Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate), Americans voted overwhelmingly for Democratic congressional candidates. The 95th Congress gave the Democrats a filibuster-proof 61-38 advantage in the Senate, and an even more overwhelming majority of 291-144 in the House. By also capturing the presidency,

Democrats were now in control of the federal executive and legislative branches. It seemed as though there was nothing that could possibly prevent them from successfully addressing the nation's critical energy challenges; one of President Carter's main campaign themes. According to Jones, 1979), "Democrats in Congress appeared to have prepared themselves for policy action on [energy issues] pending the return of a Democrat to the White House" (p. 168).

Looking to the future, on February 18, 1977, the newly elected President Carter wrote the following entry into his personal diary, "I would guess that the energy policy that we pursue this year – the creation of a new department and a comprehensive energy program – will perhaps be the most important domestic challenge and, I hope, accomplishment" (Carter, 2010, p. 25).

Thirty years later, on February 25, 2007, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* carried an extensive series of articles about the history of our country's many failed attempts to enact a comprehensive national energy policy. Richard Nixon was the first president to attempt such a plan. Gerald Ford picked up where Nixon left off, but he too was mostly unsuccessful. However, both Nixon and Ford were Republicans and the Democrats controlled both the House and the Senate for the entire eight years of their combined presidencies.

The expectations and possibilities for enacting a comprehensive national energy plan were at an all-time high. The new congressional majorities seemed to create a sense that partisan gridlock might cease to be an impediment. It appeared that President Carter only had to execute perfunctory presidential leadership, because he and his fellow Democrats were poised to chalk up what appeared to be an easy, yet major legislative



victory. One of the articles in the above mentioned *Atlanta Journal Constitution* series (2007) quoted former President Carter, who was still discernibly frustrated three decades later, “I spent more time on the energy issue while I was president than any other thing I addressed” (Chapman, 2007, p. F4). What happened?

In January 2007, Thomas Friedman a renowned columnist for the *New York Times* also wrote an article acknowledging President Gerald Ford’s earlier role in the quest for a national energy plan. Referring to new and higher miles per gallon requirements, instituted by Ford, Friedman wrote:

Those mileage standards have barely been tightened since 1975 — because some idiotic Congressmen from Michigan, who thought they were protecting Detroit, have blocked efforts to raise them. So, Japanese automakers innovated more in that area, and the rest is history — or in the case of Detroit, obituary (p. C7).

America’s continued dependency on imported oil, and the inability of the succeeding presidents to exert enough presidential leadership to forge a congressional majority for a comprehensive, non-incremental, national energy policy to eliminate that dependency is still considered by many as two of America’s most critical issues. By studying President Carter’s leadership and communication with congressional leaders during the energy program’s legislative push, this study sought to understand and describe presidential leadership that leads to transformational change in ways that might be useful to future U.S. presidents.

### **Statement of the Problem**

For nearly 25 years, there has been little successful transformational presidential leadership-leadership which has inspired a majority of the American citizens about a

major piece of non-incremental legislation which would involve a cultural shift to an apparently higher moral or motivational dimension. Getting Americans to look outward instead of inward has become increasingly difficult. Perhaps no issue is more important or serves as a better example of this presidential shortcoming than President Carter's unsuccessful attempt to alter the culture attitudes and habits of the American people in their uses and choices of energy. Terrorism, raging hatred against the U.S. in some areas of the world, and international brinkmanship are all indisputably connected to the continued presence of American military power in the proximity of the oil-rich, mid-eastern part of the world. Few would argue that if the U.S., Europe, and Japan did not import oil, world politics would be significantly different.

President Carter was the last American president who attempted not only to make a vocal case for such a paradigm shift, but who actually made a concerted legislative attempt to implement it. Studying the dynamics of this particular leadership effort may yield useful insights for a future president who is also willing to address America's relationship with energy. This study assumes that researching President Carter's' futile attempt to legislate America's energy habits would yield more specific information that may be unique to energy, than would a study of a successful display of transformational leadership on an unrelated legislative topic such as President Johnson's leadership in passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In the past few decades, the transformational dimension of presidential leadership has been diminishing rapidly and now appears almost non-existent (Burns, 2003). The absence of significant legislative attempts by U.S. presidents, coupled with the minimal, aborted, or contentious results of the few that were attempted, speak volumes about the

contemporary status of the transformational dimension of American presidential leadership. “This may be perhaps the most elusive skill a president can have” (Sheehan and Sheehan, 2006, p. 11).

Transactional leadership alone is usually insufficient to generate popular support for an issue that requires a fundamental or transformational shift of the American people (Burns, 1978). When discussing what they called “the most important skill a president should possess,” Sheehan and Sheehan (2006) quoted President Kennedy:

Most important of all, and most difficult to conspicuously pursue, is an understanding of the people you will lead. You, and at times you alone, will be the spokesman for the great and often silent majority. And the final measure of your administration will, in large measure, rest on how well you respond to their inward hopes while leading them toward new horizons of ambition and achievement (p. 11).

The operative word in the above text is ‘leading’, which implies willingness on the part of those being led. That skill has been in short supply for several years (Burns, 2006), and it is the object of research in this dissertation.

Scholars, the business community, and many divergent special interest groups typically agree about the need for more effective presidential leadership. James McGregor Burns, a Pulitzer Prize winning presidential historian, and recognized expert on leadership, introduced the concept of transformational leadership and differentiated it from transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). He offered FDR as an example of the quintessential transformational president who inspired, motivated, and captured the imagination of the majority of Americans with his visions and dreams. However in

*Running Alone* (Burns, 2006), he laments that “We need such vital and creative leadership as we confront the daunting challenges of the twenty-first century, but to get it we must reverse nearly a half century of decline” (p. 6).

David Gergen, a former advisor for presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Clinton, currently the director of the Center for Public Leadership at the John Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and editor at large at *U.S. News and World Report*, wrote:

The grim truth is that the political leadership of the country, especially in Washington, is almost dysfunctional in grappling with the big issues bearing down on us. From energy to education, climate change to healthcare, budget deficits to trade deficits, progress is perilously slow. And time is definitely not on our side (2006, p. 72).

Given the apparent vacuum of effective transformational presidential leadership, a general question that provides a useful context for this research is the following: Why have most modern U.S. presidents been unsuccessful in generating adequate (or sometimes any) bi-partisan support to secure congressional passage of major, transformational, and non-incremental legislation?

This presidential inability is a relatively new trend in modern American presidential politics (the past 25 years). Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan were quite effective in generating wide spread public support and bi-partisan congressional majorities for their major non-incremental legislation (i.e., funding the Apollo space program, “Great Society” programs, and a monumental tax reduction bill respectively). Subsequent presidents have had much less legislative success with legislation that was as transformational in nature.

This study will not address the specific merits of President Carter's energy initiative. However, it is based upon the premise that persistent congressional gridlock is not the best long-term strategy for the United States, and that future U.S. presidents need to know how to generate at least a reasonable amount of bi-partisan support for important legislation, and on a semi-regular basis. Otherwise, their legislative initiatives will fail, or even if they are passed, they may generate widespread and deep seated anger with voters; essentially winning a battle but losing the war.

The Carter presidency is a classic example of this scenario, and it points out the need for more effective presidential leadership that can transform the thinking of voters and members of Congress outside of a president's natural base of support. By studying why America's possibly best chance for energy independence was lost during the Carter administration, future presidents may be better prepared to successfully legislate solutions for energy and many of our other numerous, yet unresolved issues. More than 30 years later, nearly all informed adult Americans (Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and even those who typically avoid political discussions and ideas all together) would probably agree that if Jimmy Carter had been successful in securing passage of the majority of his energy proposal, our country would now be more secure and prosperous. We still do not have a comprehensive energy plan, and we need to understand what kind of leadership it is going to take in order to make that happen.

The problem in this particular case was that President Carter was generally unsuccessful in transforming the cultural attitudes of the American people about their approach to the use of energy in a way that would inspire them to put the needs of the country ahead of their individual concerns (and pocket books). That problem has

remained unresolved throughout all subsequent presidencies that have included both Republicans and Democrats. Yet without exception, all of those presidents repeatedly voiced the need for America to reduce its dependency on imported sources of energy. Yet they all failed to transform the vision of a majority of the American people in a way that would result in a collective sacrifice for the common good. Congressional leaders typically respond to the mood of their constituents. If there are leadership lessons to be learned from President Carter's legislative initiative, they should be researched and identified.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Question**

The purpose of this qualitative, historical case study was to explore President Carter's leadership approach in his attempt to gain support of the two congressional leaders in his quest to pass his comprehensive energy plan (a significant, transformational, and non-incremental legislative initiative), as evidenced in his direct communication with the two leaders from the time of his inauguration to the time of the congressional vote.

Given that the major emphasis of Carter's proposal was for energy conservation, rather than developing new sources of energy (Barrow, 1996), a transformation in the attitudes of the American people about their use of energy would have been required in order to generate the widespread general support necessary to influence a majority of Congress. Since that support did not develop, questions remain.

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study the following research question was investigated: What was the nature of President Carter's leadership approach as evidenced

by direct communication with the two congressional leaders during his attempt to pass his comprehensive energy program between January 20, 1977 and November 8, 1978?

### **Statement of Potential Significance**

If additional insights about unsuccessful presidential leadership strategies can be identified, it may enhance a future president's ability to employ different or additional leadership strategies to succeed in passing important, non-incremental legislation. If future legislation might be passed with at least some meaningful amount of bi-partisan congressional support, the general feeling of the citizenry may be not only more supportive of such legislation, but also perhaps more likely to be supportive of additional legislation that would address other important national concerns.

### **Theoretical Foundation and Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study assumes that the congressional legislative process is part of system that is affected by multiple factors or inputs. When Congress is addressing issues that may involve a major shift in the culture of the American people, it is further assumed that some element of transformational presidential leadership would be an appropriate presidential input.

After more than ten years of reviewing the leadership literature and conducting onsite research, Sashkin and Sashkin, (2003) concluded that "By the 1970's, it was clear that seventy-five years of research and application had yielded little definitive or practically useful knowledge about leadership" (p. 31). Later however, they found in the work of political historian James McGregor Burns, "a new leadership paradigm" (p. 31). "Instead of exercising power over people, transforming leaders champion and inspire

followers” (Burns, p.26). Burns’ concept of transformational leadership was grounded in the world of presidential politics which was (and remains) his area of scholarly expertise.

In this study, the concept of transformational leadership refers to President Carter’s appeal to the congressional leaders in a way that would inspire them to see the merits of the energy proposal as a vehicle to a higher national vision and perhaps even an international vision. If they had become true believers in the merits and need of this collective goal for the country, as opposed to treating it like any other piece of legislation, their zeal and commitment might have made a difference.

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) used Burn’s concept of transformational leadership as the framework for their book *Leadership That Matters*. They also posited that Burns’ theory of leadership would generally be one element within the context of a complex organization or social entity; which would include the U.S. congressional system of legislation. Parsons postulated that “human action always exhibits the properties of a system” (Rocher, 1975, p. 31). The congressional legislative process is a system that is affected by inputs and outputs.

Bertalanffy (1950) and Parsons, (1951) described systems (biological, organizational, etc.) as having specific characteristics. An open system imports energy or other “inputs” from outside sources. For example, one’s personality is influenced by interaction with other people or other “outside influences.” Some of these external factors are internalized by the system and become part of the “throughput” process that transforms a person, organization, physical thing, or perhaps a piece of legislation into something different, or into something new that did not formerly exist. The new thing or change is the resultant “output.”



Finally, the new output becomes a part of the external environment and thus becomes a factor in subsequent “throughput” cycles. For example, the 1964 Civil Rights Act (an output of a congressional open system) has continued to influence many areas of American society ever since. Those influences have permeated the cultural landscape in ways that have impacted subsequent congressional legislation or “output” (e.g., education standards, lending practices, etc.). For those old enough to remember separate water fountains for whites and people of color, segregated restaurants, housing and education, there is a realization that the future impact of just one new law can be incredible. For example, had President Carter’s energy proposal passed in the 1970’s, there might have been societal influences on a scale similar to those of Civil Rights legislation that might have continued to affect future “inputs” for subsequent legislation. An open system is a cyclical process, but one that is dependent upon continued successful cycles.

An open system is always attempting to combat entropy, or the tendency toward disorganization or death. Creating new energy or input, processing it, and subsequently producing new output at a level consistent with the tendency toward entropy is critical to survival (Katz and Kahn, 2003). A country such as the U.S. is an example of an open system, and Congress is the societal mechanism for processing new outputs. An assumption that our government is not performing that function adequately is a basic argument for the need for this research.

Similar to an “open system” model (Katz and Kahn, 2003), the congressional legislative process takes in “energy” from not only the president, but also from numerous other sources such as the American people, media, lobbyists, special interest groups, political donors, and unforeseen events around the world. Collectively these outside

influences comprise the “input” component of the congressional legislative “open system.” The interaction and effectiveness of these factors during the “throughput” phase determine if there will be legislative “output” and/or what the “output” (legislation) will state specifically if enacted.

Effective presidential leadership can affect some of the various sources of input – not just members of Congress – because many other players influence Congress besides the president. A president can influence the thinking of citizens, members of the media, and others who will collectively influence members of Congress. The eventual effect of any such legislative conclusion (passage or failure) will flow back into the societal milieu and impact the political environment, the various actors, and influence (for better or worse) subsequent attempts to further legislate the structure of the American society. It is hard to overstate the importance of the effectiveness of presidential leadership on major issues that require a major transformation in the cultural and vision of the American people.

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) included Parson’s open system model in part, because it provided for the notion of boundaries within the various elements of a system. Having boundaries is an important concept for this study, because it assumes that the interactions between President Carter and the two congressional leaders were an identifiable dimension that was uniquely separated from the balance of the congressional dynamics surrounding the energy legislation. As is many times the case, “A boundary separates these internal and external patterns of action” (Sashkin and Sashkin, p. 111). Thus such isolated activities can be potential objects of research.

The following Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) places the interaction between potential social change and presidential leadership within the context of the energy proposal's totality. The Congressional Legislative Process (Figure 2, p. 18) shows the object of this research, which is isolated from – but part of – the congressional “open system” of processing, revising, or defeating proposed legislation.

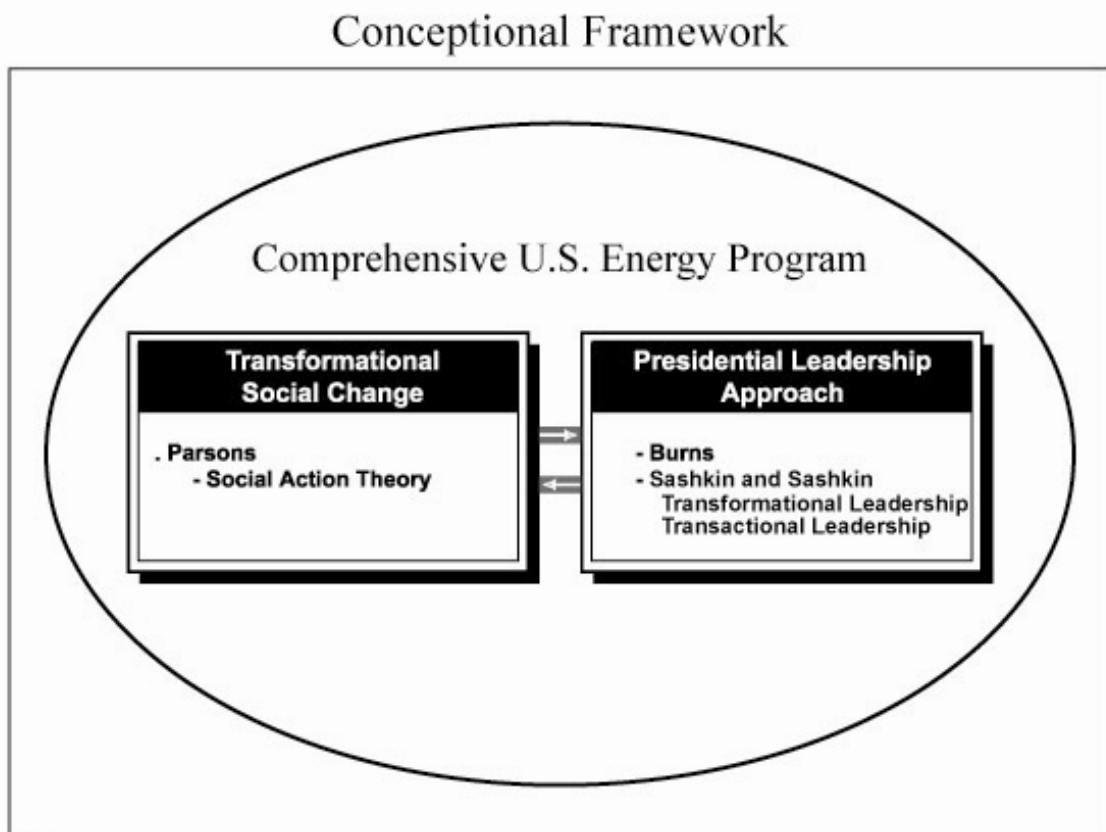


Figure 1.

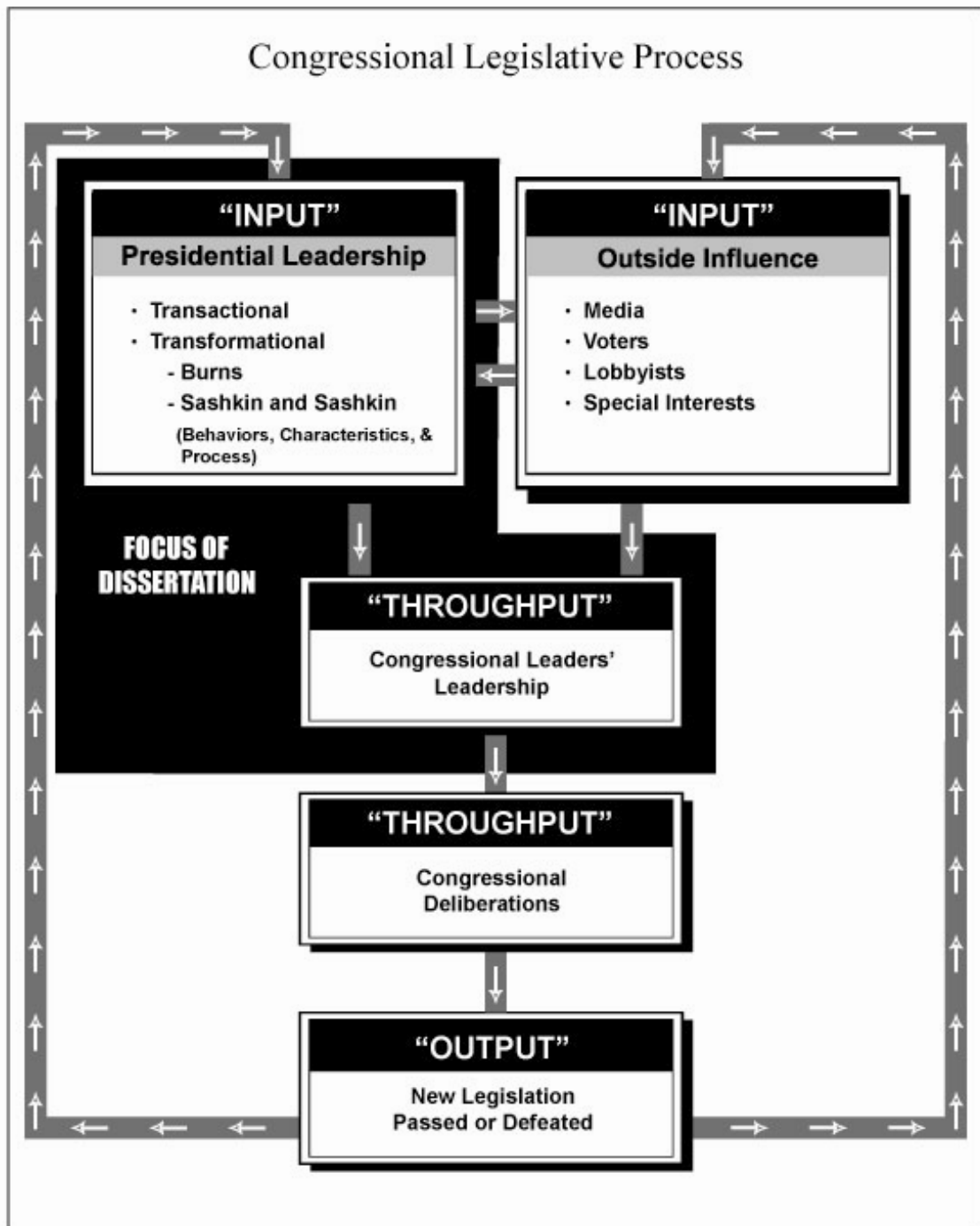


Figure 2.

Parsons contends that this ongoing cycle seeks to stabilize a system (Katz and Kahn, 2003). However in some cases, such as in American society, resultant legislation such as the healthcare bill in 2010, or lack of legislation, such as Carter's energy bill in 1978, has produced destabilization instead (at least temporarily). Yet the American system of government has prevailed for over 200 years, and in general operates successfully as an "open system." However, up to this point in world history no country has been able to avoid the forces of entropy.

While an open system remains viable as a working concept, there is major disagreement in the literature about Parson's contention that the status quo is the desirable or optimal norm. Claiming conflict, not stasis, is the root of innovation, ideas, and ultimately change, In the tradition of C. Wright Mills, and perhaps most notably German scholar Ralf Dahrendorf, Burns (2003) argued that change is ubiquitous. In "the closed world of certainty" Parson and his followers had "lost the simple impulse of curiosity, the desire to resolve riddles of experience, the concern with problems" (p. 190). Burns however, leans more in the direction of Parsons and argues for less – not more – conflict. However it appears to this researcher that Burns has aligned with the Parsonian outlook of conflict more out of conviction and philosophy than because of results.

An "open system" model can accommodate either stasis or change, because the new output (or lack of it) is assimilated into the external environment, which is always part of the new input for future outputs. History seems to support the theory of change as the norm rather than simply a long continuation of the status quo. However, history also provides numerous examples of major, and many times unexpected, change following periods of relative stasis. Gersick (1991) referred to the occurrence of such a major

change event as a “punctuated equilibrium,” of which the American Civil War and the 1964 Civil Rights Act would both offer excellent examples. In each case, the change was relatively sudden, far reaching, and transformational in nature. In each case, the former status quo of slavery, and its successor, racial discrimination, was irrevocably altered because of successful presidential transformational leadership. The external environment for subsequent legislative initiatives would never be the same. Similarly, the extended status quo of America’s approach to energy is continually recycled into the legislative environment, and it is not a neutral or benign factor.

All transformational change is a disruption of the status quo and is not an everyday occurrence. Legislation that requires a visionary change or inspiration in the American people and their elected representatives toward a higher national purpose would typically require effective transformational leadership if the transformation would be sudden – as opposed to incremental.

The literature review briefly explored the theory of transactional leadership, and more extensively transformational leadership. Both are “inputs” in the congressional open system and were isolated nearly to the exclusion of other “inputs” unless there is a significant and discernible connection. While this study focused on President Carter’s explicit transformational leadership attempts during his attempt to legislate an energy plan, it also attempted to ascertain if there may have been any other input links that may have influenced his ability to be an effective communicator, which may in turn have had an effect on his ability to be transformational leader.

The theoretical perspective of this research is that in general, the presumed role of a U.S. president is that of a leader and that the role of Congress is to either follow or act

as a counterbalance to presidential leadership. It is assumed that all presidents should use in varying degrees, both transactional and transformational leadership strategies and tactics in order to obtain the necessary congressional votes to secure passage of their major legislative proposals. In this case study, given the transformational requirements that would have been necessary to significantly change how Americans approached their use of energy (as members of a nation as opposed to their own individual concerns), Jimmy Carter's use or attempted use of transformational leadership with the congressional leadership was researched.

### **Summary of the Methodology**

The purpose of this qualitative, historical case study was to explore President Carter's leadership approach and efforts in his attempt to gain support of the two congressional House and Senate leaders in his quest to pass a comprehensive energy plan (a significant, transformational, and non-incremental legislative initiative), as evidenced from his direct communication with the two leaders at the time of his inauguration to the unsuccessful congressional vote. Multiple sources of evidence were available for researching this event. The case study methodology was chosen because of the strength of its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations – beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study” (Yin, p. 8).

The first step of the design was to develop a basic chronology of the evolution of the legislation from the first day of the Carter presidency until the final congressional vote. Key moments of leadership communication were collected according to the units of

analysis, to include speeches, statements, articles, memos, interviews, memoirs, and congressional records (Brundage, 2002).

The data were triangulated by using multiple sources when available (i.e. written, audio, and video). This particular topic had not been studied before and there was not a specific set of directions. In proceeding, Brundage's (2002) thoughts were applicable: "What is crucial to grasp is that there is an enormous variety of narrative approaches and that new ones will continue to appear. There is, quite simply, no such thing as a "definitive" treatment of any topic" (p. 14). However, this study was intended to simply identify, collect, and analyze President Carter's direct communications with Robert Byrd and Tip O'Neill, which might be considered attempts of transformational leadership. This was the theoretical lens through which the data were observed.

One aim of this study was to see if there are any identifiable themes or patterns in Carter's leadership style that might have been a definitive factor in the outcome of the energy legislation effort. "A theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). A grid for coding the data was used to visualize leadership patterns.

As Boyatzis (1998) also points out, "Knowledge relevant to the arena being examined is crucial as a foundation, often referred to as tacit knowledge" (p. 8). As a former mayor, which included a legislative role for ten years, I feel confident that my prior legislative experience helped me identify important leadership factors in the data, as well as some of the critical nuances of this particular legislative event. Having a grounded sense of the general legislative process was helpful.



Given what could have been described as significant opportunity for enactment of a national energy policy in the late 1970's, (when the Democrats controlled both the federal legislative and executive branches) and coupled with the fact that policy was not enacted, there was a possibility that some unique leadership dynamic may have been present and that explains the minimal level of legislative success. Perhaps President Carter's leadership actions were in conflict with current leadership theory, or some other factor was at play. This study attempted to identify any critical factors that may have undermined the fate of this critical legislative attempt.

### **Limitations**

The documentation of history is never complete and is always recorded by imperfect human beings who have personal limitations and biases. Triangulation was the best, but not perfect, tool for attempting to ascertain what really transpired during the event under study. For example, there was enough diversified data (written, audio, and video) to experience a speech (the president's most utilized leadership tool) on a multi-dimensional level. The videos in particular revealed not only a different level of perception, but they also allowed for a thick and rich visual description of both the speech itself and provided the ability to analyze facial expressions, clothing, hair styles, audience reactions (i.e., seeing a standing ovation versus just hearing applause), and the apparent neutrality and hard-charging objectivity of the old style media on the news cast that followed the speeches and are now also part of the archive at the Carter presidential Library. For an older researcher like me, the videos provided a way to remember a general sense of the time and the mood of the country. Without the videos, the study would have been significantly different.

Most of the critical actors under study have died or are no longer available as a resource. On the positive side, substantial recorded history of this episode is available. More recent (post-Watergate) presidents have avoided leaving a “paper trail” (Riley, 2007). But “an archive that is reasonably complete only as late as the Jimmy Carter years” (p. 2) provided rich data. The availability of data was another good reason to study this particular episode of American history.

Regardless of the amount of surviving artifacts, a researcher has to interpret them and arrive at a subjective analytic conclusion: “Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Brundage (2002) concurs, noting there can never be absolute agreement about the interpretation of historical events:

Rather than simply presenting an unchanging view of the past, historians instead are constantly searching for fresh sources, approaches, methodological tools, and interpretations in an effort to offer an ever-new past to the present. Or rather, a multitude of new pasts, since each historian’s view of the past is at least slightly different from another’s, sometimes dramatically. In other words, a vigorous, many-sided debate among scholars is not only unavoidable but essential to the discipline (p. 3).

It is hoped that this study can add to the ongoing conversation about America’s approach to such a vital resource as energy. New information and understanding about the past may enhance the prospects for the future.

This study addressed leadership issues that were related to, and occurred during, President Carter’s attempt to pass a national energy plan. It did not address any other issues during the Carter administration, his overall Presidency, or his leadership skills,

etc. It did not render an opinion as to the merits of the proposed legislation. It also was not intended to produce an all-inclusive list of every possible leadership action, event, decision, or circumstance which involved communication during this legislative event. However, it was intended that enough of the critical factors would be identified and subsequently analyzed in order to provide data that may be of value to future presidents and/or researchers.

This research was limited to the first energy legislative proposal which culminated on November 9, 1978. Because the resulting legislation was only a symbolic or token version of the original proposal, President Carter attempted to enact additional provisions in a subsequent bill. However, an imploding economy and the American hostage crisis that occurred in Iran left the final 444 days of the Carter administration in disarray and with little in the way of accomplishments. The only viable opportunity for substantive success with an energy proposal was the first attempt and thus it is the only one examined in this dissertation.

The worldview and prior legislative experience of this researcher will probably be different than of subsequent researchers. Hence, the filter for assimilating and analyzing the findings may vary from researcher to researcher. However so that this rigorous study would be relevant and trustworthy, there was an explicit commitment to objectivity, epoche, and non-bias. While it is a goal that the findings will be able to be duplicated by other researchers, there is no guarantee that such replication can be accomplished in a qualitative study. If subsequent researchers arrive at different conclusions, then a healthy conversation can ensue. It is not presupposed that this researcher arrived at the definitive analysis or the last word on this very important issue. If this report sparks further research

then it will have served a valuable purpose. However, it was a pre-stated goal of this research that it attempted to be trust-worthy, and free of preconceptions.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

1. Transactional leadership seemed easy to define, if only because it was the basic, daily stuff of politics, the pursuit of change in measured and often reluctant doses. The transactional leader functioned as a broker and, especially when the stakes were low; his role could be relatively minor, even automatic” (Burns, 2006, p. 24).
2. “In contrast to transactional leadership, transformational leadership refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential. Burns points to Mohandas Gandhi as a classic example of transformational leadership. Gandhi raised the hopes and demands of millions of his people and in the process he was changed himself” (Northouse, 2004, p. 170). In this study, the prospect of a president inspiring key followers (congressional leaders), who would in turn inspire other followers to embrace an issue that included a moral dimension (the equitable distribution of a diminishing asset (oil) and America’s disproportionate use of this finite world resource), is consistent with a major premise of transformational leadership: transferability to followers.
3. Non-incremental policy is directed toward the accomplishment of large-scale goals, clearly framed in scope at the highest level of government, bounded in

time, and demanding uncustomary political support, such that the very substantial resources required for its implementation will be made available. Non-incremental policy must emanate from the president and rest in his unwavering support until its goals are achieved. Not only is it necessary that the president articulate this policy, but he must move rapidly to mobilize key leadership in the Congress in order to build the strong political bridgework required to achieve stated goals before competing objectives can obstruct their realization” (Giacchino, 1983, p. 6). Non-incremental legislation is not automatically transformational in nature. However for this study, Giacchino’s definition will be applied to legislation that also requires a societal transformation which inspires the citizenry to reach outward toward a worthy common goal such as national energy conservation.

4. Presidential leadership, the office of the president, political leadership, modern presidents, presidential administrations, or any other terms or references to the presidency in this study will be used exclusively to refer to or describe presidential actions that were directed at securing congressional passage of President Carter’s national energy legislative initiative. This is both a working definition and a limitation provided by this researcher to facilitate the research. While the totality of a particular president is a factor in all presidential endeavors, there are some actions that are specific, or nearly so, in assembling the requisite congressional votes necessary to pass a major piece of legislation. It is only those specific presidential actions, which are addressed, referred to, or assumed in this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review informed key elements of this work by establishing what is currently known about the nature of leadership, and more specifically presidential leadership. This research attempted to assess President Carter's leadership actions by means of his direct communication with the two congressional leaders during his attempt to secure congressional passage of his national energy proposal. The potential significance was that it may yield valuable information for future presidents.

This chapter was organized by following the general topics: historical and modern leadership theory, the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership, the unique attributes and characteristics of successful U.S. presidents, presidential cycles and models, and three works which were used to facilitate the analysis of the data. This format provided a logical progression of the requisite literature for this study.

The review was intended to provide the necessary understanding and context which can provide a theoretical lens for addressing the research question. The computer literature search was conducted primarily in ProQuest Research Library Plus and Google Scholar. Computer searches were limited to scholarly publications. Bibliographies of articles published in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* were also utilized. References and citations in many works led to additional sources not noted in the computer searches. Leadership text books that were assigned during the class sessions of The George Washington University ELP program were also utilized in this review.

The first word searched was simply *leadership* which seemed to be a good place to begin building a basic theoretical foundation. It opened a universe of literature with 37,255 entries. However, a cursory scanning of the literature showed a high recurrence of

*transactional* and *transformational leadership*. As stand-alone searches, they produced 120 and 384 entries respectively. When coupled with *U.S. presidents*, the results were zero and 40 respectively. Numerous search terms were explored, including *leadership* and *legislative success*, *leadership* and *strategies*, *leadership* and *congressional relations*, *leadership* and *U.S. presidents*.

Interestingly, when the word *presidents* was coupled with either *transactional* or *transformational leadership*, no reference registered; this was also the case with *presidents* and *congressional leadership*. The most productive search combinations were *transformational leadership* and *politics*, *transactional leadership* and *politics*, *legislative strategies* and *politics*. In many cases, the articles that were pertinent to this study were published in *presidential Studies Quarterly*. I have been a subscriber of this periodical for many years, and I reviewed every article in the archive that begins in 1999 through the present in order to bring additional relevant works into this literature review.

An article titled “Presidential Leadership” in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, (Goethals, 2005) provided a succinct but comprehensive review of the extant theories of leadership in general and presidential leadership in particular. “The chapter reviews psychological theories of leadership and selected literature on the American presidency to highlight key psychological principles of presidential leadership” (p. 545). He added:

The goal of this chapter is to describe the literature on leadership and on the presidency that are relevant to understanding presidential leadership. It is important to note at the beginning that this review differs from similar chapters in the *Annual Review of Psychology* in that it focused almost entirely on theory rather than on research (p. 546).

The purpose of reviewing the theoretical literature in this study was to provide a ‘measuring stick’ of known leadership theories which could be used to assess the leadership actions of Jimmy Carter in his pursuit of a national energy program. Goethals had already assembled the majority of the literature that was relevant for this study. There was not an intention on the part of this researcher to duplicate Goethals’s work, but instead to report the salient points, and use it as a building block along with other literature resources. Similarly, Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) assembled the most recognized leadership theories and also provided a research synthesis. Their research was primarily grounded in transformational leadership theory, which was basic to this research study. Most recently, Roberto (2011) also reviewed the history of leadership study and provided a contemporary analysis of leadership theory.

### **Psychological Principles of Leadership**

**Freud’s group psychology.** Considering that a U.S. president is the leader of over 300,000,000 people, it was fortunate that Goethals (2005) began his review with the leadership theory of Freud whose 1921 publication *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* emphasized how people react differently when they are a member of a crowd. Freud theorized that when people are in a group situation, they become highly suggestible and regress to a lower intellectual level. He further posited that most people want to put themselves under the authority of a leader, and that there is a “mysterious and irresistible power” (p. 81) that causes people to become followers. He suggests that this phenomenon can be traced back to the “primal herd” mentality of the earliest civilizations. Expanding that concept, Roberto (2011) suggests “learned helplessness occurs when people come to falsely believe they [themselves] have no power to change” (p. 23).



That voters and members of Congress may react or behave differently if they are thinking as a member of a group, as opposed to themselves as an individual, may or may not appear as a factor in the Carter episode. However, if we find that President Carter deliberately attempted to lead Tip O’Neill and Robert Byrd in a transformational way as individuals, one on one, instead of simply treating them as other members of Congress, it may yield helpful information.

Freud (1921) goes on to argue that a leader must have a command of language and ideas, that groups do not necessarily want the truth, and that they may prefer illusions. He also described the necessity for a leader to be perceived by his or her followers as a dispenser of equal treatment. All of the leadership theories that were subsequently reviewed contained some element of these early theories.

**Modern psychological theories of leadership.** Calling Burns’ theory of transformational leadership “One of the most influential leadership developments of the past few decades” (p. 550), Goethals (2005) draws the link between Freud’s (1921) and LeBon’s (1895) work on the dynamics of crowd mentality and that of transformational leadership which draws members of a group to follow a leader of a cause, movement, or idea. Gandhi, Hitler, Lincoln, Osama bin Laden, John Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan are offered as examples of leaders who have inspired followers, and transformed others’ thoughts and feelings.

It is this specific leadership quality that appears to be absent in contemporary presidents and that is an object of this study. For example, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama are unquestionably charismatic leaders. However neither was able (so far) to transform the thinking of significant numbers outside of their own natural base of support

- but that is exactly what is required to enact significant (transformational) change.

Clearly, there is a distinction between a charismatic and a transformational leader. While Burns' (1978) describes the existence and effects of transformational leadership, he does not address in specific detail the characteristics or unique skills of leaders who possess this uncommon ability.

Expanding upon Burn's work, and attempting to define the behavior of transformational leaders, Bass (1997) suggests that such leaders have four significant attributes. First, they must possess charisma. They "display conviction" and "emphasize the importance of purpose, commitment, and ethical components of decisions" (p. 133). Second, they "articulate an appealing vision of the future, challenge followers with high standards, talk optimistically with enthusiasm, and provide encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done" (p. 133). Third, they provide intellectual stimulation by pushing followers to question old assumptions, and to consider new points of view. Finally, they treat each member of the group equitably. It is the second item that appears to contrast directly with the Carter leadership style.

House and Shamir (1993) furthered the discussion about charismatic leadership by suggesting that such leaders articulate an ideological goal, and provide a vision that "describes a better future for followers" (p. 97). Perhaps an energy plan that was nearly all conservation (sacrifice) was not seen by many as a "better future." The research illuminated that issue.

House and Shamir (1993) also note the necessity of theatrical ability. Noting that no leader is perfect, they state that the weaker qualities of a leader need to be hidden from followers, and that promoting and highlighting a positive image is always necessary.

They cite Theodore Roosevelt's carefully choreographed photograph of himself at the controls of a giant Bucyrus steam shovel in 1906, when the president was attempting to generate public and congressional support for the construction of the Panama Canal as classic display of charismatic leadership behavior.

These theoretical works provided an opportunity to contrast Carter's leadership with the purported ideal attributes. The former president's leadership actions, style, and approach were detailed from the research and the theory was used to seek an understanding of the outcome of the congressional vote.

**The role of leader schemas.** While Freud (1921) argued that groups have a "passion for authority" (p. 127), and a "need for a strong chief" (p. 129), the image of a leader that can effectively fill that void has its own characteristics. The leadership field continued to attempt to further define what factors are the determinants of successful leaders. Philips and Lord (1981) and Simonton (1986) found that leaders are usually considered competent, understanding, caring, honest, outgoing, linguistically skillful, aggressive, determined, educated, and decisive. These adjectives were gleaned from a list of over 300 possible attributes. Simonton qualifies his work by noting that the use of adjective analysis is useful but not a primary tool. Kenney (1994) listed four categories that describe a leader's most basic requirements: learning the group's goals, taking charge, being a nice person, and being nervous (not complacent). At this point overlap and similarity in the field seemed to have suggested an informal consensus.

Hollander (1993) expanded the specific discussion about charisma and asserted that it is a quality "that can be considered to be invested by followers, and accorded or withdrawn by them" (p. 41). Furthermore, if a leader is perceived to be influential and

authoritative, his or her influence will increase and solidify. Hollander cites President Carter, who at one point enjoyed the prestige of having brokered the Camp David Peace Accord, as an example of the opposite possibility. Ostensibly in charge of an economy that was sinking, and having failed to secure passage of a national energy program, Carter's support of the American people was withdrawn. The citizens (followers) no longer wanted to relate to or identify with a leader whom they perceived as not representing their ideals. As Hollander has pointed out support can be given or withdrawn. Of course this assumes the dynamics of a free society. The German people had no such option when Hitler was their leader.

**Telling identity stories.** It seems that rhetoric and polemic are staples of leaders who attempt to manipulate or energize the emotions of their followers. However, Gardner (1995) asserts that the leaders of nations and other large groups often lead "through the stories and acts they address to an audience" (p. 13). The most powerful leaders tell stories that are "about themselves and their groups, about where they were coming from and where they were headed, about what was to be feared, struggled against, and dreamed about" (p. 14). The leader and followers are the "principal characters or heroes" (p. 14).

One of Gardner's (1995) examples involved the Catholic Church and its entrenched leadership that emphasized hierarchy, obedience, and formality as a method of group control. In the early 1960's, when Pope John XXIII expressed words of humility, openness, and inclusion, the church members (and many non-Catholics) responded positively, and he effectively grabbed the reins of leadership. Importantly, his behavior reinforced his message. His story, "I always try to show people that I am a

regular person. I have two eyes, a nose – a very big one – a mouth, two ears and so on” (p. 178), resonated with his followers. How did Jimmy Carter fare in this area of leadership? Perhaps reviews of his speeches and of the subsequent polling of viewers of those speeches will provide a valuable insight. More importantly, how did Tip O’Neill and Robert Byrd relate to Jimmy Carter?

**Personality, leadership style, and contingency.** Additional leadership factors have been identified in the emergent post-Freudian era. Norman (1963) described the Big Five model of personality as consisting of ‘surgency,’ emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intelligence. These are all positive characteristics. On the other hand, Hogan (1994) also describes negative characteristics that can derail a presidency. Being arrogant, hostile, passive aggressive, selfish, compulsive, abrasive, and aloof are listed as some of the more common traits. President Nixon was used as an example of a leader who possessed some of these less desirable characteristics. While these traits are still considered important benchmarks, after extensive research R.M. Stogdill (1974) found that:

- There was no strong evidence of a set of universal leadership traits.
- A leader with particular traits may be effective in one context, but not in another.
- Two people with a very different set of personality traits could still succeed in the same situation.

Other theory suggests that leaders with different personalities adopt one of two different leadership roles (Bales, 1958). The first is the role of task leader, while the second is that of socio-emotional leader, who keeps group members happy. Fiedler

(1993) suggests that leaders who are oriented toward task performance are more effective than those who are focused on interpersonal relations. However, his main point is that different leaders are more or less effective based on different circumstances and not just personal traits.

While this review was not all-inclusive of every general leadership theory, it highlights many of the seminal works and provides a basis for observing and evaluating President Carter's leadership which was the focal point of this research. As a final note, it appears that the majority of leadership theory is directed toward followers and followership. The next section will focus primarily upon leaders and leadership.

**Principles of presidential leadership.** A primary function of this study was to perform a case analysis of Jimmy Carter's leadership actions as he attempted to enact his vision of a national energy program. It should be noted that the leadership challenges of a U.S. president are in some ways unique. For example, he or she must first run a national campaign in order to be elected president. The election process itself is not unrelated to future presidential legislative success or failure. A president must also gain a majority of support for a legislative initiative in two separate bodies of elected representatives; the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congressmen and senators are heavily influenced by special interest groups, political donors, and lobbyists, the political agenda of the media, and hopefully the hopes and concerns of their constituents. A president's legislative agenda is only one of several interests that vie for congressional favor. The skills and tools that a president must possess and utilize are in many ways distinct from those of other leaders because of the unique circumstances.

Goethals's (2005) literature review of the psychological theories of leadership and the key psychological principles of presidential leadership provided an excellent theoretical foundation for this study because it takes into account the exclusive situations of the U.S. presidency. Citing presidential historian James David Barber (1992), Goethals sets the context for understanding those unique dynamics, "The presidency is the focus for the most intense and persistent emotions in the American polity. The president is a symbolic leader, the one figure who draws together the people's hopes and fears for the political future" (p. 2).

**Presidential character.** Goethals (2005) posits that there are different approaches to assessing the psychological dimensions of presidential leadership. The first is character. He cites James David Barber's (1992) book, *Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, which was first published in 1972. Its description of Richard Nixon as being an "active-negative" appeared to predict the self-destructing behavior that brought down his presidency. His opposing description of an "active-positive" leader was based upon a leader possessing an adequate level of self-esteem. Barber listed three essential factors for an effective presidential personality: character, worldview, and style.

Barber (1992) divides presidential character into active versus passive, and negative versus positive dimensions. The four resulting possibilities are a result of childhood development of self-esteem. The active-positive character is the highest rated of the four. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy were cited by Barber as examples of this category. These men showed congruence between working hard, being active, and enjoying that activity. They also possessed enough self-confidence to be

flexible and adaptive in their approaches to dealing with the nation's problems. Research will determine how President Carter would be characterized.

Barber (1992) asserts that a president's worldview is developed in childhood and that style is a developed characteristic that some presidents learn by combining homework, interpersonal relations, and rhetoric, in order to lead others and also to achieve their personal goals. However, the power situation is an additional variable. This scenario might include a popular mandate from the presidential election and the corresponding degree of support of Congress. As a presidency evolves, the power situation can change for the better or for the worse. Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed a powerful wave of popularity until he overplayed his hand by attempting to stack the Supreme Court with additional members who would support his New Deal legislation. The American people were angered and his power receded.

Barber (1992) cited Reagan's 1980 inaugural speech which contrasted sharply with Carter's 1979 "malaise speech" as an example of a president's character, worldview, and style, creating a positive power situation. While Jimmy Carter had referred to a crisis of confidence in the American people as one of the country's problems, Ronald Reagan boldly proclaimed that the U.S. had the capacity to meet the world's challenges and solve the nation's problems. "Why shouldn't we believe that?" He ended his speech by proclaiming, "After all, we are Americans." This attribute is consistent with the prior theories of House and Shamir (1993) and Bass (1993).

### **Reconstructive Presidential Leadership**

The second approach to evaluating presidential leadership (Goethals, 2005) is reconstructive presidential leadership. Skowronek (1999) argues that a new president's



potential is affected by the resilience or vulnerability of the existing regime, which is an extension or progression of the work of Aberbach and Rockman (1999). He asserts that there are four possible presidential scenarios: articulation, disjunction, preemption, and reconstruction.

Articulation occurs when a new president follows a resilient regime, and as a result, simply oversees a continuation of the prior administration. George H.W. Bush was such a president. He did not have a distinct personal plan or vision for the country, and he merely extended the Reagan agenda.

Disjunction of an established regime results from a vulnerable situation. The Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt had essentially dominated the American political scene for over 40 years. However in the late 1970's, Jimmy Carter's beleaguered administration opened the door of opportunity for Republicans (Skowronek, 1999).

Preemption describes an opposition scenario such as when Bill Clinton dislodged the resilient Reagan/Gingrich regime.

The fourth and most advantageous political scenario that Skowronek (1999) describes is reconstruction. A president who opposes and successfully replaces a vulnerable regime is then in a position to establish a new agenda and a new way of governing. Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Barack Obama are examples of presidents who began their presidency from positions of reconstruction. How they capitalized on these opportunities typically would define their legacies.

At this point there is some disagreement in the literature. The interaction and ultimate influence of personal versus situational variables falls into two major philosophical camps (Fiedler, 1993). The first approach suggests that personal attributes

are more important than the situational context (Barber, 1992). On the other hand, Skowronek (1997) declares that situational variables are the dominate factor. However, he acknowledges that personal factors, especially personal energy and competence, are also major variables. He goes further to assert that presidents who meet Barber's (1992) active-positive model and are most apt to take advantage of situational variables.

### **Presidential Personality and Effectiveness**

Simonton (1986) created a check list of presidential behavioral factors (both positive and negative) which was a similar approach to Barber's (1992) active-passive-negative-positive model. The scores are based on information about every president from Washington through Reagan sourced from biographical reference works:

Factor analysis of the ratings revealed 14 different personality dimensions, called Moderation, Friendliness, Intellectual Brilliance, Machiavellianism, Poise and Polish, Achievement Drive, Forcefulness, Wit, Physical Attractiveness, Pettiness, Tidiness, Conservatism, Inflexibility, and Pacifism, Goethals, (2005, p. 564).

Barber (1992) pointed out that the presidents who matched his optimum model (active-positive) were in his words "attractive, optimistic, and persuasive, as well as energetic and decisive" (p. 153). On the other hand, Barber contends that presidents who were the most successful specifically in regard to passing important legislation (a key to this study) were "Machiavellian, forceful, moderate, poised and polished, and flexible" (1992, p. 153). This distinction points out the need to be specific about the criteria of assessing a president's success, whether it is approval ratings, electoral success, domestic and international policy achievements, etc. This study was focused only on President Carter's

effectiveness as a transformational leader in his interaction with the two congressional leaders.

**Why presidents succeed.** Goethals's (2005) general summary of leadership theory is that "the personality and behavior of a leader always intersect with the requirements of a given situation" and "the behavior of all leaders needs to be understood in terms of both the situation they face and their unique life history" (p. 567). Concluding on a positive note, he adds:

Despite the indubitable roles of chance and context, it does seem clear that effective presidential leadership in the past has come from men with energy, intelligence, vision, articulacy, optimism, and commitment. Our research suggests that men and women with these qualities can also become good presidents in the future (p. 569).

Goethals's literature review of leadership and presidential leadership was broad and it included numerous seminal works that have collectively come to define current leadership theory. However, no work is all-inclusive, and additional works will be added to this literature review.

### **Leadership Cycles**

Stephen Skowronek (1993) posits that there are lengthy, yet semi-regular cycles of presidential leadership opportunity that to some degree, limit or enhance a "big idea" president's chances of legislative success. Major change and transformation cannot be the ever present state of affairs. Periods of stasis are a prerequisite to change, otherwise there would be chaos. Skowronek suggests that at that point at which a president enters an

entropic leadership cycle will dictate to some degree the potential of his or her leadership possibilities.

### **Presidential Leadership Models**

**Maximalist.** These cycles tend to create four distinct presidential leadership models. The first model (the one observed in this study), is the “maximalist” presidency (Aberbach and Rockman, 1999, p. 761), which is what Burns (1978) earlier described as transformational. Citing Roosevelt, Johnson, and Reagan, they describe a charismatic leader who uses the bully pulpit to educate and inspire the citizenry and ultimately Congress, which eventually implements the president’s vision with legislation. This is the model that would be required for passing a major piece of transformation legislation such as a comprehensive national energy plan.

**Presidential-centric bargaining.** It is important to review the other three models in order to have a contextual appreciation of the maximalist or transformational president, because that is a lens that was used to evaluate Jimmy Carter, who was attempting to act as a maximalist president. The second model is labeled “presidential-centric bargaining” (Aberbach and Rockman, 1999, p. 761). In *Presidential Power* (1990), Richard Neustadt contends that the presidency is essentially a transactional craft to be learned and implemented. Strategizing, bargaining, and manipulation are the main tools of the trade.

Burns (1978, 2003 and 2006) disagrees and refers to such tactics as being merely transactional in nature. While agreeing that those elements of leadership are necessary components of a legislative game plan, he disagrees that excelling in those endeavors is the mark of a superior president. Burns contends that having an agenda which lacks a transformational issue, or lacking the “maximalist” leadership actions necessary to

implement such an agenda will preclude a president from being a top tier leader. Burns does not say that lacking transformational abilities would necessarily dictate that a president would be a poor leader, but by definition, he or she would not be a leader of the caliber of the aforementioned presidents.

Despite their differences, the literature treats both Burns and Neustadt as seminal thinkers in terms of presidential leadership. Neustadt was cited more often than any other scholar when transactional leadership and the presidency were jointly discussed.

Conversely, the literature usually credits Burns as the originator of the transformational leadership concept. The second leadership model is to some degree, a component of the first model. Even transformational presidents need to assemble congressional majorities by using multiple methods. The second model depicts Neustadt's prototypical president as the transactional bargainer-in-chief.

**System-bargaining model.** The third model is a variation of model two. Instead of the president being at the forefront of the political horse trading, the "system-bargaining model" Aberbach and Rockman (1999) describes multiple interests initiating and guiding the process. They suggest that this is much more prevalent when one or both bodies of Congress are controlled by the party that is not the president's party. They posit that a typical "half a loaf for you and a half a loaf for me" (p. 763) concept is usually necessary in a divided government situation. However Burns (2003, 2006) notes that Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan were able to assemble healthy bipartisan congressional majorities for their transformational legislation while having to do so with a divided government.

Even though this study will observe a presidency when the Democrats had complete control of the government (House, Senate, and presidency), the dynamics of competing parties, philosophies, and special interests are always present in any legislative undertaking. There is also recent disagreement in the literature about the benefits of one party having complete political control. Neustadt (1990) argues that a unified government is a prerequisite to significant presidential success. However, Rauch (2010) argues that if one party enjoys a unified government, they will attempt to legislate from the philosophical middle ground of their own party – not from the philosophical middle ground of the country as a whole, which would typically be the case if a president had to assemble votes on a bi-partisan basis.

Rauch (2010) argues further that divided government produces better long-term results because the moderate voters who occupy the political center will be alienated by the unconstrained, and thus extreme agenda of an unchecked, one party dynasty. The national healthcare legislation that passed in 2010 without a single Republican vote and the support of less than half of the American people will provide an opportunity over time to assess Rauch's hypothesis.

For this study however, Rauch's concept of the consequences of philosophical drift in proposed legislation is relevant to the extent that it offers insights even when one party is in total control. For example, numerically speaking President Kennedy had a Democratic majority in both the House and the Senate. However, many of the southern Congressmen often voted with the Republicans on issues of finance and race. Sometimes even the concept of unified government can be difficult to define.

A president's circumspect understanding of the actual dynamics of the situation may be a critical factor in the final analysis. The third model of the presidency would tend to stress this concept. However, Campbell (1991) argues that there is a danger that a president may be reduced to simply becoming a deal maker and not a true leader. Cutting deals and providing payback in return for congressional votes is a much different dynamic than capturing the hearts and minds (and the votes) of Congressmen by using the power of reason, logic, and moral persuasion which are the tools of a transformational leader.

**The guardian presidency.** The fourth model was coined "the Guardian Presidency" by David Mervin (1996). Simply stated, this model refers to a president who more or less maintains the status quo. George H. Bush is a good example. By his own admission, he had trouble with the "vision thing," which in essence described his presidency. There were no significant transformational agendas pursued by him from 1988 to 1992.

The first three models are not mutually exclusive. It appears that at least some elements of the second and third model would be present even if a "maximalist" or "transformational" president is pursuing a major non-incremental policy initiative that would be transformational in nature; such as President Carter's quest for a national energy program.

### **The Qualities of Effective Presidents**

In addition to the theoretical concepts of transformational and transactional leadership, the literature also includes theoretical discussions about specific personal qualities of former effective presidents. Noted presidential historian, Fred L. Greenstein

(2000) spent several years researching 11 presidencies that began with Franklin Roosevelt and continued through Bill Clinton. While similar in many ways to work of Simonton (1987) which was reviewed by Goethals (2005), Greenstein's work was more comprehensive and focused only on presidents of the past 75 years.

Greenstein (2000) notes that prior to FDR most major legislation was promoted by Congress, not the president. The modern presidency is not only unique within our own history, but it is also distinctive when compared to most other modern governments, such as Great Britain which favors a more collective style of governance. The leadership possibilities of an individual American president are quite extensive. Greenstein posits that the ability of a president to capitalize on that potential will depend on six general leadership categories.

**Proficiency as a public communicator.** Greenstein (2000) found that of the 11 presidents he examined, only Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy, Reagan, and sometimes Clinton "when he is at his best" (p. 195) were excellent public communicators. He laments that many members of the clergy, numerous educators, and a large number of radio and television broadcasters have been better public communicators than most modern presidents. Yet this skill is seemingly a fundamental requirement for a transformational leader.

**Organizational capacity.** A president must assemble a large team upon which he or she will need to depend on for four to eight years. Personnel selection and the ability to continually inspire and motivate the members of the president's team are obviously critical factors. Developing and maintaining the respect, loyalty, and admiration of those team members is essential for generating the necessary energy to persevere through long



and difficult legislative struggles. Greenstein (2000) cites Eisenhower, Kennedy, Ford, and Bush as high achievers in this category, and list Johnson, Nixon, Carter, and Clinton at the bottom. He suggests that Eisenhower was the best of the 11, and that unfortunately there appears to be little institutional memory of this president's unique organizational skills (Ponder, 1999). An underlying assumption of this study was that a lack of institutional memory is a very impactful and prevalent problem in the realm of presidential leadership.

**Political skill.** Citing Neustadt's *Presidential Power* (1960, 1990), Greenstein (2000) argues that Lyndon Johnson was the quintessential example of Neustadt's skillful politician; a modern day Machiavellian operator. He noted that within hours of Kennedy's assassination Johnson was already gearing up the legislative machinery that would permanently transform America's political landscape. Conversely, Greenstein portrays Jimmy Carter as an inept and incompetent president who lacked even the most basic leadership skills. Their respective legislative accomplishments seemingly confirm his assessment. However, it was my intent to assess the Carter energy episode with a blank slate and arrive at independent conclusions.

**Policy vision.** Greenstein (2000) suggests that there are two elements of policy vision. The first is the capacity to inspire. Because of their aforementioned rhetorical gifts, Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Reagan were the leaders in this category. Second, he mentions the explicitness of their policies. Here Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan were the standouts. However, Greenstein goes on to assign value to a president's ability to maintain a consistent and predictable viewpoint that serves as a political anchor, and compares it to a pragmatist type who deals only in the moment and is not guided by a

focused vision. He cites George H. W. Bush as an example of a vision-challenged president.

**Cognitive style.** As a former engineer, Jimmy Carter tended to break issues up into their component parts. This methodical but narrow form of analysis did not produce a circumspect or “big picture” type of vision (Greenstein, 2000). In contrast, when Eisenhower introduced his administration’s deliberations on Dien Bien Phu, he offered an insightful observation and stated that the jungles of Indochina would “absorb our divisions by the dozens” (Burke and Greenstein, 1989, p. 32).

Strategic intelligence or cognitive intelligence, which is only one of the six factors that Greenstein (2000) enumerates as critical, was most noteworthy in the Nixon administration. Two years before he was elected president, Nixon had laid out grand plans for his presidency. It included ending the war in Vietnam, establishing a balance of power with the Soviet Union, and opening a serious dialogue with China. All were accomplished by the end of his first term. One might argue that perhaps these accomplishments would also fall into the category of policy vision. Greenstein contrasts the “paucity of major accomplishments” (p. 183) of Bill Clinton to that of Nixon, even though Clinton was a Rhodes Scholar, and he had the ability to absorb and process large amounts of information. Greenstein’s point is that not all intelligence is the same and that certain types of intelligence are more valuable for a president than others.

**Emotional intelligence.** The term emotional intelligence has been rather popular for the past few years. It has meant different things to different people. Greenstein defined it “as fundamentally free of distracting emotional perturbations” (p. 184). Other than Eisenhower, Ford, and Bush, he found that the remaining eight presidents had

varying degrees of emotional baggage. Greenstein wrote about emotional intelligence in 2003. It seems that the term has had a fluid definition over the years. I found many varying definitions, but the following best describes my own understanding, as well as how the term was used as a concept in this study, “Emotional intelligence represents an ability to validly reason with emotions and to use emotions to enhance thoughts” (Google, 2010).

Greenstein (2000) points out that there has never been a president who was totally proficient in all six categories. However, he generalizes that there are really only two broad components of personal character: thought and emotion. Many presidents were very intelligent in many ways. However, many had emotional handicaps that undermined their presidency. He notes Nixon, Carter, and Clinton as prime examples. As a final filter for judging a president or a presidential candidate, he concludes with the admonition, “beware of the contender who lacks emotional intelligence. In its absence, all else may turn to ashes” (p. 185).

More recently, the concept of social intelligence or the ability to determine how to approach a situation and what strategies to employ in an interpersonal situation (Roberto, 2011) has emerged. While there is not a convenient check list of factors that identify such a talent, it is a critical aspect of leadership for any president who must orchestrate an approach to multiple challenges simultaneously. This is perhaps an extension or broadening of Greenstein’s strategic intelligence.

Like Burns, Greenstein is acknowledged in the literature as one of the foremost authorities on presidential leadership. His work which goes beyond personality traits and

identifies specific skills was a useful tool in comparing President Carter's leadership actions to the existing theory of necessary skills.

Unfortunately, the literature is usually general in nature and not easily transferable to a specific situation. While most of the contemporary literature is in agreement about the reality of situational context as an important determinant of leadership choices, Jaques (1986) broadened the concept by offering a theory of stratified systems that suggests that the need for the degree of cognitive capability is different at various levels or positions. This would be true in the case of President Carter, who would be at the highest level, and the two congressional leaders whose range of responsibility would be limited to their respective constituent bodies. The appropriateness of President Carter's leadership choices that were specific to Tip O'Neill and Robert Byrd needed to be assessed given their position in the leadership chain.

There were three works in the literature that lent themselves as particularly useful tools for this specific study. First, was an instrument called The Leadership Profile: on Becoming a Better Leader Through Leadership That Matters (Sashkin and Sashkin, 2007). The authors offer a succinct synthesis of the leadership literature, which provides a researcher the ability to create a useful grid that highlights two categories of transactional leadership, and four categories of behavior and four categories of personal characteristics that together typically identify transformational leadership.

Within each of the ten general categories of leadership, the authors enumerated five specific scales. As a result, their questionnaire (TLP) poses 50 questions to a leader, as well as some of their followers or associates. It is intended to identify and score all of the elements of a participant's leadership attributes. While President Carter did not

answer the 50 questions himself, this study interpreted and then coded his direct communications with the congressional leaders into a grid that reflects all 50 leadership categories (Appendix 2).

“Transformation is not an event; it is a process” (Roberto, 2011, p. 27). While Sashkin (2007) provided an excellent tool for assessing personal leadership categories, there was also a need to assess the actual process of transformational leadership in its various conceptual stages.

The second work was that of Kurt Lewin (1951), whose work is “a fundamental paradigm that has governed all leadership work looking at how transformational leadership takes place: unfreezing, changing, and then freezing” (Roberto, 2011, p. 27). Most Americans, presumably including the two congressional leaders, were – and perhaps some still are - frozen in an attitudinal mindset about the use of energy that had been formed by decades of an overabundance of fossil fuel. Until that mindset was unfrozen, significant change was not going to happen.

If there had been a significant transformation within the American people about their use of energy, perhaps similar to that of Europe, the culture of America would have then refrozen into a new set of norms and redefined the status quo. If a subsequent culture changing event involving energy eventually came to supplant this latest change in the status quo, it too would first require an unfreezing cycle before it could refreeze into the new state of affairs.

This study attempted to ascertain if that all important first step of the transformational process was accomplished (or attempted) by President Carter. This presidential “input” would be critical to the eventual congressional “throughput” that

would eventually follow. Garvin (2000) offers four steps in the unfreezing process. While two are redundant with elements of TLP, two of the four are more general in nature, but specific to the process of transformation:

1. Challenge and examine existing attitudes, while developing a restlessness and unease with the status quo.
2. Broaden the worldview, ask new questions, look at new trends, and new facts.

These two fundamental steps are essential prerequisites to all significant social change. Until people feel that change is in their best interest and necessary, they typically tend to embrace the status quo. Transformational leaders must generate or create the dynamics that can unfreeze people's comfort zone with their current set of circumstances. Including these two steps in the analysis helped assess President Carter's approach to building a foundation upon which to begin building a case for implementing his energy proposal. The research data was assessed to see if these two steps were adequately addressed.

In addition to the 50 specifics of TLP and the first phase of the process of transformational leadership (unfreezing), an overall leadership process was included in the assessment. The literature offers many choices, most of which have significant overlap. I chose Harvard Business School scholar John Kotter's (1996) work because I believe it covered all of the important factors of the other theorists, yet it was also succinct, and thus perhaps more useful as a final funnel for the 52 other categories.

Kotter (1996) suggests there are three fundamental processes for effective leadership:

1. Setting a compelling direction, a vision for the future, and the appropriate strategies for how to get there.
2. Aligning people, communicating the direction, building a shared understanding, getting people to believe in the vision, and influencing people to follow the vision.
3. Motivating and inspiring people to enact the changes necessary to achieve the shared vision.

Kotter's (1996) three stages or processes are successive. Unless there is a compelling vision or goal, there is nothing with which to align, communicate, influence, motivate or inspire. The coding of the TLP and the two factors of the unfreezing process were organized first, and then they were assessed against Kotter's three phases of transformational leadership.

### **Summary**

With the existing theories of leadership, presidential leadership, non-incremental legislation, and social structures acting as a lens, along with extensive historical accounts of President Carter's attempt to secure passage of a major piece of transformational legislation providing an object to observe, there appeared to be an opportunity to conduct a search for possible new information about presidential leadership.

The abundance of existing literature and the extensive resources of the Carter Presidential Library demanded that this study perform a judicious selection and narrowing process in order to keep the size of the study within reasonable bounds. The final literature review was a reflection of that process. "Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured" (Creswell, 2003, p. 183).

The initial literature review offered a beginning point for reconstructing and analyzing President Carter's energy episode. It included seminal works on leadership, presidential leadership, the dynamics of pursuing non-incremental policy initiatives, social structures, and the history of the Jimmy Carter's presidential efforts as a leader in his quest to legislate a national energy policy.

The gap in the literature that this study attempted to fill is identifying, analyzing, and assessing the significant leadership aspects of that specific event. Applying leadership and presidential leadership theory to President Carter's actions offered the opportunity to identify theoretical congruence, incongruence, identify either an anomaly, or perhaps a new theory. After spending seemingly countless hours scouring the literature, it appeared to me that identifying, analyzing, and assessing President Carter's attempted leadership actions, on an issue that clearly demanded transformational leadership, and ascertaining if some of the current leadership theories in literature provide a proper explanation of the legislative outcome was the bull's eye of this study.



### **Chapter 3: Methods**

The over-arching problem that prompted this research was as follows: Why have most modern U.S. presidents (1976 – 2012) been unsuccessful in generating adequate (or sometimes any) bi-partisan congressional support which is optimal for securing passage of major non-incremental legislation? The purpose of this qualitative, historical case study was to explore President Carter’s leadership approach in his attempt to gain support of the two congressional leaders in his quest to pass his comprehensive energy plan (a significant, transformational, and non-incremental legislative initiative), as evidenced in his direct communication with the two leaders from the time of his inauguration to the time of the congressional vote.

Specifically, it focused on identifying presidential actions that were transactional and transformational in nature by analyzing President Carter’s direct communication with the two congressional leaders who he needed to navigate his energy bill through the congressional legislative process. The research question is: What was the nature of President Carter’s leadership approach as evidenced by direct communication with the two congressional leaders during his attempt to pass his comprehensive energy program between January 20, 1977 and November 8, 1978?

A proposition guiding this study was that in order to pass congressional legislation which is major and non-incremental in nature, and requires a cultural shift in the political landscape of America in a way that calls for individual sacrifice in order to benefit the country as a whole, an element of transformational leadership of the president that could inspire the congressional leaders, and ultimately a majority of the members of Congress is important.

Given the complexity of the congressional committee maze, priority assignments and even the timing of hearings, a major piece of legislation can easily be defeated, neutered, or delayed indefinitely if congressional leaders are not active supporters and legislative shepherds. While the American people, as well as the individual members of Congress, are important players in the political process, the two congressional leaders wield extraordinary power and influence over this process. Making sure that both are on board and active supporters of a specific piece of legislation would seem to be a critical early step in the legislative process.

For issues that require transformational changes in the American psyche, such as our fundamental attitudes toward our personal choices and uses of energy, the congressional leaders would need to become “true believers” in order to maximize the chances of their being a major factor in securing passage of the legislation. As such, this research focused specifically on President Carter’s communication approach to the two congressional leaders on this critical issue. It is only one of several components of the legislative process, but I feel that it may be the most important, which is why it is the only one that this study addressed.

The theoretical framework for this study describes a system (our government) which is dependent upon the processing of multiple inputs which eventually result in new outputs (Parsons, 1951). The leadership literature describes relationships that exist between leaders and followers (Sashkin, 2007). These concepts helped to inform the methodology by providing an appropriate context for understanding.

There are different philosophical assumptions, ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies that can guide a study. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), there are

two intellectual traditions. The first, sociological positivism is an objectivist approach that includes an ontological position of realism. This assumes that reality is external to an individual and made up of hard, tangible structures that are not created by the individual and exist “out there” whether or not a person is aware of them. This objective approach further assumes a positivist epistemology where the nature of knowledge is hard, real, and capable of being transmitted in tangible form and observed by an outside observer. Furthermore, a deterministic view of human nature assumes that man is a product of his environment and not a creator of it. A nomothetic methodology that is consistent with the objectivist, positivist assumptions would call for a quantitative, systematic protocol which might include surveys, personality tests, and questionnaires.

The second intellectual tradition, German idealism is based upon the premise that reality lies in the idea, not data of sense perception. It contends that the positivist’s models and methods of studying natural science are not useful for the study of human affairs. Instead, a subjectivist assumption calls for an ontological stance of nominalism which assumes that knowledge is a product of a person’s cognition. An anti-positivist epistemology posits that knowledge is not hard and tangible and must be obtained from a frame of reference of the participant – not an outside observer. This tradition also includes voluntarism as an assumption of human nature: man possesses free will and creates his own environment. To study knowledge from this tradition, an idiographic methodology would call for a researcher to immerse himself or herself “inside” of the situation in order to obtain subjective and impressionistic accounts typically found in journals, biographies, and journalistic records, This might call for conducting a qualitative case study. German idealism is the basic assumption that guided this study.

However, the literature can be a little confusing so it is important to differentiate the anti-positivist epistemology from that of the post-positivist. According to Creswell (2003), post-positivism reflects a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine outcomes, and that objective reality can be observed and measured by outside researchers using quantitative experiments. In essence, it calls for applying the scientific methods of the natural sciences to human affairs. The epistemological assumption for this study is primarily anti-positivist – not post-positivist. However, it is widely acknowledged that most studies lean more toward one approach or the other, and that there is a range between the two extremes where most studies reside.

An example of such an alternative process would be social constructivism (interpretivism) which seeks to gain a subjective conclusion by asking participants broad questions. Their answers are interpreted into the participant's meaning about the world – not the researcher's. This approach was not applicable to this study because most of the participants are no longer available to be interviewed.

### **Ontology**

There are hard and tangible facts that appear to frame the factual reality of the historical interaction between the key players who were at the forefront of the attempt to pass a national energy plan in the U.S. Congress. However the actual meaning of Jimmy Carter's words, gestures, letters, and memos, as well as his true intentions which were originated from his own personal reality, may have been received differently than he had intended.

Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Robert Byrd, the Majority Leader of the Senate each formed their perception of the reality of the situation

based upon their observations, insights, and language filters (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As a result, they may have each perceived the meaning of the same conversation, memo, or letter from the president in a different way. It is quite possible that in some instances there may have been three separate perceptions of the meaning and implications of the same piece of communication. What each man believed was the reality of the event, may in fact have been only his own reality.

Similarly, I developed a nuanced opinion about the attempts, existence, or effectiveness of President Carter's leadership communications based upon my own sense of reality. This study only observed direct and verifiable communication between President Carter and the two congressional leaders, and as a result, a case for an assumption of realism might be argued, yet the fact remains that understanding the true nature of personal communication is less than precise. Given that backdrop, nominalism was the ontological assumption that guided this study.

A nominalist approach is based upon the premise that the social world which exists outside of an individual's cognition is made up of an assortment of names, labels, and concepts such as (in this case) energy independence, Congress, vision and leadership. These tools or artificial creations provide a convenient way to facilitate describing, making sense of, and working with the external world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Given the significantly different backgrounds of President Carter, Speaker O'Neill and Senator Byrd, the effectiveness of their communication may have been challenging.

### **Epistemology**

Congruent with nominalism, an anti-positivist epistemology led the methodology. This study assumed that President Carter's leadership actions played a major role in the

eventual outcome. An analysis of the direct communications between the three key figures, while subjective in nature, did bring some definition to the nature of President Carter's leadership approach in this instance. The data provided a plausible account of the critical communication that took place between the president and the two congressional leaders, but it could not account for every word and nuance.

### **Methodology**

The ontology, epistemology, and theoretical philosophy of voluntarism collectively indicated an historical case study methodology. In a case study:

The researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded in time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. (Creswell, 2003, p. 15).

"History is a dynamic process" (Brundage, 2002, p. xi). Much has already been written about President Carter's attempt to legislate a comprehensive solution to the U.S. energy problem. However, specific research that explores the dynamics of a possible transformational leadership relationship between the president and the two congressional leaders during that process still remained a fertile learning opportunity. An historical case study provided the best method for researching such an event:

The principal advantage of historical research is that it permits investigation of topics and questions that can be studied in no other way. In addition, historical research can make use of more different kinds of evidence than most other methods. It thus provides an alternative and perhaps richer source of information

on certain topics than can be studied with other methodologies (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2002, p. 555).

Attempting to pass a legislative bill does not happen in a vacuum. There are always numerous other bills, potential bills, personalities, budget considerations, national and world events, lobbyists, special interest groups, media, the ever changing mood of the American people, as well as countless other factors that collectively create a contextual environment that must be taken into account when analyzing the presidential/congressional leadership relationship. This is another one of the reasons a case study approach was chosen. “You would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (Yin, 2003, p. 13).

A qualitative, historical case study of this integral piece of President Carter’s legislative attempt was also chosen as the research method because “this format [substantive case report (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)] calls for an explication of the problem, a thorough description of the context or setting and the process observed, a discussion of important elements, and finally, lessons to be learned” (Creswell, 1998, p. 221). Yin (2003) concurs: “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or a set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.”

Lincoln and Guba (1985), state that “it seems likely that the naturalistic inquirer will always wish to chronicle and render at the factual level, to engage in interpretation for research, and, in the case of evaluation and/or policy analysis, to engage in evaluation” (p. 361). Their statement sums up the essence of this inquiry.

In order to understand the implications of a particular presidential communication, it was necessary to place it in the context of the larger picture of the legislative process. As a result, a general story line of the energy bill's legislative journey was provided. Within that broad evolving event, specific instances of direct communication from President Carter to either or both of the congressional leaders were isolated and analyzed. Documents which detail communications from President Carter to the two congressional leaders, and which would meet all three of the following criteria were selected for this study:

1. Clearly linked to the enactment of a comprehensive national energy bill.
2. Direct communication between the president and the two congressional leaders.
3. Direct communication that took place from the day President Carter was sworn into office until the day of the final congressional vote (January 20, 1977 to November 9, 1978).

The data were limited to only verifiable communication because of the cloud of obscurity that envelops a White House after a president leaves office. Since the famous White House tapes helped to bring down President Nixon, there has been a clear trend of modern presidents to leave as little as possible in the way of a primary source trail related to controversial or failed initiatives. Fortunately however, the public records are reasonably complete up to and including the President Carter years (Riley, 2008).

### **Data Collection**

The method of obtaining the data was to conduct an organized records search at the Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia. The records at the library are



extensive, and it is the storage center for all of the official documents that were retained from the Carter presidency. Researchers and scholars now have full access to all of the historical data. Additionally, the library staff were helpful in navigating through the volumes of archival material.

The first step of the data collection was to locate the direct communications from President Carter to the two congressional leaders, organize them in chronological order, and then delimit them by applying the selection criteria of the sample documents. According to Amenta (2008), “In narrative causal accounts, as opposed to standard variable-based discussions, when something happens is often key to its influence in the process of major change” (p. 352).

An extensive investigation was conducted over a period of several months. Written documents, audios tapes and videos were collected in order to triangulate the data. The data collection eventually led to the emergence of eleven oral presentations and ten written documents which were evidence of direct communication between the president and the two congressional leaders. These specific records were selected because collectively they embody the totality of President Carter’s leadership communication actions in his quest for a national energy policy with those two key Congressmen. A review of these documents provides a reader with a circumspect account of the president’s leadership approach in this particular instance.

The technology of that era played a role in both the quantity and diversity of communication options. Television was not nearly the presidential tool and medium that it is today, no plethora of cable television networks was scrambling to fill its daily show content, and the Internet had not yet developed. There were no cell phones, fax machines,

personal computers, or other more modern tools for communication. By today's standards, communication options were very limited. The 24/7, 365, ubiquitous expectations of the constant and continuous information age had not yet developed. It was a different time, and the flow of political communication was consistent with that time period.

Initially I was surprised that I found less direct communication than I had anticipated. Yet as the context of the era began to redefine itself during the research, the limited documentation became understandable. The research was interesting for many reasons. Typewriters and teletypes were modern tools and Twitter was still waiting to be invented.

To begin work at the library, I was first required to be cleared as a researcher. Once that had been accomplished, a rigid protocol was enforced when reviewing material. I was required to leave all personal items outside of the research room in a locker. The library provided pencils, paper, and the use of a copy machine.

There were large walls of reference books that provided the system for identifying the documents I requested for review. Once a request(s) was noted and submitted to an archivist, it was retrieved and brought into the research room on a metal cart. The records are stored in heavy cardboard boxes that are about six inches deep and accommodate legal size documents. There is a limit of 15 containers at any one time on a cart, and only one container may be opened at a time.

The reference books made identifying and locating the research material a fairly simple procedure. There were specific file containers that held all correspondence between the president and numerous individuals. I was able to isolate a person such as

Tip O'Neill or Robert Byrd and request all written communication between President Carter and that person. These files contained all of the written communication on all matters. I had to handle virtually every piece of written communication in order to find the ones of specific interest, which was not a simple procedure.

Speeches, statements, and speechwriters all had similar reference books that facilitated locating desired files. Once again however, the resultant file folders were voluminous and resulted in a time consuming and painstaking process of turning thousands of pages while on a hunt for energy related communication.

While the reference books directed me to a specific document, there may have been hundreds of unrelated documents in each container. This brought two conflicting dimensions to the records search. First, as mentioned before it required me to look at every document in order to find the item being sought. This made for a very slow and tedious process. However, the second aspect of this laborious method was advantageous. It brought to light the incredible number of additional issues that had been simultaneously vying for presidential and congressional attention.

Natural curiosity motivated me to begin reading some of these other seemingly unrelated documents. However, it actually helped to provide the contextual setting that enveloped the dynamics of the energy legislation. Additionally, it helped to contrast President Carter's leadership approach with the energy proposal with that of other major issues such as the Panama Canal Treaty and the Camp David Peace Accords. This provided a sharp contrast and provided definition to his significantly different leadership approach with the energy legislation.

The largest body of data that was analyzed included speeches given by President Carter which were directed, at least in part, toward both House Speaker O'Neill and Senate Leader Byrd. This included his inaugural speech, presentations to joint sessions of Congress, press conferences, worksite briefings, as well as televised addresses to the American people. Surprisingly, the research found that public speeches represented the vast majority of President Carter's leadership actions on this particular legislative proposal.

I later came to learn that this was true on nearly all of President Carter's legislative initiatives – both prior to and after becoming president. In 1977, he published *Jimmy Carter: The Man Behind the Speeches*. It is a book that contains dozens of his favorite speeches that he had given during his political career. In the book, he estimates that he delivered over 3,000 speeches before he was elected president. He considered himself a top-rate speaker, and making speeches was his primary and nearly exclusive leadership tool.

One of the strategic methods of researching the speeches was to first read the evolution of the speech as influenced by a dozen or so speechwriters and confidants in its multiple stages, read the resultant transcript, then listen to the audio if one existed, and finally watch the video if one existed. The purpose of the latter two stages was to determine if President Carter's personal style added to or detracted from his message, which it did. It was especially interesting to watch a video after first listening to the audio tapes. My impressions of each were significantly different.

For both the audio and video files, I was placed in a very small room. An archivist set up the equipment and I was then allowed to listen or watch in total isolation. This

seemed to add a sense of focus and drama. The videos have not yet been converted to discs and it takes about 45 minutes for the videos, which have been stored in deep refrigeration, to reach room temperature before being played in the video equipment. Rereading the written script while the audio was still fresh in my mind provided me a specific initial impression before then watching the video.

It is worth noting that televised presidential presentations were still a relatively new phenomenon in the 1970's, and not yet a well-honed and polished leadership tool. Similarly, the written documents were typed on typewriters - not computers. A large number of the memos were hand written. An awareness of the technology of the times helps remind a researcher of my age (64) of the cultural context of the times as well. The fierceness of future world-wide economic competition had not yet manifested itself in a way that contributed to a general societal understanding about the need for energy independence. Given that fact, coupled with the fact that President Carter felt lobbying citizens directly, rather than appealing to congressional leaders directly, resulted in these speeches being the most important element of his leadership actions. His public addresses needed to be powerful and inspirational enough to create a transformational change within the American people and lead them to embrace a completely new approach to their uses, choices, and costs of energy: in a way that was personally difficult, but inherently moral, because President Carter believed it was for the public good.

President Carter made many addresses at worksites, press conferences, and television interviews, as well as speeches directly to Congress and to the American people on national television. The content of his message was obviously repeated more than once. Eleven specific oral presentations were selected for the data review because of

their significance, their content, and because it was clear that both congressional leaders would have heard the address. Collectively they captured the essence, message, and feeling of the President's oral leadership actions.

Reading the dialogue of President Carter, the two congressional leaders, and numerous other significant players on seemingly unrelated legislative issues provided a thick and rich contextual setting. Locating the documents specific to the first energy legislation (which were ultimately selected for review) would be very easy to duplicate.

### **Data Analysis**

Content analysis was used to analyze the data for this study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), "Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications" (p. 482). The units of analysis were words, sentences, paragraphs, gestures, posture, facial expressions and voice inflections from written, audio, and video samples studied. After completing the records search at the Carter Presidential Library, there were 11 speeches and 10 written documents that met the selection criteria and were selected for thematic analysis. Six of them also had an audio and video version that added additional context and provided for a thick and rich description of the event. As Boyatzis (1998) noted, "Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. A theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (p. 4).

A strategy for analysis was developed for this study based on the dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership as described by Sashkin, (2007). A leadership grid was designed as a tool to facilitate a systematic approach of analyzing the

21 documents by using the same criteria for each. Sashkin's TLP (2007) identifies 50 widely acknowledged leadership scales that might be found in various leadership endeavors. It includes 10 individual scales for detecting transactional leadership and 40 individual scales which identify transformational leadership (see Appendix 1). Providing this comprehensive list was the sole purpose of the TLP in this study. Additionally, Garvin's (2000) first two steps of the unfreezing process (which must precede a transformational event) were also included in the grid because of the transformational nature of the energy legislation.

This produced a list of 52 potential leadership scales (A – ZZ) which were listed on the left side of the grid and provided a method of coding each of the 21 documents. Each of the 21 documents selected for review was assigned a number. The numbers (1 - 21) that run from the top left of the grid and continue to the top right identify each document. These documents included speeches (1 - 11) and written personal correspondence (12 - 21). The resultant grid which lists the 52 leadership scales on the left side and the 21 documents across the top, created 1092 blank boxes (see Appendix 2) which became the tool for coding all of the documents.

After reading each document (and listening to an audio and watching a video when available), I went back through the entire document looking for each of the 52 scales of leadership (A-ZZ in Appendix 1) – one scale at a time. If I sensed that a leadership scale was present, I reread Sashkin's description of that scale and then reread the sentence or paragraph in the document. Whenever I felt I could clearly identify the presence of one of the scales in a document, I coded it by blackening the appropriate box on the leadership grid. In some cases, I had to reread the text more than once in order to

determine if the leadership scale was truly resonating with me. If it was not sending a strong signal I did not blacken the box. The results of coding all 21 documents in the same manner are shown in Appendix 3. This created a one page visual analysis which quickly identifies recurring instances of President Carter's leadership, as well as areas of leadership which were less utilized. The grid identifies certain themes, such as confident leadership (HH), which were a recurring staple of the Carter leadership model. The results of the grid were then assessed against Kotter's (1996) three general stages of leadership. It is here in the final analysis that the findings of the study took shape.

Kotter (1996) points out that there is a difference between management which produces order and consistency and leadership which produces change and movement (in Northouse, 2004, p. 9). To produce effective leadership, he described three major requisite actions:

1. **Establishing direction:** setting a compelling direction, a vision for the future, the appropriate strategies for how to get there.
2. **Aligning people:** communicating goals, seeking commitment, building shared understanding, getting people to believe in the vision, building teams and coalitions, and influencing people to follow the vision.
3. **Motivating and inspiring:** energizing and empower people to enact the changes necessary to achieve the shared vision and satisfy unmet needs.

U.S. presidential leadership is quite unique in many ways and some of the scales would typically not be applicable in a presidential setting. The purpose of using the grid was to identify the ones that did apply to the Carter presidency when it was pursuing its



energy legislation with congressional leaders. Because Sashkin's TLP is an all-inclusive list of leadership criteria, it provided a method of analyzing the documents under review.

### **Statement of Subjectivity**

When I engaged in this study, I naturally had the possibility of having certain biases. I had voted for Jimmy Carter in 1976, and I had also lived through and was affected by the event under study. My worldview has been shaped by many factors including having lived abroad for 12 years, owning a business for 40 years, and having served as a four-term elected official. As a former politician, I have a personal sense of the legislative process and also a personal view of the dynamics of political activities. However, I made a conscious decision to make every attempt to bracket those factors and to suspend my personal biases. Whenever I read a document, I also gave conscious thought to whether or not I might be assessing the data from a position of predisposition.

### **Trustworthiness**

As suggested by Creswell (2003), and Lincoln and Guba (1985), a thick and rich description of the pertinent data was included to provide readers the ability to inject their own subjectivity, come to their own conclusions, and to add trustworthiness to the study. Additionally when possible, multiple sources (written, audio, and video) of data were utilized to provide triangulation.

Since I was the only researcher, I wanted to further expand and insure the trustworthiness of the process. As a result, a peer review process was also conducted on a portion of the data to provide inter-coder reliability. The peer used the same Sashkin (2007) leadership scales for coding. I chose a 41 year-old professional woman who was not old enough to have any personal recollection of the events, of a different gender than

myself, familiar with this study, and with whom I have had many prior professional conversations that did not always end with mutual agreement. I felt her intellect, objectivity, independence, worldview, and interest in the study made her an excellent choice.

The peer review was limited to written documents because their availability. Requiring the peer to physically go to the Carter Presidential Library and engage in the process of becoming a cleared researcher in order to watch the videos and listen to the audios was not logistically practicable. Since speeches comprised the majority of President Carter's communication to the congressional leaders, I had the peer reviewer select three speeches at random. She also selected one written item of communication.

The peer reviewer coded four documents by using the Sashkin Leadership Grid. Her findings were similar but not the same. Overall, she noted more instances of leadership than I had. With few exceptions, she noted the same scales that I had listed, but she also cited additional scales. We discussed our findings and her input persuaded me to reconsider a few of the transformational categories that I had not noted before. Her input resulted in the addition of three leadership scales being marked on the grid which are included in the discussion in chapter five. However even after an in-depth conversation, we did not reach agreement on a few scales.

The peer reviewer listed "Knows the rewards that people value" (I) and "People are clear on goal attainment and reward expectations" (J) for three documents (9, 11, and 16). I had only marked (J) for one of the three documents (16). Similarly for "Grabs people's attention, focusing on important issues of discussion" (M) and "Is able to get complicated ideas across clearly" (O), she noted all four documents, whereas I had only

noted (M) for one document (9). The peer reviewer marked “Shares power and authority with others” (NN) and “Considers how a specific plan of action might be extended to benefit of others” (OO), for all four documents. I did not mark any of them. She also listed a few stray marks for a document here and there which I had not noted, but the differences listed above were the ones that were notable.

While the peer concurred with nearly all of the scales I had marked, I was surprised that she noted additional items in both transactional leadership (Reward Equity) and in three different areas of transformational leadership (Communication, Follower-centered, and Visionary). There was concurrence in the majority of our analysis, but there was also a slight difference that brought attention to the subjective nature of personal interpretation. Based on our conversation, it seems the peer was more willing to give the president the benefit of the doubt. If I did not feel a distinct association with a scale I did not mark it. “Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive,” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Our post-review conversation was valuable and it did result in some, but not all, of our differences becoming aligned.

I was reassured because there was only a slight margin of difference between my findings and those of the peer reviewer. Perhaps the additional areas of leadership that resonated with her but not with me explain why so many people who listen to the same politicians arrive at different conclusions in the voting booth. Reading the same words in a speech or a letter may create a different meaning for different readers.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Public Speeches: Written, Audio, and Video Communications

**January 20, 1977 (document 1) – (written, audio, and video data).** When reading this inaugural speech, I noticed that it was short by historical standards. It did make general statements about poverty, injustice, avoiding future military conflicts or limiting nuclear weapons, and there was no mention of any specific plans or proposals. Listening to the audio tapes did not enhance the speech. I did not find President Carter's delivery especially effective and it did not add additional power or energy to his written message. I found his speaking style to be unusual in that he accented or highlighted words in a sentence different that I would have myself. I found this slightly distracting as I listened.

When watching the video, I was reminded that it was an early period during the evolution of the television industry (1970's). Most of the event was filmed from a distance and the president was indistinguishable from other members of the crowd behind him. The few close-up clips that did occur were not actually very close and the cameraman directly behind the president was very distracting. An American citizen watching this event was probably no more inspired than if they had read or listened to the speech. This was due to both the media's handling of the presentation and the president's own pedestrian performance.

Ironically for the previous three months prior to the inauguration, the country had endured record cold weather east of the Rocky Mountains. In his inaugural speech on a bitter cold day the president did not mention energy, but after the speech he and his family retreated to a viewing stand that was warmed by a solar-powered heater. It might

have been a great opportunity to reference future opportunities for energy and to have used the solar panel as a visual tool to connect his (eventual) message with the American people on the issue of energy.

Yet while his administration was already feverishly at work designing a sweeping and fundamental change in the country's cultural habits with its use of energy, within the first minute of the speech he said, "I have no new dream to set forth today." He also went on to say that in the future he would be making mistakes and displaying his weaknesses. While these are certainly issues for every human being, the leadership literature does not advise accentuating them or reminding everyone of one's personal frailties as a method of instilling or generating confidence.

While there were general references to national strength, idealism, and freedom, there were no new collective visions, common goals, or national challenges offered that could have set the stage for future transformational leadership. He did score well on the Transformational Behavioral category of Caring Leadership (V, W, X, and Y). It seemed clear that he had a genuine concern for the American people and that those concerns would help guide his future actions, "Our energy program will be fair and predictable."

He also exuded a general sense of self-confidence (HH). The Transformational Characteristics of Culture-Building Leadership (TT, UU, VV, and WW) were noted when he made a general case for the need for national unity, values, and shared beliefs, "We've met challenges before, and our nation has been stronger after the challenge was met." He cited the Bible on several occasions as the source of his convictions for those ideals. Citing his high school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman, he added, "We must adjust to changing times, and still hold on to unchanging principles." He mentioned the need for

change multiple times, which would be a first step in the unfreezing process (YY and ZZ).

The strong themes of President Carter's first speech as president were in the areas of Caring Leadership, Self-confidence, and Culture Building.

**January 21, 1977 (document 2) – (written data).** The very next day, President Carter announced that the country was facing an energy crisis, that his administration was going to propose a comprehensive energy program in the near future, and that in the meantime everyone should turn the thermostats on their heaters down to 65 degrees. A major problem was introduced, and instead of providing a “can do” optimism that held the promise of a realistic solution, the country was told instead “Today is a painful reminder that our energy problems are real and cannot be ignored.” There was nothing in the address that would have been considered transformational in nature, motivating or inspiring. While he generated a sense of confidence (HH), the only other leadership category noted for this event was the unfreezing process (YY and ZZ) when he stated “The Nation needs a coherent energy policy and such a program will be formulated promptly.” This presentation was not a major step forward toward enacting a national energy program.

**January 30, 1977 (document 3) – (written data).** At a Westinghouse Plant in Pittsburg, President Carter delivered prepared remarks, answered questions about the energy situation, and like former President Teddy Roosevelt, made an attempt to catch the attention of the American people with theatrics. While Roosevelt had been carefully choreographed and pictured next to a giant piece of earth moving equipment when promoting the idea of America building the Panama Canal, President Carter announced to

the country that “I have on heavy underwear, and the White House is cold inside.” Most Americans probably did not jump at the prospect of being cold as a solution for the energy problem, yet that was their “first impression” of the administration’s approach to the problem.

While the president was confident (HH) during this address, the only other scale that was noted was (PP) when he attempted to tie a reduction in energy usage to the goal of maintaining higher employment, “If we can get everyone in this country to realize the seriousness of our problem and cut down drastically on heat consumption, we can keep tens of thousands of Americans employed.” This presentation addressed other national concerns besides energy and was not a major turning point for the president’s energy agenda.

**February 2, 1977 (document 4) – (written, audio, and video data).** From the White House library, President Carter gave a report to the American people. Energy was the first of several national issues that were addressed. In this “fireside chat” reminiscent of one of President Franklin Roosevelt’s best leadership tactics, President Carter wore a cardigan sweater and was seated in a chair next to a fireplace. Reversing his recent campaign rhetoric, he stated emphatically, “Our program will emphasize conservation.” In addition to being confused by this quick change of direction by a president who had promised to always tell the truth, the American people who were still reeling from Watergate and distrust of politicians in general, might have begun to question his candor. As always, the congressional leadership was keeping an eye on the mood of the American people (voters).

This address was critical because it was still very early in the legislative process and its effect on the American people could be decisive in establishing (or not) a solid foundation of public support. Incredible attention was paid to this event by the speechwriters and inside operatives who were part of the speech preparation team. Iteration after iteration eventually evolved into a final product.

When reading the speech I did not feel inspired or transformed, but I did find myself leaning in the direction of the president's vision. When I then listened to an audio of the speech I felt less inclined to support the agenda. The president's nearly monotone delivery was a negative factor for me. Finally, after watching the video (and again hearing the president speak) I found myself leaning in the other direction. President Carter sat motionless (except for his lips), spoke in an unemotional tenor almost robotically, and seemed to smile artificially at inappropriate times. I found that the more President Carter was part of the message, the less I was inclined to support the legislation.

The president appeared confident (HH), seemed to suggest sharing power (shared sacrifice), (NN), and attempted to lay a foundation for building a culture of change, modeled core values, developed a shared sense of what was important and how we should work together. "All of us must learn to waste less energy" (TT, UU, VV, and WW), and went on to add, "There is no way that I, or anyone else in the government can solve our energy problem if you are not willing to help." Similarly he tried to facilitate a melting or unfreezing of America's attitude toward its use of energy by calling for the need for change on multiple occasions (YY and ZZ).



President Carter's theme of building a common culture of shared sacrifice is one of his most consistent calls for action in all of his addresses. My perception of his self-confidence is also a regular occurrence in nearly every presentation until just prior to the congressional vote.

**March 1, 1977 (document 5) – (written data).** In a message to Congress, which certainly had the attention of Tip O'Neill and Robert Byrd, President Carter explained his proposed legislation which would eliminate several overlapping and competing agencies, all of which were involved in varying degrees with energy regulation. This was consistent with his campaign promise to overhaul the government regulatory system, but it all emanated from within the administration and no outsiders (including members of Congress) were involved in the planning process, and thus they had no stake in the outcome. The regulatory simplification was not packaged or leveraged as a piece of a much larger vision that would ultimately solve the country's energy problem. While meritorious, the president's presentation was unemotional, fact-driven, and did not further the cultural transformation which would be necessary for subsequent energy proposals. It is doubtful that this speech—or any of the other prior speeches—had a profound effect upon Robert Byrd.

The president did confidently communicate a clear sense of priorities (HH and LL), explaining how his plan would benefit all Americans (OO) “The legislation (regulatory reform) I am submitting today will bring immediate order to this fragmented system:” Then in a typical Carter format he elaborated at length on eight major points. While not stated in an explicit way, I did feel that implicitly he was attempting to build consensus (XX) for the need to embrace a cultural change (YY and ZZ).

**April 18, 1977 (document 6) – (written, audio, and video).** When I read this speech, I was initially drawn toward the president’s dramatic outline of the issue. However as I continued to read I found myself having to work at staying interested. A seemingly endless list of statistics and dismal facts made it a chore to read and I had lost my initial enthusiasm. By the time I had finished reading the final ten principles I was no longer focused on the essence of the message. Listening to the audio produced a similar reaction. Once again I was drawn in by the dramatic opening, but being relieved of the role of being an active reader, I found myself mentally drifting when the litany of facts, numbers, and ten point plans were recited in an unenthusiastic fashion.

Watching the video produced a negative reaction. Sitting behind his desk in the Oval Office which had been completely cleared of papers, pens, or notepads, President Carter wore a light colored suit and nondescript tie with his hands clasped in front of him. His expression was stern and the camera focused close up on his head and shoulders from a position directly in front of him.

“Tonight I want to have an unpleasant talk with you about a problem that is unprecedented in our history.” In the televised address to the American people (quite new at the time) President Carter’s attempt to lead a cultural revolution began with negative, downbeat, and uninspiring prognosis – we are running out of energy and we better get used to it. While watching him speak, the words seemed to have a different affect that when I had read or listened to them on audio tape.

He also went on to chide the American people, “Ours is the most wasteful nation on Earth. We simply must balance our demand for energy with our rapidly shrinking resources.” A choice of words can be an important decision for multiple reasons: impact,

fallout, and how it may affect potential allies such as congressional leaders. This was not the type of dialogue that most Congressmen would want to be associated with, and yet it was those very politicians who would ultimately have to vote for the legislation.

It appeared that he had the entire speech memorized because he looked directly at the camera during the entire speech and his eyes never moved. Other than his lips, he had nearly no other body movement. The only exception was that occasionally he would lift one index finger briefly while making a point, but his other fingers were still clasped together in front of him. He spoke in a somewhat unusual or unique cadence, and it was noticeable that his unemotional voice did not match the urgency of his message. Strangely at one point he looked down, paused, and then looked up wide eyed but continued his presentation. This one-time digression from looking directly into the camera was seemingly unrelated to any point he was making. I found after watching other more successful speeches delivered in front of live audiences that President Carter was not well served by attempting to talk to a camera while seated in a chair and alone in a room. The dynamics simply did not work for him and I believe hurt his message. His stiff and unemotional demeanor was not endearing or motivating and it appeared staged and unnatural.

Some of the video speeches at the Carter Library included reactions of commentators from the three major networks at that time (CBS, NBC, and ABC), and sometimes included interviews with congressional leaders to get their reactions as well. Bob Schieffer of CBS News, called the speech “somber” and noted that even political opponents like Ralph Nader and Bill Brock (chairman of the Republican Party) had found (negative) agreement on this speech.

At this crucial stage before the specific legislation was even public, Robert Byrd and Tip O'Neill were certainly taking a reading of the reaction of their constituents (both voters and Congressmen). Being correct and being effective do not always go hand in hand. Sometimes both can be accomplished simultaneously. Sometimes a choice of how to report or package the truth will determine the degree of effectiveness of the message.

A consistent and reoccurring theme in most of President Carter's communication was stressing the negative in a way that it appeared he perversely felt it was the honorable thing to do. For example, in what would be the best opportunity for the president to connect with the American people in a transformational manner, the president did not seem to understand that in his national address it would be absolutely critical to project a positive vision, create an initial momentum, and establish a leadership bond with his potential followers (Kotter, 1996).

His head speechwriter, Jim Fallows, wrote the following memo to President Carter on the morning of the speech:

Jim Schlesinger is very worried about your words "cowardly and selfish." He points out that Roosevelt deliberately chose to say "ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed" instead of "ragged, hungry, and poor." Your words don't bother me, but if you want to restate this positively you could say: "We must be courageous and selfless if we hope..."

The best Jimmy Carter could do to force himself to be more positive was to change "cowardly and selfish" to "selfish and timid" which was still a far cry from the positive suggestions of "courageous and selfless." "Selfish and timid" were the final words chosen by President Carter himself, and delivered by him in his address to the nation.

After years of research, including reading several books written by Jimmy Carter, it is apparent to me that his fixation on the negative is clearly a critical part of his attitudinal worldview and part of the essence of who he is as a man. It is also without question a key ingredient of his leadership style.

This particular speech was critical because of its content, timing, mood of the message and especially because he was talking directly to the American people by the means of his best leadership tool: a speech. This address to the nation was the equivalent of a Presidential Super Bowl. If President Carter was ever going to create a groundswell of support from the American people and eventually Congress, it had to be accomplished quickly. Yet the ten point plan that he announced offered no new positive vision, virtually no promise of better things to come, and primarily a gloomy resignation of the idea that America must learn to get along with less and pay more in taxes as well.

President Carter had stated on multiple occasions that he felt his best political strategy (for any major issue) would be to go directly to the American people, persuade them, and as a result, Congress would eventually follow the mood of the voters. He enjoyed retelling his ability to overpower the Georgia legislature in this manner when he was Governor of that state.

That approach was not only unconventional, but it also limited the president to a singular strategy. However, he chose to play that hand and told the American people that night “our decision about energy will test the character of the American people and the ability of the President and the Congress to govern the Nation.” He set a clear sense of priorities, grabbed people’s attention, showed he cared about people, and stated that his

plan would benefit others (L, M, V, and OO). “This effort will be the ‘moral equivalent of war,’ except that we will be uniting our efforts to build not to destroy.”

The president’s words appear to lean in the direction of a transformational message and he was strong in the area of culture-building and promoting the idea of change (VV, WW, XX, YY, and ZZ), “If you will join me so that we can work together with patriotism and courage, we will again prove that our great Nation can lead the world into an age of peace, independence, and freedom.” However, the details of his plan to reduce energy consumption and raise taxes as a method of enforcement seemed to contradict his words. It left many Americans thinking that his plan would instead build more government bureaucracy and destroy the way of life Americans had come to know. Lacking an alternative (better) vision because none was provided, many people had a negative reaction to the message. A specific vision of better prospects for the future that could inspire followers, one of the most important characteristics of any transformational leader, was glaringly absent.

**April 20, 1977 (document 7) – (written, audio, and video data).** Two days later, President Carter made another “make or break” speech to a joint session of Congress. After reading the speech, I felt tired of plowing through an incredible amount of facts, figures, and policy detail. It was dull and not motivating. Jimmy Carter was acknowledged by everyone who knew him to be very bright, detail oriented and prone to dwell on every aspect of a project. This was in keeping with his former role as an engineer. However, the content of his speeches reflected his propensity for detail, facts and figures. As a result, the speeches were less than inspiring for many people, including me.

The audio tapes of this speech seem to reveal a somewhat more impassioned speaker than the man who had stared unemotionally at the camera from the addresses in the Oval Office. I still found his cadence to be a little difficult to anticipate but I found myself more receptive to this speech when listening than when reading it. The excess detail was still an obstruction, but his delivery helped.

The video brought an additional dimension. Unlike the Oval Office speeches which started with silence and no introduction, the joint session of Congress opened with a long standing ovation. Instead of a sterile office with only the president in view, the Capitol offered the backdrop of hundreds of enthusiastic Congressmen and women (very few). Once again using his favorite leadership tool (a speech) President Carter had a chance to deliver an uplifting and inspiring presentation that might rouse the passions and spirits of America's lawmakers. A transformational message of hope, commitment to national goals, and faith in the creativity and resolve of the American people could have possibly lit the fires of confidence, stroked an emotional chord, and unleashed a desire for people to become willing followers of a leader worthy of their trust and allegiance. The stage was set, his target audience was listening intently, the scene was electric and the president began the speech of his life.

“This cannot be an inspirational speech tonight. I don't expect applause.” Then President Carter droned on at length with a plethora of dismal facts, negative statistics, and numerous admonitions. There was little room in the presentation for hope, optimism, and promise. The Congressmen to whom this speech was directed were essentially handed a politician's worst nightmare: a huge problem with no realistic positive solution.

There seemed to be a disconnection between the message and the presentation, and the former eventually overcame the latter. However, despite the initial promise of an unpleasant message, I felt President Carter made a very strong presentation. His voice was forceful with authority, he looked at the audience in every corner of the room, he seemed to possess a personal and presidential strength that was absent in the Oval Office speeches, and he was a little more animated. I felt that if he had offered a positive vision instead of facts, figures and admonitions, it could have been a dramatic highlight in American history.

The video also introduced some negative factors that did not exist in the written and audio texts. Vice President Mondale sat a few feet behind the president's right shoulder and Speaker O'Neill sat behind his left shoulder. At about the halfway point of the speech, O'Neill was frowning and Mondale was looking very tired. Their faces were a distraction; especially O'Neill's whose head at times seemed to be a second head on Carter's left shoulder. The Speaker's head was very large and even though he was a few feet behind the president, his head appeared larger than Carter's. The camera angles were inopportune. Additionally, the camera panned over to Majority Leader Byrd, whose arms were folded and whose body language did not appear receptive.

A few minutes later, the camera panned parts of the audience. Some were listening intently while others looked bored. Similarly when the camera resumed filming the President, Vice-President and Speaker, both Mondale and O'Neill looked like they were about to fall asleep. Their heads were both leaning to the side and their eyes were drooping. The cameraman made the decision to film Mondale's fight with sleep for an extended period of time. Whether it was because there was not a positive vision around



which to craft a speech, or because the president was perhaps enthralled with enormous amounts of facts and figures, despite Jimmy Carter's strongest presentation to date, the speech did not create the ground swell he had desired. In a commentary after the speech, NBC's John Hart referred to the proposal as a "complex layered web of regulation."

The president did provide numerous specifics (B), offered the reward of future strength as a nation as a goal (I and J) and he explained that his program was a multi-year endeavor (SS). As was normally the case, he confidently made the case for adjusting the nation's culture attitude toward energy and called for needed change (VV, WW, XX, YY, and ZZ). However, this night he added in an unusually terse way, "We prefer to reach those goals through voluntary cooperation..." but "penalties and restrictions to reduce waste are essential." My interpretation at this point was that the president's major strength and recurring theme was that of a culture-building president who intends to for the American people to "take their medicine" because it is the right thing to do.

**April 29, 1977 (document 8) – (written data).** In a statement at a public ceremony where he theatrically signed a letter of transmittal of the energy legislation draft to House Speaker O'Neill and Vice-President Mondale, who was President of the Senate, President Carter boasted that "It's one of the most complicated messages or legislative packages that a President has ever sent to the Congress..." Complexity is not normally considered a plus. Conspicuously, there was not a copy, note, or similar document sent to Senator Majority Leader Byrd.

This opportunity to leverage the event was devoid of any leadership categories except self-confidence (HH) and unfreezing (YY and ZZ) when he referenced "this momentous step forward" and away from the current state of affairs.

**November 8, 1977 (document 9) – (written, audio, and video data).** The energy legislation had become bogged down, contentious, and in serious jeopardy. House Speaker O’Neill had adroitly maneuvered the administration’s proposal through the House intact as a singular “take it or leave it” bill and secured approval. However in the Senate, Majority Leader Byrd had split the bill into six pieces for committee review and it was unraveling rapidly. The effects of special interest groups, individual senators, and media pressure resulted in a final Senate version of the bill that bore little resemblance to the original proposal.

At this point, the significantly altered Senate version and the House version were sent to a joint conference committee to be hashed out into a final proposal. Knowing the bill was in serious trouble, President Carter decided to utilize his favorite leadership tool and address the nation once again on national television. He hoped he might motivate citizens to put pressure on their Congressmen.

The written version revealed another litany of facts, figures and admonitions. The audio offered a somewhat more energized president for the first few moments, but then he reverted back to the same unenthusiastic monotone that was characteristic of the first Oval Office address.

Someone in the White House had been at work attempting to package this Oval Office presentation in a better format than the first one. The president sat at the same desk, but instead of lamps on the tables behind him, this time an American flag was positioned behind his right shoulder and a dark blue flag with an eagle’s talon showing was positioned behind his left shoulder. A dark suit and blue shirt projected a stronger image. To add drama, the address was given on the evening of an election. The president

also explained that he had canceled a foreign trip because of the importance of this address.

While this speech was in many ways an improvement over his address to the nation six months earlier, for some reason President Carter was always intent on chiding, chastising and lecturing the American people on their bad behavior, “Our biggest problem, however, is that we simply use too much and waste too much. Although all countries could be more efficient, we are the worst offender.” Similarly, there seemed to always be a noticeable shortage of praise, reassurance, and optimism. Seemingly discounting all possibilities for a near-term solution to our country’s energy problem, he went on to add, “I hope that, perhaps a hundred years from now, the change to inexhaustible energy sources will have been made, and our Nation’s concern about energy will be over.” It is doubtful that many Americans were ready to wait a hundred years for a solution, and follow leadership in that direction.

The president attempted to grab attention by stating “With every passing month, our energy problems have grown worse” (L and M). He continued to repeat his pleas for the nation to come together around his plan for mutual sacrifice (VV and XX) and to let go of our old habits (YY and ZZ).

**January 19, 1978 (document 10) – (written, audio, and video data).** In his first State of the Union Address to a joint session of Congress, President Carter did not take the opportunity to promote his energy agenda in any meaningful way. When reading the draft, it was apparent that, while mentioned early on, energy was not a major focus of the speech. Energy was allotted less than 5% of the speech’s totality, and it was mentioned in a strictly perfunctory manner as if it was simply just one of dozens of bullet points on a

card. At this late stage of the game, President Carter may have resigned himself to the reality of the fate of his legislative center piece. He probably decided to spend his time, energy, and political capital on other agenda items.

The audio tapes revealed that the president's attempted joke about energy fell on nearly deaf ears, "One year ago tomorrow, I walked from here to the White House to take up the duties of President of the United States. I didn't know it then when I walked, but I've been trying to save energy ever since." The lack of hearty laughter after only two sentences into the speech did not bode well. Even as only a listener, it seemed to set a mood that was a bit uncomfortable and not one of mutual receptivity.

The video provided an additional dimension to the event. In his first State of the Union speech, the president wore a dark suit, blue shirt, and a multi-colored tie. What was immediately noticeable was that in just one year his hair had turned completely gray, though his presidential presence was still strong. After watching several speeches from both the isolated setting of the Oval Office and from the grand environment of the Capital, I believe the president was at his best in front of a joint session of Congress.

The high point of the speech was the discussion about the upcoming legislation for the Panama Canal Treaty. President Carter received a long and loud round of applause for what would eventually be a big legislative victory. The brief mention of energy received only a token acknowledgement. The low point of the speech was when the president stated emphatically, "But the fact remains that on energy legislation, we have failed the American people." It was not apparent at the time he spoke those words that he had created a big problem. Unlike the House, the Senate was not yet close to producing an energy package. Senator Byrd took the president's words as a barb aimed at him. On

the news shows after the speech, Senator Byrd angrily defended the Senate's pace of deliberations and reminded everyone listening that this problem had been around a long time and it would take time to deal with it.

Overall the speech had little to say about energy and thus it did not register with any of the leadership scales. Other issues such as the Panama Canal Treaty would have been noted for specific scales of leadership, but not energy. In fact the most telling quote of the entire speech came just prior to the discussion of energy, "Government cannot solve our problems, it can't set our goals, it cannot define our visions." While he said this in an attempt to promote a partnership relationship with the American people, in a time of crisis (which he had been declaring energy was for over a year) people turn to a leader for answers, direction and leadership. After reading, listening and watching this speech on multiple occasions, I felt strongly that it was a major setback for the president in his role as a leader (in regards to the energy legislation). Yet it also appeared to be a successful push for the upcoming vote on the Panama Canal Treaty. This speech was an excellent reminder of the complexity of the presidency. Compared to other modern presidents, President Carter had an extreme number of significant legislative proposals in the process simultaneously. The decision for allocating time, effort and political capital was clearly a factor that appeared to have impacted the president's address. This facet of leadership did not show up in the leadership scales, but I believe it was definitely an aspect of leadership consideration in this instance.

**April 20, 1978 (document 11) – (written data).** While Congress occupied itself with issues other than energy, President Carter's energy legislation languished. The media, the American people, and the president himself were becoming frustrated and

impatient. At an energy briefing with reporters he said, “We must have energy legislation without delay, and I will call on the Congress to fulfill its duty to the American people. Where legislation requires firmness, I will continue to be firm. When compromise is necessary, I will make *reasonable* compromises. And when it requires a special expression of the Nation’s interest, I will speak for that interest, above the special interests that have hindered our progress so far. The American people expect those same qualities from the Congress.”

REPORTER: “Sir, how long will you wait before you have to take administrative action if Congress doesn’t act?”

THE PRESIDENT: “I don’t know yet.”

This was President Carter’s last public appeal for the passage of the energy legislation. He had essentially given up on leading Congress and special interest groups, and had instead resorted to scolding and criticizing them. The only leadership category noted was the transformational scale of communicating a clear sense of priorities (L).

### **Written Communication between the President and Both Congressional Leaders**

While public speeches were far and away the most utilized presidential leadership tool during the Carter administration, there were some, though few, written documents to the congressional leaders that also comprised a small piece of the energy leadership landscape. These selected items were examined in the following order: joint communication with both congressional leaders, exclusive communication with Tip O’Neill, and finally exclusive communication with Robert Byrd.

**April 29, 1977 (document 12) – (written data).** At this early stage in the process, President Carter set the tone for his energy proposal, his style of communication,

and his penchant for austerity, penance, and propitiation. As a follow up to his national address of April 18, 1977 and his address to the joint session of Congress on April 20, 1977, the president sent a terse, seven sentence letter to the two congressional leaders. He confidently (HH) informed them that “I recognize that the measures proposed will impose burdens on all Americans, and that many of these measures will be highly controversial.” There was nothing genuinely optimistic in the communique. It did mention working together (L) as a clear priority, “I want to assure you that I and members of my administration will work closely with the Congress toward the prompt enactment of the National Energy Act so that we can together solve the energy problems facing our country.” It failed to cite a vision or a specific goal beyond passing the legislation that the country could collectively be working toward, such as energy independence (in the manner of President Kennedy) by the end of the decade, or some other clearly identifiable goal. It must have been assumed that passing the legislation was itself the ultimate goal (XX). In a general sense the letter was not a major leadership event in any of the leadership scales.

**June 3, 1977 (document 13) – (written data).** The president issued a statement at the signing ceremony of S.36 into law, which created new funding for energy research. The first sentence was upbeat, “I am pleased to sign S. 36, a bill which will authorize \$1.639 billion for the Energy Research and Development Administration’s nonnuclear programs in fiscal year 1977.”

The second sentence set the tone for the entire balance of the prepared statement, “There are however, two programs authorized in S.36 which cause me some concern.” From that point on, the president complained about what he did not like about the new

bill he had just signed into law. In speeches and in written communications, President Carter's leadership style was quickly showing itself to usually adopting "the glass is half empty" attitude. While his observations were nearly always accurate (my opinion), his approach to eliciting followership in attempting to improve the situation was consistently at odds with the leadership literature. He still retained his self-confidence (HH) but there were no other leadership categories that were noted.

**August 1, 1977 (document 14) – (written data).** In what began as his most conciliatory, cooperative, and appreciative statement to date, the president's written remarks that preceded the final House deliberations on the details on the energy bill gave a glimmer of hope that he was perhaps evolving as a transformational leader. With generous praise for all of the key players in the House, President Carter set a positive tone and confidently (HH) communicated his priorities by offering a specific five-point plan (L), and showed concern and care for his colleagues (V and W), "Each of these members themselves have shown, by putting their shoulders to the grindstone, that Congress shares with me a commitment to taking decisive action on our energy problem." He also explained in detail how the plan would benefit "those who need assistance" (OO), and once again made the case for building a cultural change (VV, WW, XX, YY, and ZZ). These last few scales of transformational culture-building and preparing the country for change are the most recurrent themes of leadership throughout the president's push for his energy legislation. Explicit and implicit calls for national unity as a precursor for upcoming change are nearly a constant in the president's communications.



However immediately after setting a positive and upbeat mood, he took the other tack and laid out his five key concerns. The first three involved lowering taxes on consumers of energy, an idea which he was adamantly against. The operative words or phrases in his remarks about these three issues were: “undermine,” “resist,” and “I do not believe.” The last two points called for raising taxes on energy consumers and his operative lines for those two items were, “I recommend positive action and I strongly support.” It is doubtful that his positive rhetoric for raising taxes was a rallying point for American citizens or congressional leaders. Alternatively, there was no counterbalancing promise of a reward for the new pain, no future vision to ameliorate the prospect of smaller paychecks, colder houses, and an ever growing feeling of losing the American dream. The statement did nothing to address any of those concerns of the American people.

The president’s transformational call for unity and change centered on not a compelling vision (Kotter, 1996), but instead a unified adjustment to an austere and less favorable future.

**January 19, 1978 (document 15) – (written data).** Usually a day or so after the State of the Union address to the American people, a written message is sent to Congress to expand, clarify, and promote the major agenda items. This was the last such report that was sent to Congress prior to the vote on the energy bill. It was the last opportunity to make a strong and perhaps impassioned case for the need for major cultural change, the viability of the energy proposal to meet the needs of the day, and to share a vision of how much better our lives would be once the plan was passed and implemented. None of these things were included.

There were a few brief, boilerplate remarks that repeated the same mantra that had so far been ineffective in garnering a wave of support – things are bad, and unless the legislation is passed, they are going to get worse. He did make a few brief remarks that showed he was concerned for Americans who were suffering through “the worst recession in 40 years” (V and W). The energy bill received no special attention, extra verbiage, or notable prominence. Even the president’s normally self-righteous demeanor and confidence were noticeably absent. The president’s usual calls for cultural change were also conspicuously missing. It appears that perhaps at this point he had resigned himself to the realistic prospects of his proposal and was directing his efforts toward other legislative proposals. Like the State of the Union Speech, this accompanying Annual Message to the Congress was primarily aimed at issues other than energy.

#### **Written Communication between President Carter and Speaker O’Neill**

On March 24, 1977, President Carter, his wife, Rosalynn, Tip O’Neill and Millie O’Neill dined together. This was an early opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the Speaker of the House and to begin paving the way for his main agenda item: a national energy program. Numerous staff memos were sent to the president in preparation for the occasion. Frank Moore provided an extensive and broad background perspective on the Speaker in order to optimize the president’s face-to-face time in an informal setting.

There are several noteworthy items that relate to that meeting. First, as would be the case on numerous occasions in the future, Speaker O’Neill sent a written letter of thanks the next day. His letter of March 25, 1977, like all subsequent letters did not mention any of the items of discussion from the prior night’s conversation. It was a warm

but a purely perfunctory response. That was not in any way improper or inappropriate. However, the point is that it did not help identify (for us) any important conversations that may or may not have ensued the night before, and what might have been continued in the future.

Second, if any substantive issues were discussed (like energy) at dinner, over a drink, in the gym, on the golf course, or on the tennis courts, evidence of such conversations did not show up in any of the subsequent written communications. Seemingly if such important items had been discussed in informal settings, traces of those conversations would have surfaced in future written communication. They did not.

Third, I was not able to find evidence of a similar dinner arrangement with Senator Byrd and his wife. I did find a letter from Senator Byrd thanking the president “for your thoughtfulness in stopping by the dinner on February 24<sup>th</sup>.” It appeared after research that President Carter was more at ease and inclined to socialize, converse, and interact with Tip O’Neill than with Robert Byrd, but it was Robert Byrd who needed to be brought on board—not Tip O’Neill.

There was nothing in the way of a paper trail that details the evolutionary dynamics of the relationship between President Carter and the Speaker of the House during their interaction on the energy legislation. However, one is taken aback by the enormous amount of mundane correspondence which was regularly passing back and forth between the president and the two congressional leaders. It appears that all was generated by staff members, and that a culture which included sending formal letters--even for giving thanks for a Christmas card--was the protocol of the day. However written correspondence that discussed substantive issues, especially strategy, tactics, and

philosophy--was essentially non-existent in the Carter administration, at least for the energy legislation, with one exception.

**October 11, 1978 (document 16) – (written data).** Breaking with his usual habit of not using written correspondence as a leadership tool, President Carter sent the House Speaker a full-page letter urging him to help pass the energy legislation just prior to the final vote of the joint committee's final version. I was unable to determine if the president drafted the typed letter himself, but he did sign it "Jimmy" and recognizing the Speaker's stellar performance in getting the bill through the House essentially intact, he wrote in pen "Thanks, Tip, for your great leadership" (G and I).

While the content was still short of a dramatic and motivational appeal, I feel this letter was perhaps the president's best overall attempt to lead in a transformational way. It was very positive and it finally enumerated the benefits that would accrue if the law was enacted. It did however only list benefits for the nation as a whole and did not mention how it might benefit individual citizens (or the House Speaker, for that matter). The letter was comprehensive and devoid of any self- righteous preaching, scolding, or chastising which was normally a staple of a Carter communication.

For the first time during the research, I was personally moved by the message and also by how it was relayed. My inner stirring reminded me of the essence and target of this research. It was no longer simply a sterile academic exercise. While fleeting and certainly not seismic, that moment resonated with me nonetheless. However effective it might have been at the time, it was too little, too late. Yet he did set challenging goals (E) "With the eyes of our citizens and the world upon us, we must not fail this test of national will." He also acknowledged the hardships being endured by the American people (V)

“the U.S. dollar, whose decline over the last year has added a full 1% to the Consumer Price Index, and stated that this was going to be ongoing for many years (SS) “It will give us the tools to save about 2.5 million barrels of oil per day by 1985, with a reduction of more than \$12 billion in our trade deficit.” I felt the letter showed a side of Jimmy Carter that had been kept under wraps for too long. I believe that if there had been less sermonizing and more of this type of genuine human interaction, perhaps the energy legislation outcome might have been different. As a reader, I was drawn in by an element of transformational leadership that provided a rare sense of inspiration.

There were also written memos and letters to other key players such as Lud Ashley, who was Chairman of the House Ad Hoc Select Committee on Energy. It can be assumed that these documents would knowingly also cross the desk of the two congressional leaders. However, none of them contained anything that would add to the leadership component of President Carter’s legislative push for energy.

### **Written Communication between President Carter and Majority Leader Byrd**

It is important to remember that Tip O’Neill was an energy proponent even before Jimmy Carter became president, and he would have soldiered loyally on any issue, on behalf of any democratic president. That was not the case with Senator Robert Byrd. The Senate Majority Leader was the most important and pivotal player in the eventual outcome of the energy legislation: both in the content of the final bill (after the Senate committee process) and in its eventual success or failure for enactment (and for all other future bills as well). As a leader, it seems President Carter would have known the importance of cultivating a working relationship with this “make or break” person who

would possibly have more influence on the Carter presidency than any another person, except perhaps Jimmy Carter himself.

In August 1977, there was an inner administration memo that circulated among the key Carter staffers (initialed by Stu Eizenstat, Fran Voorde, Les Francis, Frank Moore, Dr. Schlesinger, and Dan Tate) which pointed out the need for the president to make sure that Senator Byrd was approached properly, developed as a member of the energy inner circle, and made aware that he was key to the success or failure of the legislation:

Meeting with Senator Robert Byrd. It is essential that Byrd, as Senate Majority Leader, feel a personal stake in the fate of the National Energy Act. For that reason, among others, the president should invite the Senator to fly up to Camp David some afternoon next week to meet privately with the president. During the meeting, the president should tell Senator Byrd that he will be the key to victory in the Senate, that passage of a strong energy bill is now really up to him, and the president will do whatever he can to help.

**August 2, 1977 (document 17) – (written data).** After receiving the memo (prior paragraph) from numerous members of his staff, President Carter sent the following hand written note to Senator Byrd:

To Senator Robert Byrd,

During the recess, when convenient for you, I would like to have a leisurely conversation with you about the legislative programs and about defense and foreign matters. Frank (Moore) will discuss this with you.

Sincerely, Jimmy

While transformational aspects of respect, inclusion, and care (U, X, and Y) were embedded in the letter as was the prospect of discussing new ideas (BB), there was no archival evidence that such a meeting ever took place, and it was not referred to in any subsequent written correspondence. Unable to find any evidence, I asked Jay Haykes, the Director of the Carter Presidential Library, about such a private meeting with the Senate Majority Leader to discuss the energy proposal, and he assured me that it did not happen. There is a log of all telephone calls made by President Carter to various people, including the congressional leaders, but there are no transcripts of those conversations. Similarly, there must have been informal conversations when they met at various meetings and gatherings, but once again there was no documentation of those personal discussions.

At this point in the analyzing data, a contextual awareness was necessary at several levels. I was not able to find any written correspondence between President Carter and Robert Byrd which was specific to the energy bill. However, the dynamics of their relationship which affected energy was not limited to interaction on energy alone. In fact all interaction would collectively form the basis of their working relationship.

While physically handling and looking at literally thousands of documents while sifting through the contents of many dozens of archival containers, several important factors became apparent to me:

1. There were an incredible number of legislative issues that were simultaneously vying for attention, time, and political capital. Energy did not enjoy the luxury of garnering an inordinate amount of attention of any of the people involved, including the president.

2. The written correspondence for each issue was not spread evenly. Two items in particular appeared to have garnered the most written correspondence: the Panama Canal Treaty and the Camp David Peace Accords, both of which were going on simultaneously with the energy legislation. These two items were also both international in nature and involved personal meetings and negotiations with foreign leaders over an extended period of time. Keeping the congressional leadership apprised of the evolution of those events, and attempting to enlist their support for the eventual legislative product of those dealings seemed to dominate not only the president's calendar, but also his written correspondence.
3. It also was apparent that the president's approach to leadership on these issues (especially the Panama Canal Treaty) was markedly different than on energy. For instance, Senator Byrd who had formerly been a critic of the administration's idea of "giving away the Panama Canal" was flown down to Panama, and it was arranged to have him meet with the Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos, who helped President Carter turn an ardent detractor (Byrd) into a staunch supporter. In 1975, 38 U.S. Senators had signed a resolution to never change the treaty. Senator Byrd, now a convert, led the charge and ultimately made the difference in passing the Panama Canal Treaty in the Senate. No similar conversion happened for the energy legislation. On Panama, the president was victorious and achieved the legislative package he requested. On energy, he only received a token or symbolic victory. Quite possibly the



difference was Robert Byrd. The difference in the president's approach and effectiveness with Robert Byrd on both issues was also markedly different.

4. Without seeing it in person, it would be hard for anyone to imagine the abundance of written correspondence which was mundane, pleasant, but totally unrelated to promoting any of the president's legislative agenda. Notes for wedding anniversaries, letters to basketball teams, cheerleading squads, fishing clubs and countless other citizen's groups were a constant demand on time, energy and resources. While certainly positive in nature, these written activities seemed to significantly outnumber the correspondence that was directly related to legislation.
5. It appeared to me during the research process that as the success or lack of success became more apparent for major issues such as the Panama Canal Treaty, the Camp David Peace Accords, or energy, the efforts of the administration (especially written correspondence) increased and decreased accordingly. Perhaps it is natural for anyone to gravitate toward more pleasurable activities. It is also probable that conscious and unconscious decisions about the best expense of time, energy and political capital came into play on a continual basis. It was discernibly evident that the president's heart and mind began to diminish in affection for the energy legislation in favor of greener pastures such as the Camp David Peace Accords and the Panama Canal Treaty. Those were both hard-earned and significant victories that are considered by many to be the greatest legislative achievements of his administration. There were significantly more written documents in the files

for those two events than for the energy legislation. It is worth repeating that those two issues were occurring at the same time the energy legislation was struggling to take shape.

Even though there was no specific written correspondence from the president to Robert Byrd which demonstrated leadership characteristics relating to the energy program, given that all interaction between the two was a cumulative experience, I have included letters involving seemingly unrelated issues that shed some light on the tenor of their overall relationship. In many cases, a legislator will attempt to influence another legislator by working together on a tangential issue.

**September 13, 1977 (document 18) – (written data).** This letter was typical of a letter from President Carter to Robert Byrd:

To Senator Bob Byrd,

Thanks for letting me know you support my position on the neutron bomb. I'm taking the liberty of letting Secretary Brown know your views, also.

Sincerely, Jimmy

He had recognized Byrd's support and showed care, respect and inclusion (V, X, and Y) while also expanding on additional issues (BB). I would include culture-building in this assessment because it was an unusual extended hand approach for the president (TT, VV, WW, and XX). Even though this letter was about the neutron bomb and not energy, I felt that the president was in a culture building mode which he may have thought would spill over into the area of energy as well as other unrelated legislative issues. This was one of President Carter's few instances of transactional leadership which was noted.

Recognizing good performance with rewards people value (G) seemed to apply in this

instance. I believe the president was sincere in his appreciation and was thus comfortable with the transactional aspect of the exchange.

On May 4, 1978, in a formal letter to the president which was probably drafted by staff, Senator Byrd congratulated the administration for obtaining the majority of their request for a new tax and cost recovery approach to taxation. At the bottom of the letter a handwritten note said, “Mr. President, this is a victory for the administration! Really, in my judgment.”

**May 25, 1978 (document 19) – (written data).** In what may have been a reciprocal gesture for Byrd’s letter of May 4<sup>th</sup>, President Carter in his typical two sentence letter wrote:

To Senator Bob Byrd

Please accept my personal thanks for your support on the arms sales vote. I strongly feel that these sales are in our national interest and will promote the prospects of peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely, Jimmy (handwritten)

Also in handwriting below, “Once again, you made the difference! J.” While the main letter was short, perfunctory, and Spartan, the short but warm note at the bottom was an unusual touch for the president. This brief letter, including the handwritten note, was as far as the president would go in a written communication with the Leader of the Senate. However, I felt it covered many bases both explicitly and implicitly. Once again, the president utilized a small degree of transactional leadership. He was encouraging (D), rewarding, (F) appreciative (H), and he recognized Byrd’s support (G). It included transformational scales as well. It was respectful (X) and inclusive (Y) and President

Carter confidently (HH) addressed the long-term importance (QQ) and vision for his foreign policy agenda (SS and TT). Once again, I subjectively felt that the good will from this exchange was meant to spill over into other dealings, and that it promoted a sense of cultural building and change (VV, WW, XX, YY, and ZZ).

Given the scope of legislation which was simultaneously in motion, these small exchanges with the Senate Majority Leader were insufficient to build a close working relationship. Culture building would normally entail an ongoing series of private meetings, shared meals, and other bonding events. Letters would normally have been merely an adjunct to a multi-faceted leadership approach which would have attempted to bring Senator Byrd into the inner circle of the administration, recognize his importance, and actively involve him the actual creation of the legislation which he would be expected to put through the Senate.

**June 28, 1977 (document 20) – (written data).** Unlike Tip O’Neill, who was a committed liberal, a big-spending, and a big-government type of Democrat, Robert Byrd was a member of the conservative wing of the Democratic Party which often voted with Republicans on issues of fiscal responsibility. While today such a faction within the Democratic Party is essentially nonexistent, it is important for a researcher today to understand and appreciate the existence, size, and influence of this former block of Congressmen in the 1970’s.

Additionally, as a former elected official I can attest to the carryover connection from one piece of legislation to another. When President Carter made a case for issues that were near and dear to Robert Byrd such as fiscal responsibility, the president was also utilizing the leadership tool of reciprocity; a classic transactional gambit. While the

president had distain for engaging in purely transactional exchanges, when he was already in agreement with his side of a transaction, he was open to utilizing the tool.

Such was the case (he felt) when he was recommending the elimination of several water projects that he thought were unnecessary and fiscally irresponsible. The bottom paragraph on a full page letter reads, “If we are to hold down federal spending and fund necessary programs, we must work together to eliminate unnecessary projects.” I believe this was an extended hand to the Senate Majority Leader that was respectful (X) made Senator Byrd feel like part of a group of fiscally responsible Congressmen (Y) and encouraged him to act according to shared values and beliefs (TT). I felt President Carter was attempting to build a culture of responsibility that would overlap into his vision of extreme energy conservation (VV, WW, XX, YY, and ZZ).

**September 29, 1977 (document 21) – (written data).** In a similar letter to Senator Byrd concerning the reduction in procurement for B-1 bombers and Minuteman III missiles, President Carter wrote in the last paragraph, “I hope that you and the Senate will assist me in this effort to avoid unneeded spending.” Given that the president had made a declaration that the energy legislation would be revenue neutral (no new net expenses), I believe he was attempting to bond with the Majority Leader on mutually agreeable, but seemingly unrelated issues. While the last few items were not direct communication on the energy proposal itself, because of the dearth of historical evidence, I broadened the scope slightly to add contextual nuance and provide a reader with a small reminder of how many other significant items were simultaneously in play, and yet how they were all somewhat interconnected. The letter of September 29, 1977 registered all of the leadership scales of the previous letter of June 28, 1977.

## Summary

After the research was concluded, 21 written documents were selected to be coded on the Leadership Grid (Appendix 3). While many documents were reviewed, these 21 were representative of the body of correspondence. In six instances, there was also the ability to listen to an audio of the presentation, and the opportunity to watch a video as well. Three different dimensions of analysis (written, audio, and video), provided triangulation, a thick rich description of the events, and also an element of trustworthiness which would not have been attainable by only reading the written documents. For example, the videos in particular revealed a significantly different level of effectiveness when President Carter was in different settings (e.g. alone in the Oval Office while addressing the nation on television or when surrounded by hundreds of congressional members during a live speech in the Capital). The dynamics of each setting were starkly different and were revealed only through the triangulation process. The addition of the audio and visual dimension of the speeches also provided a thick and rich description that afforded a context unavailable with only written documents.

While the number of audio and video records was fewer for President Carter than would be the case for President Obama today, it was more than adequate to provide a circumspect assessment of the totality of this leadership event. The president's message, his delivery, and the results were consistent. Even after reading, listening and watching six speeches (the president's almost exclusive method of communication) there was already an element of saturation beginning to develop. The 15 additional written documents were also consistent in their scales of leadership with the six that were also recorded in audio and video formats. The data generously provided a dependable

explication of the elements of President Carter's leadership communication with the two congressional leaders during the attempt to pass the National Energy Program. The peer review provided a significant aspect of trustworthiness as did the triangulation process.

The recorded and coded data were interpreted in light of the results, the leadership literature, the conceptual framework, and within the limitations of the study. After all of the coding was recorded on the grid, I found no evidence that President Carter utilized any transactional leadership scales on a consistent basis. The grid did show that he employed six transformational scales on a somewhat regular basis. The first was communicating a clear set of priorities (L). While it did not resonate with the American people or the congressional leadership, President Carter continually argued for the need of a cultural transformation in the country's use of oil consumption. Four of the six transformational scales employed were in the general category of Culture-Building (TT, VV, WW, and XX). Linked closely with his message for the need to change our priorities, President Carter repeatedly spoke in terms of our need for mutual values, shared beliefs, and common goals. The sixth and final transformational scale was the president's consistent display of confidence (HH). Of the 52 possible leadership tools or scales, I found that President Carter utilized only six with any degree of regularity, and they were generally located in one specific area of leadership.

## **Chapter 5: Interpretations, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Interpretations**

The purpose of this qualitative, historical case study was to explore President Carter's leadership approach in his attempt to gain support of the two congressional leaders in his quest to pass a comprehensive energy plan (a significant, transformational, and non-incremental legislative initiative), as evidenced in his direct communication with the two leaders from the time of his inauguration to the time of the congressional vote.

The problem prompting this study was that over the past few decades there has been an acute lack of effective transformational presidential leadership which has been able to transform or inspire large groups of American voters, and more specifically congressional voters, on any significant, non-incremental, legislative proposal. Instead of collectively pursuing a compelling vision, partisan gridlock has consistently been the norm.

A general proposition of this study was that legislation which required transformational changes in the culture, behavior, and expectations of the American people in a way that would have required personal sacrifice for the benefit of the country as a whole, as the energy legislation proposed, would have required both effective transformational and transactional leadership by the president in order to maximize its chances of passage. While it may have been possible to secure enactment of the bill by strictly transactional methods, given the cultural implications of the proposal, the inclusion of a significant level of effective transformational leadership was an obvious tool for the task at hand.



That general proposition was strongly supported by the findings. Senator Byrd did not ever become a valuable “follower” of the energy legislation, and there is no evidence that a large groundswell of public support ever developed which might have influenced the congressional leaders. Those findings are consistent with the generally accepted tenets of the leadership literature which address the need to mobilize followers in the early stages of change (Roberto, 2011).

It is important to note that a comprehensive national energy program was not the center piece of the 1976 Carter/Mondale campaign agenda. Their campaign brochure afforded a scant 34 words for future energy policy: “ENERGY: To establish a coherent energy policy, and to increase emphasis on coal production and increased research on renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind and geothermal. To lead in directing a voluntary conservation program.” The actual legislative proposal that was developed immediately after the election was a complete reversal of the campaign promise: a NON-voluntary conservation program was made up of restrictions, regulations, and new taxes and included only a negligible promotion of new sources of energy. This complete repudiation of campaign rhetoric meant that there was virtually no political groundwork that had been laid in preparation for such an epic undertaking (Hargrove, 1984).

Given the lack of a political foundation from which to build a national and congressional consensus, the active support of the House Speaker and Senate Majority Leader for leading the charge for such an unexpected energy bill was even more critical than usual. Fortunately for President Carter, Tip O’Neill was already an outspoken energy advocate even before Carter became president. Additionally, he was perhaps one of the staunchest partisans in political history. O’Neill’s loyalty to the Democratic Party

is legendary in contemporary politics. As a result, O'Neill could be counted upon to support any energy proposal with great enthusiasm and dependability. Such automatic support was not the case with Robert Byrd.

Yet incredibly, President Carter managed to alienate the man who would be most crucial to the success of his energy plan even before the plan was formulated or announced to the American people. Less than a week after the inauguration, Byrd publicly chided the new president for not including him in the discussions about the energy policy and told the press that the president "has to learn that there have to be a number of senators brought into a discussion on any subject, and he (Carter) better let the leadership know about these meetings so we can suggest the leaders involved" (Davis, p. 113).

The energy proposal called for an enormous transformation in the cultural habits of the American people in their uses and choices of energy—a tall order. Converting Robert Byrd into a true believer of massive energy conservation, the man who would not only be needed to shepherd the legislation through the Senate, but also as a key moral persuader of the American people, was an absolute requirement for securing passage of the energy bill.

Going back to the 1850's, American presidents had traveled on trains around the country to give "whistle stop" speeches at railroad stations from the backend of a railroad car. The evolution of presidential communication was still in its early stages in the 1970's. Because of the lack of other media options, speeches took on an inordinate importance, especially for someone who considered himself to be a top-rate orator.

The overarching theme that developed throughout the data analysis was that President Carter used the leadership tool of public speeches almost exclusively, and he voluntarily elected to not utilize other leadership strategies such as employing transactional opportunities. Every speech was a huge event in the Carter presidency. Besides the speechwriters, the president also had numerous insiders read, edit, and add to countless iterations of every speech. They were expected to make notes, additions, and comments. A significant amount of time and energy were invested in the crafting of every speech. Sometimes the use of one word or phrase versus another would be debated for days, by numerous people, whose turf and egos many times appeared to supersede the speech itself. Speech preparation consumed enormous amounts of time, energy, and personnel resources in the Carter presidency. This was clearly considered to be their most potent legislative strategy and they prepared for it accordingly.

After reading the entire evolution of several of the speeches, I concluded that part of President Carter's problem with effectiveness might have been due to the influence of some of the speechwriters whose worldview was starkly different from Carter's. For instance in the speech of April 18, 1977, the following line was in the draft, "Further delay can affect our strength and our power as a nation." Richard Hertzberg, one of the speechwriters made a note on both sides of the sentence. On the left side he wrote "sounds Republican and reactionary" and on the right side he noted "jingoistic bullshit." At a time when patriotism was still a powerful force in America, a seemingly anti-America bias by some of those close to the president, who considered himself a true, hard-core patriot, might have diluted what could have been a significant potential source

of motivational strength and momentum for his legislative agenda through the choice of words, phrases, and even paragraphs (Barberio and Lowe, 2006).

However, a more detailed explanation of the specific leadership results on the grid provides a broader insight to a historical event that occurred in 1978 when the United States was at a major fork in the road: a choice between a cultural transformation and unfreezing in order to embrace instant and massive energy conservation, or to remain culturally frozen and maintain the status quo of energy consumption.

Of the ten major leadership categories (Sashkin, 2007) which each consisted of five related leadership scales, and the eleventh category which contained two criteria that addressed the unfreezing process as a prerequisite for the start of the process of transformational change (Garvin, 2000), President Carter shows consistent marks in only three of the eleven categories (Confidence, Vision and Culture-Building). These are all scales that are located in the Transformational Leadership section of the grid. There were no scales in the Transactional Leadership section which showed up with any degree of consistency. President Carter had stated on many occasions that he detested the wheeling and dealing of Washington, and it appears he did not partake in its ways - or utilize its potential.

I found the president's most consistent and broad leadership activity was located in the transformational category Culture-Building Leadership. President Carter consistently explained what he felt was important, encouraged his fellow Americans to follow his lead, attempted to forge a consensus for what he felt was necessary, and personally demonstrated his commitment to those principles. He showed leadership activity in all five scales (TT - XX) on a semi-regular basis. Ironically, the chart indicates

that the president demonstrated leadership more consistently with written statements and written correspondence than he did with public speeches. Yet he considered speeches to be his main tool of leadership.

I observed that the president showed significant leadership qualities a singular item within a scale grouping labeled Communication Leadership: (L) communicates a clear sense of priorities. Those priorities consisted of limiting the American people's use of energy and making them pay higher taxes as well. While not pleasant or motivating, they were none the less a clearly defined set of priorities that were promoted consistently. He had a vision, but it was not compelling (Kotter, 1996) for most Americans.

The biggest distinction between speeches and written communication shows up in a grouping Sashkin (2007) refers to as "Caring Leadership." I did not find that President Carter's speeches typically stressed empathy, caring, or respect for others. I found his tendency when speaking was to lecture, admonish and sermonize. There were only a few scores noted for the Caring Leadership categories in his speeches, but there were consistent marks for his written words. These positive qualities were apparent often and showed up in nearly half of the documents. There was a starkly different tenor between the spoken and written words of the president.

The one category in which the president scored the highest was (HH) "Is confident of his or her own abilities." President Carter appeared to be self-assured in almost every communication (written and spoken) until just prior to the actual vote on the energy bill when his confidence seemed to give way to carping and resignation.

The broadest, most consistent and only category that registered multiple scales of leadership was in a transformational category labeled "Culture-Building Leadership."

Most of the five scales in that category were present more than half of the time, and consistent in both oral and written communications. Ironically, when observing the grid with its leadership patterns displayed, I was surprised to see the pattern that had developed because it did not match my general feeling throughout the course of the research. Perhaps the missing leadership categories that were not noted were more impressionable or conspicuous than those that were noted.

Garvin's (2000) two elements of unfreezing (YY and ZZ), which are assumed to be a prerequisite for transformational leadership, were areas where the president attempted to lead on a regular basis in all of his communications (written and spoken). As mentioned before, events such as gas lines, rising prices for fuel, and the visuals on national television of foreign oil ministers meeting to decide the price of oil had already facilitated the unfreezing process. To his credit, the president continued to hammer away at the need for change. Yet an "unfortunate" temporarily worldwide oil glut had temporarily developed and the American public refroze in its old attitudes, while forgetting about the need to change its approach to energy. The grid identifies the president's actions – not his effectiveness.

Kotter (1996) developed a three stage evaluation of a transformational leadership event. Each stage was built upon the preceding stage. Stage one determined if there was a proper foundation upon which to build the balance of the leadership event. It is here that the Carter leadership model for the energy legislation failed. Kotter's first stage calls for setting a compelling direction, a vision for the future, and the appropriate strategies for how to get there.

President Carter and the members of his staff believed that the country was going to run out of energy resources and the best they could do was manage America's misery as fairly as possible. The following memo that circulated in the energy department on April 11, 1977 details the mood of the day, "Unlike many problems around us, the energy problem is astonishingly simple: demand is rising exponentially and supplies are shrinking. Our energy supply system is moving from order, in the form of cheap, available concentrated liquid fuels toward disorder."

No one in the administration was rallying for accelerating oil exploration or any other sources of new supply. It was all about how to manage a dwindling resource. This was not a common goal that many Americans wanted to pursue, yet that was all President Carter offered. There was no credible phase one for a new direction. The second and third phases of transformational leadership (Kotter, 1996), when applied to the Carter vision were essentially dead in the water. "Aligning people, communicating the direction, building shared understanding, getting people to believe in the vision, and influencing people to follow the vision" simply never got off the ground because there was no compelling vision that had captured the imagination of the American people. Similarly, "Motivating and inspiring people to enact the changes necessary to achieve the shared vision" was impossible because most Americans were not ready to adopt a painful future, which was the only vision or "nightmare" presented to them.

I was quite surprised by the makeup of the data itself. I had anticipated a much larger paper trail and was taken aback that President Carter had relied so heavily on speeches to promote his energy agenda. I was also stunned by the enormity and number of other conflicting and competing issues that were on the plate of the president (and

Congress) simultaneously. It is hard for me to understand how a president could devote enough attention to any one major issue when so many were in motion at the same time.

The data for energy had large gaps of time on numerous occasions. Sometimes many weeks or even months would be devoid of any documentable communication that involved energy. This was unanticipated on my part, but now after the research I understand why it was so. While this legislative initiative was considered to be one of President Carter's most important, it accounted for only a very small amount of the president's overall communication activity. On many days I would sift through hundreds of documents before I would find one that was related to energy. The complexity of the presidency does not show up on or affect the leadership grid in any way, but maybe it should in future studies.

The research question asked "What was the nature of President Carter's leadership approach as evidenced by direct communication with the two congressional leaders during his attempt to pass his comprehensive energy program between January 20, 1977 and November 8, 1978?" It was very evident from the research that President Carter felt it was his job to assess the issues, make decisions about the best course of action, and announce his decisions publically, primarily by way of major speeches. It appeared that his expectation was that everyone would follow his lead on energy because he was the president. That did not happen.

The data on the Leadership Grid (Appendix 3) shows that President Carter was not an effective transactional leader. That was not surprising because he stated on many occasions that he did not like and would not partake in the "unattractive aspects of Washington politics." He found the give and take, back and forth horse trading not to his



liking and he simply ignored it. That avenue of leadership was voluntarily discarded. The Transactional Leadership scales (A – J) were rarely employed during the quest for a national energy program.

As a transformational leader, Jimmy Carter was strong in some areas and weak in others. The research revealed an admirable president who was guided by principles, moral conviction, and a clear sense that he felt he was doing the right thing and which he felt was in the best interest of the country. However most Americans at that time (including Robert Byrd) were not motivated or inspired, and were thus unwilling to follow his lead. Despite the alignment of opportune circumstances, President Carter's lack of a compelling vision undermined all of his other admirable efforts. It was such a basic flaw or "rookie error" that it leaves me with a deep sense of frustration; both as a researcher and as an American citizen.

The culture-building leadership scales (VV – XX) reveal a leader who consistently attempted to create a culture of change but failed to provide a desirable alternative to pursue. Yet promoting change can be approached in many ways. President Carter chose to begin the process of change by attacking the status quo and dwelling on blame – not offering a compelling alternative vision. His other transformational leadership possibilities were severely stunted for two additional reasons. First, President Carter was not open to new ideas from others, even if they may have improved his original plan and thus enhanced the overall chances of success. Second, his own plan was so austere and myopic that any real possibility of transformational change was essentially non-existent.

The leadership grid depicts President Carter's attempt to lead, but to a destination where no one else wanted to go, and in a way that was inadequate. There was no evidence of any deliberate or extraordinary attempt by the president to cultivate a special relationship, bond, or dynamic with the two congressional leaders – especially Robert Byrd. The visual graphics of the leadership grid are consistent with that interpretation. If Robert Byrd had become a passionate convert to the energy conservation legislation, as he had with the Panama Canal Treaty, perhaps the outcome would have been different. If Byrd had been included in the president's inner circle, it is probable that he would have influenced the drafting of the actual legislation. This might have made it easier to enact because the Senate Majority Leader would have had a personal stake in the outcome and might have helped to create a better proposal in general. The research did not reveal any extra effort, or awareness of the importance of such an effort by President Carter.

The leadership literature was consistently at odds with President Carter's approach to motivating, inspiring and engaging the congressional leaders (and the American people) as a way to create followers of his vision.

One part of the conceptual framework that provided a context for this research (Parsons, 1951) assumes a free flow of outside input on a continual basis as a requirement for a system to perpetuate and avoid entropy. The Carter administration was instead insulated and not receptive to outside input. This put it at odds with the transformational leadership concepts of Burns (1978, 2003) and Sashkin (2007) who have described a symbiotic relationship between the leader and followers which changes and elevates all parties as a result of their interaction. That was not the Carter leadership model. Instead,

President Carter sermonized, issued dictates and he expected them to be followed. That he acted in this manner was not surprising given his personal history (Barber, 1992).

In an interview by Bill Moyers of Carter just prior to the 1976 election, the following exchange occurred:

Moyers: You said once that you never really seriously considered disobeying your father. And I wonder if anyone who never disobeyed his father can understand the rest of us.

Carter [Laughter]: Well, as a matter of fact, I never disobeyed my father when he said, Jimmy, you do something; I never failed to do it. But on many occasions I did things I knew my father didn't like, and I was punished severely because of it. In fact, my father very seldom gave me a direct order. If all the other field workers were off for the afternoon, and he wanted me to turn the potato vines so they could be plowed Monday morning, Daddy would say to me - He called me "Hot."

Moyers: he called you what?"

Carter: "Hot" – "Hotshot" – is what he called me. He says "Hot" would you like to turn the potato vines this afternoon? And I would much rather go to the movie or something. But I always said, "Yes, sir, Daddy, I would." And I would do it. But he didn't have to give me many direct orders. But I never did disobey a direct order my father gave me.

Moyers: Was it a stern life?"

Carter: Yes, it was a stern life.

When Jimmy Carter was in the Navy, Admiral Rickover, another strong disciplinarian, took the young Carter under his wing and taught him the Rickover style of command. As his naval career progressed, the future president worked with submarines. On a submarine, where everyone's life depends on perfect execution of duties – all of the time, there is virtually no discussion when an order is issued. When the commander issues a directive, it is unquestioned and immediately followed. Discussion, debate, and consensus were never part of the environment that formed the understanding, expectation, or concept of leadership during Carter's early formative years.

As a one-term Governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter's leadership style clearly matched the leadership lessons he had experienced in his prior life. In his memoirs, Tip O'Neill's recounts an incident that brings this critical point into focus. After the 1976 election but prior to the inauguration, the two met to discuss the future of the administration's legislative agenda. O'Neill told Carter how important it would be for the president to work with the Congress in order to get his agenda approved.

O'Neill recounted that the new president informed him that when he was governor and ran into legislative resistance, he simply went over the heads of the legislature and made a direct appeal to the voters. Incredulous, the Speaker raised his voice and said "Hell, Mr. President, you are making a big mistake. You don't mean to tell me that you are comparing the House and the Senate with the Georgia legislature? The Congress of the United States includes some of the most talented and knowledgeable lawmakers in the world." Given this context, it is not surprising that the bulk of the president's leadership actions on the energy bill were primarily public speeches and not

the traditional methods of politicking of which he had voiced disdain for on many occasions.

The above vignette with Tip O'Neill is an excellent example of the Jimmy Carter leadership model that was revealed in the correspondence that was examined: he would make decisions, give directives and expect them to be followed. He also did not seem to anticipate having to convince, motivate, or explain.

In keeping with his authoritarian view of leadership, despite many suggestions that he could enhance his skills as a public speaker, the president was not open to advice or coaching that might have improved his delivery and effectiveness. In his exit interview (required protocol) Carter's head speechwriter Jim Fallows recalled, "I don't know of any case in which he has accepted coaching. None of us after the first couple of months even bothered to mention it again because it was clear that there was no market for it."

The literature also provided contextual consideration for the event studied. There are references to cycles or presidential political scenarios that may affect the potential of a new president. Skowronek (1999) describes four possible scenarios and President Carter was fortunate to have been at the right place at the right time. Describing reconstruction as the best possible set of circumstances, Skowronek posits that a president who opposes and successfully replaces a vulnerable regime is best positioned to enact their own agenda. The post-Nixon White House was the quintessential example of such a vulnerable regime.

Skowronek (1993) also argues that there are semi-regular cycles of presidential leadership opportunity that will limit or enhance the prospects of a "big idea" or transformational leader. Once again, President Carter was well positioned to launch a

transformational platform because the Ford Presidency was primarily that of a caretaker. There was a discernible lull in the national agenda from the time of Richard Nixon's forced resignation in August 1974 until the 1976 campaign. The timing for a new leadership cycle was excellent.

Skowronek (1993) further defined the specific nature of various types of presidencies. Citing Franklin Roosevelt, Johnson and Reagan as examples, he described the "maximalist" model, which would be similar to Burn's (2007) idea of a transformational leader. This type of president would promote significant societal changes and use the presidential bully pulpit as an important tool for making it happen. This was in alignment with President Carter's sweeping call for change in America's use of energy. His dependency on speeches was also consistent with Skowronek's maximalist model. However, unlike his aforementioned predecessors, President Carter did not (in the case of energy) have a compelling vision or a realistic plan for reaching it. Those are both components of the transformational leadership model (Kotter, 1996).

Rauch (2010) has argued that a government that is controlled entirely by one political party attempts to rule philosophically from the center of their party – not the center of the country as a whole. That was clearly the case with the energy proposal. The Republican minority wanted legislation which would have emphasized more production of oil and coal and the development of new sources of energy. Conversely, the president wanted to stress curtailing Americans use of energy and wanted to accomplish that goal with a series of draconian regulations and a large menu of new energy taxes. Because of the significant numeric control of both houses of Congress by the Democrats, the president (I assume) saw no reason for engaging in any give and take. As a result, the

final energy proposal that he used the presidential bully pulpit to promote was perceived by the American people as all pain and no gain. It may have been palatable to many Democrats (not enough), but it was definitely not representative of the thinking of the majority of the American people. It was party-centered, not society centered.

There is a presumption in the literature that a U.S. president would always be critiqued or assessed as a leader. After years of research, I believe that might be a mistake in this instance, and it may explain why much of the literature which describes traits, attributes, and leadership qualities did not seem applicable to Jimmy Carter. It appeared to me that President Carter did not see himself as a leader in the traditional sense, but instead as a high level, fair and able administrator. In the context of the 1970's, administrators were typically not consensus builders, but more often the dispenser of directives. That was a perfect match or description of the leadership he had experienced in the prior chapters of his life; both as one receiving orders and also as one who handed them out. This was the leadership paradigm as he had always known it.

On page four of his *White House Diary* (2010) President Carter describes his reasons for running for President of the United States, "I chose to focus my campaign on three themes: truthfulness, management competence, and distance from the unattractive aspects of Washington." I interpreted that to mean that as president, he would administer to the government affairs as a high level and competent administrator, ignore the Washington operatives, and tell us the truth. All three were novel ideas at that time. A thin majority of Americans voters did elect him president, and true to his word that is exactly how he approached his job. However, the Washington operatives did not buy into that premise.

What is most telling about President Carter's three theme agenda is that it never mentions a compelling vision of what America could (or should) achieve during his presidency, and he never mentions his role as a leader who would guide the American people toward new goals. I therefore believe he saw himself as a high-level decision maker and as a competent, master bureaucrat. A contrast with the Obama campaign theme is sharp and I believe meaningful. "Change you can believe in" left no doubt that Barack Obama intended lead on substantive issues: not administer, manage, or tend to the day to day affairs of the federal government in a competent fashion.

The Carter/Mondale campaign brochure devoted significantly more attention to reorganizing the federal bureaucracy than it did to energy or any other substantive issue, "We can no longer drift along with a complicated, confused, overlapping and wasteful federal bureaucracy. There is no reason why our government can't work efficiently and effectively." The brochure went on to offer a pledge "To reorganize completely the executive branch of government, making it fair, efficient, effective, and responsive to people's needs." I believe these written priorities in his campaign brochure are consistent with Jimmy Carter's stated priorities of honest, competent management that was free of backroom politics. This was his stated vision.

While those were certainly worthy and necessary goals, they do not seem to meet the thresh hold of transformational change which would have included a compelling vision of a common goal (not just him cleaning up the government), and a viable plan which would have been able to generate substantial support, enthusiasm, and followership. The research indicated that he attempted to solve the energy crisis in a way



that was consistent with his personal view of how the federal government should function administratively: not in the role of a transformational leader.

Carter's pledge of competency and Obama's pledge of change, I believe, speak directly toward the mindset of each president as a leader and what they considered important. There was nothing in the data that indicated President Carter considered himself a visionary in the generally accepted theory of a transformational leader. As a former engineer, he seemed more consumed with details than with visionary goals. President Kennedy had envisioned Americans going to the moon; engineers designed and built the rockets to get there. President Johnson envisioned "The Great Society" but Congress and bureaucrats assembled the nuts and bolts.

If there is one constant in the leadership literature it is that a transformational leader must have a vision, be able to sell that vision, and also be able to lead followers toward that vision. I think Jimmy Carter saw his role as president somewhat in that context, but he did not seem to understand the full range of requirements for a compelling vision. In regards to energy, his vision was not one of America solving its dependency on foreign oil by figuring out a creative new solution, but instead, his personal vision was that we were running out of energy and his job was to "manage fairly" the unpleasant task of rationing a shrinking finite resource - competently. He saw the moral dimensions as acting responsibly, fairly, dutifully and behaving as a conscientious member of the world community. I believe in his mind, the issue was a transformational imperative, but his solution did not capture the hearts and minds of most other Americans, and thus he was not able to build a successful leadership strategy.

If that was indeed his reality, his leadership actions were understandable and perhaps even commendable. Yet believing that he thought rationing and sacrifice were our only possibilities is still difficult for me to understand. He had campaigned on the idea of developing alternative sources of energy, but—incredibly--after the election those ideas seemed to have vanished. I am convinced that if he had proposed a two-pronged approach that included a massive push for alternative energy, similar to the Manhattan project, coupled with an equal dose of conservation, the American people would have responded in a positive way. A temporary sacrifice which would have bought the time necessary to develop the next wave of sustainable energy could have been palatable, practical and even patriotic. Alternatively, permanent deprivation as the sole solution was simply not compelling, appealing, or likely to attract supporters except in truly extreme conditions.

Not only does the distance and hindsight of history tell us President Carter was wrong on his assumption of energy diminution (we did not run out of energy in the 1980's as he predicted), but more importantly he was attempting to sell a singular story of gloom and doom to a citizenry that had sent a man to the moon and back less than a decade before. These were the same American people whose forefathers had carved out a nation from ocean to ocean with the sweat of their brows, cunning, and creativity. They connected the country with railroads and interstate highways, built the Panama Canal when other countries had failed, were victorious in two world wars, and ended the second with the output of the Manhattan Project. Then America had assembled dozens of the brightest minds specifically to create a solution to end the war – which they did. Americans were steeped in a history and culture of “can do.”

In America during the 1970's, a president who had no positive vision for the country had literally nothing to sell. Jimmy Carter, though well intentioned, perhaps did not grasp the possibilities of American ingenuity and had resigned himself to the idea that the best America could do was manage its shrinking supply of energy efficiently, fairly, and for as long as possible before it ran out.

Yet President Carter's observations about American wastefulness with energy were completely accurate. Observing as one who lived in Europe for 11 years (1990 – 2001), I saw and lived the cultural vision that he was trying to put forth: small cars, little engines, and lots of bicycles, smaller homes, extensive use of public transportation, and a host of other energy saving societal habits. Europe, which has no domestic supply of oil and is totally dependent upon imports, developed a cultural outlook that rose from the ashes of WWII, has been passed down for generations, and is now permanently ingrained in the psyche of its citizenry. However, Europe was not President Carter's audience. America was a country that had not long before, paid price-supports to oil producers because there was too much production. Telling Americans to pay a lot of new taxes for the right to drive small cars and dress more warmly was a difficult "sell." Explaining the advantages of energy conservation instead of chastising Americans for being wasteful would probably have been a better choice.

It is hard to overstate or repeat too often, that the vast majority of President Carter's energy proposal was painful: it was comprised of sacrifice, taxes, and conservation. A report in the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* on April 23, 1977 (p. 727) noted "unlike earlier government programs that did things for people, Carter's proposals will do things to people" (underlined emphasis is quoted from the article).

The specifics of the energy bill had as much to do with its poor showing as did the lack of presidential leadership which was trying to enact it. However, the content of the bill was also a key component of presidential leadership because it all emanated from within the Carter administration. It was Jimmy Carter's proposal, or dictate. There was no input from others who could (should) have had a stake in the outcome and thus become promoters rather than detractors. This was not a bill that was seen by anyone as a "Democratic Party" initiative, but instead simply a Jimmy Carter initiative. It was treated accordingly.

I have concluded that President Carter did not populate many of the leadership scales on the grid because he was in more of an administrator's role than a leader and motivator of people. Perhaps it is a matter of semantics, but while Jimmy Carter surely thought of himself as a leader, his actions appeared to align with that of a decision maker and pronouncer of policy, rather than as a visionary who inspired others to follow him in a quest to achieve a promising goal.

A quick glance at the leadership grid shows that President Carter registered only negligible occurrences of transactional leadership. That is completely consistent for a man to who had stated that one of his top three priorities as president was to keep his "distance from the unattractive aspects of Washington politics." He kept his word but was perhaps rendered ineffective as a result.

Similarly, there were few reoccurring instances of transformational leadership that populated the grid. Once again, candidate Carter said that one of his top three priorities if elected would be to exhibit "management competence." I found those words to be a strange choice, and I would have expected some description of leadership or significant

goals to be mentioned instead. Perhaps I am reading too much into his choice of the descriptions of his priorities. However, I felt he described the role of someone who is carrying out the details of the plan or vision, not the one creating it or promoting it. I found the data to be consistent with my impressions of his word choices. The meaning of words like management, leadership and transformation has evolved over the decades. Yet I think the distinction I am trying to make is an important nuance of this study.

While President Carter's national energy proposal met the criteria of Giacchino's definition of non-incremental policy, his approach as a potential transformational leader was nearly the antithesis of the generally agreed-upon principles of the contemporary leadership literature when assessing his communication with the congressional leaders.

## **Conclusion**

President Carter attempted to promote an energy bill that was objectionable to most people, and employed only one leadership tool (speeches) instead of many; this proved to be a futile combination. Unquestionably, the lack of a compelling vision was the biggest problem for President Carter. It precluded any realistic, overall strategy. Tactically, there were many lessons to be learned, such as cultivating Robert Byrd and other potential key players, keeping the plan less complex, seeking input from other stakeholders, personnel choices, timing, and numerous other legislative gambits. However, I think it would be a mistake to dwell on those secondary issues. Instead I think it would be better to stay focused on the large, singular issue that undermined this historic event and is currently undermining dozens of other important problems in America today: the lack of a compelling vision, a viable plan, and a transformational leader who can motivate followers to follow such visions.

After handling thousands of documents at the Carter Library while conducting the research portion of this dissertation, toward the end of my research I found two, and only two, newspaper articles (editorials) that had been deemed noteworthy enough to have been included in the official records. Something about the content of those two editorials clearly resonated with someone of authority at the Carter Presidential Library. The selected editorial snippets of those articles which follow offer their assessment of President Carter's leadership efforts during the energy initiative. They also happen to coincide with the findings of this study. The unique prominence of these two newspaper articles among all of the other official records was highly conspicuous, eye-catching, and thought provoking.

***The Wall Street Journal, Friday, Oct. 1977.***

***Carter's cardigan wasn't enough.*** He seemed more concerned with other issues. Beyond that, his complex program of energy taxes and conservation didn't make much sense to a lot of Americans. If they were to accept sharply higher energy prices, there had better be a good reason. But the administration failed to clearly state exactly what the energy problem is.

All this has implications beyond energy. The failure to follow through here raises questions about whether the president will lobby the public for other controversial measures such as the Panama Canal treaties. Whether his proposals are good or bad is another question. But because they are issues on which the nation is deeply divided, only an active and convincing presidential sales campaign can create a political climate in which Congress can approve such measures.

The costs of failing to follow through are vividly illustrated by the mangled energy program. With his dramatic energy speech last April the president captured public attention. Believing the president intended to seize the opportunity to further explain the problem and his solution to the public, Speaker O'Neill rammed the Carter energy proposal through the House. But the president didn't lobby Americans; the political momentum died, leaving the Senate free to dismantle his program – which is exactly what it did.

***The Washington Post, December 15, 1977.***

***On energy, a grave defeat.*** When Mr. Carter first embarked upon his energy plan, he was evidently under the misapprehension that the important thing was to draft a comprehensive bill. He assumed, perhaps, that the Democrats in Congress, starved for leadership after the Ford and Nixon years, would seize his plan hungrily. In reality, of course, congressional majorities now are more friable than ever. The job description for a president does not call for a planner or designer. What confronts the president is the politician's essential job of creating support and consensus for decisions that – as he correctly believes – the country must take quickly. He cannot expect a consensus to form automatically around an idea merely because he pronounces it good; a president has to build agreement. But that is the part of his responsibility from which Mr. Carter remains most remote.

It is worth revisiting Kotter's (1996) first step in the leadership process – the step upon which the subsequent leadership steps will build. Setting a compelling vision is a staple of transformational leaders but not normally associated with administrators.

Sashkin's (2007) 50 leadership scales and Garvin's two elements of the unfreezing process showed up only sporadically in the assessment of President Carter's leadership effort for enacting his energy legislation because they were not part of a realistic, large scale leadership strategy which accompanied a big picture, compelling vision. The details of an incomplete, undeveloped, and inchoate plan to significantly alter the lifestyle of the American people in only a negative way were simply irrelevant. Without President Carter first offering a positive alternative for energy and a realistic plan for achieving it, and effectively communicating that vision, the American people were simply not volunteering to turn the potato vines. He confessed that his efforts to pass an energy bill were "like chewing on a rock that lasted the whole four years" (p. 1).

After years of reading leadership theory and after reviewing thousands of historical documents, I found that President Carter simply did not have a good idea or vision that he could use to inspire and motivate the American people (Burns, 1978, 2003), was not interested in other people's input (Parson's 1951), shunned the give and take of Washington, D.C. and as a result, his attempted leadership actions were to no avail. A leader needs creativity, not austerity, hope, not resignation, and a desirable goal, not misery. It seems that Jimmy Carter did his best, but he was simply not up to the task at hand because he did not see a realistic and compelling goal to where he could lead the country, and more specifically the two congressional leaders.

This may be the case for many contemporary presidents who have also failed to rally our citizens toward realistic solutions for many of our major problems: they simply have not had any visionary ideas from which they can begin to lead. That is not a sarcastic, demeaning, or caustic remark. It is simply my personal observation. For



example, how and when we will balance the federal budget, create solvency for Social Security and stop spending our children's future today? Beyond a creating a compelling vision, a U.S. president must still enact that vision into legislation and that means understanding how to lead successfully with members of congress, and typically beginning with the two congressional leaders.

Tip O'Neill was a very large figure in contemporary American politics and one of the three key figures in this study. He was closer to President Carter during this historic event than any other person. His personal observations and assessment of President Carter's leadership is noteworthy, prescient and important:

When it came to understanding the issues of the day, Jimmy Carter was the smartest public official I've ever known. The range and extent of his knowledge were astounding; he could speak with authority about energy, the nuclear issue, space travel, the Middle East, Latin America, human rights, American history, and just about any other topic that came up. Time after time, and without using any notes, he would tick off the arguments on both sides of a question. His mind was exceptionally well developed, and it was open, too. He was always willing to listen and learn. With one exception. When it came to the politics of Washington, D.C., he never really understood how the system worked. And although this was out of character for Jimmy Carter, he didn't want to learn about it either. (O'Neill, 1987, p. 297).

O'Neill recounted an exchange with the President Carter after one of his national addresses on energy which brings his point into focus:

O'Neill: That was a fine address Mr. President. Now here is a list of members you should call to keep the pressure on, because we will need their votes.

Carter: No, I described the problem to the American people in a rational way. I'm sure they will realize I am right.

O'Neill: Look, this is politics we're talking about here, not physics. We need you to push this bill through.

Carter: It's not politics to me. It's simply the right thing, the rational thing. It's what needs to be done. (O'Neill, 1987, p. 330).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

I think it would be a mistake to assume that Jimmy Carter was an outlier president whose approach to passing significant non-incremental legislation was merely an aberration in contemporary American politics. The fact is that he was the new norm – not the exception. The four presidents who followed Ronald Reagan (two Republicans and two Democrats) all had limited success in promoting significant non-incremental policy initiatives, by transforming the vision of a majority of the American people, and ultimately enacting legislation that codified the transformational change. Since Carter's presidency, energy and dozens of other major political issues have become entangled in a congressional log jam that just keeps getting larger and tighter.

A multi-case study comparing President Johnson's leadership efforts when he successfully engineered the largest legislative package in American history with President Carter's ineffective attempt on the energy bill, and their specific approach to engaging the congressional leaders should offer a sharp contrast in leadership style. Such a study might be replete with learning opportunities. Both Democratic presidents enjoyed

the luxury of having the Democratic Party hold significant majorities in both houses of Congress, and their presidencies were only eight years apart, so the context of the times was somewhat similar.

Similarly, a comparative case study of Bill Clinton's unsuccessful attempt to pass a national healthcare law might reveal either a similarly flawed leadership plan, or perhaps something entirely different. Once again, Bill Clinton, a Democrat, began his presidency with his party in significant numeric control of both houses of Congress. But he too was also unable to enact the only substantive legislative proposal of his entire eight year term as president. Is there any significant institutional memory in White House, or at the very least, are the two national political parties keeping track of what works and what does not once their candidate is elected president and must begin to govern?

Perhaps the best related multi-case study would be to compare President Obama's leadership efforts on his healthcare legislation with President Carter's energy proposal. As is the case with every Democratic president since and including Franklin Roosevelt, Barack Obama began his presidency with the Democratic Party having a significant numeric advantage in both houses of Congress. Yet on the eve of the historic national healthcare vote, even a friendly CNN poll revealed that a large majority (59%) of Americans were still strongly against the plan and not yet inspired, motivated or transformed. Those were the same polling statistics that were reported before Barack Obama was elected president. Like President Carter with energy, President Obama's effectiveness as a transformational leader on healthcare was ineffective: few if any Americans had become transformed in their vision about the about the proposed

healthcare legislation which would affect 20% of the entire American economy; but the legislation passed anyway. This proves that transactional leadership can be enough to secure passage of a bill, but it is probable that its long-term prospects would be better if the majority of Americans had been supportive because they felt there was a moral imperative in redesigning the healthcare system.

Despite the huge Democratic majorities in the Congress, President Obama resorted to dropping large sums of taxpayer money into key Democratic districts at the last minute and perhaps other transactional gambits as well, to cobble together a razor thin majority. That display of base transactional leadership was hardly a return to the heady days of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, or Ronald Reagan: presidents of both parties who because of their effective use of both transactional and transformational leadership were able to generate significant bipartisan support for their personal visions (funding the Apollo moon expedition, greatly expanding the role of government, and conversely shrinking the role of government, respectfully). Those legislative achievements were accomplished despite often bitterly divided political philosophies and politicians who were engaged in both continuous and contentious partisan brinkmanship and high-stakes backroom maneuvering and deal-making—all while speaking to the public using charismatic rhetoric.

Contrasting the National Energy Program with the passage of the Affordable Healthcare Act could be especially fertile ground for future research because of the significantly different efforts of the two congressional leaders in each instance. Whether they were already committed adherents to healthcare reform, or whether President Obama adroitly enlisted their support, the fact remains: House Speaker Pelosi and Senate

Majority Leader Reid made the difference – even when a majority of the American voters were not yet “unfrozen.” President Carter did not ever achieve this strategic advantage with Senator Byrd even though his staff told him it was absolutely necessary.

### **Recommendations for Presidential Practice**

There are many factors that may enhance or undermine the chances of a president’s legislation being enacted. However this study brings focus to the inordinate importance of having both congressional leaders on board as fervent and energized supporters of the legislation. Perhaps even more than the president, congressional leaders have an enormous influence on determining the outcome of any legislative initiative. Nurturing a close relationship with those two key players on a personal and professional level is critical, yet the lack of such a relationship (or attempt) with Senator Byrd appears to have been an important factor in this case.

However, first and foremost a president must have a clear and compelling vision upon which to build a consensus. This study indicates that if a president has developed a compelling vision and a realistic plan for achieving it, utilizing both major categories of leadership (transactional and transformational), and turning both congressional leaders into ardent supporters early on in the legislative process is probably the best approach for passing a significant, non-incremental initiative which is significant, non-incremental and transformational in nature. It seems many U.S. presidents have failed to take advantage of the full range of leadership possibilities.

A future president who intends to codify transformational change should probably begin with the two congressional leaders. President Carter and President Obama have provided two cogent and contrasting examples which support that basic premise of this

dissertation. Transactional and transformational leadership actions can be complimentary and synergistic. Even a president like Lyndon Johnson, who was legendary as an extremely effective transactional manipulator, went on national television and raised his arms high chanting “we will overcome, we will overcome” when attempting in a transformational manner to inspire Americans and Congress to support his assorted civil rights legislation. He understood the advantage of using both types of leadership tools.

As a researcher and as an American citizen, I can’t help but wonder what would have played out in this instance if President Carter had brought in leaders (stakeholders) from all corners of the country (private, corporate, public, academic, scientific, and congressional) to address the energy crisis. If collectively all of the major players had been involved (at least in some degree) and had input in the design of the eventual legislation (as in the case of President Johnson’s Great Society legislation), I believe there would have been a much broader base of support, a much different energy bill, and thus a much better chance of enacting a much broader legislative solution.

### **A Final Thought**

When I began my adventure in this doctoral program, George W. Bush was president. As a concerned, frustrated, and perhaps angry American citizen, I had become alarmed that our country had been lacking adequate presidential leadership for many years. As a result, I elected to study contemporary leadership theory so that I might assess it against current presidential practice.

Ironically, as I write this final page on December 31, 2012, and bring this multi-year academic journey to a close, it is the eve of the “fiscal cliff.” I am struck by the fact that just as President Carter had no viable vision of an energy solution and thus no real

practical plan, neither George W. Bush, nor President Obama have had a vision of how to solve our country's financial crisis. As a result, neither president has ever offered a practical solution for Congress to consider – no compelling vision.

Like Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush, President Obama has poignantly demonstrated the increasing significance of this study and our need to better understand not only the importance of vision and congressional relations, but also presidential leadership in general.

America has had a number of presidential giants over the years. Lincoln, both Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan are a few who are widely regarded as transformational leaders. The times were a different dynamic for each president and as a result they each had to lead somewhat differently. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the American journey continues.

I would like to end this dissertation with a Chinese proverb:

If you do not change your direction –

You will end up where you are headed.

Postscript – the morning after January 1, 2013

Newspaper Headline:

“Government by crisis becoming the new normal”

By David Lightman, McClatchy Newspapers

They don't manage crises. They manage by crisis. Their proposals to avoid the fiscal cliff largely kicked the nation's pressing budget problem to the next crisis, days, or weeks down the road... The tortured bargaining by Washington politicians to avoid the higher taxes and drastic spending cuts due to take effect this week aimed at best at a small and temporary fix – and provided a vivid reminder why the American political system is broken... The system of doing what for 200-odd years was normal governing is crumbling.

Like the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* editorials that were selected as official records for the Carter library, perhaps the above editorial may one day become an official record in a future presidential library. Hopefully some of the lessons in this study along with the input of other Americans will help provide future presidents with the tools necessary to create compelling visions, inspire us to follow those visions and to eventually secure congressional enactment of the enabling legislation.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1.

The leadership scales on the left side of the grid will be as follows:

#### Theme I. Transactional Leadership

##### Scale 1: Capable Manager

- A. Ensures adequate resources for people to perform the task at hand.
- B. Provides requisite information for planning and performance.
- C. Provides necessary training.
- D. Supports and encourages people to perform well.
- E. Provides clear and challenging goals.

##### Scale 2: Reward Equity

- F. Rewards people fairly for their efforts.
- G. Recognizes good performance with rewards people value.
- H. Expresses appreciation when people perform well.
- I. Knows the rewards that people value.
- J. People are clear on goal attainment and reward expectations.

#### Theme II. Transformational Leadership Behavior

##### Scale 3: Communication Leadership

- K. Pays close attention to what others say.
- L. Communicates a clear sense of priorities.
- M. Grabs people's attention, focusing on important issues of discussion.
- N. Listens for feelings as well as ideas.



O. Is able to get complicated ideas across clearly.

Scale 4: Credible Leadership

P. Can be relied on.

Q. Follows through on commitments.

R. Keeps promises.

S. Acts in ways consistent with her or his words.

T. Can be trusted.

Scale 5: Caring Leadership

U. Respects people's differences.

V. Shows he or she cares about others.

W. Shows concern for the feelings of others.

X. Treats others with respect, regardless of position.

Y. Makes others feel a real part of the group.

Scale 6: Enabling Leadership

Z. Creates opportunities for people to succeed.

AA. Designs situations that permit people to achieve their goals.

BB. Involves others in new ideas and projects.

CC. Helps others learn from mistakes.

DD. Gives people the necessary authority.

Scale 7: Confident Leadership

EE. Acts in ways that have an impact.

FF. Can see the results of her or his actions.

GG. Makes a difference.

HH. Is confident in her or his own abilities.

II. Is in control of his or her life.

#### Scale 8: Follower-Centered Leadership

JJ. Enjoys making others obey his or her orders. (opposite score)

KK. Expects others to obey without question. (opposite score)

LL. Uses power and authority to benefit others.

MM. Seeks power and influence to attain goals people agree on.

NN. Shares power and authority with others.

#### Scale 9: Visionary leadership

OO. Considers how a specific plan of action might be extended to  
benefit of

others.

PP. Concentrates on short term goals rather than long range, strategic  
goals.

(opposite score)

QQ. Explains long range plans and goals clearly.

RR. Expresses a vision that engages people.

SS. Has plans that extend of a period of several years or more.

#### Scale 10: Culture-Building Leadership

TT. Encourages others to act according to the values and beliefs we  
share.

UU. Models what our core values really mean.

VV. Helps others develop a shared sense of what is important in this

organization.

WW. Expresses and supports a set of basic values about how we should work

together to achieve shared goals.

XX. Works to build a strong consensus around the core values of the organization.

Theme III. First Phase of Transformational Change: Unfreezing the existing status quo.

YY. Challenge and examine existing attitudes, and develop a discomfort with

the status quo.

ZZ. Broaden the worldview, ask new questions, and look at new trends and

new facts.

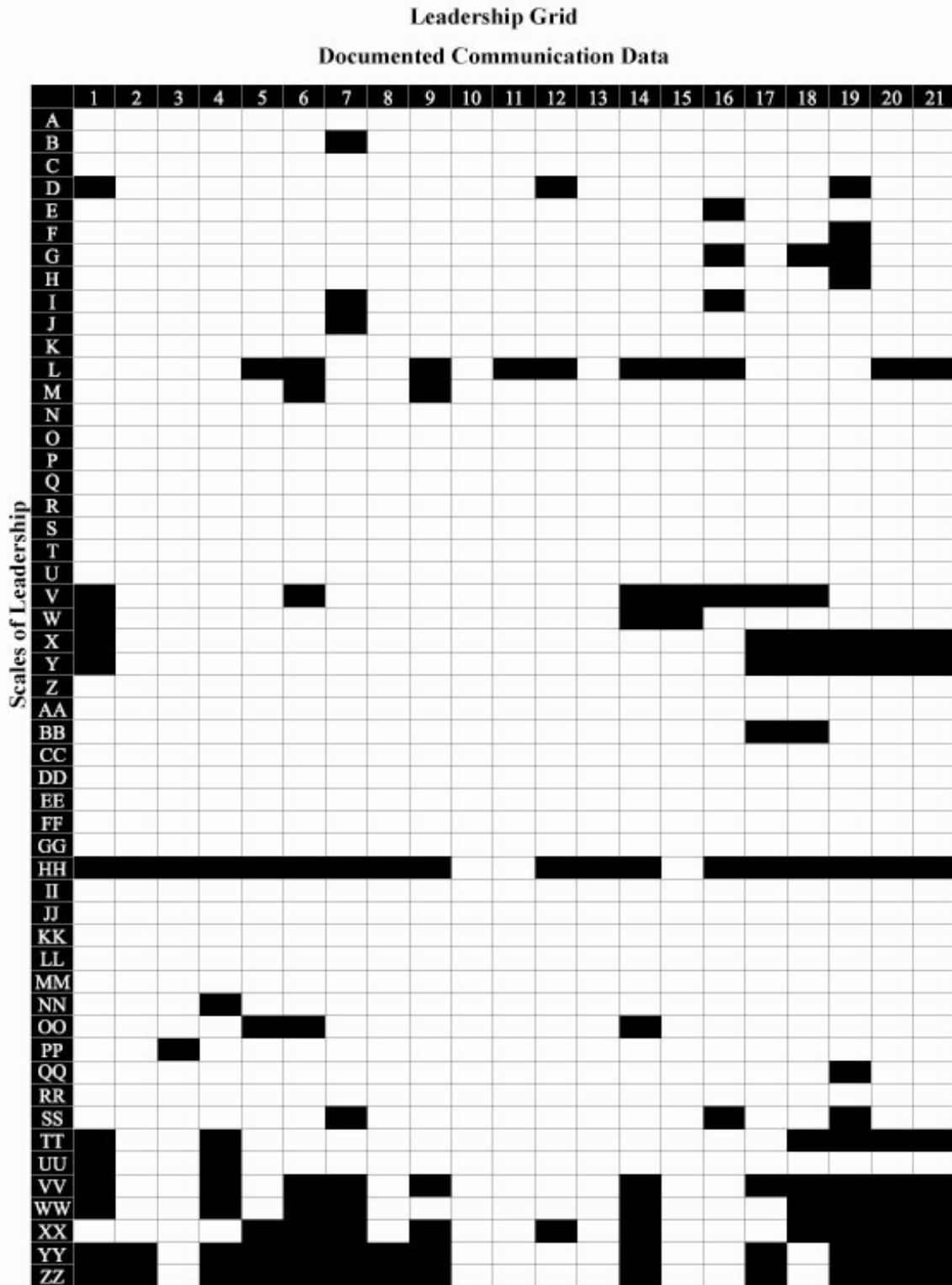
Appendix 2.

Leadership Grid

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
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Appendix 2.

Appendix 3.



Appendix 3.