RSA Journal 24/2013

Marco Morini

How U.S. Presidents Are Regarded Historically: The Contrast Between Historians' Rankings and the Retrospective Public Opinion Approval Ratings

1. Past Presidents Ranked by Historians

From sport to politics to history, Americans seem to like to rank anything they want. And, according to Richard Neustadt, "In the United States we like to 'rate' a President. We measure him as 'weak' or 'strong' and call what we are measuring his 'leadership'. We do not wait until a man is dead; we rate him from the moment he takes office" (3).

The present paper deals mainly with post-World War II presidents. However, it can be useful to provide a brief overview of the general approach polling has taken toward the category. Polling scholars to rank past presidents began in 1948, when Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. asked for the views of 55 historians for *Life* magazine. Schlesinger repeated this venture in 1962 for the *New York Times Magazine*. And his son, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., followed in his father's footsteps in 1996 (Schlesinger 65-66). "Each President (except for W. H. Harrison and Garfield because they died right after taking office) was ranked in one of five categories: Great, Near Great, Average, Below Average and Failure." The first Schlesinger poll (1948) resulted in six greats: Lincoln, Washington, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Wilson, Jefferson and Jackson. There were two failures: Grant and Harding. The last Schlesinger ranking (1996) found only three greats: Lincoln, Washington and Franklin D. Roosevelt (Dean n.p.).

Given the media attention generated by these early Schlesinger polls, others quickly followed. In 1979, Robert E. DiClerico asked 93 academic scholars to select the ten greatest presidents (Dean n.p.). He reported them

in *The American President*: Lincoln was the greatest, followed by Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, Jackson, Truman, Polk, and John Adams. The reverse side of DiClerico's ten greatest was described by Nathan Miller in *Star-Spangled Men: American's Ten Worst Presidents*; his list ranked (from the bottom): Nixon, Harding, Buchanan, Pierce, A. Johnson, Grant, Coolidge, B. Harrison, Taft, and Carter.

In November 2000, there was a massive effort organized by the Federalist Society and *The Wall Street Journal* that involved 78 presidential scholars: 30 historians, 25 political scientists, and 23 law professors. The scholars were selected in such a way as to assure that the jury was politically balanced. Once again, "the findings of this study were almost identical to those of the 1996 Schlesinger poll. Greats: George Washington outranked Lincoln, with Franklin D. Roosevelt holding the third place. The bottom of the rank was: Andrew Johnson, Pierce, Harding and Buchanan" (Dean n.p.).

After almost a decade of ostensible "calm," between 2008 and 2011 there have been at least four surveys in which presidential scholars were asked to rank former presidents. What catches the interest here is the inclusion of recent presidents. From these surveys, it seems that winning a second term is something of a prerequisite for presidential greatness (Leonhardt n.p.). It is also no guarantee of it, as the case of Richard Nixon and George W. Bush might attest. But the eight presidents who are currently regarded most favourably by historians have all been two-termers (or four-termers, in Franklin D. Roosevelt's case). The most recent historians' ranking states: Abraham Lincoln first, Franklin D. Roosevelt in second, and George Washington in third place.

Indeed, if we average the rankings among the four surveys and then re-rank the presidents from 1 to 43 accordingly, we obtain that of the 19 presidents before Barack Obama to successfully defend their first term (this definition excludes Grover Cleveland), 13 are regarded as good (Silver n.p.), four as average, and just three as poor (Nixon, George W. Bush and Calvin Coolidge). George W. Bush ranks 38 among historians, while Nixon is placed at 29, and Calvin Coolidge is numbered 27.

George W. Bush's negative trend among presidential scholars already began during his second term in office. In a Siena College survey (2006), "nearly 60 percent of the historians and political scientists rated Bush's presidency as a failure and two-thirds said he did not have a realistic chance

of improving his standing" (Siena College n.p.). A 2010 Siena ranking of presidential scholars rated Bush as one of the nation's five worst presidents (Siena Research Institute n.p.).

It is also crucial to remember that at the end of his tenure, despite strong support by conservative Republicans, George W. Bush was distrusted by relevant parts of his electorate. Indeed, John McCain, the 2008 Republican Presidential candidate, always refused to appear in public rallies with Bush, and one of the most employed strategies of Obama's 2008 campaign was to symbolically connect McCain with his unpopular party fellow. Obama also realized several ads which showed pictures of George W. Bush and John McCain together, and one of the most successful campaign's slogan was "we can't afford more of the same." Nearly all of Obama's attack ads linked John McCain with President Bush, whose approval ratings were extremely low. By linking McCain to Bush, the Obama campaign successfully undercut McCain's image as an independent maverick (Denton 7).

Tab. 1: Historical ranking of post-WWII Presidents of the United States (various surveys)

President	Political Party	Siena '94	Siena '02	Times '08	Siena '10	Aggregated Ranking**
Roosevelt	D	1	1	3	1	1
Truman	D	7	7	7	9	7
Eisenhower	R	8	10	6	10	10
Kennedy	D	10	14	11	11	15
Johnson	R	13	15	12	16	11
Nixon	R	23	26	38	30	29
Ford	D	32	28	25	28	24
Carter	D	25	25	32	32	18
Reagan	R	20	16	8	18	8
George H. W. Bush	R	31	22	20	22	22
Clinton	D	16*	18	23	13	19
George W. Bush	R	-	23*	37*	39	38
Obama	D	-	-	-	15*	14*

Source: Our elaboration. *Ranked while in office. **Considering also previous surveys not shown in this chart.

From Table 1, it appears clear that there are two modern presidents who have left office with approval ratings at the bottom down and have emerged over time with reputations enhanced, according to presidential scholars. President Harry Truman stepped down in 1953 with an approval rating of 23 percent (Schlesinger 74). When Truman left office, his poll numbers were lower than President Richard Nixon's at the peak of Watergate. He was often blamed by Republicans for the three macro-themes: Korea, communism, and corruption. But, with the passage of time, Truman has come to be judged by historians as the man who inaugurated the post-WWII Marshall Plan (the U.S. program to help to reconstruct Europe and keep off communism) and who integrated the U.S. Army. By the late 1960s, Americans had a deeper respect for Truman's record, and his name almost always appears in the top 10 of historians' rankings of best presidents (Vedder and Galloway 24).

President Nixon, devastated by the Watergate scandal, resigned in 1974 with a 24-percent approval rating (Murray and Blessing 35). But later, the Nixon presidency was praised for improving the relations with China, extending the social safety net, and inaugurating detente with the Soviet Union. The image of Watergate was largely omitted at Nixon's funeral service in 1994, where then-President Bill Clinton noted the "wise counsel" he had received from the former commander in chief and eulogized him in this way:

> When he became president, he took on challenges here at home on matters from cancer research to environmental protection, putting the power of the federal government where Republicans and Democrats had neglected to put it in the past, and in foreign policy. He came to the presidency at a time in our history when Americans were tempted to say we had had enough of the world. Instead, he knew we had to reach out to old friends and old enemies alike. He would not allow America to quit the world. (Black 319)

This kind of posthumous appraisal is a clear example of how opinions can easily change among politicians and intellectuals. Howeve)r, we should bear in mind that this kind of surveys have been criticized for the way they have been organized. At times, the surveys have had low responses In

other cases, there have been accusations of using either too liberal or too conservative panels of scholars (Feltzenberg 52).

The issue of the validity of the rankings has been of special interest to political scientists and sociologists who have tried to specify the relative importance of personality, leadership, issues, and partisanship. It has also been argued that those surveyed have tended to select their choices from personal preference rather than from a neutral perspective. Historian Thomas Bailey described the endeavour as trying to "measure the immeasurable." (Bailey 28) Quantitative ranking by groups of scholars has been in favor in recent decades, replacing the traditional methods of evaluation by individual writers as exemplified in Bailey and most biographers.

The aggregate ranking also does not provide a clear picture of the explicit contradictions among the historian community. Some recent divisive figures, such as Ronald Reagan, retrieved very conflicted results from different surveys: some ranked him in top positions, some others relegated him far behind. Also, judgments about recent Presidents are much more controversial than among eldest ones; when the work of historians has to interfere with current affairs, controversies arose.

According to Neustadt (167-68), if one wishes to look retrospectively at any President, "there are four questions to look at: first, what were his purposes and did these run with or against the grain of history; how relevant were they to what would happen in his time? Second, what was his 'feel', his human understanding, for the nature of his power in the circumstances of his time, and how close did he come in this respect to the realities around him? Third, what was his stance under pressure in office (episodes such as Truman's Korea outbreak; George W. Bush's 9/11, Kennedy's Bay of Pigs); fourth, what was his legacy? (for instance, Roosevelt's New Deal tell us a lot about the Hoover's presidency)."

The opinions among historians about the criteria on how to rank presidents obviously vary. For some scholars "certainly it is no accident that the presidents most widely celebrated for their mastery of American politics have been immediately preceded by presidents generally judged politically incompetent. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, James Buchanan and Abraham Lincoln, Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan – this repeated

dismal failure with stunning success is one of the more striking patterns in presidential history" (Skowronek 8). Edwards and Wayne (1983) focused their judgments measuring presidents' political change and leadership, as discussed by MacGregor Burns (1978), while Barber (1972) and Miroff (1993) prefer to reason in traditional terms of "presidential achievements."

Listing their selection of the United States' five greatest presidents, Landy and Milkis (2000) cite the prerequisite defined by James Madison in *The Federalist*. A chief executive's primary function, said Madison, is to "refine and enlarge public views." The authors tell that a great president is part visionary, part social innovator, and part serious paternal figure, pointing out the duties of citizens in a republic. Landy and Milkis's first pick, George Washington,

> insisted that popular opinion must be enlightened by inspired rhetorical leadership. Both Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt answered Washington's admonition when they inspired unstable electorates to achieve great successes during times of severe adversity. Another of the top five, Thomas Jefferson, is appreciated for inoculating Americans with a healthy distrust of elites. And Andrew Jackson makes the cut for his stand on nullification. (Landy and Milkis 286)

What constitutes presidential greatness? According to Landy and Milkis, while there are no neutral, objective standards, they argue that greatness is "the opportunity and capacity to engage the nation in a struggle for its constitutional soul," to stage a "conservative revolution," and to bring about change and leave a legacy. But they further note the importance of "democratic leadership," more difficult and demanding of a leader. This type of leadership involves "civic education" and the use of political party to have a lasting impact. As it appears clear, the top of the chart has always been the same: Washington, Lincoln, and FDR, though not guaranteed in the same order. Although there are plenty of obvious explanation, one of the main reasons for this ranking is possibly related to their successful leadership in wartime. The three greatest presidents had to deal with the American Revolution, the Civil War, and WWII, respectively. Three

wars that have been crucial for the future of the country and, more important, three wars that have been "won."

Princeton University political scientist, Fred Greenstein, focuses his book *The Presidential Difference* (2000) on "emotional intelligence," a president's ability to "manage his emotions and turn them to constructive purposes." Greenstein offers an unusual explanation of why presidents succeed or fail. He surveys each president's record in public communication, organizational capacity, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence. The author argues that the last is the most important in predicting presidential success:

> Franklin D. Roosevelt receives the highest regards for his ability to translate his popularity into leadership. Truman is acclaimed for his management style but criticized for his inability at times to lead the nation along the lines of his vision. Eisenhower is highly congratulated for his strong management style and his quiet leadership while Kennedy receives criticism for his early failings. After JFK, there is a series of failed presidents, with Ford excepted. The common denominator between Johnson, Nixon and Carter are their weak emotional intelligence attitudes. All are unable to work well with others, naturally suspicious of those outside their circle. Clinton too is regarded as weak emotionally. (Willians 131)

Greenstein's thesis is that people of low emotional intelligence should not become president as it is a factor for failure. Interestingly, in his brief comments on George W. Bush, written before the 9/11 events, he predicted, based on his observations of Bush's emotional inner core, that he was going to be a strong and successful leader.

2. Past Presidents' Public Opinion Surveys

American public opinion survey's institutes, such as Gallup and Rasmussen, among others, monitor current presidents' approval ratings on a daily basis (and on a yearly basis or so after they leave office). Looking at these data, a constant trend can be identified: "Presidents who are unpopu-

lar in their final months in office – like Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter and George H. W. Bush, all of whom lost presidential elections – typically become more popular out of office" (Leonhardt n.p.). All three of these former presidents had approval ratings exceeding 60 percent at various points over the past 20 years, according to separate polls by Pew and Gallup (Bose and Landis 28). "The approval rating of the elder Bush peaked at 74 percent in early 2000. Jimmy Carter hit 69 percent in 1999, before decreasing to 52 percent in 2010. Gerald Ford reached 71 percent in 1999 and he was at 61 percent in 2010. The trend starts before presidents leave office, with their approval often rising in between Election Day and inauguration day of their successor" (Leonhardt n.p.).

Changes in presidents' approval ratings can be explained with the changes on what the nation feels is important. For instance, early in his term, the nation positively viewed George H. W. Bush's expertise in foreign policy as he guided the United States through the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Persian Gulf War. But public opinion changed against Bush when the nation fell into recession. People blamed him for ignoring the economic situation of the country. His approval ratings fell to 29 percent near the end of his term, and the campaign against Bill Clinton and the constant attacks on Bush by Clinton over the economy shaped the public's mindset against Bush. Media also concurred in this process of shaping public opinion. They heavily focused on negative aspects of presidency (there were twice as many negative reports as positive), such as daily bombings in Iraq, and the *Washington Post* tried to build a scandal about precarious hygienic conditions at the Walter Reed Hospital (Barilleaux and Rozell 66).

The 41st President narrowly lost his re-election bid to Bill Clinton (it is important here not to forget the decisive element represented by the stunning performance of third-party candidate Ross Perot) and left the presidency with a 55 percent approval rating, which is not that bad but it was his minimum during his four years tenure (Bush sr. peaked 85 percent during the first Iraq War). But, about twenty years later, George H. W. Bush's ratings have surged, probably because his successful war in Iraq seems an outstanding accomplishment compared to the difficulties that the United States suffered from the second Iraq War.

Again, presidents' retrospective approval ratings are almost always more positive than their job approval ratings while in office. "Former presidents likely transcend politics when they leave office, moving into a more non-political role compared with the highly political environment in which presidents operate" (Jones n.p.). Even Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, popular throughout much of their presidencies and re-elected by comfortable margins, have had higher approval ratings since leaving office, on average.

George W. Bush's trajectory is most similar to that of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Bush, devastated by an unpopular war, left office with among the lowest approval ratings of any president. President Johnson, worried he would lose his own Democratic Party's nomination because of the Vietnam War, chose not to run in 1968. Johnson's approval rating was around 40 percent in his last year in office, while George W. Bush's stood around 30 percent. By 2012, 49 percent of Americans approved of Mr. Johnson's performance as president, with 36 disapproving, according to Gallup (2013). In a recent *Washington Post*/ABC poll, 47 percent approved of George W. Bush, and 50 percent disapproved (Lederman and Stengle n.p.). The one exception to the pattern is Richard Nixon, the only president to resign from the office. His approval rating was only 29 percent in 2010 and has not exceeded 40 percent in any poll Gallup has published.

Table 2 shows the Gallup review of presidential job approval ratings. The findings suggest that presidents' retrospective approval ratings are almost always more positive than their job approval ratings while in office. In particular, "Americans rate John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan much more positively in retrospect than they did while they were president" (Jones n.p.).

Table 2. Presidential Job Approval Rating while in Office vs. Retrospective Job Approval Ratings.

President	Final job approval rating as President (%)	Average job approval rating while in office (%)	Average retrospective job approval rating (%)	Difference1*	Difference2**
Kennedy	58	70	83	+13	+25
Johnson	49	55	42	-13	-7
Nixon	24	49	33	-16	+9
Ford	53	47	60	+13	+7
Carter	34	46	56	+10	+22
Reagan	63	53	64	+11	+1
George H. W. Bush	56	61	66	+5	+10
Clinton	66	55	60	+5	-6
George W. Bush	34	49	47	-2	+13

Source: Gallup (2013). *Retrospective average approval rating minus average while in office. **Retrospective average approval rating minus final job approval rating while in office.

Of nine former presidents about whom Gallup has asked at least one retrospective job approval rating, six have averaged higher retrospective ratings than their average job approval rating while in office (see 'difference 1' in Table 2). However,

> The main exceptions were Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, whom Americans view much less positively in retrospect than they did while they were president. Nixon's low ratings are most likely related to his involvement in the Watergate scandal, while Johnson's likely result from his overseeing the unpopular Vietnam War. But Johnson's overall term average was aided by the rally in support for him after he took office due to the assassination of Kennedy.

> Johnson averaged 72 percent approval his first two-plus years in office, compared with a 45 percent average thereafter (Jones n.p.).

Additionally, seven of nine former presidents have had higher retrospective approval ratings than their final job approval rating as president just before leaving office. That includes George W. Bush, who got a 47 percent retrospective approval rating in the November 2010 poll, the only time Gallup has measured Bush retrospectively. That rating is 13 percentage points higher than Bush's 34 percent final job approval rating as president in January 2009, but similar to his overall job approval average of 49 percent (Adams n.p.). Bush's 34 percent final approval rating is

> generally indicative of his low second-term ratings. Bush averaged 37 percent approval during his second term as the U.S. continued fighting the increasingly unpopular war in Iraq. During his second term, Bush also dealt with the slow government response to Hurricane Katrina, the controversial nomination of Harriet Miers to the U.S. Supreme Court, record-high gas prices, and the beginning of the financial crisis (Jones n.p.).

And, interestingly enough, it is not just Bush's change in the overall job approval numbers but also the intensity measured. In the new *Washington Post*/ABC poll, 34 percent say they "strongly" disapprove of the job he did while in office; that's the lowest "strongly disapprove" number for Bush since January 2005 (Eland 19).

Bush's biggest gains over the past few years have come from seniors (30 percent approval in 2008, 57 percent approval today), non-college whites (34 percent in 2008, 57 percent now) and moderate/conservative Democrats (10 percent in 2008, 33 percent now). It hasn't changed amongst blacks and Democrats, who still profoundly dislike him (Leonhardt n.p.).

On an anecdotal analysis, the presidents whose approval ratings have risen with time had probably some sorts of "redeeming" qualities. Gerald Ford's ratings rose because he was perceived as an unassuming man who did what he thought was necessary to get the country past the Nixon scandals. Jimmy Carter's reputation has raised more from his post-presidential achievements and has been stained by the continuing Republican attempts

to diminish him. George W. Bush's redeeming qualities are less immediately evident. One positive achievement was certainly increasing AIDS funding in Africa, although that is not likely to have much resonance with the large conservative base that was a key element in his two successful presidential campaigns. Most of his legacy is still highly arguable, essentially because only a few years have passed since then. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 9/11 securities failures, Guantanamo's prison, the Patriot Act, and selective tax cuts are only a few of the many controversies which surrounded his eight years in office.

It is possible that years of reflection and a reinterpretation of his presidency could end up putting George W. Bush in a more positive light. Since no more than five years later, George W. Bush's approval ratings show an impressive recovery of about 15 points. What does this mean? That time heals all wounds? That Americans have short memories? It is likely that George W. Bush will become more or less popular over time, depending on events like the Arab Spring, the evolution of the global recession, and on further details that eventually emerge about his tenure. But it is not surprising that George W. Bush has become more popular as a former president than he was as president. As it is self-explanatory from Table 2, public attitudes about former presidents tend to soften with time.

Conclusions

This manuscript aimed to demonstrate two research hypotheses. The first one wished to make a comparison between how citizens rank American presidents and the evaluations made by the historians. Findings shown in Table 1 and Table 2 highlight consistent differences among the two.

Presidential scholars' judgment is certainly based on a deep understanding of history and documents; however, historians represent only a very small portion of the citizenry, and they are probably not in the position to influence the general public. Above all, their ideas are not exactly shared by the majority of the public opinion. For instance, while scholars are gradually re-evaluating the Nixon presidency, citizens still consider him one of the worst presidents ever. On the other hand, George W. Bush

is consistently ranked as one of the most terrible U.S. Presidents by historians, while public opinion surveys show that his perception among the people has recently bounced back to around 50 percent of positive approval rating.

The public's beliefs are probably driven by immeasurable variables such as interpersonal relations (talks with friends, for example), mass popular culture productions (such as movies and TV programs), or simple fading personal memories. And it is possible that people tend to look at the past through rose-colored glasses. However, public approval ratings of past presidents show significant and consistent trends that can be considered with the same weight as the historians' evaluation.

The manuscript's first section acknowledges the actual presence of several surveys in which historians were asked to rank American presidents. From the first (Schlesinger's poll) to the last (Siena's surveys), the top ranking remained the same (Washington, Lincoln, FDR – not imperatively in the same order as specified), while the bottom has changed over time and the evaluation of some presidents (Harding, Reagan) is still highly controversial among presidential scholars. The final part of this section also describes the criteria for how prominent scholars judge presidents. Some historians consider presidents who have been remarkably effective in orchestrating political change to be the best; while others mention leadership efforts, the ability to transform the American political landscape, and the president's emotional intelligence. Taking for granted that the 'requisites for glory' vary widely, it seems that the issue of external variables is often under-evaluated: factors such as the general state of the economy and the presence of a divided government are not usually stressed by presidential scholars.

The second research aim was to investigate the recent bump in George W. Bush's approval rating and to compare it with other past presidents' patterns. Section two of this manuscript shows that George W. Bush's job evaluation definitely improved after he left office, and his trajectory is similar to many other previous presidents: as stated in more than one Gallup's report (2013), "Americans rate John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan much more positively in retrospect than they did while the men were president." Bush's upswing is a result not only of

the passage of time and an American public that embraces redemption but also the deflection of emotion from Bush's more controversial decisions.

This is not intended as predictive of Bush's future approval trajectory, just historic context of how the reputations of unpopular presidents can be revived in the hearts and minds of the American public. Some suggest that the softening of attitudes toward Bush may be attributable to his personal affability, his new public role as a grandfather, a surprising post-Oval Office pursuit of painting dogs and himself, and completely absenting himself from the national discussion. However, his gain in retrospective approval rating is still on a relative basis, because he still rank near the bottom of the list of presidents.

Public opinion pollsters stated it clearly in their comments:

> Americans tend to be kinder in their evaluations of past presidents than they are when the presidents are in office. And Americans' retrospective views of presidents may focus more on their accomplishments as president rather than the day-to-day political decisions that usually are highly influential on their approval ratings while in office. Of course, presidents may be remembered for unflattering reasons, as is the case with Nixon and likely also Johnson (Jones n.p.).

Retrospect can induce romance, and also other variables should be taken into account, for instance, the time in office: How would we rate Kennedy's presidency if he wouldn't have been assassinated? And also FDR's thirteen years in office are much different to rate than the two years of Gerald Ford. Furthermore, what a man does in his later years of presidency sheds light on the significance of what he did in his early years. Evaluations of presidents may also be influenced by their works after leaving office, such as the fundraising for Hurricane Katrina led by Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush or Jimmy Carter's involvement in negotiations to secure the release of political prisoners around the world.

Some (partisan) people would think that, for better or worse, Americans have short memories. But the real reason for these trends is "out of politics, out of fight," because the pattern here does not apply only to former presidents, either. When other prominent people leave the battles of daily politics, their approval ratings tend to rise.

That could serve as a lessons for future ambitions and for evaluating possible upcoming scenarios. Hillary Rodham Clinton's favorability rating was at 65 percent at the end of her tenure as secretary of state, a job that is considered mostly above the daily political partisan battle. As recently as 2008, in the middle of her primary campaign against then-Illinois Senator Barack Obama, her approval rating was only 48 percent, according to Pew. If she will run for president again in 2016, as many political observers predict, her rating will almost surely decline from 65 percent.

Works Cited

Adams, Richard. "George Bush: Worst. President. Ever?" *The Guardian* 1 July 2010. Web. 28 April 2013 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/richard-adams-blog/2010/jul/01/george-bush-worst-us-president>.

Bailey, Thomas. *Presidential Greatness: The Image and the Man from George Washington to the Present*. New York: Appleton-Century, 1966.

Barber, James D. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Barilleaux, Ryan J., and Mark Rozell. *Power and Prudence: The Presidency of George W.Bush*. College Station: Texas A&M UP, 2004.

Black, Conrad. *Richard Nixon: A Life in Full*. Philadelphia: Public Affairs, 2008.

Bose, Meena, and Mark Landis. *The Uses and Abuses of Presidential Ratings*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003.

Dean, John. "Ranking Presidents -- Utter Nonsense Or Useful Analysis?" *FindLaw* 11 May 2001. Web. 18 Apr. 2013 <http://writ.lp.findlaw.com/dean/20010511.html>.

Denton, Robert. *The 2008 Presidential Campaign: A Communication Perspective*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009.

Edwards III, George C., and Stephen Wayne. *Studying the Presidency*. Nashville: U of Tennessee P, 1983.

Eland, Ivan. *Recarving Rushmore: Ranking the Presidents on Peace, Prosperity, and Liberty*. Oakland: Independent Institute, 2009.

Felzenberg, Alvin S. "There You Go Again: Liberal Historians and the New York Times Deny Ronald Reagan His Due." *Policy Review* 82 (1997): 51-54.

Gallup. "Presidential Approval Ratings -- George W. Bush." *Gallup.com* 2013. Web. 3 May 2013 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116500/presidential-approval-ratings-george-bush.aspx,%20>.

Goddard, Taegan. "Was George W. Bush the Worst President Ever?" *The Week* 24 Apr. 2013. Web. 3 May. 2013 <http://theweek.com/article/index/243205/was-george-w-bush-the-worst-president-ever>.

Greenstein, Fred I. *Presidential Differences: Style and Character in the Oval Office from FDR to Bill Clinton*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Jones, Jeffrey. "History Usually Kinder to Ex-Presidents", *Gallup.com* 2013. Web. 31 May 2013 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/162044/history-usually-kinder-presidents.aspx>.

Landy, Mark, and Sidney M. Milkis. *Presidential Greatness*. Lawrence: U of Kansas P, 2000.

Lederman, Josh and Jamie Stengle. "George W. Bush Library: Presidents Converge At Dallas Dedication Ceremony." *The Huffington Post* 25 Apr. 2013. Web. 30 Apr. 2013 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/25/george-w-bush-library_n_3154513.html>.

Leonhardt, David. "Presidents Are Viewed More Fondly in the Rear-View Mirror." *New York Times* 25 Apr. 2013. Web. 31 May 2013 <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/25/presidents-are-viewed-more-fondly-in-the-rear-view-mirror>.

MacGregor Burns, James. *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Merry, Robert. *Where They Stand By*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012.

Miller, Nathan. *Star-Spangled Men America's Ten Worst Presidents*. New York: Scribner, 1998.

Miroff, Bruce. *Icons of Democracy: American Leaders as Heroes, Aristocrats, Dissenters and Democrats.* New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Murray, Robert, and Tim Blessing. *Greatness in the White House: Rating the Presidents, from Washington Through Ronald Reagan (*2nd updated edition*).* University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1994.

Neustadt, Richard. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: Free P, 1990.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. "Ranking the Presidents: From Washington to Clinton." *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (1997): 179-90.

Siena Research Institute. "Siena's 5th Presidential Expert Poll 1982-2010" 1 July 2010. Web. 26 May 2013 < http://readme.readmedia.com/Americas-Greatest-Worst-Presidents-Sienas-5th-Presidential-Expert-Poll-1982-2010/1546118>.

—. "Experts: Bush Presidency Is A Failure Little Chance To Improve Ranking." 1 May 2006. Web. 21 May 2013 <http://www.siena.edu/uploadedfiles/home/parents_and_community/community_page/sri/independent_research/Presidents%20Survey_06_may.pdf>.

Silver, Nate "Contemplating Obama's Place in History, Statistically." *New York Times* 23 Jan. 2013. Web. 24 Mar. 2013 <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/23/contemplating-obamas-place-in-history-statistically/>.

Skowronek, Stephen. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.

Taranto, James, and Leonard Leo. *Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and Worst in the White House*. New York: Wall Street Journal Books, 2004.

Vedder, Richard, and Lowell Gallaway. "Rating Presidential Performance." *Reassessing the Presidency: The Rise of the Executive State and the Decline of Freedom*. Ed. J. Denson. Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2001.

Willians, Bill. "Reflections over Greenstein's Book" 2001. Web. 15 Apr. 2013 <http://onlinereview.com/article/index/57185/willians>.