THE PERSUASIVE PRESIDENCY

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ABSTRACT

In his seminal work, The Rhetorical Presidency (1987), Tulis argues that a reinterpretation of the president's constitutional role in the early twentieth century legitimized the creation of the bully pulpit. With an expanded conception of his public powers, the president began to use his public rhetoric to mobilize the public. Tulis concludes that the very act of popular leadership stultifies the president's ability to deliberate and persuade the public. This research project challenges Tulis' argument. Presidents may have political incentives to exercise a rhetorical leadership that promotes public deliberation and persuasion. This dissertation develops a novel measure to gauge a president’s intention to persuade through deliberative argument and examines whether certain political circumstances, situations or venues make the president more or less likely to use deliberative rhetorical strategies. After examining the trends of the deliberative intent of the modern president, the dissertation then tests whether using deliberative rhetorical strategies are persuasive through a novel experiment. The major findings of the dissertation are 1) The venue in which the president speaks has a significant impact on his rhetorical strategy 2) Perceptions of presidential greatness are correlated with how much the president uses deliberative rhetoric 3) The political filtration process and pre-presidential experience are correlated with how much the president uses deliberative rhetoric 4) Contrary to expectations from the literature, there is no significant trend of declining quality of rhetorical
argument as the differences are president specific 5) There is a significant difference in the public’s perceptions of persuasiveness when a president uses deliberative rhetoric rather than non-deliberative rhetoric.
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Chapter 1
Introduction: The Presidency As a Rhetorical Institution

The presidency is a rhetorical institution. In a representative democracy, words matter a great deal—from establishing the contours of the political debate to giving the public the information they need to make informed choices about democratic governance—presidents occupy the “center stage” of a speech-based political system (Han 2001). Medhurst writes that, “a president cannot escape rhetoric as much as some would like to do so. For good or ill, all presidents are rhetorical presidents” (Medhurst 2006, ix). Presidential words matter because the president defines political reality with his rhetoric (Zarefsky 1973). More than any other actor the president is the chief articulator of the collective culture of America (Stuckey 2004). The president’s words allow “a single individual to symbolize and substitute for the complexity and confusion of government” (Hinkley 1990, 9). Not only does the President “constitute” a people through his words, but he can also create power rhetorically. The centrality of rhetoric to the presidency is not just about communicating ideas to others, but also legitimating and expanding constitutional powers (Campbell and Jamieson 2008). Presidents must be persuaders. They must persuade the public, the media, legislators, world leaders, and state officials. Presidential influence is wielded through their ability to communicate effectively. Presidents wield this influence as by seeking to win people over to their positions. By definition, persuasion is the act of convincing someone through argument.

This dissertation develops a novel measure to gauge a president’s intention to persuade through deliberative argument and examines whether certain political circumstances, situations
or venues make the president more or less likely to use deliberative rhetorical strategies. After examining the trends of the deliberative intent of the modern president, the dissertation then tests whether using deliberative rhetorical strategies are persuasive through a novel experiment. The major findings of the dissertation are 1) The venue in which the president speaks has a significant impact on his rhetorical strategy 2) Perceptions of presidential greatness are correlated with how much the president uses deliberative rhetoric 3) The political filtration process and pre-presidential experience are correlated with how much the president uses deliberative rhetoric 4) Contrary to expectations from the literature, there is no significant trend of declining quality of rhetorical argument as the differences are president specific 5) There is a significant difference in the public’s perceptions of persuasiveness when a president uses deliberative rhetoric rather than non-deliberative rhetoric.

The Study of The Rhetorical Presidency

The transition to the public presidency ushered in a paradigm shift for students of the presidency. Neustadt famously defined “presidential power” as “the power to persuade” (Neustadt 1960, 10). This definition famously “placed the locus of presidential power in the president-as-persuader instead of in the formal constitutional or statutory powers of the office” (Windt 1984, 24). Neustadt’s conceptualization of presidential power encouraged scholars to examine the presidency from a “rhetorical, executive” lens, rather than just from a “constitutional, administrative” perspective (Windt 1984, 25).

And while the president’s words tend to dominate public discourse and political agendas, the study of presidential rhetoric has been underdeveloped in the literature of political science.
The existence of a rhetorical bully pulpit is a modern development. Tulis argues that that a reinterpretation of the constitutional role of the president in the early 20th century legitimized the creation of the bully pulpit. A once clerical presidency transformed into a public presidency and encouraged modern presidents to rely on public rhetoric to persuade the public (Tulis 1987). Kernell documents the increasing frequency of presidents “going public”. Instead of negotiating with Congress, presidents instead issue public appeals in favor of their legislative agenda (Kernell 1997).

Tulis’ and Kernell’s argument that presidents’ realized they could get what they wanted by mobilizing the public to pressure other elite actors opened up a research agenda where scholars were highly concerned with tracking rhetorical changes and detecting institutional paradigm shifts. A popular method of empirical analysis centers upon changes in presidential rhetoric over time. Kradel (2008) documents the increase in the presidential mentioning of religion during the contemporary presidency, Shogun (2006) traces the amount of moral rhetoric used by presidents over time, while Lim (2008) looks at the declining intellectual quality of rhetoric.

In addition to detecting historical rhetorical eras, scholars have also looked at how different partisan patterns emerge for presidential orators. Jarvis shows that presidents and presidential candidates rhetoric is becoming increasingly candidate-centered, that Democrats are more likely to bring coalitions together, and Republicans are more likely to emphasize ideals (Jarvis 2004). Domke and Coe argue that Republican presidents are more likely to deploy religious rhetoric than their Democratic counterparts (Domke and Coe 2008). Other research
compares Presidents to each other rhetorically on indexed measures of rhetorical certainty, optimism, and familiarity (Hart 1984).

A focus on the impact of circumstance is another key vein of presidential rhetoric research. Ragsdale (1984) finds that presidents are more likely to speak in response to noticeable shifts in their approval ratings, Hager and Sullivan (1994) find that the advent of new technologies had a statistically significant impact on public speech, while Powell (1999) finds that the composition of Congress has an impact on presidential public activity. Hart and Childers found that campaigns prompt presidents to use “less certain” rhetoric (2005), while Hart shows that variables such as party, era, incumbency, and campaign cycle impact how presidential candidates describe the people rhetorically (Hart 1987).

While the study of rhetorical content is approached from historical, political, and circumstantial angles, studying rhetorical efficacy is knotted with more methodological difficulty. Most of this work examines whether or not the president’s public speech impacts public attitudes. Some scholars have found rhetoric to move public opinion (Ragsdale 1984; 1987; Brace and Hinckley 1992), while others have found the effect to be circumscribed, if not entirely muted (Simon and Ostrom 1989; Edwards 2003). Research indicates that presidents can shape the public agenda (Cohen 1995: 1997), influence the salience of issues (Canes-Wrone 2006), or priming issue frames (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Druckman and Holmes 2004). And there is also a sizable literature on how and whether a rhetoric can impact attitudes of citizens if not necessarily persuade the public (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Mondak 1993; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Lupia 2002).
Other research looks at how specific rhetorical deployments can increase presidential performance. Emrich et. al. argue that presidents who use more image-based rhetoric are considered to be “greater” and more “charismatic” than presidents who use more concept-based rhetoric (Emrich et. al. 2001). Coe et. al. show that speaking in binary rhetorical frames may make the media more likely to echo the presidential message during times of war (Coe et. al. 2004). Albertson shows that speaking in “dog-whistle rhetoric” may be particularly effective allowing presidents to curry favor with an in-group, without offending the out-group (Albertson 2006). Parkin shows that information viewed in humorous ways could get the public to remember more of what a presidential candidate says (Parkin 2008). And Wood develops a measure for the intensity and tone of presidential rhetoric on specific economic issues. He concludes that optimistic rhetoric can lead to more favorable public assessments of the economy. With a more optimistic assessment of the economy, people will actually increase investment and consumption (Wood 2007).

What is missing from the study of presidential rhetoric is a systematic study of a president’s intent to persuade. In what circumstances do presidents attempt to persuade the public? And what type of rhetorical content is effective in persuading the public? While scholars have looked at how speeches have moved public opinion, there has been no systematic study of presidential rhetorical persuasion. When does the president change his rhetoric in order to change minds? And what type of argumentative structure is effective in persuading people?

In order to examine a president’s intentions to persuade, the argumentative structure must be examined. The only significant attempt to study thoroughly the argumentative structure of presidential persuasion is contained in Tulis’ study in comparing the 19th and 20th century
presidential speeches to each other. In this study Tulis looked at the percentage of speeches that contained “developed arguments”, “series of arguments”, “list of points”, and “mixed (series and list)”. Tulis was merely trying to show the dramatic change in the structure of presidential articulation after presidents had reinterpreted Article II in the early 20th century, he was not drawing conclusions about the rhetorical intent of the president in certain situations or circumstances (Tulis 1987).

There has been no significant study that looks at the structure of presidential argumentation and its consequent impact on public opinion. Are there circumstances or venues that change the rhetorical justifications of presidential arguments? And are there ways that a president can improve his standing with the public through the structure of his rhetorical arguments?

This project makes two important empirical contributions to the literature. First, it provides evidence of whether or not presidents have different rhetorical argumentative strategies during certain political circumstances and situations. Presidents do not see any appreciable change in their rhetoric during elections, in their different terms or by approval rating (all buffeting the permanent campaign thesis), in their foreign versus domestic policy speeches (undermining the two-presidency thesis), yet there is significant change in their strategy based on their speech forum (confirming the importance of speech genres). Second, the results suggest that a deliberative presidency may be more effective than a merely “rhetorical” presidency. There is a strong correlation between the amount of deliberation a president uses in his speeches and how he is regarded by history. The experimental data of this project also suggests that deliberative rhetoric is significantly more persuasive in domestic policy speeches. Contra Tulis
and Kernell, the act of going public, if done in the most politically effective way, may not quash deliberation, but might actually increase the quality of democratic discourse.

Overview

In the next chapter the theoretical case for a deliberative presidency is constructed. The dissertation’s theoretical expectations rest on two overriding assumptions 1) In a democracy where citizens can influence policy, deliberation is a prerequisite for informed and sound judgments 2) Deliberation, properly understood, must have at its foundation a search for the common good based on the interests and preferences of the citizenry. Since the president has a unique representational role as the only truly national figure, the president is the most responsible actor in cultivating public deliberation. The framers wanted to design a political system that would cultivate reasoned and rational discussion of contested issues. Leaders must justify decisions rather than merely impose their will on the public. Political leaders should be required to give reasons for their positions and make sure the evidence provided is accessible to the public. Not only is deliberation constitutionally prescribed, but the citizenry also desires it. In order for a president to live up to his constitutional expectations and to meet the needs of the mass public, he must speak in a way that encourages deliberation. Based on the theoretical argument for the deliberative presidency, chapter 3 develops a novel measure of the argumentative structure of speeches by conceptualizing argumentative quality as being “deliberative” or “non-deliberative”. Chapter 4 reviews the literature of political behavior, elections, the American presidency and the rhetorical presidency to develop a series of theoretically informed hypotheses for the empirical analysis that follows. Chapter 5 provides the
results of a vast content analysis of the speeches of the completed terms of Presidents Carter, Reagan, GWH Bush, and Clinton. Chapter 6 designs a novel experiment to see whether “deliberative” and “non-deliberative” frames have a different persuasive impact on the public. Chapter 7 highlights the major findings of the project, suggests avenues for further research and addresses some of the limitations of the dissertation.
Chapter 2

The Deliberative Ideal: A Theoretical Justification of Presidential Communication

“Instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all” Pericles’ funeral oration

This chapter engages the literature on deliberative democratic theory to establish the case for the use of deliberative rhetoric in presidential speeches. In order to persuade the public, presidents must actually signal to the citizenry that they are willing to listen and learn to engage in argument and discussion. This turn towards deliberative rhetoric may also be politically useful and effective. The argument rests on two theoretical pillars 1) that deliberation is constitutionally encouraged 2) the public prefers deliberative discourse to non-deliberative discourse. The chapter establishes the constitutional support for the deliberative presidency, surveys the literature that explains the ideals of deliberative democracy, and adopts Green’s “ocular” model to justify the theoretical argument for the deliberative presidency.

The Constitutional Justification

In designing the American political system the framers sought to encourage the conditions for deliberative democracy. Concerned with the problem of majority faction and with the potential selection of demagogues, the framers wanted to “fashion an institutional environment that would foster genuine deliberation” (Bessette 1994, 13). In structuring the American political system, the framers were intently focused on the selection of political leaders. They wanted to create election procedures that would lead to the election of politicians with the
following six characteristics 1) leaders who could understand both the feelings of individual constituents and the common good of the country; 2) those who had a deep knowledge of financial, commercial, political and economic matters at both the state and national level; 3) who were not tied down by parochial local concerns; 4) who had an intellectual disposition to reasoned discourse and persuasion; 5) who exercised good judgment when making decisions; and 6) who would not make demagogic appeals or only seek to satisfy the immediate desires of the public. As Bessette writes, “possessed of these qualities, political leaders would have both the inclination and the capacity to deliberate well for the new national government” (Bessette 1994, 19).

The framers, however, were deeply worried about the use of popular rhetoric, and thought that deliberation could really only happen within the institutional framework. Since citizens did not have the same the time or the knowledge necessary for intricate deliberation, the constitutional designers believed they would be vulnerable to demagogic appeals. The framers believed that even that if “popular oratory were encouraged, deliberative rhetoric would not hold its own against irresponsible passionate appeals” (Bessette 1994, 238). In particular, the framers were very worried that the President, with his unique representational standpoint as a national leader, could inflame public passion.

Tulis underscores how concerned the framers were of the theoretical possibility of demagoguery. Scarred by the excesses of Shays rebellion, the architects of the Constitution were wary of the power of words used to rally the public. In their experience popular rhetoric would either lead to division through chaotic mobilization or to a shortsighted perspective through the flattery of the masses. In designing Article II, the framers wanted to institutionalize a politics of
administration. The president was to prevent social disruptions by being singularly concerned with his institutional role of executing policy. The president was to command the view of the “whole ground” by avoiding the parochial interests of popular politics. Under this conception, the president’s words were highly constrained, as most presidential communication avoided discussion of the merits and was usually expressed only as written policy rhetoric delivered to Congress. As Stuckey writes, there was an “interesting trend among the first presidents---none of them was an able speaker. This is reflective of the low premium the founders placed on popular rhetoric and the ‘popular arts’” (Stuckey 1991, 15). If a president spoke outside of his role as chief administrator by making appeals directly to the people, he would upset the constitutional expectation and undermine his credibility. Additionally, limitations of technology made it very difficult for a president to reach the mass public with his rhetoric. Presidents were expected to deliberate within the governmental community, not outside of it. Tulis argues that this is the “first” constitution and that modern presidents have radically reinterpreted this document.

Starting with Theodore Roosevelt and continuing with the administration of Woodrow Wilson, presidents started to leverage their unique representational position to help them get what they wanted. Wilson found a political system dominated by Congress and a political process stunted by the provincial concerns of the congressional committee system. Only the president had a national mandate and only the president had the authority to understand and explain majority sentiment. Under this new constitutional interpretation the president was duty-bound to exercise his rhetorical leadership in order to carry out his elected responsibilities. The president could get what he wanted by mobilizing the public to pressure Congress into supporting the president (Tulis 1987).
Over time through the advent of mass media in the form of the radio, television and now the internet, the president has transformed into a communicative locus of national political identity. As Stuckey argues, “the president has become the nation’s chief storyteller, its interpreter-in-chief. He tells us stories about ourselves, and in so doing he tells us what sort of people we are, how we are constituted as a community” (Stuckey 1991, 1). Because the expectations have changed so much since the crafting of Article II and the president is expected to “go public”, it also falls to the president to foster deliberation in the political system through this communication.

What is the Deliberative ideal?

As Gundersen writes, “political rationality seeks to answer one fundamental question: What shall we, as a community, do next?” (Gundersen 2000, 27). The process of answering this question is fundamental to defining the character of a polis. The very foundation of the deliberative model of politics in theory rests on the assumption that in answering this question “all arguments in a political discussion are respected and that the force of the better argument in terms of the common good prevails” (Steiner et. all 2004, 4). Effective deliberation will necessarily include a host of different viewpoints, enlarging the viable options that a citizen may choose from and support. If a democracy is to attain democratic ideals, there must be a healthy amount of deliberation because deliberation will goad voters to think more robustly about their preferences. Open to the possibility of changing their minds on the merits of logical argumentation, citizens will be able to make better choices and rational decisions about what policies are best for them and especially for the common good. Dryzek argues that democracy
gets its authority from discursive exchanges because “no individuals may possess authority on the basis of anything other than a good argument” (Dryzek 1990, 41). Democracy should be about more than counting votes; it should be about cherishing the discussion and arguments over contested issues (Goodin 2008, 2).

Deliberative discourse increases the likelihood of rational thinking and may therefore increase the likelihood of better decisions. Dryzek argues that deliberation is “a means for joint resolution of social problems” and that there is an “effectiveness of deliberation on the part of those concerned with a common problem in generating solutions that are both effective and mutually acceptable” (Dryzek 1990). Effective discourse can lead to better lawmaking. This link has been demonstrated in the legislative process. Oliver-Lalana provides convincing evidence that “there exists a link between the quality of law and that of its underlying reasoning; broadly speaking, the better is the legislative argumentation the better will be the law resulting from it” (Oliver-Lalana 2010, 4).

Opening up discourse to more robust arguments can increase the legitimacy of the decisions because people believe there is a wide-ranging consultative process singularly focused on finding the most beneficial way to address the problem. Deliberation may have a positive impact on a polis because it provides transparency. Sieckmann argues that, “rational argumentation will help a political system to demonstrate its legitimacy and find support of its citizens. By contrast, a political system that openly violates requirements of rational argumentation will hardly be able to make people believe in its legitimacy and will have difficulties to find the support of the citizens in order to make the system work smoothly” (Sieckmann 2010, 72-3). In addition to giving citizens more confidence in their government and
their leaders, the process of deliberation may also have beneficial impacts on their ability to be good citizens. In their study of legislative deliberation, Mucciaroni and Quirk state, “participants may learn about diverse subjects, acquire skill in reasoning, receive intellectual stimulation, become more tolerant of differences, develop awareness of distant places, come to identify with wider circles of humanity, overcome rigidity and so on” (Mucciaroni and Quirk 2010, 38).

Of course this is an aspiration more than something that can be fully realized in practice. As Mendelberg summarizes from a review of work in social psychology, “When groups engage in discussion, we cannot count on them to generate empathy and diminish narrow self-interest, to afford equal opportunities for participation and influence even to the powerless, to approach the discussion with a mind open to change and to be influenced not by social pressures, unthinking commitments to social identities, or power, but by the exchange of relevant and sound reasons” (Mendelberg 2002, 180). Individuals are not perfectly logical and enamored with the rigors of rational thinking. Arguments are typically not seen as opportunities for enhancing democratic competence or to advance the common good, but are instead, more of a competitive duel. Therefore, different views and positions are usually not acknowledged in good faith, but are instead seen as impediments to winning an argument.

In their survey of the philosophical literature on deliberative politics, Steiner, Bachtiger, Sporndli, and Steenbergen (2004) identify six major characteristics of the deliberative ideal. 1) There is robust participation by citizens and an equal opportunity to participate fully in the political process 2) Each speaker in the public sphere speaks with integrity and does not try to deceive 3) There must be logical arguments and evidence-based justifications of validity claims. Political choices must be based on reason and in this ideal democracy citizens are obligated to
offer justifications to each for the collective laws and policies they create 4) The merits of political positions should be argued for as part of a search for the common good. Steiner et all argue, “there should be a sense of empathy or solidarity that allows the participants consider the well-being of others and of the community at large” (Steiner et. all 2004, 21). Ackermann and Fishkin differentiate the economic marketplace from the ideal political marketplace as the good citizens asks, “What’s good for the country?” and not necessarily “What’s good for me?” because “the task of citizenship is to rise above self-interest and take seriously the nature of the common good” (Ackermann and Fishkin 2002, 143). 5) Participants listen to arguments of others and competing claims with sincere respect. While we can never truly understand fully the position of others, we should do our best to make an effort by careful listening. Genuine attention and respect should be given to opposing groups, opposing demands and counterarguments 6) Finally, there must be an understanding that the positions of the participants cannot be immutable, but must change and yield to the force of better arguments.

The most dramatic element of this ideal type of deliberative politics is the quality and openness of argumentation. There is an assumption that people participating in this process will allow themselves to be persuaded and moved by the best arguments and most relevant information. They are seeking an understanding of what is best for the community. Keohane writes, “Persuasion must appeal to norms, principles, and values that are shared by participants in a conversation. Persuasion requires giving reasons for actions, reasons that go beyond assertions about power, interests, and resolve” (Keohane 2001, 10). Someone committed to effective deliberation must be willing to engage any argument (Bohman and Richardson 2009). And for this to occur there must exist a mutual respect and reciprocity founded on a sincere
“effort to appreciate the moral force of the position with which we disagree” (Gutmann and Thompson, 1990, 85). The process of colliding with contravening ideas and opposing positions can increase the quality of the exchange. As Bachtiger explains, “Questioning, disputing and insisting can unearth new facts and tacit assumptions as well as unravel inconsistencies and holes in the argumentation…truthfulness can emerge out of a critical and thorough process of inquiry” (Bachtiger 2010, 3). A civil and respectful interrogation of competing arguments may be necessary in order to have healthy and robust deliberative discussion of the issues. Ultimately, in a democracy the most important determinant of power should be Habermas’ postulation of “the unforced force of the better argument” (Habermas 1996, 305).

In a deliberative model, the search for political choices that promote the common good will elevate the importance of reason, justification, evidence and truthfulness. And since the best argument should triumph, there is an inherently provisional and humble aspect of political advocacy because at any moment a stronger alternative may surface. Arguments must be supple and flexible, always allowing for updates and innovations as new facts emerge, circumstances change, or insights arrive. Chambers concludes, “generally speaking, we can say that deliberation is debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinion in which participants are willing to revise their preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants” (Chambers 2003, 309). True deliberation will spark a rigorous debate that can help innovate democracy because debate can lead to a reflective society that makes considered judgments, not ill-conceived democratic decisions. As Goodwin argues, “Democratic citizens are supposed to act reflectively. They are supposed to ponder long and hard what they want and why, and what really is the right way for the larger community to assist them
in achieving those goals” and they must also “act responsively, taking due account of the evidence and experience embodied in the beliefs of others” (Goodwin 2003, 1).

In his work on deliberation, Gundersen finds that Socratic deliberative dialogue is good for people because it leads to political learning and satisfaction (Gundersen 1995). Gundersen’s model of dyadic deliberation offers demonstrable cognitive advantages. First, it leads to active processing because it “invites, even requires, individuals to reexamine, reprocess, and reconnect their preexisting cognitions” (Gundersen 2000, 165). Basically, when engaged in a deliberative fashion people become more aware of what they don’t know and of what they do know. Deliberative discourse allows for a fuller context and appreciation of the political landscape. In addition to stimulating active thought, it also sensitizes citizens to the tolerance and acceptance of others. This deliberative model encourages citizens to be open to individual differences because the deliberative model of the give-and-take of argument sensitizes people to the vast diversity of perspectives and viewpoints. Gundersen maintains that deliberative discourse also promotes various affective qualities of citizens as it promotes “responsible optimism”, nurtures “visionary thinking”, promotes “responsibility” and “collective thinking” (Gundersen 2000).

Citizens not only have a greater range of positions to weigh in the deliberative model, but they also feel like they have more ownership of their society. Gundersen argues that there is a certifiable empirical case for deliberative politics because it perfectly aligns with the political ethos of America. Deliberative discourse promotes the political values of rationality, equality and freedom, foundational qualities that a well-functioning polis must aspire to and safeguard. Additionally, the very nature of deliberative discourse involves a balance of conflict and
consensus. As Gundersen writes, “Americans’ political beliefs evince both conflict and consensus. Furthermore, American institutions tend to sustain this mix” (Gundersen 2000, 281).

Citizen Participation

While many will agree that deliberation is a fruitful enterprise for both the citizen and the society, the main empirical question concerns the competence of the citizenry to engage in the deliberative process. Are deliberative theorists right that individuals should play a larger role in influencing the political process? Or should citizens be limited in their ability to shape public policy? There are three recurrent criticisms of citizen deliberation. 1) Citizens are too self-interested and passionate, restricting their participation in a process that requires careful, temperate and even-handed weighing of a complex menu of options. 2) Citizens are too focused on short-term results and do not have an appropriate understanding of long-term consequences. 3) Citizens are vulnerable to manipulation because they do not have an adequate knowledge nor do they have a desire or the energy to acquire this knowledge. In fact, these fears of the citizenry’s shortcomings in judgment, explain the constitutional structure of the political system from framers design of the Senate to the selection of the President through an electoral college. Presidents may even cash in on the public’s ignorance and whims by using them to gain leverage over an intransigent Congress (Tulis 1987; Kernell 2007). Jacobs and Shapiro argue that politicians can be quite adept at simulating responsiveness; “their words and presentations are crafted to change public opinion and create the appearance of responsiveness as they pursue their desired policy goals” (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000, xv).
In their seminal study of the public’s deliberative nature in the United States, Jacobs, Cook and Carpini reach two major conclusions.

1) “Citizens engage in more extensive and meaningful public talking than previously suspected. Our findings challenge the enduring tendency to attribute the ills of democracy to a lazy and withdrawn citizenry, breaking from a long tradition that has belittled and dismissed the competence of citizens.

2) Discursive politics in contemporary America falls short of the hopes and optimism of deliberative theorists. We find that public deliberation does not reach the high expectations of its proponents with regard to universal, representative, and rational communication and outcomes that generate agreement and politically efficacious citizens” (Jacobs, Cook and Carpini 2009, 4).

In their survey of public deliberation the scholars find that 25 percent of Americans have a “face-to-face” deliberation about a public issue, 47 percent persuade someone about a public issue, and 31 percent persuade someone about whom to vote for, while they find that 81 percent of the adult public is involved in discursive participation (Jacobs, Cook and Carpini 2009, 37-8).

While these percentages are not ideal, they do underscore the potential for the public to engage in the deliberative process. There is a significant portion of the citizenry that is actively discussing politics.

Deliberationists hinge their hopes on improving the political system by increasing the frequency of public talk by citizens. More public deliberation will improve both democratic legitimacy of the political system and the accountability of the politicians. With an increased
engagement and understanding of the issues citizens could force politicians to provide more extensive and logical reasons for their actions and therefore expand the amount of information available to citizens (Gutmann and Thompson 2004; Fishkin 1995). Most deliberationists believe that tinkering with the institutional apparatus of the political system can increase deliberative discourse; Sunstein writes that we must “design political institutions that promote discussion and debate among the citizenry” instead of “systems that promote law making as ‘deals’ or bargains among self-interested private groups” (1988, 1548). Barber labeled the political system and the representative form of government as “thin democracy”. The public is reduced to a mere instrument of aggregation, instead of meaningful and full participants in democratic decision-making. By increasing reasoned public deliberation, the public would find energy to substantively participate in the democratic process, something Barber labels as an “authentic democracy” (Barber 1984).

Dionne argues that “Americans hate politics” because politicians “have long framed political issues as a series of false choices” (Dionne 2004, 10). Citizens desire a democratic politics that solves problems and represents preferences. The public has grown wary and alienated by the “false choices presented by an ideologically driven either/or politics” (Dionne 2004, 10). Dionne contends that these false choices indicate that political arguments eschew reasoning and fact-based evidence. Political leaders have discarded the belief that politics can search for the public good. He contends,

“Americans hate politics as it is now practiced because we have lost all sense of the public good. Over the last thirty years of political polarization, politics has stopped being a deliberative process through which people resolved disputes, found remedies and
moved forward. When Americans watch politics now, in thirty-second snatches or even in more satisfactory formats like ‘Nightline’ or ‘The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour’, they understand instinctively that politics these days is not about finding solutions. It is about discovering postures that offer short-term political benefits. We give the same game away when we talk about ‘issues’ not ‘problems’. Problems are solved; issues are merely what politicians use to divide the citizenry and advance themselves” (Dionne 2004, 332).

In order to spark a civic renewal, Dionne believes that politics must shift its focus to solving problems and recognize that there is a civic obligation to participate in an “ineluctably cooperative enterprise” (Dionne 2004, 334). There must arise a new political center that appreciates the tension of competing issues and values. He concludes, “Our current political dialogue fails us and leads us to hate politics because it insists on stifling yes/no, either/or approaches that ignore the elements that must come together to create a successful and democratic civic culture. Democracy is built on constant struggle among competing goods, not on an absolute certainty about which goods are paramount” (Dionne 2004, 354). Dionne’s plea resonates with the Guttman/Thompson position that the core conception of deliberative democracy is that when citizens disagree with each other they continue the process of reasoning with each other until they can locate and reach “mutually acceptable decisions” (Guttmann and Thompson 1996, 1). Disagreement in a complex society will always be a permanent condition, but the process of deliberating with each other in a reciprocal and respectful way incentivizes citizens to become comfortable living with moral and political differences.
The President and The People: The Ocular Model

So how can the president incentivize people to become more engaged with the deliberative process? The president must realize that in a representative democracy each individual may have a limited capacity to express preferences or impact governance, but they are still valued participants of the deliberative process as active spectators and monitors of their representative leaders.

Dahl famously reduced the viability of a deliberative democracy by showing that if proper voice was given to each person to make democratic decisions legitimately deliberative it would take a room of 60 people an entire day to reach just one single decision (Dahl 1970). A country as large and complex as the United States cannot function without representative democracy. As Goodwin notes, “If we want to make the deliberative ideal practical, we apparently face an unpalatable choice. Either we have to reduce the number of people deliberating, thus involving less than the entire community; or else we have to reduce the breadth or depth of the deliberation, thus making the deliberation less meaningful in some sense or another” (Goodwin 2003, 5). A truly deliberative democracy is impossible in a large, multifaceted and diverse society. As Goodin notes, “Deliberative democracy, in such a world, simply has to work on and through our inherited institutions of representative democracy” (Goodin 2008, 256). Most democratic theorists believe the best way to increase deliberation is to tinker with the structure of the institutions, election laws and procedures. Without systematic change, the public will never have the opportunity to realize its full deliberative and democratic potential.
Green has a more optimistic view of popular sovereignty, a view that forms the theoretical foundation of the deliberative presidency proposed in this project. In conceptualizing an “ocular model” of democracy he envisions the people as intent “gazers” who are empowered with a “form of visualization that inspects, observes, and achieves surveillance” (Green 2010, 9). He believes that much of the work of democratic theorists presents a truncated and narrow vision of plebiscitary democracy in which the people’s inability to openly deliberate and decide necessarily dooms them to domination by self-interested elites. These theorists view spectatorship as something to be bemoaned and lamented. Green’s project reconsiders the negative conception of spectator-citizenship by defending it as a viable paradigm of democratic theory. He asserts that there is such a thing as an ocular model of popular empowerment, where people have an important role in monitoring their leaders’ conduct and leadership. Green writes, “the measure or index of popular empowerment on the ocular account no longer resides in the laws that are ratified but rather depends on the People’s relationship to the leaders who are seen. Unlike the vocal model, which understands leaders as a means to the ultimate end of legislation, under the ocular paradigm it is the leaders who function as the ultimate site on which democracy is realized” (Green 2010, 9). Therefore, the people realize their true power not as vocal participants in the democratic process, but as watchful monitors who force their leaders to take them seriously.

Under the normal “vocal” model, the power of the people resides in the power of the people to exercise power by expressing themselves through voice, whether though voting, preference expression, and public opinion. The communication of their opinions and preferences
is where the people derive their power. In the ocular model, “it is not an empowered form of speaking (the decision), but an empowered form of looking (the gaze)” (Green 2010, 9).

By re-conceptualizing the paradigm of popular empowerment, Green believes that there is a democratic solidarity that is inspired by redefining the People as ocular instead of vocal. He argues that this new conception “rescues the People from its recent demise, revitalizes it, and thus makes it possible for everyday citizens to understand themselves as members of a meaningful and effective collective” (Green 2010, 17). The People discover an egalitarian value implicit in this ocular model that allows them to “impose special, ocular burdens on the select few whose voices have been specially empowered to represent others, to deliberate with fellow elites, and to engage in the actual decision making that will determine a polity’s fate” (Green 2010, 23). Green believes that the major advantage of this new democratic theory of popular empowerment is that it allows people to have a continuous impact on contemporary mass democracy, rather than an episodic one that only really exercises its muscle during elections. Under this model the People always have an important impact public life.

Green argues that the best way for leaders to connect with the people is make them feel a psychological involvement as empowered spectators. The distinction of leading lies in speaking, while the virtue of being led lies in listening. Effective leaders must be able to empathize with the location of the “ruled” so they appreciate what is expected from them as leaders. Most citizens feel ambivalent because they are never truly engaged or called upon to think about and deliberate on the serious choices that face leaders. The literature suggests that the people are not taken seriously in their ocular role because politicians gauge public opinion not to solve problems or improve policy, but to determine how to present their speeches in calculated
attempts to maximize their support (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000). Under the vocal model, there is a belief that frequent competitive elections will make leaders democratically responsive. But as Green argues, viewing from this perspective “appears overly sunny when one considers the infrequency of elections, candidates’ skill at concealing policy aims behind ‘crafted talk’, the difficulty of gauging the extent of actual responsiveness, and finally, the problem that there may not be an underlying popular will for many issues in the first place” (Green 2010, 106). Under the ocular model, the People are empowered because their “decision” is not the paramount consideration of leaders, but it is their “gaze”. Knowing that they can constantly scrutinize, interrogate and supervise their leaders, Green believes the People will be able to inspire more candor in their leaders by controlling the behavior of the leaders. Under a vocal model leaders are more likely to be able to “control the outcome of the event insofar as it is scripted, rehearsed or otherwise carefully orchestrated”, but under the ocular model, the people can undermine their “leaders’ control of their own public image making” (Green 2010, 130). Adopting this ocular model redefines popular sovereignty by making the public much more present in the minds of their leaders.

By redefining sovereignty as one of sight more than voice, Green argues for a more transparent and open communication with the people. Leaders must always proceed as if it is the process of argumentation---as much as it is the final goal of that communication---that is to be valued. According to Green, acclamatory, banal, and manipulative rhetorical articulations from leaders have left citizen-observers feeling empty. In order to connect and possibly captivate, leaders must make citizens feel a psychological involvement with their words. In Federalist 42, Madison decried that “the mild voice of reason, pleading the cause of an enlarged and permanent
interest, is but too often drowned, by the clamors of an impatient avidity for immediate and
immoderate gain”.

As Bessette argues, the constitutional framers wanted a representative democracy that
would “foster rule by the informed and reasoned judgments of the citizenry” (Bessette 1994, 1).
Under Bessete’s conception, leaders should try to foster a public voice that is deliberative and
thorough rather than one that is unreflective, and unreasonable and uninformed. As the framers
enunciated in Federalist 10, leaders should use their rhetoric so that the citizens can have a more
enlarged view of the public interest. An important indicator of a democracy’s strength is the
thoughtfulness of its citizenry. As Federalist 49 states, “it is the reason, alone, of the public, that
ought to control and regulate the government”. Federalist 10 underscores the importance of
deliberation by expressing the hope that a deliberative assembly would arise that might “refine
and enlarge the public views”.

In their book on the paradoxes of the American presidency, Cronin and Genovese
underscore the seemingly irreconcilable relationship between presidential power and democratic
leadership. They write, “how can a democracy---government of, by, and for the people---
countenance one person, or even a team of people, leading? It sounds so antidemocratic. The
words leader and leadership imply that someone provides command or direction. The word
democracy implies widespread participation and rule by the people” (Cronin and Genovese
1998, 105). And since presidents have arguably the most important psychological connection
with the mass public, they may serve as a means of vicarious participation in the world of
politics for the people (Greenstein 1974). “The American Creed” (Huntington 1981) with its
commitment to freedom, individualism and democracy leads to a “cultural pull” of
“antileadership and antiauthority” (Cronin and Geneovese 1998, 106). The mass public will not want its national leader to impose his will without publicly accessible justifications. De Tocqueville recognized the rhetorical implications for public leaders.

“When it comes to the influence of one man’s mind over another’s, that is necessarily very restricted in a country where the citizens have all become more or less similar… and since they do not recognize any signs of incontestable greatness or superiority in any of their fellows, are continually brought back to their own judgment as the most apparent and accessible test of truth. So it is not only confidence in any particular man which is destroyed. There is a general distaste for accepting any man’s word as proof of anything” (de Tocqueville 1969, 430).

Americans have always been suspicious about power and government. The citizenry will not want their presidents’ rhetoric to reflect a lack of appreciation for the natural pluralism inherent in a diverse democracy. This dissertation makes the theoretical assumption that the citizenry prefers a deliberative democracy headlined by a chief executive who rhetorically reflects this preference and who understands that the public is always watching.
Chapter 3
Methodology: Measuring Deliberation

This section designs an empirical variable to capture deliberation in the presidents’ rhetoric. Based on the theoretical and empirical ideals of deliberative democracy and popular sovereignty established in the previous chapter, a novel measurement of “deliberative rhetoric” is created to assess the quality of a president’s argumentation.

In a seminal conference on “The Future of the Rhetorical Presidency” George Edwards offered an attention-getting critique of the field of presidential rhetoric when he compared the study of the president’s words to literary criticism (Edwards 1996). Surveying the major works in the field, he announced that most of the research done in the field was bereft of systematic evidence and clear hypothesis. In many ways the field has responded, increasing the rigor of the analysis and quantifying content analysis techniques. Yet, it is a permanently challenging enterprise to study the president’s words scientifically because there are many different variables in the relationship between the speaker and the citizenry. And so analyzing any text is fraught with interpretative issues, infusing all human reading with varying gradations of subjectivity. Sometimes studying words is more of an art than a science. As Medhurst writes, “to reduce rhetoric to a linear, one-to-one, cause-effect relation between the message (cause) and audience reaction (effect) is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of the art”. Medhurst continues by claiming that it is not about “the outcomes but rather judgment and power of interpretation that the speaker displays in assessing the situation, the appropriate language, arguments, timing, occasion and audience” (Medhurst 1996, xv-xvi).
We cannot capture everything in studying political rhetoric, but this does not mean our studies of rhetoric will not yield important insights. The methodological challenge is to maintain the systematic scientific rigor, yet retain an ability to account for the art. Our methods must offer more than subjective literary criticism, but they must also leave appropriate space for human judgment. Imposing rigorous methodological rules will allow us to contain the subjectivity inherent in content analysis.

The response to Edwards’ lament has been broken down into two main approaches, the coding of appearances of individual words within speeches and the coding of groups and combinations of words. The former studies make content analysis very easy by just counting all mentions specific words and then making broad conclusions of about the quantifications. For instance, Teten looks at word usages like “people, persons, citizens” versus words like “Congress and Legislature” and quantifies how “modern” as opposed to “traditional, the office of the president has become over time (Teten 2007). Those that rely on making judgments about groups and combinations typically use computer analysis in order to make these quantifications.

The pioneer of computer content analysis is Roderick Hart (1984, 1987; Hart et al. 2005). In his 1984 study he created the DICTION software program to evaluate presidential communication as a host of rhetorical characteristics. In the preface to his book he pronounced that this was “the first book-length, long-term study of presidential communication based on systematically collected factual information” (Hart 1984, xi). The study was entirely computer-based as he purposely avoided studying the “ideas” of presidential speech, instead he “looked carefully at certain microscopic features of presidential language, at how those ideas were expressed” (Hart 1984, 4). Hart endeavored to offer a precise (clearly defined and evaluated
language parameters), comprehensive (a method that would allow him to evaluate thousands of speeches), comparative (a method that will permit him to compare presidents to each other), quantitative (a method that produced differentiated results), and cautious (a method that accounted for limitations of assumption and data).

Hart’s DICTION program takes the text of a message and converts it into “machine-readable” characters” that the computer, based on a combination of dictionaries, then classifies and quantifies into a set of characteristics such as Activity, Certainty, Realism, Familiarity, Self-Reference, Optimism, Symbolism, Complexity and Human Interest. The computer is asked to sort and categorize how often a president uses certain types of words. For instance, for measuring the categories of Activity and Optimism, Hart offers the following.

“Activity: Statements referring to motion, change, or the implementation of ideas. Subcategories contributing to Activity include aggressiveness (fight, attack), accomplishment (march, push, start), etc., while passive words (quiet, hesitate) and words referring to mental functions (decide, believe) were seen as detracting from Activity.

Optimism: Statements endorsing someone or something, offering positive descriptions, or predicting favorable occurrences. Words indicating praise (good, loyal, sweet), enjoyment (exciting, cheerful), or inspiration (courage, trust) contributed to Optimism, while negations (won’t, cannot) and terms of adversity (conflict, despair) detracted from the Optimism scores” (Hart 1984, 16).
Hart acknowledges some important weaknesses of his methodology. 1) The computer cannot measure or make judgments on the context in which a word is used, it only marks its frequency 2) it does not “take into consideration such important, albeit subtle, features of language such as syntax, imagery, rhythm, and arrangement” and 3) it only evaluates the middle 500 words of the examined text which means “no comment could be made about the introductions and conclusions of the presidents’ speeches, which are, on occasion, miniature forms of rhetorical art” (Hart 1984, 17). However, he believes that these limitations pale in comparison to the overriding strength of his methodology, which is its incredible speed in evaluating “tremendous amounts of verbal information” (Hart 1984, 17). He also asserts that the main value of his methodology is that he accounts for words that are normally considered unimportant or inconsequential by the authors who write the speeches and the commentators who evaluate them. He argues that, “presidential speech often acts as a kind of Rorschach inkblot upon which commentators impose their own versions of political reality” (Hart 1984, 240). His method strips away this bias and offers a precise reporting of rhetorical reality. He compares the results of DICTION to the commentaries of a New York Times reporter’s evaluations of Jimmy Carter’s speeches. As an example of one comparison, Hart argues that his DICTION scores differ discernibly from NYT reporter Hedrick Smith on the “crisis of confidence speech” as he alleges that it was “less platitudinous” and reflected much more reality than Smith suggested (Hart 1984, 241).

Carter’s “crisis of confidence” speech
Certainty Score= 206.8 (Overall Carter Certainty= 181.1)
Realism Score= 196.5 (Overall Carter Realism= 199.4)
Human Interest Score = 53.0 (Overall Carter Human Interest = 28.1)

Hedrick Smith commentary on 7/16/79
“In what was part sermon, part program, part warning, the President returned to the homilies and populist rhetoric of his 1976 campaign in an effort to save his Presidency and try to restore what he feels is lost contact with the American people... Speaking easily, naturally, and confidently, he portrayed himself as a people’s President who had lost touch with the people and had begun to regain it in the past 10 days at Camp David... the real test for Mr. Carter will be whether the populist tone of his homilies and the tougher talk on energy will serve the rallying cry that he intended” (Hart 1984, 242).

And while Hart’s work provides very important insights, it also has the potential to distort reality. Not only might it not accurately account for context, but it also may even obscure the characteristics it portends to actually measure. Javkin noted this possibility by example with one of the more famous rhetorical lines in presidential history. Franklin Roosevelt’s iconic pep talk declaration “we have nothing to fear but fear itself,” actually would have been classified by DICTION as pessimistic because “nothing” and “fear” are pessimistic words. Jarvis (a former student of Hart’s) contends in her work on the partisan patterns of presidential campaign speeches that these foibles still do not overwhelm the advantages; she writes, “while these computerized programs are not as flexible, clever or attentive to details of context as would be the human coder, this type of coding is consistent, replicable and reliable” (Jarvis 2004, 407).

Hart would later adjust his measurements of presidential communication, eschewing a direct application of DICTION by having the computer identify the words and then coding the context in which they appeared (Hart et al. 2005). Wood also uses an inventive combination of computer and human coding as he attempts to see how the presidents use optimistic or pessimistic rhetoric in their attempts to influence the economy. Using computer programs to locate and extract every mention of the economy, he then has human coders decide if the rhetoric
in question concerns the economy. He has humans help him establish a dictionary of optimistic and pessimistic terms to increase the external validity of whether or not the president is actually offering positive or negative rhetoric in their discussions of the economy.

In his study of the trends of presidential rhetoric from President Washington to President Clinton, Lim utilized another dictionary-based software program known as the General Inquirer to count the occurrence of certain categories of words. Lim argues that classifications and subsequent quantifications of keywords are important because it allows for “a quick approximation of the lexical sense of any body of rhetoric” (Lim 2002, 331). Lim contends that these keywords permit him to make conclusions about how anti-intellectual, abstract, assertive, democratic, and conversational presidential rhetoric has increased throughout the years. As an example of how the software enabled him to make conclusions for the category “Assertive” the following classifications are deployed.


Submit: 284 words connoting submission to authority or power, dependence on others, vulnerability to others, or withdrawal. (Eg. ‘apologetic’, ‘concede’, ‘helpless’, ‘modest’, ‘relinquish’.)” (Lim 2002, 352-3).
In his book length investigation of presidential “anti-intellectualism”, Lim uses both the General Inquirer software, but also the Flesch Readability scale to argue that presidents have vastly simplified their rhetoric.

The Flesch Readbility scale has the following forumula: Flesch Readability= 206.835- (1.015 X ASL)- (84.6 X ASW)

ASL= average sentence length (the number of words divided by the number of sentences),
ASW= average number of syllables per word (the number of syllables divided by the number of words). (Lim 2008, 23)

By using the Flesch scales to make an argument about the quality of presidential rhetoric, Lim essentially equates long sentences and long words with intellectual heft, a rather generous assumption. Speakers can communicate their messages with skill and intelligence in concise presentations. In fact, it can be the sign of an impressive intellect to communicate information simply without extraneous verbal dressing. And again, while this analysis may not precisely measure what it endeavors to measure, its redeeming quality is that it does offer large-scale patterns throughout the presidential administrations without human bias seeping into the judgments.

Using computer analysis may offer a suitable lens for macroscopic conclusions because its main goal is to produce evidence of general surface trends, but for our study of argumentative intent, we must have a microscopic approach that examines the subtle arcs and gradations of communication. We must get beneath the surface to study the underlying argumentative purpose of the speech texts. Studying the structure of an argument requires human judgment and interpretive flexibility because understanding context is a crucial element of comprehending
argumentative intent. The Achilles heel of computer-based rhetorical analysis is its inability measuring and quantifying the minute and fine-grained contours that define human communication.

In order to understand just how much a president is attempting to persuade an audience necessitates an appreciation for the core foundation of an argument, not just a rendering of word combinations and sentence length. We must evaluate not just how an argument is structured, but we must also assess how perceptions of discrete words influence the impact and intent of a given speech within the context of their usage.

To quantify a president’s “persuasive intent”, we use a proxy variable called “Deliberative Rhetoric”, or to what extent does a president endeavors to persuade the public with his public remarks. Our method works off elements present in the argumentative framework developed by Tetlock (Tetlock 1981) the lexical analysis of Shogun (2006) and the Discourse Quality Index of Steiner, Bachtiger, Sporndli and Steenbergen (2004), but it is a novel variable. In concretizing an abstract variable like “persuasive intent”, the goal is to measure the following facets of the speech’s arguments 1) evidence-based reasoning 2) acknowledgment of and engagement with opposing ideas 3) concessions of alternatives and weaknesses 4) recognition of the institutional limitations of the presidency and finally 5) openness and transparency of the thought process. In sum, does the speech seek to “change” minds or does it solely seek to mobilize and “agenda-set”? Does the speech expand the democratic conversation or does it restrict it? Does the speech willingly engage in the competition and exchange of ideas or does it attempt to choke off competing viewpoints?
In Tetlock’s work on conceptual and integrative complexity of the thought processes as presidents transitioned from candidate to president, the scholar found that presidents presented issues in more complex ways after taking office. He hypothesized that this occurred because they had to justify unpopular decisions to skeptical audiences. His measurements were on a 7-point scale in which complexity was defined through the use of two categories, “differentiation” and “integration”. Differentiation is defined as the number of facets or dimensions taken into account in decision-making. A less differentiated approach would place policy options into stark relief (good or bad), while a more differentiated approach would realize that different policies have many, sometimes contradictory effects. Integration is defined as the “development of complex connections among differentiated characteristics”. He writes, “the complexity of integration depends on whether decision makers perceive the differentiated characteristics as operating in isolation (low integration); in first order or simple interactions (moderate integration); or in multiple, contingent patterns (high integration)” (Tetlock 1981, 209). Scores of 1 represent low differentiation and low integration, scores of 3 represent moderate or high differentiation and low integration, scores of 5 represent moderate or high differentiation and moderate integration and scores of 7 represent high differentiation and high integration. Scores of 2, 4, and 6 represented values in between these categories. Tetlock utilized two human coders to make these score determinations and had an intercoder agreement of .86. Tetlock does not explicitly define his unit of analysis (is it the speech, paragraph or the sentence?), and his coders resolved disagreements collaboratively, which leads to questions about how independent their determinations were and may compromise the validity of the intercoder reliability.
Shogun measures the presidents’ use of moral and religious rhetoric over time. Arguing that moral and religious rhetoric may be used as contingent, strategic tool to establish political authority, affirm existing values and justify policy, Shogun asserts that this type of rhetoric stems from abstract and indefinable principles. Using human content analysis Shogun determined that based on certain word choices there were five types of explicit moral and religious rhetoric. Her unit of analysis was the sentence, as she counted the number of sentences that had moral or religious rhetoric and divided it by the total number of sentences in the speech. She had a research assistant recode 25% of the speeches and found an inter-coder reliability of .92.

In an empirical test of the presence of deliberative democracy, Steiner, Bachtiger, Sporndli and Steenbergen construct a “Discourse Quality Index” (DQI) to see how much parliamentary debates correspond to the standards of deliberation. To develop a quantitative test of the democratic theory of deliberation, the scholars chose parliaments because “parliaments should be the place where the representatives of the people come together to talk about the key issues of a country” (Steiner et all 2004, 54). The measure is on a continuum from no deliberation to ideal deliberation. They break up their coding into five categories--- participation, level of justification, content of justifications, respect, and constructive politics. For participation they measured how freely the speaker participate in the debate using interruptions as the proxy measure. The speech receives a 0 for an interruption and a 1 if normal participation is possible. The level of justification measures the strength of a speech’s explanations. A 0 is coded for no justification, a 1 for interior justification, a 2 for qualified justification and a 3 for sophisticated justification. Content of justifications measures whether appeals are made with narrow interests or as pursuing the common good. 0 is coded as an explicit statement concerning group interests,
1 for a neutral statement and 2 for explicit statements of the common good. Respect measures the respect given to groups (who are impacted by policies), demands and counterarguments made by others. For the groups and demands indicators 0 is coded for no respect (only negative statements towards the groups/demands), 1 for neutral, and 2 for explicit respect. For counterarguments, a 0 is coded for counterarguments ignored, 1 for counterarguments included but degraded, counterarguments included (neutral), and counterarguments included (valued). And finally constructive politics measures how much consensus building occurs. A 0 is coded for positional politics (no attempt at compromise), a 1 for an alternative proposal, and a 2 for a mediating proposal. The intercoder reliability was .915.

Our method of capturing “persuasive intent” fuses these attempts as we look to account for the complexity and quality of argument as well as certain word choices that may discourage conversation and disagreement. We add to this calculus a president’s conception of his institutional authority as well as his acknowledgement of oppositional ideas. Measuring “persuasive intent” is an ambitious enterprise, as we are essentially attempting to quantify much of the art of speechmaking. Our main methodological challenge is how to mitigate human subjectivity in our quantifications of “deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric”. We incorporate features of Tetlock’s conception of the dimensionality of complexity, differentiation and integration, Steiner’s use of discourse quality, while our specific coding rules borrow heavily from Shogun’s typology or moral, traditional, inspirational and visionary rhetoric. Since their methods receive high levels of inter-coder reliability, we hope a fusion of these methods will mitigate the risks of subjectivity inherent in human content analysis. Our measurements will be more complicated and challenging since the coders will have more rules to apply.
One of the main challenges of this study is proving that human bias does render the findings invalid by making them unreliable. In order to measure this bias we rely on a sufficient inter-coder agreement or “evaluating whether a coding instrument, serving as common instructions to different observers of the same set of phenomena, yields the same data within a tolerable margin of error. The key to reliability is the agreement among independent observers” (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007, 78). While perfect reliability is never expected in human content analysis, but there seems to be support that values above .75 is excellent agreement beyond chance (Fleiss 2003), while others argue that acceptable reliability is .80, with tentative conclusions permissible between .67 and .80 (Krippendorff 2004).

The coders were subjected to a very strict training procedure as they were broken up into two teams led by a head trainer. The trainer and the coders would code sample speech texts together as a group so they became familiar with and adept at applying the rules. One team coded Carter, Reagan GWH Bush while the other team coded GW Bush and Clinton. This was done to ensure that each team had exposure to a president of each party. An initiator coder was assigned to select and grade the speeches under examination and then another coder, blind to the results of the first coder, would grade the same speech to provide a check on intercoder reliability. Where coder political affiliations were present (there were four independents), we assigned a coder of the other major party as the coding partner. There were no coding pairs who shared the same partisan affiliation. To prevent as much as possible the projection of the theoretical expectations onto the score determinations, all coders were kept blind to the hypotheses and variables. Our overall inter-coder agreement was quite impressive, given the complexity of the task at .792, thus falling in the range of acceptable reliability.
In line with the timing of the literature that informs a host of our theoretical expectations, we study Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush 1, Clinton and Bush 2 because we wanted to look at presidents who had completed their full tenures in office. Ford was excluded from the analysis because he was not elected. We chose to begin in the 1970’s because Kernell’s argument that the presidents strategy of “going public” was in response to a transformation in the polity that began in the early 1970’s. We did not include Obama in the entire analysis, but we did sample his speeches from 2009 and 2010 to give an indication of where he would compare among his contemporaries.

One of the weaknesses of the systematic study of human content analysis of presidential speeches is that because it is such a tedious process usually only inaugural and State of the Union addresses are analyzed. We wanted to gather a representative cross-section of all of the president’s public remarks and thus expanded our speech selection criteria. Using the presidential speech repository at [http://www.presidency.uscb.edu/ws/](http://www.presidency.uscb.edu/ws/) the coders were instructed to code all State of the Union address, all inaugurals, all debates, and all convention speeches. The coders were instructed to code radio addresses from the first week of every third month (starting in February), to randomly sample three domestic and three foreign policy speeches a year (as indicated by title) to randomly sample three domestic and three foreign press conferences per year (hewing as close as possible to picking one that occurred in the first week of every fourth month), and to randomly sample one domestic and one foreign policy public paper per year (hewing as close as possible to pick a speech halfway through the year). Given that the coding task was monumental and that the coding of a single speech could take almost two hours, a random sample was necessary.
The score determinations were made on a 5-point scale from -2 to 2 encompassing scores of 0. The unit of analysis was the paragraph. While most paragraphs on the site are broken up into clear discrete idea paragraphs, there were instances where the idea that framed the argument extended beyond the demarcation point of the paragraph. In these situations, the coders were instructed to allow the paragraph and the scoring judgment to extend with the idea. The maximum score for a paragraph, therefore, is +2 or -2. The following score breakdowns offer an abridged version of the coders instructions.

-2 indicates a purposive intent to choke off discussion, debate or refutation.
-Universalistic and immutable moral descriptions of Americans policies and the policies of foreign nations without specific explanation
- Universalistic and immutable moral descriptions of citizenry without specific explanation
- Universalistic and moral general appeals without specific explanation
- Universalistic and moral defense of criticism of political actions without specific explanation
- Religious language as explicitly connected to policy or general references to the importance of religion or religious principles.
- Appeals that call for a return to earlier, traditional principles, or beginning standards, references to the truths, principles or ideals of the Founders, laudatory references to America’s heritage; preservation of older ideals, traditions, foundations or basic ideals. Appeals that describe ideals or principles as fixed, immutable, steadfast, continuous, permanent, universal or old-fashioned.
- Appeals that stress an explicit categorical distinction between right and wrong or good and evil.
- Explicit predictions of the future when it cannot be rooted in logic.
- Flattery of and pandering to the public.
- Explicit proclamations of the institutional advantages of the presidency beyond constitutional fact.

-1 indicates the choking off of discussion, debate or refutation through the bad execution of logical reasoning.
- Qualified predictions of the future that are not rooted in evidence-based reasoning.
- Policy appeals that rely upon anecdote, emotion or sentimentality
- Argumentation without specifics or concrete evidence or that relies on significant assumptions.
- Commands that do not invoke specific reasons.

0 indicates either NR (not relevant) and NJ (no judgment)
- The unit of analysis does not demonstrate components of deliberative or non-deliberative rhetoric (i.e. jokes, introductions, expressions of gratitude to organizers, biographical information etc).

- The unit of analysis has a mixed record. There are both deliberative and non-deliberative components that yield a NJ for the coder.

+1 indicates deliberative intent, but the execution is not fully deliberative in execution

- An educative component, teaching the public with specific facts
- Predictions of the future that rely on facts
- Statements of the constitutionally mandated institutional powers without a discussion of the specific roles in the system

+2 indicates deliberative intent and impact and encourages debate and discussion

- Recognition that the powers of the presidency are constrained
- Rhetorical frames that suggest debate or difference on universal ideals or principles
- Rhetorical frames that acknowledge the legitimacy of policy-political debate or disagreement
- Acknowledgment that there is mutuality between the president and the public or the president and other institutional actors

The scoring of the speech was a “deliberative rhetoric” ratio score. So the “deliberative” points are added and divided by the “non-deliberative” points. So +10/-5= +2. Or +2/-6 = -3. It is not algebraic math. Whichever instance is most prevalent for the speech, “deliberative” or “non-deliberative”, is placed in the numerator. The least prevalent instance is placed in the denominator. Further, when there are more deliberative instances than non-deliberative instances, the ratio will always be positive. So the negative sign is eliminated from ratios with a majority of deliberative instances, otherwise even the most deliberative of speeches will look negative and non-deliberative if there is even one non-deliberative instance. If a speech is more non-deliberative than deliberative, the number of non-deliberative instances is put in the numerator, deliberative instances in the denominator and the negative sign is retained.
Chapter 4

Hypotheses and Variables: Situational and Circumstantial Influences on Presidential Deliberation

This chapter engages the literature of American politics and communication to develop theoretical expectations for the use of deliberative rhetoric by subject matter, political support, speech genre, election cycle, perceptions of presidential performance, presidential term, and previous political experience.

Deliberative Rhetoric And Speech Subject

H1: Domestic policy speeches should be more deliberative on average than foreign policy speeches.

Scholars have asserted that presidents have “long enjoyed substantial discretion” in matters of foreign policy (Dahl 1950, 58). Arguing that the US has a presidency for domestic issues and a more powerful presidency for foreign policy, Wildavsky showed that between 1948 and 1964 Congress enacted 65% of presidents’ foreign policy proposals and only 40% of the domestic initiatives. In fact, he argued that no single foreign policy issue that the president truly cared about had failed during this period (Wildavsky 1966, 7). This study inspired a spate of empirical tests of the “two-presidency” thesis. Prior studies did not offer systematic evidence that the two-presidency thesis existed. In fact, two decades later Wildavsky would argue that his initial hypothesis was “time and culture bound” (Oldfield and Wildavsky 1989, 55).
Some scholars took issue with the methodological approach of Wildavsky, demonstrating that even an analysis of roll call votes in Congress did not provide support to the thesis (Sigelman 1979; Zeidenstein 1981), while others argued that findings would be controlled largely by era-specific foreign crisis. Much of Wildavsky’s thesis hinges on the premise that the advent of the Cold War ushered in an era of bipartisanship in foreign affairs, an assumption that was called into question by the empirical data. Some scholars, for instance, showed that in the decades following Wildavsky’s article the president’s legislative success weakened markedly (Peppers 1975; Leloup and Shull 1979; Edwards 1986; Sullivan 1991; Cohen 1991; Schraufnagel and Shellman 2001). Other scholars argue that bipartisan support for the president has declined significantly over time (Fleisher et al. 2000; Prins and Marshall 2001).

The question of the “two-presidency” thesis, however, remains contested. Marshall and Pacelle find that congressional electoral results impact executive orders on domestic policy, but not in foreign affairs (Marshall and Pacelle 2005). A more recent assessment shows evidences that the presidential administrative influence is greater in foreign policy matters rather than domestic issues (Canes-Wrone et al. 2008). Evidence suggests that there is a difference in how the president treats foreign policy rhetorically, as presidents are less likely to beseech voters to pressure congress in their foreign policy addresses, suggesting that they believe foreign policy issues are less democratically responsive or there is no need to make foreign policy a popular consideration or both (Lewis 1997).

This study aims to continue this line of institutional inquiry. Do presidents believe they enjoy greater democratic leeway when speaking about foreign policy? Do certain institutional
advantages encourage presidents to become less democratically deliberative in their rhetorical arguments on foreign policy?

Theoretical Grounding Of Rhetorical Two-Presidency Thesis

We expect the president to use more deliberative rhetoric in his domestic speeches than in his foreign policy addresses because of three specific institutional advantages of the president (Canes-Wrone et al 2008). First, the president has a constitutional expectation to have more foreign policy authority than any other actor in the political system. Federalist 74 that foreign affairs must be “the exercise of power by a single hand”. Article II of the Constitution authorizes the president to act unilaterally and use the requisite “energy” and “dispatch” called for in Federalist 70. As Canes-Wrone et al. point out, “members of Congress often grant the president considerably more authority, funding, and administrative power in foreign than domestic affairs” (Canes-Wrone et. all 2008, 4). Presidents also enjoy a constitutionally prescribed “first-mover” advantage, which allows them great leverage in dictating any argument over foreign policy (Mayer 2001; Howell 2003).

Secondly, presidents have enormous advantages of information because they have almost a monopoly on foreign policy intelligence. Canes-Wrone et al. write, “Presidents, especially during the modern era, know considerably more than Congress about foreign affairs---about the relevant players in different regions of the globe; about the strategic consequences of different policies; about the status of ongoing diplomatic negotiations; about the effects of covert operations” (Canes-Wrone et al. 2008, 4). When the policy terrain turns to domestic issues, this informational advantage decreases as Congress, interest groups, and the citizenry can observe the
consequences and impact of policies and do not need to rely on information provided by the executive apparatus.

Thirdly, the president has an electoral incentive to make foreign policy his exclusive domain. No other actor across the two elected branches is more “visibly responsible” or “more likely…to be rewarded or blamed for the state of foreign policy” than the president (Canes-Wrone et. al 2008, 5). Even though the public finds this foreign policy to be of low salience, evidence is quite clear that foreign policy is a considerable factor in presidential elections (Aldrich et al. 1989). These electoral incentives simply do not exist for congressional actors, as foreign policy is not a very large factor in congressional elections (Jacobson 1996). Additionally, presidents are less likely to get pressured on foreign policy by interest group campaigns. Scholars show that just three of top thirty issues of interest groups are foreign policy in nature (Baumgartner and Leech 2001).

Because the president has constitutional, informational and electoral advantages to dominate the foreign policy discussion, we expect the president to reason and deliberate less than he does on domestic issues. If the president is expected to rule the domain of foreign policy, if he knows more about foreign policy than anyone else in the system and if he has minimal competition to occupy rhetorically the public dialogue because of specified electoral incentives, he should feel less obliged to provide specific arguments for his proposals in foreign policy as he would in domestic policy. With less constitutional, informational and electoral competition the president will have a decreased incentive to attempt to persuade the public with his rhetoric. By looking at whether a president uses different rhetorical patterns in his foreign policy speech
versus his domestic policy speeches, we can gain some insight as to whether the president perceives the existence of a “two-presidency” expressed in his public rhetoric.

If the speech was “primarily” (more than 75%) focused on international issues it was considered to be a foreign policy address, if it was concerned primarily with national policy issues it was considered to be a domestic address and if the speech examined discussed both international and domestic issues (with neither being discussed for more than 75% of the speech) it was labeled “mixed”. Using two separate coders, the intercoder reliability was quite high, as agreement on the categorizations of the speeches was 96%.

Deliberative Rhetoric And Public Support

H2a: When presidents have low approval, they may be more likely to adopt deliberative rhetoric than when they are more popular

H2b: When presidents have low approval, they may be less likely to adopt deliberative rhetoric than when they are more popular

Presidents are savvy public communicators and supremely rational rhetorical actors. Presidents will seek to win people over to their positions and when the circumstances warrant, they will seek to persuade. Persuasion is simply defined as an attempt to change one’s mind and is the act of convincing someone through argument. By examining the president’s rhetoric at different levels of popular support, we can gain insight on how the president perceives successful rhetorical strategy. We make the assumption that when a president has low approval ratings, he will seek in to increase these ratings. The central question is how the president attempts to
improve these ratings. Does he believe the best rhetorical strategy is one of argumentative engagement and rhetorical deliberation as he attempts to win over a skeptical public through reason and evidence? Or alternatively, will the president seek to exploit the institutional advantages of the office rather than talk about policies with specific arguments? Will he welcome democratic conversation or will he attempt to choke off the debate? Ultimately, will he attempt to persuade or will he try to mobilize?

Gathering empirical insight would be enormously helpful to our understanding of the presidential perception of power. Does the president think we have a persuasive presidency? When the public is aligned against him does he believe he has the power to change their mind? Does he believe he has the power to persuade?

Kernell’s landmark study, explained why presidents would eschew the softer strategy of bargaining and negotiating with Congress to get what they wanted. Instead, because of changing realities of the political landscape the president has an increased incentive to appeal directly to the public. Starting in the 1970’s the nation’s political system transformed from “institutional” to “individualized” pluralism. With institutional pluralism presidents were protected from public opinion because they only had to bargain elite actors in Congress. With individualized pluralism, the ability to negotiate with these elite actors declined. The expansion of interest groups and the decline in power of the political parties made political compromise within the system much more difficult. In response, presidents realized they could increase their legislative success by bypassing Congress and appealing directly to the people (Kernell 1997). In making the case directly to the public, a more popular president would make for a more effective president, subsequently driving the desire to attain and maintain high approval ratings.
George Edwards seminal book of the limitations of the presidential bully pulpit provides evidence that a president’s message falls on “deaf ears”. A core component of presidential leadership is the premise that the chief executive must lead the public by garnering public support. This core assumption of the modern presidency rests on three foundational premises; 1) public support is essential leverage for the president; 2) the president must take his case to the public through communication; 3) the president can move and persuade the public through his communication. Edwards’ research questions the last assumption, arguing that the president’s words have a very circumscribed effect on the American people (Edwards 2003).

In his examination of the “quality” of presidential rhetoric since the founding, Elvin Lim argues, “while presidents talk a lot, they say very little that contributes constructively to public deliberation. Our problem is the anti-intellectual presidency, not the rhetorical presidency” (Lim 2008, x). Using a computer-analysis of the rhetorical structure of presidential speeches Lim concludes that substantive presidential argument has progressively declined since the Founding era. Lim’s words are unequivocal in his condemnation of presidential speechifying. “When presidents lie to us or mislead us, when they pander to us or seduce us with their words, when they equivocate and try to be all things to all people, or when they divide us with wedge issues, they do so with an arsenal of anti-intellectual tricks, with rhetoric that is linguistically simplistic, reliant on platitudes or partisan slogans, short on argument, and long on emotive and human-interest appeals” (Lim 2008, xi). Lim’s analysis suggests that the president purposely avoids deliberation with the citizenry.

In her work on presidential rhetoric in national identity formation, Vanessa Beasley argues that one of the prime considerations of a president is to use the bully pulpit to “form a
mass” out of a very diverse American citizenry (Beasley 2004, 7). Beasley traces instances of the chief executive’s role in reinforcing “the audience’s presumed collective identity as national subjects” (Beasley 2004, 9). One of the difficult challenges of American democracy is out to reconcile the pluribus with the unum. In such sprawling diversity, where Americans are not united by a shared religion, race, or ethnic heritage, what can bind the citizens together? As America’s “Interpreter-in-Chief” (Stuckey 1991) it falls to the president to construct this unity rhetorically. Beasley finds evidence that presidents have advanced a “shared beliefs hypothesis of American nationalism” because “chief executives clearly have a great interest in making sure that the American people feel united, even if citizens’ actual demographic, economic and psychological conditions would suggest otherwise” (Beasley 2004 46). They accomplish this by using civil religious rhetoric, constitutive American ideals and by defining American national identity. If the chief executive believes the most important accomplishment he can have is to unite “all of the people”, it may serve his interest to underemphasize rhetorical deliberation with such a diverse public. He may simply wish to elide rhetorical argument by utilizing slogans, moral rhetoric and values language.

On the other hand, it may make institutional sense to attempt to persuade when his popularity declines. Despite evidence that suggests the influence of a president’s communication is muted, he still remains the sole resident of the bully pulpit. The president has the only national voice and therefore he retains a privileged position in the swirl of democratic discourse.

By looking at the president’s rhetorical behavior during different situations of public approval, we can address the important question posed by Edwards; are presidents directors or facilitators? Can presidents actually “lead” in the substantive sense of the word? Edwards defines
directors and facilitators bluntly; “the director restructures the contours of the political landscape to pave the way for change, whereas the facilitator exploits opportunities presented by a favorable configuration of political forces” (Edwards 2003, 25). By determining whether the president attempts to change the minds of an unsupportive public addresses this very question, does the president, a supremely gifted political actor, think that he can actually direct the national conversation? Does the president think he can reason with the American people or does he think his rhetorical reach is limited?

The variable for approval is defined simply by public support as indicated by the Gallup tracking poll. Gallup is used because of its continuous availability throughout the presidential terms chosen. The threshold for public support will be 50% approval. When the president drops below 50% approval will be considered unpopular, while a president above 50% will be considered popular. The assumption here is that in a largely two-party electoral system presidents who have less than half of the country supporting them will not be satisfied with their current level of support since it means their re-election prospects are uncertain. This threshold is also invoked for presidents in their second-term since the 50% threshold has become an accepted barometer in the media as presidential support or disapproval. The overall approval rating is used as the barometer rather than breaking down approval ratings by issue area because the theoretical assumption is that presidents are more likely to view their overall popularity as the significant concern rather than compartmentalize their public approval by issue.

Deliberative Rhetoric Versus Non-Deliberative Rhetoric
H3a: Presidents use deliberative rhetoric more than they use non-deliberative rhetoric
H3b: Presidents use deliberative rhetoric less than they use non-deliberative rhetoric

In addition to studying whether or not the president perceives deliberative persuasive strategies as effective in increasing their popularity, it is also helpful to see whether we can glean institutional knowledge from the general patterns of their rhetorical techniques. Does the increasing reliance on public law and “prerogative governance” decrease the president’s likelihood to engage the public in democratic conversation? Has the growth of executive orders and signing statements made the president less democratic? Has the imperial presidency seeped into the president’s discourse, making him less likely to provide well-ventilated arguments to the public? Is there a trend towards less deliberative rhetoric during the modern presidency?

Since our theory assumes that presidents are not just rational political actors, but also skilled and responsive to the needs and wishes of the public we must consider what type of rhetorical leadership the public wants from its president.

The president’s unique role as a leader of all Americans not only gives him a special pulpit from which to speak, but it also puts pressure on the executive to live up to certain constitutional and leadership expectations. In Federalist 42, Madison decried that “the mild voice of reason, pleading the cause of an enlarged and permanent interest, is but often too drowned, by the clamors of an impatient avidity for immediate and immoderate gain”. The constitutional framers wanted a democracy that would “foster rule by the informed and reasoned judgments of the citizenry” (Bessette 1994, 1). As Bessette argues, there are two types of public voice, one that is unreflective, unreasonable and uninformed and another that is deliberative and thorough. As
the Madison enunciated in Federalist 10, leaders should use their rhetoric so that citizens can have a more enlarged view of the public interest.

A democracy’s strength is evaluated by the thoughtfulness of its citizenry. As Federalist 49 states, “it is the reason, alone, of the public, that ought to control and regulate the government”. With his unique representational role, with a necessary responsibility to lead the entire country, the president may be expected cultivate a deliberative public that transcends partisan and ideological concerns. By invoking educative, reasoned and transparent rhetoric, the president could help fulfill the farewell plea of the country’s first chief executive who wanted leaders to promote “institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge” so that “public opinion should be enlightened” (Washington Farewell Address).

The president must also realize that his formal power is located within a more complex system and to wield their influence they must understand their place within institutional structure of the United States political system. Jones argues, the presidency exists within a “separated system”. He writes, “the President is not the presidency. The presidency is not the government. Ours is not a presidential system” (Jones 1994, 1). There are institutional limitations of the office because the founders intended to have competing institutional legitimacies. The president must make rhetorical allowances for these competing institutional power sources. As Jones concludes his book by noting that presidents must recognize and “grasp the purposes of a diffused-responsibility system of mixed representation and share powers” and those that “believe that the president is the presidency, the presidency is the government, and ours is a presidential system… will be proven wrong” (Jones 1994, 298). In a separated system presidents may have higher expectations of deliberation.
In addition to the constitutional and institutional expectations of deliberative rhetorical leadership, the contemporary political landscape may create conditions fruitful to a president who seeks to persuade rather than mobilize and divide. Deliberative rhetoric may be more effective with and welcomed by a populace that detests division.

In his seminal book on the contemporary political landscape, Fiorina argues that the American people are not more polarized, but that the choices they are provided are more constrained, therefore leading to the appearance that the nation is very polarized. In fact, the culture war is largely a myth and Americans are actually situated in the middle of the ideological spectrum (Fiorina 2006). In fact, on a host of issues, even hot-button cultural social issues like abortion and homosexuality, Americans are largely united. The issue is not political polarization among the people, but a limited menu of choices provided by their elite leaders. There is partisan polarization and sorting between the representatives of the institutional parties, but there is no discernible evidence that there is popular polarization. Fiorina and his collaborators provide meticulous evidence that both red and blue state residents are fundamentally centrist and measured in their political stances and beliefs. Even the most controversial issue, abortion, demonstrates this cautious approach to politics. “Americans are traditionally pragmatic, and they approach even an issue like abortion in a pragmatic fashion. They favor the right to choose, but only a small minority favors the right to choose in every conceivable circumstance” (Fiorina 2006, 92). The ultimate conclusion is that the overwhelming majority of Americans eschew “extreme positions and would accept compromise laws, but such compromises are hard to achieve given the polarization of the political class” (Fiorina 95). Political elites are polarized, not the mass of average American voters.
In his coda, Fiorina argues that the political class differs from the ordinary Americans more than just on political stances, but also stylistically. Political elites operate with a complete certainty in their positions and opponents of these positions “are not just misguided or misinformed, but corrupt, stupid, evil or all three” (Fiorina 2006, 203). Fiorina contrasts this starkly with most adult Americans who must operate with civility and level-headedness in their daily interactions. They discuss and negotiate, instead of denounce and declaim. And so there is an incredible disconnect between Americans and their leaders. “Americans contrast the environments in which they live their lives with a political order dominated by activists and elected officials who behave like squabbling children in a crowded sandbox” (Fiorina 2006, 204). Maybe the only rational response to this situation, Fiorina implies, is to tune out politics by disapproving of these leaders who create these unnecessary conflicts and distort reality. A deliberative rhetoric may assuage voters who find the elite polarization distasteful.

Hillygus and Shields argue that are a surprising number of “persuadable voters” or as they define these citizens, those individuals who are closer to the Republicans on some issues and to the Democrats on others. What they show through systematic evidence is that “these cross-pressured voters have a more difficult time deciding between the candidates, so they turn to campaign information to help decide between the competing considerations” (Hillygus and Shields 2008, 5). A substantial number of voters are actually persuadable not because they do not have ideological attachments, but because political preferences are so complex. The important finding of their work is that persuadable voters are not necessarily just moderate or neutral on political issues, but instead, they have serious competing interests. Since persuadable voters “hold diverse policy preferences” it “is less clear which candidate offers a better match”
(Hillygus and Shields 2008, 184). While their research focuses on what presidential candidates can do during electoral periods, their findings have implications also for popular support of a president’s governance. The public is cross-pressured on policy preferences and look towards incoming political information to sort out their attachments. Presidents who demonstrate a rhetoric that appreciates these cross-pressures may be more successful in cultivating support.

Using time-series analysis, Dalton conceptualizes a more subtle and detailed typology of American voters, particularly apartisans. He argues that since the 1960’s there has been an eroding partisanship and a very noticeable partisan dealignment. Independents now constitute the largest block of American voters among self-identifiers. Dalton breaks voters into four groups by creating a Cognitive-Partisan Index. They are classified by whether or not they are partisan and by their level of cognitive mobilization. “Apolitical independents” are not attached to a party nor are they cognitively engaged in politics. “Ritual partisans” are aligned voters and usually have limited political knowledge. “Cognitive Partisans” have a party ID, yet they have the cognitive resources to understand politics beyond partisan loyalties. And finally apartisans, who are the focus of his research “generally have the skills and resources necessary to orient themselves to politics without depending on party labels” (Dalton 2013, 41). Dalton finds that apartisans comprise an increased share of voters. The American electorate is now “less partisan, but also more likely to possess the cognitive skills and resources to manage the complexities of politics” (Dalton 2013, 44). Conversely, those who rely on “ritual dependence on party” have decreased dramatically in the last fifty years. These trends have substantial implications on the political landscape, as increased share of voters who are “cognitively mobilized” means that the American electorate “reflects a greater ability to make informed political choices” (Dalton 2013, 55). The
public is more likely to seek out political information, to have more political knowledge, and to have higher measures of “enlightened citizenship” (Dalton 2013, 60).

Partisan attachment is important because it binds, orients, frames, guides, mobilizes, stabilizes, and shapes political preferences and judgments. With the decreasing reliance on partisan affiliation there is more room for presidents to use rhetoric that extends beyond ideological straitjackets. Dalton argues that ritual partisans, cognitive partisans, and apolitical independents contribute to the “inertia” of politics. But the emergence of apartisans who are cognitively mobilized means we have a more fluid and changeable electorate, one that could provide support for “new political figures” or could respond to leaders who recognize the complexity of politics.

Synthesizing the more optimistic extant literature on the (lack of) polarization may yield the conclusion that an effective rhetorical strategy is one that actually respects the diversity and uncertainty of American public opinion. As Converse wrote, “A realistic picture of political belief systems in the mass public… is not one that presumes widespread ideological coherence; it is rather one that captures with some fidelity the fragmentation, narrowness, and diversity of these demands” (Converse 1964, 247). Highlighting the large range of opinion and celebrating disagreement may be a strategy that leads to a smarter democracy. Hochschild writes, “a democracy composed of citizens coping with disjunction and ambivalence is full of people who question their own righteousness, who may entertain alternative viewpoints, and who, given the right questions, are more driven to resolve problems than to ignore them” (Hochschild 1993, 206). The same could be said for leaders. Those who rhetorically acknowledge and even mirror the civility, the lack of righteousness, and the complexity of the populace may be rewarded with
an increased level of popular approval. And since the president is by definition America’s most successful national figure, he may more likely to use deliberative rhetoric.

However, while Fiorina, Hillygus, Shields and Dalton provide data that questions the polarization of the political landscape, their studies overlook the increasing gulf that is growing between committed partisans. Abramowitz and Saunders argue that since the 1970’s there has been a significant ideological polarization that has not only increased among political elites, but also among the mass public. Ideological thinking is more common among the broad American public than it has been in the past. And their data also undermines Dalton’s claim that more cognitive thinkers are more likely to have moderated stances. Abramowitz and Saunders write, “The increase in ideological polarization since the 1980’s has been concentrated among the more educated and politically engaged segment of the public” (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008, 545). Democrats and Republicans are becoming increasingly divided on the issues, political polarization is increasing geographically, and a chasm of difference has formed between religious and secular voters. What might be most significant is that the increasing polarization is not causing Americans to become less involved in the political process, but that “polarization energizes the electorate and stimulates political participation” (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008, 554). If these findings are correct the president may be more likely to rally support with a rhetorical strategy that reflects this polarization, one that is very non-deliberative and partisan in order to appeal more to an increasingly engaged and divided populace.

Deliberative Rhetoric and Speech Venue
H4a: Inaugural addresses and State of the Union addresses will be more non-deliberative than other addresses

H4b: Press conferences will be more deliberative than other addresses

There are identifiable genres of presidential rhetoric that have performed different roles of governance and retain varying rhetorical expectations. Studying the rhetorical argument structure of different genres will test whether these different speech types manifest noticeable differences. Are certain genres less accessible to the public than others?

The literature suggests that inaugural and State of the Union addresses are more ritualistic and ceremonial than other speech types. Schlesinger writes that inaugural addresses are “rarely an occasion for original thought or stimulating reflection. The platitude quotient tends to be high, the rhetoric stately and self-serving, the ritual obsessive and the surprises few” (Schlesinger 1965, vi). The address is the central opportunity for the president to affirm his legitimacy and officially activate the powers of the executive. It is a ceremonial rite of passage that invests the formal and informal powers of the presidency to the elected individual. Campbell and Jamieson, who wrote the definitive book on presidential speech genres, argue that inaugural addresses have a “special character” that is marked by “general epideictic features”. They claim that there are four different elements of an inaugural address. “The presidential inaugural (1) unifies the audience by reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony; (2) rehearses communal values drawn from the past; (3) sets forth the political principles that will govern the new administration; and (4) demonstrates that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions” (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 15). These elements combine to establish an investiture and “enactment of a presidential persona”
(Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 33). None of the essential ingredients and goals of the inaugural address bespeaks of an attempt to reason and persuade, it is more concerned with establishing legitimacy rather than embracing the cacophony of a democratic public.

State of the Union addresses function in a similarly non-deliberative fashion. Campbell and Jamieson conclude that these speeches use history to “involve the Congress and the people in an affirmation that this is not only the way it was, but also the way it will be. More eloquent presidents have seized the opportunity to reshape reality and to imprint that conception on the nation” (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 52). This address functions to highlight the unique role of the president in the political system. The occasion highlights that there is a sizable difference between the executive and all other actors in the political system. While the president is constitutionally obligated to report, a provision that suggests a fact-based assessment of the situation, in practice there is tremendous leeway in how the president chooses to frame his words. Surveying the historical sweep of inaugural address, Campbell and Jamieson note that “facts do not speak for themselves; assessments must be grounded in values. As a consequence, State of the Union addresses not only assess and recommend; they also articulate the values underlying assessments” (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 53). The authors also assert that these addresses provide a continuation of their most recent inaugural as they “revive the principles to which they committed their presidencies and show how these principles will be reflected in their legislative programs” (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 73). Presidents use this rhetorical forum as an opportunity to assert and argue for a legislative prerogative in the context of a separated system and less as an opportunity to rhetorically consider the complexities and nuances of contrasting arguments.
Because of their ritualistic and ceremonial functions these speech types are not forums that we would expect to incline the president to welcome conversation or contemplation of democratic difference. “When presidents fulfill ceremonial functions, they define and redefine the national ethos and the nation’s values, and they instruct the citizenry and Congress in their roles as members of the polity, in so doing, weave the fabric of a shared national heritage and identity” (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 73). These two rhetorical platforms are more suited to rhetoric of mobilization instead of rhetoric of persuasion.

The study of the press conference might be the most illuminating window into presidential leadership as all other forums of rhetorical communication are premeditated and scripted. Press conferences, unlike inaugural and State of the Union addresses, are structured as dialogues, not as monologues. As Smith points out “exchanges between presidents and the press are based on a fundamental adversarial relationship that is recognized by both parties” (Smith 1990, xix). The president and the press have a direct conflict of information, as the chief executive tries to release information in a controlled and beneficial manner, while the press is trying to hold the president accountable for his proposals and decisions. Because of this “inherently adversarial public encounter” the “main obligation of the president in this dialogue is to persuade (Smith 1990, 66). In order to communicate effectively in a mediated system, the president must enlist the support of the press and the best way to do so is to overcome their instinctual and institutional skepticism. As Smith notes, “reasonable argumentation is most important” when trying to communicate with the press elite (Smith 1990, 121). The format of a press conference is not inherently more deliberative in nature than a speech, but it forces the
president to at least engage with opposing arguments and criticisms, making it more likely the president will attempt to convince through evidence-based deliberative rhetoric.

Deliberative Rhetoric and Elections

H5a: Presidential elections will feature elevated levels of deliberative rhetoric
H5b: Presidential elections will feature elevated levels of non-deliberative rhetoric
H5c: Midterm elections will feature elevated levels of deliberative rhetoric
H5d: Midterm elections will feature elevated levels of non-deliberative rhetoric

Election periods, particularly presidential general elections, may present social and institutional opportunities for rhetorical deliberation for four major reasons. Firstly, during electoral campaigns the massive resources mobilized by political parties may allow the opposition party to compete with the incumbent executive’s institutional advantages of the bully pulpit. With more money, more motivation and more energy, the president’s political opponents will have an increased opportunity to broadcast their arguments to the public.

Secondly, presidential electoral campaigns provide the opposition party with what amounts to a pseudo-executive. The electorate must at least entertain the possibility that the challenging party’s nominee will become the executive. With a legitimated opponent, one who can realistically embody elements of an executive presence, the president may be inclined to engage the opposing arguments.

Thirdly, just as the social and institutional context of an electoral campaign prompts the executive to behave in ways that are less consistent with the role of a current executive than they
are with the role of an aspiring executive, campaign activities are, to some extent, unbecoming of a “king, priest, or prophet” (Novak 1985). Having to convince an audience not to vote one out of office has the effect of reminding the audience of the tenuous source of one’s legitimacy. A humbled executive may be more likely to engage, reason with, and explain things when speaking to the public.

Finally, the dynamic of undermining the incumbent president’s aura of authority during general elections is both mediated and heightened by the media coverage of the dueling campaign events. Not only does media coverage create a celebrity for the challenger nominee that may rival or even exceed the incumbent executive, but it will also increase its scrutiny of the president and his positions. While the president should always face resistance from the opposing party, the unique social and institutional forum provided by a general election, and spearheaded by a pseudo-executive, leads to a steep increase in highlighting oppositions to the president during this electoral moment. The media’s instinct for controversy may force the incumbent executive to explain policy and presidential reasoning with more evidence.

Presidents may become more deliberative in their rhetorical articulations because they have to share their podium with another legitimate political aspirant. The citizenry may expect the president to welcome and acknowledge contestation and so the president may change his rhetorical strategy to meet these demands. Because the incumbent president faces rhetorical challenges from an opponent who is vested with an aura of legitimacy and since the media will not allow the president to skirt this rhetorical competition, his rhetoric may become more deliberative.
There is some evidence in the literature that lends some support to this general theoretical expectation. Using a computer program to analyze word choice, Hart finds that language of “assurance” and “certainty” has progressively declined by presidential candidates over time. Additionally, the computer analysis demonstrates that the rhetoric has become more complex, meaning that campaign “talk is shot through with careful distinctions and qualifications. They speak for the moment, not for the ages, as if all truths now must be negotiated and then renegotiated” (Hart 2000, 74). Additionally, Hart shows evidence that campaign talk is a lot more “dialogical” over time, as presidential aspirants are more likely to reference directly their opponent’s arguments. These findings are aligned with deliberative rhetorical techniques, a language of realistic complexity, and of direct engagement with opposing arguments and with a cautious consideration of contested issues.

Vavreck’s work on presidential messaging introduces more of a situational and circumstantial variable to the study of presidential campaign rhetoric. While she argues that what the president says matters, strong structural conditions like a robust or declining economy or a lengthy war, provide effective candidates with an opportunity to shape their message accordingly (Vavreck 2009). So while the presence of a “quasi-executive” running against a president for re-election may push the incumbent towards a more deliberative approach, the specific conditions of the external circumstances may militate against an increase in deliberative rhetoric. For instance, a popular president with a booming economy may wish to underscore these circumstances by invoking as much evidence as possible to explain the situation. Or an unpopular incumbent may be forced to choke off conversation and dialogical debate by using
non-deliberative rhetoric simply because he does not have favorable external conditions on his side.

Additionally, we may not see much of a difference in the level of deliberative rhetoric used because there may be no real difference between election and non-election rhetoric in the age of the permanent campaign. Blumenthal argued that the image-making and political calculation of contemporary policy-making “remakes government into an instrument designed to sustain an elected official’s popularity” (Blumenthal 1982, 7). Cook argues that the permanent campaign “as part of a broader strategy to generate legitimacy, build political capital and gain leverage” is now “a central component of the contemporary presidency” (Cook 2002, 763). In the era of the permanent campaign, elections should not lead to a noticeable difference in the amount of deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric the president uses.

By looking at whether or not there is a relationship between elections and deliberative rhetoric we can gain insight into not just whether the president perceives deliberative discourse to be an effective political tool, but also whether campaigns can serve to increase democratic discourse.

There will be two separate election variables 1) a general election variable and 2) a midterm election variable. The general election variable will be defined as a presidential general election specifically defined as the period of time during a presidential election year between the effective end of each party’s nominating convention and the election. Since most of the theoretical expectation of this hypothesis hinges on the president facing a “pseudo-executive”, we should only start to test this variable when the challenger has officially taken the role as the “pseudo-executive” challenger. We will also measure the impact of midterm elections, defined as
the ninety days before the midterm election. While the president is not up for election, he is the head of his political party and seeks to have the greatest possible support in Congress. The president is deeply invested in the electoral outcomes of the mid-term elections. And while the institutional, social and electoral impacts of the midterm elections impact the president less directly than a general presidential election, there will still be an increased opportunity for the opposition party to make their arguments, a more active media, and more opposition leaders with a bigger spotlight.

Deliberative Rhetoric And Presidential Performance

H6a: There will be a converse correlation with perceptions of presidential performance and deliberative rhetoric

H6b: There will no significant historical trend of deliberative rhetoric

In a complex political environment, voters rely on informational shortcuts to reach the desired judgment (Popkin 1991: Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Voters have both issue congruence with candidates, but there is also a valence dimension in their decision-making (Stokes 1963; Groseclose 2001). In supporting or voting for a president, one of these shortcuts could be whether or not the president is living up to a voter’s ideal image of leadership. While it is difficult to establish a definitive presidential prototype, the most important qualities of leadership are arguably competence and trust. An “ideal” president is “not only technically adept, but also capable of facing hard choices and tackling formidable problems”. He must also be “politically trustworthy, must be honest and open-minded, without appetite for political
power” (kinder et al 1980, 320). To be persuasive, Aristotle argued that the character of the speaker was the important factor, particularly on contentious topics where the auditors are divided and resolution is difficult to achieve. How can a leader improve his valuations of character through his rhetoric? By creating an impression that the speaker is both intelligent and worthy of a voter’s trust, a president will increase his valence dimension. Speaking with nuance, evidence and with a more charitable understanding of his opponents’ positions will contribute the impression that the presidential speaker has a competent understanding of the world and is a trustworthy individual who is not solely controlled by partisan or ideological affiliation.

A speaker who is fully confident in his own positions would welcome debate and interchange. If his position is the superior position, he would want to subject his arguments to contestation, so as to make his advantage visible through the quality contrast. Therefore, even if an individual may disagree with the speaker, the very willingness to invite discussion may engender positive character evaluations of the politician increasing perceptions of openness, intelligence and confidence (Markus 1982; Kinder, 1986; Miller, Wattenberg and Malanchuk, 1986; Rahn et al., 1994). Recent empirical work argues that sophisticated campaign rhetoric may also lead to a valence advantage. Using Flesch-Kincaid grade level measures, scholars have found that higher grade-level rhetoric increases the likelihood that a citizen will vote for that candidate (Grose and Husser 2008).

Engaging alternative arguments not only increases trust, but it may also inoculate the president from being defined by his opponents. Losing control of the public agenda can be fatal. Evidence suggests that presidents quickly learn that maintaining rhetorical dominance requires more than slogans and proclamations. They must frame issues to their advantage in order to
maintain control. Tetlock discovered that presidents presented issues in “deliberately simplistic” ways during the election, but after they take office they use more complex presentations as they are forced to explain and justify their decisions (Tetlock 1981, 207). When talking to a diverse and heterogeneous country, good political strategy may require the president to speak with more nuance and complexity. Therefore, a president is more likely to present his ideas with an appreciation and articulation of different positions and opposing arguments. As a political actor responsible for representing all of the people, the president must make rhetorical allowances for disagreement.

Using deliberative discourse may also be a more effective way to convince others that your position has merit. Cross-cutting talk, or social discourse that expose people to disagreeable viewpoints, makes people more knowledgeable and tolerant about others’ political stances (Price, Capella, and Nir 2002; Barabas 2004). Studies show that individuals demonstrate higher levels of persuasion when they are in a state of moderate disagreement with their interlocutors. People are more likely to rate deliberative contexts where new information, perspectives or causal logic is introduced as better experiences than when they share the same worldview and positions as their discussants (Esterling et al 2010).

Political arguments are a result of political competition. One side will propose an initiative and another side will argue to reject this proposal. Most arguments are not heard by citizens simultaneously, but are heard one side at a time. Introducing the opponent’s argument and then providing evidence for why this argument is flawed could be very effective dialogical strategy.
Additionally, by invoking a deliberative rhetorical strategy, politicians may armor themselves against criticism. People assign greater weight to events that may have a negative impact on them. They seek to avoid potential losses when making decisions (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). Impressions based on negative information may be more powerful and enduring (Fiske 1980). Cobb and Kulinski find that “con” arguments are particularly effective (Cobb and Kuklinski 1995). This means that the president may not only be more effective in bringing up the opposition’s position, but also when faced with an opposition who only needs to oppose his arguments, the president may need to rely more heavily on explanatory rhetoric to combat the potency of the opposition’s “con” frame. Cognitively, it is easier for people to understand why a position is wrong-headed. If the president wishes to sustain his policy agenda, he must be able to overcome the built-in argumentative advantages that the opposition has with a convincing, evidence-based presentation. In effect, the president must have a higher standard in explaining his side with comprehensive reasoning to be competitive in the marketplace of ideas.

Because deliberative rhetoric has the potential to be a more effective persuasive strategy, there is an expectation that differences in the use of deliberative rhetoric will be a result individual differences and not the result of institutional pressures or historical trends. Presidents that possess better communication and political skills will demonstrate a higher propensity to use deliberative rhetoric. Contra Lim, Tulis and Kernell who signal a consistently declining discourse, the theoretical expectation of this study is to see no consistent trend of deliberative rhetoric.
H7a: The President will use more deliberative rhetoric in his first term than in his second term.

H7b: The President will not have a noticeable change in his use of deliberative rhetoric from his first term to his second term.

Since the president does not have to face the popular judgment of the people again, they may be less likely to reason with the public and engage competing arguments. This temptation may be particularly pronounced during their so-called lame duck period, when their political influence has dramatically declined and their motivation to work with Congress has declined. Wayne, Mackenzie, and Cole write, “during this period, they do whatever they can using their executive authority” (Wayne, Mackenzie and Cole, 2007, 419). Without political leverage, the president may be less likely to invoke his persuasive powers and more likely to just exercise his formal constitutional advantages. With a decreasing reliance on persuasion, the president may be more likely to use more non-deliberative rhetoric.

Presidents might also fall victim to outsized expectations during the second term that could influence their rhetorical behavior as their time in office winds down. Jones asserts that there is an inflated sense of the president’s power. He writes, “as a result, expectations of a president often far exceed the individual’s personal, political, institutional, or constitutional capacities for achievement. Performance seldom matches promise” (Jones 1994, 2). In fact, he argues that successful presidents understand that they must quickly dampen expectations and find ways to concede that they are not all-powerful. Winning a second term, however, makes this
task even harder and he will face even greater pressures of expectation. This “expectation” challenge the president faces during the second term becomes apparent when looking at the president’s public standing at the start of his second term as compared to how he fares during the remainder of the term. Only Clinton actually improved on his standing (by .6%).

FIGURE 4.1

The historical approval-rating decline of presidents during their second term may indicate the president is less willing to engage with the public. Canes-Wrone in her study of policy congruence between the president and the public finds that the president is much more likely to be congruent with national popular as an election approaches and this congruence declines dramatically during the second-term (Canes-Wrone 2006). Without another election, the
president cannot be punished by the public at the polls and therefore has less of an incentive to align with the public. A less democratically responsive president may be more likely to offer less evidence and reasoning for the decisions he makes and the legislation he supports. So a second term may see less deliberative rhetoric.

However, additional research that directly studies presidential rhetorical congruence with the public may undermine the theory that presidents’ alter their rhetoric during their second term. Using a content analysis of public statements from Eisenhower through Clinton, Rottinghaus looks at how often the president takes a congruent rhetorical position with a majority of the public. There are only marginal differences between first-term and second-term presidents and their level of rhetorical congruency. He concludes, “second-term presidents are as affected by public trends as first-term presidents” (Rottinghaus 2006, 727). He argues that second-term presidents speak as if they are running again, an indication that presidents may be highly concerned with helping their chosen successor win an election or bolstering their historical legacy possibly increasing their use of deliberative rhetoric.

Studying differences between the terms can give insight into how the president perceives his persuasive powers. Are there noticeable term differences in their use of deliberative rhetoric or in the era of the permanent campaign does the president not alter his rhetorical strategy much?

Deliberative Rhetoric and Pre-Presidential Experience

H8: Presidents who are more experienced in national politics before gaining office are more likely to use deliberative rhetoric
In trying to answer the questions of when leaders matter, Mukunda hypothesized that leader impact may be intimately tied leader selection systems. While much of the social science literature proffered that the external environment (leaders act in response to the pressures of the surrounding world) and internal organizational dynamics (leaders respond to bureaucratic constraints and the interests of their constituencies) Mukunda focused on the process of choosing the leaders. He coined this variable Leader Filtration Process (LFP), hypothesizing that leaders who are highly filtered would be less likely to be extreme in their actions than those that did not receive the same filtering in the selection process. He used six indicators of unfiltered and filtered candidates, arguing that unfiltered leaders would have a much higher potential to be outliers on a bell curve of leader impact, while filtered candidates are more likely to be modal.

1) Length of career. Unfiltered leaders would have shorter careers with no prolonged relevant experience, while filtered leaders would have extensive careers during which the leader was evaluated.

2) Frequency of Evaluation. Unfiltered leaders would be only rarely evaluated, while filtered leaders would be evaluated continuously.

3) Winner-take-all process. Unfiltered leaders benefit from a winner-take-all process, while filtered leaders benefit when rewards are distributed somewhat proportionally.

4) System’s Tolerance For Failure. Unfiltered leaders benefit from high tolerance where they can recover from past mistake, while filtered leaders are usually reared in a system with low tolerance where failure would impede their advancement.

5) Age of Regime. Unfiltered leaders lead a young and newly established organization, while filtered leaders lead organizations that have had continuous existence.
6) Unique advantages. Unfiltered leaders can bypass normal filters due to emergencies, charisma, and wealth, while filtered leaders do not enjoy the same advantages. (Mukunda 2012, 13)

While Mukunda does not make any normative claims about which types of leaders will be better, he does claim unfiltered leaders will be much likely to be extreme and dramatic. They may be less likely to respond moderately to external constraints and opposition. Applying Mukunda’s typology of the LFP to a president’s rhetoric, we can expect those leaders who have received more vetting and have had more experience on the national level to be more cautious and more deliberative in their rhetoric. Modal leaders would be more likely to engage opponents and concede weaknesses than extreme leaders.
Chapter 5

Content Analysis Results: The Situational and Circumstantial Impact on Presidential Deliberation

This section presents the descriptive statistics for the eight hypotheses presented in the previous chapter. In what circumstances does the president attempt to move and persuade the public? When is the president more likely to use more deliberative rhetoric in his speeches? And what modern presidents were more likely to be deliberative? Is there a correlation between the amount of deliberative rhetoric a president used and his standing with the public?

733 speeches were coded in total for Presidents Carter, Reagan, GWH Bush, Clinton and GW Bush. An additional 71 speeches were coded for Obama to give a preliminary understanding of where he would fall in relation to his predecessors as a deliberative president.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
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<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>State of the Union</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Year</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H1: Domestic policy speeches should be more deliberative on average than foreign policy speeches.

Presidents were deliberative in their domestic policy speeches 53.35% (n=343), while they were deliberative 52.88% (n=278) in their foreign policy speeches. The average deliberative ratio was .14 for a domestic address and .12 for a foreign policy address. Speeches that had a mix of domestic and international issues were more non-deliberative as presidents spoke deliberatively 48.67% (n=113) with an averaged ratio score of -.12.

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Inter-Coder Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>53.35%</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>81.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>52.88%</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>79.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>70.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3
Deliberative v. Non-Deliberative
by President

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>-1.43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>71.19%</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>70.18%</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G HW Bush</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>51.06%</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>63.16%</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-1.39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>60.91%</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G W Bush</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>35.90%</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>37.04%</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>-2.89</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is most interesting about these results is how similar the presidents speak on these issue topics. There seems to be no major statistical difference in how a president justifies his argument when he speaks on foreign policy versus domestic issues. President Carter and President GHW Bush were noticeably more deliberative in their foreign policy addresses than they were in their domestic policy speeches. While GW Bush had roughly the same frequency of deliberative/non-deliberative based on the content, his foreign policy speeches were much more
non-deliberative than his domestic speeches. Reagan and Clinton were consistent across the
subject content. Carter’s rhetorical behavior stands out the most, as he is the only president to
actually have a different “presidency” on domestic versus foreign policy issues. As a foreign
policy speaker Carter is a rhetorically deliberative president, but as domestic speaker he is
discernibly non-deliberative. This finding might underscore Carter’s political weakness, as he
does not respond appropriately to political incentives. Faced with serious economic challenges,
Carter opted to moralize rather than explain his specific domestic policies to the American
public. GHW Bush’s significant increase in deliberative rhetoric on foreign policy issues may
highlight his comfort and fluency on international issues with his substantial experience abroad.

Table 5.4
Ordered Probit Analysis of Deliberation By Subject Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Basic Model</th>
<th>+ Venue</th>
<th>+ Approval</th>
<th>Full Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation</td>
<td>-0.000504</td>
<td>-0.00141</td>
<td>-0.000855</td>
<td>-0.00174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00798)</td>
<td>(0.00827)</td>
<td>(0.00799)</td>
<td>(0.00829)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 1</td>
<td>-0.359</td>
<td>(0.407)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 2</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>(0.208)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 3</td>
<td>-0.682</td>
<td>(0.544)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 4</td>
<td>-0.447***</td>
<td>(0.143)</td>
<td>-0.448***</td>
<td>(0.143)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78
These results call into question any possible extrapolation of the two-presidency thesis to the rhetorical arguments the president makes. Presidents did not have any appreciable difference in the justifications, evidence and arguments they provide on domestic issues versus foreign policy issues. The lack of evidence for a “rhetorical two-presidency” highlights the possibility that personal and political circumstances are more important than the information advantages, electoral incentives and constitutional expectations that a president may perceive he has on foreign policy issues. While it is undeniable that presidents have wide latitude in foreign affairs, especially when the country is threatened, the evidence here suggests that on the whole, presidents do not perceive two separate presidencies when it comes to their rhetorical justifications. The relationship between a president’s rhetorical strategies on foreign policy versus his domestic policy articulations is more likely to be dictated by specific experiential or external factors. As Edwards and Wayne assert, “the president’s leadership problem stems from
the same basic root: Presidents do not control the environment in which they must operate, nor
do they exercise their responsibilities exclusively. Moreover, there are additional components in
the international arena--- nation-states, regional alliances, and world organizations--- that operate
independently and are not responsive to the internal political forces that condition policy making

H2a: When presidents have low approval, they may be more likely to adopt deliberative rhetoric
than when they are more popular

H2b: When presidents have low approval, they may be less likely to adopt deliberative rhetoric
than when they are more popular

When presidents have an approval rating lower than 50% they are deliberative in 53.96% of their speeches (N=278), while they are deliberative in 50.91% of their speeches (N=438) when their approval rating is above 50%. When their approval rating is right at 50%, they are deliberative in 66.67% of their speeches (N=18). Every president with the exception of George H.W. Bush was more deliberative when their approval rating was under 50%. Carter had the biggest spread in difference at the 50% approval rating demarcation point, almost a 20% difference. What is so fascinating about these findings is that the presidents have the exact same score (.08) when they are above 50% and when they are below 50% approval.
Table 5.5

Deliberative v. Non-Deliberative by Approval Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Inter-Coder Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval Rating</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>53.96%</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>76.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>94.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>50.91%</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>79.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Approval Rating</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>57.45%</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>-2.40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>37.93%</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G HW Bush</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>54.69%</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>60.78%</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G W Bush</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>38.30%</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 50%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>30.30%</td>
<td>-2.41</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of Carter, each president speaks rather similarly based on the level of political support. Carter is a deliberative president when he is above 50% (.58) and a non-deliberative president when he is below 50% (-1.08).
However the central deduction from this dataset is there is no statistical significance in the way a president’s arguments are shaped based on his level of political support. There is no difference in the way they communicate based on approval. Regression analysis confirms this result.

Table 5.6

OLS Regression Analysis of Deliberation By Approval Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Simple Model</th>
<th>+ Venue</th>
<th>+ Venue, Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation</td>
<td>-0.000107</td>
<td>-1.17e-05</td>
<td>-2.16e-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dom Sub Dummy</td>
<td>0.00468</td>
<td>(0.000820)</td>
<td>(0.000839)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Sub Dummy</td>
<td>0.0138</td>
<td>(0.00982)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 1</td>
<td>0.126**</td>
<td>(0.0159)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 2</td>
<td>-0.0236</td>
<td>0.101**</td>
<td>(0.0475)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 3</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>0.0257</td>
<td>(0.0480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 4</td>
<td>-0.0437</td>
<td>0.0877*</td>
<td>(0.0445)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 5</td>
<td>-0.0409</td>
<td>0.0928**</td>
<td>(0.0434)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 6</td>
<td>-0.122**</td>
<td>(0.0601)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 7</td>
<td>-0.0402</td>
<td>0.0903**</td>
<td>(0.0439)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.525***</td>
<td>0.566***</td>
<td>0.430***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
These results suggest that the president’s argumentative quality is immune to rising and falling levels of approval from the mass public. The president makes no major adjustments in his rhetorical efforts to persuade. Both of the hypotheses here are rejected, the presidents do not seem to believe that an increase in deliberative rhetoric will increase their support, nor do they believe (with the possible exception of Carter) that value-laden, non-deliberative rhetoric will be more effective in turning around their political prospects. The evidence provided here suggests that presidents perceive their ability to restructure the national conversation to be quite limited. Presidents do not seek to lead the public, but as Edwards argues, they play a more facilitative role.

H3a: Presidents use deliberative rhetoric more than they use non-deliberative rhetoric

H3b: Presidents use deliberative rhetoric less than they use non-deliberative rhetoric

Presidents deliver deliberative speeches 52.45% of the time, while they deliver non-deliberative speeches 47.00% of time. The average score of the presidential speeches is .09. While the presidents are more deliberative than non-deliberative on balance, what is striking about the data is the neutral language they deploy. While the most deliberative, Reagan (2.03) and the least deliberative, GW Bush (-2.00) have a recognizable rhetorical orientation, Carter (-.11), GWH Bush (.39) and Clinton (.39) have less distinctive rhetorical patterns. In developing our hypotheses for how the president would communicate, we engaged two strands of literature with different implications for how a president may communicate. On one hand scholars (Fiorina,
Hillygus and Shields and Dalton) argue that voters are persuadable, cross-pressured, and independent, while on the other hand the literature indicates that there is an increasing ideological polarization (Abramowitz and Saunders) among the mass public. Reagan’s use of deliberative rhetoric suggests that he believed voters were more malleable and moveable, while Bush’s use of non-deliberative rhetoric indicates that his rhetorical strategy was predicated on the language of mobilization. The fact that Reagan’s presidency was more successful than GW Bush’s tenure gives support to the claims that the mass public may be more moveable than they are entrenched. Most importantly, this data undermines Tulis’ contention that presidents’ public rhetoric is devoid of substantive argument. Instead of simply mobilizing a polarized and uninformed public, presidents are more likely to prompt and encourage debate than they are to discourage public deliberation.

H4a: Inaugural addresses and State of the Union addresses will be more non-deliberative than other addresses

H4b: Press conferences will be more deliberative than other addresses

As hypothesized, press conferences were a very deliberative forum of presidential speechmaking. Presidents were deliberative 59.36% of the time, 8% points clear of their regular addresses and 20% above State of the Union address. No Inaugural addresses qualified as being deliberative speeches (N=8), neither were any convention speeches (N=5). Additionally, not only were presidents more likely to have deliberative remarks during press conferences, but the intensity of deliberation was much higher as well with an average score of .62, much higher than the .09 for other non-ceremonial addresses. Reagan was by far was the most deliberative in press
conferences at 83.33% and an average score of 2.86 (N=48). Both of the one-term presidents had significantly non-deliberative average scores, Carter at -1.28 (N=24) and GHW Bush at -.47 (N=24).

Table 5.7

*Deliberative v. Non-Deliberative by Speech Type*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Inter-Coder Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech Type</td>
<td>Inaugural Address</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-9.60</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of the Union</td>
<td>38.71%</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>80.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
<td>59.36%</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>74.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>51.57%</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>80.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Speech Type Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Inaugural Address</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-2.64</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of the Union</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Paper</td>
<td>60.42%</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>-1.28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-1.69</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio Address</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Inaugural Address</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-4.33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of the Union</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Paper</td>
<td>69.79%</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G. HW Bush</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inaugural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Paper</td>
<td>55.32%</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Conference</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Address</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | Clinton    |          |          |        |
|                  | Inaugural  |          |          |        |
| Address          | 0.00%      | -1.92    | 2        |        |
| State of the     |            |          |          |        |
| Union            | 62.50%     | 0.43     | 8        |        |
| Public Paper     | 55.79%     | 0.19     | 95       |        |
| Press Conference | 52.08%     | 0.31     | 48       |        |
| Convention       | 0.00%      | -3.06    | 2        |        |
| Debate           | 0.00%      | -2.43    | 2        |        |
| Radio Address    | 68.75%     | 1.61     | 32       |        |

|                  | G W Bush   |          |          |        |
|                  | Inaugural  |          |          |        |
| Address          | 0.00%      | -30.00   | 2        |        |
| State of the     |            |          |          |        |
| Union            | 12.50%     | -1.65    | 8        |        |
| Public Paper     | 25.77%     | -2.89    | 97       |        |
| Press Conference | 57.14%     | 0.44     | 49       |        |
| Convention       | 0.00%      | -5.67    | 1        |        |
| Debate           | -          | -        | 0        |        |
| Radio Address    | 39.02%     | -1.42    | 41       |        |

These results are statistically significant when other variables are considered.
Table 5.9
Ordered Probit Analysis of Deliberation By Venue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue (OPROBIT)</th>
<th>Simple</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Full</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>FP</td>
<td>FP, Approval</td>
<td>Approval Yr</td>
<td>Election Year</td>
<td>Approval, Election Yr</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberative</td>
<td>0.0166**</td>
<td>0.0167*</td>
<td>0.0165**</td>
<td>0.0164*</td>
<td>0.0167**</td>
<td>0.0167**</td>
<td>0.0165**</td>
<td>0.0166**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00749)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
<td>(0.00748)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval Rating</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
<td>-0.131</td>
<td>-0.0944</td>
<td>-0.131</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
<td>-0.131</td>
<td>-0.0944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.337)</td>
<td>(0.337)</td>
<td>(0.347)</td>
<td>(0.348)</td>
<td>(0.347)</td>
<td>(0.348)</td>
<td>(0.347)</td>
<td>(0.348)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Year</td>
<td>0.0366</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>0.0149</td>
<td>0.0330</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>0.0149</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>0.0330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0917)</td>
<td>(0.0915)</td>
<td>(0.0947)</td>
<td>(0.0947)</td>
<td>(0.0915)</td>
<td>(0.0947)</td>
<td>(0.0915)</td>
<td>(0.0947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Dummy</td>
<td>-0.0343</td>
<td>-0.0205</td>
<td>-0.0335</td>
<td>-0.0197</td>
<td>-0.0335</td>
<td>-0.0205</td>
<td>-0.0335</td>
<td>-0.0197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Dummy</td>
<td>0.218*</td>
<td>0.233*</td>
<td>0.221*</td>
<td>0.235*</td>
<td>0.233*</td>
<td>0.221*</td>
<td>0.233*</td>
<td>0.235*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cut1 (Inaug/SOTU)

| Constant | -2.314*** | - | - | - | - | -2.379*** | -2.314*** |
|          | 2.283**   | 2.390** | 2.390** | 2.390** | 2.390** | 2.390** | 2.390** |
|          | (0.136)   | (0.157) | (0.226) | (0.226) | (0.226) | (0.226) | (0.226) |

Cut2 (SOTU/Conv)

| Constant | -1.618*** | - | - | - | - | -1.682*** | -1.602*** |
|          | 1.574**   | 1.693** | 1.693** | 1.693** | 1.693** | 1.693** | 1.693** |
|          | (0.0769)  | (0.116) | (0.193) | (0.193) | (0.193) | (0.193) | (0.193) |

Cut3 (Conv/Radio)

| Constant | -1.558*** | - | - | - | - | -1.621*** | -1.540*** |
|          | 1.512**   | 1.632** | 1.632** | 1.632** | 1.632** | 1.632** | 1.632** |
|          | (0.0739)  | (0.116) | (0.192) | (0.192) | (0.192) | (0.192) | (0.192) |

Cut4
### (Radio/Paper)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constant</th>
<th>-0.796***</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-0.859***</th>
<th>-0.759***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.733**</td>
<td>0.785***</td>
<td>0.870**</td>
<td>0.723***</td>
<td>0.791***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0521)</td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
<td>(0.210)</td>
<td>(0.184)</td>
<td>(0.114)</td>
<td>(0.0572)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cut5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Paper/Debat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cut6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Debat/Conf)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 733 733 731 731 733 733 731 731

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

These robust results demonstrate that presidents do perceive that there are certain identifiable genres and historical expectations of presidential communication. In fact, the inaugural addresses seem to have a consistent, overwhelmingly non-deliberative formula while, the State of the Union addresses are mostly non-deliberatively speeches. Interestingly, Clinton, known for giving strong State of the Union addresses, is the only president to use significantly deliberative rhetoric during these annual speeches. Press conferences are an effective way to prompt the president to deliberate with the public. Even the radically non-deliberative GW Bush became a deliberative president during press conferences (.44). Rational political actors, the strong statistical significance of the speech venue on the presidents’ rhetoric indicates that presidents understand that different rhetorical forums carry different rhetorical expectations.
H5a: Presidential elections will feature elevated levels of deliberative rhetoric

H5b: Presidential elections will feature elevated levels of non-deliberative rhetoric

H5c: Midterm elections will feature elevated levels of deliberative rhetoric

H5d: Midterm elections will feature elevated levels of non-deliberative rhetoric

The election year findings offer mixed results based on the theoretical hypothesis. While presidential and midterm elections made the president more likely to give a deliberative speech, the average score for non-election speeches was always positive, while the average score for election period speeches was always negative. On the surface, this is a fascinating finding as it might indicate that while the theoretical hypothesis is largely correct, presidents are mixing in very non-deliberative speeches as they attack their opponents. However, a closer inspection of the data shows that when the numbers are disaggregated, it is largely Reagan’s high level of deliberative rhetoric during his presidential elections that lifts up the overall % of speeches that are deliberative. In fact, individually, each president is actually less likely to deliver a deliberative speech during presidential years as they are during non-presidential years.

Campaigns appear to make the President less deliberative in their speeches.

Table 5.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Inter-Coder Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>53.49%</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>77.94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>49.47%</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>82.11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>52.89%</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>79.96%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Midterm</td>
<td>51.11%</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>76.11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Presidential and Midterm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Speech Type Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative Score</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>50.88%</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Midterm</td>
<td>47.46%</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidential and Midterm</td>
<td>52.50%</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>63.04%</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Midterm</td>
<td>73.68%</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidential and Midterm</td>
<td>66.30%</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>75.86%</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. HW Bush</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>48.00%</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>55.38%</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>63.16%</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Midterm</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidential and Midterm</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>52.17%</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>42.22%</td>
<td>-1.81</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Midterm</td>
<td>59.72%</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidential and Midterm</td>
<td>48.42%</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>62.77%</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G W Bush</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>22.92%</td>
<td>-3.59</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Presidential</td>
<td>39.33%</td>
<td>-1.49</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>45.10%</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The difference between the presidents’ rhetorical arguments in election cycles is not statistically significant.

Table 5.11

Logit Analysis of Deliberation By Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elect (LOGIT)</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Full Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VARIABLES</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Approval Sub</td>
<td>Approv</td>
<td>Sub</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Approv</td>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Venue, Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation</td>
<td>-0.0108</td>
<td>-0.00835</td>
<td>-0.0108</td>
<td>-0.0124</td>
<td>-0.0123</td>
<td>-0.00936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0153)</td>
<td>(0.0159)</td>
<td>(0.0154)</td>
<td>(0.0169)</td>
<td>(0.0164)</td>
<td>(0.0170)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>5.151**</td>
<td>4.979**</td>
<td>4.979**</td>
<td>4.979**</td>
<td>4.979**</td>
<td>4.979**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.797)</td>
<td>(0.801)</td>
<td>(0.817)</td>
<td>(0.817)</td>
<td>(0.817)</td>
<td>(0.817)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dom Sub Dummy</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.0832</td>
<td>-0.0423</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.250)</td>
<td>(0.241)</td>
<td>(0.305)</td>
<td>(0.315)</td>
<td>(0.315)</td>
<td>(0.315)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mix Sub Dummy</td>
<td>-0.349</td>
<td>-0.271</td>
<td>0.0441</td>
<td>-0.0310</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.262)</td>
<td>(0.253)</td>
<td>(0.321)</td>
<td>(0.332)</td>
<td>(0.332)</td>
<td>(0.332)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.0732</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.457)</td>
<td>(0.445)</td>
<td>(0.467)</td>
<td>(0.481)</td>
<td>(0.481)</td>
<td>(0.481)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 4</td>
<td>-0.0373</td>
<td>-0.0604</td>
<td>-0.0846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.288)</td>
<td>(0.280)</td>
<td>(0.284)</td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Dummy 5</td>
<td>0.0531</td>
<td>0.0518</td>
<td>0.0199</td>
<td>0.0378</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.214)</td>
<td>(0.208)</td>
<td>(0.220)</td>
<td>(0.226)</td>
<td>(0.226)</td>
<td>(0.226)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.571**</td>
<td>1.769***</td>
<td>1.402**</td>
<td>1.338***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.050***</td>
<td>0.931**</td>
<td>1.135**</td>
<td>1.254**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0843)</td>
<td>(0.403)</td>
<td>(0.457)</td>
<td>(0.439)</td>
<td>(0.500)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

91
These results lend credence to those that argue that the president is permanently campaigning. There is no major difference in the arguments when presidents are governing from when they are running for re-election as there is more similarity than dissimilarity. Elections do not seem to have an impact on the level of deliberative rhetoric the president uses.

So while elections present the incumbent president with the rhetorical competition of a pseudo-executive who benefits from increased media attention and a strong platform to broadcast his message, the president does not significantly adjust his rhetorical strategy—suggesting that while campaigns do not necessarily prompt a fuller discussion of the issues they also do not lead to a decline in the quality of presidential argumentation.

H6: There will be a converse correlation with perceptions of presidential performance and deliberative rhetoric.

Judging presidential performance is a tricky task. If we rely heavily on public approval performance, we give external circumstances an outsized role in determining presidential success. GWH Bush, a one-term president, enjoys the highest averaged approval rating among the presidents in this study at 61%, while two-term presidents Clinton (55%) Reagan (53%) lag behind. GWH Bush’s high overall public opinion rating is a result of the stratospheric levels of approval he received during the Persian Gulf War. Public approval is an inaccurate barometer of presidential performance because specific crises, events and external forces play a large role in the approval of the president. Similarly, measuring presidential performance by legislative
success would favor presidents who enjoyed a more sympathetic Congress. Presidents who work with a Congress controlled by the opposition party have many more obstacles to face than those that share the legislative branch with their co-partisans.

While it is an undeniably subjective enterprise, the best way to gauge presidential performance is to rank the presidents by reputation and prestige. In the absence of any objective measure of presidential performance, the ultimate measure of presidential performance is how people believed he performed. Those most familiar with the study of the historical presidency are most qualified to make these judgments. The most acclaimed recent poll was taken by C-Span in 2009. Sixty-four prominent historians, political scientists, and observers of the presidency rated the presidents in the categories of public persuasion, crisis leadership, economic management, moral authority, international relations, administrative skills, relations with Congress, vision/setting an agenda, pursuit of equal justice for all, and performance within the context of the times. The rankings in this poll perfectly correlate with the rankings of the presidents’ use of deliberative rhetoric (C-Span 2009). There is an exact correlation between the historical success of the president and the use of deliberative rhetoric.

Reagan (10)
Clinton (15)
GWH Bush (18)
Carter (25)
GW Bush (36)
Silver’s model will let us introduce Obama into the discussion. Using a composite analysis of previous presidential rankings surveys, Silver conducts a regression analysis of the percentage of the electoral vote and the historian rankings. Silver projects Obama to be the 17\textsuperscript{th} ranked president, just ahead of President Clinton. Again, these rankings perfectly correlate with the rankings of the presidents’ of deliberative rhetoric. A content analysis of Obama’s first two years in office show that his speeches (N=71) are deliberative 66.1\% of the time with an average score of .42, putting him behind Reagan, but ahead of Clinton and GWH Bush.

Reagan (10)
Obama (17)
Clinton (18)
GWH Bush (22)
Carter (26)
GW Bush (38)

Table 5.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Deliberative</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Inter-Coder Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>48.72%</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>98.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>70.39%</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>63.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G HW</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>54.50%</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>84.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>35.35%</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>73.74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94
These results suggest that there may be something inherent in deliberative rhetoric that improves their reputation and perceptions of performance. Further research must be done to identify the causal mechanism, but as hypothesized based on the extant literature, presidents who use more deliberative rhetoric are probably more likely to be considered confident, intelligent, accessible, persuasive and empowering. The theoretical foundation of this project presumes that there are constitutional and popular expectations for a president to employ deliberative leadership. These results suggest that there may be an incentive for a president to deliberate if he wishes to increase the perceptions of his presidential performance.

H7a: The President will use more deliberative rhetoric in his first term than in his second term.
H7b: The President will not have a noticeable change in his use of deliberative rhetoric from his first term to his second term.

The results here indicate not much difference between the two terms. While presidents have a bit higher average score for deliberation in term 1 (.10) compared to term 2 (0.8), they are more likely to deliver a deliberative speech in term 2 (54.14%) compared to term 1 (51.42%).

The important finding here is that the presidents are almost rhetorically identical from term to term. There is no evidence that the president perceives the need to change his rhetorical strategy as he enters a second term. The rhetorical patterns of the presidents’ final term are basically the same as if he had similar expectations as a first term president up for re-election. Rottinghaus’ contention that presidents are almost as equally responsive to the public despite not sitting for another election seems to receive support from these findings. These findings could be
an indication that the president believes his historical legacy or the future success of his party is a key determinant in not decreasing his deliberative rhetoric or it could underline that in the era of the permanent campaign the president is always communicating as if he is up for election. Either way, it is clear that the president does not believe that he can be rhetorically non-deliberative and unaccountable just because he does not face another election. These findings suggest that the presidents see no difference in the institutional, social and political circumstances of a second term on their ability to persuade the public. A rational political actor, the president perceives both terms to present an almost indistinguishable situation for him to make his arguments to the people.

H8: Presidents who are more experienced in national politics before gaining office are more likely to use deliberative rhetoric.

Based on Mukunda’s typology of unfiltered and filtered leaders he categorizes the presidents under our examination as follows with brief justifications.

“Carter, Unfiltered--- 4 years in filtering offices
Reagan, Filtered--- 8 years in filtering offices, mature political system, prolonged political career
Bush, Filtered--- 13 years in filtering offices
Clinton, Filtered---12 years in filtering offices
G.W. Bush, Unfiltered--- 6 years in filtering offices” (Mukunda 2013, 28).

Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed, as Carter and Bush 2, both unfiltered leaders, are the two least deliberative presidents and the ones with a negative average score and less than 50% of their speeches as qualifying as deliberative, while the three filtered leaders Reagan, Bush
I and Clinton all have positive average deliberative scores and more than 50% of their speeches qualifying as deliberative. The preliminary results for Obama would run counter to this theoretical expectation, but Obama’s training as lawyer and law professor may play a role in his inclination to use highly explanatory and evidence-based justifications.

These results indicate that previous experience may be a factor in how the president attempts to deliberate with the public. Further study could establish whether a president “matures” to use deliberative rhetoric during his pre-presidential experience or that presidents who are subjected to more filtering in the selection process are just stylistically different than those who have not received similar vetting. An examination of the presidents’ usage of deliberative rhetoric in their pre-presidential offices would give us some insight on whether the experience changes the communicator or whether those that reach the presidency without significant national experience have fundamentally different rhetorical styles.

Concluding Thoughts

Tulis argues that his study of the presidents’ rhetoric is not principally a book about presidential communication, but a window into the constitutional structure of the political system. The new constitutional interpretation of the president’s public role means the president’s public communication “is a form of indirect governance” because in this “modern invention, the people are intermittent witnesses to governance, but are not truly part of the political order” (Tulis 2008, 498). While Tulis does not explicitly advocate for a return to the pre-Wilson, pre-TR interpretation of the public presidency, he does argue that modern interpretation forecloses the possibility of a healthy connection between the president and the people. Tulis concludes,
“For Americans to become truly political beings, they would need a new kind of civic education, one that echoes ancient understandings of citizenship in modern circumstances” (Tulis 2008, 498). Yet, the findings in this chapter undermine this claim. There appear to be certain incentives for the president to deliberate and engage with the public. There is a perfect correlation between perceptions of presidential success and the use of deliberative rhetoric.

The arguments of Kernell, Tulis and Lim imply that the modern presidents are consistent in their preference for language that repels discussion and rational thought. The findings in this chapter call these claims into question as presidents show individual differences, possibly based on their previous political experience; some are deliberative (Reagan, Clinton and Bush) and others are non-deliberative (Carter and Bush). Presidents do not see any significant change in their rhetorical strategy when they speak on foreign policy issues, are facing election, and have different levels of political support. Instead, presidents demonstrate a remarkable consistency in their argumentation across these variables. Additionally, presidents do not see any change in their rhetoric when they are in their final term. These results seem to indicate that the president does not see perceive that these circumstances require an alteration of his rhetorical style. This suggests that the presidents display a permanent and enduring rhetorical strategy that is largely resistant to significant circumstantial and situational changes. The presidents do, however, see a significant change in their argumentative style based on the venue of their remarks. Presidents are more deliberative in press conferences and radio addresses, and much less deliberative in inaugural and State of the Union addresses confirming the belief that there are distinctive genres of presidential communication that the president must respect.
Chapter 6

Efficacy of Deliberative Rhetoric: Experimental Data

We have looked at descriptive data for when Presidents are more or less likely to have deliberative rhetoric in their speeches, but is this type of rhetoric actually effective? This chapter uses a unique experiment to test empirically whether the presence of deliberative rhetoric is more effective than using non-deliberative rhetoric. Is a president’s use of more explanatory rhetoric more likely to yield beneficial outcomes with the public? Are attempts at persuasion effective? Does deliberative rhetoric improve the perceptions of leadership qualities? This chapter runs a novel experiment to test whether or not deliberative rhetoric may be more effective than non-deliberative rhetoric. The experiment seeks to test whether there is any significant difference in an immediate effect when individuals are exposed to deliberative and non-deliberative frames. The purpose of this chapter is to see whether there is an inherent difference in the persuasiveness between deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric.

According to Petty and Cacioppo there are two routes to persuasion, the central route and the peripheral route. In the central route the source’s persuasive attempt is judged based on the comprehensibility of the message, the logic, and the strength of the arguments. In the peripheral route, the success of a message is based on heuristics such as the attractiveness of the speaker, likability, context, and similarity to the speaker. In both routes, we would expect that deliberative rhetoric would be more effective than non-deliberative rhetoric. In the central route, the very nature of deliberative rhetoric with its emphasis on quality argumentation and evidence-based reasoning would trump the non-deliberative approach, which does not emphasize these qualities.
In studying how messages changed a receiver’s attitude based on a more peripheral route, Hovland et al. argued that the three essential factors of a message’s effectiveness are predicated on the credibility of source (speaker), the characteristics of the message (the what), and the features of the audience (Hovland et al. 1953). The speaker must be credible if he wishes to persuade (Hovland and Weiss 1951) and sources that have more expertise and trustworthiness are more effective than those that lack these qualities (Bochner and Insko 1966). Additionally, when a speaker is perceived as not trying to persuade someone, then they are more effective in changing attitudes because the audience views them as being more objective (Walster and Festinger 1962). Because people cannot make sense of all the complex information in the political world, they rely on shortcuts to make decisions and judgments (Fiske and Taylor 1991). People rely on heuristics to understand shifting and complicated environments (Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991). In fact, Downs argued that rational citizens should do nothing else but rely on these shortcuts in processing complicated information (Downs 1957). There is a rich body of literature that suggests feelings play a large role in the shortcut process. Individuals who feel good about something will give positive evaluations, while those who feel bad about something will deliver negative evaluations (Schwarz and Clore 1983, 1988; Schwarz 1990; Lazarus 1982). Affective feelings can serve as an effective heuristic. Another heuristic that people rely on to infer how trustworthy an argument may be is from its structure. People will think that complex arguments have more authority than shorter, simpler more declarative statements (Petty and Cacioppo 1979; Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1984). So we would expect also in the peripheral route that a president who uses deliberative rhetoric is more likely to be persuasive because he will have higher perceptions of expertise and
more credibility as an even-handed rhetorical broker.

As stated and explained in the hypothesis and variables chapter, the expectation is that deliberative rhetoric will lead people to use heuristics that will make a speaker seem persuasive, trustworthy, competent and leader-like. Exposing subjects to different treatments of speeches (non-deliberative versus deliberative), this experiment tests to see whether there is a discernible difference in the perceptions of the speaker’s persuasiveness and leadership characteristics. The experiment tests 188 undergraduate students, and 480 subjects using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk Mechanism.

Justification of Student Sample

Experiments should provide generalizable causal inferences (Shadish, Cook and Campbell 2002). As Sears contends, using students as the entire sample may be a fatal problem because there is a “narrow data base” from which it is impossible to make generalizable claims (Sears 1986). Many political scientists are deeply skeptical whether findings that consist solely of student responses can be used to make generalizations about larger populations. This question is hotly debated in the discipline since over 25% of experimental articles in political science journals and over 70% in more specialized journals rely on student subjects ((Kam, Wilking and Zechmeister 2007).

Druckman and Kam offer a defense of student populations in certain situations. One of the situations in which they show evidence of non-student and student subjects behaving similarly is in the political communications literature (Kinder 1998; Chong and Druckman...
2007). Students would be a suspect sample for external validity if there were particular characteristics that distinguished students from other populations that would lead the researcher to question the causal relationships found after the treatments. In their studies, Druckman and Kinder only find distinguishable differences between students and non-student general population in religious attendance, level of political information, and media use, while other key covariates demonstrate similarity. Ultimately, Druckman and Kam argue that if the experimental method has an underlying data generating process that has a homogeneous treatment effect, results from any sample could be generalizable to other populations (Druckman and Kam 2011).

Justification of Mechanical Turk

Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is an online labor market that allows for low-cost experiments that are more diverse than relying solely on student subjects. People who use MTurk use it for a range of tasks requiring human intelligence, from photo identification, to judging the fairness of test questions, to tracking down contact information. Political scientists are beginning to take advantage of this online market to include surveys in embedded experiments. In a recent article, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz defend the use of MTurk in political science research by arguing that demographics of MTurk users are 1) much more diverse than the typical convenience samples (students) that political scientists typically rely upon; 2) in replications of experimental studies conducted using both convenience and nationally representative samples the MTurk estimates of the average treatment effects are similar to the original samples and 3) the limitations of the recruiting process for MTurk (concerns about subject attentiveness, “professional” subject test takes, and heterogeneous treatment effects) do not pose a serious problem (Berinsky, Huber and
Concerns of Validity

A more concerning issue present in the experimental test of deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric is one that is present in any test of political communication; we have a captive audience and therefore we ignore the true contextual reality of how people receive information. Scholars have demonstrated that in communication experiments results can change significantly when they have the choice whether or not they receive the information (Areneaux and Johnson 2008). This threat is probably the greatest threat to the external validity of the experiment. The most important issue is whether or not the experiment “captures the intended essence of the theoretical variables” (Kruglanski 1975, 106). Does the use of deliberative rhetoric increase the efficacy of a president’s message? Is it possible to design an experiment that can adequately capture the impact of deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric on the citizenry? This experiment does not claim to simulate real-world conditions, but to identify and isolate whether different rhetorical speech frames can potentially have different impacts on the public when the public receives these different frames. In order to isolate this causal mechanism, we have modeled the experiment after others that have attempted to isolate the causal mechanism of certain frames.

Berinsky and Kinder, in their study of the impact of media frames on citizens’ political understanding, designed a unique experiment to see the impact of ordering of information on comprehension. They exposed three groups to different treatments in the ordering of information on the Serbia/Kosovo conflict. Each treatment featured the exact same text, but only differed in
the ordering and structuring of the words. The control frame featured a conventional news reporting structure, while the two experimental claims were organized, according to research in cognitive psychology, to accentuate certain frames, a “humanitarian crisis” or “risk to America crisis” just by the order in which certain information was presented. While the emphasis of the two groups is different, the text is identical allowing them to isolate the impact of the given “frame” on political understanding. (Berinsky and Kinder 2006).

In their study of the impact of emotive visual imagery on persuasion, Huddy and Gunnthorsdottir test the impact of a range of visual images of animals on convincing people to have positive or negative reactions on environmental stances. In their pro- and anti- environment messages (which are presented on flyers) they are very careful to make sure that the language and argument structure are very similar except for the necessary alterations to introduce the pro- and anti- positions. They do not want other factors creeping in to influence the impact of the visual image. As much as possible they endeavor to make sure it is the visual image that is driving the differential treatment and not something present in the flyer’s argument.

In order to ensure that the correct causal mechanism drives the responses from the subjects, immense caution must be used to keep the different speeches as close as possible in all elements except for the deliberative/non-deliberative treatment. This is a difficult task to accomplish because a significantly deliberative speech and a significantly non-deliberative speech would be very different in composition. Having very different speeches would make it almost impossible to attribute any difference in the subjects’ responses to the difference in deliberative/non-deliberative rhetoric or to other factors like content, word choice, subject matter or stances on the issues. To mitigate the concerns posed by Druckman and Kam about ensuring
that the theorized independent variable engines the findings on the dependent variable, we used an amalgam of the approaches of Berinsky/Kinder and Huddy/Gunnthorsdottir. The raw information in the text should be as similar as possible, but the introduction of the treatment will mean we have to alter the words in some manner. The most effective way to do this is to give the subjects the exact same speech, but change a single extended paragraph’s level of deliberation. In one frame we expose the subjects to a very deliberative frame (+2), in another a frame that is not deliberative or non-deliberative (0) and then to a very non-deliberative frame (-2). Since the speeches are short in nature (5 paragraphs), the adjusted frame would make up a significant portion of the speech’s impact and thus allow us to see whether there is a difference in response based on the different frames (SEE APPENDIX).

RESULTS

The student sample was taken from a series of introductory government classes over a two-day period at Georgetown University. The total (N) available was 188, so only the domestic frame was used in order to make sure an appropriate sample was collected. The control treatment of the “0” deliberative frame had fewer (N) because one of the classes was dramatically under-attended. For Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, all six frames (domestic and foreign policy +2,0,-2) were exposed to a treatment group of 80 individuals for a total of 480 subjects. Each worker was paid $.20 to complete the task. On average the task took about three minutes to complete so the subjects were compensated between $4 to $5 dollars an hour.

As an exploratory study, student sample largely confirmed the theoretical expectations that deliberative rhetoric leads to increased perceptions of persuasiveness and leadership evaluations. In the deliberative frame (N=71) subjects found the speech to be more persuasive
than subjects in the non-deliberative frame (N=68) 3.64 to 3.41, more competent 4.10 to 3.94, demonstrate more leadership 3.99 to 3.64, and to be more trustworthy 3.92 to 3.69. Interestingly, subjects in the non-deliberative frame judged the speaker to be more empathetic 4.29 to 4.07.

The two treatment groups were relatively similar in their demographic composition. In the deliberative frame 59% were female (53% for the non-deliberative frame), 45% were Democrats (38%), 23% were Republican (26%), 18% were independent (16%), and 14% were unaffiliated (19%).

MTurk results replicated the results found from the student population. The main difference is the scores from the MTurk subjects are much higher overall, indicating that while the treatment effect of the students is not much different, there may be differences in evaluative standards between the elite college student population and the general population using MTurk. Subjects in the MTurk mechanism also showed confirmation that deliberative rhetoric might be more effective than non-deliberative rhetoric. The demographic information for the two treatment groups was quite similar. In the deliberative frame 40% were female (48% female in the non-deliberative frame), 51% Democrat (44%), Republican 21% (23%), Independent 13% (14%), Unaffiliated 10% (20%), 18-30 46% (44%), 31-49 40% (46%), 50+ 14% (10%). Subjects found the speaker of the +2 frame to be more persuasive (5.25 vs 4.69), competent (5.30 vs 5.17), display more leadership (5.54 vs 5.48) and to be more trustworthy (5.24 vs 4.92). The subjects found the speaker of the non-deliberative frame to be more empathetic (5.21 vs 5.11).

For the domestic speeches, each result confirmed the theoretical expectations. A speaker who uses deliberative rhetoric is using a strategy where he tries to change minds (persuasive), increases perceptions of expertise (competent), has confidence in his ability to move people
(leadership), and is a more objective, realist communicator (trustworthiness). Each one of these expectations was confirmed in both studies. In the non-deliberative frame, in both the student and MTurk samples, the president was judged to be more empathetic than in the deliberative frame. This too makes intuitive sense, as people may identify more closely with those who speak emotionally and with less rhetorical qualification, hallmarks of non-deliberative communication.

The only result that attained a high level of statistical significance was persuasion with a P-value of .0103. Competence (.5827), Leadership (.7334), Empathy (.6420) and Trust (.162) did not reach an adequate level of statistical significance. While only “Persuasion” reached statistical significance, the fact that both studies showed the expected directional relationships is important because of the relatively understated manipulation effect. The treatment impact could have been larger between the two frames if a greater difference in levels of deliberation/non-deliberation was applied. Only one of the five paragraphs was altered, a rather modest treatment. To see a statistically significant result for “Persuasive” and to see the other qualities accord directionally with theoretical expectations in both studies, even with a limited treatment, lends credence to claims that deliberative rhetoric may be much more effective than non-deliberative rhetoric in domestic policy speeches, not just in persuading people, but also in increasing certain valence advantages for the president.

Foreign policy speeches did not show the same treatment effect. For foreign policy speeches there is a very small difference between the frames on persuasiveness (5.19 vs 5.22), leadership (5.56 vs 5.65) and empathy (4.99 vs 5.07) where in each case the non-deliberative frame yields the higher scores. The deliberative frame yielded higher scores for competence (5.79 vs 5.62) and trust (5.35 vs 5.22). However, none of the treatment effects reached statistical
significance across any of the treatment effects. The demographics again were largely similar. In the deliberative frame 39% were female (48% female in the non-deliberative frame), 36% Democrat (40%), 31% Republican (25%), 24% Independent (11%), 21% unaffiliated (24%), 56% 18-30 (38%), 39% 31-49 (54%), 5% 50+ (9%).

In the foreign policy address the differences are almost indistinguishable for persuasiveness, leadership and empathy. While deliberative rhetoric has a slight advantage in increasing perceptions of competence and trust, what is most interesting about these results is the absence of an affect for persuasiveness, indicating that deliberative rhetoric may function differently based on the subject content of the speech. Deliberative rhetoric does not have the same impact on foreign policy speeches as it does for domestic speeches. There may be expectations that the president does not have to use the same amount of reasoning and justificatory rhetoric to make his argument for international issues. This finding may suggest support for the rhetorical two-presidency thesis at least as the public’s expectations are concerned. The assumption that the president has more constitutional, informational and institutional leverage on foreign policy issues than on domestic issues, may indicate that speaking deliberatively does not give the president an advantage when he presents his arguments on international issues.

Across the treatments, it appears that deliberative rhetoric slightly increases perceptions of trust and competence, while non-deliberative rhetoric increases perceptions of empathy. Yet, the difference in these treatments is not enough to reject the null hypothesis. In the domestic speech, deliberative rhetoric also increases perceptions of persuasion, and leadership, while in the foreign policy speech the effect goes against theoretical expectations indicating that
explanatory rhetoric may not be as effective when talking about international issues. The only major statistically significant finding is that respondents in the sample find deliberative rhetoric to be more persuasive when domestic issues are discussed.

Substantively, the elevated perceptions of persuasiveness for deliberative rhetoric in domestic speeches may have an important impact on the long-term reputation and success of the president. As discussed earlier in Chapter 5, there is a perfect correlation between the overall use of deliberative rhetoric for presidents and perceptions of presidential greatness. The more deliberative rhetoric the president used, the higher the president was ranked with respect to presidential performance. This study yields some important insight into the potential mechanisms that may drive this finding.

First, deliberative rhetoric’s higher estimations of persuasiveness in domestic speeches may be an indication of a strategic president trying to build diverse coalitions. With the sound-bite nature of the news and the fleeting attention spans of the public, the inclination may be for the president to present political options publicly in simple, binary terms. Non-deliberative rhetoric squashes debate and disagreement at the cost of failing to find possibilities for compromise. Adept presidential communicators may understand that they can leverage their rhetoric to encourage a broadened array of arguments and perspectives. Deliberative rhetoric not only allows for a greater appreciation for democratic inclusion, but as this study suggests, it may actually help win over converts to the president’s positions. A president who invokes more persuasive language will have more success in building larger coalitions and increasing public approval, subsequently improving presidential performance.
Second, a more rhetorically deliberative and persuasive president will probably have higher evaluations of efficacy and strength. Edwards outlined two contrasting views of presidential leadership, the president as a facilitator and the president as a director of change. As a facilitator the president is viewed less heroically, as he simply mirrors and perhaps solidifies the views of the public. The president as a director gets the public to follow his lead by restructuring the argument or by shaping the public’s opinions through his public communication. A deliberative president is one that seeks to direct the public. Using the language of persuasion rather than a language of mobilization, a president who uses deliberative rhetoric may be perceived to be a stronger and more muscular leader. A president who invokes a persuasive strategy signals that he believes that he has the rhetorical competence and confidence to change minds rather than to just simply exploit favorable political opportunities. Therefore, a deliberative president may be perceived to be more effective and significant.

Thirdly, a more rhetorically deliberative president may enjoy valence advantages that accumulate gradually over time or that may be amplified through media coverage. One of the potential criticisms of the study is that the short-term experimental impact may not last long after a speech concludes. While the differences in perceptions of persuasiveness are quite significant between deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric for an individual speech, the aggregate impact may even be greater over time. Deliberative presidents may earn themselves more bipartisan cooperation in Congress, more positive news coverage, and higher levels of public approval as they demonstrate continual deliberative communication. The president’s legislative opponents may be more sympathetic to a deliberative communication style that involves them in the political conversation. Additionally, the media may appreciate presidential arguments that use
logic, facts, and the language of compromise, while the public may respect a president who tries to represent everyone rhetorically. A deliberative rhetorical style could contribute to the gradual development of a better reputation with congressional adversaries, the media and the public, enhancing his prestige and explaining the link between deliberative rhetoric and perceptions of presidential greatness.
Chapter 7

Conclusion: The Incentive For Presidential Deliberation

This dissertation’s core contention is that presidents may have political incentives to become more persuasive and deliberative when they speak to the public. This argument challenges the thesis of the field’s most important and enduring work on presidential communication. In *The Rhetorical Presidency*, Tulis argued that the public presidency has a deleterious impact on democratic deliberation. Tulis believed that in a representative democracy the public should “be able to judge the rhetorical categories in which power is expressed, defended and understood” and that presidents should “responsibly avail themselves of a political tradition that offers rhetorical exemplars of principle, vision and silence” (Tulis 1987, 204). However, according to Tulis, a rhetorical presidency does not provide the incentives for a president to encourage deliberation among the citizenry. Instead, the public presidency gives “the president an increased ability to assess public opinion and to manipulate it” (Tulis 1987, 185).

Tulis believes that the modern public presidency is a distortion of the framers’ constitutional intent, “a view of statecraft that is in tension with the original Constitution---indeed, is opposed to the Founders’ understanding of the political system” (Tulis 1987, 18). Modern presidents are becoming less deliberative and more demagogic. Tulis was blunt in his preoccupation that this new rhetorical leadership undermined democratic values, arguing that there has been a “steep decline in constitutional speech” and “that the rhetorical presidency also marks an increasing inability of governors and governed alike to talk intelligently about the basic principles that define the regime” (Tulis 1987, 180). Tulis asserted that the constitutional designers ruled out the popular and congressional election of the president because these
selection procedures would make the president too reliant on public opinion. The Framers did not want an uninformed citizenry influencing the selection of the president, so they looked to insulate the chief executive from the mass public as much as possible. According to Bimes’ reappraisal of Tulis’ work, presidential leadership was not meant to be “popular or plebiscitary democracy, but a trustee-like version of leadership, where the president exercises his own independent judgment about the public good” (Bimes 2008, 245). Engaging in popular rhetoric “would undermine the rational and enlightened self-interest of the citizenry which the system was designed to foster and on which it was thought to depend for its stability” (Caeser et al. 1981, 161). Tulis believed that the interaction between the public and the president would prevent a careful consideration and deliberation of the issues. Put simply, the modern political situation is not conducive to healthy public discourse or deliberation; in fact, it may even produce demagogic rhetoric.

The biggest fears of the framers in designing the United States political system were the danger of concentrated power and demagoguery. They believed by limiting popular democracy they could thwart the ability of an esteemed executive appealing to the public at the expense of the other branches and other factions (Cohen and Nice 2003). As expressed in Federalist 48, the executive branch was to be “carefully limited, both in the extent and duration of its power” (Federalist No. 48). As Whitford and Yates write, “the president was to be a leader of the people, not a populist reduced to channeling (indeed, exacerbating) the often ill-conceived opinions of the masses” (Whitford and Yates 2009, 12). The inventors of the American presidency believed that a president too closely linked to the public would suffocate deliberation and reason. With
technological innovations, constitutional changes, and the declining power of party politics, the president resorted to whatever powers were available to wield influence.

Both Tulis and Kernell argue that the president uses public rhetoric to change how public deliberation operates. By “going” public, presidents curtail inter-branch deliberation and gain policy leverage by mobilizing the people. If the president fails in gaining leverage by shifts in public opinion, he may not have suitable options to negotiate and bargain with Congress (Tulis 1987; Kernell 1997). The president is now part of a permanent campaign that seeks to increase political power through the use of his public pulpit. In particular, Tulis argues that the very act of popular leadership stultifies the ability to deliberate and persuade the public.

Tulis’ claims could be compounded by the drastically changing media environment. Since the publication of *The Rhetorical Presidency*, scholars have demonstrated that the bully pulpit has transformed as the president’s audience has shrunk. To be able to move the public, he must first have access to them. The public is simply not listening to the president, a condition that prevents the president to speak as the nationally elected officer--- as a leader of all the people (Wattenberg 2004). Through the proliferation of expanded viewing options, the people are no longer a captive audience for the president. The Nielsen ratings for presidential speeches have declined dramatically (Baum and Kernell 1999). Additionally, the remaining audience is particularly skewed by age and partisanship (Wattenberg 2004). And when the people do tune in, they are more likely to be exposed to negative portrayals of the president by the media (Groeling and Kernell 1998). The power of the presidential pulpit is much weaker because the rhetorical connection to the American people is severely attenuated. As Cohen writes, “Where presidents once built a public leadership strategy that placed considerable weight on leading the broad mass
public, they now place marginally less emphasis on leading the broad mass public and more on mobilizing narrow segments of the population. This shift in leadership style has important implications for the relationship between the president and the mass public, as for democracy as well” (Cohen 2008, xii). These scholars would predict a declining incentive to use deliberative rhetorical strategies with the mass public. Public rhetorical strategy would center primarily on narrowcasting and mobilizing, rather than deliberative discourse and persuasion.

This research project calls into question these assumptions by arguing that presidents may be actually impelled to exercise a rhetorical leadership that promotes public deliberation and persuasion. Anchored in the literature of deliberative democracy, this dissertation argues that the president will increase his prestige and burnish his reputation by fostering deliberative ideals.

A deliberative democracy is that one encourages citizens to examine a diverse array of arguments and perspectives. In defining what deliberative democracy, Gutmann and Thompson explain that it can be defined “as a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future” (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 7). A deliberative democracy’s goals are to “promote the legitimacy of collective decisions”, “encourage public-spirited perspectives on public issues”, “promote mutually respectful processes of decision-making” and “advance both individual and collective understanding” (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 10-12). Securing these goals allows a polis to be better positioned to deal with moral and political disagreement. In a deliberative system participants are ready “to enter into a dialogue in which the reasons given, and the reasons
responded to, have the capacity to change minds” (Gutmann 2004, 20). Even if disagreement remains and persuasion does not occur there is a civility and mutual respect as people “consider their opponents’ positions on the merits, rather than try to explain them as products of unfavorable conditions, such as impaired judgment, misguided motives, or cultural influences” (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 20). A deliberative democracy is more likely to produce sounder decisions and cultivate more respect for popular sovereignty.

The President of the United States is uniquely situated to shape democratic norms and values. Speaking with a singular voice in a cacophonous political system, the president can become a model of deliberative discourse. Using deliberative rhetoric, presidents can present their policy arguments in ways that encourage debate and discussion. As Chambers writes, “deliberative rhetoric makes people think, it makes people see things in new ways, it conveys information and knowledge, and it makes people more reflective” (Chambers 2009, 335). The theoretical assumption of this dissertation is that the president, as the centripetal force in government with the loudest voice, has a constitutional and political responsibility to foster deliberative democratic discourse. As president for “all of the people”, the chief executive must respect and empower citizens through a deliberative consideration of different viewpoints. With the abundant diversity of the mass public, the president must use his rhetoric to recognize and acknowledge varying viewpoints in a quest to advance the common good. Adopting Green’s ocular model, this dissertation assumes that the president can embolden the public by allowing them to see arguments ventilated through the engagement of opposing ideas and evidence-based reasoning. Deliberative rhetoric, motored by justificatory and explanatory argumentation, can increase the sense of autonomy that individuals feel. Even though the mass public can only serve
as “spectators” according to Green, they feel as if they can “take part in the governance of their own society” (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004, 5).

A president should speak with logic, respect for the opposition, recognition of the limitations of the presidential institution, and openness to dialogical argument. Deliberation is essential to the success of a representative democracy. People will not feel represented nor will effective policy created if democracy is simply an aggregative collection of democratic preferences. There must be a public conversation and as the one truly national leader the president has the responsibility to lead this discussion.

The empirical evidence provided in this dissertation supports this argument. In Chapter 5, a major finding was the precise correlation between perceptions of presidential greatness and the use of deliberative rhetorical strategies. Presidents who use more deliberative rhetoric are more likely to have higher perceptions of presidential greatness. Surveys show that when presidents are assessed, the public rates honesty as the most crucial attribute, followed by compassion, intelligence, toughness/decisiveness, and decision-making ability (Clark and Clark 1994, 173). Deliberative rhetoric can increase all of these measures. Additionally, a president’s reputation may be burnished when they can be thought of as a leader of all of the people, possess uncommon wisdom, and are prepared to sacrifice short-term popularity for doing what is most prudent (Simonton, 1987). A deliberative president may benefit from the perception that he identifies with the whole country, that he is a wise and even-handed rhetorical broker, and that he is concerned fundamentally with doing the right thing rather than pandering to public opinion or exploiting favorable political conditions. This dissertation challenges Tulis’ contention that the
rhetorical presidency is one that militates against persuasion and deliberation. In fact, to be successful, the president might have to be deliberative.

In Chapter 6, a novel experiment showed that for domestic policy speeches deliberative rhetoric was perceived to be more persuasive than non-deliberative rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric also slightly increased valence advantages for trust and competence, the two most important leadership qualities, in both domestic and international speeches. The findings of presidential prestige found in Chapter 5 and the findings of deliberative rhetoric’s persuasive and valence advantages in Chapter 6, suggest there may be a link between the efficacy of deliberative argumentation and the evaluations of presidential performance. Therefore, the evidence suggests that contra Tulis, it may be politically useful for presidents to deliberate when they “go public”. Presidents who employ a deliberative rhetorical strategy may be more likely to not just win over the American people with their persuasive speeches, but they may also improve their likeability through increased valence advantages. The findings indicate that deliberative rhetoric seems to improve the reputation of the president. Successful presidents are more deliberative.

Interestingly, we may even be able to predict how deliberative future presidents might be. There is a correlation between pre-presidential experience and the amount of deliberative rhetoric a president uses.

The study of the presidents’ deliberative strategies in this project supports the claim that the presidency is a dynamic institution that is filled by the diversity of experience and skills that each president brings to the office. No other actor in the political system enjoys the same capacity to lead the country rhetorically. The president speaks with a singular voice ---one that is inherently more powerful than any that emerge from the cacophony in Congress--- yet this
singular voice is always stylistically different from presidency to presidency. The deliberative nature of the presidents’ rhetoric gives us leverage in explaining these differences and possibly predicting presidential performance. By examining a host of situational independent variables and the use of deliberative rhetoric by the president, this study shows that presidents seem to have consistent rhetorical styles. Different situations and circumstances do not noticeably alter their rhetorical strategies. While there are slight statistical differences between subject matter, election periods, term effects, and approval rating these differences are not dramatic nor do they attain statistical significance. Presidents do not speak differently when they deliver domestic policy addresses versus foreign policy speeches, indicating that they do not perceive the existence of a two separate presidencies on these issues. Election periods also do not seem to alter how the president communicates; suggesting that either the era of the permanent campaign has completely blurred the line between the rhetoric of governance and campaigning or presidents believe that their rhetorical strategy is equally effective during both forums. The first and second terms are almost exactly similar in the level of presidential deliberation, suggesting that the president does not perceive a lame duck effect. Political support is not a significant predictor of deliberative rhetoric, as presidents do not seem to believe that a shift to persuasive strategies will increase support. Since we can safely assume that presidents are rational rhetorical actors, these results are quite interesting as they help as gain insight into how the presidents rhetorically perceive the power of their office, elections, their second term, and their abilities to persuade.

The only independent variable studied that offers statistically significant predictive value is the venue in which the president delivers his speech. These results are highly significant and
confirm that there are very distinctive functions for different venues. The speech venue has a considerable impact on how the president chooses to structure his argument, confirming that different speech forums are perceived by the president to have different rhetorical functions. Inaugural speeches and state of the unions are inherently non-deliberative, while press conferences and radio addresses are significantly deliberative. What is so interesting about this finding is that the presidents do not have major differences in choosing these forums they just perform differently in them. Therefore, we can conclude that the venue of the speech has a significant impact in what types of rhetorical arguments the president offers the public.

This dissertation provides a theoretical conceptualization of the president’s intent to persuade through deliberative argumentation. The literature in the field of presidential rhetoric is mostly concerned with whether a president can move the public by delivering speeches. This project studies presidential persuasion from a different perspective. Are there certain situations or forums when the president believes he should become more rhetorically deliberative? And are there certain rhetorical argumentative frames that make the president more or less persuasive when he communicates with the public? The data provided in this research project begins to address this understudied aspect of the literature and advances our understanding of the institution of the presidency and its role in the United States political system.

Future Research

The data presented in this project is only a first step in studying how presidents perceive their bully pulpit. One of the most important limitations to the study is identifying the exact
causal link between the use of deliberative rhetoric and perceptions of presidential greatness. The speculation is that deliberative rhetoric is not only inherently more persuasive with the public, but that it may also improve the president’s standing with other elite actors.

The Impact of Deliberative Rhetoric on the Media

Chapter 6 established that deliberative rhetoric is more persuasive than non-deliberative rhetoric in domestic speeches. But how lasting is this impact? One way to link the finding of the correlation between presidential ratings and deliberative rhetoric is to study whether or not the media actually rewards a president for using a deliberative rhetorical style. If the media favors rhetorical deliberation, then the president’s use of deliberative rhetoric could have an enduring impact on the public. The media is the primary mediator between the president and mass public. Therefore, it is crucial that the president receive favorable coverage if he is to lead public opinion effectively. Better presidential coverage means that there are fewer impediments to cultivating public support and congressional accommodation. The White House has a vast apparatus dedicated to shaping a positive public image of the president. As Edwards writes, “presidents commonly view the press as a major obstacle to their obtaining and maintaining public support” (Edwards 1983, 140). Presidents regularly complain about missed stories, superficial coverage, negativism and bias. Speaking in a more bipartisan, logical, evidence-based, and expansive manner could have a beneficial impact on the way the media covers the president. The media may have a preference for deliberative rhetoric. More deliberative presidents may be more likely to have positive relations with the press. So while there may be an effect of deliberative rhetoric, the true impact may be an “echoing press” that privileges the arguments of a deliberative president. To study this potential “deliberative rhetoric privilege” we
could examine editorial press coverage of deliberative and non-deliberative speeches and see if there is a discernible difference in the favorability of the media’s reporting. The real impact of presidential rhetoric may not be directly with the people, but with the gatekeepers of the press who help shape the image of the president with their coverage.

The Changing Media Environment

Another limitation to the project is its inability to conceptualize what the impact of newfound media platforms will have on presidential communication. The bulk of the content analysis in this dissertation precedes the meteoric rise of youtube, twitter, facebook, blogging and other recent technological platforms. How will the changing media environment not only impact how presidents decide to structure their speeches, but how the audience responds? As Herbst writes, “Rhetors talk; audiences listen, thoughtfully or not. There has always been feedback: Audiences react, buy, vote, argue, and respond in myriad ways. But, until contemporary times, the venues for reaction have been fairly limited, by both imagination and technology” (Herbst 2008, 339). Herbst argues that we are undergoing a fundamental shift where the public now has an ability to transform the historical relationship between the speaker and the audience. She predicts, “new technologies will eventually make it increasingly difficult to discern just who is the audience and who is the rhetor” (Herbst 2008, 340). The contemporary media environment is increasingly intimate, as the distance between the presidential pulpit and the people is dramatically shrinking. What impact will this have on the effectiveness of explanatory and justificatory language? Will deliberative rhetoric be more or less appealing in this new landscape? Future experimental research should examine whether or not deliberative rhetoric has the same appeal when presented in different media forums.
Applying The Novel Measures To Other Institutional and Political Questions

The novel measure of deliberative rhetoric should be applied as a dependent variable to other important questions about the institution of the presidency. Does the office of the presidency change the presidential speaker? Are there differences between the levels of deliberative rhetoric in the presidents’ pre-presidential governing experience and how they speak once president? Another interesting comparison would be how the discourse in the US Congress compares to the presidency. Are there significant differences between presidential and congressional rhetoric? Do we see any significant historical trends? Does the deliberative rhetoric of congressional leaders differ from rank and file members?

In assessing the uniqueness of the presidency as an institution, research should also consider the rhetoric of international actors. How does the American presidency compare to other presidential democracies? Are American presidents more or less deliberative than their international peers? Are there noticeable differences between presidential and parliamentary democracies?

Using deliberative rhetoric as an independent variable in experimental conditions could also yield important insights on the previous questions. This study provided evidence that deliberative rhetoric is more persuasive than non-deliberative rhetoric in domestic policy speeches. The analysis should be extended to examine more fine-grained differences on issue topics. Are there differences between social and economic issues? Does the partisan affiliation, gender, or personal speaking style play a role in the perceptions of persuasive efficacy in
deliberative rhetoric? While the impact of deliberative rhetoric had a more muted effect for foreign policy speeches, are there different dynamics at work when the president discusses war?

The experimental analysis of the efficacy of deliberative rhetoric should be extended beyond the study of the presidency. Do different institutional political actors have greater success when using deliberative rhetoric? Are there differences between the voting publics in their receptivity to deliberative rhetoric across countries and political systems?

The central limitation of the project’s findings is that the content analysis data and the experimental results only allow for theoretical speculation for why deliberative rhetoric may improve perceptions of performance and persuasion. The study could be extended to include space for open-ended responses from subjects exposed to deliberative and non-deliberative rhetoric. Allowing subjects to explain their reactions to these different speech frames would be helpful in understanding the dynamics of persuasion.
Appendix A

Experimental Speech Frames

Foreign Policy +2 (Deliberative)

A speech by the President

Consistent with the Joint Statement issued by General Secretary Gorbachev and me at the conclusion of the Geneva meeting and with our efforts to promote a more constructive East-West relationship, we and our NATO allies are introducing in Vienna today a new proposal designed to break the long deadlock on conventional arms reductions in Europe.

Since the early 1970's, NATO has engaged the Warsaw Pact in discussions aimed at limiting the numbers of troops on both sides in central Europe. These discussions, known as the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks (MBFR), now constitute one of the longest continuously running arms control negotiations in history. The NATO allies have consistently tried to move these negotiations forward. In 1982 and 1984, the U.S. and the allies presented new proposals designed to achieve progress in the MBFR negotiations. Regrettably, both proposals were rejected by the Warsaw Pact. After extensive national reviews of these talks and their objectives, we and our allies have concluded that a significant and forthcoming new move could provide new impetus to the negotiations.

In an effort to move the negotiations forward, and taking into account expressed Eastern concerns, we have today tabled a new proposal for reductions with effective verification. The
proposed package of verification measures is intended to verify the numbers of troops withdrawn as well as the numbers which will remain. Thus, in exchange for a comprehensive and effective package of verification measures, NATO would be willing to accept the general framework of the February 1985 model proposed by the Soviet Union and its allies for a noncomprehensive agreement. We will no longer insist, as we have since the outset of negotiations, that the sides come to an agreement on Eastern troop levels before treaty signature. Nor will we continue to insist, for now, on a comprehensive approach whereby East and West must agree at the outset on all the steps needed to reduce to parity.

In this context, the U.S. is now prepared to accept a reduction of 5,000 U.S. and 11,500 Soviet ground troops in the central European reduction area. These figures reflect the ratio between existing U.S. and Soviet troop levels in the area. As soon as these reductions are completed, NATO is prepared to accept a commitment by both alliances not to increase forces in central Europe. As verified by implementation of the verification measures, this no-increase commitment would last for 3 years.

The new Western proposal builds on key aspects of the Warsaw Paet's ideas of February 1985. These include a time-limited, noncomprehensive agreement; reductions without prior data agreement on Eastern forces; and a no-increase agreement. The main element which NATO has added is in the area of verification. Fair, effective, and reciprocal verification measures are essential so that both sides will be able to know whether the terms of the accord are being complied with. This is especially important if we are to accept a no-increase commitment on
troops in the area without prior agreement on the level of those troops. The Soviets have contended that such prior agreement was unnecessary and that Western concerns could be satisfied through implementation of verification measures. This new Western proposal offers them an opportunity to pursue that approach. Agreement on all aspects of the proposed verification measures would, of course, have to be reached prior to the signature of a treaty.

We urge the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries to consider carefully the details of our proposal. This NATO initiative can help fulfill the commitments made at the Geneva summit and produce real progress in Vienna which would reduce forces in central Europe.

Foreign Policy 0 (Control)

A Speech by the President

Consistent with the Joint Statement issued by General Secretary Gorbachev and me at the conclusion of the Geneva meeting and with our efforts to promote a more constructive East-West relationship, we and our NATO allies are introducing in Vienna today a new proposal designed to break the long deadlock on conventional arms reductions in Europe.

Since the early 1970's, NATO has engaged the Warsaw Pact in discussions aimed at limiting the numbers of troops on both sides in central Europe. These discussions are known as the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks (MBFR). And after several failed proposals, we and our NATO allies offer a new proposal that addresses Eastern concerns and preoccupations.
Basically, NATO would be willing to accept the general framework of the February 1985 model proposed by the Soviet Union and its allies for a noncomprehensive agreement, in exchange for a comprehensive and effective package of verification measures.

The new Western proposal builds on key aspects of the Warsaw Pact's ideas of February 1985: a time-limited, noncomprehensive agreement; reductions without prior data agreement on Eastern forces; and a no-increase agreement. The element which NATO has added is in the area of verification. Of course, agreement on all aspects of the proposed verification measures will have to be reached prior to the signature of a treaty.

We urge the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries to consider carefully the details of our proposal. This NATO initiative can help fulfill the commitments made at the Geneva summit and produce real progress in Vienna which would reduce forces in central Europe.

Foreign Policy -2 (Non-Deliberative)

A Speech by the President

Consistent with the Joint Statement issued by General Secretary Gorbachev and me at the conclusion of the Geneva meeting and with our efforts to promote a more constructive East-West relationship, we and our NATO allies are introducing in Vienna today a new proposal designed to break the long deadlock on conventional arms reductions in Europe.

Today, we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on Earth. Yet history
has shown that peace does not come, nor will our freedom be preserved, by good will alone. 

There have been those in the world who scorn our vision of human dignity and freedom. One nation, the Soviet Union, conducted the greatest military buildup in the history of man, building arsenals of awesome offensive weapons. And together with our NATO allies we deployed new weapons as a deterrent and as an incentive to the Soviet Union to meet us in serious arms control negotiations – and I think it’s fair to say that without our planned deployments, they wouldn’t be here.

For decades, we and the Soviets have lived under the threat of mutually assured destruction. Is there either logic or morality in believing that if one side threatens to kill tens of millions of our people our only recourse is to threaten killing tens of millions of theirs? Wouldn’t it be better to save lives than to avenge them? Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are. I’ve become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence. Feeling this way, I believe we must thoroughly examine every opportunity for reducing tensions and for introducing greater stability onto the world stage.

So in an effort to move the negotiations forward, NATO would be willing to accept the general framework of the February 1985 model proposed by the Soviet Union and its allies, in exchange for a comprehensive and effective package of verification measures. If the Soviet Union will join us in our effort to achieve major arms reduction and accept fair, effective, and reciprocal
verification measures, we will take a successful step towards stability: peace and security. Nevertheless, in order to continue negotiating from a position of strength, it will still be necessary to rely on the specter of retaliation, on mutual threat. And that’s a sad commentary on the human condition. Yet this new Western proposal offers them an opportunity, offers us all an opportunity, to honor a future rich in possibilities, to come together not as citizens of different countries but as citizens of the World, as one people under God.

We urge the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries to consider carefully the details of our proposal. This NATO initiative can help fulfill the commitments made at the Geneva summit and produce real progress in Vienna which would reduce forces in central Europe.

Domestic +2 (Deliberative)

A Speech by the President

Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. We're here today to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. The proclamation concerning Older Americans Month has been issued every year since 1963, and each time it becomes more meaningful, because the number of older Americans is increasing every year.

Since 1970, for example, the national mortality rate has dropped 2 percent each year. Scientific advances in the medical profession have increased both the length and quality of life for our older citizens. Today, a typical 65-year-old will live another 16 years. And in the next decade,
the median age of our country is expected to increase another 3 years.

As our older population increases, we must remain alert to the needs and vulnerabilities of this segment of our population. As the CBO announced last week, the double-digit inflation of the last decade took a heavy toll on older Americans, particularly those with fixed-incomes. Shrinking the value of their savings beyond all expectation. The report also called attention to the progress that we've made in the battle against inflation during our 14 months here in office and how it has already had considerable impact on these people.

I might add that older Americans currently dependent on social security did not see this program touched by our efforts to cut spending increases in our battle against inflation. In fact, while they make up only 11 percent of our population, elderly Americans will receive 28 percent of the Federal budget in this present fiscal year. A larger percentage of the Federal budget than they have received in the last several years.

This year's proclamation reminds us that older Americans possess a reservoir of experience and a depth of knowledge that is a great national resource. Today, I'm taking this opportunity to announce my support for legislation that will make better use of this resource. I will back legislation which eliminates mandatory retirement requirements in government and private industry based solely on age.

Domestic 0 (Control)
A Speech By the President

Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. We're here today to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. The proclamation concerning Older Americans Month has been issued every year since 1963, and each time it becomes more meaningful, because the number of older Americans is increasing every year.

Since 1970, the national mortality rate has dropped 2 percent each year. Today, a typical 65-year-old will live another 16 years. And in the next decade, the median age of our country is expected to increase another 3 years.

Simply put, our older population increases. As they do, it is our responsibility to remain cognizant of their needs and vulnerabilities as well as recognize that the inflation of the last decade also shrank the value of their savings beyond reasonable expectation. And while the progress that we've made in the battle against inflation during our 14 months here in office has already had an impact on these people, I want to assure you that older Americans currently dependent on social security did not see this program touched by our efforts to cut spending increases.

This year's proclamation reminds us that older Americans possess a reservoir of experience and depth of knowledge that is a great national resource. Today, I'm taking this opportunity to announce my support for legislation that will make better uses of this resource. I will back legislation which eliminates mandatory retirement requirements in government and private
industry based solely on age.

DOMESTIC -2 (Non-Deliberative)

A Speech By the President

Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. We're here today to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. The proclamation concerning Older Americans Month has been issued every year since 1963, and each time it becomes more meaningful, because the number of older Americans is increasing every year.

Advances in science and medicine have increased the length and quality of life for all Americans. And as our older population increases, we must remain alert to the needs and vulnerabilities of this very special segment of our population. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes thrift, and crushes the elderly. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.

The inflation of the last decade devastated older Americans. People who had worked so hard all their lives to protect and preserve the American dream for our children and our children's children, helplessly watched as their own American dream, their own hopes of prosperity, and the value of their own savings shrank beyond all expectation. And it is with great pleasure I can say that the progress that we've made in the battle against inflation during our 14 months here in
office has already had considerable impact on these people.

And let there be no misunderstanding: the business of our nation goes forward; the battle continues. The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we as Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom. But not at the expense of our older citizens and forbearers. So I want to assure you that older Americans currently dependent on social security did not see this program touched by our efforts to cut spending increases in our battle against inflation.

This year's proclamation also reminds us that older Americans possess a reservoir of experience and depth of knowledge that is a great national resource. Today, I'm taking this opportunity to announce my support for legislation that will make better uses of this resource. I will back legislation which eliminates mandatory retirement requirements in government and private industry based solely on age.
Appendix B

Survey

Answer a short survey:

Personal Information:
1. What is your gender?

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2. What is your age?

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3. Political affiliation?

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Speech Reactions:

4. How persuasive did you find the speech?  
   (1 = Not persuasive at all; 7 = Very persuasive)

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5. How competent did you find the speaker?  
   (1 = Not competent; 7 = Very competent)

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6. How would you rate the speaker's leadership skills?  
   (1 = Minimum; 7 = Maximum)

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7. How empathetic is the speaker?  
   (1 = Not empathetic at all; 7 = Very empathetic)

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8. How trustworthy is the speaker?  
   (1 = Not trustworthy at all; 7 = Very trustworthy)

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Bibliography


